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India would have given larger bailout package: **Rajnath**

INDIA, US
TO BOOST COLLABORATION IN CRITICAL MINERAL SUPPLY CHAINS

Satyam Sundaram: Classic portrayal OF LOVE

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Hyderabad's real estate business was destroyed by the policies of the Congress government. The economy of Telangana has been destroyed. It is not proper for the Congress government to adopt a stubborn attitude without thinking of its consequences. The BJP is opposing this attitude of the government. We are preparing an action plan against HYDRRAA demolitions under the leadership of Telangana BJP president G. Kishan Reddy. The BJP is going to fight for the poor. It will fight till the government comes down.

— Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Union Minister



P4

DON'T MISS...

90% of flood victims in NTR dist...

NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana has announced that the government has credited compensation into the bank accounts of 90% of the flood-affected beneficiaries in the district. She stated that Rs.173.69 crore has been transferred to 1,09,729 accounts, as part of the state government's financial assistance to those affected by recent floods. However, 10% of beneficiaries have yet to receive their compensation due to technical issues with their bank accounts. Dr Srijana advised these beneficiaries to visit their respective...

-PAGE: 3

Chandrayaan-3 landed on oldest...

India's lunar mission Chandrayaan-3 possibly landed in one of the oldest craters of the Moon, according to scientists who analysed images from the mission and satellites. The crater was formed during the Nectarian period, which dates back to 3.85 billion years and is one of the oldest time periods in the Moon's history, the team, including researchers from the Physical Research Laboratory and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Ahmedabad, said. S Vijayan, an associate...

-PAGE: 5

Govt considering foreign investment...

The government is considering setting up a foreign investment regulatory mechanism for post-investment review and monitoring in the country, according to sources. At present, the consideration is at the discussion level only, they added. "It has been observed that all countries do oversight on the FDI (foreign direct investment), which is coming into their country. People suggest that in India also, there should be an oversight mechanism. It's a kind of oversight on money, which is coming up in the..."

-PAGE: 8

Indian shooters win two gold...

Indian shooters began their ISSF Junior World Championship (Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun) campaign in Peru on a good note, winning team gold in men's and women's 10m air pistol events, though a potential top-podium finish was lost in the individual category after a marksman was docked two points for reporting late for the final. The junior men's trio of Umesh Choudhary, Pradyumn Singh and Mukesh Nelavalli topped the men's team competition in 10m air pistol with a tally of 1726 points...

-SPORTS

Laddu case: SIT begins probe

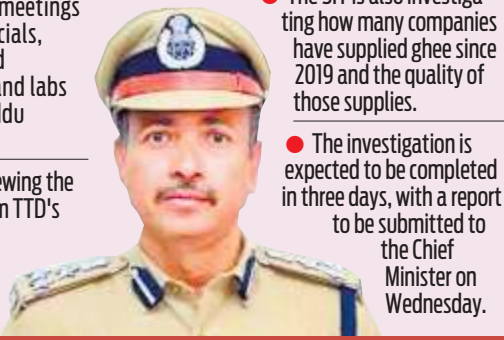
Three teams formed, headed by DIG Gopinath Jetty, SP Harshavardhan Raju, and Addl SP Venkata Rao

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Special Investigation Team (SIT), headed by Guntur Range IG Sarvashrestha Tripathi, has commenced its investigation into the adulteration of ghee used in the preparation of TTD 'laddu prasadam'. The SIT officials have formed three teams to conduct the investigation, led by DIG Gopinath Jetty, SP Harshavardhan Raju, and Additional SP Venkata Rao. The SIT chief stated that a comprehensive investigation will be undertaken regarding the adulteration of ghee in the Tirumala laddu. He confirmed that the case registered at the Tirupati East police station has been transferred to the SIT and that an inquiry will be conducted against AR Dairy Foods Company, which supplied the ghee.

On Saturday, members of the SIT team arrived in Tirupati, where they first visited the Srivari temple to offer their prayers. SIT chief Tripathi held a meeting with TTD officials at the Tirupati Police Guest House and inspected the warehouses storing TTD's raw materials used for preparing various prasadam, including laddu, in Tirupati and Tirumala, as well as the labs maintained by TTD. The SIT team is currently exam-

- The case registered at Tirupati East police station has been transferred to the SIT, which will investigate AR Dairy Foods Company for supplying adulterated ghee.
- The SIT visited the Srivari temple, held meetings with TTD officials, and inspected warehouses and labs related to laddu preparation.
- The SIT is reviewing the complaint from TTD's procurement General Manager and examining all aspects of the investigation.
- Muralikrishna, TTD's procurement General Manager, filed a complaint against AR Dairy Foods, prompting the SIT's involvement.
- The SIT is also investigating how many companies have supplied ghee since 2019 and the quality of those supplies.
- The investigation is expected to be completed in three days, with a report to be submitted to the Chief Minister on Wednesday.



ining the complaint submitted by the procurement General Manager of TTD. All aspects of the investigation, including the board's role and that of officials and staff, are being scrutinised. A special meeting was later held with TTD Executive Officer Shyamala Rao, during which details regarding AR Dairy's supply of adulterated ghee were discussed, including when the company was awarded

the tender and how many tankers of ghee it supplied. The reports from NDDP concerning adulterated ghee were also reviewed by the SIT team. Additionally, the SIT is looking into how many companies have supplied ghee since 2019 and how many tankers were rejected due to poor quality. They have recorded details regarding the companies whose materials were turned away. **Continued on Page 2**



SC to hear case today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Supreme Court will hear on September 30 a batch of petitions seeking a court-monitored investigation into allegations made by the TDP-led Andhra Pradesh government regarding the use of adulterated ghee in the preparation of laddus at the Tirumala Tirupati Temple during the previous YSRCP regime. The matter is scheduled before a bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan.

To summarise, the controversy stems from a lab report made public by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, which revealed that samples of

ghee supplied to the Tirupati temple for laddu preparation during the previous YSRCP government were found to contain foreign fats, including beef fat and fish oil.

So far, five petitions have been filed seeking relief, including a court-monitored probe into the allegations and greater accountability in Hindu temples managed by government bodies.

One of the petitions has been submitted by Suresh Khanderao Chavhanke, Editor of Sudarshan News TV, who is calling for an investigation by a committee headed by a retired Supreme Court judge or a retired High Court Chief Justice. **Continued on Page 2**



Declaration must for non-Hindus to enter Tirumala: BJP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BJP AP chief spokesperson Lanka Dinakar, in a release on Sunday, stated that while YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has the constitutional right to practise Christianity, he must also respect the rituals, customs, and regulations of other faiths. Dinakar emphasised that when Jagan Mohan Reddy visits Hindu temples, he should adhere to their traditions, failing which he would be deemed ineligible to enter.

He noted that non-Hindu can enter the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) only after submitting a declaration. "YS Jagan must mandatorily declare himself as a non-Hindu before entering TTD," Dinakar said. He also demanded that Jagan apologise for the alleged misdeeds during his governance, including the improper use of standard ghee in the preparation of TTD's 'Laddu Prasadam'.

Dinakar further criticised Jagan for not apologising to the Hindu community and instead continuing to provoke by allegedly mocking Hindu rituals and traditions.

