

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

— Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Union Minister P4

Pak feeling pain watching democracy in J&K: Rajnath



INDIA TO CLOCK 7 PC GROWTH DESPITE HEADWINDS: DELOITTE



Megastar Chiranjeevi enters into Guinness

WORLD RECORDS



DON'T MISS...

List of damaged houses sent to...

Eluru District Collector K Vetri Selvi has said that the lists of damaged houses due to heavy rains and floods were sent to the village secretariats, Tahsildar and RDO offices. The Collector asked the flood affected people to check the list and bring to her notice if there were any objections in the list. The Collector said the enumeration of loss due to heavy rains and floods was conducted and the report revealed that 207 houses were damaged due to heavy rains and floods. The information of damage to the houses was put on demonstration in the...

-PAGE: 4

Avail services offered by...

Urging the fishing community to avail the benefits offered through the Kisan credit card, Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday said it would help boost their trade. At a BJP membership drive here, Sitharaman said members of the fishing community who's applications were rejected by banks and financial institutions, may approach her for redressal. Prime Minister Narendra Modi felt the need for a separate department to address the issues...

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Majority of users say they will stop...

Around 75 per cent UPI users will stop using it if any transaction charge is levied on the service, a survey by LocalCircles said on Sunday. The survey found that 38 per cent of users make over 50 per cent of their payment transactions via UPI instead of debit, credit or any other form of digital transaction. "Only 22 per cent UPI users surveyed are willing to bear a transaction fee on payments, 75 per cent of respondents stated that they will stop using UPI if a transaction fee is introduced," the survey said...

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India trumps Bangladesh with...

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

-SPORTS

Public happy with TDP-led NDA govt: CM

ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF FREE LPG CYLINDERS FROM DEEPAVALI

SIT to probe Tirumala ghee adulteration charges

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

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

Naidu noted that a Santhi Homam Panchagavya Prokshana (ritualistic sanitisation) will be held on Monday at Tirumala to undo the alleged desecrations.

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

to laddus that animal fats were allegedly used to make them and added that they are enraged.

"An IG level or above officer manned SIT will be formed. It will probe all the reasons, misuse of power and give a report to the government. The government will take stringent action to avoid recurrence (laddu adulteration), there is no compromise," said Naidu.

The CM said nobody has the right to play with people's sentiments. Further, Naidu noted that a Santhi Homam Panchagavya Prokshana (ritualistic sanitisation) will be held on Monday at Tirumala to undo the alleged desecrations.

"From 6 am to 10 am on Monday, Santhi Homam Panchagavya Prokshana will be done at the Bangaru Bavi (golden well) Yagashala (ritual place) in Srivari (Sri Venkateswara) temple," he said.

Naidu said, as per the earlier conditions, the ghee supplier should have at least three years of experience. However, after Jagan Mohan Reddy came to power, it was reduced to one year. The CM also said that the required turnover of the supplier was also reduced to Rs 150 crore from the earlier Rs 250 crore, among other relaxations. **Continued on Page 2**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu in a teleconference on Sunday with party MLAs and activists, reaffirmed the Telugu Desam Party's (TDP) commitment to honouring their sacrifices. He assured the leaders that all nominated posts will be filled soon and expressed confidence that the people have accepted the TDP-led NDA regime in the State, which has completed 100 days, as a "good government."

During the call, Naidu urged party workers to reach out to every household to explain the welfare measures being implemented and highlight the positive steps taken by the State government. He announced that the free cooking gas cylinder scheme will be launched from Deepavali and condemned the previous government's adulteration of the sacred Tirumala laddus, assuring that those responsible will be held accountable.

"We are realigning all systems and correcting the mistakes made by the previous government," Naidu stated. He also revealed an increase in accidental insurance for party activists from ₹2 lakh to ₹5 lakh and highlighted efforts to create employment opportunities for the youth through the Skill Development and Empowerment

- **TDP's commitment:** Naidu assures party MLAs and activists of filling all nominated posts soon and praised the TDP-led NDA government's "good governance" in its first 100 days.
- **Outreach programme:** Party workers urged to explain govt's welfare schemes to the public.

- **Reforms and Initiatives:** CM condemns the previous government's handling of Tirumala laddus, announces 'Operation Cleansing' at Tirumala, and reveals the increase in accidental insurance for party workers.

- **Employment Generation:** He emphasises skill development, TDP's NRI wing's efforts to provide overseas employment, and plans to attract industries to create jobs.

- **Development projects:** Naidu confirms ₹12,127 crore funding for the Polavaram project, a ₹15,000 crore package for Amaravati, and opening of 175 new Anna Canteens, with more planned.

- **Housing and cyclone relief:** The government plans to build 8.25 lakh homes for the poor by 2029, and flood victims in Vijayawada will receive support.

- **Energy and industrial corridors:** An action plan for solar energy is being drafted, and the Centre sanctioned three industrial parks, alongside investments in national highways and water resources.



wing. Naidu elaborated on training programs being offered through the TDP NRI wing, aimed at providing employment opportunities abroad for students. He assured that work is already underway to fill the nominated posts, emphasizing that hard-working individuals will receive due recognition.

He announced the initiation of "Operation Cleansing" at Tirumala, stressing that only devotional chants should echo atop the hills.

Addressing the previous government's failure to conduct a single DSC (District Selection Committee) exam, he pointed out that he has already cleared the first file for the DSC and has taken steps to revoke the Land Titling Act as promised.

The Chief Minister reiterated his commitment to creating substantial employment opportunities by attracting industrialists to set up their units in the state. He men-

tioned that Pattadar passbooks will be issued to landowners with an official seal. Naidu also noted that 175 Anna Canteens have been opened in 100 days, with plans for additional canteens in every Assembly segment soon.

"We aim to build 8.25 lakh housing units for the poor by 2029. After the recent cyclone, we are committed to supporting the flood victims in Vijayawada," he added. **Continued on Page 2**

PIL in SC seeks SIT probe into Tirupati laddu row

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

The petition filed by Surjit Singh Yadav, a farmer and the president of the Hindu Sena, has contended that the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), by serving "laddu prasadam" prepared using animal fat instead of ghee to devotees at the Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple, has ridiculed the Hindu religion and outraged the sentiments of Hindus. The plea has said the allegation of using animal fat in preparing the "laddu prasadam" at the Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple has shaken the conscience of the Hindu community and outraged the religious feelings and sentiments of its members.

The TTD is the official custodian of the Sri Venkateswara temple in Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh.

"The petition has been filed for the benefit of the public in general, who may be incapable of accessing the court themselves on account of being not fully/properly equipped, financially as well as legally, and thus, in no position to resort to the remedy of 'Public Interest Litigation'," the plea has said.

3 medicos swept away in flash flood

PNS ■ PADERU

A devastating incident occurred at the Maredumilli Jalatarangini waterfall on Sunday, leaving three medical students missing after being swept away by a sudden flood. Five students from Alluri Seetharama Raju Academy of Medical Sciences (ASRAM), Eluru, had visited the waterfall, unaware of the impending danger. Heavy rainfall in the region caused the waterfall to overflow, creating treacherous conditions. While swimming, the group was caught off guard by the sudden surge. A local witness described the scene: "The students were having a good time when the flood hit without any warning. It was a terrifying sight."

Two students managed to reach a nearby causeway and were rescued by locals. A rescuer recalled, "We were able to get to them just



in time, but the other three were already swept away by the time we could react."

The missing students have been identified as Harshadeep, Soumya, and Amrita.

Local police swiftly launched search and rescue operations but faced challenges due to heavy rain and poor visibility.

An official involved in the operation stated, "The conditions are making it very challenging for us to conduct the search." Authorities are urging caution in the area, advising people to avoid visiting the waterfall during heavy rainfall. **Continued on Page 2**

TIRUPATI LADDU 'DESECRATION'

Dy CM Pawan begins Deeksha

Wonders why TTD Board is silent amid the reported impurity in the offerings

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan began an 11-day Deeksha on Sunday at the Sri Dasavatara Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Namburu, Guntur district. This vow follows the controversy surrounding the alleged adulteration of the Tirupati laddu offering, and Kalyan aims to seek forgiveness from Lord Venkateswara while wearing the deeksha mala.

During his Deeksha, Pawan Kalyan questioned why officials and board members of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams



(TTD) remained silent amid the reported impurity in the offerings. He criticised TTD employees for their inaction, describing it as a grave mistake that prompted him to undertake this vow. Kalyan clarified that his actions were not motivated by political gain or an intention to blame the government.

He demanded that those responsible be held accountable and urged the TTD board to assume its responsibilities. Kalyan posed a pointed question: would Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy remain silent if such incidents occurred in a church or mosque? **Continued on Page 2**

Beneficiaries' lists displayed following flood loss enumeration

VMC Commissioner Dhyanchandra inspects registration of objections

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Following the completion of flood loss enumeration, the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) has displayed beneficiaries' lists at all 32 Ward Secretariats in flood-affected areas of the city as of Sunday. The recent floods affect-

ing the Krishna River and Budameru Rivulet impacted 32 out of the 64 VMC divisions.

Under the direction of the state government, the NTR district administration and VMC authorities conducted a thorough enumeration to assess the damages. After careful scrutiny, the benefi-

ciaries' lists were finalised to facilitate compensation from the state government. These lists were then posted on the notice boards at all Ward Secretariats, with authorities also inviting and registering public objections after verifying the lists.

