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JET-SETTING TRAVELS FROM **LONDON TO GREECE**





QUOTE OF THE DAY

Priority to solar power for farmers...

West Godavari District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani has instructed the relevant officials to ensure the provision of solarpowered electricity to beneficiaries in agriculture and allied sectors. The Collector presided over a meeting with officials from the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), New Delhi, along with representatives from the horticulture, agriculture, fisheries, and animal husbandry departments on Thursday. Addressing the gathering, the Collector emphasised the importance of...

'Weekend exercise effective in...

People cramming their entire week's exercise in one or two days or over the weekend, could be at a lower risk of developing over 200 diseases, with similar effects to those who exercise throughout the week, a study has found. 'Weekend warriors' are individuals who engage in moderate or vigourous physical activity over the weekend and yet meet the World Health Organization's recommendations of 150 minutes of exercise per week for overall health. However, researchers said it is not clear if...

India needs to do more to boost...

India has done well in areas like infrastructure in the last 10 years, but it also needs to do more in other sectors to boost local manufacturing and job creation. former RBI Governor Raghuram said on Thursday interview with PTI, Rajan further said the government's focus on production, whether it is goods or services is a good thing, but it is also important to do it the right way. Responding to a question on the Modi government's flagship initiative 'Make in India', he said, "I would say the intention... -PAGE: 8

India likely to maintain...

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

20L jobs in 5 years 'One teacher per class' policy for govt schools: Nara Lokesh

CM keen on skilled manpower for industries

Exploration of employment

opportunities. COLLABORATION WITH MNCS: Plans to establish training centres with multinational companies for job

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu

on Thursday instructed officials to for-

mulate comprehensive plans aimed at creating 20 lakh jobs and other employ-

ment opportunities across various sec-

tors over the next five years, in line with

the election promise made to the

Secretariat, the Chief Minister met with

officials from the Departments of Skill

Training, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Industries, and

the Society for Employment and

Economic Rehabilitation of Flood

Victims (SERF). The discussions

focused on aligning skill training with

industry demands to meet workforce

requirements. Chandrababu Naidu

APSRTC bags

national award

The Andhra Pradesh State Road

Transport Corporation (APSRTC),

now operating as the AP Public

Transport Department, has been

awarded the prestigious Governance Now 9th India PSU IT Award' for its

successful implementation of cashless

transactions and paperless ticketing

Governance Now presented the

award. V Sudhakar, Chief Engineer

(IT), accepted the honour on behalf

of APSRTC Managing Director Ch

Dwaraka Tirumala Rao at a ceremo-

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via its mobile app.

ny in New Delhi.

During a review meeting at the State

Promotion of hybrid

systems to enable

work-from-home

PNS VIJAYAWADA

NT: Focus on providing opportunitie s in rural

opportunities in flood-affected areas, as requested by victims. PLAN: Officials directed to present an action plan in the next meeting.

emphasised the potential for large-scale

employment through skill development

initiatives and stressed the impor-

tance of promoting work-from-home

models through hybrid systems. He urged officials to collaborate with

multinational companies to establish

training centres and explore job cre-

ation opportunities, particularly in

flood-affected areas, where victims

have appealed to the Government for

nificant results could be achieved by tar-

geting rural areas, where many residents

have remained due to various circum-

stances. He called for greater cooper-

ation between the Government and

industrialists to address these needs and

directed officials to present an action

YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan

Reddy's planned visit to Lord

Venkateswara Swamy temple at

Tirumala Hills to offer prayers

political temperatures in

Andhra Pradesh as the ruling

Chief

NDA is sticking to its guns

The Chief Minister noted that sig-

employment support.

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on Saturday is likely

on the demand that the

Minister should

declare his faith

before entering

the hill shrine.

former

sports sector' Rs 23 cr sanctioned for

completing stadia

'Develop infra in

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Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has directed officials to provide the necessary infrastructure to bolster the sports sector in the State.

During a review meeting at the State Secretariat on Youth Services and Sports, the Chief Minister stressed that the previous TDP regime had promoted sports and initiated the construction of stadia and playgrounds.

However, he lamented that the YSRCP government had halted these ongoing projects.

Mr Naidu instructed officials to expedite the completion of partially built stadia, playgrounds, and sports development centres across the State. He announced that Rs 23 crore has been sanctioned for this

Continued on Page 2

Jagan's Tirumala visit likely to trigger tension

NDA allies insist on YSRCP chief declaring his faith

According to the rules, foreigners

and non-Hindus should declare their reverence for Lord

Venkateswara to have a darshan of

the presiding deity at the hill

visit the temple as part of

als called for by the party

to atone for the 'sin'

Minister

allegedly commit-

by Chief

Chandrababu

Naidu through

the statewide temple ritu-

class' policy in all government

PNS VIJAYAWADA

implementing a new excise policy,

the Andhra Pradesh government

passed an ordinance on Thursday

abolishing 'government liquor shops'

in the State. The government has

also made amendments to facilitate

the establishment of retail liquor

shops. It is worth noting that the

State Cabinet had already approved

the abolition of government liquor

shops and the opening of retail out-

his allegations on Tirupati laddus. Reddy's appeal comes days after Naidu alleged that the pre-

vious YSRCP government used

substandard ingredients and ani-

mal fat for making the laddus at

The allegations sparked a massive

Responding to Reddy's announce-

ment on the temple visit, the BJP's

state unit on Thursday demanded he

declare his faith before entering the

Continued on Page 2

controversy across the country.

Tirupati.

Municipal Corporation Elementary School in Etcherla, Srikakulam.

Minister Lokesh interacted with students from grades 1 to 5, asking them about their favourite subjects, lunch experiences, and their parents' occupations. The students expressed their fondness for subjects like English and Environmental Studies (EVS). Lokesh appreciated their handwriting and praised the efforts of the teachers in improving

their writing skills. The dedication of our teachers is reflected in the success of our students," said Lokesh, indicating that the new policy could be expanded



In an important move towards

meeting in Eluru on Thursday.

Housing and I & PR Minister Kolusu Parthasarathy addressing a bankers'

ID cards for crop loans to all tenant farmers: I& PR Min

Minister for Housing and He noted that the previous YSR Information & Public Relations, Congress Party (YSRCP) govern-

Kolusu Parthasarathy, has announced that all tenant farmers in the State will be issued identity cards to facilitate crop loans, irrespective of the landowner's consent.

Addressing a district-level bankers' meeting here on Thursday, the Minister farmers make up 80

per cent of the farming sector; however, only one per cent landowners do not face any difficulof these farmers currently receive

priority sector is ?16,000 crore,

crop loans.
"The annual allocation for the

tenant farmers regardless of andowners' consent. We are ensuring that landowners do not face any difficulties. Bankers will extend loans to tenant farmers based on

Steps are being taken to

issue identity cards to

with ?240 crore designated for tenant farmers. Yet, only Rs 101 crore

loans. "Steps are being taken to issue identity cards to tenant farmers ers' consent. We are ensuring

ties. Bankers will extend loans to tenant farmers based on these identity cards," the Minister asserted, adding that the process will be completed by the next rabi season.

has been disbursed," the Minister

ment had imposed a

condition requiring

landowners to consent

to the issuance of

identity cards for ten-

ant farmers, creating a

technical obstacle for

bankers in extending

Meet targets of Central schemes: CS



PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad reviewed the implementation of various centrally sponsored schemes in the state at the secretariat on Thursday. He held discussions with officials from the relevant departments financial year.

and emphasised the need to execute these schemes to meet the set targets. The Chief Secretary examined the

progress of schemes jointly funded by the Central and State Governments in areas such as Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, Housing, Agriculture, Medical and Health, and Fisheries.

Principal Secretary for Panchayat Rai and Rural Development, Sashi Bhushan Kumar, informed that 22 Centrally-sponsored schemes are currently being implemented by the department. He further elaborated that during the 2023-24 financial year, Rs 3,366 crore had been spent on these schemes, and so far, Rs 7,899 crore have been utilised in the 2024-25

US Consulate to promote American firms' access to AP

PNS VIJAYAWADA

shrine.

The Andhra Pradesh government is looking for a lot of investments and the US Consulate General in Hyderabad is eager to promote said on the sidelines of American firms' access to the State, said Consul General Jennifer Larson here on Thursday.

The Consul General noted that she recently met Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and ministers to talk about the kind of cooperation the consulate could facilitate.

"I had a chance to come and meet with the new government six weeks ago, meet various ministers, meet with the CM, and we talked about

the type of cooperation we can do in Andhra Pradesh, and they are looking for a lot of investments," Larson a human trafficking

seminar. According to the diplomat, several top US companies operating out of Hyderabad, which is growing by the week, would look at

how the business landscape would develop, ease of doing business us. The diaspora is so big in the US," aspect and good business incentives,



among others. Highlighting that the US shares a strong relationship with Andhra Pradesh along with Telangana, Larson noted that 40 per cent of Indian students in the US originate from the Telugu states.

"Telugu is the fastest growing language in America. So, we have incredible people ties

the southern state with interest as to with Andhra. That's another reason why it is such an important state for said the diplomat.

Balineni, Samineni join Jana Sena

The Consul General underscored that promoting bilateral ties and building bridges through education and students is an excellent way.

Further, Larson said Naidu had played a major role in the establishment of the US Consulate in Hyderabad, the first US diplomatic office to open in India since its independence in 1947.

The Hyderabad US Consulate, which now operates out of a USD 350 million office in Hyderabad's Financial District, first commenced its operations from Paigah Palace in Begumpet in 2008 when YS Rajasekhar Reddy was the CM of united Andhra Pradesh.

Govt committed to coastal development: Min

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Municipal and Urban Development Minister Ponguru Narayana has said that the government is dedicated to coastal development and environmental protection throughout the State. The School of Planning and Architecture, Vijayawada, in association with the Indian Institute of Town Planners, organised a two-day national conference on Thursday, focusing on the theme "Protection of Coastal Environment through Use of Technology and Traditional

Knowledge. Speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural programme, Minister Narayana outlined the measures being taken by the government for coastal development and environmental protection, as well as the challenges faced. He



Minister Ponguru Narayana addressing a national seminar organised by the School of Planning and Architecture, Vijayawada, in association with the Indian Institute of Town Planners on Thursday,

praised the organisation of such a

conference as a means to address

these challenges. He noted that

Minister Narayana said that the ports of Visakhapatnam, Kakinada, Machilipatnam, Ramayapatnam, and Krishnapatnam have also seen substantial development. The government is committed to taking the initiative to further develop the coastal areas.

Andhra Pradesh boasts the longest coastline in the country, stretching 972 km, making the

topics discussed in this conference particularly relevant.

The minister highlighted that the coastal region encompasses 13 districts and major cities like Visakhapatnam, Kakinada, and Srikakulam, which collectively have a population of 34.19 million. Significant projects, such as the Visakhapatnam-Chennai Industrial Corridor and the Visakhapatnam-Kakinada Petroleum and Petrochemicals Investment Region, are currently underway in these cities.

He mentioned that the ports of Visakhapatnam, Kakinada, Machilipatnam, Ramayapatnam, and Krishnapatnam have also seen substantial development. The government is committed to taking the initiative to further

develop the coastal areas.



PNS VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Balineni Srinivasa Reddy, along with former MLAs Samineni Udayabhanu and Kilari Rosaiah, joined the Jana Sena Party (JSP) on Thursday. YSR Congress

Party (YSRCP) leaders, including Avanapu Vikram and his wife, also made the transition to the JSP.

The three leaders were welcomed into the JSP in the presence of Jana Sena chief and Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan at the party's state

office in Mangalagiri. Pawan Kalyan admitted them into the Jana Sena by draping them in party scarves.

Balineni Srinivasa Reddy was a prominent leader of the YSRCP in Prakasam district and served in the cabinet of Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy. He is also closely related to the YSR family. Samineni Udayabhanu served as the government whip in the previous administration and was a significant leader of the YSRCP in the Jaggayyapet constituency. Kilari Rosaiah was elected to the Assembly on a YSRCP ticket from the Ponnuru constituency in Guntur district. Tensions within the YSRCP, particularly with Jagan Mohan Reddy, prompted their decision to join the JSP.

Additionally, Ongole-based businessman Kandi Ravi Shankar and film producer Chittamuru Pravin Kumar Reddy also joined the JSP.

APCC chief Sharmila urges cadre to focus on local body elections

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president YS Sharmila Reddy has called on party leaders and workers to approach the upcoming local body elections with full seriousness, aiming to secure the maximum number of seats. She emphasised that the All India Congress Committee (AICC) is determined to ensure the Congress Party's success. Sharmila also mentioned that several national leaders would visit the state to campaign during the elections, further highlighting that the Congress Party is the only viable alternative in the state and currently serves as the

The new APCC state committee met at the A Convention in Vijayawada on Thursday. The meeting was attended by Congress Party State Affairs Incharge Manickam Tagore, Congress Working Committee (CWC) Member N Raghuveera Reddy, Special Invitee and former Union Minister MM Pallam Raju, former Rajya Sabha mem-



APCC president Y S Sharmila, party AP in-charge Manickam Tagore, senior leader Gidugu Rudra Raju, and others at the new State committee meeting in Vijayawada on Thursday. Photo: Ch. Vijaya Bhaskar

ber KVP Ramachandra Rao, former Union Minister JD Seelam, and other senior leaders. Addressing the meeting, YS

Sharmila Reddy acknowledged that the Congress Party is currently in a weakened state in Andhra Pradesh, but she stressed that with collective effort, the party could overcome this challenge. She urged every leader to work diligently over the next five years, noting that with persistent efforts, the party could achieve significant progress during this

Sharmila further outlined two

party's influence, particularly at the grassroots level. She stressed the need to strengthen the party at the booth level, stating that each of the 46,000 booths in the state should have at least 20 party workers, creating a formidable force for the Congress. Additionally, she called for the formation of committees at the village, mandal, and district levels in the coming days.

Sharmila also criticised Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, and opposition leader YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, accusing them of being subservient to the BJP. She alleged that none of these leaders spoke out against the BJP, even when it acted against the interests of Andhra Pradesh. She announced that the Congress Party would stage a protest against the BJP on October 2, Gandhi's birth anniversary, to highlight the injustices done to

AICC Secretary Palak Verma, and senior leaders Gidugu Rudra Raju, Dr S Sailaja Nath, Dr N Tulasi Reddy, and others were also present at the meeting.

Sanatana Dharma JAC to block Jagan's Tirumala visit

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Sanatana Dharma Protection Joint Action Committee (SDPJAC) has declared that its leaders and supporters will prevent YSR Congress chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy from visiting Tirumala unless he signs the Declaration. This announcement followed a meeting on Thursday at the Guntur Brahmin Chaitanya Vedika, attended by representatives from 13 districts.

JAC leaders, including Siripurapu Sridhar Sharma and Dasari Ramu, accused Jagan of attempting to provoke Hindu sentiments with his planned foot pilgrimage to Tirumala on the 28th of this month. They suggested that this visit could be seen as an affront to Hinduism.

APCC urges YV Subba Reddy to cooperate with probe agency

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) vice-president Kolanukonda Sivaji has called on former Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) chairman YV Subba Reddy to cooperate with vigilance officials investigating the 'Laddu Prasadam' adulteration issue. He also questioned the where-abouts of former Executive Officer Dharma Reddy.

Addressing the media on Thursday, Kolanukonda Sivaji ridiculed former chief minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's call for a 'Temple Pooja' to be organised on September 28 across the state in protest against the Telugu Desam Party's allegations concerning the use of ghee-containing animal fat in the preparation of the sacred 'Tirumala Laddu'.

The Congress leader emphasised that, given the evidence



of adulterated ghee being used, a thorough investigation should be conducted and those responsible brought to justice.
"The use of adulterated ghee has deeply hurt the sentiments of millions of devotees world-

The previous YSRCP government turned the sacred Tirumala shrine into a recreation centre, undermining its sanctity," he remarked.

