

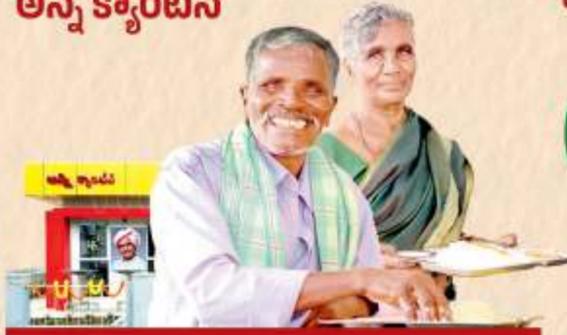


సంక్షోభంలోనూ సంక్షేమం అందించి, అభివృద్ధికి రెక్కలు తొడిగి, మొదటి 100 రోజుల్లోనే 'ఇది మంచి ప్రభుత్వం' అని ప్రజల చేత అనిపించుకుంటోంది కూటమి ప్రభుత్వం

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దివ్యాంగులకు
రూ.6000 ఇస్తున్నారు



అమ్మలాగా లక్షల మందికి
ఆకలి తీరుస్తున్న
అన్న క్యాంటీన్



నిరుద్యోగ యువత భవిష్యత్తుపై
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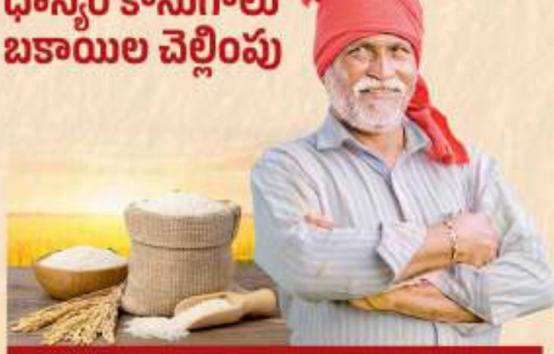
కష్టాల్లో ఆపుడిలా తోడు నిలిచాడు
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ల్యాండ్ ట్రబిలింగ్ యాక్ట్ రద్దుతో
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భద్రతకు భరోసా



రైతుబిడ్డకి తెలుసు రైతు కష్టం
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ధాన్యం కొనుగోలు
బకాయిల చెల్లింపు



ఇది మంచి ప్రభుత్వం

ఇక మీదట కూడా ప్రజల ఆకాంక్షలకు, అవసరాలకు అనుగుణంగా
కూటమి ప్రభుత్వం పనిచేస్తుందని చంద్రబాబుగారు హామీ ఇస్తున్నారు

AP will become aqua hub: Minister Kollu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Excise Minister Kollu Ravindra has said that the government is working towards transforming Andhra Pradesh into a hub of the aqua sector. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday virtually inaugurated the Syam Aqua Processing Plant in Kurumaddali village, Pamarru constituency, with Minister Kollu Ravindra and Union Minister Srinivasa Varma attending the event.



heavy losses due to syndicates controlling the purchase process. He lamented, "The previous government destroyed the traditional fisheries sector under the banner of 'Fish Andhra', pushing many traditional fishermen into ruin. Jagan Reddy's policies have deterred investors from considering Andhra Pradesh, with even major companies like Lulu deciding not to invest in the state."

Union Minister Srinivasa Varma pledged to take steps to develop the fisheries sector by leveraging central government subsidies for food processing. He emphasised efforts to link the food processing sector with the MSME sector. The Union Minister welcomed the establishment of Syam Aqua, which will employ nearly 2,000 people, and expressed hopes that more units like this would be established. He also noted that while the state currently focuses on prawn processing, there is an urgent need to set up fish processing units.

hubs along the state's coastal regions and provided electricity at Rs 2 per unit. However, after Jagan Reddy assumed power, the entire system was disrupted. He imposed additional taxes through the Seed Regulatory Act, and due to similar exploitation in the feed sector, farmers were unable to access quality seeds and struggled with feed costs, which led them into debt. Many have abandoned aquaculture altogether.

Ravindra also noted that even when farmers managed to grow aqua crops despite these challenges, they incurred

Complaint filed against ex-minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The management of Balaji Stone Crusher in Palnadu district has complained to Home Minister V. Anitha, accusing former minister Vidadala Rajini of corruption.

The complaint alleges that Vidadala Rajini, along with her Personal Assistant, Gopi, collected Rs 2.5 crore from the company. In response, the Home Minister has ordered an investigation into the matter.

It is further claimed that irregularities involving the former minister during the YSRCP's tenure are surfacing gradually. In June, farmers from Chilakaluripet mandal submitted a complaint to MP Lavu Srikrishnadevarayulu, stating that the former minister's associates had acquired land under the guise of the 'Jagananna Colony' scheme and charged commissions.



The farmers urged the authorities to help recover these commissions.

Additionally, it has been alleged that Vidadala Rajini's followers collected 200 acres of land from farmers in Pasumarru and Gudipudi villages, also in Chilakaluripet mandal. In one instance, 50 acres were taken from 32 individuals, with farmers informing both the police and the MP that they were owed Rs 1.16 crore by the former minister in this case.

Second boat stuck at barrage retrieved

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Engineers from Visakhapatnam-based Bekem Infra have successfully retrieved two boats that were stuck at the Prakasam Barrage gates in the river Krishna. The first boat was removed on Tuesday night, with the second being recovered on Friday. Both vessels have been placed at Punnami Ghat.

According to officials from the Water Resources Department, Bekem Infra engineers utilised iron girders to lift the boats. While two have been successfully retrieved, one large and one small boat remains in the river.

The engineers are currently working to lift the third boat, and the entire retrieval process is expected to be completed within the next day or two.

Officials further noted that after several days of effort, the retrieval of the second boat marks significant progress in the operation that has been ongoing for the past ten days.

Minister reviews 100-day progress in energy sector

Says 12,000 new agricultural connections provided



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar convened a review meeting to evaluate the accomplishments of the energy department during the first 100 days of the coalition government. The focus of the meeting was on key initiatives, particularly the provision of electricity connections to farmers.

To date, 12,000 new agricultural connections have been established, including over 5,000

in the APSPDCL region. The department aims to reach a total of 40,000 connections. A new system has been introduced allowing farmers to apply for connections via a toll-free number (1912), enhancing the process's ease and transparency.

The minister also reviewed the progress of setting up electric vehicle (EV) charging stations through public-private partnerships and examined the development of solar parks across the state. He underscored the importance of job creation as a key component of these projects. The Andhra Pradesh Integrated Clean Energy Policy 2024, designed to promote clean energy, will be launched soon.

Special Chief Secretary K. Vijayanand, along with the CMDs of the distribution companies and other officials, participated in the review meeting.



Lokesh to launch dialysis unit at Bangarupalayam today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Education and IT Minister, Nara Lokesh, is set to inaugurate a kidney dialysis unit at Bangarupalayam village this Friday. Minister Lokesh will launch the unit as part of the State government's initiatives, marking 100 days since the formation of the NDA government in Andhra Pradesh. In keeping with the commitments made during the 'Yuvagalam Padayatra', the Minister has moved forward with this project.

It is worth recalling that on 3rd February 2023, during the Padayatra's 100-kilometre milestone, a plaque was unveiled, assuring the people of Bangarupalayam that a kidney dialysis unit would be established. Fulfilling this promise, the dialysis unit has been built at a cost of ₹3 crore, with the capacity to treat 10 patients daily. The facility's capacity will be expanded in the future as required.

As the NDA government, led by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, completes its 100-day milestone in office, this dialysis unit will be inaugurated by Minister Lokesh on Friday.

A detailed action plan has been prepared to ensure the fulfilment of these promises. Regular consultations are being held with ministers and officials from the respective departments to expedite the implementation of the assurances made to the public during the 'Yuvagalam' initiative.

Swarnandhra @ 2047 vision document to be unveiled on Nov 1: Chief Secretary

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad announced that, in tune with the Central government's Vikas Bharat 2047 initiative, aimed at transforming Andhra Pradesh into a developed state, the government is preparing the Swarnandhra @ 2047 vision document, which will be unveiled on November 1. A meeting was held on Thursday with District Collectors, various Heads of Departments, and Secretaries from the State Secretariat to discuss the steps needed to formulate this vision document.

The Chief Secretary explained that the document seeks to position Andhra Pradesh as a developed state by 2047, targeting a \$2.4 trillion economy with a per capita income exceeding \$43,000.

He highlighted that Andhra Pradesh's 974 km coastline, along with its existing ports at Moolapet, Gangavaram, Ramayapatnam, and Krishnapatnam, will be lever-



aged with the addition of new ports. He also noted that port-based industries are being established in coastal districts, offering substantial opportunities for import and export. Districts are expected to prepare five-year action plans with a focus on the blue economy.

The Chief Secretary further emphasised key government priorities, including the eradication of poverty, ease of living, infrastructure development, and demographic management. He underscored the importance of growth engines such as data centres and artificial intelligence, which will play a vital role in district development.

According to Prasad, the Swarnandhra @ 2047 vision

document will prioritise making Andhra Pradesh a global hub for high-value agriculture and processing, industry-based skills enhancement, and a growing logistics centre on the east coast.

The vision also includes transforming Andhra Pradesh into a hub for industrial and renewable energy, creating next-generation mega cities, fostering major tourism hubs, and ensuring technologically accessible healthcare.

The state aims to promote dignified, safe, and productive lives for its citizens, with an environmentally conscious and sustainable government focused on digital governance and fiscal prudence.

The vision document will incorporate suggestions and

feedback from the public to ensure a collaborative approach to shaping the future of the state.

Chief Secretary Prasad directed District Collectors to organise meetings with MPs, MLAs, MLCs, and other public representatives. He also urged the organisation of student competitions, such as essay writing, from 21st September to 5th October, to raise awareness of the Swarnandhra @ 2047 initiative.

Additionally, WhatsApp messages will be sent to the mobile phones of personnel in Gram Ward Secretariats, and the PR&RD, MAUD, Police, Revenue, and Education Departments to further spread awareness.

Posters, hoardings, and video documentaries will also be displayed by the Planning and Information Departments. The Chief Secretary stressed that the media should play an active role in creating widespread awareness about Swarnandhra @ 2047.

Anna Canteen launched outside AP Secretariat

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

To mark the completion of 100 days of the NDA government in Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu inaugurated the Anna Canteen outside the Secretariat in Velagapudi on Thursday. The Chief Minister issued tokens to the needy, and meals were served on the occasion.

Addressing the media, the Chief Minister stated that 203 Anna Canteens had been established across the state, but they were maliciously shut down by the previous government. "Upon coming to power, we swiftly took action to relaunch the Anna Canteens, making arrangements to provide food to the poor with a spirit of service. We are reopening the 203 canteens that were previously closed. On August 15, we opened 100 canteens, and today, to mark 100 days of our rule, we have opened 75 more. Around 450 people are being served lunch at each canteen."

The Chief Minister also responded to concerns about

the adulteration of TTD laddus with animal fat, stating that lab reports had confirmed the issue. "No one expected such things to happen in a sacred place like Tirumala," he said. "It is widely believed that those who disrespect Lord Venkateswara will face punishment in this life, not the next. The use of adulterated ingredients in the preparation of Tirumala prasadam came to light following an investigation by the TTD. I am at a loss as to how people can act in such an evil manner. They seem to have crossed all limits."

Recalling that Dr N.T. Rama Rao had introduced Annadanam at Tirumala, the Chief Minister noted that there had been numerous complaints about the quality of food distributed there.

The Chief Minister further emphasised the importance of Tirumala to Hindus, noting that every devotee wishes to visit Lord Venkateswara at least once in their lifetime to seek blessings. He accused the previous government of actions that tarnished the sanctity of the holy site.

AP govt has complete support from Centre: Naidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday said the TDP-led NDA alliance government in the State has the complete support of the Central government to efficiently implement welfare schemes and also back all its development decisions. The Chief Minister noted that this support from the Centre is key to achieving results.

"People's governments are there at the Centre and in the state. These are governments which are taking dedicated decisions on public welfare and development," said Naidu in a post on 'X'.

According to the CM, the NDA government in the southern state has executed more than 100 welfare schemes and development programmes in the first 100 days of government, terming it a 'good government'.

Naidu asserted that the current government is a 'good government' because it ended the alleged dictatorial and oppressive politics of the erstwhile YSRCP regime.

Home Minister assures justice to Mumbai model

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha affirmed that all those involved in the case concerning Mumbai actress Kadambari Jethwani will face legal consequences. Actress Jethwani, who visited the Home Minister's office at the Secretariat with her family on Thursday, was reassured by Minister Anitha of swift action. The Home Minister highlighted that legal measures have already been taken against three IPS officers.

The Mumbai actress expressed her gratitude to the government and the Home Minister for their support. She also requested the withdrawal of false charges levelled against her



by Kukkala Vidyasagar and submitted a petition seeking safety during her stay in Vijayawada until the case was resolved.

In response, Home Minister Anitha assured her that she need not fear for her safety, stating that a comprehensive investigation is underway. She further

emphasised that both the government and Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu are committed to ensuring justice for her. Minister Anitha consoled Jethwani, remarking that even 75 years after India's independence, cases like hers reflect an ongoing struggle for true freedom.

CM unveils new free sand..

Continued from Page 3

He instructed that regulations be created to allow residents to collect sand for personal use without any charges and that all measures be taken to prevent illegal transportation and mining, thereby strengthening the vigilance system.

Minister Kollu Ravindra stated that they are setting a precedent by introducing third-party inspections for sand supply, with every aspect closely monitored by third parties from time to time. He noted that the new sand portal will have constant surveillance at various stages, ensuring that no one, from offi-

cialists to transporters, can make mistakes. He added that district-level committees, led by collectors, will regulate the local systems in their respective districts. The portal will display details such as supply points, transportation charges, and available sand for the day by district.

Minister Ravindra also mentioned that the portal provides a way to regulate excessive charges collected in the name of truck owners, transporters, and intermediaries, with trucks being empanelled for transportation. The public can report any issues related to free sand through the toll-free number 1800-599-4599 or the email address dmgsapsand-

complaints@yahoo.com. Necessary action will be taken on every complaint, with feedback provided by the district collector offices, as explained to the Chief Minister.

Principal Secretary of the Mines and Geology Department, Mukesh Kumar Meena, stated that the integration of GPS with sand transport lorries will curb illegal transportation. He highlighted that a feedback mechanism is being prioritised, with responses from users being collected regularly through IVRS calls. Director of the Mines Department, Praveen Kumar, informed the Chief Minister that CCTV surveillance is being maintained at sand export centres, and district-level committees have been assigned appropriate responsibilities and powers.

Tirupati laddu sparks...

Continued from Page 3

He argued that the claims were politically motivated and aimed at tarnishing the YSRCP's image.

B Karunakar Reddy, another senior YSRCP leader and former TTD chairman, defended the party, accusing Naidu of using the issue to gain political advantage. Reddy suggested that Naidu's allegations were part of a broader strategy to target the opposition party and its leader, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

The KMF clarified that the TTD had not purchased ghee from it in the past four years. It said it has been supplying ghee to TTD for laddus only since TDP came to power.

The Tirumala temple, dedicated to Lord Venkateswara, is regarded as a sacred site, often referred to as Kaliyuga

Vaikuntha and its offerings hold significant spiritual importance. Andhra Pradesh Minister Nara Lokesh shared a video clip of his father, CM Naidu, expressing astonishment over the allegations and condemning the purported use of animal fats in the prasadam.

YS Congress chief YS Sharmila, sister of YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, has demanded a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) inquiry to validate Naidu's claims. She criticised both Naidu and the YSRCP for engaging in 'heinous politics' over the preparation of the laddu.

The Viswa Hindu Parishad (VHP) also weighed in, calling Naidu's accusations a 'serious issue' and demanding strict action against those responsible for any potential adulteration.

In a further development, the Vigilance Department issued a notice to YSRCP leader and former TTD Chairman YV Subba Reddy on Thursday, concerning allegations of financial irregularities and the use of adulterated ingredients in the prasad and laddu preparation. Reddy has requested additional information from the department to address these concerns.

The YSRCP countered by asserting that the sample in question was tested on July 17 and the report was obtained on July 23, after the TDP came to power. The party claimed that Naidu's attempt to discredit the YSRCP had backfired. However, TDP sources maintained that the ghee stock used for the sample was supplied during the previous administration, adding another layer to the ongoing controversy.

Balineni Srinivasa...

Continued from Page 3

Speaking to the media later that day, Balineni made it clear that his decision to join Jana Sena was voluntary, stating he had no aspirations for any position within the party.

"I will formally join Jana Sena in the presence of Pawan Kalyan during a programme to be held in Ongole soon. I will work according to the directions and guidelines set by Pawan Kalyan," he announced.

Balineni pledged to bring all leaders and followers from his camp into the JSP while alleging that YSRCP chief and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had humiliated him during his tenure in the party. He further revealed that he had tolerated many insults while in YSRCP, choosing not to leave earlier despite the disrespect.

Tap connections...