In this context, VMC Commissioner HM

Dhyanchandra inspected the process of registering beneficiaries' objections in KV Kandrika (NSC Bose Nagar), Payakapuram, Prakash Nagar, Vambay Colony, and Rajiv Nagar on Sunday. He spoke with beneficiaries regarding the enumeration lists and encouraged them to register any complaints if they had concerns about the compiled lists.



BJYM protests at Jagan's house: P2

Quad grouping not against anyone: Modi

PNS ■ WILMINGTON (US)

Top leaders of Quad unveiled major steps to expand maritime security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and called for lasting peace in Ukraine with Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserting that the grouping is for a rules-based global order and respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations.

In the annual Quad summit hosted by outgoing US President Joe Biden at his hometown state of Delaware, the leaders, without directly naming China, expressed serious concern over the situation in the East and South China Seas and condemned the "dangerous" use of coast guard and maritime militia vessels. Besides Modi and Biden, the fourth in-person summit was attended by Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese.

Leaders unveil new maritime security steps



Amid growing global concerns over Chinese assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific, the Quad leaders strongly opposed any "destabilising or unilateral" actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion.

"We seek a region where no country dominates and no country is dominated -- one where all countries are free from coercion, and can exercise their agency to determine their futures," the leaders said in a

joint statement.

In his address, Modi said a free, open, inclusive, and prosperous Indo-Pacific is a shared priority of the Quad.

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

Awkward: Biden fumbles again while introducing Modi

WASHINGTON: In yet another gaffe, US President Joe Biden experienced an embarrassing moment during a Quad event in Wilmington, Delaware, when he struggled to introduce Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This brief confusion, captured on camera, has sparked comments on social media. After finishing his speech at the Cancer Moonshot event on Saturday, Biden, 81, appeared to have forgotten the name of the next leader who was going to speak -- and asked his staffers. "So, I want to thank you all for being here. And now, who am I introducing next?" After a pause of a few seconds, he asked, this time in a louder voice, "Who's next?" There was an awkward silence in the audience.

Govt increases focus on 'Operation Budameru'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector, Dr G Srujana, has stated that the recent heavy rains and floods inundated 32 wards in Vijayawada city and surrounding areas, resulting in significant losses to the public. The State government promptly addressed the situation, and special attention is being given to prevent future flood disasters.

In an informal interaction with the media at the Collector's camp office on Sunday, Dr Srujana discussed 'Operation Budameru'. She assured that the government will take steps to identify encroachments without causing inconvenience to anyone. She added that a preliminary survey was conducted, with officials from Land Records, Irrigation, VMC City Planning, and Revenue departments jointly inspecting the areas and recording



NTR District Collector, Dr G Srujana

details of encroachments based on survey numbers.

The Collector informed that from A Konduru to Vijayawada, there are 40 villages in NTR district through which the Budameru canal flows, covering 2,700 acres. Of this, around 270 acres have been encroached

upon for cultivation, and 3,000 houses along with 80 structures have also been identified. Dr Srujana explained that 'Operation Budameru' will proceed only after a thorough review of all encroachments, ensuring minimal disruption to the public.

Under the directives of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, the district administration worked diligently to assist flood-affected residents. Special teams were deployed to assess the damages suffered by the victims.

The Collector confirmed that the enumeration process in 32 wards and 179 secretariats in Vijayawada urban areas has been completed. To ensure no family is missed, lists have been displayed at the secretariats, and any left-out families can still apply to be included. This process is expected to conclude by Monday evening.

Monday Mirchi

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

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

KCR THROWS A SHADE AT TRANSFERS

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

HEALTH DEPARTMENT TRANSFERS FUEL DATA LEAKS BENEFITING BRS

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

FOUR IPS OFFICERS STIR RUMORS OF TRANSFER

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

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

IAS OFFICERS GRUMBLE OVER MIDDLE LEVEL OFFICERS POSTING

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

A NEW ERA FOR TTD WITH SYAMALA RAO AT THE HELM

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

TESTING TIMES FOR IPS TRIO

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

--Yours truly

Ministers express grief over death of medicos

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Housing and I&PR K Parthasarathy and Minister for Tourism Kandula Durgesh expressed grief and shock over the death of three medicos at a waterfall at Maredumilli village in ASR district.

The I&PR Minister directed the officials to intensify the search operation to trace missing medicos. The Minister, who was participating in 'Idi Manchi Prabutwam' at Masunuru Eluru district, got the information about the drowning of three medical college students in a waterfall.

The ASR district Collector explained about the incident to the Minister. The Minister directed the officials to provide the best medical treatment to the students who were undergoing treatment in hospital. Meanwhile, Minister for Tourism Kandula Durgesh expressed shock and grief over the incident.

Jagan urges PM to act against AP CM's charges over laddu purity

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) chief and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging immediate action against the unfounded allegations made by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu concerning the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD).

In his letter, Jagan strongly condemned Naidu for disseminating what he termed malicious propaganda regarding the purity of the ghee used in the preparation of the sacred Tirumala laddu, a prasadam revered by millions of Hindu devotees worldwide. He argued that Naidu's politically motivated statements have not only hurt the sentiments of devotees but also tarnished the sanctity of the world-renowned TTD.

Jagan emphasised the rigorous procurement processes and quality checks established at TTD to ensure that only the highest quality ingredients are used in the preparation of prasadam.



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He detailed the stringent e-tendering process, NABL-accredited laboratory tests, and multi-tier inspections conducted prior to the use of any materials, noting that such measures were in place even

during the TDP regime. Expressing concern over the potential damage these allegations could inflict on TTD's reputation and the faith of millions, Jagan urged Prime Minister Modi to reprimand Naidu for his actions and to help restore trust among devotees.

This letter comes on the heels of the completion of 100 days of the new government, during which Naidu made his controversial remarks at a political meeting, two months after the ghee tanker in question had been rejected by TTD's rigorous quality control system.

Jagan reiterated that Naidu's baseless claims are a transparent attempt to divert attention from his government's failures and further his political agenda.

The YSRCP Chief called for PM Modi's intervention to safeguard the sanctity of the Tirumala temple and to prevent any further affront to the sentiments of devotees.

CM invited to Brahminsavams at Tirumala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TTD has invited Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu to attend the annual Brahminsavams festival to be held from October 4 to 12 at the holy shrine of Tirumala.

TTD EO J Syamala Rao along with the Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdhary, have extended the Brahminsavams invitation to the CM at his residence in Undavalli, Vijayawada on Sunday. On this occasion, one of the TTD Pradhana archakas of



Tirumala temple Venugopala Deekshitulu, and Vedic pundits offered Veda Aseervachanam to the CM. Later he was also presented with Srivari Tirtha Prasadam.

Kollu for special training centres for fishermen's kids

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Mines and Excise Kollu Ravindra emphasized the need for unity within the fishermen community to drive development. Speaking at a meeting of fishermen associations organized by former MP Mopidevi Venkataramana in Vijayawada on Sunday, the Minister pledged to advocate for the establishment of special centres to provide enhanced training for the children of fishermen.

Ravindra expressed his commitment to ensuring that no fisherman suffers due to poverty. He highlighted the pressing issue of poverty within the community and called for initiatives to eradicate it completely. The Minister recalled the significant contributions made by former Minister Nadakuditi Narasimha Rao, who played a pivotal role in the establishment of special residential schools for fishermen's children. He also acknowledged Chandrababu Naidu's efforts in approving pensions for fishermen starting at the age of 50.

"Despite thousands of crores allocated through central and



state schemes, we have yet to fully utilize these resources. We may be the ones who fish, but do we even have a single processing unit to our name? This reflects our backwardness. I take it upon myself to secure as much funding as possible for our community from the central government in the coming five years. We must also focus on improving education and job opportunities. I will advocate for the establishment of special centres to provide better training for our children," stated Minister Kollu Ravindra.

The meeting also saw participation from former MLC Karri Padma and other prominent leaders.

BJYM protests at Jagan's house

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM), the youth wing of the BJP, staged a protest outside the residence of former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy in Tadepalli on Sunday. The demonstrators demanded an apology from Reddy regarding allegations of animal fat being used in the preparation of Tirupati laddus during the tenure of the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP).

Tension mounted as protesters

raised slogans and sat outside the gates of Jagan's residence, holding banners that called for an apology to Hindus for the alleged use of adulterated ghee in the famed laddu prasadam at the Tirumala temple. They accused Jagan Mohan Reddy of hurting Hindu sentiments through his actions.

Police intervened and detained several protesters to manage the situation. The controversy gained traction after Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu claimed last week that ghee mixed with animal fat had been used for making

the Tirupati laddus during the YSRCP's administration. He alleged that YSRCP leaders had tarnished the sanctity of the hill shrine. The ruling Telugu Desam Party (TDP) supported these claims by citing laboratory reports indicating the presence of animal fat in the ghee. A test conducted at the Centre of Analysis and Learning in Livestock and Food (CALF) at the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), Gujarat, purportedly confirmed findings of beef tallow, lard, and fish oil in the ghee.

Public happy...

Continued from Page 1

Naidu highlighted that the Centre has released ₹12,127 crore for the Polavaram project and set a timeline for completing Phase 1. He also announced a ₹15,000 crore package for Amaravati's development, with construction set to begin shortly. An action plan for solar power generation is being formulated, with Naidu advocating for solar energy to replace thermal power in the future. Additionally, he stated that the Centre has sanctioned three industrial parks for the state and promised special packages for the backward districts in Rayalaseema, Prakasam, and North Andhra.