Sivaji questioned why Dharma Reddy has remained unknown. He also criticised YV Subba Reddy for approaching the court rather than cooperating with the inquiry. Subba Reddy, he said, had argued that the Vigilance wing was not the appropriate agency for the investigation, prompting Shivaji to demand clarification on which agency should handle the probe.

The APCC vice-president further recalled that Jagan Mohan Reddy had refused to make the traditional declaration before entering the Tirumala shrine and urged senior YSRCP leaders to stand against such actions.

Sivaji also noted that despite the state suffering heavy flood damage, the Central government has yet to release funds, and he advised Jagan Mohan Reddy to undertake a 'Deeksha' to demand immedi-

Dandiya Mahotsav on Oct 4

PNS VIJAYAWADA

In celebration of the Dasara festivities, Blooming Dale International School and Gignasa Organisations will host the Vijayawada Dandiya Mahotsav at Blooming Dale School in Penamaluru on October 4. The event will feature the launch of the Curteniser CD, which took place at the school on Thursday.

Golla Narayanara Rao, president of the Sahithi Samskritika Samiti, and businessman Polavarapu Koteswara Rao unveiled the CD. During the launch, they expressed their hopes that many visitors would travel to Vijayawada to participate in the Dandiya Mahotsav, celebrating their culture and traditions. The event was attended by Blooming Dale School Principal Har Simran Kour, Women Entrepreneur Chandini Chandana, Gignasa Organisation CEO Gayatri Varigonda, and others.

Continued from Page 1

The Chief Minister emphasised the importance of encouraging all sections of society to engage in sports and physical exercise. He urged officials not to limit sports to competitive participants alone, recalling that in the past, games such as kabaddi and volleyball were played in almost every village. He expressed concern that these practices had diminished with the advent of television and other distractions.

"If playgrounds are established in villages, the community will naturally gravitate towards them once again," Mr Naidu said. He added that residents should be involved in these efforts, and suggested that NRIs and industrialists who contribute to the construction of playgrounds could have them named in their honour.

TUDAY **ALMANAC**

Month & Paksham

Tithi: Dashami:

Police arrest mastermind behind unregulated deposit scheme

major objectives for the Congress

Party: the first is to strengthen the

party's presence in the state, and

the second is to support Rahul

Gandhi's candidacy for Prime

Minister. She reminded attendees

that the late Chief Minister, Dr YS

Rajasekhar Reddy, had always

hoped to see Rahul Gandhi as

Prime Minister. While express-

ing her own ambition to become

Chief Minister of Andhra

Pradesh, she reiterated the

importance of Rahul Gandhi

In terms of strategy, Sharmila

presented a plan to expand the

leading the nation.

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

In a major crackdown on financial fraud, city police have arrested Nadella Srinivasa Rao, a 52-year-old Gajuwaka resident, for allegedly operating an unregistered deposit scheme disguised as an angel broking firm. Rao, claiming six years of online trading experience, allegedly duped hundreds of investors across Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu, collecting approximately Rs 75 crores from 360 victims before his

September 21, 2024 arrest. According to police, Rao had lured investors with unrealistic promises of high returns on their investments. One such scheme promised to double an investment in just 50 working days. "These offers were too good to be true, and



many fell into the trap," said a financial fraud expert. The police have registered a case against Rao under the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Act and have remanded him to judicial custody.

Commissioner of Police Dr. Shankhabrata Bagchi emphasized the need for public awareness, advising caution against quick money schemes. "All deposit schemes must be properly registered under the law. If anyone has doubts, they should check online or report to their local police

Residents are encouraged to report suspicious schemes to the authorities, contacting the Commissioner of Police at 7995095799. The city police assure stringent actions against individuals involved in unregistered investment schemes, reinforcing their commitment to protecting the community from financial fraud.

As investigations continue, police urge the public to remain vigilant and informed, avoiding fraudulent schemes disguised as chit funds or Ponzi schemes. A case has been registered against Rao under the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Act, and he has been remanded to judicial custody.

4000 MW pumped storage hydro projects PNS VIJAYAWADA Megha Engineering & Infrastructures Limited (MEIL)

has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department of Water Resources, Government of Maharashtra, to develop two major Pumped Storage Projects with a combined capacity of 4000 MW. These projects include the Kamod Pumped Storage Project in Nandurbar District and the Ghosla Pumped Storage Project in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar District. Notably, MEIL is executing its first pumped storage hydro projects under the 'Build-Operate-Maintain (BOM)'

The MoU signing event was



MEIL signs MoU with Maharashtra govt for

attended by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Deepak Kapoor, Additional Chief Secretary of the Water Resources Department, representing the Maharashtra government. MEIL was represented by President RVR Kishore, alongside Girish, Ravi Kiran,

Speaking at the ceremony, MEIL President RVR Kishore said, "These projects will not only meet Maharashtra's energy needs but also contribute to the state's development. We are proud to support national progress by supplying power to the grid across India

The projects will require an

21,100 crore and are expected to create employment for approximately 2,500 people. MEIL aims to complete the Ghosla Pumped Storage Project within three and a half years, while the Kamod Pumped Storage Project is scheduled for

completion in five years.

The off-stream projects will provide at least six hours of daily energy storage. The Pumped Storage Projects will include newly constructed upper and lower reservoirs, operating in a closed-loop system for power generation.

Pumped Storage Projects are recognised for their costeffective energy storage, grid management, frequency regulation, and integration with renewable energy sources.

'One teacher per class'... 'Develop infra...

He also suggested including local food in the midday meal scheme, considering students' preference for familiar tastes. During his visit, the minister conducted a quick IQ test, asking students to name objects in English. Impressed by their responses, he motivated them to study hard and make their parents, especially their mothers, proud. Lokesh also met with teachers and the Mandal Education Officer (MEO), stressing the need for financial support to address infrastructure issues. He assured them that the necessary facilities would be provided before rolling out equal development across all schools. He expressed satisfaction with the school's attendance and academic performance while directing the MEO to resolve

The minister aims to make Andhra Pradesh's schools a model for the nation in the next five years, promising systematic reforms to avoid past mistakes. He also highlighted the shortage of subject-specific school assistants and assured that necessary changes would be made. MLA Gondu Shankar and MLC Vepada Chiranjeevi accompanied the minister during the visit. This move is part of the government's larger effort to revitalise the education sector.

ID cards...

Continued from Page 1

He emphasised that Chief regret. get of Rs 16,600 crore.

Jagan's Tirumala visit...

Continued from Page 1

Andhra Pradesh BJP leader L Dinakar highlighted that Reddy has his constitutional right to follow the religion of his choice but called for respecting the rituals, customs, traditions, rules and regulations of other faiths.

"He is trying to enter into Hindu temples. He shall adhere to the systems and practices of Hindu temples, otherwise, he is ineligible to enter the Devasthanam (Tirumala temple)," Dinakar

Further, Dinakar alleged that the opposition leader should tender an apology for the alleged atrocities against temples during his regime and the utilisation of substandard ghee for making Tirupati laddu prasadam (consecrated food).

Earlier, AP BJP chief D Purandeswari had raked up the issue.

"We are given to under-stand that Jagan Mohan

Reddy intends to visit Tirumala on the 28th of this month. The practice of declaring one's faith has been in vogue for decades in Tirumala.

"As per G.O. MS NO- 311

of AP Revenue Endowments--1, Rule no 16, declaration at Vaikuntam queue complex before darshan in the faith form. This is also as per TTD general regulations Rule 136, Purandeswari had said in a post on 'X.'Echoing Purandeswari, TDP spokesperson Jyoshna Tirunagari said Reddy will not be allowed to visit the deity if he does not sign the declaration that he has faith

in Sri Venkateswara. "Any non-Hindu who enters Tirumala has to sign the declaration at Vaikuntam complex and then only they (he or she) should go or else they should not enter

Tirumala," Tirunagari said. She highlighted that eminent personalities such as

former President Abdul Kalam and ex-Congress chief Sonia Gandhi had also given that declaration, and alleged that the YSRCP chief is plan-ning his visit to Tirumala to politicise the issue.

Further, the TDP leader observed that the declaration nobody is above God.

When contacted, Tirupati Superintendent of Police L Subbarayudu said that taking out processions and meetings have been prohibited in the district.

"We will strictly implement all police acts. Without prior permission, there should not be any processions and meetings. We will take all the precautions," he

He further said Section 30 of the Police Act which regulates public assemblies and processions is enforced and as of Thursday 5 pm no political party approached the Police department seeking permission to conduct rallies.

Meet targets...

Continued from Page 1

The Central Government has allocated Rs 8,340 crore for the ongoing fiscal year.

Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad also reviewed the progress of skill development programmes. He discussed the performance of and 2024-25, including the financial contributions from both the Central and State governments. He stressed the importance of delivering outcome-based training to enhance employment opportunities for the youth and requested a detailed report on the training programmes

conducted so far. The review extended to centrally sponsored schemes in the Home Department. Special Secretary Vijaya Kumar informed the meeting about initiatives such as modernising police forces. The Chief Secretary directed that all CCTV cameras in the state be integrated with the Real-Time Governance System at the secretariat.

Krishna Paksha Sep 26 12:25 PM to Sep 27 01:20 PM

Ekadashi Sep 27 01:20 PM to Sep 28 02:50 PM Nakshatram: Sep 26 11:34 PM Pushya: Ashlesha Sep 28 01:20 AM to Sep 29 03:37 AM 10:37 AM to 12:06 PM Rahukalam: 3:05 PM to 4:35 PM Yamagandam: 03:21 PM to 05:07 PM Varjyam

06:28 PM to 08:11 PM Amritakalam: Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:43 AM to 12:30 PM

7:38 AM to 9:08 AM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Cloudy Temp: 33°° Humidity: 77% Sunrise: 5:57 AM Sunset: 5:59 PM

Updated: September 26, 2024 5:00 PM

pending teacher salary issues.

Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is committed to extending loans to all tenant farmers. Due to the previous YSRCP government's indifference, many tenant farmers had to borrow large sums from private moneylenders at high interest rates, as they were unable to secure loans from banks. During the 2014-19 period, the then-TDP-led government issued over 1.8 million identity cards to tenant farmers, whereas the YSRCP government issued only 800,000 cards in five years, the Minister noted Minister Parthasarathy stated that Rs 3,223 crore in loans had been disbursed in the first quarter of the current financial year, against a tar-

Did not manufacture drugs flagged in CDSCO report

PNS NEW DELHI

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

to quality standards. The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has listed samples of more than 50 drugs, including paracetamol, Pan D, calcium and vitamin D3 supplements, and anti-diabetes pills, as "not of standard quality" in its latest report. When contacted, a Sun Pharma spokesperson said the company has investigated the matter and found that Pulmosil (Sildenafil Injection), batch no KFA0300; Pantocid (Pantoprazole Tablets IP), batch no SID2041A and Ursocol 300 (Ursodeoxycholic Acid Tablets IP), batch no GTE1350A are spurious. "The said batches tested by the regulatory authority are not man-

PHARMA COMPANIES BLAME OF ON "COUNTERFEITS"

ufactured by Sun Pharma," it stated. The company is taking several

steps to ensure patient safety, it added. Some of our leading medicine brands now come with QR codes printed on the label, allowing patients to easily verify their authenticity by scanning them. Additionally, we have incorporated a 3D secu-

rity strip for further pro-tection," the drug maker noted. Torrent Pharmaceuticals stated that to verify the genuineness of the sample collected by the CDSCO, it carried out an evaluation of the same batch of Shelcal 500. "The outcome of the analysis concluded that the sample seized by CDSCO is not manufactured by Torrent

in fact non-genuine and spurious," it stated

As anti-counterfeit measures, the company has implemented QR codes on Shelcal, displaying batch manufacturing details to verify its authenticity, which was found to be lacking in the sample seized by CDSCO, it

"Our assessment of establishing authenticity of samples including physical appearance, QR code and labelling text comparison establishes that the NSQ (nonstandard quality) sample is nongenuine and counterfeit, whereas our controlled sample matches with predefined specifications," the drug firm said.

Torrent has already submitted a formal response along with an

"Our assessment of establishing authenticity of samples including physical appearance, QR code and labelling text comparison establishes that the NSQ (non-standard quality) sample is non-genuine and counterfeit, whereas our controlled sample matches with pre-defined specifications."

report, concluding the seized sample as spurious to CDSCO, it noted. An Alkem Laboratories spokesper-

son said the drug firm gives utmost importance to quality.
"The products mentioned seem to

be spurious and not manufactured by Alkem. The company is engaging with the authorities on this matter," the spokesperson stated.

Balineni, Samineni join...

Continued from Page 1

Former DCMS Chairperson Avanapu Bhavana and her husband, YSRCP youth wing leader Avanapu Vikram, joined the Jana Sena Party as well. JSP leader and Ĉivil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar, along with other leaders, were present at the event. Pawan Kalyan urged the Jana Sena leaders and activists to work diligently to strengthen the party. A large number of supporters of Balineni, Samineni, Kilari, and Avanapu gathered at the JSP office for the occasion. Among those who attended the programme were MLC P. Hariprasad, MLA Arani Srinivasulu, TIDCO Chairman Vemula Ajay Kumar, Guntur district JSP president Gade Venkateswara Rao, and Prakasam district president Sk. Riaz. Later, speaking to the media, Samineni Udayabhanu stated that he joined the Jana Sena without any conditions and pledged to work towards enhancing the

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE No. 43 to 59/2024-25 Online lenders (second call) are being invited from eligible registered civil contraction through e-procurement platform for execution of annual maintenance works, cancioned to Zilla Parishad under the 15th Finance Commission grant in Prakasam district, for the year 2024-25 of 17 CP/NS works with an estimated cost of Rs. 1538.99 lash. The tender documents for the 17 works will be substituted by the contract www.tender.appearcourement.gov.in

hours or contact www.tender.apeprocurement.gov.in Sd/- Superintending Engineer RWS & S Circle, Ongole Phone: 08592-233275

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JSP stages protest in front of Nani's house

After former minister and YSRCP senior leader Perni Venkatramaiah, also known as Nani, made controversial comments about Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj & Rural Development K Pawan Kalyan on Wednesday, Jana Sena Party (JSP) leaders and supporters staged a protest in front of Nani's house in Machilipatnam on Thursday.

This was the second consecutive protest by JSP at Nani's house after the attack on his vehicle in Gudivada on September 1. The JSP leaders and supporters chanted slogans against Nani and demanded an apology. Meanwhile, YSRCP staged a counter-protest. The situation turned tense, leading to the arrest of JSP leaders and supporters by the police.



Upon learning about the JSP protest, the police rushed to Perni Nani's house. YSRCP leaders and party workers also gathered at Nani's house, and both parties raised slogans against each other, creating a tense atmosphere. Nani's son Perni Krishna Murthy and other leaders attempted to come outside the house to argue with the JSP leaders, but the police prevented them from doing so.

Meanwhile, Perni Nani, while talking to reporters, said

that he is not afraid of Pawan Kalyan's threats. He alleged that Pawan has no substance and that he is making provocative comments. He warned that if the police remained silent, incidents of violence will occur in Machilipatnam.

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh held a 'Praja Darbar' at the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) district office during his visit to Visakhapatnam. At the event, the minister directly interacted with citizens, listening to their concerns and addressing their grievances. "I assure you that every issue raised will be thoroughly reviewed, and we will make every effort to resolve them," Lokesh stated, emphasising his commitment to public service.

During the session, the minister underscored the urgent need for a comprehensive investigation into the killings and attacks on Dalits that occurred under the YSRCP government. "It is vital to ensure justice for all communities, especially the marginalised," he added.