Continued from Page 3

"Steps must be taken to permanently address the drinking water issue. Before 2019, water was supplied to several villages through tap connections as infrastructure was already in place. But the YSRCP, after coming to power, neglected to continue the initiative," Naidu said. The Chief Minister directed officials to devise plans for the uninterrupted supply of safe drinking water, suggesting that pipelines could be built from nearby reservoirs in rural areas. He also urged them to coordinate with the Irrigation Department to assess water storage capacity and utilisation. Naidu highlighted that 95 lakh households still need to be provided with drinking water. He instructed officials to prepare a Detailed Project

Report (DPR) for the remaining 28 lakh households and recommended involving top-level consultants and using SCADA technology to speed up water supply and prevent leakages.

The Chief Minister stressed that tenders for projects where there is no progress should be cancelled. He blamed the YSRCP government for delaying the implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission but expressed confidence that funds could be secured from the Centre by addressing past mistakes. "The main goal is to provide safe water to all households by 2027. If the Jal Jeevan Mission had been properly implemented over the last five years, all households would have safe drinking water by now," Naidu remarked.

He also instructed officials to regularly monitor ongoing projects, ensure the use of quality materials, and accelerate the pace of work. Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and departmental officials attended the review meeting.

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Banks to play key role in achieving Viksit Bharat: FM

8

KANIKA
KAPOOR RECALLS HER 'PECULIAR MEMENTO' FROM HER PARIS TRAVEL

10

Nearly 3,000 women record harassment statements IN TFI

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

The BJP and the BRS are ignoring Backward Classes. The BJP should explain why it removed Bandi Sanjay Kumar from the Telangana BJP president's post when he was working actively. Why did the BJP give only a Union Minister of State post instead of a Union Cabinet Minister post to a Bandi Sanjay Kumar, a BC.



-B. Mahesh Kumar Goud, TPCC chief P5

DON'T MISS...

VMC all set for Dasara festivities...

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Commissioner Dhyanaachandra has announced that arrangements are in the final phase for the Dasara Sarannavaratri festivities, scheduled to take place from October 3 to 12, at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri. On Thursday, Dhyanaachandra held a meeting with officials from various departments to discuss preparations for the Dasara festival. He instructed all heads of the departments to take an active part in the festivities...

-PAGE: 4

4 iconic tourist centres will be set...

Reiterating the TDP-led coalition government's commitment to develop Andhra Pradesh as the best tourist destination, Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh has announced that four iconic tourist centres will be set up. Besides, eco-tourism will be developed at the famous hill shrine Srisaikalam. Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, the Minister said that the Central government has come forward to allocate Rs 250 crore under the 'Scheme for Special Assistance to State for Capital Investment' to...

-PAGE: 5

'India major contributor to...

India remains a major partner for Maldives and also a major contributor to the development, especially in the education sector, Maldives Education, Labour & Skills Minister Ahmed Shafeeu has said. He was addressing education and skilling resources exhibition and conference DIDAC INDIA, on Wednesday. 'India has been a leader in many ways, not only in the region but also globally. When we consider India's economic and technological development, as well as its contributions to education and skill development...

-PAGE: 8

Ashwin, Jadeja tango saves India...

Seasoned off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin sparked on home turf with his sixth Test hundred as he combined with Ravindra Jadeja to steer India out of trouble and post a formidable 339 for six on day one of the first Test against Bangladesh here on Thursday. Ashwin (102 batting) and Jadeja (86 batting) added 195 runs (174 minutes, 225 balls) for a riveting unbroken seventh wicket stand after young pacer Hasan Mahmud (4/58) reduced India to 144 for six, despite Yashasvi Jaiswal making a solid...

-SPORTS

Tirupati laddu sparks row

TDP releases lab test reports indicating presence of animal fats in ghee used for the laddu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A political storm has erupted in the State following allegations by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu that the famed Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) laddu, a revered offering at the Lord Venkateswara Temple, was adulterated with animal fats.

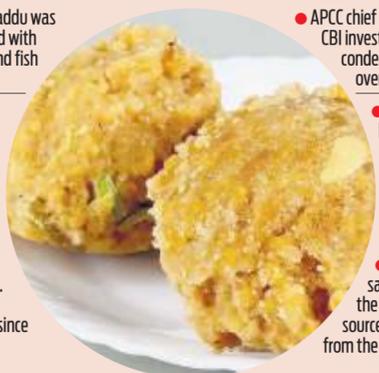
Naidu and the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) on Wednesday released lab reports from a Gujarat-based livestock laboratory, asserting that the ghee used in the preparation of the laddu contained 'beef tallow', 'lard' (pig fat), and fish oil. According to these reports, the ghee tested positive for traces of these animal fats, which are considered controversial in the context of temple offerings. TDP spokesperson Anam Venkata Ramana Reddy presented the findings at a press conference, citing an analysis from the National Dairy Development Board's Centre for Analysis and Learning in Livestock and Food (CALF). The analysis revealed that the ghee was mixed with a variety of foreign fats, including soybean, sunflower, olive, rapeseed, linseed, wheat germ, maize germ, cottonseed, fish oil, coconut, palm kernel fat, palm oil, beef tallow, and lard. The sample was recorded on July 9, 2024, with the lab report issued on July 16.

Reddy alleged that during the YSR

CM Naidu alleged that TTD laddu was made using ghee adulterated with beef tallow, lard (pig fat), and fish oil.

YSRCP leaders, including former TTD Chairman YV Subba Reddy, have denied the allegations, accusing Naidu of political manoeuvring.

The KMF clarified that the TTD had not purchased ghee from it in the past four years. It said it has been supplying ghee to TTD for laddus only since TDP came to power.



APCC chief YS Sharmila has called for a CBI investigation into the allegations, condemning the political dispute over the laddu preparation.

The Vigilance Department has issued a notice to YV Subba Reddy regarding allegations of fund diversion and the use of adulterated ingredients in the preparation of 'prasadam' and laddu.

The YSRCP argues that the sample testing occurred after the TDP came to power, while TDP sources claim the ghee stock was from the previous administration.

Congress Party (YSRCP) administration, animal fats were used in the ghee, compromising the purity of the Tirupati laddu. The report indicated significant contamination with these fats, which has heightened the controversy.

In response, YSRCP leader and former TTD Chairman YV Subba Reddy held a press conference in Tadepalli on Thursday, vehemently denying the allegations. Reddy accused Naidu of attempting to damage the reputation of the Tirumala temple and undermine the faith of millions of Hindus.

Continued on Page 2

Annexure-1
Lab. Ref. No. AB023655
Sample Name: Ghee
Table 1. S-Value for sample

Equation No.	S-Value	Standard S value limits as per method
1	86.58	88.05 to 101.95
2	106.99	96.42 to 100.58
3	22.76	65.90 to 104.10
4	117.15	97.96 to 102.04
5	19.77	95.68 to 104.32

Table 2. S-Value equation for its suspected adulterants as per ISO 17676 : 2019

Equation No.	Foreign fat
1	Soybean, Sunflower, Olive, Rapeseed, Linseed, Wheat germ, Maize germ, Cotton seed, Fish oil
2	Coconut and Palm kernel fat
3	Palm oil and Beef tallow
4	Lard
5	Total



CM unveils new free sand portal

SAND BOOKING AVAILABLE 24/7

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has instructed officials to ensure 24-hour sand booking availability. He emphasised that the sand portal system must be updated to allow anyone to book sand from anywhere at any time. On Thursday, he launched the new portal related to the Andhra Pradesh Sand Management Policy for free sand distribution at the Secretariat.

The CM made several recommendations to the officials, stating that there should be no time restrictions for sand bookings. When the

authorities explained that only the sand available for the next day could be booked, he ordered that this be extended to a week for the convenience of the public. As a result, it is now possible to book sand for the upcoming week. He advised finding immediate solutions to recurring issues as they arise.

The CM suggested promoting transparency to ensure that everyone receives sand according to the government's free sand policy, without inconveniencing residents in nearby villages regarding sand from small rivers and streams.

Continued on Page 2

Houses to be handed over to poor by March 2025: Kolusu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister Kolusu Parthasarathy has announced that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has instructed the completion of houses under construction in housing colonies across Andhra Pradesh by the end of March 2025. These houses will then be handed over to the beneficiaries. The minister, accompanied by officials, inspected the layouts in the Perecherla Housing Colony, Guntur District, and interacted with beneficiaries to understand their concerns.

Minister Parthasarathy stated that out of a total of 18,000 houses, 11,000 are currently being constructed in the Perecherla Housing Colony.

He further revealed that the Chief Minister has called for a vig-



ilance inquiry into irregularities found in the construction process. Based on the findings of the inquiry, strict action will be taken against those responsible.

The minister assured that the government would provide full support to the builders and contractors to expedite the completion of the housing projects.

Tap connections to all households in 3 years: CM Says govt aims to ensure uninterrupted safe water for all families

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, on Thursday, said that the State government aims to provide uninterrupted safe drinking water to every household through tap connections within the next three years. He instructed officials to expedite progress towards this goal.

During a review meeting at the State Secretariat on rural water supply and the Jal Jeevan Mission, the Chief Minister criticised the previous YSRCP government for hindering the Jal Jeevan programme. He stated that the programme was launched by the NGA Government with the sole purpose of supplying safe drinking water to every household, but the YSRCP government failed to secure adequate funds for



Naidu criticises the previous YSRCP government for mismanaging the Jal Jeevan Mission, using only Rs 4,235

crore of the Rs 27,248 crore allocated by the Centre.

Over 28 lakh households still lack tap water connections.

CM instructs officials to plan for supplying water from nearby reservoirs and coordinate with the Irrigation Department.

A Detailed Project Report (DPR) to be prepared for the remaining 28 lakh households, with the use of SCADA technology to prevent water leakages.

Tenders for stalled projects to be cancelled, and Naidu plans to secure funds from the Centre to rectify the delays caused by the previous government.

its proper implementation. Of the Rs 27,248 crore allocated by the Centre, only Rs 4,235 crore was utilised by the YSRCP government, leaving over 28 lakh households without

water through tap connections. Naidu noted that states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Kerala have effectively utilised the Jal Jeevan Mission. However,

progress in Andhra Pradesh was stalled as the previous government did not release the required matching grant.

Continued on Page 2

Balineni Srinivasa Reddy to join Jana Sena

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Former minister Balineni Srinivasa Reddy, who resigned from the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) two days ago, has announced that he will soon be joining the Jana Sena Party (JSP).

Balineni Srinivasa Reddy met with Deputy Chief Minister and Jana Sena chief K. Pawan Kalyan at the party office in Mangalagiri on Thursday, where they discussed his forthcoming induction into the JSP.

Continued on Page 2



Naidu welcomes simultaneous polls

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday welcomed the Union Cabinet's recent decision to accept a high-level committee's recommendations for simultaneous polls. The Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi accepted the recommendations of the committee led by former President Ram Nath Kovind on simultaneous elections across the country.

Ex-MP Nandigam's remand extended

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The remand of former YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) MP Nandigam Suresh has been extended by a further 14 days, as per a court order. It may be recalled that he was arrested in connection with the attack on the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) central office in Mangalagiri.

As part of a recent two-day investigation, Suresh was taken into police custody, during which the police posed 45 questions to gather details

about the incident. While many questions remained unanswered, Suresh responded to four or five key inquiries that are crucial to the ongoing investigation.

The former Bapatla MP disclosed to the police that he had attended a press conference at the YSRCP central office after being informed to be present on that day. Police investigations have since confirmed that the attack on the TDP office in Mangalagiri was orchestrated from the YSRCP central office in Tadepalli.

Adani Group donates Rs 25 cr to AP CMRF

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Adani Group has extended its support to Andhra Pradesh, which has been severely affected by heavy rains and floods. The Adani Foundation has announced a contri-

bution of Rs 25 crore towards flood relief efforts.

Gautam Adani announced the social media platform 'X', stating that the group is committed to supporting the state in its time of need, following the extensive damage caused.



New channel for diversion of Budameru mooted

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Water Resources, Nimmala Ramanaidu, has instructed officials from the Irrigation and Revenue departments to explore the possibility of constructing a new channel from the Velagaleru Regulator to the Enikepadu UT via Pamulakalva and the GPS Canal. He noted that the existing Budameru Old Channel, which runs from the Velagaleru Regulator to the Enikepadu UT, currently flows through residential areas. An alternative channel, running parallel to the Budameru from the Velagaleru Regulator to the Enikepadu UT, via Pamulakalva and the Gollapudi Lift Irrigation Canal (GPS), should be developed, he emphasised. This would allow floodwaters to be diverted into the new channel, thereby alleviating flooding in the area.

He also pointed out that action is being taken against 3,051 encroachments along the Budameru Rivulet, primarily within the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) limits. Out of 202

acres from Vidyadharapuram to Gundala, 70 acres have been encroached, with houses constructed along the bund. The encroachments span 36.2 kilometres across several VMC wards, mostly for agricultural purposes, he added.

Minister Ramanaidu stated that under the direction of Chief Minister N

Chandrababu Naidu, multiple review meetings have been held over the past three days with officials from various departments to ensure Vijayawada becomes flood-free from the Budameru. He highlighted that the Budameru floods submerge low-lying areas of the city every year, causing significant damage to property and loss of life.



Irrigation officials explaining the proposed parallel channel to the Budameru within Vijayawada city to overcome the flood threat in Vijayawada, on Thursday.

The minister further stated that, following the receipt of a detailed report, the government will prepare an action plan to present to Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. Based on the CM's decision, 'Operation Budameru' will commence in Vijayawada. The Budameru flows from Velagaleru to Kolleru, passing through Vijayawada City, Vidyadharapuram, Kavuluru, Elaprolu, Pydurapadu, Gollapudi, Gunadala, Ramavarappadu, Prasadam Padu, and Enikepadu, covering approximately 13.25 kilometres, he said. However, much of this area has been encroached upon, he added. Additionally, Minister Ramanaidu stressed the need to increase the capacity of the Cheemalavagu, Enikepadu, and Kesarapalli UTs.

He also highlighted the importance of strengthening the Budameru embankment from Enikepadu to Kolleru, a stretch of around 50.60 kilometres.

VMC all set for Dasara festivities

Commissioner says drinking water, temporary toilets and cloakrooms will be arranged

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Commissioner Dhyanchandra has announced that arrangements are in the final phase for the Dasara Sarannavaratri festivities, scheduled to take place from October 3 to 12, at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri.

On Thursday, Dhyanchandra held a meeting with officials from various departments to discuss preparations for the Dasara festival. He instructed all heads of the departments to take an active part in the festivities.

He told the meeting that the VMC is taking all possible measures to ensure that the public faces no inconveniences during the festival. The arrangements include setting up adequate drinking



VMC Commissioner Dhyanchandra addressing a meeting with officials at his chamber on Thursday

water facilities, temporary toilets, cloakrooms, sanitation management, and patchwork on roads leading to the temple, he said. For the convenience of the

devotees attending the Dasara festival, 35 lakhs of drinking water bottles and packets, 150 temporary toilets, six cloakrooms, and a three-shift sanitation man-

agement team with 1,400 sanitation workers in 27 areas will be arranged. Additionally, he said a 24x7 control room will be set up, and patchwork will be done

on the path for circumambulation (Giri Pradakshina). As in previous years, conveyer belts for Bhavani devotees' red cloth and 18 tractors will also be arranged, he added.

Will ensure safety of Safai Mitra workers: Union Min

GVMC has procured 15 specialised vehicles, reducing the need for workers to enter drainage systems

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Dr Virendra Kumar, has reiterated the government's dedication to the welfare and safety of Safai Mitra workers during an event at MSF-3 in Lawson's Bay Colony. Speaking at the distribution of JCB vehicles and PPE kits to sanitation workers, Dr. Kumar emphasised the Narendra Modi government's efforts to protect and uplift this vital workforce. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to the welfare and health of Safai Mitra workers. These workers often put their lives at risk, and the government is working to eliminate this dangerous practice."

The event, held in collaboration with the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC), saw the provision of two JCB vehicles under the Swachhta Ujjwala Yojana scheme, funded by the National Safai Karamchari Finance and the



Development Corporation (NSKFCDC). GVMC Commissioner Dr. P. Sampath Kumar noted that GVMC has procured 15 specialised vehicles, significantly reducing the need for workers to enter dangerous drainage systems. "These vehicles generate rental income, directly supporting workers' families."

Dr. Kumar highlighted essential tools provided under the Namaste programme, enhancing safety and efficiency in sanitation work. He explained the significance of the Swachhta Hi Seva 2024 programme, describing it as a cornerstone of the Swachh

Bharat Mission. "The initiative revolves around three pillars: 'Swabhav Swachhta', 'Sanskars Swachhta', and 'Safai Mitra Suraksha Shibiram', he said, encouraging people's participation in keeping Visakhapatnam clean.

Both leaders praised efforts to modernise sanitation infrastructure while prioritising safety and dignity of the worker. Corporator Nollu Nookaratna, Zonal Commissioner-3 Sivaprasad, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Naresh Kumar, Supervising Engineer Krishnarao, and Assistant Medical Officer Krishnam Raju were present.