Rich tributes paid to Sitaram Yechury

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM), Andhra Pradesh Committee held a condolence meeting on Sunday at the Makineni Basava Punnaiah Vignana Kendram (MBVK) in Vijayawada to honour the late CPM General Secretary Sitaram Yechury. The gathering saw the presence of several prominent leaders who came to pay their respects.

Among those in attendance were CPM Politburo Members M.A. Baby and B.V. Raghavulu, State Information and Public Relations and Housing Minister K.P. Sarathy, Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) President Y.S. Sharmila Reddy, CPI State Secretary K. Ramakrishna, CPM State Secretary V. Srinivasa Rao, and YSRCP senior leader and former Minister Ambati Rambabu. The leaders paid floral tributes to Yechury, reflecting on his significant contributions to Indian politics and the Left movement.

During the meeting, many



I&PR Minister Kollu Parthasarathy, CPI(M) Politburo members M.A. Baby, B.V. Raghavulu, party State secretary V. Srinivasa Rao, CPI State secretary K. Ramakrishna, APCC president Y.S. Sharmila, former ministers Ambati Rambabu and Vadde Sobhanrao Rao, and other party leaders participated in the condolence meeting.

leaders remembered Yechury as a secular leader whose demise represented a significant loss for the nation. M.A. Baby expressed his sorrow, stating that it was difficult for him to speak about Yechury, with whom he had worked for over three decades.

He highlighted Yechury's remarkable leadership qualities and his journey alongside stalwarts of the CPM, including B.T. Ranadive and Makineni Basava

Punnaiah. Minister K.P. Sarathy noted that Yechury had expanded left ideologies across the country and had worked tirelessly for the welfare of the poor. He expressed deep sadness at the loss of such a prominent Left leader. Sarathy also recalled Yechury's beginnings as a leader in the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Students' Union in New Delhi, which paved the way for his rise in politics.

The meeting concluded with reflections from former Minister Vadde Sobhanrao Rao, B.V. Raghavulu, V. Srinivasa Rao, and other leaders, all honouring the legacy of Sitaram Yechury.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Krishna Paksha
Tithi:	
Shashthi:	Sep 22 03:43 PM to Sep 23 01:50 PM
Saptami:	Sep 23 01:50 PM to Sep 24 12:39 PM
Nakshatram:	
Rohini:	Sep 22 11:02 PM to Sep 23 10:07 PM
Mrigashirsha:	Sep 23 10:07 PM to Sep 24 09:54 PM
Rahukalam:	7:38 AM to 9:08 AM
Yamagandam:	10:38 AM to 12:08 PM
Varjyam:	03:40 AM to 05:15 AM
Gulika:	1:38 PM to 3:08 PM
Amritakalam:	07:02 PM to 08:35 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	11:44 AM to 12:32 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Scattered Thunderstorms
Temp: 33°
Humidity: 77%
Sunrise: 5:57 AM
Sunset: 6:03 PM
Updated: September 22, 2024 5:00 PM

3 medicos swept...

Continued from Page 1

The incident serves as a stark reminder of the dangers posed by natural attractions during extreme weather conditions.

As the search for the missing students continues, concerns are being raised about the need for improved warning systems and safety measures at tourist spots.

The tragic incident has left the medical college community in shock, with colleagues and friends of the missing students anxiously awaiting news.

Dy CM Pawan begins...

Continued from Page 1

He called for discussions in both the cabinet and the assembly on this matter and suggested that the investigation be handed over to the CBI, asserting that he believed the public would support his stance.

Kalyan also stressed the need to identify the intermediary who purportedly provided ghee at a lower price. Reflecting on the previous YSRCP regime, he alleged that significant changes had been made to worship methods and that tickets were sold under the guise of the Srivani Trust. He accused the YSRCP of desecrating around 300 temples during its rule and emphasized that sentiments of all faiths should be respected. "We have long been raising concerns about the adulteration and lack of quality in prasadam (offerings)," he stated,

calling for a white paper on TTD. Kalyan expressed shock that a lakh of laddus were sent to Ayodhya, asserting that the YSRCP accuses him of political motivations. He recalled how, during the destruction of the idol in Ramatheertham, he chose not to politicize the tragedy. Kalyan remarked that remaining silent in the face of such attacks is a grave mistake, stating, "No one has the right to defile the principles of dharma. We are not a government that seeks revenge. It has become habitual for the YSRCP to make mistakes, and this needs to stop." He criticized the TTD board members, Y.V. Subba Reddy and Dharma Reddy, for their failure to act and insisted that accountability must prevail. "If similar incidents happened in a church or mosque, there would be widespread protests.

'Mee Kosam' in NTR dist resumes today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The NTR district administration is set to resume the Public Grievance Redressal System (PGRS), popularly known as 'Mee Kosam,' from September 23, following nearly a month-long break. The last 'Mee Kosam' programme was held on August 19, but subsequent sessions were cancelled due to public holidays and the recent flood.



NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana

On Sunday, NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana urged the residents to attend the programme and present their grievances before district officials. The weekly programme is a key platform for addressing public issues and ensuring efficient governance in the district, she said.

Further, she stated that the Collector staff and divisional, municipal and mandal-level officials should conduct the 'Mee Kosam programme' at 10 am on Monday. The NTR district-level programme will be conducted at the Pingali Venkaiah Meeting Hall on the premises of the collectorate. She asked the people to utilise the opportunity.

'Payment for grain in farmers' accounts within 48 hours'

Free gas cylinders to be distributed from Diwali

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

State Agriculture Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaaidu has announced a series of farmer-centric initiatives during the Idi Manchi Prabhutam event in Kothapalli village, marking 100 days of the coalition government's formation. One of the major announcements was that payments for purchased grain would be deposited directly into farmers' accounts within 48 hours. "Farmers are the backbone of our State, and we are committed to ensuring timely payments," said Atchannaaidu. He also emphasised efforts to provide investment assistance and revealed that free gas cylinders would be distributed during Diwali, under Chandrababu Naidu's six welfare schemes.



During the event, Atchannaaidu urged villagers to bring forward any issues they face. Villagers raised concerns about infrastructure, such as electricity and road conditions. The Minister assured them, stating, "Our government is prioritising public health, and as part of that effort, we will provide drinking water to Kothapalli through the Sujaladhara scheme."

Atchannaaidu criticised the previous government for accumulating Rs 12 lakh crore in debt and for the large-scale exploitation of natural resources. "The mismanagement and debt burden left by the previous government have caused irreparable harm to the State's economy," he said. He expressed gratitude to voters for electing 22 MPs

from the coalition, which strengthened the party's presence at the Centre. He also highlighted how Central government cooperation has enabled the implementation of welfare schemes within just 100 days of governance. "Despite facing challenges, we have already increased pensions by Rs 1,000 to Rs 4,000 and distributed Rs 4,408 crore to 65.18 lakh people in a single day," Atchannaaidu said. Addressing infrastructure needs, the Minister promised that every village would see the construction of cement roads. He also announced the reopening of Anna canteens across the State. Regarding education, Atchannaaidu announced that 16,437 teaching positions would be filled through the Mega DSC recruitment drive. The Minister also addressed public concerns over liquor prices, assuring that quality liquor would be made available at affordable rates. He further guaranteed that government employees would be paid on time. "Our govern-

ment is committed to providing clean drinking water to every household, resolving power problems, and improving the overall quality of life in the constituency," Atchannaaidu said. Reflecting on the coalition's achievements, Atchannaaidu expressed satisfaction with the first 100 days of governance and announced future plans to provide loans to various caste groups. He also committed to supporting widows. In response to rumours that the volunteer system would be dismantled under the Telugu Desam government, Atchannaaidu clarified, "The volunteer system has not been altered since August 2023, and there are no plans to weaken it." Atchannaaidu affirmed the government's commitment to fulfilling all election promises. He also addressed concerns regarding the alleged mixing of animal fat in laddu prasadam at the Tirupati Venkateswara Swamy temple, stating that the matter is being investigated.

400 mobile phones recovered using CEIR, CHATBOT

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The officials at the NTR District Police Commissionerate successfully handed over 400 mobile phones, valued at Rs.50 lakh, to their rightful owners during an event held at the Police Command Control Room on the Armed Reserve Police Grounds in Vijayawada on Sunday. Thanks to the efforts made by the Cyber Crime Police, the mobile phone recovery is continuing in the district. Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhara Babu handed over the phones to their owners.

These phones were recovered with technical support from the Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) and the CHATBOT portal. This marks the third phase of the Police Commissionerate's mobile phone recovery drive, which focuses on helping individuals retrieve their lost or stolen devices. The initiative is part of the ongoing efforts to enhance public service by addressing mobile theft complaints with technical support.

Police Commissioner Rajasekhara Babu said that all the phones were recovered

Police Commissioner hands over phones to owners



NTR District Police Commissioner Rajasekhara Babu handing over the recovered mobile phone to a senior citizen in Vijayawada on Sunday

from Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and other States. Soon after receiving complaints from the phone owners, the Cyber Crime Police sent the IMEI numbers to the service providers. With the support of the CHATBOT portal, which

was developed by the Central government, the police recovered the mobile phones, he said.

He said that as many as 1,785 phones have been recovered so far. In the first phase, 307 phones were found and in

the second phase, the number of mobiles recovered was 628, he said. People should make use of CEIR and CHATBOT services to recover their lost phones, he urged. He also lauded the Cyber Crime Police.