Focus on 'speed of doing business'

Lokesh says forum set up for dialogue between State govt and CII

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government, led by Minister for Education, IT, Electronics, and RTG, Nara Lokesh, is taking swift measures to enhance the 'speed of business'. The Department of Industries has issued GO No. 58, forming a consultative forum with the joint participation of the State government and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). This platform will enable investors to address their

concerns with the government directly. Minister Lokesh, who recently attended the Southern Regional Council Conference organised by CII in Vijayawada, responded to a request from CII representatives to establish such a forum. The minister had assured its formation within a week and has now fulfilled his commitment. The forum, operational for two years, will serve as a bridge

between the government and industrialists, facilitating investments. Minister Lokesh will chair the forum, ensuring coordination across various government departments. In addition, the state has revamped the Economic Development Board to foster an investment-friendly environment and provide a single point of contact for entrepreneurs. The government is moving swiftly towards its goal of creating 20 lakh jobs in the next five years.

Minister Lokesh will chair the consultative forum, ensuring coordination across various government departments.

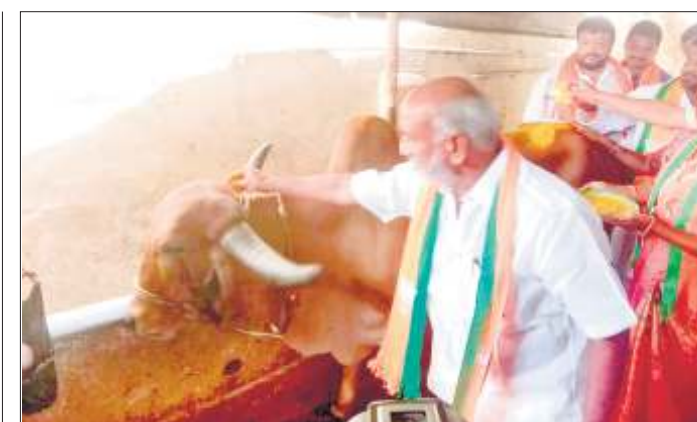


Heavy rain likely in Rayalaseema

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The trough extending from South Interior Karnataka to the Gulf of Mannar now runs from the Comorin area to Rayalaseema across Interior Tamil Nadu and reaches up to 0.9 km above mean sea level, the Meteorological Centre reported on Sunday.

In its daily weather bulletin, it stated that the southwest monsoon has been weak in Coastal Andhra Pradesh but remains normal in Rayalaseema. Isolated heavy rain is expected in Rayalaseema over the next 24 hours. **Continued on Page 2**



BJP performs purification rituals at temples visited by YSRCP leaders

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In an important development on Sunday, BJP leaders conducted purification rituals using 'gomutra' at Hindu temples in Vijayawada, where YSR Congress leaders had earlier performed special pujas. The BJP leaders expressed their concerns over the alleged defamations of the revered Tirumala Venkanna, claiming that Hindu sentiments have been hurt during Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's tenure. The rituals were conducted at the Labbipet Venkateswara Swamy Temple, with BJP leaders also offering special prayers.

Led by BJP Kisan Morcha State president Chigurupati Kumar Swamy, along with Adduri Sriram and Chaitanya Sharma, the leaders stressed the need to address griev-

ances they allege have arisen under the YSRCP government. They also highlighted the ghee adulteration issue in Tirumala laddus, demanding strict action against those involved.

Kumar Swamy criticised the ruling party, stating, "The desecration of religious sanctity under the guise of political rehabilitation is unacceptable."

Handing over temple-related powers to individuals of other faiths has raised serious concerns among devotees." Adduri Sriram also lambasted the government, calling for accountability and prosecution of those responsible for the ghee adulteration.

Sriram further accused the YSRCP of exploiting temples for political gains, urging an apology to the Lord for the wrongs committed.

TIDCO houses to be handed over soon: Min

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Municipal Administration, P Narayana, has assured that the TIDCO houses will be handed over to beneficiaries shortly.

The Minister inspected the TIDCO housing complex in Palakollu on Sunday. Addressing the media afterwards, he emphasised that the houses were constructed with top-notch quality. He mentioned that the design and construction of TIDCO houses were based on models studied from other states. Highlighting the quality of the materials used, the Minister said



MA&UD Minister P Narayana inspecting the TIDCO housing complex in Palakollu on Sunday.

CJ offers prayers at Tirumala



PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The Chief Justice of India, Justice DY Chandrachud, offered prayers at the Tirumala Srivari temple on Sunday. He was welcomed by TTD Executive Officer J Syamala Rao and Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdhary at the Vaikuntha Queue Complex.

Justice Chandrachud, along with his entourage, entered the temple through

the Vaikuntam queue complex and offered prayers to Lord Venkateswara in the sanctum sanctorum. After the darshan, Vedic pundits bestowed the Vedaseevachanam on the CJ and his family at the Ranganayakula Mandapam.

Later, TTD EO presented the Chief Justice with a Srivari laminated photo and Thirtha Prasadams. TTD officials including CVSO Sridhar and DyEOs Lokanatham and Bhaskar were present.

Cong demands FM's resignation over FIR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress hit out at the BJP on Sunday after a case was lodged in Karnataka against Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and others on a complaint relating to the now-scrapped electoral bonds scheme, demanding her resignation and seeking an objective probe under the supervision of courts.

Addressing a press conference here along with Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh, AICC spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi said his party hopes that through the judicial process, those involved in this 'corruption' will be summoned, their statements recorded and on that basis, they will be arrested.

"All the agencies, all the official organs know very well how to proceed because they have been proceeding against a large number of political opponents (of the BJP) in the last 11 years. They do not have to be told how to proceed..." We would certainly demand an objective probe under the courts' control but more importantly, ultimately supervised either by the Supreme Court or an SIT of the Supreme Court," Singhvi said.

"The first need of the hour is for the legal process started by this court order to take its course and to be supervised by courts -- both the high court and ultimately, the Supreme Court -- to prevent any interference or distortion or subordination," he said.

The opposition party reiterated its demand for a Supreme Court-monitored inquiry through a special investigation team (SIT) into the electoral bonds scheme. Ramesh alleged that four ways

Slams BJP for 'undermining democracy'



were used to extort money through the "conspiracy of electoral bonds - pre-paid bribery, postpaid bribery, post-raid bribery and through shell companies".

He said the finance minister should immediately resign on polit-

ical, legal and moral grounds as she is "guilty". Ramesh said the FIR was lodged following court orders and the Congress has nothing to do with it.

He said his party has been demanding a Supreme Court-monitored inquiry through an SIT into

the electoral bonds scheme and it reiterates that demand. Singhvi also accused the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) at the Centre of "undermining democracy".

"The finance minister cannot do this on her own. We know who is number one and number two (in the government) and this was done on whose directions," he said.

"The larger issue is the level-playing field, which is necessary for free and fair polls. Free and fair polls are critical for democracy. This is an attack on our democratic system," Singhvi said while terming it "EBS -- Extortionist BJP Scheme".