Members of the AP Nurses Struggle Committee presented their demands to Minister Lokesh, seeking solutions for contract staff nurses. Their requests included the regularisation of nurses working under the DME, APVVP, DPH, and NHM departments, the implementation of full gross salary, mutual consent transfers, and insurance coverage. Representatives from journalists' associations also voiced their concerns, requesting 4 cents of land for free housing, a pension of Rs 10,000, and

Every grievance will be addressed: Nara Lokesh



compensation for journalists who lost their lives due to COVID-19.

Additionally, representatives from the AP Velama Teachers Federation sought justice for candidates who were not selected during the DSC 2008 notification. Meanwhile, parents of students studying medicine in Russia appealed for the NTR Foreign Éducation BC Overseas Scholarship, highlighting the financial burdens associated with overseas education.

Amaravati to be greenfield capital balancing environment

A coalition of Dalit groups demanded the release of fee reimbursement arrears for engineering and degree students, which had been suspended by the previous YCP government due to high electricity bills. They urged the government to take over aided schools and colleges to strengthen the education system and called for accountability regarding the attacks on Dalits during the pre-

Specific incidents were

attention, including the cases of Dr Sudhakar and the murders of driver Subrahmanyam, Kodikatti Srinu, and Kiran Kumar, allegedly perpetrated by YSRCP MLC Ananthababu. 'We need a thorough investigation into these serious matters to ensure justice is served," the minister affirmed. Minister Lokesh concluded by stating, "We will do everything possible to address these appeals and support those



Govt achieved many strides in 100 days: Rammohan Naidu

Atchannaidu announces re-establishment of Horticulture Department's AD office in Uddanam

PNS SRIKAKULAM

Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu Chief has praised the coalition gov-Pradesh, stating that the administration has successfully revived the State's prosperity, accomplishing several significant milestones within its first 100 days in power.

Speaking at the conclusion of the Idi Manchi Prabhutvam

programme Manchineellapeta, Vajrapukotthuru mandal, Naidu highlighted the stark contrast between the current government's achievements and the failures of the previous administration. "Despite holding power, the former administration failed to deliver meaningful work. In contrast, we have already cleared Rs. 3,000 in arrears over three months and launched 178 canteens serving nutritious meals for just Rs. 5," Naidu remarked.

He further emphasised the importance of fulfilling election promises, pointing out the repeal of the Land Titling Act.

"Our government is committed to the welfare of the people, no matter the challenges. Minister

Chandrababu Naidu has been working tirelessly for th terment of the State," he added. Agriculture Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu also addressed the gathering,

stressing that while official posts may not last, good deeds will be remembered forever. He announced several key initiatives, including the reestablishment of the Horticulture Department's AD office for the Uddanam area, which had previously been Atchannaidu also reiterated the government's commitment to improving conditions for fishermen, unveiling compensation of Rs. 10 lakh for families who lose loved ones

while at sea. 'We are dedicated to constructing a coastal road, delivering on our promises," Atchannaidu assured the public. He further confirmed that households will receive three gas cylinders by Diwali, and fish landing centres would be

established soon to significantly benefit residents of Neelpet. 'We are equipping fishing boats with satellite systems to provide vital information on conditions," he added, while acknowledging the department's financial burden of Rs.

32,000 crore.

District Collector Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar applauded the achievements of the government over the last 100 days, particularly the release of funds from the 15th Finance Commission. He called upon the public to participate in initiatives like Swarna Andhra and Swarna Srikakulam. "We need collective efforts to achieve our goals," Pundkar

Local legislator Gauthu Sirisha expressed her gratitude to the fishing community for their unwavering support of the government. She assured the public that the promised distribution of Rs. 20,000 to fishermen will begin soon, and that the construction of the much-anticipated fishing jetty will be completed in the



together diverse stakeholders from the government, industry, and academia to explore opportunities and address regulatory and operational barriers to facilitate the adoption of District Cooling in the greenfield capital city of Amaravati and the broader state of Andhra the broader state of Andhra

The roundtable, moderated by Sudheer Perla, Managing Director of Tabreed Asia, and Piyush Sharma, Energy Advisor at GIZ India, focused on catalysing district cooling systems in Amaravati for both existing and upcoming industrial clusters in the

"Amaravati's vision as a greenfield capital balancing environmental stewardship and equitable growth provides the perfect opportunity to implement District Cooling and leverage the circularity benefits it can offer. Through the potential case studies we have assessed for the region, including the capital of Amaravati, District Cooling presents a USD 5 billion investment opportunity through reduced power load and energy consumption. Amaravati has the potential to become a lighthouse city for sustainable urban development across Andhra Pradesh and the

Sudheer Perla stated,

Man, his son killed as lorry knocks them down

programme, which is jointly

implemented with the Bureau

of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Ministry of Power.

PNS VIJAYAWADA

killed when a lorry ploughed through them when they were walking on the road at A. Kondur crossroads, near here on the night of

Wednesday. Police said that the deceased Mamilla Srinu and his son Mamilla Prasangi were going home on foot. A speeding lorry ran over them and killed both on the spot. The police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH. The lorry driver absconded.



Venkaiah Naidu visits Sainik School

Emphasises schools' critical role in training future leaders

PNS VIZIANAGARAM

Vice-President Former Venkaiah Naidu visited the Sainik School in Korukonda, ed by the Ministry of Defense. The visit aimed to engage with students and highlight the importance of holistic education in developing well-rounded individuals. Naidu expressed his joy at seeing the institution's focus on holistic development, set amidst a picturesque environment. "It turesque environment. brings me joy to see an educational institution focused on the holistic development of students, set in a beautiful environment surrounded by greenery," he remarked.

Accompanied by Captain SS Shastri, Naidu toured the school's departments, praising the dedicated infrastructure supporting academic learning and character build-ing. "It is heartening to see such dedicated infrastructure that supports not just academic learning but also character building," he noted. "I was truly impressed by the display of patriotism and discipline



among the students here," he

The former Vice-President emphasised the school's critical role in training future leaders. "The training offered here is exceptional for those aspiring to oin the Indian Army in the future," he stated.

Naidu acknowledged the broader mission of Sainik Schools in cultivating a sense of

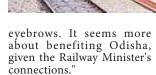
duty and leadership among youth. "Visiting institutions like this reminds us of the importance of guiding our young generation towards paths of service and commitment," he said

Rail authorities ignore local needs in north Andhra Announcement of a Vande Bharat train to Puri raises eyebrows

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The central hub of North Andhra is grappling with a severe shortage of train services to key cities, despite years of persistent pleas from both officials and the public. The recent introduction of Vande Bharat trains, while generating some excitement, has also ignited dissatisfaction among locals who feel their specific needs are being

ignored. The launch of a Vande Bharat train between Visakhapatnam Secunderabad was initially met with enthusiasm," said Kameswar Rao, a prominent trader in the Poorna Market. "However, the subsequent announcement of a Vande Bharat train to Puri, which lacks local demand, raised



The situation has deteriorated further with the intro-duction of a Vande Bharat train from Visakhapatnam to Durg, passing through Rayagada and Titlagarh. "This new service, also not requested by locals, has intensified feelings of frustration and neglect," said Sundar Patnaik, a regular traveller between the proposed route. "The response from passengers has been lukewarm, primarily due to higher ticket prices compared to bus services.

The pressing question remains: Why are railway

authorities rolling out trains that do not meet local demand while ignoring the long-standing requests from North Andhra? Residents of the port city have expressed their disappointment and are calling for more action to bridge the transportation gaps.
The business and commut-

ing needs of North Andhra to Bengaluru are not being adequately addressed. The Prasanthi Express, which used to operate between Visakhapatnam and Bengaluru, has been rerouted

to Bhubaneswar, leading to a decrease in seat availability for passengers from Visakhapatnam. "We desperately need a regular service to Bengaluru," said IT Entrepreneur. "Our appeals have largely gone unheard."

to Tirupati is also urgent. The Tirumala Express and the double-decker train from Visakhapatnam to Tirupati are frequently overbooked, with reservations often needed months in advance. "We have been pushing for a Garib Rath on this route to accommodate the increasing demand," said Nirmal Kumar Rao, a member of the prominent Industry body.

Besides, Visakhapatnam does not have a direct train service to Chennai, a significant commercial centre. Although trains like the Coromandel and Mail pass through Visakhapatnam, they provide limited seating. Local traders and residents have been advocating for a regular train service to Chennai to satisfy the high demand.

Vijayawada Division launches Swachh Food initiative

PNS VIJAYAWADA

As part of the ongoing Swachhata Hi Seva-2024 campaign, the Vijayawada Division of South Central Railway launched a comprehensive Swachh Food initiative on Thursday to ensure clean, hygienic, and quality food services at railway stations, onboard trains, and surrounding areas. This initiative aligns with the campaign's mission to provide a healthy and pleasant experi-

ence for passengers.
As part of the initiative, 15 pantry cars from popular express trains were inspected. Food inspectors monitored hygiene standards, including the cleanliness of washing areas and utensils. Pricing and expiry dates of food items sold onboard were also thoroughly checked.



Additionally, complaint registers and IDs of onboard vendors were reviewed, while vendors were counselled on personal hygiene and protective measures to avoid food contamina-

Further inspections were carried out at major food plazas, Rail Coach Restaurants, and

other catering units across stations. The food inspection team collected samples for laboratory testing and verified licences, medical certificates, and FSSAI certifications of vendors to ensure full compliance. The Vijayawada Haldirams Coach Restaurant and other fast-food units were inspected.

he pioneer



Turbocharging MSMEs: Andhra Pradesh's bold leap over hurdles

Ticro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have long been acknowledged as the backbone of India's economy. These enterprises foster job creation, spur industrial production, and contribute to regional development. Crucially, they play a key role in promoting rural industrialization, ensuring regional equity and distribution of wealth.

In Andhra Pradesh, MSMEs are pivotal in driving sustainable development and transforming local economies. However, despite their immense potential, MSMEs in the state face significant challenges that demand innovative solutions and strategic reforms to unlock their full growth potential.

India boasts over 6.33 crore MSMEs -- a sector known for its resilience to market fluctuations and economic chal-

12,000 enterprises might appear substantial, it accounts for just 0.0001% of the total, illustrating that business risks and closures are part of the natural economic cycle. This resilience is further underlined by the registration of 72,55,873 new MSMEs in a single year. The sector's contribution to India's economy is undeniable-30% of GDP, 40% of exports, and employment for over 12 crore people. Despite facing hurdles such as high tax rates, foreign competition, and the impact of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), MSMEs remain central to India's economic growth.

In Andhra Pradesh, MSMEs have embarked on a journey marked by ambition amid significant challenges. The state's initial MSME Policy, which aimed to create 350,000 jobs by 2020, focused on enhancing

In Andhra Pradesh, MSMEs have embarked on a journey marked by ambition amid significant challenges. The state's initial MSME Policy, which aimed to create 350,000 iobs by 2020, focused on enhancing energy efficiency, fostering competitiveness, and addressing regional disparities.

energy efficiency, fostering competitiveness, and addressing regional disparities. However, challenges such as limited access to finance, complex bureaucratic processes, inadequate infrastructure, restricted market access, and skill shortages have hindered the sector's growth potential. These barriers have stymied the ability of MSMEs to inno-

vate, expand, and flourish. To address these challenges, Andhra Pradesh requires a

comprehensive and multifaceted approach. A key strategy lies in developing specialized industrial clusters focused on sectors like textiles, pharmaceuticals, and agro-processing. By capitalizing on local strengths, these clusters can stimulate sector-specific growth. Equally important is infrastructure development. Establishing common facility centers and providing warehousing solutions as well as quality testing labs will provide



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

much-needed support to MSMEs, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

Access to finance is one of the most significant hurdles for MSMEs. Simplifying loan applications, streamlining credit guarantee schemes, and collaborating with banks to introduce MSME-specific

constraints. Additionally, addressing skill gaps through targeted vocational training, apprentice-ships, and industry-specific programs will equip the workforce to meet the sector's evolving demands.

Improving market access is another critical aspect. Facilitating MSME participation in trade fairs, enhancing online platforms for product promotion, and supporting government procurement initiatives will help enterprises expand their customer base. Moreover, regulatory streamlining through online single-window systems will reduce bureaucratic hurdles, fostering a more efficient and transparent business environ-

Technology adoption, particularly Industry 4.0 solutions, is vital for enhancing

petitiveness. Supporting MSMEs in upgrading their technology and promoting digital transformation through incentives and training programs will help businesses remain competitive. Furthermore, a focus on value-added growth in agriculture, renewable energy, and pharmaceutical research and development (R&D) will unlock new opportunities for

the MSME sector. One of the most promising developments is Andhra Pradesh's initiative to establish MSME parks, or "M-Parks." The state aims to create at least 100 parks, each spanning 100-200 acres, with projected investment of ?15,000 to ?25,000 crore. These parks, focusing on sectors like textiles, pharmaceuticals, and food processing, will create a solid foundation for future

Energy Minister opens

growth. Managed by the AP MSME Development Corporation, these parks aim to accommodate 30,000 MSMEs, generate around 3 lakh jobs, and attract large enterprises as anchor investors to catalyse growth.

In conclusion, Andhra Pradesh's bold initiatives to reinvigorate its MSME sector hold immense potential to reshape the state's economic landscape. By emphasizing strategic reforms, the development of MSME parks, integration of Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) groups, and investment in rural infrastructure, Andhra Pradesh is building a strong foundation for sustainable growth. These efforts will help propel MSMEs to new heights, contributing significantly to the state and India's economic future.

Priority to solar power for farmers: DC

Collector District Chadalavada Nagarani has instructed the relevant officials to ensure the provision of solar-powered electricity to beneficiaries in agriculture and allied sectors.

The Collector presided over a meeting with officials from the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), New Delhi, along with representatives from the horticulture, agriculture, fisheries, and animal husbandry departments on Thursday.

Addressing the gathering, the Collector emphasised the importance of integrating technology and solar power into agriculture and related fields. She highlighted that a pilot project aimed at providing low-cost and profitable beneficiaries in these sectors should be implemented in the district. The Collector also urged officials to explore innovative solar-powered technologies for rice cultivation,

and cocoa farming. 'To reduce the cost of fodder and increase milk production with a higher butter con-

dairy development, dry fish,

a system of cultivating animal feed from corn seeds, with growth cycles of five to six days," the Collector noted. She added that this method would significantly cut down feed costs for dairy

Furthermore, the Collector suggested identifying beneficiaries for the provision of solar-powered dryers for

grains, solar refrigerators for fish products, and cold storage and solar polyhouse dryers for cocoa farmers, all on a subsidised basis. Earlier, CEEW representatives discussed the potential of solar power technology in agriculture and allied sectors.

The meeting was attended by District Joint Collector T

PD MSS Venugopal, District Agriculture Officer Z. Venkateswara Rao, Animal Husbandry Officer K Muralikrishna, Horticulture Officer R. Devanand Kumar, Fisheries Officer RVS Prasad, District Lead Bank Officer A. Nagendra Prasad, CEEW Programme Coordinator Preetham Yashaswi, and Scientist Manish.

33/11 KV sub-station PNS ■ ONGOLE Minister for Energy Gottipati

Ravikumar inaugurated the newly constructed 33/11 KV Electrical sub-station at RL Puram in Chimakurthy mandal on Thursday.

The Minister, accompanied by Santhanuthalapadu MLA BN Vijay Kumar visited some of the areas in RL Puram panchayati and participated in some programmes. Addressing the gathering on the occasion, the Minister promised that the problem of power shortage in the industries in the surrounding areas of Chimakurti would be resolved soon.