Governor inaugurates Divya Kala Mela

11-day celebration of creativity and craftsmanship



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Governor of Andhra Pradesh, S Abdul Nazeer, along with Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Dr Virendra Kumar, inaugurated the Divya Kala Mela on Thursday, marking the beginning of an 11-day celebration of creativity and craftsmanship. The event, held at the A.U. Marine Grounds, is organised by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) (DEPWD) in collaboration with the National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDFDC). Speaking at the inaugural

ceremony, the Governor emphasised that the Mela is more than just an exhibition; it is a testament to the resilience and talent of the Divyangjan community. "The Mela symbolises the empowerment of individuals who, despite challenges, continue to contribute significantly to our nation's social and economic fabric," he stated.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, through its DEPWD, has been working tirelessly to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their physical abilities, live a life of dignity and self-reliance. The NDFDC has also played a crucial role in empowering Divyangjan by providing financial assistance and creating platforms to promote their artistic and entrepreneurial skills.

Over 100 Divyangjan artisans from more than 20 States are participating in the Mela, showcasing a wide range of products, from traditional crafts to modern innovations. "This is not just a display of craftsmanship, but a celebration of India's diverse cultural heritage," said Dr Virendra Kumar.

Flood victims urged to avail of loan rescheduling facilities

Banks asked to sanction new loans following RBI guidelines



Additional Secretary (Finance) J Nivas and NTR District Collector Dr Srijana addressing a meeting of bankers and insurance companies at the Collectorate in Vijayawada on Thursday

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Additional Secretary (Finance) J Nivas and NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana have urged those affected by the recent floods in River Krishna and Budameru Rivulet to take advantage of the loan rescheduling facilities offered by banks. The victims have been asked to submit their loan applications at the bank branches as soon as possible to benefit from the rescheduled loans and moratorium.

Following the consent given by bankers, Nivas and Srijana convened a meeting with bankers and insurance companies at the collectorate in Vijayawada on Thursday to facilitate the process.

They asked the bankers to create confidence in the flood victims by providing its services under 179 secretariats in

Vijayawada and surrounding areas. As per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guidelines, bankers could facilitate loan rescheduling offering a one-year moratorium, they said. There are chances of sanctioning Rs. 50,000 to the people who are living on the ground floor, and Rs.25,000 to the first-floor residents, they added.

They added that for these loans, there will be a moratorium for three months and the repayment period is 36 months. Bankers can sanction new loans for developing small businesses, commercial organisations and others as investment support to meet their requirements. As per the natural calamities rules and regulations and following the RBI guidelines, bankers should support the flood victims.

Nivas and Srijana stated that the government officials are

supporting the flood victims and they asked the bankers to extend their services to them. Bankers are to implement the resolutions of the continued meetings of the District Coordination Committee (DCC) and the State Level Bankers Committee (SLBC), they explained.

They added that around 48,000 vehicles were damaged due to the floods, and auto-rickshaws and two-wheelers suffered more damage. The State government has already announced compensation for these vehicles and in addition, insurance companies could settle claims as early as possible, they added. Union Bank of India Regional Head M Sridhar, Lead Bank Manager (LDM) K Priyanka and other bank officials besides insurance companies' representatives were present.

Concern over delay in opening of VIMS' City Diagnostic Centre

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Despite its construction having been completed over a year ago, the City Diagnostic Centre at the Visakha Institute of Medical Sciences (VIMS) remains non-operational due to the ongoing equipment procurement. With funds of Rs 21 crore from the National Health Mission (NHM), this critical facility promises to revolutionise healthcare services for economically disadvantaged patients in North Andhra Pradesh.

"The construction is complete, but without the essential equipment, we cannot begin operations. The delay is frustrating, but we're hopeful it will be resolved soon," said a senior VIMS official. Part of a Central government initiative, this centre joins two others in Vijayawada and Tirupati, providing free diagnostic tests,



including CT scans, MRIs, and chronic disease tests. "This centre will be a game-changer for the people of North Andhra Pradesh, especially for poor patients. It will drastically reduce the need for long-distance travel and ease the financial burden on families," stated a senior Health official.

Local leaders are urged to expedite the centre's opening. "This facility is vital, and it's time local authorities prioritise

it. It could benefit thousands every day," added a healthcare advocate. Once operational, the centre will alleviate pressure on King George Hospital (KGH), currently the only facility offering free CT and MRI tests.

"KGH is overwhelmed with demand for tests. We perform around 1,500 blood tests, 50 CT scans, and 10 MRI tests daily, free of charge," said a KGH representative. The VIMS facility will significant-

ly increase testing capacity, handling up to 500 CT scans, 200 MRI scans, and 1,000 additional blood tests daily.

Alongside the diagnostic centre, a regional drug store is being constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 9 crore. Stocking medicines and injections for up to six months, it will serve North Andhra districts. "We plan to open both the City Diagnostic Centre and the drug store at the same time. This will streamline medical services and essential medicine distribution," noted an official overseeing the project.

Although the drug store's completion won't hasten the diagnostic centre's opening, officials remain hopeful. "The benefits are immense, and once opened, it will bring significant relief to the entire area," concluded a VIMS spokesperson.



Ramakrishna meets Revanth Reddy

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

CPI Andhra Pradesh secretary and former MLA K Ramakrishna, along with his party's Telangana State secretary and MLA Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao, met Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth

Reddy in Hyderabad on Thursday. Ramakrishna praised Revanth Reddy for his government's efforts in the flood relief operations. Later, the Left leaders held discussions with Revanth Reddy about the recent political developments in the country.

NTPC Simhadri launches gypsum production

Gypsum is generated from the flue gas of its power plants



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a landmark initiative aimed at minimising emissions and promoting environmental sustainability, NTPC Simhadri has launched the production of gypsum, a value-added by-product generated from the flue gas of its power plants. On Thursday, Sanjay Kumar Sinha, Chief General Manager (Simhadri), flagged off the first sale of gypsum on the plant premises.

This breakthrough stems from NTPC Simhadri's Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD) units, which are designed to curtail sulfur dioxide emissions, one of the leading pollutants emitted by coal-fired power plants. By converting these emissions into gypsum—a versatile material used in industries like cement and agriculture—NTPC Simhadri has successfully transformed a potential environmental threat into a valuable resource. Speaking at the launch, Sinha emphasised the initiative's environmental importance: "The commissioning

of our FGD units reflects NTPC Simhadri's unwavering commitment to reducing emissions and ensuring that our operations contribute positively to the environment. The production of gypsum not only supports industrial demand but also helps mitigate the impact of harmful emissions."

Reaffirming NTPC Simhadri's dedication to green energy, Sinha further noted, "We are committed to making our operations more eco-friendly, and the production of gypsum from FGD units is a significant step toward this goal. This initiative not only helps reduce our environmental impact, but also contributes to economic value." The production of gypsum from the plant's two FGD units has already garnered interest from several industries eager to utilise this by-product. The strong demand for gypsum underscores the increasing recognition of sustainable practices in the energy sector.

YSRCP's Appaji, Rajesh, Adilakshmi likely to join JSP on Sep 22

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Amidst the shifting political landscape in the State and NTR district, several YSRCP corporators from the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation are reportedly planning to switch allegiance to the Jana Sena Party (JSP), led by Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj & Rural Development K Pawan Kalyan. As a result, JSP will get its representatives in the VMC council, as the party had no representation so far.

As of now, YSRCP, TDP and CPM have corporators in the

VMC council. However, Corporator Bulla Vijay Kumar switched sides to BJP from YSRCP before the general elections. After NDA came to power, six corporators joined TDP from YSRCP.

As a result of the recent changes in politics in the State, many people's representatives have quit YSRCP and showed their interest in joining either TDP, BJP or JSP. Following the trend, YSRCP Corporators Mahadevu Appaji, Marupilla Rajesh and A Adilakshmi are likely to quit the party and join JSP on September 22.

On Thursday, former YSRCP



YSRCP Corporators holding discussions with JSP State secretary Ammisetti Vasu and former MLA Samineni Udayabhanu in Vijayawada on Thursday

MLA and former Government Whip Samineni Udayabhanu met JSP State secretary and Vijayawada constituency in-

charge Ammisetti Vasu at his office. Later, he held a crucial discussion with party chief Pawan Kalyan, after which Udaya Bhanu announced that he would join JSP on September 22.

During the discussions between Udayabhanu and Vasu, Mahadevu Appaji, Marupilla Rajesh, Adilakshmi's husband Pedababu, former Corporator Bahadur and others met these leaders. They expressed their consent to join JSP. With this development, JSP will get its representation in the VMC council.

According to sources, these corporators will join BJP along

with former MLA Samineni Udayabhanu in the presence of Pawan Kalyan. Also, many other VMC corporators are willing to join the party, the sources added.

Thota Srinivas quits YSRCP
Meanwhile, YSRCP State secretary and Kapu community leader Thota Srinivas tendered his resignation from the primary membership of the party. After conducting a meeting with his followers in Vijayawada, he said that he will join the Jana Sena Party (JSP) in the presence of Pawan Kalyan on September 22. Srinivas's resignation is a big setback to YSRCP.

'Four iconic tourist centres will be set up in AP'

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Reiterating the TDP-led coalition government's commitment to develop Andhra Pradesh as the best tourist destination, Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh has announced that four iconic tourist centres will be set up. Besides, eco-tourism will be developed at the famous hill shrine Srisailem.

Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, the Minister said that the Central government has come forward to allocate Rs 250 crore under the 'Scheme for Special Assistance to State for Capital Investment' to establish four iconic tourist centres in AP. Apart from the Central funds, the State government would allocate some more funds to establish the iconic tourist centres for Rs 400 crore," he revealed, adding that each iconic centre will be established at a cost of Rs 100 crore. He also announced that Araku Valley and Lambasingi which have earned fame as Andhra Ooty, would be developed as adventure tourism centres.

The Minister further said that Eco-tourism and Spiritual Tourism centres would be established in the hill shrine Srisailem in the Nandyal district. Nandyala district is an ideal place to establish a Tourism Circuit since the district has Tiger Reserve forest and, waterfalls, the Tourism Minister asserted. The second Iconic Tourist centre would be established in the name of 'Akhanda Godavari' in some areas in Kakinada, East Godavari, Konaseema, West Godavari and Eluru districts.



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The third iconic tourist centre would come up in Bapatla district at the Suryalanka beach and the fourth Tourism Iconic Tourism centre would be set up in the Sangameswaram area in Nandyal district. "The Detailed Project Report (DPT) will be sent to the Central government on the establishment of Iconic Tourist Centres in the state on October 15. As soon as the approval is received, the works will begin," the Minister mentioned.

Minister Durgesh explained that the famous hill shrine Annavaram would be developed at Rs 25.32 crore under the Pilgrimage Rejuvenation And Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD). A temple package connecting Shakti Peethas and Pancharamas would be taken up by the APTDC, he informed. It is proposed to construct resorts in Tirupati, Gandikota and Pichchukalanka and the Oberai group would take up the projects, he observed, stating that the Light and Sound show will be started in Chandragiri fort.

The Tourism Minister vowed to extend all help if anybody comes forward to construct film studios in AP. He pledged to renovate the tourism centres which were devastated by the recent floods. The Berm Park, located on an island in the river Krishna, suffered a loss of Rs 12 crore due to the heavy floods and the renovation works would begin soon. The Minister disclosed that the Ministry is contemplating on how to use the Rushikona buildings in Visakhapatnam.

"The World Tourism Day programme will be organized in Vijayawada on September 27 in which Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan will participate," he announced. Taking a dig at the Tourism Ministry in the erstwhile YSRCP regime, Kandula Durgesh alleged that the then Tourism Minister instead of focusing on the development of tourism in AP, indulged in accusing the Opposition parties.



Cycle rally taken out to create awareness of environment protection

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

A cycle rally was taken out here on Thursday to create awareness of environmental protection as part of the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' programme.

Bhimavaram MLA Pulaparti Ramanjaneyulu flagged off the cycle rally in which MLA Kanumuri Raghurama Krishnam Raju, Collector Chadalavada Nagarani and SP Adnaan Nayeem Ashmi participated.

The cycle rally began at Vishnu College main gate and reached BV Raju Circle.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Chadalavada Nagarani said that the cycle rally was undertaken to create a friendly environment adding that using a bicycle gives good health besides it reduces air pollution.

"A healthy society can be established with the cleanliness of the environment. If the

society is healthy, it will develop economically and health-wise. Everyone, especially the students, should ride bicycles, as it is very good to go on a bicycle for short distances," she exhorted the students.

The Collector revealed that people in some Western countries mostly travel by bicycle. It is improper to throw garbage on the roads and appeals to people to dump garbage in dustbins. SP Adnan Naeem Asmi exhorted

the students and youth to learn good habits from childhood so that they can create a healthy environment.

MLAs Pulaparti Ramanjaneyulu and K Raghurama Krishnam Raju also spoke. RWS Officer BV Nageswara Rao, Additional SP Bhima Rao, DSP G Jaisurya, Vishnu Collector Principal IR Srinivasa Raju were among those who were present.

Why was Bandi shunted out?

TPCC chief calls out BJP for removing him from state prez post

Slams BRS for reducing BCs reservation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that the BJP and BRS are 'ignoring' BCs, TPCC president B. Mahesh Kumar Goud asked the BJP to reveal why it removed Bandi Sanjay Kumar from the post of Telangana BJP President when he was working actively. Why did the BJP give only a Union Minister of State post instead of a Union Cabinet Minister post to Sanjay, he asked.



Addressing a felicitation meeting for him held at the Ravindra Bharati on Thursday, Mahesh asked BRS Working President KT Rama Rao to explain why the BRS reduced reservations for BCs from 42 per cent to 23 per cent in local body elections.

"Does the BRS have the guts to make a BC its president," he asked. Mahesh said the BRS entered into a secret pact with the BJP before elections. However, the Congress came to power with the support of BCs, he said.

"We have to keep castes aside because it will destroy the unity of BCs. There is a need for the unity of BCs. It is our fortune that we have a great leader like Rahul Gandhi. I will provide 60 per cent of the posts to SCs, STs and BCs in TPCC committees. The Congress will do justice to all sections while appointing the corporation chairman and conducting local body elections under the leadership of AICC chief Mallikarjuna Kharge,"

Mahesh said. The TPCC Chief said that BJP leaders are seeking votes in the name of gods and misleading the people.

"It is not good to fall into the quicksand of caste and religion. The people of Telangana have good relations with the people of AP although Andhra and Telangana got separated. However, the BJP and the BRS are trying to 'create hatred' and it is time to teach a lesson to the BRS and the BJP," Mahesh said.

Dealers allege widespread discrepancies in rice supply

Each 50-kg bag should contain an additional 580 g to account for weight of sack, which is frequently ignored

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Allegations of substantial discrepancies in rice supply from Civil Supplies Corporation (CSC) warehouses to dealers have sparked widespread outrage, with multiple dealers reporting consistent shortages and financial losses. "We've been facing this issue for months, and it's crippling our businesses," said a dealer from Onetown, who wished to remain anonymous. "I recently received a shipment that was 175 kg short. It's unacceptable."

According to regulations, each 50-kg bag should contain an additional 580 grams to account for the weight of the empty sack. However, dealers claim this adjustment is frequently ignored, with many receiving bags weighing only 47 to 49 kg. The issue appears to be widespread, affecting 642 ration depots in the district. Dealers report weight discrepancies ranging from 60 to 75 kg per 5-ton order, despite warnings from senior officials.

"We've been raising this issue for months, but there has been no action," said a dealer from the Marripalem area. "The in-charges haven't changed, and many of us believe it's because most of the dealers are benami." Dealers also allege illicit sale of rice, with some claiming that rice is being sold outside every month. "No one is doing anything about it," said a dealer who wished to remain anonymous.



Sand can be booked online from now onwards: DC

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K Vetri Selvi announced that people could book online sand from now onwards.

Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, the Collector said that the AP Sand Management System portal has been specially designed by the state government for the convenience of people to get free sand.

Collector Vetri Selvi said that the sand would be provided to the public completely free of cost, adding that only transportation, handling and nominal loading charges will have to be paid.

According to the orders issued by the State Government, the charges related to the transportation of sand have been fixed, she stated. Those who need sand should first log in AP Sand Management System portals.

"After logging into the www.sand.ap.gov.in portal, the details of the sand reach available to the users, the details of how much sand is required and after placing their order, the vehicle will be allocated to the users automatically," she explained.

Collector Vetri Selvi said: "Previously this was done at the sand reaches of Kukunoor but from Friday onwards, people can book and get sand from their homes or the nearest secretariat. In addition to this, the Eluru district administration has given full training to the relevant staff. Motorists transporting sand should first register their vehicle in the online portal."

So far 141 sand transporters have been registered in the district; she disclosed adding that at present 3 sand reaches are available in the district. Sand reserves of up to 29,000 metric tons are still available at Ibrahim pet sand reaching Kukunoor mandal and these reserves are expected to be sufficient for 29 days. If there are any problems in the supply of sand, consumers can call the toll-free number 1800 425 6025 or 08812 - 234014.