He said the Police Department is aiming to create awareness on this system by downloading the Cyber Crime Citizen App for four lakh citizens. They have covered as many as 18,000 people. The target will be achieved in the next two to three months. People can download the app using the QR code, he said.

Rajasekhara Babu warned the public that some people are demanding money saying that their phones were hacked. People should not believe such phone calls and inform the police immediately. A person has lost Rs.1.70 crore. If anybody receives fake calls, complain to the number 1930 soon, he said.

The Commissioner gave directives to the police officials regarding the working of the CC cameras installed at traffic junctions to monitor the traffic in the city. Later, he spoke to the officials regarding the functioning of Dial 100 and 112 and instructed them to swiftly respond to the phone calls.

Deputy Police Commissioner Gouthami Sali, ADCPs G Ramakrishna, M Raja Rao and others were present.

Adulteration scandal: Ghee-based sweets under scrutiny

Two prominent establishments have priced their products much lower than what pure ghee-based sweets should cost

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Ghee-based sweets, once cherished for their rich flavour, have become the centre of a growing controversy in Visakhapatnam. Reports suggest that many local sweet shops are deceiving customers by selling sweets made with adulterated ghee, falsely claiming to use pure ghee.

Two prominent establishments have recently faced criticism for their misleading practices. They have lured customers with enticing offers like "Vedi Vedi Neti Bobbatlu" (Hot sweetened flatbreads) and priced their products significantly lower than what pure ghee-based sweets should cost. Sweets priced between Rs 230 and Rs 260 per kilogram raise suspicions, as pure ghee in Visakhapatnam typically costs Rs. 600 or more per kg. Visakha Dairy sells it at Rs 660 per kg, and organic ghee from desi cows can reach up to Rs 2,500

per kg. The high cost reflects the labour-intensive process involved in producing ghee, as one kg requires approximately 15 litres of milk.

Food safety officers have warned that sweets made with such 'ghee' are likely to be adulterated with cheaper substances. "It's impossible to find quality ghee at such low prices," says GV Apparao, Food Safety Officer for Division - 3. "Suppliers are either diluting ghee with substances like dalda (hydrogenated vegetable oil) or using cheaper fats like cow or pork fat."

Apparao also highlighted the telltale signs of adulterated ghee. "The oil tends to float on top, separating from the substance below, and it doesn't melt completely when heated," he explained. He cautioned consumers that adulterated ghee often contains harmful additives like palm oil, animal fats, and chemical dyes, posing serious health risks.



'Adali Viewpoint' set to turn into major tourist attraction

Collector suggests showcasing region's rich tribal heritage through art exhibitions and a food festival

PNS ■ PARVATHIPURAM

The scenic Adali Viewpoint in the Parvathipuram-Manyam district, located at the highest elevation in the region, is poised to become a prominent tourist destination. Its inauguration on September 27, coinciding with World Tourism Day, will offer visitors breathtaking panoramic views of the Hiramandalam reservoir and the surrounding landscapes.

District Collector A Shyam Prasad highlighted the significance of the new attraction, stating, "Adali Viewpoint offers visitors an unparalleled experience of our region's natural splendour. With its panoramic views, tented accommodation, and a restaurant, this spot is set to become a key tourist attraction."

During a recent review meeting on Sunday, Prasad also underscored the importance of logistics and upkeep at the site. "Vehicle traffic and parking should be well-managed. Directional signs should be placed at all turns. Selfie points should be set up. The viewpoint should be well-maintained," he said.

Further, he proposed incorporating technology to enhance visitor engagement. "A QR code should be created to provide information about the viewpoint and its facilities." He also stressed the need to showcase the region's rich tribal heritage through cultural activities such as tribal art exhibitions and a food festival to attract tourists. "Arrangements should be made

to showcase tribal art forms. A food festival should be organised, ensuring high-quality food to attract tourists," he added.

The district's tourism potential will also be enhanced by the inauguration of a 5D theatre at the NTR Adventure Park in Seethampeta. An official from the Tourism Department commented, "The NTR Adventure Park is already well-known for its thrilling amusements, but the 5D theatre will take the visitor experience to the next level. We expect a boost in the number of tourists, especially from neighbouring States."

The inaugural ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. on September 27, followed by the World Tourism Festival at the NTR Adventure Park at 3 p.m.

YSRCP condemns attack on party office

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP has strongly condemned the attack on its central office in Tadepalli by BJP youth wing members on Sunday. Speaking after the incident, a group of YSRCP leaders including Malladi Vishnu, Lella Appireddy, Monditoka Arun Kumar, Devineni Avinash, Pothin Mahesh, and Ambati Rambabu criticised Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for making 'baseless allegations' regarding animal fat in Tirumala laddus. They accused him of diverting attention from the privatisation of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant.



The YSRCP pointed out that the National Dairy Development Board's report was released during Chandrababu's tenure and that TTD had already rejected adulterated ghee.

The YSRCP leaders condemned the 'use of sacred institutions like TTD for political gains' and expressed disappointment over BJP's involvement in the attack, seeing it as a conspiracy to discredit former Chief Minister

YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Rambabu apologised on Chandrababu to apologise for his allegations and perform penance instead of engaging in misleading political tactics.

Collector seeks public feedback on 'Swarna Andhra 2047'

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

District Collector Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar has issued an open invitation for public feedback and suggestions to shape the district's development plan under the ambitious "Swarna Andhra @ 2047" initiative. Addressing the media on Sunday, Collector Pundkar emphasised the importance of public participation, stating, "We are seeking input from the people and public representatives to ensure our district-level plan aligns with the overall Swarna Andhra 2047 vision." He added, "Every department in the district will play a pivotal role in achieving this goal."



The Swarnandhra @2047 project is part of the national initiative Vikas Bharat, aiming for an advanced and developed India by 2047. To gather feedback, various activities are scheduled from September 21 to October 5, including meetings with members of parliament, legislators, district-level officials, farmers, bankers, and various associations. "We are organising discussions with key stakeholders across different sectors to gather insights that will be incorporated into

the district's development plan," he added.

Additionally, oratorical and quiz competitions, along with debates, will be held at schools, intermediate colleges, and higher education institutions to engage the younger generation. The aim is to raise awareness about the Swarnandhra@2047 vision. At the grassroots-level, gram sabhas will be conducted to ensure that the voice of every citizen is heard.

"The public's input on sectors such as agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, and irrigation will be vital," the Collector stated. "We are looking at expanding agricultural output, enhancing intercropping systems, and promoting natural farming practices. Moreover, we are

integrating plans for industrial development, tourism, and food processing units in the district."

Encouraging public participation, the Collector urged citizens to provide their opinions through a QR code-based survey, which features 11 questions aimed at collecting detailed public feedback. "We want every citizen to actively contribute their ideas and suggestions for the district's future," he added. With community input and strategic planning, the district is set to play a key role in achieving the broader goal of Swarnandhra@2047, ensuring a brighter, more prosperous future for all. The finalised plan will be submitted to the government by October 15.

GGH in Nidadavole will be upgraded as 100-bed hospital: Durgesh

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Minister for Tourism Kandula Durgesh assured of upgrading the government hospital in Nidadavole as a 100-bed hospital and providing drinking water under Jal Jeevan Mission scheme. The Minister participated in a programme organized in Nidadavolu town on Sunday. Addressing the gathering, the Tourism Minister assured of upgrading the government in Nidadavolu as a 100-bed hospital and providing required infrastructure to serve better to the patients. The required number of doctors and medical staff would also be

appointed to the hospital, he made it clear.

"The government has already sanctioned a mini-stadium to Nidadavolu town and the stadium will be made available to the people. The Godavari water will be brought to Nidadavolu under the Jal Jeevan Mission programme to mitigate the drinking water scarcity. Funds from the Financial Commission and the government will be allocated for the development of Nidadavolu town," the Minister revealed. He said that the TIDCO houses would be handed over to the beneficiaries and focus would be laid on sanitation in Nidadavole town.

The Minister highlighted the achievements of the coalition government including the implementation of enhanced pensions, taking steps to conduct mega DSC to fill up over 16000 teacher posts. He announced that the free gas cylinders scheme would be implemented from Deewali day. He also promised to implement free bus travel to women soon.

The Minister accompanied by the officials and party leaders participated in a house to house visit programme in Jyothi colony, NTR colony and Subbaraju Pet and interacted with the people to get feedback on the 100 days governance of



the coalition government. He distributed pamphlets on the 100 days progress of the coalition government. He listened to the grievances of the people and assured them of resolving their problems.

Talking to the media, Tourism Minister Durgesh came down heavily on the erstwhile YSRCP regime for using adulterated ghee to make sacred Laddu Prasadam of Tirumala temple. He lauded that after Vatican city, Tirumala has earned such fame as lakhs people visit the hill shrine every day. Making sacred Laddu Prasadam using inferior ghee is a big sin that has hurt the sentiments of crores of

Hindus across the world, the Minister lamented.

"Jana Sena chief and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan has undertaken a 11-day 'Prayaschit Deeksha' in Venkateswara temple at Numburu in village in Guntur district to express penance and remorse for using adulterated ghee to make Laddu Prasadam. Pawan Kalyan felt pained by the misdeeds of the YSRCP regime," the Tourism Minister observed.