A case was registered against Sitharaman and others on Saturday on the directions of a court in Bengaluru, following a complaint relating to the now-scrapped electoral bonds scheme. **Continued on Page 2**

Monday Mirchi

BUREAUCRATIC BUNGLING CASTS SHADOW OVER MUSI EVICTIONS

They say through proper negotiations even the most complex issues like war can be settled amicably. But what stands out in HYDRABAD's controversial operations along the Musi River is bureaucratic bungling. The fallout of the ongoing evictions has left many wondering if the Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MAUD) Department, along with District Collectors, have forgotten the standard operating procedures of rehabilitation altogether. As per norms, officials engage in multiple rounds of discussions with those set to be rehabilitated, with potential oustees being shown alternative pieces of land and offered prescribed compensation packages. Most of the SOPs were apparently given the go-by in the case of Musi evictions. A little bird told us that discussions regarding evictions along the Musi had been ongoing for four months, with officials claiming they were 'ready to move forward'. But when it came to the word 'Go' for actual evictions; only those occupying the riverbed were targeted, leaving those in the Full Tank Level (FTL) and buffer zones. Interestingly, the entire operation was based on findings of drone surveys, with no semblance of conversations with the affected people. Sources in the Chief Minister's Office said when the Chief Minister gave his nod for the evictions, the presumption was that all the SOPs had been addressed. The sting lies in the twist in the tale: residents in the FTL and buffer zones were promised compensation and 2BHK houses — even that was never communicated properly. Now, with backlash from the potential oustees amid mounting public outrage, the whispers in the corridors of power are turning toward babus' missteps. It is not that they did not know their job. The larger question is: Was there a will? After all, these are the same officials who had successfully rehabilitated lakhs of people over the last decade. Yet this time they faltered with just 16,000 people.

DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES AMONG BUREAUCRATS ON CM

With a rather young Chief Minister ruling India's youngest state — Telangana, there is a discernible divide among babus in the state, coupled with their differing perspectives on CM Revanth Reddy. Going by both types of babus' recent interactions with yours truly, it is evident that the younger lot see in the Chief Minister a visionary and are accordingly more willing to engage with his ideas and plans. Seasoned bureaucrats, however, have adopted a cautious approach towards the CM, largely because of hush-hush discussions among them about the possibility of his being replaced any time. Hence, they are reluctant to commit fully to the government's plans. As one young bureaucrat pointed out, "Many critical issues are slow-paced by senior officials, largely due to their

reluctance to believe the security of the current CM's tenure". So, they are playing it safe and staying within their comfort zones. This conflicting approach is no doubt hampering administration. "It is a tale of two generations within the bureaucracy: one that sees a future with the CM at the helm and the other that is unsure about his tenure," another borderline babu remarked. How this internal divide will shape governance remains to be seen. Meanwhile, the writing on the wall suggests that the CM's control is only increasing by the day.

IN UNIFORM, THOUGH NOT ON DUTY AT THE SCENE

Whispers are making the rounds about Cyberabad CP Avinash Mohanty's impeccable record, though he was forced to proceed on leave when the defection drama involving Arikpedi Gandhi reached its climax. On the very day when Gandhi was headed to Padi Kaushik's place, Bharat Rashtra Samithi leaders showed up at the CP office only to be told that Avinash was 'on leave'. They then handed their letter to Joel Davis instead. But here's the kicker: Avinash, despite his official absence, was apparently in the loop, answering calls from media personnel and staying on top of the developments. Now, though tongues are wagging, no one seems to be bad-mouthing him, largely because of Mohanty's unsullied reputation. After all, it is whispered, he has stood his ground against former chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao in the past. The latest incident makes one wonder whether his 'leaving' the scene was just a coincidence or is there more to it than meets the eye. Whatever it be, whenever the defection episode comes up, reference to Avinash Mohanty follows invariably.

WASHING INFORMATION COMMISSION'S DIRTY LINEN IN PUBLIC

The authorities at the office of Andhra Pradesh Information Commission have begun washing their dirty linen in public, apparently due to a rift between the RTI Chief Commissioner and a few of the Commissioners. Matters came to a head when RTI Chief Commissioner R Mehboob Basha reportedly issued a circular placing restrictions on some of the Commissioners, virtually 'insulting' them. Presently, Andhra Pradesh RTI Commissioners are P Samuel Jonathan, Chavali Sunil, Rehana Begum, and Ellareddy Uday Bhaskar Reddy — appointed during the erstwhile YSRCP regime. The Chief Commissioner has justified the circular, stating that some of the Commissioners are enjoying their salaries and perks without even coming to office or choosing to drop in as per their whims and fancies. As per the circular, among other things, their salaries will be determined strictly on the basis of their attendance record.

--Yours truly

Suggestions & objections on Wakf Amendment Bill submitted: Minister Farooq

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Minority Welfare, Law and Justice, NMD Farooq, stated that suggestions and objections regarding the Wakf Amendment Bill-2024 have been submitted to the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC). He explained that due to various concerns raised by the Muslim community over the proposed amendments, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu made efforts to refer the Bill to the JPC for gathering public opinion.

Farooq emphasised that the government is committed to the welfare of Muslims and has formed a special committee of 15 members from Andhra Pradesh to express objections in a democratic manner at the JPC's opinion-gathering meeting.

The committee, chaired by Jagdambika Paul, convened in Hyderabad on Saturday to collect views from representatives of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Chhattisgarh.

Minister Farooq thanked Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu on behalf of the Muslim community for referring the Bill to the JPC. He mentioned



that while supporting the provisions beneficial to Muslims, objections were raised regarding several controversial aspects of the Bill.

He further added that the state government appointed committee members to address key issues in the JPC discussions.

C Shridhar, Commissioner of the Minority Welfare Department, along with other prominent officials such as L Sudhakar Rao, L Abdul Qadeer, and S Muhammad Ali, attended the meeting. Other notable attendees included Syed Adam Shafi, Mohammed Shafikuzzaman, Dr Munwar Hussain, Md Salim Pasha, MA Kalim Baig, S Muhammad Tahirullah Qadri, M Shah Jahan Bhasha, MA Sharif, S Mohammad Iqbal, MA Ghafoor, and M Farooq Shubli.

ACA seeks BCCI support in cricket development

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Cricket Association (ACA) president and Vijayawada MP, Kesineni Sivanath alias Chinni, along with ACA secretary Sana Satish, have urged the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president Roger Binny and Secretary Jay Shah to extend support for the development of cricket in Andhra Pradesh.

Chinni and Satish attended the inaugural ceremony of the Centre of Excellence and the BCCI general body meeting held in Bangalore on Sunday. Presidents and secretaries of all state cricket associations were present at the meeting.

During the meeting, Chinni and Satish submitted a representation to Binny and Shah, requesting their assistance for the advancement of cricket in the state.

They appreciated the BCCI's efforts to develop domestic cricket and sought support for ACA's initiatives.

They also urged Binny and Shah to take steps towards the construction of new cricket stadiums in Andhra Pradesh. The BCCI chiefs responded



ACA president Kesineni Chinni and secretary Satish meet BCCI president Roger Binny in Bangalore on Sunday.

positively to their request. During the National Cricket Academy (NCA) inauguration programme in Bangalore, Kesineni Chinni and Satish proposed to the BCCI Apex Council Member and former Indian Cricket team captain

Dilip Vengsarkar that three outstanding cricketers from the ACA be sent to Australia and England on an exchange tour to gain international experience. Vengsarkar responded favourably to their request, Chinni said.