"On working days, orders will be allowed only from 12 noon to 5 pm on the sand portal. In the same way, sand can be ordered at the village and ward secretariats and sand booking orders will be taken from 10.30 am to 5.00 pm. Only online payments are accepted," the Collector made it clear.

Rs 6,585 cr for development of 384 km NH projects in AP: Min

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Minister for Road Transport and R&B, BC Janardhan Reddy, announced that Rs Rs 6,585 crore has been sanctioned for the development of 384 kilometres of national highways in Andhra Pradesh.

Speaking to the media at the Secretariat in Amaravati on Thursday, the Minister stated that the Centre had approved Rs 6,585 crore for the development of seven national highways in the state.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu had engaged in discussions with officials from the Prime Minister's Office and Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, which resulted in the Centre granting substantial funds for the seven highway projects.

"These seven projects, previously sanctioned for Andhra Pradesh, had been stalled due to various reasons. However, they have now been reapproved. I personally met with the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, along



with other relevant officials, which has led to this positive outcome," the Minister revealed. "The Standing Finance Committee has removed these seven projects from the BharatMala Scheme and included them in the National Highways Ordinary Programme (NHO), granting their approval. Thanks to the Centre's favourable response, another significant step has been taken towards the expansion of national highways in Andhra Pradesh," Transport Minister Janardhan Reddy acknowledged.

The seven approved projects

The 49.9 KM Kondamuru-Perecherla National Highway

The 62.5 KM Sangamesaram-Nallakaluvu and Velugodu-Nandyal National Highway

The 62 KM Nandyal-Kurnool and Kadapa Border Section National Highway

The 78.95 KM Bepalli-Chalappari Section National Highway

The 33.58 KM Gorantla-Hindupur National Highway

The 56.5 KM Muddanur-B Kottapalli National Highway

The 40.55 KM Pendurthi-Bavdara National Highway

The Transport Minister further stated that under the CRIF scheme, the Central Government typically allocates Rs 350 crore annually to the state. Following Andhra Pradesh's request, the Centre has agreed to increase this amount to Rs500 crore. Additionally, the Centre has responded favourably to the proposal to upgrade 31 roads, currently managed by the Roads & Buildings Department, to national highways.

AP investors call for measures to improve CoDB

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

With Andhra Pradesh ranking second in the Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) rankings, investors are now advocating for a series of reforms aimed at reducing the Cost of Doing Business (CoDB) to further enhance the State's investment climate.



O Naresh Kumar, Vice-President of the Vizag Development Forum and CEO of Symbiosys Technologies, highlighted the need for immediate measures to reduce operational costs. "We have a 974-km-long coastline and attract significant investments in multiple sectors as part of port-led development. Hence, the new government led by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu must focus on improving the CoDB," Kumar told The Pioneer.

CoDB," Kumar told The Pioneer.

"Entrepreneurs in the State," Kumar said, "are concerned over several factors contributing to higher business costs. There has been a ninth-time increase in power tariffs in the past five years, and high costs of liquor, fuel, and land are additional burdens. The revision of property taxes linked to the

market value of properties is another issue that needs addressing. If these concerns are managed effectively, Andhra Pradesh will become even more attractive to investors."

Grandhi Rajesh, Chairman of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Visakhapatnam Zone, echoed similar sentiments, lauding the State's efforts to improve EoDB but calling for

stronger infrastructure. "The State has made tremendous efforts, gaining national recognition for its proactive policy initiatives. However, improving connectivity and addressing infrastructure gaps are critical to accelerating the investor attraction process," Rajesh said.

Andhra Pradesh's success in improving EoDB has drawn national attention. The State

recently moved from 10th to third place in providing access to health, social security, and legal assistance, according to the Access to Equality Index-2024, released by the Centre for New Economic Studies.

Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, praised Andhra Pradesh's performance in a recent conclave, recognising it as one of the top performers in the Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP). "States like Andhra Pradesh have shown remarkable reforms in streamlining processes and providing efficient services to businesses and citizens alike," Goyal said. He also highlighted the importance of a genuine single-window system to simplify the approval and compliance processes.

Yesteryear comedian Relangi's statue unveiled

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

The statue of yesteryear comedian Relangi Venkatramaiah was unveiled by Minister for Tourism Kandula Durgesh and MP Daggubati Purandeswari at Goutami Park on the embankment of the river Godavari here on Thursday.

The statue of Relangi was installed by the Settibalija Welfare Association. Speaking on the occasion, Tourism

Minister Kandula Durgesh recalled the late comedian Telangi Venkatramaiah and how he had become a great comedian in Telugu films. "Relangi Venkatramaiah was the first Telugu cinema comedian to receive the Padmashri award," he highlighted.

He called upon people to admire the yesteryear actors NTR, ANR, Relangi, SV Ranga Rao and Suryakantham, irrespective of which caste they belonged

to. MP Purandeswari recalled her father NT Rama Rao's association with Relangi Venkatramaiah in those days.

MLA Adreddy Srinivas expressed happiness for unveiling the statue of Relangi on the bank of river Godavari. MLA Battula Balaramakrishna, and Gowda-Balija association president Reddyraju were among those who were present. The scripture of the statue Rajkumar was felicitated on the occasion.



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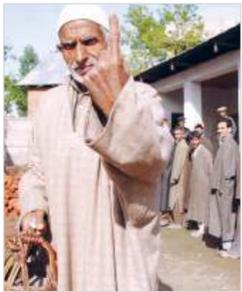
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PAPER WITH PASSION

India wins in J and K

The large turnout and peaceful voting in phase I of the elections marks a significant victory for the nation

The first phase of polling in Jammu and Kashmir, held on September 18 was not only peaceful but also a thumbs up for democracy as 58 per cent voters cast their vote. Approximately 23.27 lakh voters, including 5.66 lakh youths, were eligible to cast their votes to determine the fate of 219 candidates in Phase 1. Though two more phases are left but morning shows the day. Widespread apprehensions arose following a series of attacks in Jammu, raising serious concerns about the high likelihood of disruption. The successful democratic exercise in itself is a victory for the country. Indeed, it marks a crucial moment in the political landscape of the region. For the first time since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, the Union Territory is witnessing elections that hold significant weight for both the state and the country at large. This election is not merely a democratic exercise; it is a test of the stability, governance, and the long-term vision for integrating the region more firmly with the rest of India. The elections are being



closely watched, particularly after the transition of Jammu and Kashmir from a state to a Union Territory. For the people of the region, the act of voting is more than just a participation in democracy. The return of democratic process after years of instability, militancy and unrest is expected to reassure the local population that their voices matter in shaping their future. The turnout, especially in rural areas, is a clear indication that people feel secure enough to participate in democratic process.

The election campaign has brought a range of issues to the forefront, which will determine how the political winds blow in the region. Development, unemployment, and security are the most pressing concerns, with local leaders attempting to address the economic stagnation that has plagued Jammu and Kashmir for years. Tourism, once the backbone of the state's economy, has taken a severe hit, and while efforts have been made to revitalise the sector, it remains a sensitive issue in the polls. At the same time, political parties have taken contrasting stances on the abrogation of Article 370. While some align with the central government's move, touting it as a path to progress, others continue to advocate for the restoration of special status. This dichotomy underscores the ongoing divide between different regions of Jammu and Kashmir, which will likely influence the outcome of the elections. A high voter turnout and peaceful elections emboldens the government's stance on its Kashmir policy, reinforcing the narrative that the decision to revoke Article 370 was justified and has led to positive outcomes for the region. For opposition parties, the elections offer an opportunity to challenge the ruling government's narrative and build alliances with local players. As the first phase of polling concludes, Jammu and Kashmir stands at a crossroads. The region's political future hinges on how the rest of the election unfolds and what messages the electorate sends through their vote.

PICTALK



Pilgrims arrive at the Shri Badrinath Dham in Chamoli district

Modi@74: A journey of triumphs and challenges



K S TOMAR

Narendra Modi, a man who rose through the ranks, from RSS worker to become a global leader, has undergone a remarkable transformation

As Narendra Modi turns 74, the Prime Minister of India stands at a pivotal point in his political career. Having transformed from a grassroots worker in the RSS to a global leader, Modi's leadership has been marked by several triumphs, while also weathering significant criticism. A closer look at his governance reveals a complex blend of successes and shortcomings, reflecting his unique vision for India and the challenges of implementing sweeping reforms in a diverse, evolving democracy. Successes: Economic Reforms: Modi's tenure has been defined by key economic reforms aimed at spurring growth and investment. The implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2017 stands as one of India's most transformative reforms, simplifying the tax system and promoting ease of business.

Another flagship initiative is the "Make in India" program, which sought to position India as a manufacturing hub, attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) in sectors such as defence, electronics, and pharmaceuticals.

Digital India: Modi's push for a digital revolution has reshaped India's financial and technological landscape. The Digital India campaign significantly expanded internet connectivity, especially in rural areas. Innovations like the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) have revolutionized digital transactions, while the Aadhaar system has streamlined welfare distribution, reducing inefficiencies in benefit transfers.

Foreign Policy: On the global stage, Modi has strengthened India's relationships with key nations like the U.S., Japan, and Israel. Under his leadership, India has played a more prominent role in global forums such as G20 and BRICS. A major achievement has been the International Solar Alliance (ISA), promoting global cooperation on renewable energy and showcasing India's leadership in sustainable development.

Nationalism and Identity Politics: Modi has adeptly tapped into nationalist sentiments, reinforcing the Bharatiya Janata Party



(BJP) as a champion of Hindu pride and Indian sovereignty. His government's initiatives, such as the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, reflect a blend of cultural and political assertiveness, though the latter move drew international criticism.

Infrastructure Development: Under Modi's leadership, infrastructure has seen significant growth. Projects like Bharatmala and Sagarmala have expanded transportation networks, while initiatives like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and Ujjwala Yojana have improved housing and provided cooking gas to millions of households.

Challenges Before Modi: As Narendra Modi enters the later stages of his political journey, he faces a series of challenges that will shape his legacy and influence India's future. While his tenure has seen significant achievements, Modi's leadership must now address pressing concerns across various sectors that demand urgent attention and innovative solutions.

Economic Recovery and Job Creation: India's economic recovery post-COVID-19 remains fragile. Despite some growth, inflation continues to be a persistent challenge, driven by rising global oil prices and domestic supply chain disruptions. For the average citizen, higher living costs are



ON THE GLOBAL STAGE, MODI HAS STRENGTHENED INDIA'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH KEY NATIONS LIKE THE US, JAPAN, AND ISRAEL. UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP, INDIA HAS PLAYED A MORE PROMINENT ROLE IN GLOBAL FORUMS SUCH AS G20 AND BRICS

squeezing household budgets, particularly for the poor and middle class. Modi's government must balance inflation control with promoting sustained economic growth. The issue of unemployment, especially among the youth, looms large. Urban and rural areas continue to experience high joblessness, and despite various reforms, the informal sector, which provides most jobs, is still recovering from the effects of demonetization, the Goods and Services Tax (GST), and the pandemic. Modi will need to focus on bolstering labour-intensive industries, strengthening small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and encouraging entrepreneurship.

Agriculture and Farmers' Discontent: Even after repealing the controversial farm laws following large-scale protests, rural distress persists. Indian farmers continue to face challenges such as low productivity, insufficient infrastructure, and limited access to credit. To address these problems, Modi will need to prioritize rural development and improve agricultural infrastructure. However, he must tread cautiously with new reforms to avoid reigniting protests. Farmers will require sustained support through initiatives like improving Minimum Support Prices (MSP) and introducing technological innovations to

enhance productivity. **India-China Relations and Regional Security:** India's strained relations with China, particularly after the 2020 Galwan Valley clashes, remain a significant foreign policy challenge. The border standoff continues, and while diplomatic negotiations have curbed escalation, the potential for conflict still exists. Managing the delicate balance between regional security and diplomatic efforts with China is critical. Despite these successes, Modi's tenure has not been without shortcomings. The "Make in India" initiative has struggled to create enough manufacturing jobs, and his government's 2016 demonetization policy disrupted the informal economy without yielding long-term benefits. Modi also faced one of the largest protests in Indian history over controversial farm laws, which he ultimately had to repeal. Additionally, his leadership has been criticized for deepening communal divisions, with incidents of religious violence and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) sparking social tensions. As Modi continues to lead, his legacy will depend on balancing development with social harmony and democratic governance.

(The writer is a strategic affairs columnist and political analyst; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ONE NATION ONE POLL

Madam — The Cabinet nod for 'One nation - One election' (19-9-24) displays the misplaced priority of the Union government. Except the cost factor there is no other point worth considering to support the decision of the Cabinet. Election is an opportunity for the people to demonstrate their democratic sanction or resentment over the policies and programmes of a government. People exercising this right to ventilate their agreement or disagreement over the governments in the Center or the States should not be curtailed just to avoid expense. The expectations of the people being state specific in assembly elections and nation specific in the Parliament elections there is possibility of either of them getting swayed by the general mood. Possibility of holding elections in a massive way is not practically feasible. We are seeing the inability of the Election Commission to hold elections to a few States at one stroke. The Commission is not able to hold elections to Maharashtra Assembly along with elections in J&K and HP. Even elections to the state assembly are held in multiple slots. We have also seen the Commission rendered helpless to deal properly with the violations reported during the last General elections. The very idea of mandating holding elections to assemblies along with election to the Parliament is against the very Federal structure of the constitution. Proposal to hold elections to local bodies in 100 days after the General elections is also expensive and it is aimed at swaying the polls taking advantage of the outcome of national level elections. The arbitrary decision is undemocratic, anti-federal and strangulates the right of the people to decide their choice on local, state and nation specific needs and demands. Above all, the move of government is, as usual, to divert the attention of the people from the basic and burning issues of the nation in many of which the performance of the government is definitely not upto the mark.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

Hundred days of achievements



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first 100 days of his third term have demonstrated a clear focus on development and global leadership. The government's investments of ₹3 lakh crore in infrastructure projects like roads, railways, and ports are vital steps toward boosting the economy and creating jobs. Raising capital expenditure to ₹11.11 lakh crore reflects

a strong commitment to job creation and overall economic growth. Efforts in agriculture, such as the ₹20,000 crore allocation to farmers and increased MSP, along with the recognition of 1 crore 'Lakshpati Didis,' are praiseworthy. Foreign policy initiatives, including Modi's engagement with nations like the U.S., Russia, and China, indicate a proactive approach in shaping India's global standing. These accomplishments set a positive tone for the future, even as challenges like inflation and political tensions remain.

In his first 100 days of a third term, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has focused on development and global leadership, with significant investments in infrastructure, agriculture, and foreign relations. While progress is evident, challenges like inflation and political tensions continue to test his government's future agenda.

Vishesh Shukla | Lucknow

WORLD BAMBOO DAY

Madam—Bamboo is one of the largest members of the grass family and is the fastest growing woody plant on the planet. Its growth rate varies according to the soil and climate, and is best known as a major food source for pandas. Bamboo is also used for culinary and medicinal purposes in many parts of the world, as well for construction materials, furniture, textiles, musical instruments, bicycles, clothing and more. As a packaging material, bamboo is strong, durable and sustainable. It is one of the more remarkable natural materials available to us. The Economist recently quoted that bamboo is literally, the green equivalent of plastics. This is because it is renewable and low-carbon. It also said bamboo is now part and parcel of our packaging material. Furthermore, bamboo produces up to 35% more oxygen than trees, thus helping to offset carbon-dioxide emissions. It's easy to see why bamboo is a favorite when it comes to sustainable materials.

C.K. Subramani Iyer | Coimbatore

CONGRESS PROMISING THE MOON

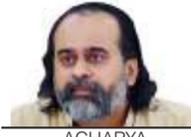
Madam — The Congress election manifesto in Haryana is a bundle of high cost freebies not at all feasible financially for the State to implement. While the political parties must examine the impact of their pre-poll announcements over the health of the State exchequer and present the detailed outline of available revenue which would bear the brunt of the freebies. The poll regulator Election Commission of India should also draft strict rules for manifestos and promises which are not viable.

The cult of freebies must stop if we really wish to progress morally, economically and socially and if Election Commission fails, the Supreme Court of India must take cognizance of the matter and direct the Election Commission to stop this nonsense. The freebies can become a real liability for the exchequer.

Jai Prakash Gupta | Ambala

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Kolkata's protests and the culture of rape: A call for societal change



ACHARYA PRASHANT

The tragic incident at RG Kar Medical College, Kolkata underscores the urgent need for a profound societal shift in attitudes toward women

The recent public outcry in Kolkata, sparked by the tragic incident at RG Kar Medical College, has transformed into a significant and sustained protest. Junior doctors gathering in front of the Health Department, alongside widespread public engagement, underscores a profound frustration with the pervasive violence against women in India. Reflecting on the August 9 incident, it's evident that the protest is not merely about the individual responsible. Despite the apprehension of the perpetrator, the continuing movement raises crucial questions about why such intense outrage persists.