Nidadavole Municipal Commissioner Bhupati, Tahsildar B Nagaraju Naik, JSP, TDP and BJP leaders were among those who took part in the programme.

List of damaged houses sent to secretariats: DC

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K Vetri Selvi has said that the lists of damaged houses due to heavy rains and floods were sent to the village secretariats, Tahasildar and RDO offices.

The Collector asked the flood affected people to check the list and bring to her notice if there were any objections in the list. The Collector said the enumeration of loss due to heavy rains and floods was conducted and the report revealed that 207 houses were damaged due to heavy rains and floods. The information of damage to the houses was put



on demonstration in the village secretariat, Tahasildar and RDO offices. The Collector held a teleconference with the officials concerned and directed them to conduct re-verification of enumeration of damage to the houses.

"If there are any objections in the list, the flood victims should immediately bring it to the attention of the Tehsildar and RDO concerned," the Collector appealed to the victims, adding that the state government has decided to hand over compensation to the victims, whose houses were damaged due to heavy rains and floods on September 25th.

Sudhakar Babu slams Jana Sena MLA for attack on Dalit officer

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former MLA TJR Sudhakar Babu has condemned the recent attack on a Dalit professor by a Jana Sena MLA in Kakinada, stating that there is no protection for Dalit officials in the State.

Speaking to the media at the party central office here on Sunday, the former MLA criticised the TDP-BJP-Jana Sena coalition leaders for inciting violence and then pretending to apologise to cover up their actions. He demanded immediate legal action against the MLA responsible for the attack.

He expressed his disappointment over Pawan Kalyan's silence on the issue, accusing him and Chandrababu Naidu of deceiving the public with false promises before elections and then resorting to threats when they couldn't fulfil their promises.

He recalled past incidents where similar compromises were made to shield perpetrators, like the case of Chintamaneni Prabhakar, who had assaulted a Dalit officer.

SEIL Energy wins second best exporter award



PNS ■ NELLORE

SEIL Energy India Limited (SEIL), one of the largest Independent Power Producers (IPP) in India, on Sunday announced that it had won the '2nd Best Exporter (Coastal)' Award for FY 2023-24 from the Paradip Port Authority in a ceremony held in Bhubaneswar.

On behalf of the Company, Capt Pawan Kumar, Head, Coal Sourcing and Logistics received the award. Winning

the award signifies the Company's commitment and dedication to excellence in every field it operates.

SEIL leverages the strategic location of Paradip Port in Odisha to export its domestic coal, which is then imported at the Adani Krishnapatnam Port in Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, to support operational requirements. Raghav Trivedi, CEO, SEIL Energy India Limited, congratulated the team for their exceptional efforts and said,

"We are proud to win this award from the Paradip Port Authority. As one of the largest independent power producers, we are committed to excellence in all aspects of our operations, and this award is a testament to our team's hard work and dedication. Our focus on sustainability and efficiency has enabled us to achieve this recognition. We will continue to strive for excellence in all our endeavours," Raghav Trivedi said.

4 youths killed as lorry collides with car



PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

In a ghastly road accident, four youths were killed when the car in which they were travelling collided with a lorry at Bukkarayakuntapalli village in Singanamala mandal in Singanamala constituency in the wee hours on Sunday.

Police said that four youths were returning from Bangalore in the car. A speeding lorry collided with the car killing Chakali Pawan, Arinivas, Mustak and S Pawan. All the deceased below 30 years of age.

SP Jagadish and other officials visited the scene of the accident. The lorry driver is absconding. The police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH in Singanamala for postmortem.



Car rams container truck, three dead

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Three persons of a family were killed and two were injured when the car in which they were travelling rams a stationary container truck at Chillakur village on Sunday.

Police said that five persons of a family went to Arunachalam in Tamil Nadu on pilgrimage in a car. When

they were going back to their native place Vanam Thoppu in Nellore, their car rams a stationary container truck. The deceased were identified as Venela (8), Jagadeesh (50) and Babu (45). The injured were shifted to the Area Hospital in Gudur. The police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH for post-mortem.

'Eat Less, Move More' — The mantra of a 101YO champion

Sriramulu recently won three gold medals at World Masters Athletics Championship held in Sweden

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

At 101 years, Vallabhajosyula Sriramulu has become a beacon of vitality and perseverance, demonstrating that age is no barrier to achieving greatness. An avid mountaineer and naval veteran, Sriramulu recently captured the world's attention by winning three gold medals at the World Masters Athletics Championship held in Sweden. Competing in the 100-year category, he triumphed in the javelin throw, discus throw, and shot put, outshining nearly 8,000 athletes from 110 countries between August 13 and August 25.

Born in Machilipatnam on July 18, 1923, Sriramulu's remarkable journey began when he joined the Royal Indian Navy in March 1944, amidst the turmoil of World War II. His Naval career spanned over 35 years, followed by a stint with the Dredging Corporation of India (DCI) before he settled in Vizag. Despite his illustrious career, it is his athletic achievements that have garnered him global acclaim. Sriramulu's mantra, "Eat less, move more," reflects his disciplined lifestyle. He proudly boasts a room full of medals and has never used a walking stick.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Sriramulu shared, "My son bought me a walker when I was 80, and for the last 20 years, it's been lying up there, untouched," he gestures towards the attic. His dedication to fitness and discipline is evident in his impressive haul of 15 gold medals, five silver medals, and two bronze medals from Asian competitions, along with eight gold and three silver medals from World Championships.

His athletic journey began with race walking and running



Vallabhajosyula Sriramulu displays his gold medals

Born in Machilipatnam on July 18, 1923, Sriramulu's remarkable journey began when he joined the Royal Indian Navy in March 1944, amidst the turmoil of World War II. His Naval career spanned over 35 years, followed by a stint with the Dredging Corporation of India (DCI) before he settled in Vizag.

post-retirement. His first major international success came in 2010 at the Asian Masters Athletics Championships, where he clinched gold medals in four events: the 5 km race walk, 400m, 800m, and 1500m runs. This victory paved the way for further triumphs, including a gold medal in the 20 km race walk at the World Masters Athletics Championships in Sacramento, California, followed by two silver medals in the 5 km and 10 km walks.

Despite facing a setback due to knee issues, Sriramulu did not let it hinder his spirit. "I had to limit myself to walking events after that," he recalls. "Two of my children, both doctors, strictly advised me to stop running. So, I stuck to walking." His resilience paid off as he won a gold medal in the 10 km race walk at the World Championships in Lyons,

France, in 2015, and later bagged three gold medals in the 5 km, 10 km, and 20 km race walks at the World Championships in Perth, Australia.

Beyond his athletic achievements, Sriramulu's adventurous spirit led him to climb Mount Kilimanjaro at the age of 79 with his son and trek to the Everest Base Camp and the Pindari Glacier. His approach to life is succinctly captured in his own words: "Live your life rigorously as long as you live without being a burden to your family, friends, or country." Vallabhajosyula Sriramulu's story is a testament to the power of resilience, discipline, and the undying spirit of adventure. His life serves as an inspiration to all, proving that with dedication and a positive mindset, one can achieve remarkable feats regardless of age.

Plea to withdraw GST on insurance premiums

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

South Central Zone Insurance Employees Federation general secretary TVNS Rabinathan has demanded that the GST Council should consider the withdrawal of 18 per cent GST on the insurance premiums as it is very high, and is causing a huge financial burden on the incomes of the policy holders. He said that subsequent to the corona pandemic, the need for health insurance became an important element in people's daily life. Crores of people still have no access to health insurance due to burdensome GST. The 56th South Central Zone Insurance Employees Federation meeting was held at



MBVK Bhawan on Sunday. About 500 representatives from various States participated in the meeting. Rabinathan, who was the chief guest of the conference, urged the Central government that if the insurance sector is made more pow-

erful, the share of premium in GDP will increase. He demanded cancellation of 18 per cent GST levied by the Central government on insurance and health insurance premiums. He said that under the aus-

pices of All India Insurance Employees Association, more than 300 members of Parliament and many Union Ministers are presenting petitions and there was a large-scale discussion on this issue in the Parliament. He said that the NDA government under the leadership of BJP, which came to power after the 2024 elections, is continuing economic reforms and is preparing to take the privatisation policies further in the banking and insurance sectors.

Division president J Sudhakar, general secretary G Kishore Kumar, LIC Senior Division Manager G Sudhakar Babu and leaders of various associations were present.

AMRUT SCHEME SCAM

Centre will respond if KTR complains: Bandi Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Reacting to the allegations of BRS Working President KT Rama Rao that corruption took place in Amrut Scheme tenders, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar said that the Centre will order a probe if KTR complains to the Centre.

Speaking to the media at Karimnagar on Sunday, Sanjay said that there is a secret deal between the BRS and the Congress. The BRS will merge with the Congress any day. KTR has been making allegations instead of facing the BJP, Sanjay said.

He said that the BJP is not against HYDRABAD, however, the Congress government should take action against BRS leaders as most



encroachments took place during BRS rule. Sanjay said that AIMIM chief Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi is helping terrorists. The AIMIM and the Owaisi family have made the Old City a haven for ter-

rorists. The AIMIM has made the Old City a centre of Rohingyas and terrorists. Every terrorist arrested in the country had links with Hyderabad, he said.

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

Free bus travel, gas cylinders from Diwali: Min

PNS ■ RAYACHOTI

Minister for Transport and Sports M Ramaprasad Reddy has reiterated that the schemes of free bus travel for women and free gas cylinders will be implemented from the ensuing Diwali.