Ganja chocolates seized in Vizag

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a major operation against drug trafficking, Visakhapatnam police seized a significant quantity of ganja chocolates from a pawn shop located opposite Kranti Theatre under two town Police limits. Acting on a tip-off from the City Task Force, law enforcement officials conducted raids at the establishment, leading to the arrest of the accused, Manoj Kumar Chaudhary.

A total of 133 ganja chocolates, weighing 660 grams, were recovered from the shop. A case has been registered against Chaudhary under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

YSRCP slams Naidu's 'diversion' tactics, demands accountability

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leaders have launched a scathing attack on Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, accusing him of diverting attention from pressing issues through false propaganda.

Addressing the media at the party's central office on Sunday, former minister Vellampalli Srinivas questioned the focus on the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into the alleged adulteration of ghee at Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD). He argued that if there

was solid evidence, a direct case should have been filed instead of creating unwarranted hype. Vellampalli accused CM Naidu of misleading the public about the purity of 'laddus' at TTD and warned that such actions would have repercussions.

Former minister Gudivada Amarnath, speaking in Visakhapatnam, echoed similar concerns. He alleged that Naidu was relying on diversion tactics, particularly with the TTD ghee controversy.

Amarnath challenged Naidu to request a high-level investigation under the Supreme Court's supervision, suggest-

ing the current SIT probe was a means to avoid a thorough inquiry.

In Kadapa, former MLA P. Ravindranath Reddy accused Naidu's government of coming to power through Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) manipulation and prioritising looting over governance. He demanded a white paper on the state's rising debts and criticised the handling of the Vijayawada floods.

The leaders called for transparency and urged the public to hold Naidu accountable for focusing on distractions rather than addressing crucial issues facing the state.

Cong demands...

Continued from Page 1

According to police, the FIR was registered under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 384 (punishment for extortion), 120B (criminal conspiracy) and 34 (common intention) against Sitharaman, Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials and office-bearers of the BJP at the state and national levels, based on the order of the special court.

Karnataka BJP chief B Y Vijayendra and party leader Nalin Kumar Kattel have also been named in the FIR.

The complaint was submitted to police by Adarsh R Iyer, co-president of the Janaadhikara Sangharsha Parishath (JSP), alleging that the accused "committed extortion under the guise and garb of electoral bonds" and benefitted to the tune of more than Rs 8,000 crore. The complainant has further alleged that Sitharaman, through the clandestine aid and support of ED officials, facilitated the extortion of thousands of crores of rupees for the benefit of others both at the state and national levels. "The entire extortion racket under the garb of electoral bonds has been orchestrated hand in glove with officials of the BJP at various levels," the complaint has said.

The Supreme Court struck down the electoral bonds scheme in February, saying it violates the right to information and the freedom of speech and expression under the Constitution.

Laddu case...

Continued from Page 1

Previously, TTD General Manager (Procurement) Muralikrishna filed a complaint against AR Dairy Foods Company at the Tirupati East Police Station, alleging the supply of adulterated ghee. The SIT has obtained a copy of the FIR and appointed a special investigation officer to oversee the case. General Manager Muralikrishna was summoned for questioning, and lab employees responsible for checking the quality of the ghee were also interrogated.

Meanwhile, a team led by DIG Gopinath Jetty visited AR Dairy Foods Company in Dindigul to meet with its representatives. Another team went to Vaishnavi Company in Nellore, which had taken a sub-lease from AR Dairy Foods Company, to conduct an investigation. The investigation is expected to be completed within three days, with the report to be submitted to the Chief Minister on Wednesday.

Anarchy of alliance MLAs at its peak in AP: Malladi Vishnu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former YSRCP MLA Malladi Vishnu has condemned the current coalition government, stating that the anarchy among coalition MLAs has reached unprecedented levels since they came to power. Addressing media persons on Sunday, Vishnu accused Chandrababu Naidu of abusing power at every opportunity and claimed that the coalition government has failed miserably to fulfil its pre-election promises to the

people of Andhra Pradesh.

Vishnu expressed his frustration over how public issues have been sidelined due to diversionary politics. He remarked that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's assertion that an "Evil Rule" is prevailing in the state rings true, as the current situation reflects this reality. He pointed out that the government has been confusing the public by linking every issue to the previous YSRCP government.

Vishnu also criticised the formation of a Special Investigation

Team (SIT) to probe the alleged adulteration of Tirumala Laddu Prasad, calling it a tactic by Naidu's government to blame the previous YSRCP administration. He stated that Y.S. Jagan has clarified the timeline regarding the arrival and dispatch of ghee tankers, emphasising that the Executive Officer has confirmed there was no



adulteration. He questioned why the coalition government is reluctant to conduct a CBI inquiry if they believe there was wrongdoing. He accused Naidu of orchestrating drama to mislead the public, which is why he approached the Supreme Court.

Vishnu described the prevailing situation as "rowdy rule," expressing concern that flood victims

are not receiving justice. He cited the chaos caused by the Tiruvuru MLA as evidence of this decline. Kakinada Janasena MLA Pantam Nanaji's attack on the Head of Department at the medical college also drew attention, leading Vishnu to question what action has been taken against him by Pawan Kalyan. He voiced his anger over the harassment faced by reporters who dared to ask questions, as well as threats against police officers, citing a recent protest outside a Circle Inspector's

house in Tadipatri as further evidence of this troubling trend. He noted that similar behaviour was exhibited by ministers during Naidu's previous regime.

Vishnu lamented that it is disheartening that this government resorted to lathi-charge against victims protesting due to the lack of enumeration in the West constituency. He concluded by stating that the people are growing increasingly impatient with the current administration.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha

Tithi: Trayodashi: Sep 29 04:47 PM to Sep 30 07:06 PM

Chaturdashi: Sep 30 07:06 PM to Oct 01 09:39 PM

Nakshatram: Magha: Sep 29 03:37 AM to Sep 30 06:18 AM

Purva Phalguni: Sep 30 06:18 AM to Oct 01 09:16 AM

Rahukalam: 7:38 AM to 9:07 AM

Yamagandam: 10:36 AM to 12:05 PM

Varjyam: 03:17 PM to 05:05 PM

Gulika: 1:34 PM to 3:03 PM

Amritakalam: 02:04 AM to 03:52 AM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:42 AM to 12:29 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy

Temp: 34°C

Humidity: 73%

Sunrise: 5:57 AM

Sunset: 5:57 PM

Updated: September 29, 2024 5:00 PM

SC to hear...

Continued from Page 1

A second petition has been filed by Surjit Singh Yadav, President of Hindu Sena, requesting a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the alleged use of adulterated ghee in the laddus. The third petition, filed by senior BJP leader Subramanian Swamy, seeks an investigation by a court-monitored committee. In addition to requesting the appointment of a committee, Swamy has sought a detailed report from the authorities on the forensic of the ghee sample used by the concerned lab, including its source.

The fourth petition, submitted by Rajya Sabha MP and former TTD Chairman YV Subba Reddy, requests an independent investigation by a court-monitored committee or a retired judge along with domain experts into the allegations of adulteration. Reddy also seeks a directive to the respondent authorities for a report detailing the forensic of the lab report and the source of the ghee used in that report, along with all additional details regarding sampling and procurement.