He observed that the government is taking steps towards providing quality electricity even in the villages. As a part of this, new electricity sub-stations are being



set up to supply quality electricity to the public

Responding to the opposition YSRCP leaders' questions on the achievements of the new government in the 100 days rule, Minister for Energy Ravi Kumar acknowledged that the social security pension was hiked from Rs 3000 to Rs 4000, Mega DSC was announced to fill up teacher

The free gas cylinder scheme would be implemented from Deepavali, he announced. He reiterated that development and welfare are the two eyes of the government and give priority to the segments. "The Naiduthe segments. headed new government had abolished the controversial 'Land Titling Act. The government has tackled the flood devastation effi-

ciently," he highlighted.

SRM, R&B Dept join hands for research in pavement engineering

PNS VIJAYAWADA

SRM University-AP and the Department of Road and Buildings (R&B), Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding for research, academic and scientific knowledge exchange in the field of Pavement Engineering and its allied areas.

Dr R Premkumar, Registrar of SRM University-AP, and L Srinivasa Reddy, Chief Engineer (Roads & Buildings) SH&MD, Andhra Pradesh Development Corporation, formally signed

The collaboration, poised to enhance bilateral engagement in research, pilot initiatives, and capacity-building efforts, will also foster student upskilling and reskilling through seminars, workshops, symposia, guest lectures, and co-mentorship in academic endeavours and enable them to



perform better on the industri-

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Premkumar stated, "This MoU serves one of the university's goals, wherein we concentrate on positioning the university as a globally connected and regionally transformative institution of excellence." He added that there is nobody better suited than the faculty and students of SRM-AP to come up with effective and affordable solutions to the problems we

ourselves encounter. The MoU offers manifold benefits. It will enable government engineers to come and train the students and will provide them with first-hand experience in solving problems that are regional to this place," said Mr K Nayeemullah, Engineer-in-Chief (R&B). in-Chief (Roads & Buildings), alongside Prof. Ranjit Thapa, Dean of Research; Dr Raviteja KVNS, Department Head; Ór GVP Bhagat Singh, Associate Professor; Dr Uma Maheswar

K Nayeemullah, Engineer-

Arepalli, Assistant Professor; and other distinguished members of the faculty were pre-

PNS HYDERABAD

Roads, Buildings and Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy advised newly appointed engi-neers not to get inspired by those involved in the Kaleshwaram Project but to follow the path of legendary engineers like Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya.

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

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

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

Don't learn from Kaleshwaram engineers, says Venkat



He stressed that engineers have to play a vital role in Telangana's rebuilding efforts.

"The selfish acts of some engineers and some politicians have tarnished the reputation of the engineering fraternity. I request all of you to follow the examples set by engineers great Visvesvaraya and Nawab Ali Nawaz Jung Bahadur and not those responsible for substandard projects Kaleshwaram," Venkat said.

He narrated an incident

involving Visvesvaraya when

"If you do your duties with

from your work," he said. like the Super Game Changer RRR, TIMS hospital build-

he stopped a train after sensing a problem with the tracks, which were later found to be broken. This, he said, demonstrated the dedication and meticulousness engineers

the same care you will earn respect, and the state will gain

He also highlighted projects ings, and the administrative buildings being built in dis-

"The work you do is not merely the construction of a road, bridge, or building; it serves the needs of millions. I work as a responsibility to the people, you will deliver quality projects," he said. Venkat took a dig at the BRS

government, blaming them for leaving the state with a debt of Rs 7 lakh crore and a shortage of engineers to oversee critical projects. "Although they left us in such a state, we are now strengthening the R&B department with new recruitments.

In his concluding remarks, Venkat assured the engineers of his full support. "I am available to the public 24/7. If you face any problems, let me know, and I will resolve them immediately. Let us work as one family to develop our state. We are committed to the rebuilding of Telangana after a decade of destructive policies," he said

Stern steps being taken to check human trafficking: Anitha

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha has asserted that the Andhra Pradesh government is committed to combatting human trafficking and has consistently been at the forefront of this issue. She emphasised that human trafficking is not only a violation of human rights but also a crime that devastates lives and communities. The Minister unveiled the National Action Research Report on Cyber-Enabled Human Trafficking, prepared by the Prajwala Institute, in conjunction with the Director General of Police

The Home Minister was the chief guest at a workshop on the National Consultation on Countering Cyber-Enabled Human Trafficking (EHT), held on Thursday. The event was attended by Minister Gummadi Sandhyarani, State DGP Ch Dwarka Tirumala Rao, IT Secretary Saurabh Gaur, police officers from 27 states, public prosecutors, directors of the judicial academy, officials from the women and child welfare departments, and representatives from various NGOs.

The Home Minister expressed her pleasure at sharing the stage with Padma Shri Sunitha Krishnan, thanking her for highlighting the critical issue of human trafficking, which constitutes a form of modern-day slavery affecting millions globally. She announced that a cyber police station has been established in every district, with measures being implemented to counter cyber crimes in Andhra Pradesh. As technology evolves, human traffickers adapt to these advancements, she noted, adding that according to data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), there has been a 32 per cent increase in crimes related to child trafficking since 2021.

The Minister commended community groups and volunteers for their frontline efforts in supporting victims, advocating for their rights, and preventing exploitation. She highlighted the government's commitment to strengthening laws and policies as a defensive mechanism against this menace, noting that traffickers often exploit loopholes in



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existing systems and emphasising the need for strict law enforcement. Although the Information Technology Act and various Supreme Court guidelines have facilitated the establishment of cyber monitoring cells, much remains to be done, particularly regarding legal provisions for cyber monitoring and investigations.

Minister Sandhya Rani stated that the collective efforts observed at the workshop instil confidence in tackling the rising

crime and represent a significant step towards protecting trafficking victims in society. She remarked that cyberspace knows no geographical boundaries and stressed the importance of interdepartmental coordination at all levels to control cyber crimes, which are among the fastest-growing forms of international crime. The Minister added that due to the rapid increase in internet usage and swiftly changing technology, cyber-based human trafficking can manifest in various forms.

DGP Ch Dwarka Tirumala Rao remarked on the ongoing efforts to formulate the National Plan of Action, acknowledging the challenges but affirming its necessity. He pointed out that human trafficking has existed since ancient times and currently presents in many forms with-

in society. He noted the pivotal role of the state CID in employing new technology to combat human trafficking and commended the police department for its tireless efforts to prevent this crime through various initiatives.



NTR District Collector Dr Srijana addressing a meeting on the sand policy, at t

Supply sand to consumers without delay: Collector

PNS VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana has instructed the officials to work closely with sand transporters to ensure smooth and timely supply of sand to the consumers. The State government has issued guidelines to improve the implementation of

the free sand policy. Collector Srijana, along with Joint Collector Dr Nidhi Meena, held a meeting with representatives of the Mines and Geology Department and the Sand Lorries Owners' Association on the sand policy at the collectorate in Vijayawada. She urged the transport operators to cooperate with the district authorities in supplying sand.

Dr Srijana emphasised that the district administration is transparently implementing the free sand policy and ensuring timely delivery to consumers' homes. She also stated that sand charges are being directly credited to the government account.

Additionally, she requested sand transporters to register their names in the AP Sand Portal, with no limitations on registration. Considering the traffic congestion in the city, transportation will be conducted at night. She clarified that only transportation charges will be collected from consumers, with no additional fees.



ACROSS THE STATES



Death sentence for Kolkata man for rape-murder

Kolkata court on Thursday sentenced a man to death for the rape and murder of a seven-year-old girl in 2023, Aholding that it was a case of the rarest of rare nature. The girl had gone missing from near her house at Tiljala in south-east Kolkata on March 26 last year when she went out on some chores. The police launched an investigation after a missing diary was lodged and found her body in a nearby flat. The tenant of the flat was arrested and charged with rape and murder of the girl after post-mortem examination reports confirmed the crimes. The body bore blunt weapon injuries and strangulation marks post-rape, according to the autopsy report. Special Judge (POCSO) at Alipore court, Sudipto Bhattacharya, finding the accused guilty of rape and murder, sentenced him to death, holding that it was a case of the rarest of rare nature. He observed that the girl, who was of the tender age of seven, had no possibility of defending herself and was subjected to the heinous crime



Naga govt stops seer from holding 'Gau Dhwaj Yatra'

prominent seer along with five others who had arrived in Nagaland for the 'Gau Dhwaj Sthapana Bharat Yatra' were told to return following restrictions imposed by the Nagaland government. Jagadguru Shankaracharya Swami Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati accompanied by five others arrived at Dimapur on Thursday, but they had to return, officials said. Shankaracharya was scheduled to hold the Gau Dhwaj Sthapana Bharat Yatra, a movement demanding to declare the cow as the mother of the nation and to enact a central law to stop cow slaughter. However, on arrival at Dimapur airport, they were prevented from coming out of the airport following an order from the state government, an official said. "As per the state government order Swami and others were not allowed to step outside the airport," the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Chumoukedima district, Polan



Allahabad HC questions use of 'Honourable' title

he Allahabad High Court is examining the protocol surrounding the use of the term "Honourable" in official communications concerning officials of the Uttar Pradesh government, prompted by a case in which the Kanpur divisional commissioner was referred to as the "Honourable Commissioner" by the collector of Etawah. The court has noted that in official correspondences, there is a regular reference to different ranks of state officials with the word "Honourable" prefixed with their names. Hearing a writ petition filed by one Krishna Gopal Rathore, Justice J J Munir said, "Let the principal secretary, revenue apprise this court, on an affidavit, if there is any protocol about officials of the state who are entitled to ... have the word 'Honourable' prefixed along with their designations or names." "This court is well aware that the word 'Honourable' is to be certainly prefixed in the case of ministers and other sovereign functionaries, but we are not aware if the same holds good for secretaries serving the state government," the court

'No more adjournments'

SC on Godhra train burning case; next hearing on Jan 15

PNS NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said it will hear on January 15 the appeals filed by the Gujarat government and several other convicts in the 2002 Godhra train burning case.

A bench of Justices J K Maheshwari and Rajesh Bindal made it clear that no adjournment will be given in the matter on the next date of hearing.

On February 27, 2002, 59 people were killed whi France.

6 coach of Sabarmati Express was burnt at Gujarat's Godhra, triggering riots in the state. Several appeals have been filed in the apex court challenging the October 2017 verdict of the Gujarat High Court which had upheld conviction of sever-

al convicts and commuted the

death penalties of 11 to life term. The Gujarat government had in February last year told the apex court that it will be seeking award of death penalty to the 11 convicts whose sentences in the case were commuted to life imprisonment by the high court. The batch of pleas came up for hearing on Thursday before the top court.

Gujarat government's counsel Swati Ghildiyal requested the bench to post the matter for hearing on some other day as she was to argue before another bench of the apex court in a death penalty-related matter.

"We have to first understand what are the cases of individuals. What is the prosecution's case. Then we have to ascertain the roles," the bench observed, adding that hearing in the matter will take at least three days. "Now we will not adjourn it

Ghildiyal, counsel appearing for the State of Gujarat, list on January 15, 2025," it said. During the hearing before the apex court earlier, the state's

on the next date," the bench said.

"At the request of Swati

counsel had said 11 convicts were sentenced to death by the trial court and 20 others were awarded life term in the case. The high court had upheld

total 31 convictions in the case and commuted the death penalties of the 11 convicts to life term,

Will not allow terrorism to stage comeback in J&K: Shah

PNS CHENANI/UDHAMPUR

Ahead of the third and final phase of polling in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elec-tion next week, Union Home Minister Amit Shah intensified attacks on the Congress, NC and PDP on Thursday, saying the three dynastic parties are responsible for terrorism, which has been buried by the BJP and will not be allowed to stage a comeback.

Promising a terror-free Jammu and Kashmir under the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) regime, Shah alleged that the National Conference-Congress alliance would implement Pakistan's agenda if it comes to power in the Union Territory.

Addressing back-to-back rallies in the Chenani and Udhampur Assembly segments in support of the BJP candidates, Shah said the world has its eyes on the Jammu and Kashmir election, which is taking place for the first time after the provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution were



The government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi fulfilled the dream of BJP patriarch Syama Prasad Mukherjee in August 2019, when it abrogated Article 370, in line with his slogan -- "ek desh me do vidhan, do pradhan aur do nishan nahi chalenge" -- Shah said.

The home minister arrived at the venue of his first rally a few hours late after his chopper failed to land at Chenani due to inclement weather. However, he flew to Udhampur

and reached Chenani by road. Mentioning the delay during his speech, Shah lauded the Modi government for providing "Delhi and Gujarat-like roads" in hilly areas.

The BJP leader returned to Udhampur by road and addressed his second rally of the day. He is also scheduled to attend election rallies in the Bani and Jasrota constituencies in Kathua district and March constituency in Jammu district

The home minister said whoever spreads terror in Jammu and Kashmir will get his answer at the gallows.

"I want to ask you, whether (Parliament attack convict) Afzal Guru should have been hanged or not? The NC and the Congress are now saying he should not have been hanged...," he said.

"They want to release stone pelters and terrorists. Omar Abdullah gave up these dreams because you cannot do it. It is the duty of courts and we have enforced such laws that nobody will dare to hurl a stone anymore," Shah said at the first rally in Udhampur district's Chenani area.

The first phase of polling was held on September 18, followed by the second phase on September 25. The third phase, covering 40 Assembly seats in Jammu, Udhampur, Samba, Kathua and the north Kashmir districts of Kupwara, Baramulla and Bandipora, is scheduled to be held on

Tech upgradation should empower the poor: Modi Launches 3 supercomputers

giving priority to science, tech-

"Mission Gaganyan prepara-

tions have begun and by 2035 we

will have our own space station,"

he said, adding that the first

phase of the project has been

nology and research.

approved.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said a country can aim for high achievements only if it has a big vision and asserted that technology upgradation

should be to empower the poor. Speaking after launching via video link three PARAM Rudra supercomputers, developed indigenously under National Supercomputing Mission, Modi asserted that today's India is carving new opportunities in the infinite sky of possibilities.

Modi said his government has taken steps to ensure research in technology benefits the common

"We started the national supercomputing mission in 2015 and now quantum computing technology has taken a lead which will help improve IT, manufacturing, MSMEs and

startups," he said. Modi said his government is

Science for self-reliance is our mission," Modi said. The three supercomputers, built at a cost of Rs 130 crore, have been deployed in Pune,

Delhi and Kolkata to facilitate pioneering scientific research, Modi said.

Modi also inaugurated the Rs 850 crore High-Performance Computing system tailored for weather and climate research, and described the day as one of a "very big achievement" in science and technology sector. "There is no sector which does

not rely on technology and computing capability," Modi said. "In this revolution, our share should not be in bits and bytes but in terabytes and petabytes. Therefore, this achievement proves that we are moving in the right direction at the right pace," he said.

The significance of science is not only in invention and development, but also in fulfilling aspirations of the last person, Modi said.

BJP leaders provoking people of Jharkhand: CM

PNS RANCHI

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Thursday accused BJP leaders of "provoking people of the state in the name of caste and religion".

He claimed that BJP leaders who are being seen in the state at present would not be seen after the assembly elections in the state due later this year.

Soren was addressing a government function in Ranchi where he waived Rs 400 crore of farm loans of around 1.77 lakh farmers in the state. Earlier, the government had waived farm loans of up to Rs 50,000 of around 4.73 lakh farmers.

"Earlier, the government waived farm loans of up to Rs 50,000. Then, it decided to waive farm loans of up to Rs 2

lakh," Soren said. Accusing the BJP govern-



ment at the Centre of "ruining Jharkhand's 'Jal, Jungle and Jamin' (water, forest and land) for over 20 years", he alleged that leaders of the saffron party are "hovering" across the state as election is roundthe-corner.

"As election is round-thecorner, they (BJP leaders) are hovering across Jharkhand. Many faces, which you would not have seen earlier, are being seen now. They will be seen only for once and thereafter they will disappear," Soren

"They are spreading communal tension and provoking people in the name of caste and religion. Beware of them," he alleged.