The Minister participated in the 'Idi Manchi Prabutwam' programme organised at Sibyala village on Sunday in Annamayya district. Addressing the gathering, Minister Ramaprasad Reddy assured of transforming Rayachoti constituency as a developed constituency in the next five years.

He said that the government is aimed at providing the benefits of welfare schemes to all eligible people and implement the schemes transparently, stating that in the 100 days of formation of the coalition government, various welfare schemes have been implemented and people have recognised that this is a good government.

"The government is taking steps to implement the flagship schemes of free bus travel to women and providing domes-



tic gas cylinders at free of cost from Dipawali. The government will implement all the assurances it has made to the people during the election campaign and at the same time development will also take place across the State," the Transport Minister asserted, adding that the modalities for implementing the free bus travel are being formulated.

The Minister recalled that in the past, pensions used to be given only to a few people, but now NTR Bharosa social security pensions are given to all eligible people, disregarding caste, religion and region. He highlighted that as per the promise, the amount of pension was enhanced to benefit the elderly, widows and the disabled. The government has taken

the implementation of NTR Bharosa pension distribution programme prestigiously and 100 per cent distribution of pensions of various categories was achieved as the scheme is implemented transparently, the Minister acknowledged.

"With an objective of providing nutritious and delicious food to the poor, the government reopened the Anna can-

teens across the state to provide food to the poor at a cheaper price. The government abolished the controversial Land Titling Act providing a respite to the land owners in general, the farmers in particular," he maintained.

Steps would be taken to extend Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh loans to the DWCRA group women in order to bolster the groups, he revealed. The Minister disclosed that own building would be constructed for every government department, adding that a solution will be found to do away with the water scarcity issue which prevails in rural areas.

Regretting that many people from the region migrated to Kuwait and Saudi seeking livelihood and they are facing problems there, he assured them of providing them jobs here itself as various factories and industries would be established in the area. He said that to provide quality electricity to the farmers, sub-stations set up in the required areas and the electricity problem of the farmers would be solved.

ACROSS THE STATES

Pak feeling pain watching democracy in J&K: Rajnath

PNS ■ POONCH (J&K)

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

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

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



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

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

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

didate Choudhary Abdul Gani here.

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

"I want to ask my friends in the

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

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

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

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

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



PNS ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cong appoints Uday Bhanu Chib as new IYC president

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



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

PNS ■ AYODHYA (UP)

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

and then inducting them into its fold.

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

He further questioned if the RSS chief was satisfied with the BJP's current politics.

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

"Do you agree with this fact that the rule that applied for Advani ji will not be applicable to Modi ji?" he asked Bhagwat. While Kejriwal was addressing the gathering, the BJP held a protest against him and AAP on issues of corruption at Connaught Place, barely a kilometre away from Jantar Mantar. The saffron party held another protest against Kejriwal at Rajghat on the same issue. Jantar Mantar, on the other hand, was awash with AAP's signature blue and yellow colours as hundreds of supporters filled the site with banners that declared Kejriwal as "one of us", affirming their unwavering belief in his innocence.

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

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



Cong gov't takes loans, gives it to Sonia: Kangana

PNS ■ SHIMLA

BJP MP Kangana Ranaut on Sunday alleged that the Himachal Pradesh government takes loans and gives it to former Congress president Sonia Gandhi which has made the state's coffers "hollow".

Addressing people after launching a BJP membership drive at a village here, the actress-turned-politician said, "Everyone is aware that corruption is prevalent and the Congress-ruling state governments have hollowed their respective states."

She wondered how the party spends "so much" on elections.

Attacking the Congress government headed by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, she said, "They take loans and give it to Sonia Gandhi which has made the state hollow."

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

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wrote another letter to PM Narendra Modi on the flood situation in West Bengal, maintaining that Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) released water from its reservoirs without consulting her government, inundating several districts.

Responding to Banerjee's earlier letter to the PM, Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Paatil had said the state's officials were informed at every stage about the release of water from DVC reservoirs, which was essential to prevent a major disaster.

The CM said, "While the hon'ble minister claims that the release from DVC dams was carried out by consensus and collaboration with the Damodar Valley Reservoir Regulation Committee, includ-



ing consultations with representatives of the government of West Bengal, I may respectfully disagree."

"All the critical decisions are made unilaterally by representatives of the Central Water Commission, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India without arriving at a consensus," she said.

Banerjee claimed that sometimes water is released without any notice to the state government and the views of her government are not honoured.

Congress' structure today as 'dilapidated' as once Babri was: Yogi

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday mounted a sharp attack on the Congress saying the party's structure has become as "dilapidated" as once Babri was in Ayodhya.

The Uttar Pradesh chief minister, who addressed poll rallies at Narwana in Jind, Rai in Sonapat and Assandh in Karnal, and asked people to reject caste politics and bring the BJP back to power in Haryana for accelerated development.

He took on both the Congress and the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD), both of which are separately fighting the October 5 Haryana polls, saying they are busy in "parivarad" (dynastic politics). He also took swipes at AAP and the BSP. The BSP is fighting polls in alliance with the INLD.

"Today, the structure of the Congress has become dilapidated like once Babri (mosque) structure in Ayodhya... when



Lord Ram's devotees had raised the slogan 'ek dhakka aur do, Babri dhanchhe ko tod do'.

"The Babri structure has been demolished forever. The structure of slavery was demolished, paving the way for construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya," he said.

"And I have come to make this appeal to you. They want to divide you by doing caste politics. I told you, didn't I say batoge toh katoge, ek rahoge

toh nek rahoge, koi mai ka laal aapka baal banka nahi kar payega," Adityanath further alleged the Congress had "created obstacles in building Nankana Sahib corridor". He also targeted the Congress over 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

"And what was Rahul Gandhi saying abroad, he was abusing Sikhs. He was defaming India..." he said referring to the Congress leader's recent statement in the US.

Rhino poaching in Assam dropped 86pc: Himanta

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa on Sunday claimed that rhino poaching has dropped by 86 per cent since the first BJP government took charge in the state in 2016.

Responding to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's post regarding the World Rhino Day on X, Sarma said the state's rhinoceros are safer than ever under his leadership.

"Thank you, Hon'ble Prime Minister!... Since the Double Engine government took charge in 2016, poaching has dropped by 86%. We are

deeply grateful for your commitment to promoting and preserving our living heritage," the chief minister said.

Rhino is found in several forests in Assam including Kaziranga National Park.

Earlier during the day, Modi also reiterated his government's commitment to protect "one of our planet's most iconic species" and hailed the efforts of those involved in rhino conservation.

Environment and Forest Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary also asserted that the Assam government is dedicated to bolstering anti-poaching measures, expanding protect-



"Thank you, Hon'ble Prime Minister!... Since the Double Engine government took charge in 2016, poaching has dropped by 86%. We are deeply grateful for your commitment to promoting and preserving our living heritage," the chief minister said.

ed areas and engaging with local communities who are the true custodians of the wildlife.

"We are proud of the unwavering dedication of our forest guards, wildlife officers, and conservationists who safeguard the future of our rhinos every day. This World Rhino Day, I call on every citizen of Assam to stand united in our efforts to protect and preserve this precious species," he added.

The Assam Forest Department in a post said that enhanced security and conservation measures have led to a rise in rhino population over the years.

It also said that the population of rhino has increased to over 3,000 now from about 600 in the 1960s.

The department also burnt to ashes a stockpile of 2,479 rhino horns to send a strong message of zero tolerance to poaching, the Forest Department said.

Meanwhile, DGP G P Singh said, "After almost half a century, 2022 was the first year with Zero Rhino poaching in Assam. The pride of Assam has a bigger claim over forest land than anyone else."

The fight to protect the animals has to continue in the coming days too, he said.

Cong will safeguard rights of people of J-K: Kharge

PNS ■ JAMMU

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday reaffirmed the party's commitment to protecting the constitutional rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Kharge said that the Congress' seven guarantees for Jammu and Kashmir aim to usher in a brighter future for the region.

"The Indian National Congress pledges to safeguard the constitutional rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Our progressive development agenda is for everyone," Kharge said on X.