The fifth petition has been filed by historian Dr. Vikram Sampath and spiritual speaker Dushyanth Sridhar, calling for the divestment of government and bureaucratic control over temples. The duo seeks to establish accountability in Hindu temples managed by government bodies. The petitions submitted by Subramanian Swamy, YV Subba Reddy, and Vikram Sampath are set to be listed on Monday.

Heavy rain...

Continued from Page 1

Thunderstorms, accompanied by lightning and strong surface winds with speeds ranging from 30 to 40 kmph, are likely to occur at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next five days, in Rayalaseema over the next 24 hours and from October 1-3, and in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next 48 hours.

Strong surface winds, also ranging from 30 to 40 kmph, are expected at isolated places in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh from October 1-3 and in Rayalaseema on September 30. Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are anticipated at various places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, South Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and Rayalaseema over the next seven days. Heavy rainfall has been reported in Tirupati District of Rayalaseema over the past 24 hours. Rainfall was also recorded at one or two places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and at several places in Rayalaseema during the same period, the report added.

TIDCO houses...

Continued from Page 1

He acknowledged that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu had successfully persuaded the Union Government to extend the scheme by one more year.

With these funds, drinking water and other essential facilities will be provided to the TIDCO housing units, the Minister stated. He assured that technical issues related to extending loans to TIDCO beneficiaries would soon be resolved.

Despite the state's current financial difficulties, Narayana confirmed that promises will be honoured. "The provision of three free gas cylinders will begin from the Diwali festival, and preparations are underway to implement the scheme," he said, also promising the development of Palakollu town. The Minister noted that a team had studied the operations of canteens in other states before reopening Anna canteens in Andhra Pradesh. He also praised the government's swift response to the recent deluge in Vijayawada, particularly the repair of breaches along the Budameru rivulet to prevent flooding.

Meanwhile, Minister for Water Resources, Nimmala Ramanaidu, mentioned that 90 percent of the TIDCO houses' construction had been completed, but the remaining minor works were left unfinished by the previous government. Later, a joint meeting was held with Collector C. Nagarani, Joint Collector T. Rahul Kumar Reddy, and other officials to discuss development projects, including drinking water, roads, drainage, and sanitation.

Rahul's poll guarantees in Himachal, Karnataka came a cropper: Shah

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Union Home Minister Amit Shah hit out at the Congress in poll-bound Haryana on Sunday, alleging that Rahul Gandhi's election guarantees have come a cropper in states, such as Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka, where the grand old party is in power.

Addressing a poll rally in Gurugram's Badshahpur, Shah said the Congress makes tall promises at the time of elections.

But it does not fulfil those promises, he said, adding that Gandhi's guarantees have "come a cropper" in Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) does not make a promise that it cannot honour, Shah said. "Rahul baba and company cannot undertake development" and it is the "double-engine" government that will ensure Haryana's development, he said, referring to the BJP being in power both at the Centre and in the state.

"We will secure the country's borders, we will protect

reservations and never allow Article 370 (of the Constitution) to return," he said.

After Badshahpur, Shah addressed two more rallies at



Nangal Chaudhary in Mahendragarh and Indri in Karnal district. He said he has sensed the "atmosphere" across Haryana and asserted that the BJP is set to score a "hat-trick" of poll victories in the state.

The Congress can neither secure the country nor make it developed, Shah said, targeting the opposition party over corruption, casteism, nepotism and appeasement. He dubbed the Congress as "anti-poor", "anti-Dalits", "anti-youngsters" and "anti-farm-

ers". As some BJP rebels are contesting the election as independents, Shah told the gathering at Indri to cast their votes on "lotus" (the saffron party's poll symbol).

Referring to the Waqf (Amendment) Bill at Badshahpur, he said, "You have a problem with the current legislation on the Waqf Board."

We will amend it in the Winter Session of Parliament." Several opposition leaders alleged last month that the Centre's Waqf Bill aims at creating a divide in the society and said they would strongly oppose it.

Campaigning for the party candidates in the Gurugram region, including Rao Narbir Singh from Badshahpur, Shah said every 10th soldier in the Army comes from Haryana.

From former prime minister Indira Gandhi to Manmohan Singh, the Congress did not fulfil the demand of "One Rank, One Pension" and it was the Narendra Modi government that implemented it in 2015, the home minister said.

90% of flood victims in NTR dist received compensation: Collector

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana has announced that the government has credited compensation into the bank accounts of 90% of the flood-affected beneficiaries in the district. She stated that Rs.173.69 crore has been transferred to 1,09,729 accounts, as part of the state government's financial assistance to those affected by recent floods.

However, 10% of beneficiaries have yet to receive their compensation due to technical issues with their bank accounts. Dr Srijana advised these beneficiaries to visit their respective bank branches to resolve the issues by linking their Aadhaar numbers to their accounts.

In a press release on Sunday, Dr Srijana mentioned that Rs.160.47 crore has been credited to the bank accounts of 75,427 affected families. She noted that 4,315 families are



NTR District Collector Dr Srijana

Dr Srijana mentioned that Rs.160.47 crore has been credited to the bank accounts of 75,427 affected families. She noted that 4,315 families are facing technical difficulties, while another 8,000 families will receive their assistance through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) on Monday, with the administration taking the necessary steps to facilitate the process

facing technical difficulties, while another 8,000 families will receive their assistance through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) on Monday, with the

administration taking the necessary steps to facilitate the process.

The district administration is focusing on resolving issues

with the remaining accounts, and compensation will be credited after verification. Beneficiaries facing difficulties are urged to approach their

bank branches, and no one should worry, as special efforts are being made to ensure financial support for all, she added.

SAAP announces plans for indoor stadium in Visakhapatnam

VC&MD attends Gymnastics Championship at Pandurapuram Indoor Stadium

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Vice-Chairman and Managing Director (VC&MD) of the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) Girisha announced on Sunday that strategic steps are being taken to establish a multi-sport indoor stadium in Kommadi, as part of the efforts to develop an integrated sports complex in Visakhapatnam district.

During his visit to the city, Girisha actively participated in various para sports events and visited several sports facilities. He observed the swimming competition at the Railway Stadium and the rifle shooting competition at YMCA, where he impressed many by competing as a para-athlete. His participation served as an inspiration to others.

Girisha, along with District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad, attended the Gymnastics Championship at the Pandurapuram Indoor Stadium. The duo honoured the athletes with awards and certificates for their outstanding performances. Speaking to the gymnasts, Collector Harendhira Prasad promised to provide full support for the development of gymnastics in the district. "We are committed



to ensuring all necessary facilities for gymnastics and other sports," he said. Both officials expressed their admiration for the athletes' talent and sportsmanship, applauding them throughout the competitions.

During the district tour, Girisha and the Collector discussed the potential development of various sports infrastructure projects. This includes the development of

water sports facilities at Gambhiram and Rushikonda and the establishment of an integrated sports complex at Kommadi. "Visakhapatnam has great potential to become a sports hub," Girisha stated, emphasising the need to complete the necessary formalities and identify suitable land for these projects. "We want to create world-class facilities that can nurture local talent and bring national attention

to this district."

The tour also included discussions about the current state of sports infrastructure in the district, with the Collector providing insights into existing opportunities for growth. District Sports Authority Officer June Gallier, officials from the Coastal Gymnastics Association, and other dignitaries were present during the visit.