The root problem, as I see it, lies in the cultural context that enables such violence. It's not just about one person's actions but about a broader cultural environment. The protests highlight a growing recognition that the issue is embedded within a culture that normalizes and perpetuates violence against women. The Kolkata demonstrations have brought to light a critical aspect of this cultural problem: the normalization of rape and the way women are

mentally change societal norms and practices that contribute to a pervasive culture of violence and exploitation. As long as these cultural attitudes persist, incidents of rape will continue. The troubling normalization of sexual violence in Indian society is evident in various ways. For instance, the fact that the name of the doctor murdered and raped in Bengal was trending on porn websites for an extended period reflects a serious cultural issue. It shows how sexual violence is often sensationalized and dehumanized rather than addressed with the seriousness it deserves.

This critique extends to societal behaviors and attitudes, illustrated by the public reaction to the Ujjain incident. The fact that such a violent act occurred in a busy area, with onlookers observing and recording it, underscores the disturbing normalization of sexual violence. Such incidents are met with alarming indifference. Examining the cultural foundations of this issue reveals how cultural norms perpetuate gender inequality and violence. There are many

subtle signs of rape culture that are often overlooked, such as the objectification of women and the normalization of harmful attitudes and practices. Addressing this issue requires a profound cultural transformation. It's not just about legal measures or punishing offenders; it's about transforming the norms and values instilled from a young age. Culture is nurtured in our homes, and changing how we educate and raise our children is crucial to addressing rape culture.

In conclusion, the protests in Kolkata and similar movements across India are not just reactions to individual cases of violence but a critical response to a deep-seated cultural issue that normalizes and perpetuates sexual violence. This situation underscores the urgent need for a fundamental cultural shift. Until we address the broader culture of rape, incidents of sexual violence will continue to plague our society.

(Acharya Prashant is a Vedanta teacher and an advocate of women rights; views expressed are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

APPLY SPORTS ETHICS IN THE WORKPLACE

The lessons learned through sports cultivate a healthier and productive work environment



SAKSHI SETHI

Sports have since long been a crucial element of human culture, teaching participants important life skills and values. The discipline, teamwork and perseverance developed in sports can easily be translated into a professional setting, where these qualities often lead to success. Applying sports values to the workplace creates a healthier and more productive environment that benefits individuals and teams alike.

The term 'resilience' is one of the core values in sports, where athletes regularly face challenges, setbacks and failures. Whether it's losing a game, dealing with injuries or facing tough competition, athletes learn to recover, adapt and continue working toward their goals. The similar value is crucial in the workplace, where employees encounter stress, failed projects and unexpected obstacles. Resilience helps employees bounce back from difficulties and maintain a positive attitude despite setbacks. It encourages them to see failure as an opportunity for growth rather than a reason to give up.

There is no denying the fact that athletes exhibit tremendous commitment and passion for their sport, dedicating hours of practice, maintaining a strong mental focus and striving to overcome challenges. At the workplace, too, similar commitment is essential for both personal as well as organizational success. Employees who are passionate about their work are more engaged, motivated and willing to go the extra mile. Just as athletes work toward improving their performance, committed employees consistently seek opportunities to learn, grow and contribute to their team.

When talked about the Paralympics, these athletes provide a powerful



source of inspiration when it comes to work ethics. They demonstrate exceptional dedication, resilience and perseverance—qualities that can directly inspire and shape one's approach to professional life. The lessons learned from their incredible journeys highlight the importance of maintaining a strong work ethic, overcoming adversity and striving for excellence in any field. Passion fuels innovation and creativity, leading to breakthroughs and a sense of fulfillment in one's job encouraging professionals to remain committed to their goals even when facing challenges at the workplace. It teaches us that obstacles, whether personal or professional, can be overcome with time, effort and persistence.

The values learned through sports are not only essential for athletic success but also for professional growth and productivity in the workplace. By embracing these values, individuals and teams can foster a work culture that promotes collaboration, perseverance and a drive for excellence. Recognizing progress, no matter how small reinforces one's belief that effort pays off and celebrating these victories along the way keeps the individual motivated and energized to continue. Instead of shying away from difficulties, one must see them as opportunities to learn and grow. When an individual approaches obstacles with the belief that effort leads to improvement, they build resilience and perseverance.

As stated above, undoubtedly, Paralympians have to cope with significant adversity, whether it's learning to use a prosthetic limb or recovering from a life-altering injury. In the workplace, this means that failures, mistakes or even unexpected challenges are not the end but an opportunity to bounce back stronger. In the workplace, adopting a mindset that welcomes challenges rather than avoiding them is a key part of developing a strong work ethic. It pushes professionals to take on difficult tasks, expand their capabilities and evolve in their careers. Sports values do provide excellent lessons that can be transferred to the workplace, promoting personal growth, team cohesion and overall success.

(The writer is an educator; views expressed are personal)

Sri Lanka's pivotal presidential election

With traditional parties in decline and new alliances emerging, this election may spring surprises. The outcome will determine Sri Lanka's capacity to address its urgent challenges



NILANTHA LANGAMUWA

Sri Lanka faces a pivotal moment in its political history as it prepares for the presidential election this Saturday, 21 September. This election, the ninth for the executive presidency, unfolds amid severe political polarisation, sharply contrasting with the last election in November 2019. The decline of traditional political parties and the rise of various political alliances are prominent features of this election, with three main candidates competing in a manner distinct from the two-horse races of previous presidential contests. The fragmentation of political parties, the absence of anti-defection laws, and the formation of new alliances driven more by personal interests than by cohesive agendas pose significant risks to democratic stability and governance. The 2019 presidential race featured two main candidates and a notable but relatively minor third-party candidate. It saw a record voter registration of 15,992,096 and a turnout of 83.72% (13,387,951), surpassing previous highs of 81.52% in 2015 and 81.06% in 1982. Despite this high turnout, 135,452 votes were invalid, leaving 13,252,499 votes as valid. Gotabaya Rajapaksa of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna won with 52.25% of the valid votes (6,924,255), while his main opponent, Sajith Premadasa of the National Democratic Front, received 41.99% (5,564,239). Anura Kumara Dissanayake of the National People's Power secured a mere 3.16% (418,553 votes). In the subsequent general election on 5 August 2020, Premadasa and Dissanayake faced off again for parliamentary seats. Premadasa won 305,744 votes, while Dissanayake received 49,814 votes.

In the 2015 parliamentary elections, Premadasa garnered 112,645 votes from Hambantota, whereas Dissanayake, contesting from Colombo, secured 65,966 votes. Ranil Wickremesinghe, one of main three main contenders, in this year's race but absent from the 2019 presidential election, leads the United National Party. His party received 249,435 votes (2.25%) in the general elections, including 30,875 from Colombo and 28,282 from Gampaha. Although his party did not win a parliamentary seat, Wickremesinghe was appointed to a national list position. Amid severe social upheaval caused by economic mismanagement, which resulted in the resignation of both the President and Prime Minister, Wickremesinghe, a seasoned politician and six-time Prime Minister, capitalised on the moment to make his comeback. After Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa was forced to resign, Wickremesinghe was appointed as Prime Minister.

However, protests demanding the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa led to his dramatic escape, first to Trincomalee by navy ship, then back to Colombo by air force chopper, and finally to the Maldives by air force cargo flight. Rajapaksa officially resigned on 14 July 2022. Subsequently, Prime Minister Wickremesinghe was appointed as President by the constitutional process. Wickremesinghe's appointment highlights the complexities of Sri Lanka's political system.

According to the constitution, the President must appoint a Prime Minister who commands the majority's confidence in Parliament, illustrating the considerable unchecked powers inherent in the executive role. Rajapaksa's assumption that Wickremesinghe, who came to Parliament through the national list, was the candidate who earned the majority's confidence reflects the intricate dynamics of Sri Lankan



THE FRAGMENTATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES, THE ABSENCE OF ANTI-DEFECTION LAWS, AND THE FORMATION OF NEW ALLIANCES DRIVEN MORE BY PERSONAL INTERESTS THAN BY COHESIVE AGENDAS POSE SIGNIFICANT RISKS TO DEMOCRATIC STABILITY AND GOVERNANCE

politics. However, Wickremesinghe has effectively stabilised the situation after the social upheaval. In this context, Wickremesinghe has emerged as a major candidate, yet the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna has nominated its candidate, Namal Rajapaksa.

Reports suggest that Rajapaksa's ambitions to secure the prime ministership were opposed, leading a faction of his party to break away from Wickremesinghe. Rajapaksa's candidacy appears more focused on maintaining his family's political lineage rather than presenting a genuine bid for leadership. Nonetheless, his endorsement of supporting Sajith Premadasa, where he appeals to supporters to cast their second vote for Premadasa, could be a decisive factor in the election outcome. Meanwhile, the NPP, initially opposed to the public uprising that led to Rajapaksa's removal, has become a significant political entity.

Anura Kumara Dissanayake, who ironically led his political party into alliances with traditional parties to secure ministerial positions over the past few decades, has skillfully capitalised on widespread dissatisfaction with corruption and the growing anger towards conventional politicians to bolster his standing. His alliance's emotionally charged propaganda has infiltrated every corner of society, despite its lack of deep ideological substance. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), his original party, has and anticipated this discontent to challenge the status quo.

However, Dissanayake's path to victory remains uncertain, especially with three major candidates in the race. Voter statistics reveal additional obstacles: with 17.1 million registered voters and an anticipated 80% turnout (13.7 million), a candidate would need approxi-

mately 7 million votes to secure the presidency in the first count.

The NPP's past performance shows limited success, receiving 418,553 votes (3.16%) in 2019 and 445,950 votes (3.84%) in parliamentary elections in 2020. The party faces challenges in Tamil-majority districts like Nuwara-Eliya, Jaffna, Wannai, Batticaloa, and Trincomalee, and in areas with lower voter counts, such as Polonnaruwa and Matale. To succeed, the NPP must secure substantial votes from Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Kandy, and Kurunegala, requiring an estimated 700,000 to 800,000 additional votes.

Given these dynamics and the competition among three candidates, the NPP or JVP may struggle to achieve significant success in this election. However, the election remains crucial in determining the country's social and governance structure. Conversely, Sajith Premadasa appears to have significant potential to garner a majority of the votes, while Wickremesinghe has also gained substantial ground. Therefore, it is unlikely that any candidate will secure over 50% of the vote in the first round of counting, which may necessitate counting the second votes.

This uncertainty could trigger a new wave of political instability if major alliances and key candidates fail to manage the results effectively and refuse to accept the people's verdict. Despite flashy manifestos and hefty campaign budgets, none of the candidates have provided a clear plan to tackle the staggering \$100 billion national debt. They all parrot the same old IMF rhetoric, yet almost none offer a concrete strategy beyond this worn-out solution.

The situation in the island nation is dire, and there's no straightfor-

ward path for the incoming leader to steer the country out of its deepening crisis. As of 1 July 2024, about 24.8% of Sri Lanka's population lives in poverty, with rates varying dramatically between districts—3.5% in Colombo versus 44.2% in Nuwara-Eliya.

Poverty in rural areas has surged from 15% to 32%, while urban poverty has tripled from 6% to 18%. A recent survey revealed that 31% of the population is impoverished, with 33% skipping meals and 47% cutting back on meal sizes. Malnutrition affects nearly one-third of children under five, and over 40% of women aged 18-60 are overweight or obese, reflecting severe economic and health issues. Regardless of the election's outcome, Sri Lanka's entrenched political divisions threaten to entrench a fragmented legislative body, where effective governance and decisive action may become increasingly elusive.

Such divisions risk entrenching a cycle of delays and inefficiencies, potentially leading to a state of perpetual gridlock that hampers national progress. Antonio Gramsci's notion of passive revolution becomes pertinent here, warning of significant changes that merely preserve existing power structures. Hannah Arendt's insight that "The most radical revolutionary will become a conservative the day after the revolution" cautions against decisions driven by emotion over reason. Thus, the question looms: can this election transcend emotional politics to instigate genuine reform, or will it simply entrench the status quo? Regrettably, the candidates' manifestos seem to hint at the latter.

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

Chronicles of compliance: The missing case diaries in money laundering probes

Money laundering poses a significant threat to society, undermines democratic institutions, and fosters criminal activities and corruption

The international community established the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to combat money laundering and terrorist financing through international standards. The FATF's 40 Recommendations provide a comprehensive framework for countries to prevent and address these financial crimes. India enacted the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in 2002, effective from July 1, 2005, in alignment with its international obligations. The PMLA aims to combat the laundering of illicit funds, including those from activities such as drug trafficking, thereby safeguarding the country's financial integrity. **The Role and Importance of the Case Diary:** The case diary, as mandated under sec-



PRAKHAR BAJPAI

tion 172 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), maintains a chronological record of the investigation process conducted by the police officer. This detailed documentation includes every step taken during the investigation, such as the date and time of receiving information about the crime, the start and finish times of the investigation, locations visited, witness statements recorded, and evi-

dence collected. This comprehensive record ensures continuity and transparency in the investigation, serving as a crucial handover document when different officers handle the case at various stages. The case diary is essential for maintaining continuity and transparency in the investigation process, offering a comprehensive overview of progress to courts and defence lawyers. This transparency is indispensable for maintaining procedural integrity and accountability in the investigative process.

Concerns Regarding the Absence of a Case Diary under PMLA: In contrast, the PMLA mandates thorough investigations into money laundering but does not specify the need for a

detailed case diary as in the CrPC. This absence raises concerns about potential misuse by the Enforcement Directorate. Without a mandated case diary, there is no obligation for investigators to maintain a comprehensive, chronological record of their actions. This lack of documentation could reduce accountability and allow for the manipulation or selective presentation of evidence without a transparent trail of how and when it was obtained, compromising the investigation's integrity.

This can lead to biased or unjust conclusions, undermining the integrity of the investigation and in cases where multiple officers are involved in different stages of the investigation, the absence



of a detailed case diary can result in inconsistent handovers. Critical information might be lost or altered, impacting the continuity and coherence of the investigation. This ultimately leads to violations of individual rights and compromise on due process of law.

Case Diary Maintenance: It is important to understand that the accused under CrPC does not have an automatic right to

view the case diary. Access to the case diary is at the discretion of the Court or the police officer. However, the significance of maintaining a case diary as noted above lies in its ability to keep investigating agencies diligent and accountable throughout the investigation process.

Furthermore, under the criminal law procedure, it is considered a dereliction of duty if the Magistrate does not request and review the case diary before authorizing any form of custody to the accused which means the perusal of the case diary by the magistrate is essential before any remand, whether judicial or police custody and haphazard maintenance of a case diary discredits those responsible and defeats the very purpose for

which it is required. Therefore, it is suggested that similar practice needs to be followed under the PMLA cases as well. Mandating ED to maintain a case diary ensures that it adheres to the due process of law during investigations and thereafter, the court will become entitled to use the case diary during trials or inquiries as an aid in the inquiry or trial, thereby holding the ED accountable for its investigative procedures, doing this the magistrate will be getting aid and true picture of the detailed record of the investigation proceedings conducted by ED till date in a narrative form, recorded promptly, with sufficient detail, and in chronological order and thus, will be able to objectively decide whether to remand the

accused or not. The Supreme Court is set to review 2 aspects of PMLA in July 2024, firstly, the FIR which is akin to ECIR under PMLA should be supplied to the accused or not. Secondly, the reversal of the presumption of innocence. It is to be noted that giving a case diary a statutory requirement under PMLA and thereby, mandating the ED to maintain one will be crucial in shaping the final judgement, which could fundamentally impact the legal framework for money laundering investigations in India. A ruling in favour of maintaining a case diary would enhance the fairness and transparency of PMLA proceedings, ensuring the accused's right to a fair trial. *(The writer is a law student; views expressed are personal)*

IN BRIEF



Gold up Rs 100; silver jumps Rs 500 after Fed rate cut

Gold prices rose by Rs 100 to Rs 75,650 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday due to increased demand from local jewellers and strong global cues after the US Federal Reserve cut interest rate. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 75,550 per 10 grams on Wednesday. Silver prices rose for the sixth straight session, climbing by Rs 500 to touch Rs 91,000 per kg on Thursday, according to All India Sarafa Association. It had closed at Rs 90,500 per kg in the previous session. In the six trading sessions, silver prices have zoomed by Rs 7,200 per kg. Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity increased by Rs 100 to Rs 75,300 per 10 grams on Thursday. Traders attributed the rise in yellow metal prices to a pick-up in demand by local jewellers and retailers in the domestic markets.