Kharge's X handle highlighted a presentation detailing the Congress' seven guarantees for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and said "these guarantees will bring about a brighter future by focusing on social justice and economic empowerment"



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Quad is here to stay

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

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



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

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

PICTALK



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

Key reforms needed for unified electoral system



SUBHASH CHANDRA AGRAWAL

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

votes than NOTA should be barred from contesting future elections, even though the candidate with the next highest vote tally could be declared the winner for that particular term. Furthermore, immunity for MPs and MLAs from legislative proceedings should be reconsidered. In the infamous JMM bribery case, the Supreme Court was unable to act against guilty individuals due to parliamentary immunity. Parliament's rules should be rewritten to introduce fixed penalties for members who violate norms, removing the discretionary powers of the Speaker. This would prevent lenient punishments like the one imposed on MP Rajesh Manjhi, who faced only a brief suspension for taking his lady friend, pretending she was his wife, on a foreign trip at government expense. Absconding parliamentarians, if present in the House during sessions, should not be allowed to leave until legal authorities execute pending warrants against them. Additionally, MPs and MLAs with less than 75 per cent attendance should be barred from contesting elections for the next six years. Cases like that of George Fernandes, who was elected to the Rajya Sabha despite losing his memory, highlight the need for a minimum medical fitness certificate for candidates. Parliamentarians should also



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

be required to disclose all details of their assets, including the names of their spouses, to avoid cases of undisclosed multiple marriages, as occurred with actor-turned-MP Dharmendra. All dues, including those for utilities, rent, and government accommodations, should be deducted from their salaries or pensions. Pensions should be withheld until former MPs and ministers vacate government accommodations. Additionally, political parties that fail to contest elections for five consecutive years should be de-recognised. Finally, electoral reforms should be accelerated by empowering the Election Commission to implement reforms with a one-year notice to Parliament. If Parliament does not disapprove the proposed reforms within this timeframe, they should be deemed approved. To reduce the influence of black money, sections of the Income Tax Act that allow for contributions to political parties should be abolished. Moreover, the controversial MPLADS scheme, which allocates funds to MPs for local area development, should be scrapped. It is time to bring sweeping reforms to India's electoral system to ensure a more transparent, accountable, and stable political process.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RAHUL'S IRRESPONSIBLE REMARKS

Madam — Your newspaper (September 22) carries several news relating to statements of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, counter allegations by BJP and Congress party's explanations on Rahul Gandhi's asseverations on certain crucial issues in his foreign visits and election campaigns. His assertions on reservations, Sikh community's freedom, abrogation of Article 370 and its standing as alliance partner of National Conference in J&K are drawing flak in the political spectrum and in public. Weakening the country and painting gloomy pictures while abroad, will not go well for Congress and Rahul Gandhi. Selected foreign media has vested interest in maligning India. Desperation of Rahul Gandhi and his lack of conviction is writ large while his narratives against BJP and PM Modi are failing in absence of report cards of Congress and allies' ruled states. His statements are also silently eroding the INDI alliance base. The country is facing tough times and the country needs a committed voice from all political parties against the deep state forces conspiring unrest and anarchy in our country. Our neighbourhood is troubled and no peace and normalcy is predictable in the near future. Apparently, these are the most challenging times since independence and PM Modi and the bulk of non-BJP political parties have identified, analysed and diagnosed the threats. We need to fight unitedly.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

ADULTERATION IN LADOOS

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

High voter turnout in J and K



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

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

Manoj Parashar | Ghaziabad

EXPLODING PAGERS

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

Anshu Bharti | Begusarai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Social media age limit: Will banning children be enough?



ASHA IYER KUMAR

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

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



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

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

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

On the one hand, it exposes children to unrealistic portrayals of life, leading to anxiety, depression, and a constant need to measure up to others. On the other hand, it provides a space for young people to connect, express themselves, and access educational resources. Banning it outright may remove the toxic aspects but also deny them these valuable opportunities. As parents and educators, our challenge is to strike a balance. Instead of rushing towards a ban, it might be more prudent to focus on equipping children with the skills they need to navigate the online world responsibly. Digital literacy, mental health education, and open conversations between parents and children can go a long way in protecting young minds from the pitfalls of social media. Rather than looking at social media as an enemy to be vanquished, we should view it as a tool that requires careful handling. Age restrictions, when implemented properly, can help shield younger users, but without holistic solutions—ranging from better parental support to more reliable age verification methods—their efficacy will be limited.

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





FIRST COLUMN

HEALTHY SPINE AND WELLBEING

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



RAVI VALLURI

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

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

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



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

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

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

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway and is a faculty of the Art of Living. Views are personal)

GST cess extension: Is it Justified Beyond 2026?



UTTAM GUPTA

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

crore; courtesy, of the devastating effect of Covid pandemic. Against this, cess proceeds were only Rs 65,000 crore, leading to an unmet deficit of Rs 235,000 crore. During FY 2021-22 also, the collections in the Cesspool couldn't fully meet the shortfall in tax collection though the deficit was much less.

To make up for the deficit, the Centre, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) set up a special window for borrowings at a "low" rate of interest and transferred the funds to states as back-to-back loans. Under this window, it borrowed a total of Rs 270,000 crore including Rs 110,000 crore during 2020-21 and Rs 160,000 crore during 2021-22. To generate the required money to repay the loan and interest, the GST Council decided to extend the cess till March 2026.

The necessary amendment was made to the GST Compensation Act (2018) to give effect to this decision. According to the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, the entire loan of Rs 270,000 crore would be fully serviced by January 2026, two months ahead of the March 31, 2026 deadline.

As per estimates, the collections from GST compensation cess in February and March 2026 are expected to be about Rs 40,000 crore. How this surplus money would be apportioned between the Centre and States is a task the GoM will have to carry out. The States want the GST compensation cess to continue even beyond March 31, 2026.

Naturally, its continuation can't be justified in terms of the need to service loan liabilities from the past; those would have already been extinguished before that.

Do they have any logical argument? To say that they require more revenue to meet the development needs, as

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



CHAITANYA K PRASAD

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

telling and memorable music, and "Fauji", featuring Shah Rukh Khan's debut, are just a click away. This accessibility allows viewers to journey back in time, relive cherished moments, and introduce younger generations to timeless narratives that shaped Indian television during the Doordarshan era.

Contemporary creators are also blending nostalgia with new storytelling. Content like "Laapata Ladies", "Heeramandi", "Guns and Gulaabs", "Jubilee", "Bambai Meri Jaan", and "Rocket Boys" weave retro elements into engaging plots. These narratives are often set in simpler times, free of modern technology, offering viewers a respite from the chaos of the modern world. They transport audi-

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

The use of cultural symbols—retro fashion, old advertisements, vintage phones, cars, and even homes—evokes a sense of nostalgia. Everyday



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

OTT's appeal to nostalgia has also fueled the popularity of the "OTT and Chill" culture. A recent example is Manoj

Tiwari's rendition of the famous Bhojpuri Sohar "Hind Ke Sitare" for an OTT show, which became an internet sensation. The track went viral, with people of all ages singing along, demonstrating how content that resonates with simpler times can bring generations together.

In addition to revisiting the past, OTT platforms continuously release new content, often with extensive promotional efforts that make certain shows highly popular. Red carpet events for premieres, media coverage, and articles listing the "10 best OTT shows to watch" have all become part of the cultural zeitgeist. Even major events like the Indian Premier League (IPL) stream on OTT platforms, drawing massive audiences.

OTT also champions diverse talent. Independent filmmakers and regional storytellers, who might have been overlooked in traditional media, now have a platform to showcase their work to a global audience. This has led to the discovery of fresh voices and unique stories, breaking down geographical barriers. OTT's ability to feature content in multiple Indian languages has helped regional films and series gain national and international recognition.

According to a FICCI-EY report from 2023, regional content on OTT platforms overtook Hindi language content for the first time, with the share of regional language titles rising from 47% in 2021 to 52% in 2023. Stars like Mohanlal, Junior NTR, Vijay

Sethupathi, and Fahadh Faasil, once confined to regional industries, have now become household names across India, thanks to the reach of OTT. Films like "RRR" (Telugu), "Pushpa" (Telugu), "KGF" (Kannada), "Kantara" (Kannada), have found new audiences through OTT platforms. Actors like Vijay Sethupathi, who gained prominence in Tamil cinema, have become pan-Indian stars, appearing in films like "Jawan" and "Merry Christmas". This cross-cultural fusion, accelerated by the pandemic, reflects the growing demand for diverse content.

(The writer is former additional DG, DFF and Festival Director, IFFI. Research and Inputs by Priya Kamra, Views are personal)

IN BRIEF



Anil Ambani's Reliance Group starts transformation journey

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



Climate-smart tea seed variety to withstand temp impacts

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



US firm ties up with Saankhya Labs for D2M tech mobiles

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

GoM on GST to discuss slab, rate tweaks

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

The Carbon Border



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Plan to open offices abroad to assist foreign investors: Min

PNS ■ SINGAPORE

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

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

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

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

"The Singapore office will serve as a dedicated point of

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

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



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

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

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



'Govt working on plan to promote yacht tourism'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

India signs IPEF's clean, fair economy agreements

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



INDIA SIGNS IPEF AGREEMENT WITH INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK MEMBERS

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

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

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

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

Global trends, trading major drivers for markets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

The highlight of the week

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

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

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



The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,359.51 points or 1.63 per cent to settle at an all-time high of 84,544.31 on Friday. During the day, it soared 1,509.66 points or 1.81 per cent to hit the momentous intra-day peak of 84,694.46. The NSE Nifty surged 375.15 points or 1.48 per cent

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Govt to kick off FY26 Budget making exercise from next month

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



BABIL KHAN EXCLAIMS, WINDING UP HIS NEXT TWO FILMS!

Babil Khan frequently makes news for his engagements with fans on social platforms and his appreciation towards the paps when seen in public. After being asked by a fan, Babil Khan suggested that he is wrapping up two projects. Babil also replied to another internet user who requested him to honor his late father, Irrfan.

Babil Khan recently posted some photos of himself on Instagram, including one where he shared a sneak peek from his photoshoot. Babil wrote a motivating message in the caption.

"Put the alphas to work because they're easy to fool; let the sigmas lead the team because they know their roots; the throne is empty, waiting for truth; for a prince will be king, whether or not you choose to root, yet I crave you do," read the note.

One of the users inquired about his future projects and commended the actor for his role in *The Railway Men*. He hoped to earn Irrfan Khan's approval.

"Sir, the work on two is finished; now I can only wait, but I wish that you do not have to do much," said the *Qala* actor.