Wear handloom textiles for festivals: HM Anitha

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha has announced that we should wear handloom textiles for the festivals and support the weavers. She mentioned that Nara Bhuvaneshwari, wife of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu gave a clarion call to support weavers by wearing handlooms. She urged the Telugu people to stand with the handloom weavers as per the call of Bhuvaneshwari. She emphasised the need for everyone to participate in transforming the lives of handloom weavers, who painstakingly create beautiful textiles by weaving fibres together, dyeing them with attractive colours.

With consecutive festivals approaching, Anitha urged people to wear clothes that reflect our culture and traditions, while giving prominence to the art forms of handlooms. The Minister expressed hope that the joy of festivals fills the homes of everyone who depends on handloom textiles.



Anam, officials review steps for Dasara fete at Durga temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Endowments Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy, along with Vijayawada West MLA Yalamanchili Satyanarayana Chowdary (Sujana Chowdary) and Endowments Principal Secretary S Satyanarayana, conducted a review meeting on the upcoming Dasara Sarannavaratri festivities. The celebrations are set to be held from October 3 to 12 at the Mallikharjuna Maha Mandapam on the premises of Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam, atop Indrakeeladri.

NTR District Collector Dr. G. Srijana, Police Commissioner S.V. Rajasekhara Babu, and Durga Temple Executive Officer K.S. Rama Rao, along with other officials, attended the meeting. The Minister reviewed the arrangements and stressed the importance of seamless coordination between all 13 departments involved.

Addressing the media after the meeting, Minister Ramanarayana Reddy assured that the government is prioritising the welfare of devotees, particularly focusing on ensuring smooth queue lines. He mentioned that necessary facilities such as drinking water, milk, and breakfast would be arranged for devotees waiting in queues, with the support of Vijayawada Municipal Corporation ensuring proper sanitation.

The minister added that VVIP darshan slots would be available from 8 AM to 10 AM and 2 PM to 4 PM, while special provisions would be made for senior citizens and differently-abled persons from 4 PM to 5 PM. A final review meeting is scheduled for October 1, with Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu expected to present Silk Robes to Goddess Durga Devi on October 9, during Moola Nakshatram.

Earlier, District Collector Dr. Srijana and Police



Goddess Durga to appear in 10 'alankarams'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The annual Dasara festivities atop Indrakeeladri, the abode of Goddess Kanaka Durga, are set to commence on October 3. The Kanaka Durga Temple's Vedic Committee has announced that the presiding deity will be adorned in 10 different 'alankarams' (attires) during the festival, concluding with the grand 'Sri Rajarajeswari Devi' alankaram on October 12.

Notably, the temple authorities made changes last year, introducing Sri Maha Chandri Devi alankaram as per the Vedic Committee's suggestions. This year, the festivities will begin with 'Sri Bala Tripurasundari Devi' alankaram, replacing the earlier 'Swarna Kavachalakruta Durga Devi' alankaram.

Executive Officer KS Rama Rao stated that each day of the festival will feature a distinct alankaram, including 'Sri Gayatri Devi', 'Sri Annapoorna Devi', 'Sri Lalitha Tripura Sundari Devi', 'Sri Maha Lakshmi Devi', and 'Sri Saraswati Devi'. On October 9, the seventh day, the deity will appear as 'Sri Saraswati Devi' on the auspicious 'Moola Nakshatram'. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is expected to present silk robes to the goddess on this occasion.

The festivities will conclude with the 'Teppotsavam', a celestial boat ride for Goddess Kanaka Durga and Lord Malleswara Swamy, on October 12. Devotees can visit www.kanakadurgamma.org to book seva tickets and access further festival details.

Commissioner Rajasekhara Babu highlighted the efforts being made to accommodate an increased number of devotees, ensuring all essential facilities such as drinking water, bathing ghats, and toilets are in place.

GITAM holds health & nutrition awareness camp for tribal communities



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As part of the DST SEED project 'Science Technology and Innovation Hub', GITAM Deemed to be University, in collaboration with the GITAM Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (GIMSR), successfully conducted a Community Health & Nutrition Awareness Camp in Jamiguda village of Alluri Sitharama Raju district.

The camp, held on Sunday, catered to the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG), specifically the Khonda tribe community, providing essential healthcare services to underserved tribal populations in remote areas. "A majority of the tribal population lacks access to basic healthcare facilities. This initiative aims to bridge that

gap," said Dr I Sarat Babu, Principal Investigator of the project.

A team of specialised doctors, including Dr Shamita (Gynaecology), Dr Chandan (Pediatrics), and Dr Sandeep (General Medicine), provided medical attention to over 150 beneficiaries from surrounding villages. "The response from the local community was overwhelmingly positive. We're grateful for the opportunity to serve these communities," said Dr. Gitanjali Batmanabane, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Medical Sciences.

GITAM Secretary M Bhardwaja praised the medical teams, saying, "Their dedication to reaching remote communities and providing essential healthcare services is commendable. These camps are part of our ongoing efforts

to enhance the socio-economic well-being of tribal populations by addressing health and nutrition challenges."

The camp focused on treating common health issues and raising awareness about critical health and nutrition practices. Beneficiaries received health kits to encourage better long-term health practices. Dr Sarat Babu thanked GITAM's management for their financial support and Dr. Konga Gopikrishna from DST-SEED for guidance. "This initiative demonstrates our commitment to supporting the well-being of tribal communities. We'll continue to work towards creating revenue-generating social enterprise models through improved health outcomes," said M Bhardwaja.

PNS ■ PARVATHIPURAM

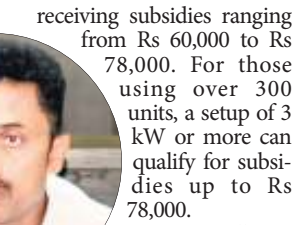
The Parvathipuram Manyam district administration is taking significant strides toward adopting renewable energy, thanks to the PM Surya Ghar (Muft Biji Yojana). Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 15, the scheme aims to provide free electricity to households across India by offering generous subsidies for rooftop solar panel installations.

The scheme provides a subsidy covering up to 40 per cent of the cost of installing solar panels, encouraging households to switch to solar energy. Officials note that this initiative not only helps households lower their electricity bills, but also supports

Parvathipuram embraces renewable energy

Scheme provides subsidy covering up to 40 pc of the cost of solar panels

environmental sustainability. The programme offers flexible options based on different levels of monthly electricity consumption. For homes using up to 150 units, a 1 to 2 kW solar system is sufficient, with subsidies between Rs 30,000 and Rs 60,000. Households consuming between 150 and 300 units can opt for a 2 to 3 kW system,



receiving subsidies ranging from Rs 60,000 to Rs 78,000. For those using over 300 units, a setup of 3 kW or more can qualify for subsidies up to Rs 78,000. District Collector A Shyam Prasad, highlighting the benefits of the scheme, said, "PM Surya Ghar is a remarkable initiative for our district. It will not only

ensure free electricity for households, but also help the government reduce its energy expenses while promoting the use of renewable energy sources." He added that the scheme has the potential to significantly lower carbon emissions, contributing to a greener future.