Infosys to invest up to Rs 17 cr in space tech startup GalaxEye

T firm Infosys on Thursday said it will invest up to Rs 17 crore in space tech startup GalaxEye Space Solutions as part of Infosys Innovation Fund. The investment will be made in equity and series A compulsory convertible preference shares allotment, a regulatory filing said. "Infosys Ltd has agreed to invest in SpaceTech startup, GalaxEye up to INR 17 Crores (approximately \$ 2 million) as part of Infosys Innovation Fund," it said. The all-cash deal is expected to be completed on or before September 30, 2024. Infosys will undertake a "minority holding" in GalaxEye, not more than 20 per cent of the outstanding share capital of the company, the filing said. Incubated at IIT Madras and based out of Bengaluru, GalaxEye is building multi-sensor satellites and synchronisation platform, which generates comprehensive all-weather, high-resolution and intuitive datasets. The technology and the datasets potentially benefit various industries such as defence, insurance, logistics, utilities, infrastructure, agriculture, disaster management, and mining.



Govt okays sale of FSNL to Japan's Konoike Transport Co

The government on Thursday approved the privatisation of Ferro Scrap Nigam Ltd (FSNL) to Japanese corporation Konoike Transport Co Ltd for Rs 320 crore. Under the Steel Ministry, FSNL is a 100 per cent subsidiary of MSTC Ltd. The government had received two technically qualified financial bids for the company. The Alternative Mechanism, comprising Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Steel Minister H. D. Kumaraswamy, have approved the highest bid amounting to Rs 320 crore of Konoike Transport Co Ltd for sale of 100 per cent equity shareholding of MSTC Ltd in FSNL along with transfer of management control, a finance ministry statement said. The 320 crore bid was higher than the reserve price of Rs 262 crore set by the government on the basis of valuation carried out by the Transaction Adviser and Asset Valuer. The strategic sale of FSNL received two technically qualified financial bids. The bid submitted by Konoike Transport Co. Ltd at Rs 320 crore was the highest of the two bids and was also above the reserve price.



White Revolution to boost dairy sector: Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major push to transform India's dairy cooperative sector, Union Minister Amit Shah on Thursday unveiled 'White Revolution 2.0', a comprehensive initiative aimed at empowering women farmers and creating job opportunities. The programme focuses on four key areas - empowering women farmers, enhancing local milk production, strengthening dairy infrastructure, and boosting dairy exports. The programme is one of the three initiatives undertaken in the first 100 days of the Modi government's third term. "Maximum women are engaged in the dairy sector, with some generating business worth Rs 60,000 crore in Gujarat alone. This new initiative will focus on empowering women and further strengthening the

fight against malnutrition," Shah said while addressing the gathering. The minister also launched the nationwide rollout of RuPay Kisan Credit Cards for dairy farmers and the installation of micro-ATMs at dairy cooperative societies. Additionally, he released standard operating procedures for the computerisation of 67,930 Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACS). Under White Revolution 2.0, the government aims to increase milk procurement by dairy cooperative societies by 50 per cent over the next five years. The plan involves setting up and strengthening 1,00,000 new and existing district cooperative societies, multi-purpose district cooperative societies, and multi-purpose PACS, which will be linked to milk routes with necessary infrastructure.

Banks to play key role in achieving Viksit Bharat: FM

PNS ■ PUNE

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said the banking sector will have to play a crucial role in driving the agenda of making India a developed nation or Viksit Bharat by 2047.

The Finance Minister was speaking at an event here to mark the 90th Foundation Day of the Bank of Maharashtra, a public sector lender.

She said the vision of a Viksit Bharat by 2047 has key pillars of economic growth, social progress, environmental sustainability, and good governance. "Banks will have to play a crucial role in driving the agenda set by the vision of the Prime Minister and by your role, we are going to give greater momentum to achieving this dream," she said.

The vision of Viksit Bharat, Sitharaman added, envisages providing strong momentum in infrastructure; ensuring availability of need-based funding to MSMEs; bringing the unbanked population under the ambit of formal banking channels; and providing insurance net to all citizens.



The vision of Viksit Bharat envisages providing strong momentum in infrastructure; ensuring availability of need-based funding to MSMEs; bringing the unbanked population under the ambit of formal banking channels; and providing insurance net to all citizens.

The minister further said technology is reshaping India's banking landscape and it provides a secure, easy-to-navigate digital banking experience to customers. The system needs to be robust, reliable and user-

friendly. However, she added that "you (banks) cannot have a digital system which somewhere gets hacked, and the entire system and the trust which is laid on it getting compromised. So you need to have a robust and resilient

system for which every now and then you need to make sure that the firewalls are adequate, any emergency drill which you need to do, what if situation so you know to handle if there is an emergency in terms of digital insecure incidents".

The finance minister also said the fintech's growth is also going to help.

Unified Payments Interface (UPI), the real-time payment system launched in April 2016 by NPCI, has played a significant role in the growth of retail digital payments.

"Today, approximately 45 per cent of all real-time digital payments in the world happen in India. Banks should look at prospects to expand it," she said.

Sitharaman said so far, UPI has been launched in seven countries - Bhutan, France, Mauritius, Nepal, Singapore, Sri Lanka and the UAE.

She emphasised that the digital footprints which are being generated should be fully tapped.

"As we use technology to our advantage, we also need to get well-equipped to mitigate the risks," she added.

RBI lifts restrictions on IIFL Finance's gold loan biz

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IIFL Finance on Thursday said RBI has lifted the restrictions imposed on its gold loan business. These restrictions were imposed on March 4, 2024, which prohibited the company from sanctioning, disbursing, or assigning/securing/selling any of its gold loans. "The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), through its communication dated September 19, 2024, has lifted the restrictions imposed on the gold loan business of IIFL Finance Ltd," IIFL Finance said in a regulatory filing. The RBI's decision is effective immediately and allows the company to resume the sanctioning, disbursing, assignment, securitisation, and sale of gold loans in compliance with all relevant laws and regulations.

India's logistics cost to come down to single-digit : Gadkari

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's logistics cost will come down to single-digit within the next five years, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Thursday.

Addressing the 'Deloitte Government Summit' here, Gadkari said the ministry is constructing several highways and expressways which will help reduce India's logistics cost. "I am confident that within five years our logistics cost will be in single-digit," he said.

However, according to quick estimates of economic think tank National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), the logistics cost in India ranged from 7.8 per cent to 8.9 per cent of GDP in 2021-22.

The road transport and highways minister further said

he aimed to make the Indian automobile industry number one in the world. Last year, India had overtaken Japan to become the third-largest automobile market in the world, only behind the US and China, he said.

According to him, the size of India's automobile industry rose from Rs 7.5 lakh crore in 2014 to Rs 22 lakh crore in 2024. Talking about India's macro-economy, Gadkari said India is the fastest-growing major economy in the world.

"If we can increase the purchasing power of farmers, then it will have a big positive impact on our economy," he said.

Gadkari also emphasised that India needs to increase its exports and reduce imports. "Like smart cities, smart village is also economically viable," he said.

'Will adopt nuanced approach to deal with 'at risk' NPOs'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday said it will adopt a 'nuanced' approach to deal with 'at risk' non-profit organisations (NPOs), an issue raised by the global crime watchdog FATF in its report which has otherwise appreciated India for its efforts to tackle terror financing and money laundering.

Additional Secretary (Revenue), Finance Ministry, Vivek Agarwal said India has excelled on 6 'immediate outcomes' of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), including in risk, policy and coordination, international cooperation, financial intelligence, confiscation and proliferation financing.

On the five other parameters, including abuse of NPOs and terror financing sanctions, as well as prosecution of money laundering and terror financing cases India has got a medium rating.



As regards the abuse of NPOs for terror financing, Agarwal said the scope for NPOs being misused is very less in India because there is a cap on cash donations.

"We were trying to make a case that regulatory framework is good enough... Their case is that since the NPO sector is very big, we should have good risk-based metrics... For India, it should be a risk-based regulation and not stifling

regulation... We don't see a case for further tightening. We see a case for a more nuanced approach to identify at-risk NPOs," Agarwal said.

He further said that efforts of India are towards having a better outreach with the NPOs to encourage them to maintain their accounts, and donors list so that the chances of getting abused are minimised.

Agarwal said India has suffered the effects of terrorism since Independence and has been taking steps to deal with the menace.

As per the FATF India mutual evaluation report, which has upgraded India to "regular follow up category", theatres of terrorism threats are Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Qaeda-linked terror groups, radicalisation of individuals, regional insurgencies in North East and Left Wing extremism.

Sensex jumps 237 pts to close at all-time high after US rate cut

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty climbed to fresh record high levels on Thursday in line with firm global trends after the US Federal Reserve announced the first cut in policy rate in more than four years.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 236.57 points or 0.29 per cent to settle at an all-time high of 83,184.80. During the day, it jumped 825.38 points or 0.99 per cent to scale a new all-time intra-day high of 83,773.61 but pared some of the gains at close.

The NSE Nifty gained 38.25 points or 0.15 per cent to 25,415.80. During the day, it surged 234.4 points or 0.92 per cent to hit a fresh intra-day record peak of 25,611.95.

From the 30 Sensex firms, NTPC, Nestle, Titan, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Maruti, Hindustan Unilever, Bharti Airtel and HDFC Bank were the biggest gainers.



HCL Technologies, Tata Consultancy Services, Adani Ports, Larsen & Toubro, JSW Steel, State Bank of India, Tech Mahindra and Bajaj Finance were among the laggards from the pack.

"In the Indian market, Nifty has climbed 2.1 per cent over the past 10 days in anticipation of the rate cut, although market activity remained relatively flat today, with early excitement tapering off by the after-

noon. "This suggests that markets may have already priced in the rate cut and are looking ahead to other clues. Additionally, crude oil prices are trading at 52-week lows, and essential metals like iron ore and steel are hovering near multi-year lows—clear indicators of a slowing global economy," Amit Golia, Group CEO, MarketsMojo, said.

Looking forward, markets may shift their focus to how these rate cuts affect corporate earnings and broader economic health, especially if global demand continues to weaken, Golia added.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 1.06 per cent and midcap index dipped 0.53 per cent.

Among the indices, consumer durables climbed (0.64 per cent), Realty (0.47 per cent), bankex (0.46 per cent), consumer discretionary (0.34 per cent) and auto (0.32 per cent) were among the gainers.

India on track to be third-largest economy by FY31: S&P report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India is on track to becoming the third-largest economy by 2030-31, driven by a projected annual growth rate of 6.7 per cent this fiscal, S&P Global said in a report on Thursday.

The report also said that with 8.2 per cent growth rate in FY2024, continued reforms are crucial to improving business transactions and logistics, boosting private sector investment, and reducing reliance on public capital.

It said equity markets are expected to stay dynamic and competitive due to strong growth prospects and better regulation, and foreign inflows into Indian government bonds have surged since the country joined major emerging market indexes, with further growth anticipated.

COMPUTATION OF GDP

Govt mulls change in base year to 2022-23 from 2011-12

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is considering to change the base year for computation of the GDP to 2022-23, from 2011-12 at present, to reflect an accurate picture of the economy, sources said on Thursday.

This will be the first revision in over a decade. It was last done in 2011-12, they said.

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is likely to make a suggestion for accepting 2022-23 as a base year to the Advisory Committee on National Accounts Statistics (ACNAS), they said.

The 26-member ACNAS, which was constituted under the Chairmanship of Biswanath Goldar, is expected to complete the exercise by early 2026.

The estimates of the new base are likely to be released in February 2026, sources said.

"... Considering the major data source availability such as ASUSE (Annual Survey of

Unincorporated Sector Enterprises), HCES (Household Consumption Expenditure Survey) from NAS (National Accounts Statistics), MoSPI will place 2022-23 as next base for consideration of ACNAS," they said.

As per sources, in the new computation some items like lanterns, VCRs, recorders will be removed and products like smart watches, phones and processed food items will be added.

The GST data is a new data source that could be used in GDP computation.

In addition to this, a number of studies have been conducted to update the rates and ratios used in computation of GDP and therefore will improve the computation, sources said.

The government is also taking various other measures to improve the statistical system for a strong data governance which reflects a better and accurate picture of informal sectors.



'India major contributor to development of edn sector'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India remains a major partner for Maldives and also a major contributor to the development, especially in the education sector, Maldives Education, Labour & Skills Minister Ahmed Shafeeu has said.

He was addressing education and skilling resources exhibition and conference DIDAC INDIA, on Wednesday.

"India has been a leader in many ways, not only in the region but also globally. When we consider India's economic and technological development, as well as its contributions to education and skill development, it's important to recognize its significance," Shafeeu said at the three-event that began on September 18 here. The event is being organised by Messe Stuttgart India in collaboration with India Didactics Association (IDA),

their intellectual growth. Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan said there are 200 academic and research collaborations between Victoria and India. Victoria stands as the number one destination for Indian international students and "we see transnational education as the greatest opportunity for growth."

Aditya Gupta, CEO, of IDA

said that to support Government of India's vision and to further boost India's education system, DIDAC INDIA 2024 convenes thought leaders, educators, policymakers, and industry officials from all around the world for in-depth exploration and global showcase. India is witnessing a massive shift in the education and skilling sector with the introduction of AI and tech-driven solutions, he added.

Addressing this need of the hour, DIDAC INDIA's 14th edition will showcase a diverse array of futuristic solutions and resources to bolster the sector. DIDAC INDIA opened new doors for foreign investments, tech innovation and collaborations to fuel India's education and skill sector. The participating countries include Maldives, Germany, Finland, the State of Victoria, the State of New South Wales and the UK.



what's brewing?

JLO'S NEW REVENGE ANTHEM

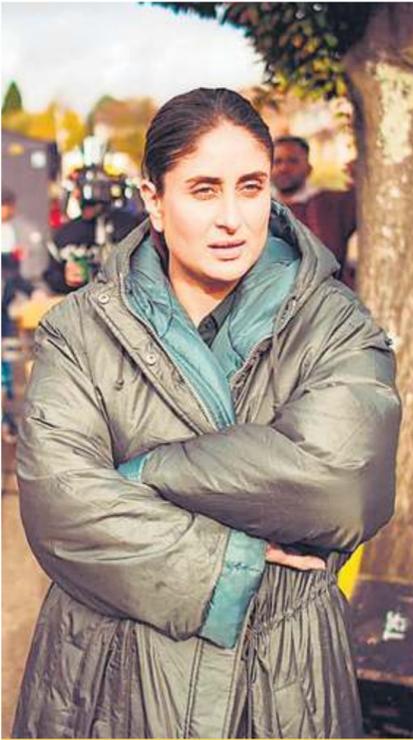
Jennifer Lopez is reportedly gearing up to "embarrass" her estranged husband, Ben Affleck, with a scathing breakup song, revealing less-than-flattering details about their intimate life. According to reports, the *On The Floor* singer, once completely smitten with Affleck, has had a change of heart since their recent split. An insider shared, "When they were together, JLo praised Ben, especially when it came to their bedroom life. But now, she's telling friends that he wasn't as remarkable as she once believed."

Lopez's previous album, *This Is Me...Now: A Love Story*, released in February 2024, was an ode to their rekindled romance, with some tracks inspired by their private moments. Songs like *Missing Your Body* celebrated their passion, featuring lyrics such as, "Climbing on top of me / Slipping inside of me / Way that I ride it."

However, post-breakup, Lopez now regrets making such intimate tributes.

"She's frustrated that she wrote all those romantic lyrics about him," the source continued. Now, JLo is allegedly working on a breakup song with a completely different tone, aimed at hitting Affleck where it hurts—his bedroom performance.

Affleck, initially supportive of the album and its accompanying documentary, may not have anticipated such a sharp turn in Lopez's lyrics. Despite being the driving force behind the project, he's reportedly less thrilled now that the tables have turned.



KAREENA'S KILLER MOVE

Kareena Kapoor Khan has embraced a bold new chapter in her career with *The Buckingham Murders*, a film that marks her 25th year in the industry. Speaking about the movie's remarkable reception, she called it a "brave film" for its authenticity and the creative risks it took, particularly in its use of multiple languages. Reflecting on her career choices, Kareena highlighted how she's consistently pushed boundaries with films like *Chameli* and *Dev* early on, and now *The Buckingham Murders* is no different.

At a recent event, Kareena explained how the film's director, Hansal Mehta, was determined to keep the story as true to its setting as possible. Set in a small English town, the team chose to blend Hindi, English and Hinglish, capturing the authenticity of the characters' environment. Kareena, who also serves as a producer, remarked on how the film's originality and language choices posed a challenge, but one that felt timely and exciting in her long career.

The Buckingham Murders—which hit cinemas on September 13, 2024—has captivated both audiences and critics. While the film's Hinglish accents might have seemed unconventional, its suspense-filled narrative and Kareena's commanding performance have kept viewers engaged. The film also boasts a stellar ensemble cast, including Ash Tandon, Ranveer Brar and Keith Allen. Directed by Hansal Mehta, this mystery thriller represents a significant milestone for everyone involved, including first-time producer Kareena Kapoor Khan and Ekta R Kapoor, whose backing of this daring project has been widely praised.

Saiyami Kher becomes only Indian actress to finish Ironman 70.3 triathlon in Germany

Saiyami Kher, known for her roles in Bollywood, has achieved a remarkable personal milestone by completing the prestigious Ironman 70.3 triathlon in Germany. She becomes the only Indian actress from India to successfully finish this physically demanding race, which consists of a 1.9 km swim, 90 km of cycling and a 21.1 km run—completed back to back.