Meanwhile, an Instagram user asked him, saying, "Abba ka naam banao beta (Make your father feel proud)!" To which the young actor responded on a positive note that read, "Ji sir, mehnat jaari hai (Yes, sir, I am working on it)."



MADONNA RETURNS TO 90s FASHION AT DOLCE&GABBANA

Celebrities swarmed Milan Fashion Week on the last big day of runway shows on Saturday, sending crowds of adoring fans from venue to venue.

Madonna sat in a front-row seat at Dolce & Gabbana, along with Naomi Campbell and Victoria De Angelis of Maneskin. Her bandmate, Maneskin frontman Damiano David, showed up at Diesel, one of the season's hottest tickets, across town. Jacob Elordi took a seat on a bunny-shaped beanbag chair to take in the Bottega Veneta show.

Highlights from Milan Fashion Week's mostly womenswear previews for next spring and summer. Madonna attempted a semi-stealth entrance to the Dolce & Gabbana runway show draped in a black veil for a runway show referencing her 1990s heyday and celebrating the cone bra.

Models in bleach-blond wigs strutted in Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana's signature corsets and fitted jackets, each featuring the aggressively feminine cone bra, in a collection that notes said "pays homage to an ironic and powerful female figure."

Madonna wasn't cited specifically, but the stars of the Milan designers and pop star have been aligned ever since they made costumes for her 1993 *Girlie Show* tour. The tour promoted Madonna's *Erotica* album launched alongside her taboo-breaking coffee table book, *Sex*.

"Madonna has always been our icon. It's thanks to her that a lot of things in our lives changed," the designers said in a note.

The collection, dubbed Italian Beauty, perfectly captured that moment in time. Cone bras peeked out of cropped jackets with a pencil skirt, garters swung from corsets and coats sculpted the body. Floral prints returned, accenting a colour scheme of black, nude, red and white. Oversized cross earrings finished the looks. Heels were unapologetically high.

After taking their bows, the designers walked down the runway to greet their guest of honour. Madonna, still covered by the Chantilly long lace veil fastened by a gold and crystal crown, stood to embrace them both. Bottega Veneta taps wonder.



NORA GEARS UP TO IGNITE THE IIFA STAGE



Global sensation Nora Fatehi, who has often taken the entertainment industry by storm with her viral dance tracks and moves, is now gearing up to set the IIFA stage on fire. The actress is returning to the much-celebrated award show for the third time in a row and is going to headline the show. Her performance is set to feature a mix of popular tracks, allowing her to connect with fans and celebrate the vibrant spirit of Indian cinema.

The international icon conveyed her enthusiasm for the IIFA Weekend, saying, "I'm absolutely exhilarated to be performing at the grand IIFA Weekend! The sheer energy of the crowd, the mesmerising performances, and the celebration of Indian cinema create an atmosphere that's truly unforgettable. I can't wait to return to the IIFA stage at the stunning Yas Island, Abu Dhabi and share extraordinary moments with fans and fellow artists. It's my third time performing at IIFA back-to-back and it's an absolute honour to be part of the spectacular showcase of creativity and stardom at the IIFA Weekend."



Celebrating heartwarming moments of father and daughter with *Be Happy*

Be Happy, the captivating dance drama, follows a unique and heartwarming journey of a single father and his wise beyond-her-years daughter. Produced by Lizelle Remo D'Souza under the banner of Remo D'Souza Entertainment Production and directed by Remo D'Souza, *Be Happy* features a talented and versatile cast featuring Abhishek Bachchan, Nora Fatehi, Nassar and Inayat Verma in the pivotal roles, with Johnny Lever and Harleen Sethi in supporting roles.

Celebrating International Daughter's Day, the streaming service unveiled the first look of the film with an eye-catching poster featuring Abhishek Bachchan and Inayat Verma that showcases the father-daughter duo performing a contemporary dance move, highlighting the film's dance-centric theme. *Be Happy* beautifully captures the bond between a devoted single father and his wise and witty daughter, who dreams of performing on the country's biggest dance reality show. "Be Happy is a heartfelt story about a single father and his remarkable journey to help fulfil his daughter's dream of performing on India's biggest dance reality show. I am delighted to offer our viewers a first look with a beautiful poster that exemplifies the father-daughter bond that is the foundation of the story and what better day to do it than today—International Daughter's Day," said Remo D'Souza, Director.

NOT VAANI KAPOOR! FAWAD'S COMEBACK STARS RIDHI DOGRA

Earlier, information indicated that Fawad Khan, a Pakistani actor, is poised to return to Bollywood post *Ae Dil Hai Mushkil* (2016) in a film co-starring Vaani Kapoor. Nevertheless, we have just found out that he will star in a play alongside actor Ridhi Dogra.

"The two will be cast in a romcom drama; the supporting actors are yet to be cast," informs a source, adding that the film is at a very nascent stage. "The paperwork was only recently completed and the duo have been cast as romantic interests. The director's name is still kept under wraps," the source added.

The source also mentions that filming for the unnamed project has not started yet because both of them have conflicting schedules. "The shoot will begin by the end of this year. The makers plan to release the film by next year's end or the beginning of 2026," says the source.

Additionally, Dogra and Khan will not film any scenes in India, as all shooting schedules are organised to take place overseas.

"The project will be shot in several locations, including New York (US) and London (UK). It matches the theme of their rom-com drama," ends the source.



FUN

ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBS

GARFIELD

REALITY CHECK

SPEED BUMP

NANCY

CROSSWORD

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

ACROSS

- A large animal
- Poultry product
- Shriek
- A leacher, usually for one pupil at a time
- Follows an order
- Car engine
- Very easy to do
- A young sheep
- A building material that sets hard

DOWN

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

SOLUTION

P	C	A	S	E
S	M	O	T	O
O	R	I	E	S
U	N	E	S	A
C	E	L	E	B
A	T	T	R	E
I	R	I	O	R
O	V	E	R	S
N	W	K	O	S

GINGER MEGGS

TRAVEL LIKE TREEHUGGER

Eco-consciousness just got a makeover!

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



EVENT COVERAGE

Bi Pan fest 2024 floods Hyderabad with fabulousness

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

KNOW-HOW ASTHMA DEVICES MADE EASY!



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

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

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

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

Fundamentals of disease management

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

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

Knowing your devices

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

Nebulisers turn medicine into a fine which a child

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

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

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

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

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

INDIA TRUMPS BANGLADESH WITH ASHWIN'S SIX WICKETS

PTI ■ CHENNAI

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

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

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

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



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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Super sub Vinicius leads to Real Madrid comeback win over Espanyol

AP ■ BARCELONA

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



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

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

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

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

Arshdeep takes six in India D's consolation win

PTI ■ ANANTAPUR

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

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



PAWAN KALYAN'S ASSURANCE TO THE TELUGU FILM INDUSTRY!

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

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

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



MEGASTAR CHIRANJEEVI ENTERS INTO GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS

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

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

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

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

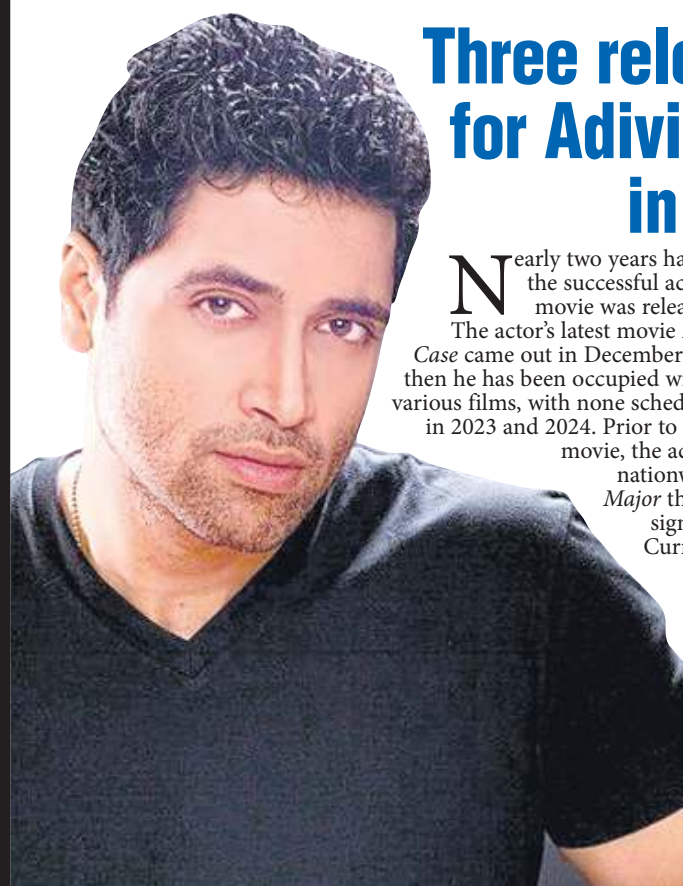
The Guinness World Records representative Richard said that Chiranjeevi has been the star of Telugu cinema for a whopping 156 films in a span of 45 years, achieving an unbeatable feat of 24,000 dance moves in 537 songs until today.

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

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

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

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



Three releases for Adivi Sesh in 2025

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

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

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

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

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

Balakrishna drops by Venky, Anil Ravipudi's set

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

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

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

A love story with an American backdrop in the making!

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

Actress Sri Gouri Priya, known for her role

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

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



VARUN TEJ'S MATKA SEQUEL IN PROGRESS

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

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

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