The district administration is also exploring how the scheme can benefit government institutions like hostels, hospitals, schools, and offices. "We plan to implement this scheme on a large-

scale to provide sustainable energy to public institutions," Shyam Prasad stated. In addition to reducing energy costs, the scheme allows households to sell surplus electricity generated back to the grid, offering an extra financial benefit for participants. Interested households can easily apply for the scheme online. The District Collector urged residents to take advantage of this opportunity, emphasising both the financial savings and environmental benefits.

Tahsildars reluctant to serve in Agency areas

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The transfer of tahsildars in the Visakhapatnam district remains at a standstill, with officials expressing reluctance to work in agency areas. This situation has particularly affected the Paderu Revenue Division, where, despite 10 tahsildars being transferred out, no replacements have arrived.

A senior official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said: "In Rampachodavaram and Chintur divisions, the transfers went smoothly. Ten tahsildars were transferred out, and 10 new ones took their place. But in Paderu, we are facing a serious issue—while many leave, no one comes to take their place."

This imbalance is being attributed to a lack of coordination between the

10 tahsildars transferred, no replacements yet

Visakhapatnam Collector and the Alluri District Collector. "There is a strong feeling that the absence of proper communication between the two district collectors has contributed to this deadlock," said a Revenue Department source. In the most recent transfer cycle, tahsildars were sent to the joint Visakhapatnam district from various areas. However, while many were interested in positions in Visakhapatnam and Anakapalli districts, none were willing to work in the Alluri Sitharamaraju district, but they later changed their minds, leaving Paderu without a single officer," a district official revealed.

The tahsildar transfer issue was further complicated by the recent MLC election code, which temporarily stalled the process. "Tahsildars who were transferred here before the general elections returned to their home districts right after the elections. The MLC election code delayed the new postings, and although that restriction has been lifted, the situation has not improved," explained another official.

The reluctance of tahsildars to serve in tribal agency areas has persisted for some time. "Most officials prefer to work in Visakhapatnam city or nearby areas, often with backing from associations or political leaders. As a result, no one is willing to come to the

agency areas," said a local source familiar with the issue.

Revenue officials believe that immediate intervention by higher authorities is needed to break this deadlock. "Unless the authorities focus on the issue and transfer those avoiding agency postings, the situation will not improve," said a Revenue officer. Many are urging the government to take decisive action to ensure that essential revenue services are not neglected in the tribal regions.

Residents and local leaders are now calling for a swift resolution. "The agency areas need efficient revenue services, and it's time the government steps in to resolve this transfer crisis," said a community leader from Paderu.

Andhra Pradesh is at a critical juncture on many fronts

From building the capital city Amaravati to completing irrigation projects, from sharpening skills of youth to making them industry-ready, the state government led by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has a strenuous and overwhelming task ahead. Apart from Amaravati, the state government has to cater to the state's ever-increasing needs and necessities on priority to put the state on the path of expeditious development.

Fulfilling the foregoing tasks is easier said than done. For, it warrants not only financial and industrial strength, but also strong leadership that stands by its word. Fulfilling the aspirations of people is paramount for any

government. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, in his Independence Day speech, had raised many crucial issues and wisely called for wider attention. This implies that the government wants to involve all sections of people to ensure impeccable policy-making. For a people-oriented and issue-centric administration, this should be the basis as it reflects the mood and aspirations of the people. By reviewing every aspect -- from finance to agriculture to industry to infrastructure -- the CM laid out a well-thought-out roadmap, which is inclusive and elaborate. Coming to issues that need immediate attention and provision of resources, the capi-

Chief Minister Naidu's experience and expertise may matter a lot in facing the developmental challenges and the saving grace is that the government has cordial and congenial relations with the Centre. This is very much needed for Andhra Pradesh to surge ahead on the path of development

tal city Amaravati needs utmost care and nurturing. Since it is the capital city being built before our very eyes, it should reflect the aspirations of people, technologically, economically, and culturally. Such is the political, economic, and cultural relevance and reverence a capital city attracts. Ever since the combined

Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated, the issue of the capital city has been in turmoil, with the opposition YSRCP opposing it tooth and nail and the Telugu Desam Party, which had ruled the residual Andhra Pradesh in the initial five years hell-bent on developing it as the modern capital city. It had the necessary wherewithal and the then TDP gov-



BUDDHAVARAPU RAJESWARA PRASAD
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ernment did substantial groundwork to develop the capital city. The work was halted with the TDP losing power and power moving to

Jagan's YSRCP, which later proposed three capital cities and completely ignored Amaravati. Everything was at standstill until the Naidu-led NDA alliance came to power. The Amaravati issue has come into limelight again and the Chief Minister has promised to complete it as soon as possible with a plan to make it a world-class capital city. With a harrowing political, cultural, and economic history, Amaravati, stresses Naidu, will be the ideal capital city meeting the needs of all people of Andhra Pradesh as it is centrally located and ideally positioned for comprehensive development. The same is the case with the prestigious Polavaram

irrigation project, considered the lifeline of Andhra Pradesh for meeting both irrigation and drinking water needs. Upon timely completion, these two projects would make the state of Andhra Pradesh a modern state in almost all respects. These two have to be completed on a war-footing, along with other issues that are equally pressing. Politics should be constructive enough to make the state not mar it. From day one of coming to power, CM Naidu has left no stone unturned to unleash his developmental agenda, which is inclusive and comprehensive. Just laying a developmental roadmap does not suffice unless it is matched with commitment

and resourcefulness. Taking into account its enormity, it will be an onerous task for Naidu to lead the NDA government in the state. As time is short and the responsibilities that have to be shouldered are heavy, it can be said that Andhra Pradesh is at a critical juncture on many key fronts. Chief Minister Naidu's experience and expertise may matter a lot in facing the developmental challenges and the saving grace is that the government has cordial and congenial relations with the Centre. This is very much needed for Andhra Pradesh to surge ahead on the path of development. (The writer is a senior journalist)

Despite financial strain, salaries being paid on first of month: Dola

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Minister for Social Welfare Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy has highlighted that the government paid salaries on first every month to the government employees overcoming the financial constraints.

The Minister participated in the Diamond jubilee function of All India Girijana Employees Association organised in the Ambedkar bhavan here on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that salaries paid to the employees first every month and social security pensions were also disbursed on the first to the beneficiaries despite the state is facing a financial crisis.

He noted that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu



has special concern for the tribals and that is why he started the pension scheme at the age of 50. Tribal loans would be renewed from the next financial year and all tribals would be financially

strengthened, he added. The Minister said that the Chandrababu Naidu headed government would extend Rs 4 lakh for housing construction to the beneficiaries, adding that the DSC notifica-

tion has been issued to conduct examinations to fill teacher posts. He highlighted that 5,000 SC and ST candidates who are undergoing training for DSC are being given free accommodation

and training. MLA Damacharla Janardhan asserted that there is a great need to remember those who worked for the welfare and development of the tribal people. The MLA said that he feels happy to see that All India Tribal Employees Union organized its diamond jubilee celebrations in Ongole. He called upon people to be united irrespective of caste affiliations.

National ST Commission member Jatoh Hussain Naik, Tribal welfare department officer Jagannatha Rao and Tribal Employees Welfare association district president Dr. Balaji Naik were among those who attended the meeting. Earlier, Minister Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy garlanded the statue of Ambedkar and paid tributes.

Secretary lauds HSL's progress

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Sanjeev Kumar, the Secretary of Defence Production, has visited Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) to assess its operations and future prospects. During his tour, Kumar commended HSL's advanced infrastructure and proactive management approach, highlighting its crucial role in ensuring timely project completion.