Woman trampled to death by wild tusker in Odisha

PNS ■ BARIPADA (ODISHA)

A tribal woman was trampled to death by a wild tusker in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district on Thursday, police

The incident took place at Radhikasole village under the Baripada forest division in the early hours of Thursday when the woman

was asleep, they said. The deceased has been identified as Manka Hanshda

Police have registered an unnatural death case and sent the body to PRM Medical College and Hospital, Baripada, for post-mortem, an officer said.

Four persons, including two women, have been trampled by the same tusker in the past three days, creating panic among the villagers in the area, he said.

The forest department is keeping a close watch on the situation and the movement of the elephant is being monitored, another official said

'Stop working like political party'

PNS BENGALURU

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday said the Indian Road Congress (IRC), a 90year-old organisation that gives guidance when it comes to technical aspects of infrastructure building of our country, may be a knowledge engine, but it is functioning like a political

Gadkari was addressing a special plenary session, 'Advances in Management' at the international seminar of the Indian Road Congress.

"Sometimes I feel you (IRC) are working like a political party. You are a professional organisation. You should have a permanent office with laboratories and appoint people who are interested in research and technology full-time and take advantage of their knowledge and experience," he suggested.

The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways said if IRC is interested, he will facilitate land and a grant. "But you should be an independent, impartial and fair organisation. I am confident all state governments, including Karnataka,





"Sometimes I feel you (IRC) are working like a political party. You are a professional organisation. You should have a permanent office with laboratories and appoint people who are interested in research and technology fulltime and take advantage of their knowledge and experience," he suggested

will also contribute towards this," he added.

Gadkari said if quality work is to be done, then it is very important to be independent of the government framework. "In the government's way of doing things, the boss is always

correct, whether he is making good or bad decisions," he added. He also said quality alternatives to the existing technology are needed as India is facing a lot of problems with bridges, particularly in the coastal areas.

He also said projects are often stalled due to time-consuming processes and that this must be solved at the earliest and at every level.

"Álso, once the DPR is accepted, it is treated like a Bible. No one is ready for any variation and because of that, a lot of mistakes we have committed and that is today a big problem," the union minister said.

Gadkari said one of the good examples that the visiting experts can refer to in India is the Worli Sea Link Road

"Even after 26 years, expansion joints are perfect. Everywhere else there is a problem. Dwarka express highway is supposed to be a premium project, but the expansion joint was not perfect," he said.

CASE AGAINST K'TAKA CM

Lokayukta police seeking legal clarification

PNS BENGALURU

The Lokayukta police are seeking 'legal clarification' to register an FIR against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment case, sources said on Thursday.

A special court here on Wednesday ordered a Lokayukta police probe against Siddaramaiah in the MUDA case, setting the stage for registering an FIR against

The order of the special court Judge, Santhosh Gajanan Bhat, came a day after a single judge bench of the High Court upheld the sanction granted by the Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot to conduct an investigation against Siddaramaiah on the allegations of illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife B M Parvathi by MUDA.



"We have not yet registered a case. Some legal clarification is being sought, as the special court has passed the order under the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) while it should have perhaps passed the order following procedure under Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Samhita (BNSS)," a source in the Lokayukta police

said.
"We have to lawfully register a case under BNSS but the court order is under CrPC, so the clarification is being sought," the officer added.

Sangh founder Syama Prasad

'Weekend exercise effective in lowering disease risk'

PNS NEW DELHI

People cramming their entire week's exercise in one or two days or over the weekend, could be at a lower risk of developing over 200 diseases, with similar effects to those who exercise through-

out the week, a study has found. 'Weekend warriors' are individuals who engage in moderate or vigourous physical activity over the weekend and yet meet the World Health Organization's recommendations of 150 minutes of exercise per week for overall health.

However, researchers said it is not clear if 'weekend warriors' experience more health benefits

compared to those distributing their exercise in durations of 20-30 minutes on most days of the week. "We show the potential benefits of weekend warrior activity for risk not only of cardiovascular diseases, as we've shown in the past, but also future diseases spanning the whole spectrum, ranging from conditions like chronic kidney disease to mood disorders and beyond," said Shaan Khurshid. a faculty member at Massachusetts General Hospital, US and a senior author on the study.

In a study, published in July in the Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA), the team had found that the weekend war-



rior style of exercise was associated with a lower risk of heart disease and stroke compared to exercise performed evenly over a week. The research, published in the journal Circulation, analysed data from nearly 90,000 individuals in the UK Biobank dataset. Participants wore wrist accelerometers for a week

between June 2013 and December 2015, which recorded their total physical activity, including duration and intensity. They were classified under 'weekend warrior', 'regular', or 'inactive'. The study examined links between physical activity patterns and incidence of 678 conditions across 16 types of diseases, including mental health, digestive and neurological ones. Both weekend warriors and

regulars were found to have significantly lower risks of develop-ing over 200 medical conditions, particularly cardiometabolic ones like hypertension and obesity, compared to those inac-

Congress has become spokesperson of urban naxals, says Nadda

PNS BHUBANESWAR

country

BJP president and Union Minister JP Nadda on Thursday came down heavily on the opposition Congress, labeling it as the "spokesperson of urban naxals" and accusing it of promoting dis-integrative forces within the

Speaking at a gathering of intellectuals who joined the saf-fron party in Odisha, Nadda criticised the Congress for aligning with those advocating for the revival of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, stating, "The Congress has forgotten about



nationalism." He asserted that the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 was achieved under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. Nadda paid tribute to Jan

Mookerjee, who opposed the notion of "Ek Desh, Do Nishan, Do Vidhan, Do Pradhan," and highlighted the BJP's commitment to its ideology. Reflecting on the history of the Congress, Nadda remarked that Mahatma Gandhi had once suggested disbanding the party after independence, a recommendation that Jawaharlal Nehru ignored. He also criticised Left parties, claiming they lack direction and

often engage in infighting in states like Kerala and West Bengal, only to unite for photo opportunities in Delhi.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Trouble for Siddaramaiah

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

✓ arnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is facing the heat as a special court has directed the Mysuru Lokayukta police to investigate his connection with an alleged MUDA scam. This follows the Karnataka High Court's dismissal of Siddaramaiah's petition challenging the Governor's approval for the investigation. Siddaramaiah finds himself embroiled in a controversy as a probe into an alleged land scam during his previous tenure (2013-2018) gains momentum. The allegations revolve around irregularities in the denotification of prime land in Bengaluru, where government-owned land was allegedly released for private development, bypassing legal procedures. This development has not only triggered a political storm but also raised questions about the stability of his government, which is already navigating internal challenges. The case, brought to light through opposition parties and activists, accuses Siddaramaiah of misusing his position to facilitate the denotification of land in favour of private individuals. It is claimed



that these actions led to substantial financial losses to the state exchequer. The denotification process is typically reserved for cases where the government no longer requires the land for public purposes. However, the opposition alleges that the decision-making was influenced by vested interests.

The probe, aims to examine Siddaramaiah's role and whether he acted within the framework of the law. While the investigation is in its preliminary stages, the political ramifications are already visible. With the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) demanding a thorough investigation and even his resignation, the pressure on Siddaramaiah is mounting. In response to the accu-

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



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

Exploring the depths of the human mind



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



he human mind is a unique organic entity whose lengths of reach and visions of the range are still to be fully mapped. Many believe that an average mind works at less than 30 per cent of its potential. Putting this in the context of artificial intelligence, the matter becomes even more complex. There is a theory doing the rounds in the field of artificial intelligence that suggests that entities of artificial intelligence have the potential of organic functioning, just like the human The evidence for this is fairly

mixed. Some conclusions may emerge over time. The crucial question concerning artificial intelligence however does include its possibilities and potential for organic evolution and growth. As observed, sooner or later, answers will emerge. Even otherwise, the human mind is a suo motu logic of its existence. Attempts to map it, are indeed one of the exciting aspects of human endeavour. Notwithstanding some breakthroughs in mapping the brain, there are areas of brain function that need a closer look both more to the point one does physically and operationally. Interestingly, notwithstanding all this, there is a common reference to the 'second childhood' of human beings, where often, there may be latent people, upon reaching a certain

age, start behaving with childlike traits. It is difficult to explain this process, but it is fairly obvious to notice.

Similarly, the jury is out on the age by which, the basic orientation of the brain fully takes place. One also needs to know when it matures enough to develop a relationship between the 'conscious' brain and the 'subconscious'

Notwithstanding the diverse interpretations of the above narrative, it is obvious that at some stage the basic foundations of the mind seemingly get concretised. One such example is the influence of early childhood experiences on a growing human being. There are stages of childhood emerging into early adult-

All this becomes integral to the individual's ways of thinking and behaving. Popularly, this is known to affect the orientations of a growing individual on matters of finance, gender or for that matter even values.

The list can be extended but not know, exhaustively, of all the influences which go into the making of an operationally adult human mind. Very influences on a human mind

MANY AREAS OF

THOUGHT, REFLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND RESEARCH MAY CONTAIN INDICATIONS OF UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF THE MIND. IT MAY BE A CHALLENGE, BUT A CHALLENGE

BE EVADED

selves until a much later point in adulthood.

All in all, many ambiguities

remain, and so do many contradictions that stay alive so far as the working of the mind is concerned. Above all, it is generally believed that hormonal changes affect the working of the mind. Both men and women reportedly pass through menopause in their later life. Many are of the view that menopausal effects are more identifiable amongst the women than the men. An issue, however, remains to be fully answered: what are the factors that influence the

working of the mind? Yet another element that influences behaviour is the fall out of a mental shock. It can have many approximations of derailing the thought process of the individual, and indeed, impacting many values. Put simply, many areas of thought, reflection, analysis, and research may contain indications of understanding the dynamics of the mind. may be a challenge but a challenge that cannot be

Further, there are also some transgenerational aspects to it. Say, how two parents deal with each other, or singly and collectively deal with a child

that may not manifest them- is an important factor for the child's growth. This can carry on across generations. Physiologically, the passing of some genes is known to happen across generations.

This is not only in terms of physical characteristics but also certain diseases that may have affected one of the grandparents in a given generation and resurfaced again two generations later in the physical system of a descendant. The mapping of this process, as of today, needs much additional work to be done.

This also contains a whole research agenda of human physiology, physical anthropology, medicines and more. Such a subject matter would deserve an integrated approach of not just, anthropology, psychology, genetic sciences and more, but a whole setup of support disciplines with appropriate interdisciplinary framework.

This will give insights into the physiology of the human being and the composition of the brain and mind. It is a challenging task, but it is a task that cannot be avoided.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are

World tourism day: Uniting people, fostering peace



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

very year on September 27, the world celebrates World Tourism Day, a reminder of the crucial role that tourism plays in fostering cultural exchange, boosting economies, and promoting peace. As borders open and people explore new destinations, tourism serves as a bridge, uniting diverse cultures and breaking down barriers between nations.

In 2024, as we celebrate World Tourism Day, the theme focuses on the far-reaching benefits of travel beyond leisure, recognising how tourism helps us understand the world, its people, and its many cultures in deeper and more meaningful ways.

Tourism is not merely about sightseeing; it's about experiencing the essence of a place, its history, and its culture. As Bulat Nurmukhanov, Deputy Chairman of the Moscow City Tourism Committee, emphasises, "Tourism is primarily a way to immerse oneself in new cultures and experience history." Through tourism, individuals are given the chance to see the world through different lenses, fostering greater acceptance and understanding of other peo-



ple and their ways of life. This broader understanding is why cities like Moscow have prioritised cultural tourism as a key driver for their economic and social growth. The Moscow tourism strategy emphasises the importance of museums, exhibitions, and cultural events, which help travelers connect with the history and artistic traditions of the region. This approach reflects a global shift in tourism, where travelers seek deeper, more authentic experiences that expand their worldviews.

Tourism has always played a unique role in creating connections between people from different backgrounds. It allows us to learn from one another, building bridges of

understanding and respect. contributes to the global On World Tourism Day, this economy. aspect of travel is especially highlighted, as we reflect on how it fosters harmony in an increasingly interconnected world.

Roseate Hotels & Resorts, points out, "Tourism is about the connections we forge and the cultural experiences we offer." Kapoor stresses the importance of offering travelers more than just a stay, but a chance to explore different cultures and traditions. In a world where differences can sometimes divide, tourism brings people together, promoting peace and mutual

respect. For hotels and resorts, the focus is now on providing culturally aware experiences, from diverse culinary offerings to personalised services that reflect the traditions and customs of visitors. This kind of attention to cultural diversity enriches the overall travel experience, making it more inclusive and meaningful. Beyond cultural connections, tourism is a major economic driver for many countries. It

generates millions of jobs,

supports local businesses, and

Sustainable tourism focuses on minimising the environmental footprint of travel while maximising the positive social and economic impact As Kush Kapoor CEO of on host communities. From eco-friendly hotels to tours that support local artisans, tourism can be a powerful tool for inclusive development and environmental protec-

> Perhaps the most significant impact of tourism is its role in promoting global peace and understanding. By encouraging interactions between people of different cultures, tourism helps to break down prejudices and build mutual espect. As we celebrate World Tourism Day, it's important to remember that each journey is not just a trip to a new place but an opportunity to engage with the world in a way that promotes peace and harmony. When people experience the customs, values, and traditions of other cultures, they begin to appreciate the similarities and shared humanity that unite us all.

(The author is a travel writer, views expressed are personal)

GOVERNOR SPARKS CONTROVERSY

Madam — Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi, in an unprecedented move on the evening of June 29 last year, unilaterally removed Tamil Nadu Minister V Senthilbalaji from the Council of Ministers. But he hastily backtracked from his decision late at night because he too knew that his act was not only illegal but also unconstitutional.

Some people say that Ravi has always been in the habit of being in controversies. But I believe that R N Ravi is a Governor later, first he is the order follower of the ruling Home Ministry. The ideology of the Home Ministry is clearly visible in every decision and every speech of him.

For example, just two days ago, while giving a lecture, he said that 'secularism is a European concept, that is why it was not a part of the Indian Constitution earlier, later, an 'insecure Prime Minister' got it added to the Constitution during the Emergency'

For example, in one of his sentences, he first hinted at the concept of a Hindutva nation and secondly, he also criticised former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Some critics are demanding the immediate removal of R N Ravi from the post of Governor, whereas I believe that this is an ideological war which has been started by the central Government through the Governor, hence it would be better to answer this verbal war with thoughts only. Ravi should be asked, and then he will also say that the entire Constitution of India is external and is a copy of Europe, especially Britain, hence the entire Constitution should be abolished? Is our Constitution, on the basis of which we are proudly waving the flag of being the largest democracy today, also a European

concept? Has the Governor forgotten that he has taken oath of this Constitution? Secularism is an integral part of our Constitution. It is our biggest duty to keep

religion separate from politics. Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur ented players, of course, are indispensable

Ukraine appreciates India's efforts

THE EDIT

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

NDIA'S HOCKEY DOMINANCE CONTINUES

Madam—Indian hockey is on a high as exemplified by the way Manpreet Singh's men dominated the Men's Asian trophy at China's Hulunbuir. Notwithstanding the fact that India was the favourites to lift the title, the boys had to perform on the day, and they did. Although India fought hard to overcome an unexpected resistance from China in the final, the same team it had blanked in the league match, there was little doubt that it was the best team on display throughout the tourney.