The Ironman 70.3, also known as the Half Ironman, is one of the most challenging endurance races in the world, testing the limits of athletes from around the globe. Even seasoned participants find it tough to reach the finish line, but Saiyami's dedication



and perseverance saw her through to the end, marking her as one of the few who managed to complete the race.

Saiyami, who has been training for the past year while juggling her busy film schedule, reflected on the journey with immense pride and gratitude. "Crossing the finish line of the Ironman 70.3 and getting that medal has to be one of the proudest moments of my life. This has been on my bucket list forever, and I am just so happy I finally did it! Training for an Ironman

while juggling 12 to 14-hour shooting was tough. There were days when motivation was nowhere to be found and it really felt like a battle with myself. No one else could put in those hours; it was all on me. Through all the ups and downs—missed flights, lost luggage and everything else—I made it to the finish. This race has been about losing my way but ultimately finding my path. I'm very happy I managed this, not just for finishing but for the journey that got me here. It showed me the power of determination and how if you put your mind to something no one can stop you. I'll carry this moment with me forever! I want to be a *Lambi race ki ghodi* not only in endurance sport but also in my acting career."

Saiyami's accomplishment stands as a powerful testament to her commitment to fitness and her ability to balance her professional and personal goals. Known for her work in films like *Choked*, *Ghoomer* amongst others, Saiyami has long been an advocate for health and fitness and her success in completing the Ironman 70.3 reinforces her belief in pushing the boundaries of what's possible.

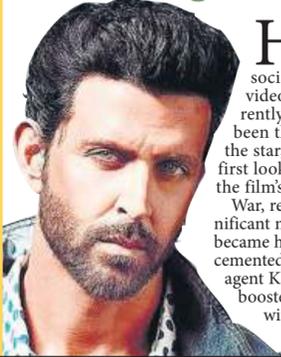
Anees Bazmee clears air on misinterpreted statement

A seasoned filmmaker with over three decades of experience recently addressed the media regarding the misinterpretation of his statements surrounding the simultaneous release of two major films, *Singham 3* and *Bhool Bhulaiya 3*. The filmmaker clarified that his focus remains on storytelling rather than the business dynamics surrounding film releases.

In a statement, he said, "Some media personnel are misinterpreting my words. As a filmmaker, I've spent decades crafting compelling narratives and I don't get entangled in the business side of film releases. I've seen many movies succeed despite being released on the same day." The director also took to social media to rephrase his earlier comments, emphasising his support for both projects. "It seems my words were lost in translation! To clarify, I am thrilled for *Singham 3* and *Bhool Bhulaiya 3*. Both films feature incredible talent and I wish the teams success. Let's celebrate them together," he tweeted.

The filmmaker's statement underscores the collaborative spirit of the industry, reminding audiences that competition between releases can coexist with mutual respect and admiration for the craft.

RAW agent Kabir is back, Italy can't keep him a secret!



Hrithik Roshan, often hailed as the Greek God of Bollywood, has set social media abuzz with a leaked video from Italy, where he is currently filming *War 2*. Fans have been thrilled to catch a glimpse of the star, even though the official first look has yet to be revealed by the film's creators.

War, released in 2019, marked a significant milestone in Hrithik's career. It became his highest-grossing film and cemented his role as the dashing RAW agent Kabir. The film's success was boosted by his sizzling chemistry with co-star Vaani Kapoor and the electric camaraderie

with Tiger Shroff. Now, Hrithik is all set to step back into the shoes of the iconic character in *War 2* and fans are eagerly waiting for what's next.

The leaked video shows Hrithik in a casual yet stylish look—sporting a white t-shirt, light blue shirt and white trousers, with sunglasses in hand, radiating his signature charm. Another clip captures the actor checking a shot with director Ayan Mukerji, giving fans a behind-the-scenes peek at their collaboration.

Social media has been flooded with excitement, with fans expressing high expectations for the sequel. One tweet noted, "This looks like a production on the scale of *Mission Impossible* and

Fast & Furious," while another added, "This movie is going to be massive. I can't even imagine, especially with a possible *Pathaan* cameo. Goosebumps!"

Alongside Hrithik, Telugu superstar Jr NTR will take on the role of the antagonist, while Kiara Advani and Anil Kapoor have also joined the cast. One of the most anticipated aspects of *War 2* is the rumoured cameos of Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan, reprising their roles as *Pathaan* and Tiger from YRF's spy universe. There's even talk of a post-credit scene featuring Alia Bhatt, who is set to make her debut in the franchise with her film *Alpha*.

The Sabarmati Report gets release date

Mark your calendars for November 15, 2024! The highly anticipated film *The Sabarmati Report*, starring Raashii Khanna and Vikrant Massey, is set to hit theaters. This new release date announcement is accompanied by a gripping poster that offers a sneak peek into the film's intense narrative.

In this Ranjan Chandel directorial, Raashii Khanna takes on the role of a determined reporter investigating the tragic Sabarmati Express incident, which occurred on February 27, 2002, near Godhra railway station in Gujarat. Vikrant Massey stars alongside her, bringing to light the harrowing details of the tragedy.

The film's makers shared the new poster on social media, promising, "The burning truth will be out on 15th November! Stay tuned! #TheSabarmatiReport only in cinemas!" The buzz around the film intensified with the release of its trailer, heightening fans' excitement to see Khanna and Massey in action.

In addition to *The Sabarmati Report*, Raashii Khanna is preparing for her next project with Vikrant Massey in *Talakhon Mein Ek* and has a Telugu film, *Telusu Kada*, also in the pipeline.



FUN

ARCHIE



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



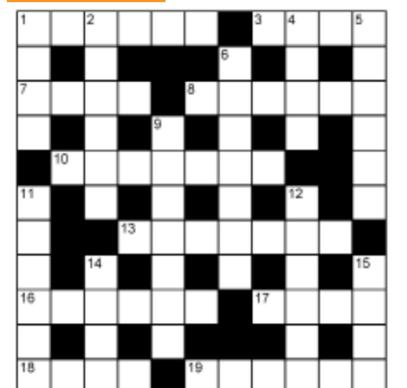
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

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

- 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

- Baking instructions
- Factual
- Play this with two sticks
- Rub to a shine
- Young hen
- Fake document
- Extra-intelligent person
- Finished
- Playthings
- Almost

DOWN

- Travel by horse
- Captured
- Water from the sky
- Breathe out
- From another country
- A sea creature with many arms
- Aeroplane trip
- Motorist
- Jealousy
- Large group of soldiers



Kanika Kapoor recalls her 'peculiar memento' from her Paris travel

TRAVELOGUE

SINGER KANIKA KAPOOR, WHO WAS NOT LONG AGO ADORING THE BEAUTY OF LONDON AND MYKONOS DURING HER TRIP, SPEAKS TO THE PIONEER ABOUT HER TRAVEL, HER LIBERATING TRIP AND A LOT MORE AROUND HER TRAVEL DIARIES



SHIKHA DUGGAL
shikhaduggalwork@gmail.com

Singer Kanika Kapoor loves to travel to new places and attempts to fully immerse herself in the local way of life. It has guaranteed that she will continue to grow as a person and has expanded her horizons. With a little creativity, we can take you on her recent vacation as we write this article for our travelogues segment.

"My last trip was to London, a city that always feels like a home to me," she says in an exclusive interview that she is having with us from Dallas. "Ralph, my new dog, is adorable and I enjoy having him around. The ideal destination to travel with my family and kids is London. Every time I have a break from work, I take a plane back to my family. In addition, I just visited Mykonos, Barcelona and Spain. Right now, we are in Dallas, Texas, for a live performance. Indeed, travel is an integral aspect of my life."

The *Ragini MMS* star gives us a brief overview of her observations, saying, "The museums, the buildings and even the street art tell a story. In terms of style, London is a great place to try out new looks! I experiment with bold boots, stylish berets and traditional trench coats. I adore how the city encourages you to blend sophistication and edge!"

She has been to the British Museum, an amazing repository of cultural and historical artifacts. Kanika found the Egyptian mummies and the Rosetta Stone to be quite fascinating. She goes on, saying that she likes to stay in Ritz Carlton hotels and: "I always buy friend magnets from all the cities I travel to and I once brought back a mini Eiffel

Tower filled with sand from the Paris beach. It's a peculiar memento that always takes me back to that journey."

She never stops telling us these amusing stories that make us think of her while also bringing us back in time. "Mumbai is truly unique," she says. "With a fusion of cultures, languages and nationalities, it's a city that never sleeps. There's never been energy like this. My parents and the amazing food there are the two things that provide me joy; therefore, Lucknow comes in second."

A recent trip that felt liberating? The *Roy* fame states, "My spouse and I would travel to Lagos, Nigeria. Afro musicians from that region are nice; they have a whole different culture and lately, I have been working with them frequently. It's been quite freeing and satisfying. My dream travel destinations are to see the Northern Lights in Iceland and the Japanese cherry blossoms."

Yes, folks, she also has some travel advice! "Always keep a scarf and reusable water bottle with you. The scarf can be used as a blanket, a fashion piece, or as a pillow on lengthy trips, while the bottle keeps you hydrated!"



Handcrafting tales of perseverance!

From music videos to movie magic

TEJAL SINHA
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Born from a desire to empower women, Himalayan Blooms thrives. Challenging the idea that quality is lacking in rural areas, they have been providing tools and training to women in the community, we maintain tradition while reaching the highest levels of excellence. Here, women acquire the necessary skills and resources to succeed. They can express their creativity, attain economic freedom, and provide for their loved ones. Empowering the people in the Himalayan community allows us to empower the community as a whole, creating a better future step by step.

Let's take you a little back through its story. *The Pioneer* connects with Pratibha Krishnaiah, the founder, who begins, "The inspiration began when I left my job in Bangalore to join the SBI Foundation Youth for India Fellowship program. Assigned to work with the BAIF Development Research Foundation, I immersed myself in the local community."

During this, she discovered that many women in the village were passionate about knitting and crocheting for their families. When asked if they would be interested in earning an income from their craft, their enthusiastic "yes" planted the seed. The women of Khetikhan inspired the vision to harness their talents for a meaningful change.

While engaging with the local women, she recalls, "I saw the potential of their knitting skills and their eagerness to work. Originally, I planned to hand over the project to the NGO after my fellowship. However, the support from funders who read about my work motivated me to continue. It was born out of this support and the

In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, Pratibha Krishnaiah, founder of Himalayan Blooms, connects with us about being a testament to the dedication of its artisans, uplifting their spirits, and significantly contributing to their household income



desire to empower rural women through handcrafts, turning their skills into a sustainable source of income."

Through knitting and crochet, the women of Khetikhan are preserving traditional skills while blending them with modern designs. This approach ensures that age-old techniques aren't

the skills necessary for self-sufficiency. Our goal is to elevate their status, giving them the tools and confidence to thrive within their communities. We foster collaboration, creativity, and compassion by connecting our artisans with ventures around the world. This exposure helps our women engage in global partnerships, expanding their professional networks. By working on creative projects with compassion at the core, they see their work appreciated on a global scale, boosting their confidence and self-worth."

But again, things didn't come out in place without challenges: "Initially, there was hesitation from many women. Only one out of a group of seven to eight embraced the opportunity. Social norms and economic pressures at home kept their skills hidden. Gradually, by building trust and showing the benefits of empowerment, more women joined us, overcoming these barriers."

Going ahead, she shares with us one story that stands out—a 20-year-old girl pursuing her Bachelor of Arts degree. While studying, she crochets for them, earning about Rs 5,000 a month. After her father's passing, she helps her mother with household and agricultural work while supporting her four younger siblings. Her income not only helps with her own education but also covers essential household expenses. Working with Himalayan Blooms has given her hope and a sense of purpose. She now plans to join us full-time after completing her studies.

"We continue to grow stronger each day, creating a supportive, inclusive and empowering work culture for all the women in our local community. Our focus remains on building a better future and expanding opportunities for more women to join and thrive in our mission," signs off Pratibha on a brighter note.

Dhvani Bhanushali, the popular singing sensation known for her chart-topping hits and vibrant presence in music videos, is set to embark on a new journey as she makes her acting debut in the upcoming film *Kahan Shuru Kahan Khatam*. As she transitions from the world of music to film, Dhvani shares insights into the challenges and differences between acting in music videos and movies.

"There's a significant difference between acting in music videos and acting in films," Dhvani explains. "In music videos, I'm usually portraying a version of myself. But in a movie, it's a whole new ballgame; you're stepping into someone else's shoes, portraying a different character altogether. To truly become the character, I had to dive deep into understanding this new process, which involved a lot of unlearning and approaching it with fresh eyes."

The preparation for her role as Meera was intense. "We put immense effort into shaping the character with my director, Saurabh Dasgupta. Just two days before filming began, I was working closely with Laxman sir, refining every scene to ensure I did justice to the vision that Saurabh and the writers had crafted. It was crucial for me to embody the character fully and give it my all, so that what we envisioned could come alive on screen."

Reflecting on her experiences in different mediums, Dhvani states, "Both music videos and films require different approaches to acting and both come with their own set of challenges. As an artist, I hope to do justice in both of these spaces and deliver performances that resonate with audiences."

Kahan Shuru Kahan Khatam features an ensemble cast packed with industry stars, including Supriya Pilgaonkar, Rakesh Bedi, Sonali Sachdev, Rajesh Sharma, Akhilesh Mishra, Chitranjan Tripathy, Vikram Kochhar, Himanshu Kohli and Vikas Verma. Directed by Saurabh Dasgupta, the film is a collaboration between Bhanushali Studios Limited and Kathputli Creations, produced by Vinod Bhanushali, Laxman Utekar, Karishma Sharma, and Kamlesh Bhanushali. Set to release theatrically on September 20, 2024, *Kahan Shuru Kahan Khatam* promises to be a delightful young musical family entertainer. With her dual talent shining through, Dhvani Bhanushali is ready to prove that she can make a splash on both the music and film stages, captivating audiences in new and exciting ways.



ASHWIN, JADEJA TANGO SAVES INDIA AFTER HASAN MAHMUD'S EARLY STRIKES

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Seasoned off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin sparked on home turf with his sixth Test hundred as he combined with Ravindra Jadeja to steer India out of trouble and post a formidable 339 for six on day one of the first Test against Bangladesh here on Thursday. Ashwin (102 batting) and Jadeja (86 batting) added 195 runs (174 minutes, 225 balls) for a riveting unbroken seventh wicket stand after young pacer Hasan Mahmud (4/58) reduced India to 144 for six, despite Yashasvi Jaiswal making a solid 56. The ebb and flow of the day's proceedings was quite remarkable and mostly revolved around Ashwin, Jadeja and Mahmud, who made his Test debut in March this year and was just three games old in the format before this match. In a stunning first spell of 5-2-6-3, the 24-year-old Mahmud accounted for the cream of Indian top-order -- Rohit Sharma (6), Shubman Gill (0) and Virat Kohli (6) -- before snapping Rishabh Pant's return to Test cricket (39 off 52 balls) in the initial moments of the second session. KL Rahul, another Indian batter who is re-entering the Indian Test establishment, fell for 16 to off-spinner Mehidy

Hasan Miraz as fortune's pendulum stayed firmly in Bangladesh's quarter. But then came the two gladiators who know Chepauk like the back of their hand -- Ashwin by birth and Jadeja through his long association with the Chennai Super Kings. One more wicket at that stage would have extended the dominance of Bangladesh, but such thoughts hardly disturbed Ashwin and Jadeja. Ashwin went off the blocks with a flurry of boundaries, a firm validation of his oh-so-smooth timing born out of fluent hand movement through shots and precise footwork. There was this ramp shot off Mahmud, who tried to rattle Ashwin with a short-pitched delivery that climbed onto his body. But the veteran player arched himself back ever so slightly to gain space to execute the ramp over the slip -- fabulous in conceptualisation and execution. At times, he scored at a strike rate in excess of 100 and was not hesitant to travel the more uncultured way. A slog sweep that went for six over mid-wicket off left-arm spinner Shakib Al-Hasan testified that Jadeja was a tad different in his approach. Sensing that Ashwin was in good touch, the left-hander had the simple job of keeping his end going and he



did that with minimum fuss. A past master in operating from behind the giant shadows of superstars, Jadeja looked extremely comfortable doing that once more, providing the assurance Ashwin needed. But there were moments, the showman in Jadeja came forth and Shakib was the aggrieved party, getting hammered for three fours. Bangladesh's star of the day Mahmud, too was not spared as Jadeja, who raised his fifty off 73 balls, played a drag-pull off the pacer to send him for a six. Other times, he wing-heeled across the pitch for those ones and twos to keep the Bangladesh bowlers frustrated. The spectators eventually witnessed the moment that they had been waiting for when Ashwin reached the hundred with a single off Shakib, and they welcomed it with applause, cheers and loud bugling. It was his second consecutive hundred at his home ground after going past the three-figure mark here against England in 2021. And it could not have come at a better time as well. But before the epic fightback, the Indian innings resembled a crumbling rampart. It's not often that a team winning the toss would elect to bowl first here as that translates into a fourth-innings chase. But Bangladesh skipper

Najmul Hossain Shanto bit the bullet while going against the trend, and was rewarded for it too. Rohit, who was saved by DRS when he was on 1, was the first to depart. The Indian skipper had little choice other than playing a wobble seam delivery that came at him on a tight angle as he edged to Shanto at second slip. Gill lasted just eight balls but he would count himself unlucky, feathering Mahmud's down the leg side delivery to stumper Litton Das. Kohli walked into the Chepauk amid loud cheers and looked confident. But an old failing resurfaced to haunt him. Mahmud pitched one just short of the length outside the off-stump, and the length was not suitable for a drive. But the star batter chose to play an expansive one with the ball nestling in Litton's gloves after taking a healthy edge off his bat. Jaiswal and Pant added 62 runs for the fourth wicket to temporarily check the free fall before both perished in close succession in the middle session. Bangladesh might have thought the effort was good enough to keep the home side flat on the ropes, but Ashwin and Jadeja made them wiser as to why it is so tough to keep India on the back-foot at home for long.



Indian women crush Georgia; Gukesh leads men to victory over China

PTI ■ BUDAPEST

Grandmaster R Vaishali and Vantika Agrawal put up impressive performances as Indian women defeated Georgia while World Championship challenger D Gukesh led the men to victory over China in the seventh round as both teams continued their unbeaten streak in 45th Chess Olympiad here. Vaishali and Vantika notched wins against Lela Javakhishvili and Bella Khotenashvili as Indian women thumped second seeds Georgia 3-1, while the men eked out a 2.5-1.5 over China. On a day that saw D Harika settling for a draw with Nana Dzagnidze and Divya Deshmukh being held by Nino Batsiashvili from a better position, it was Vantika who handled her time pressure extremely well to play almost 20 moves with just about a minute on her clock to win her game and seal India's seventh straight victory. The Indian women took their tally to an impressive 14 points out of a possible 14 and stretched their lead to two points over nearest rivals Poland, Kazakhstan and France who all have 12 points apiece.

tank decided to rest the reigning world champion. That was already a shock for the pundits of the game. R Praggnanandhaa played out a quick draw as black against Yangyi Yu of China while P Harikrishna pressed for some time before the position petered out to be equal in the ensuing rook and pawns endgame against Wang Yue of China on the fourth board. Earlier Arjun Erigaise went for the kill against an alert Bu Xiangzhi and the latter found a nice piece sacrifice to force a draw through repetition. With just four rounds to come, the Indian men have done everything correct thus far and are sitting pretty with a 100 percent score like their female counterparts. Iran is the only team in close pursuit of the leaders on 13 points while a pack of four teams - Serbia, Hungary, Armenia and defending champions Uzbekistan share the third spot on 12 points each. In the next round now, the Indian men will take on Iran while the women are pitted against Poland.

RESULTS ROUND 7 OPEN: India (14) beat China (11) 2.5-1.5 (D Gukesh beat Wei Yi; Yu Yangyi drew with R Praggnanandhaa; Arjun Erigaise drew with Bu Xiangzhi; Wang Yue drew with P Harikrishna); Iran (13) beat Vietnam (11) 2.5-1.5; Lithuania (10) lost to Hungary (12) 1.5-2.5; Uzbekistan (12) beat Ukraine (10) 3-1; Serbia (12) beat Netherlands (10) 3-1; Armenia (12) beat England (10) 2.5-1.5; France (11) drew with Georgia (11) 2-2. **Women:** India (14) beat Georgia (11) 3-1 (D Harika drew with Nana Dzagnidze; Lela Javakhishvili lost to R Vaishali; Divya Deshmukh drew with Nino Batsiashvili; Bella Khotenashvili lost to Vantika Agrawal); Ukraine (11) drew with Poland (12) 2-2; Azerbaijan (10) lost to Kazakhstan (12) 1-3; Armenia (11) drew with United States of America (11) 2-2; Mongolia (11) drew with Germany (11) 2-2; Spain (10) lost to France (12) 1.5-2.5.

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Kevin de Bruyne injury scare as Man City is held 0-0 by Inter Milan in the Champions League

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City faces a new injury concern for Kevin de Bruyne ahead of a showdown with Premier League title rival Arsenal after the playmaker was substituted at halftime of Champions League match against Inter Milan. The Belgium international looked in discomfort after making a run late in the first half. After receiving treatment, De Bruyne didn't return for the second half and was replaced by Ilkay Gundogan. The game ended 0-0.



City hosts title rival Arsenal at Etihad Stadium on Sunday. City manager Pep Guardiola said he didn't know the extent of De Bruyne's injury, but was informed by the club doctor the playmaker could not carry on in the second half. "I didn't speak with the doctors yet," Guardiola said about De Bruyne's availability for the weekend. "(He will be) Assessed tonight, maybe tomorrow. We will have more info tomorrow." De Bruyne endured an injury-disrupted campaign last season when he was sidelined from August to January with a hamstring problem. He returned to help the club secure a record fourth straight English title. He has started every game this season and scored in City's 4-1 win against Ipswich last month. City held off challenges from Arsenal in each of the last two seasons to lift the title. The north London club is expected to be City's main rival again this term. Arsenal has its own injury

problems ahead of the game after captain Martin Odegaard was ruled out with ankle ligament damage. Without De Bruyne, City failed to find a breakthrough against Inter and was shut out at home in the Champions League for the first time since a 0-0 draw with Sporting Lisbon in March 2022. It was only the second time in all competitions since then that Guardiola's team failed to score at home - the other coming in a 0-0 with Arsenal in the league in March. City extended its unbeaten home run in European games to 32, dating back to a 2-1 loss to Lyon in 2018. Haaland locked on 99 Erling Haaland has looked unstoppable this season with nine goals in his first four games of the campaign before

Wednesday match. But that run was snapped by Inter with the Norway striker stuck on 99 goals for City. Haaland also failed to score against the Italians when the teams met in the Champions League final in 2023, which City won 1-0 to lift the trophy for the first time in its history. "They are masters of defending," Guardiola said. With his contract expiring at the end of the season, Guardiola sounds like he's still loving life at City. Asked by an Italian journalist if he could see himself working in Italy in the future, Guardiola said: "I really enjoy being here. I love English football, it is fantastic, really enjoyable. They leave you alone to get on with the job. That doesn't happen anywhere else."



PSG's post-galactico era begins with a last-gasp win

THANKS TO GIRONA GOALKEEPER'S BLUNDER

AP ■ PARIS

It took a huge blunder to gift Paris Saint-Germain victory in the first Champions League match of its post-galactico era. PSG scraped a 1-0 home win over tournament newcomer Girona on Wednesday with a stoppage-time goal, which came when goalkeeper Paulo Gazzaniga let a left-wing cross from Nuno Mendes trickle under his hands and through his legs. For the first time in more than a decade, PSG began its Champions League campaign without at least one star player, known in soccer as a "galactico." But after the likes of Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Edinson Cavani, Neymar, Kylian Mbappé and Lionel Messi came and went without winning Europe's elite club competition, PSG started this campaign with a new identity based on more French players and greater teamwork.

It was also PSG's first Champions League game without Mbappé for seven years after France's star joined Real Madrid, scoring for his new club on Tuesday. Mbappé was reproached by his critics for not tracking back or closing down enough when he played up front for PSG. Yet PSG coach Luis Enrique could be heard shouting when his players failed to close down properly and, at one point, Girona kept the ball for 2 1/2 minutes with PSG's ball-watching players chasing aimlessly. "They defended well and we struggled to create clear-cut chances," Enrique said. After 34 minutes, whistles could be heard from the crowd at a subdued Parc des Princes. Aside from half-chances from midfielder Warren Zaire-Emery and Marco Asensio, who went off injured late in the first half with an apparent

hamstring injury, there was scant attacking play. "All the teams have things to improve," Zaire-Emery said. "We have new players coming into the team who need to settle in." Yet this was even more the case for a Girona team that lost several key players from last season, including striker Artem Dovbyk, winger Savinho and right back Yan Couto. Girona defender Ladislav Krejci made a brilliant tackle on Ousmane Dembélé after the PSG attacker went clean through on goal in the first half. But with moments left, Gazzaniga's howler spared PSG. "We didn't play very well, and we have to say it," PSG midfielder Vitinha said. "We had trouble keeping the ball. You have to give Girona credit, but we need to look at what we didn't do well."

Malvika beats Kristy Gilmour to enter China Open quarterfinals

PTI ■ CHANGZHOU (CHINA)

Young Indian shuttler Malvika Bansod continued her fine form as she cruised to her maiden Super 1000 quarterfinal after eking out a hard-fought victory against higher-ranked Kristy Gilmour in the China Open here on Thursday. Malvika, ranked 43rd, toiled hard for one hour and five minutes before pulling off a 21-17 19-21 21-16 win over the two-time Commonwealth Games medallist and world number 25 from Scotland in a women's singles round-of-16 contest. "This is the first time I will play a quarterfinal of a Super 1000 tournament so it is a dream come true and the biggest achievement of my life so far," Malvika said after the match. "I dreamt about this before the tournament that how would it be if I reached the quarters and now I'm top 8, so it's a great feeling," she added. Talking about the match, the Indian, who now leads head-



to-head against Gilmour 3-2, said "There is a lot of drift from this part so I found it difficult to control in the last parts of the last game and

second game as well. But I'm glad god helped me." The win comes a day after the 22-year-old defeated Paris Olympics bronze medallist

Gregoria Mariska Tunjung of Indonesia. The Nagpur shuttler feels she has been able to control the shuttle in the tricky

conditions here. "My retrieving is working well, I am able to control the shuttle better than the others. The conditions are a bit tricky

for both players but I'm able to handle it better," she said. She added that she has focused on enhancing her strength, and it is yielding positive results. "This circuit is very tough because if you are entering a Super 500 or 1000 you end up playing a top 10 in the first round as I'm not seeded yet. So, I need to be physically strong from the beginning itself. I have been working on that." However Malvika, who is the lone Indian shuttler remaining in the competition, has a tough challenge ahead of her as she will be up against fourth seed and two-time world champion Akane Yamaguchi of Japan in the last eight stage. Although the Japanese shuttler has won both the outings against Malvika, the Indian had come close to defeating Yamaguchi and hopes she can cross the line this time round. "Hope for the best. I am in good form let's see how it goes tomorrow. I will give my best," she said.

Nearly 3,000 women record harassment statements in TFI

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Tollywood is making headlines yet again after a young female choreographer filed a complaint against a senior choreographer. Previously, actresses such as Samantha and Anushka Shetty publicly urged the Telangana government and film industry to release the subcommittee report on sexual harassment. The Voice of Women, a support group for women in the Telugu film industry, was founded in 2019. Even on social media, many people are concerned about the working conditions in Tollywood. A few days back, the Sexual Harassment Redressal Panel also asked any woman can approach them with evidence if anything wrong happened at their workplace. Actress Poonam Kaur on her social media also asked the Tollywood bigwigs to question popular director Trivikram Srinivas.

"After the Sri Reddy issue, there was a subcommittee formed and nearly recorded the statement of 3,000 women actresses, technicians and other women who are working in the Telugu film industry (TFI). They recorded the statements in the years 2019 to 2021 and submitted the report to the Telangana Film Development Corporation (FDC)," said Thammareddy Bharadwaj, one of the members of the committee.

The FDC has been inactive for several years due to the absence of a suitable chairman. Once the BRS Government took control, they selected producer Ram Mohan Rao as the FDC Chairman, but



Pooja Hegde steals the show in #Vijay69, as Samantha stays off the script

A couple of days ago, it was revealed that Tamil superstar Thalapathy Vijay's next film is #Vijay69. H Vinoth serves as the director, with Anirudh Ravichander acting as the music director. Before transitioning to full-time politics, KVN Productions from Bengaluru is currently working on Vijay's upcoming film. There are not many female leads named Samantha featured in various media sections, but here is some exclusive news about one!

According to a source close to the actress, Pooja Hegde will be the female lead in Vijay's upcoming film. As per the source, the actress will start filming for this movie on October 1. Vijay's latest movie, *GOAT: Greatest of All Time*, helmed by Venkat Prabhu, turned out to be a major failure at the box office. Vijay has agreed to work on another movie directed by H Vinoth, which will be his final film. In addition to Samantha, there are rumours that Trisha might be cast as

the female lead, but the producers ultimately select Pooja Hegde for the role. Currently, the actress is in Bengaluru filming a jewellery commercial advertisement. She is currently filming commercials as the brand ambassador in Bengaluru.

after his departure, there was no suitable replacement. Presently, Revanth Reddy serves as the Chief Minister, while Komati Reddy Venkat Reddy holds the position of Cinematography Minister. Revanth Reddy has named Giridhar Reddy as the head of the FDC, although he has no desire to assume the role. Therefore, both the chairman position and the office itself are not functioning effectively.

The FDC and its chairman are key players in the relationship between the Telugu film industry and the state government. However, the FDC is currently inactive and industry leaders are avoiding commenting on it, given its ties to the government.

Revanth Reddy criticised individuals in the Telugu film industry for not reacting when he introduced the Gaddar Awards; however, the TFI promptly responded with their support to the FDC. Due to the FDC's inactivity, the Chief Minister has not received the

positive response. "I told the media that we responded immediately and sent a letter to the FDC," said Thammareddy.

He also mentioned that the government needs to review the report and offer appropriate instructions for workplaces; the film industry plans to adopt it.

Damodara Prasad, who serves as secretary to the Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce, stated that the subcommittee gathered testimonies from female staff, including actresses and technicians and forwarded them to the FDC.

"If the government gives proper guidelines, the chamber will send those guidelines to all the production houses to implement them. Then the government, along with the Film Chamber, can monitor whether the production houses are implementing those guidelines in a proper way," said Damodara Prasad.

Earlier also, there were instances where one actress openly held a media conference and accused a director, but later both compromised. There are a few instances that have happened in Tollywood, but the problem is that they didn't approach the organisations in a proper way.

Now, with choreographer Jani getting arrested and once again all eyes are on Tollywood. According to a source, a few industry people, including Thammareddy, are going to meet Chief Minister Revanth Reddy in a few days and may discuss with him the sub-committee report that is on the FDC table.

Another film of Vijay Antony is ready

The movie *Bichagadu* has made Tamil actor Vijay Antony gain popularity among Telugu audiences. All of his movies are translated into Telugu and then made available for release in this region as well. Regardless of whether or not his movies are successful at the box office, the actor continues to release films frequently. After releasing his recent movie *Toofan* in August, he is now preparing to release another film titled *Hitler*. Dhana serves as the director, with DT Raja and DR Sanjay Kumar serving as the producers.

The director stated that the movie *Hitler* will have a captivating action plot and is scheduled to come out in theaters on September 27. The film's trailer has been released, revealing that it is an action-packed drama. In this preview, Vijay Antony appears changed and appears to have established some goals that he aims to pursue. According to the trailer, the movie appears to be full of action scenes with unexpected developments. Charan Raj portrays a political leader, while renowned director Gautam Vasudev Menon is featured in a significant role in the movie. Riya Suman plays the main female role.



DASARA COMBINATION ONCE AGAIN!

The movie *Dasara* showcases Nani in a new role in his career and also brought recognition to the director Srikanth Odela. It has also been the recipient of numerous awards. Now, Nani and director Srikanth Odela are teaming up once more for a new movie. Nani is currently filming his next movie, *Hit 3* and also has a project with Srikanth Odela that was revealed on Thursday. The director guarantees that their next project will surpass their previous film *Dasara* in scale. The director shared a sneak peek from the announcement video shoot, reaffirming his dedication to providing an engaging product. Srikanth mentioned that he wrapped up filming for his last movie *Dasara* on March 7, 2023, as the director. Now, on September 18, 2024, he announced his next project with Nani by saying 'action'. Sudhakar Cherukuri, the producer of *Dasara*, is also producing this film. Nani also responded on his social media and said, "This one's madness is back in my life. Be prepared to be blown away (sic)"



Sharwa to work with director Sampath Nandi

Sharwanand is currently involved in several projects, with another film being revealed on Thursday. The actor has committed to his ambitious and challenging project #Sharwa38, which will be helmed by Sampath Nandi. The producer is KK Radhamohan. The creators described the narrative as an exciting historical action film taking place in the countryside of North Telangana, along the border of Telangana and Maharashtra, during the late 1960s. The narrative takes place in a society governed by terror, where blood is often the solution to various issues.

The makers stated that this movie will have a powerful storyline, intense action and emotionally charged scenes. It will mark the debut of Sampath Nandi and Sharwa in a film that will introduce never-before-seen storylines and elements in cinema. The film-makers have also revealed that this movie will be available in every language upon its release. Director Sampath Nandi, who has a reputation for his long-term dedication to his work, put significant effort into developing this story with the intention of presenting Sharwanand in a fresh and unique role, as stated by the creators. Sharwa will be going through a total transformation for this role, which is based on the 1960s era. The music will be provided by Bheems Ceciroleo.