The 2020 Tokyo Olympics bronze medal, 2023 Hangzhou Asian Games gold medal, bronze at the recent Paris Olympics, and now Asian gold: India has had an excellent run on the astroturf for a couple of years, after a long, long period. The best part of the present Indian hockey team is the unity and spirit with which they come across the field come what may. Coach Craig Fulton's disinclination towards unnecessary and unwarranted chopping of players, in contrast to a few former coaches, has played its role. The tal-

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

cial role in establishing peace within Ukraine with

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

ENCOUNTERS RAISE CONCERNS

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

Anshu Bharti | Begusarai

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FIRST COLUMN

SHARPENING THE QUAD VISION

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



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

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

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

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

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



sive actions in the maritime domain. We seek a region where no country dominates and no country is dominated—one where all countries are free from coercion, and can exercise their agency to determine their futures. We are united in our commitment to upholding a stable and open international system, with its strong support for human rights, the principle of freedom, rule of law, democratic values, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and peaceful settlement of disputes and prohibition on the threat or use of force in accordance with international law, including the UN Charter. Respect for the leadership of regional institutions, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), is and will remain at the centre of the Quad's efforts." While Quad is not a defence partnership like NATO, the presence of a global superpower, China with its coercive maneuverers in the entire Indian Ocean region, bore heavily on the leaders during the summit in Delaware. Delhi, Delaware (President Biden's hometown), Syndey, and Tokyo are keenly watching the international waters, and violations by China have been reported. The leaders announced "Today we are announcing a new regional Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific (MAITRI), to enable our partners in the region to maximise tools provided through IPMDA and other Quad partner initiatives, to monitor and secure their waters, enforce their laws, and deter unlawful behavior. We look forward to India hosting the inaugural MAITRI workshop in 2025. In addition, Quad partners intend to layer new technology and data into IPMDA over the coming year, to continue to deliver cutting edge capability and information to the region." China would continue to be a key concern for Quad leaders, and would perhaps serve as the super glue closely packing these four countries, with major interest in the Indo-Pacific region in a tighter embrace.

The next Quad leaders' summit is likely to be hosted by Delhi, where a new US president is likely to be the key guest of honour. Given that ex-President Trump had encouraged the Quad grouping and President Biden has elevated it to leaders summit, it is safe to assume that QUAD is here

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

Dissanayake's rise amidst Sri Lanka's political uncertainty



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

Colombo recounted an experience he had in Parliament after a crucial debate, where he observed two politicians discussing serious issues. After the discussion, the editor remarked to one of the leaders, "Look, you always attack him in Parliament, but behind the scenes, you are so close and listen to him carefully." This leader was none other than Anura Kumara Dissanayake, the newly elected ninth Executive President of Sri Lanka and leader of the Marxist-Leninist Party Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna. The person he was listening to was his predecessor, former President Ranil Wickremesinghe, a neoliberal democrat. In response to the editor's comment, Dissanayake stated, "Whatever we say in Parliament, listening to him for five minutes behind the scenes is where we can learn a lot about politics." Wickremesinghe embodies the craft of political manoeuvring, while Dissanayake represents an idealism that has sought to reshape politics through violent revolution, a pursuit that has, lamentably, cost over 60,000 young lives. But later, he engineered a shift among a few key party members to adopt a middle ground to attract liberal democrats through the NPP alliance. So far, it has been a suc-

cessful story.
The friendship between these two leaders grew for a reason: Wickremesinghe was facing serious internal rifts within his party, the United National Party, where his junior, Sajith Premadasa, was rebelling against him. The history of this party is filled with tales of internal conflicts and bitter betrayals that continue to haunt its prosperity. Nevertheless, Wickremesinghe demonstrated resilience, showing that no matter who declared a power struggle against him, he could adeptly play the game of politics. This Machiavellian politician, well-versed in power dynamics, understands that he would never engage in a battle when it could be won through deception. The painful reality, however, is the consequences of these internal conflicts within political parties as the country enters a new era dominated by "political coalitions." In my opinion, this is not a healthy exercise for a robust democracy.

The erosion of political parti backbone of political ideologies, inevitably paves the way for unprecedented crises and precarious social outcomes. However, few realise that the friendship between Wickremesinghe, a man from Colombo's elite and a wellestablished political family, played [knowingly or unknowingly] a vital role in President Dissanayake's victory. The longstanding enmity between Wickremesinghe and Premadasa was undoubtedly a significant factor in Dissanayake's success, even though many predicted that no candidate would secure the over 50 per cent of votes required to

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

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



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PARLIAMENT

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

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

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

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

liamentary elections. However, what is remarkable about this election is that it was exceptionally peaceful, with no violence reported, allowing for a refreshing power transition. The commendable role played by the Elections Commission in Sri Lanka cannot be overstated.

This calmness is particularly sur-

prising in a country where people previously took to the streets, violently ousting the Prime Minister and President after experiencing a devastating economic crisis. Many find it hard to believe. Nonetheless, this should not be seen as the calm before the storm, as the country's economy remains precarious. No leader can fulfil all the promises made during the election campaign. The responsibility now lies with the leader and his team to convince the public, fostering understanding and collaboration to overcome the challenges ahead. This is where the reality of the much-discussed "new renaissance" will be tested against the ground realities. The nation-state and its historical trajectory will provide important lessons in understanding what the future may hold. What does it mean for a nation's history to be an intricate weave of choices and consequences rather than a mere succession of events? This perspective compels us to reflect on the profound implications of individual and collective decisions on the essence of a nation. The dismissal of "what ifs" simplifies a complex reality rich with potential paths, urging us to explore the interplay between certainty and possibili-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



UPADHYAYA

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

Agriculture at a Crossroads For decades, agriculture has been the backbone of India's economy, employing over 50 per cent of the workforce and contributing significantly to enhance productivity, sustain- GDP. However, the sector is nologies such as GPS, IoT sen-

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

Precision Agriculture: Data-**Driven Farming:** One of the most promising advancements in agri-tech is precision agriculture, which leverages techsors, and drones to optimise farming operations. By gathering and analysing real-time data on factors like soil health, weather conditions, and crop growth, precision agriculture enables farmers to make informed decisions. This approach helps in the efficient use of water, fertilisers, and pesticides, minimising waste and environmental harm while maximising crop yields. In India, the adoption of pre-

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



lion in 2020 to USD 124.2 million by 2025. Government initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) for water conservation and the Soil Health Card Scheme for better fertiliser management are further driving this growth.

AI and Machine Learning: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are also playing a crucial role in modernising Indian agricul-

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

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

information about the origin and journey of food products, ensuring adherence to sustainability standards. The blockchain market in India's agriculture and food supply chain is expected to grow at a CAGR of 47.8 per cent, reaching USD 289 million by 2027. **IoT and Smart Farming:** The Internet of Things (IoT) is revolutionising how farmers monitor and manage their crops. IoT devices, such as soil moisture sensors and weather stations, provide real-time data on environmental conditions, allowing for better decisionmaking in the field. For example, smart irrigation systems can adjust water usage based on real-time data, saving water and improving crop health. The IoT in agriculture market

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

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

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

IN BRIEF



Anant Ambani, BP CEO open Jio-bp's EV-charging station

nant Mukesh Ambani, Director, Reliance Industries
Limited (RIL) and Murray Auchincloss, CEO, bp, on
Thursday inaugurated the 500th Jio-bp pulse EVcharging station of Jio-bp. Jio-bp is a fuels and mobility joint
venture between RIL and global energy giant BP. "The commissioning of the EV-charging station enables access for guests at the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre, Jio World Plaza and Jio World Convention Centre in Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), Mumbai, marking the installation of the 500th Jio-bp pulse charging point in India," a company statement said. Jio-bp has expanded its network of EVcharging stations at a rapid pace, growing from 1,300 to 5,000 in just a year. With 95 per cent of its EV-charging network comprising fast charging stations -- the highest in the industry -- the company is poised to deliver high speed electrons with unmatched industry-leading uptime of 96 per cent, establishing itself as the country's most reliable charging network, it said.



Rupee drops 6 paise to close at 83.64 against US dollar

he rupee depreciated by 6 paise to settle at 83.64 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, dragged by sustained foreign fund outflows. However, a decline in global crude prices and a firm trend in domestic equities restricted the rupee losses, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the local unit opened slightly weak at 83.66 against the American currency. During the session, it dropped 13 paise to touch 83.71 However, the local unit recovered some lost ground to settle at 83.64, a decline of 6 paise against its previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee closed at 83.58 against the American currency. On the domestic equity markets front, the Sensex climbed 666.25 points to settle at an all-time high of 85,836.12, while Nifty rallied 211.90 points to hit a record



Fixed price process for voluntary delisting: Sebi

arkets regulator Sebi has notified rules allowing companies to delist shares through a fixed price mechanism as an alternative to the reverse book building process, a move aimed at facilitating ease of doing business for listed firms. Under the Reverse Book Building (RBB) process, a firm planning to delist its shares from the stock exchange needs to initiate the process by making a public announcement. The rules mandated a minimum floor price for the delisting offer. Further, shareholders of the company place offers to sell their securities back to the promoters or large shareholders under the process. In its notification on Wednesday, Sebi introduced the fixed price process as an alternative to the RBB process for delisting of companies whose shares are frequently traded. The fixed price offered by an acquirer would be at least 15 per cent premium over the floor price. Additionally, the regulator has provided modification of the counter-offer mechanism in case of delisting through the RBB process.

India set to achieve 6.5-7 pc **GDP** growth: FinMin report

PNS NEW DELHI

India is set to achieve 6.5-7 per cent GDP growth in the current financial year as indicated by the movements in high-frequency indicators till August, a finance ministry report said on Thursday.

The recent developments analysed indicate strong foundations of macroeconomic stability in India with steady growth, investment, employment and inflation trends, a strong and stable financial sector and a resilient external account, including a comfortable foreign exchange reserve position.

"A challenge on the macroeconomic front is of navigating the continuing uncertainty in global economic prospects. We will likely encounter a cycle of policy rate cuts globally amid fears of a recession in advanced economies and continuing geopolitical conflicts," the Monthly Economic Review for August said.

On balance, the report said, the GDP growth of 6.7 per cent in Q1 FY25 and the movements in high-frequency indicators till August fit

well with the real GDP growth projection of 6.5-7 recent developper cent for ments analysed indicate FY25, provided strong foundations of macroeconomic stability in E'conomic India with steady growth, Survey 2023ment and inflation

For the remaining part of the financial year, it said, a reasonable expectation is that public expenditure will pick up, providing added growth and investment impetus.

In the farm sector, higher

and food inflation will be There are also incipient

signs of strains in certain sectors. For instance, the automobile dealers' body FADA has pointed to moderating sales of passenger vehi-cles and a build-up of inven-

tory, it added.
Data from Nielsen IQ indicated that the growth of fast-moving consumer goods sales in urban areas slowed in Q1

While these may turn out to be transient with the onset of the festival season, they warrant monitoring. Further, capital spending by Indian states has declined in the current financial year. Stock markets around the

world are booming, reinforced by recent policy announcements in a few countries, it said.

"Consequently, the risk of an eventual correction has If the risk materialises, the

spillover effect may be felt globally as well," it said. Amidst these concerns, it

said, low oil prices are a bright spot for the economy.

Govt to launch skill voucher system very soon, says top official

PNS NEW DELHI

The government will soon launch a skill voucher system, Secretary in the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Atul Kumar Tiwari said on Thursday, asserting that

the Centre is actively seeking industry partnerships to upgrade 1,000 industrial training institutes nationwide.

The ambitious plan, he shared, aims to transform 200 industrial training institutes (ITIs) into hub institutions, with 800 more serving as spoke facilities as part of a major initiative to enhance the

At Ficci's Global Skills Summit 2024, Tiwari announced that the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship would soon launch a skill voucher system.

country's skill development

However, the Secretary did not divulge further details on

a system whereby industries can align and partner with us to improve 200 hub ITIs and 800 spoke ITIs," Tiwari stated, adding, "We will launch the skills voucher system very soon as well". Secretary

"We would like to work on



National Credit Framework, introduced under the National Education Policy, has integrated skilling and education in terms of credits. Besides, regulations now mandate that up to 50 per cent of degree course content to be skillbased or vocational education-

way to incorporate skilling into mainstream education. The curriculum for classes 6 to 12 has been revised, and skilling and application-based learning have found their place, Tiwari explained.

based. Efforts are also under-

Govt mulling increasing ethanol price, sugar MSP

PNS NEW DELHI

The government is considering increasing the ethanol price for 2024-25 season as well as minimum selling price of sugar, Food Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Thursday. Joshi said the proposal on hiking the ethanol price is under consideration of the government. The petroleum ministry is looking into the

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an event here, the minister also mentioned that the government is "considering a proposal to increase the minimum selling price of sugar", which remains unchanged at Rs 31 per kg, a rate established in February

He also said the sugar production looks good for the 2024-25 season (October-September) on account of

Sensex jumps 666 pts to record high

Nifty closes above 26,200 on global stocks rally

kharif acreage is

already visible.

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crops as well. The skewed spa-

tial distribution of rain

may have an impact on farm

output in a few regions.

However, in the absence of

any serious adverse climate

shocks, rural incomes and

to the

PNS MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex rallied 666 points to close at a fresh record high on Thursday following buying in auto and banking shares amid gains in global markets. The BSE Sensex jumped

666.25 points or 0.78 per cent to settle at a record high of 85,836.12 amid monthly expiry in the derivatives segment. As many as 28 Sensex stocks advanced and two declined. During the day, it reached a

record intra-day peak of 85,930.43, surging 760.56 points or 0.89 per cent. The benchmark is just 69.57 points away from the 86,000-peak.

Rallying for the sixth day in a row, the NSE Nifty climbed 211.90 points or 0.81 per cent to close at a record high of 26,216.05. During the day, it soared 246.75 points or 0.94



lifetime peak of 26,250.90. From the 30 Sensex firms, Maruti jumpeu neu., cent. Tata Motors, Bajaj Maruti jumped nearly 5 per Finserv, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Steel, JSW Steel, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finance and Nestle were the other big gainers.

were the laggards. "China's recent economic stimulus announcement has greatly enhanced investor confidence, resulting in significant positive momentum in global markets, especially within Asian indices. Moreover, the market is maintaining an optimistic outlook in r

stable US economic data," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

Concurrently, the Indian market is reaching new highs, anticipating a strong recovery in corporate earnings for the H2FY25, fuelled by expected government expenditure, Nair

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.39 per cent while midcap index ended flat, marginally down 0.01 per cent.

Among the indices, auto jumped 2.23 per cent, metal (2.08 per cent), commodities (1.32 per cent), FMCG (0.84 per cent),

consumer discretionary (0.75 per cent) and services (0.64 per cent).

Industrials, telecommunication and utilities were the laggards.

As many as 257 stocks hit their 52-week high levels while 46 firms declined to their 52-

Gold prices hit record Rs 78,000 mark on strong global cues

PNS NEW DELHI

Gold prices on Thursday jumped by Rs 400 to breach a record Rs 78,000 per 10 gram level in the national capital on sustained buying by jewellers as well as strong trends in global markets.

Maintaining its recordbreaking run for the second day, gold spurted by Rs 400 to a fresh lifetime high of Rs 78,250 per 10 grams, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal had closed at Rs 77,850 per 10 grams on Wednesday.

Silver also soared by Rs 1,000 to Rs 94,000 per kg on robust demand from industrial units and coin makers amid strong overseas trend. The metal had finished at Rs 93,000 per kg in the previous session.

Pre-Budget meetings to begin from Oct 10

PNS NEW DELHI

The finance ministry will commence from October 10 its pre-Budget meetings with review of six ministries and departments, including new & renewable energy and skill development & entrepreneurship.

The meetings, which will continue through November 11, are being held to firm up budgetary allocations for 2025-26 and finalise the revised estimates for the current fiscal year.

On the last day, Ministry of Railway and Department of Health and Family Welfare will be discussed.

The Union Budget 2025-26 is expected to focus on reforms to further accelerate growth and implement measures to boost job creation and economic demand.

"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," the Budget circular 2025-26 issued by Department of Economic Affairs 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 the Indian polity. The Budget Estimates for 2025-26 will be provisionally finalised after completion of pre-

Budget meetings, it said.

During 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.

Inflated natural rubber prices to impact profitability of tyre makers: CRISIL

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Inflated natural rubber prices which are way above the trend in the past decade could impact the profitability of tyre manufacturers, according to CRISIL Market Intelligence & Analytics.

Tyre makers are headed for a rough patch as the price of natural rubber has surged more than 33 per cent onyear in just the first five months of this fiscal amid strong demand and crunched supply, which could strain profitability, CRISIL said in a statement.

The domestic prices of natural rubber closed in August at Rs 238 per kg on average, way above the trend in the past decade, it added. CRISIL Market Intelligence and Analytics, Director-Research Pushan Sharma said between fiscals 2011 and 2023, global rubber production grew 35 per cent while demand expanded 40 per cent resulting in a supply crunch thereby resulting in higher prices. "With further rise in demand and restricted supply, the prices of natural rubber are expected to remain elevated, impacting the margins of tyre manufacturers well beyond fiscal 2025," CRIŚIL Market Intelligence and Analytics, Associate Director-Research Mohit Adnani said.

GOVT RETAINS BORROWING TARGET

To raise Rs 6.61 lakh cr to fund revenue gap

PNS NEW DELHI

The Centre has retained its borrowing target for the current financial year and plans to raise Rs 6.61 lakh crore through auction of dated securities during October-March period of 2024-25 to fund the revenue gap to boost economic growth.

'Out of Gross Market borrowing of Rs 14.01 lakh crore budgeted for 2024-25, Rs 6.61 lakh crore (47.2 per cent) is planned to be borrowed in H2 through issuance of dated securities, including Rs 20,000 crore of Sovereign Green Bonds (SGrBs)," the finance ministry said in a statement on Thursday.

The gross market borrowing of Rs 6.61 lakh crore shall be completed through 21 weekly

auctions. The market borrowing will be spread over 3, 5, 7, 10, 15, 30, 40 and 50 year securities. The share of borrowing (including SGrBs) under different maturities will be 3-year (5.3 per cent), 5-year (10.6 per cent), 7year (7.6 per cent), 10-year (24.8 per cent), 15-year (13.2 per cent), 30-year (12.1 per cent), 40-year (15.9 per cent) and 50-year (10.6 per cent).

The government will carry

out switching/buyback of securities to smoothen the redemption profile, it said.

It will continue to reserve the right to exercise greenshoe option to retain an additional subscription of up to Rs 2,000 crore against each of the securities indicated in the auction notifications, it said.

Weekly borrowing through issuance of Treasury Bills in the third quarter of 2024-25 is expected to be Rs 19,000 crore for 13 weeks with issuance of Rs 7,000 crore under 91 dated treasury bills (DTBs), Rs 6,000 crore under 182 DTBs and Rs 6,000 crore under 364 DTBs.

To take care of temporary mismatches in government accounts, the Reserve Bank of India has fixed the Ways and Means Advances (WMA) limit for H2 of FY 2024-25 at Rs 50,000 crore.

Out of the gross market borrowing of Rs 14.01 lakh crore estimated for 2024-25, Rs 7.4 lakh crore, or 52.8 per cent, is already raised in first half (H1).

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the interim Budget had proposed to borrow Rs 14.13 lakh crore by issuing dated securities to meet revenue shortfall in the next financial year.



India needs to do more to boost manufacturing: Rajan

PNS NEW DELHI

India has done well in areas like infrastructure in the last 10 years, but it also needs to do more in other sectors to boost local manufacturing and job creation, former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan said on Thursday.

Ín an interview with PTI, Rajan further said the government's focus on production, whether it is goods or services is a good thing, but it is also

important to do it the right way. Responding to a question on the Modi government's flagship initiative 'Make in India', he said, "I would say the intention is good. I think in some areas, we have done a lot, as I said, in infrastructure...we have done a lot that

has been very useful". The Modi government's flagship initiative 'Make in India' was launched 10

years ago on September 25, 2014. "But we need to check the other places. And the best way to check is to ask critics, what do you think? What has happened? Has it happened the way you want it? Should we do more? You get feedback, and then you work along," Rajan said.

The eminent economist also pitched for more ease of doing business, especially with regard to government policies and less fear of raids by inspectors or tax authorities, etc.

Observing that there is a package which propels economic growth, he said, "If we focus on that, I think that would strengthen the concept of Make in India".

Rajan, who is currently a professor of finance at US-based Chicago Booth, also opined that the government should ask businessmen about difficulties faced by them, and not just follow the World Bank's ease of doing business checklist. The former RBI governor also emphasised that the govern-



ment need not dismiss criticism of its policy by saying that there is some vest-

ed interest or some hidden agenda. Under the 'Make in India' initiatives a series of measures have been taken by the government to boost local manufacturing and exports.

These initiatives include the rollout of production-linked incentive (PLI)

schemes for 14 sectors, ease of foreign direct investment (FDI) norms, reduction of compliance burden, single window approval system, and the national logistics policy.

Asked whether 7 per cent economic growth is enough for India to achieve the third largest economy status in this decade and become a developed nation by 2047, Rajan said, "If we grow at 7 per cent, then we will be past Germany and Japan in 2-3 years. That is not something which is out of the realm of possibility, it will

happen". Currently, the size of Germany's economy is about USD 4.5 trillion and Japan about USD 4.2 trillion. The size of India's economy is USD 3.7 trillion

Rajan said: "What is more worrisome, however, is when we say a developed nation. Now, what does it mean to be developed now? That is also a

at present.

Explaining further, he said, "Let us say being developed is having a per capita GDP in today's dollars of about UŜD 15,000"

"If you see that, then you put a 7 per cent growth rate, and you find it is not enough to become USD 15,000 per capita GDP by 2047 we need to do better," Rajan said.

The eminent economist also wondered that from where are "we going to generate that growth to become a developed nation by 2047"

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set an ambitious target of making India a developed nation by 2047.

On a question of whether the present coalition government can push economic reforms, Rajan said coalition politics may force more consensus which "would require more agile government, more sensitive, and a clever government to do that".



Vijayawada | Friday September 27, 2024

OFFSET'S JAW-DROPPING ALLEGATIONS; CARDI B GIVES FIERCE RESPONSE

ardi B and Offset's tumultuous relationship has experienced another dramatic twist. Offset has made a public claim during their divorce that his estranged wife cheated on him while she was pregnant. Cardi, who is not afraid of confrontation, addressed the accusations and appeared to verify them in a later tweet by saying, "AND DID !!!!"

The rapper known as Bodak Yellow was on Instagram Live late on Wednesday night, entertaining his fans, when she received a message from Offset's verified account. "U f-ked with a baby inside, tell the truth!!" he said per a screenshot from the recording shared on X.

Shortly after Cardi expressed her anger, she disclosed that Offset has been attempting to control her with gifts and warnings as she tries to move on from their relationship. The singer requested a divorce from the former Migos rapper in July, mentioning various reasons for their split, including his unfaithfulness. Even though there were rumours about Offset being unfaithful, individuals close to the pair have refuted that this was the main cause of their split. At the same time, there are rumours circulating about the *Money* hitmaker launching a new album in the cur-

"You want to play those games with me? We're going to play those games too," Cardi B blasted her soon-to-be ex-husband during the Instagram Live, highlighting his threats. "Since you wanna f*ing threaten me, talking about you wanna take my st. You want to take my s**t because I'm moving on? Move on! Move on... Why can't you move on?" she continued.



KJo under fire: MAI hits back on 'movie outing for a family' claims

irector Karan Johar pointed out that a trip to the movies for a family of four in India costs Rs 10,000. The *Zindagi Na Milegi* Dobara director Zoya Akhtar concurred with him regarding the high-cost individuals incur to see a movie at a theatre. The Multiplex Association of India (MAI) has responded to KJo's statements by presenting evidence that the average cost for a family of four at multiplexes is slightly more than one-tenth of Karan's esti-

In a statement, MAI said, "In 2023, the average ticket price (ATP) across all cinemas in India was Rs 130 per ticket. The country's largest cinema chain, PVRINOX, reported an ATP of Rs 258 for the fiscal year 2023-24." It further noted that the average Spend Per Head (SPH) on food and beverage (F&B) at the multiplex's theatres during this period stood

Responding to Karan Johar's claim, MAI stated, "This brings the total average expenditure for a family of four to Rs 1,560—significantly different from the Rs 10,000."

Karan Johar, in a discussion, revealed findings from a survey he had recently come across. They went to 100 homes and out of those 100 homes, 90 said they would watch only two films a year (in theatres). This is of an income group that is a massive part of our audience base. They can't afford it. They may come out on Diwali,

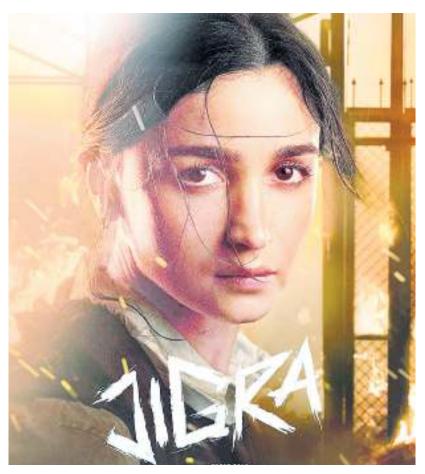
or if they hear about a film like *Stree 2*." He added, "Family members said that they don't like to go to cinema halls because when

kids say that they want popcorn or something to eat, they feel bad denying them. So they would rather go to a restaurant, where they're not paying for the ticket; they're paying only for the food. They said, 'Our child will point and say he wants caramel popcorn, but we can't afford it. Because the average cost for a family of four can be Rs 10,000. And maybe those Rs 10,000 are not in their economic planning at all."

Further in its statement, MAI pointed out the different factors that affect movie ticket prices. "Cinema pricing is dynamic and flexible. Prices fluctuate based on factors like location, day of the week, seat type, film format, and cinema format," read the statement signed by Kamal Gianchandani, President, Multiplex Association of India. They also stated that exhibitors and cinema owners frequently implement tactics like providing discounts and promotions in order to make going to the movies more cost-effective, "not only during less busy periods but also on busy days?



'When I signed Jigra, I was in my tigress mode'



lia Bhatt is currently involved in the promotion of her upcoming movie Jigra, set to be released next month. During a conversation between *Devara*: Part 1 actor Jr NTR, filmmaker Karan Johan and Alia, she discussed signing Jigra immediately after welcoming her daughter Raha Kapoor. She also noticed the maternal instinct portrayed in the film, focusing on her character's attempt to rescue her

During the chat, Alia opened up about the time she received the offer of doing Jigra and said, "When I signed Jigra, I think I was in my tigress mode. I was in my most protective mode—like, 'No one come near her, mode. That was the energy. That is why I always say destiny, luck, and life have so much to play in things going a certain way. Forget the fate of Jigra, the fact that it came to me also was... wow what is this timing! That I am feeling this way and it came. It had all of those things laced over it."

Alia shared how motherhood

changed her as an actor and as a person, saying, "I don't think I am the same person. Life has so much more meaning and I think actors can get really self-obsessed if they are constantly thinking about themselves... Now when there is another being in your life suddenly it is like Alia, who? It is Raha, Raha, Raha! Alia comes in and out! The focus is on her, nurturing and my mind always being there is something that will never change now."



ASHTON KUTCHER, MILA KUNIS STILL

umours about Ashton Kutcher and Rumours about Ashton Kutcher and Mila Kunis breaking up have been dismissed, with a source verifying that the couple is staying together.

The source spoke to individuals and

rejected the rumours, saying, "This is completely absurd and untrue." The rumours resurfaced after Kutcher's previous connection to Sean 'Diddy' Combs was brought back into focus.

The renewed circulation of old photos featuring Kutcher and Combs, who were arrested for charges such as sex trafficking and racketeering, amplified the rumours of their separation.

Nevertheless, another source made it clear that Kutcher is not involved in the current legal issues concerning Combs. Ashton is not involved in any of this. He is not a part of this discussion involving Diddy. The source mentioned that Ashton has only witnessed Diddy at a few social and business gatherings that were all captured by the media.

Ashton and Mila initially crossed paths

while they were working together on the popular TV show *That '70s Show*, which ran from 1998 to 2006. The couple started a relationship in 2012 following Kutcher's separation from Demi Moore and Kunis' breakup with her longtime partner, Macaulay Culkin. In July 2015, they tied the knot and now have two kids, Wyatt, who is 9 years old and Dimitri, who is 7.

ARCHIE









CALVIN AND HOBBES



REALITY CHECK







GARFIELD

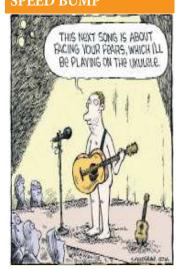






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SOLUTION

GINGER MEGGS







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Vijayawada

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Friday September 27, 2024

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

SHIKHA DUGGAL shikhaduggalwork@gmail.com

ctress Avneet Kaur chose the world's top summer vacation spots as her ideal personal get-

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

away. From London to Paris,

the Amalfi Coast to Germany,

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

Getting her to come on board for our travelogue was also one of our goals, we wanted to give our readers some homework so they could learn how their favourite actress made her overseas vacation an unforgettable experience. Oo lalala! "Every country was unique. London is my home away from home because I travel there so often. In Paris, I was all business when it came to fashion! In addition, I was travelling between sever-

travelling between several climates because I had suddenly left hot Italy for cold Germany. It's summertime after all, so I purposefully picked out ensembles with lots of colour pops. I practically wore everything in style throughout this trip: maxi skirts, pastel colors, flowery jewellery. All of this eventually pales in comparison to my fascination with luxury bags! If I claim not to be infatuated with Dior and Chanel, I will be lying. I made sure that even my swimsuits looked stylish when I got clicked," shared the Tiku Weds Sheru fame.

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

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

In this exclusive conversation. Ayneet had

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

a lot more to say to us besides her recent tour.

Because you're probably going to see your and risky at the same time. I was living my ZNMD moment!"

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





Redefining urban living with rooftop amenities

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

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

ARCHITECTS' RESPONSE

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

ROOFTOP TYPES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LOVE, SITARA: Dysfunction never felt so right!

TEJAL SINHA tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

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

PLOT

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

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

HIGHLIGHTS

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

DIRECTED BY: Vandana Kataria
PRODUCED BY: Ronnie Screwvala's
RSVP Movies
CAST: Sobhita Dhulipala, Rajeev Siddhartha,

Sonali Kulkarni, Sanjay Bhutani, B Jayashree, Virginia Rodrigues, Tamara D'Souza and Rijul Ray WRITTEN BY: Sonia Bahl, Abbas Dalal,

> Hussain Dalal and Vandana **Streaming on:** Zee5 **Rating:** 3.5/5

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

DRAWBACKS

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



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

PERFORMANCES

Sobhita, as the titular character Sitara, is as amazing as she's always been. All of those who have loved her in *Made in Heaven* and *The Night Manager* for that matter cannot stop but fall in love with her yet again. Well, not that she's played a similar character, but the different shades that she brings to her character are fantastic. Her physique, nuanced expressions and body language bring a rare authenticity to the character, making her journey and struggles deeply compelling What we personally love the most is

compelling. What we personally love the most is also her wedding looks, be it in the golden saree paired with vibrant red blouse, paired with gajra and bindi, or her engagement look, where she opts for an orange lehenga.

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

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

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

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

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

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

VERDIC1

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

INDIA LIKELY TO MAINTAIN SUPREMACY OVER BANGLADESH

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

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

It seems he has even added one more dimension to his game: curbing his aggressive instinct

making him even more dangerous.

However, both Rohit and Virat's bats remained silent in series-opener

Bangladesh pacers — Hasan Mahmud and Taskin Ahmed — bowled probing lines on a supportive track and were rewarded. With a long Test season ahead of them, the two premier batters must be itching to get back among the runs.
Playing his first Test at home since March 2023, Kohli did not look at his sharpest and one can trust him to not go for expansive cover drives at the

start of his innings. **CHANGE COMBINATIONS:**

Green Park wicket has traditionally been a low and slow track that assists spinners. While it is expected to offer some assistance to the fast bowlers initially, the basic nature of the pitch, prepared with black soil brought from Unnao, is not expected to change much.

The wicket will become slower as the game progresses. It means, India can field three spinners instead of three



pacers. If that is indeed the case, Akash Deep could make way for Kuldeep Yadav.

Axar Patel might just pip home

hero Kuldeep, who has performed exceptionally over the last 18 months. If India think they need more cushion with the bat, then In the last Test played at Green Park in 2021, India had fielded

Iadeja and Axar — in a game that ended in a thrilling draw with New Zealand.

Interestingly, the 2021 contest and the one before that in 2016 (also against New Zealand) lasted five days.

other the Bangladesh, who failed to apply themselves with the bat in the series opener, are expected to make changes to their playing eleven. They struggled against a high-quality Indian pace attack in their first essay in Chennai and then could not handle Ashwin and Co while chasing an

improbable target.

The team management has given contrasting statements on Shakib Al Hasan's availability. While a selector had said that he is doubtful due to a finger injury he suffered while batting in Chennai, chief Chandika coach Hathurusinghe said he is

eligible for selection. Bangladesh can bring left-arm spinner Taijul Islam in place of lanky pacer Nahid Rana. They also have an option in off-

spinner Nayeem Hasan.

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

CONDITIONS CHALLENG-**ING:** The muggy weather will

players. The humidity has been very high in the city in the last few days. The Indian team made Thursday's practice optional, saying it needs to save players from searing heat.

The match may see interruptions on first and third day with weather forecast predicting rain.

India have not lost a Test to Bangladesh till date and the visitors will need a special effort to reverse that statistic. TEAMS (FROM):

India: Rohit Sharma (C) Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Sarfaraz Khan, Rishabh Pant (WK), Dhruv Jurel (WK), R Ashwin, R Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohd. Siraj, Akash Deep, Jasprit Bumrah, Yash Dayal.

Bangladesh: Najmul Hossain Shanto (C), Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Zakir Hasan, Shadman Islam, Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim (wk), Shakib Al Hasan, Litton Kumer Das, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, Nayeem Hasan, Nahid Rana, Hasan Mahmud, Taskin Ahmed, Sved Khaled Ahmed, Jaker Ali Anik.



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

PTI ■ KANPUR

 $B_{\text{Shakib}}^{\text{angladesh}} \quad \begin{array}{ll} \text{all-rounder} \\ \text{Hasan} \quad \text{on} \end{array}$ all-rounder Thursday announced his from T20 Internationals with immediate effect and also said that the second Test against India will be his last if his country's board doesn't give him a farewell match against South Africa at home.

for Bangladesh will be in the Champions Trophy which is likely to be held in UAE and Pakistan.

The 37-year-old great, who featured in 129 T20Is for Bangladesh will, however, continue to play in franchise

"I have played my last T20 match in T20 World Cup. We have discussed this with the selectors. Looking at the 2026 World Cup, this is the right time for me to move out. Hopefully, BCB will find some great players and we will perform well," said Shakib on the eve of the second and final Test against India here.

Shakib, who has played 70 Tests, scoring 4600 runs and taking 242 wickets might just play his last Test in the North Indian industrial town in case the cricket board can't assure him of his security after being accused of murder although he wasn't even in the country at that time.

"I have expressed my desire to play my last Test in Mirpur to BCB. They agreed with me. They are trying to organise everything so that I can go to Bangladesh. If that won't happen, the match against India in Kanpur would be my last in Test cricket," he added. Shakib was named as an

accused in a murder case back home during the political unrest that led to the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He was a member of Parliament from her party, the Awami League.

the while made Shakib announcement interacting with Bangladeshi media but spoke in English following a request from the Indian journalists.

In an unexpected events, Shakib was named in an FIR in a murder case related to the civil protests in Bangladesh last August.

The case pertains to the death garment worker Mohammed Rubel, whose father, Rafiqul Islam, filed the complaint on August 7.
The 37-year-old Shakib

indicated that he may not travel back home after the current series in India, if he can't be promised safety.

not a problem but leaving is. My close friends and family members have concerns (about my safety), I hope things are better, well and there should be is a solution to it."

In January, Shakib had won an uncontested election to become a member of parliament for the then-ruling Awami League party. He was criticised for not speaking up for the student community during the protests.

Many Bangladeshis reportedly

raised slogan against Shakib when he played in Pakistan. resident Even non Bangladeshis hurled abuses during a private T20 league, the video of which became viral on social media.

"I have 8 games to go in ODIs, and the Champions Trophy will be my last."

PTI NEW DELHI

Former Australian captain Lisa Sthalekar said India have the all-round depth to grab an elusive ICC title during the upcoming women's T20

World Cup.
The global showpiece will be held in the UAE from October 3 and India's best effort in the event remains a final berth in 2020, where they lost to Australia.

"I can see Australia in the semifinals as they are aiming to win their fourth (title) in a row. England too had a strong pre-tournament build-up. India's chances are also very high and I expect them to be in the semifinals, if not in the finals," Sthalekar told a select group of journalists at the ABC — International Development's five-day cricket commentary

and mojo programme at the Australian High Commission. The former Australian skipper validated her argument citing good options through India's line-up.

three spinners — Ashwin,

"India has got power, depth, decent bowlers and if their 4-7 number batters can score at a good strike rate, they will be in a good position. They need a good start from the openers.
"Jemimah Rodriguez did well in the West Indies (in the CPL)

recently. It will be fascinating to see how she performs in the WC," she said. Delving further deep into the chances of the Harmanpreer Kaur-led side, Sthalekar said

beat Australia, their nemesis in global events over the years For example, in the 2020 T20 WC, Poonam Yadav took four wickets in the first game and

India have the wherewithal to



dislodged Australian middleorder. India won that match by 17 runs.

"If any top order Indian batter scores a century or bowlers have a good day, they can take the game away," said the veteran who was the first woman to score 1,000 runs and take 100 wickets in ODIs. Expressing delight over ICC's

decision of having equal prize money in men's and women's WCs, the 45-year- old said it will have a bigger impact on

the game. prize money "From a perspective, I think it's really good. But what I am more pleased about than just the winner getting the same prize as their

counterpart is how much money teams are getting for just participating in the World "So, it ensures that it's not just

the strong nations getting stronger and wealthier, but there is an effort at growing the global game," she said.

She used Scotland to leverage her point.

"Scotland coming in for the first time will earn money, probably more money than their national contract. The headline is equal prize money and that was primarily the intention.

But when you look a little bit deeper, they would like to have a bigger impact on the game." After her playing days, Sthalekar has established herself as a respected voice of the game over the last decade. The Indian-origin Aussie

described the effort she put in to reach the higher rungs of her job as a commentator.

Not everyone has to be a Richie Benaud or a Danny Morrison. But we all have different skills and strengths that we bring to the commentary box. That's why you have diverse personalities (doing commentary)," she said. Sthalekar

commentating during the IPL as her biggest career moment. "You have to have goals in your career and IPL (commentary) was my 10-year goal as a commentator. But I got a call to be in the IPL commentary team within six months.

"I remember my first IPL game as a commentator at the Eden Gardens in 2015. Some 70000 screaming fans were there and I had to do an interview with Gautam Gambhir," she said.

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



PTI NEW DELHI

Hanuma Vihari, part of India's back to back series wins in Australia, reckons the services of veteran batter Cheteshwar Pujara will be be dearly missed when the team aims for a hat-trick Down Under later this year.

The five Test series begins in Perth from November 22. Out of favour Pujara was the leading run-getter in the 2018-19 series with 521 off 1258 balls and was once again the backbone of Indian batting three years later when he accumulated 271 runs off 928 balls.

Across the two teams, the 103-Test veteran by far faced the number of balls to wear out the opposition attack comprising Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell As another Border-Gavaskar Trophy is on the horizon, Vihari wondered who can

play Pujara's role this time around.
"Pujara will a big miss. He was the backbone of the batting line-up in the last two series for Team India. He took blows, he batted time, he stayed there for a long time, he saw the new ball, he got runs. He made the job easier for the other batters coming in," Vihari told PTI in an interaction arranged by JioCinema.

"So that kind of role...Who will play is a question mark for me. Currently I would say we have an attacking mode of a batting line up (the top six). All like to play their shots. Virat is the only one I feel in that batting line up who can be like a glue to the other batters.

"He can stay on and bat the most number of overs and you know batting in Australia is all about time. If you see off the new ball, it gets a little easier with the older played the last of his 16 Tests in July 2022. In the absence of Pujara, he also sees a significant role for K L Rahul at number six. He feels Risabh Pant is best suited at number five. Rohit Sharma, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill and Virat Kohli form the top four.

"That's where KL Rahul's role also will be important because he is someone who's got the experience in playing in SENA countries and he can bat long. He has done well in SENA countries. I feel they are looking at KL Rahul at number 6 as well. "By playing Rahul ahead of Sarfaraz in the current series (against Bangladesh), they are looking at a bigger picture. They want experience in number 6 when we tour Australia.

"Because in Australia playing at 6 you need to have good technique whether it's facing the second new ball or batting after an early collapse," he said.

Vihari also thinks playing Australia in their own backyard will be the biggest thus far for Jaiswal, who has done well at home but is yet to prove himself in overseas conditions.

"It's his biggest test. But he's a very confident guy. Overall facing Australia in Australia, the mental preparation is key. This time we are playing five Test matches in Australia compared to four earlier.

"So it's even more mentally draining Down Under because everything is against you. The media is against you, the people are against you and you are away from home facing Australian attack in Australia," added Vihari, who stitched a match saving stand with R Ashwin in the Sydney Test on the previous tour.



India U20 face stern Iran test in AFC Qualifiers

PTI ■ VIENTIANE (LAOS)

Tndia will be looking to iron out the rough edges before facing Iran in their next Group G game of the AFC U20 Asian Cup 2025 qualifiers here on Friday. India put up a good show to register a 4-1 victory against Mongolia in their first Group G match but there is still a lot of work to be done.

"The last match was a big motivation for our team. I've always maintained that winning the first match of a tournament is crucial, and the boys stuck their heads in and played extremely well against Mongolia," said Ranjan Chaudhuri in a release.

But we cannot rejoice in the victory just yet. We must begin immediately preparations for the next game. We missed a lot of chances against Mongolia, and that is something we cannot afford against Iran.

They are an extremely good side, but we have made our plans according to their game

as well. Anything can happen on the day, and with a little luck, our boys can get a good result. The most important thing for us is to play our game well, and come out of the match with our heads held high, with a smile," he said.

While India registered a 4-1

win against Mongolia, Iran trampled hosts Laos 8-0, a result that puts them firmly on top of Group G. However, Iran head coach Hossein Abdi was wary of India's potential threat. "India have quality players, many of whom I've seen at the U-17 level in Thailand last year. They play a fast game, have shown a good understanding of football. I think the game has progressed very fast in India recently, and we will see further advances in the future," he said.

"We will give it our best against them, but the most important thing at this level is that the players are safe. It's all about building good human relations and doing well for the country," said Abdi.

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

AP MANCHESTER

Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag questioned his players' killer instinct after they were held to a 1-1 draw by his old club FC Twente in the revamped Europa League.

Sam Lammers capitalised on a mistake by Christian Eriksen in the second half at Old Trafford and raced away to fire an equalizer for the Dutch underdog.
"You saw that was the game of

their life. They fought for every yard and we didn't," Ten Hag said. "99% is not enough, You have to give 100%. You have United has won just three of

kill the game. You have to finish it off."

Eriksen had put United ahead with a stunning first-half strike but was caught in possession by Lammers, whose goal secured an unexpected point for the visitors.

Ten Hag had spoken before the game of his affection for the team he supported as a boy in the Netherlands and represented as a player. He said it was "not nice to have to hurt something you love."

Instead it was United fans left in pain, despite Eriksen seemingly putting the home team on course for victory.

games seven competitions this season and Wednesday's draw came after a 0-0 draw at Crystal Palace in the Premier League on Saturday.

Eriksen swept United ahead in the 35th with a first-time shot into the top corner. Connecting with a loose ball iust inside the box, the playmaker didn't break stride as he whipped his effort past past Twente goalkeeper Lars Unnerstall with power and precision.

With one fist clenched, he ran to the corner to celebrate in front of the home fans. But it was Twente's supporters his near post.



left cheering the loudest after Lammers' goal in the 68th when beating Andre Onana at

"There's a lot of football (still to play) when you (are) one up and the game takes more than 90 minutes," Ten Hag said.

"And you have to fight until the end and score the second goal." Like the Champions League, the second-tier Europa League has a new format and 36 teams instead of 32. It features a league system in which each team plays eight games against different opponents through January, replacing the old group stage.

In a clash between the Turkish and Greek champions, Galatasaray beat PAOK 3-1. Victor Osimhen, who moved from Napoli to Galatasaray earlier in September, made his presence felt.

Nigeria striker's goalbound header

deflected by defender Abdul Rahman Baba into his own net early in the second half. Konstantelias Giannis equalized on a rebound before Osimhen set up Yunus Akgün to net the winner. Mauro Icardi

added a stoppage-time goal. Lazio cruised past Dynamo Kyiv 3-0. Boulaye Dia struck

twice and Fisayo Dele-Bashiru added one. Both teams ended the game with 10 men. Real Sociedad, struggling in La Liga, got a goal from Ander

Barrenetxea at Nice but the home team salvaged a 1-1 draw thanks to Pablo Rosario's goal late in the first half. Another team struggling

domestically, Hoffenheim took home a point from Denmark in a 1-1 draw with Danish Superliga's leader Midtjylland. Darío Osorio put the hosts ahead late in the first half before substitute Max Moerstedt leveled it in the final minute. In Brussels, Anderlecht struck

twice in the span of five minutes in the second half on the way to a 2-1 victory over Ferencváros. Yari Verschaeren scored on the hour and Kasper Dolberg added the second from the spot.

Slavia Prague scored in each half for a 2-0 win at Bulgaria's Ludogorets



CAN DEVARA BREAK ₹100 CRORE BARRIER ON DAY 1?

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

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

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

released a G.O. to hike ticket prices.

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

In India, advance bookings are show-

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

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



Ajay's fierce look unveiled for *Pottel*

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

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

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

EXCLUSIVE

IS EESHA REBBA DATING? LATEST SCOOP!

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

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

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

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



FNCC donates ₹25 lakh to AP CM

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

Naidu to present the cheque.

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

Mohan Mullapudi, secretary of the Film



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

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



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

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

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

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

Next Kannadiga to conquer Bollywood

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

Bollywood hits.

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

Indian actors who have made successful Bollywood debuts.

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

Director TJ Gnanavel opens up on *Vettaiyan* ahead of release

With just two weeks until its release, anticipation builds for Superstar Rajinikanth's Vettaiyan. The film's preview, unveiled at the audio launch, offered a glimpse into its actionpacked narrative. TJ Gnanavel, the director, has begun promoting the film, sharing insights in a recent interview. Vettaiyan follows the story of an encounter specialist, played by Rajinikanth, exploring his thoughts and stance on encounters. Unlike previous films, we delve into the character's background, Gnanavel explained. Acknowledging the heightened expectations post Jailer's success, Gnanavel ensured he stayed true to his vision while incorporating elements fitting Rajinikanth's image and stardom. Vettaiyan promises action, songs and fights, but remains focused on its core message. I didn't compromise my creative vision for Rajini sir, Gnanavel asserted. The director's comments hint at a captivating blend of style and substance in Vettaiyan, eagerly anticipated by fans worldwide!