"Hindustan Shipyard Limited is making commendable progress in aligning with the Government of India's vision for self-reliance in defense production," stated Kumar. He emphasised the importance of HSL's ongoing efforts and urged the shipyard to enhance its capital expenditure, invest in research and development, and adopt Industry 4.0 technologies to remain competitive.

Kumar encouraged HSL to actively pursue upcoming defense and commercial projects under the 'Make in India' initiative. "The future of our



defense capabilities lies in our ability to innovate and adapt. I urge HSL to lead in these areas and seize every opportunity that comes its way," he remarked.

Addressing the senior management team, Kumar motivated employees to continue their dedicated service to the nation. "Your work is vital not only for the shipyard but for the defense of our country. I wish you all success in your endeavors and encourage you to uphold the highest levels of integrity in all that you do." HSL has been making

strides in defense production, recently registering its highest value of production in its history, worth Rs 755 crore. The shipyard has also secured contracts for five Fleet Support Ships (FSS) for the Indian Navy, valued at INR190bn (\$2.30bn). With the Defence Production Secretary's backing, HSL is poised to play a pivotal role in India's defense manufacturing landscape. The visit reflects the government's commitment to enhancing domestic defense production, setting a positive tone for HSL's future initiatives.

Vijayawada to host All-India Sub Junior Badminton Tourney

1,500 players to participate

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Badminton Association (APBA) will be conducting the All-India Sub Junior (U-15 & 17 Boys and Girls) Ranking Badminton Tournament in Vijayawada from October 3 to 11. For the second time, the Badminton Association of India (BAI) has been allotted the prestigious tournament to the APBA. As many as 1,500 players including international players from all States in the country will take part in the tournament.

In a press release here on Sunday, APBA secretary and Tournament organising secretary Dr P Ankamma Chowdary said that the association will conduct this tournament in memory of late Kalagara Naga Babu (Auditor),

who was the president of the Krishna District Badminton Association. He said that matches will be conducted at Chennupati Ramakotiah Municipal Corporation Indoor Stadium, Patamata and Sai Sandeep Badminton Academy. Besides, he said this is the biggest ranking tournament in India.

The qualifying matches will be held from October 3 to 7 and the main draw matches will be conducted from October 8 to 11. In singles, 32 players, and in Doubles 16 pairs will qualify to main draw matches. A total of 100 Technical Officials are taking part in the tournament and Rakesh Sekhar from Kerala will be the Referee, S Jilani Basha from Kadapa and S Suri Babu from Srikakulam will be the Deputy Referees, he explained.

Minister Savita thanks Bhuvanamma

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BC Welfare, Handloom & Textiles Minister, S Savitha, has thanked Nara Bhuvaneshwari, wife of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, for standing by the handloom workers. The Minister expressed happiness over Bhuvaneshwari's call to wear hand-woven clothes and stand by the weavers for the upcoming festivals.

In a press release on Sunday, the Minister said that Bhuvaneshwari has personally seen the hardships of handloom workers across the State during her tour of Nijam Gelawali. It is a matter of happiness that she called to stand by the handloom weavers who are making clothes and buy handloom cloths for the upcoming Dussehra and Diwali festivals.

The Minister said that CM Chandrababu has already taken action to support handloom workers. The Minister

Minister expressed happiness over Bhuvaneshwari's call to wear hand-woven clothes



revealed that all the schemes implemented in 2014-19 for the development of weavers will be implemented once again. She said that the CM took a decision to this effect in the recent review of the Handloom and Textile Department. It has been decided that the State government will bear the GST on handwoven garments. As many as 200 units of power for looms and 500 units of power for other looms will be given free of cost.

'Everybody thought HYDRAA will go after bigwigs'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar said that everybody expected in the beginning that HYDRAA would demolish the illegal buildings of bigwigs, however, HYDRAA is now demolishing only the houses of the poor.

Addressing the gathering after inaugurating the Seva Pakwada photo exhibition on Sunday at the Barkatpura BJP office, Sanjay asked the Congress government to explain how far it is right to demolish the houses of the poor constructed using bank loans and the income from their small jobs. Who will support these poor people after they lose their houses and how will they live without houses, he asked.

He said that bulldozers should touch BJP activists first if they want to touch the houses of the poor. BJP activists are ready for it, he

"Hyderabad's real estate business was destroyed by the policies of the Congress government. The economy of Telangana has been totally destroyed. It is not proper for the Congress government to adopt a stubborn attitude without thinking of consequences. The BJP is totally opposed to this attitude of the government. We are preparing an action plan against HYDRAA demolitions under the leadership of Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy. The BJP is going to become the protector of the poor. It will fight till the government comes down," Sanjay said.

He said that bulldozers should touch BJP activists first if they want to touch the houses of the poor. BJP activists are ready for it, he



said and asked the government to get ready to meet the BJP's challenge.

Sanjay asked the Congress government to explain if there is any difference between the rule of the BRS and the Congress. The BRS too behaved in the same manner and the Congress has been following the footsteps of the BRS, he said.

The BRS deceived sarpanches by not paying their bills, he said and added that the Congress too deceived them. The BRS deceived the people by not implementing its assurances and the Congress too deceived people by not implementing its so-called six guarantees, he pointed out.

He said that the BRS seized the lands of the poor for constructing collectorate buildings and fire stations and now the Congress is demolishing the houses of the poor in the name of Musi beautification. So the BJP decided to fight the Congress government to protect the houses of the poor, he said and added that they are chalking out an action plan under the leadership of Kishan Reddy.

SEIL Energy wins two prestigious awards

PNS ■ NELLORE

SEIL Energy India Limited (SEIL), one of the largest Independent Power Producers (IPP) in India, has announced that it has won two prestigious awards.

The Company received the first award in the category of 'Best Housekeeping Practices (Industrial Category)' during the International Housekeepers Summit - 2024 jointly organised in Lucknow by Asian Housekeepers Association and Clean India Journal.

It has also received the 'Gold Award' for the 'Excellence in Healthiest Workplace' category at the INFHRA Awards 2024 held in Chennai. On behalf of the Company, Mr. Altaf S. Shaikh, Senior General Manager, Administration received the first award and Mr. Podugu Nageswara Rao, Senior Manager, Administration, received the second award respectively. Winning these awards demonstrates SEIL's



commitment and dedication to ensuring a healthy and safe workplace environment for all. Mr. Raghav Trivedi, CEO, of SEIL, congratulated the teams for their exceptional efforts and said, "We are honoured to receive back-to-back awards for best housekeeping practices and

healthiest workplace, recognising our unwavering commitment to creating a better, safer and healthier environment for all. As one of the largest independent power producers, we take pride in our team's passion for excellence and their contributions to our company's success."

Lightning kills couple; son critically injured

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

A couple was killed and their son was critically injured when lightning struck them at Gangampalli thanda in Gorantla mandal of Sri Satya Sai district in the wee hours on Sunday.

Police said that the deceased couple Dharash Naik and his wife went to their cattle shed to bring milk. Lightning struck on them killing the couple instantaneously. Their son Jagadish Naik was critically injured in the incident. He was admitted to the GGH in Hindupur where his condition was said to be very serious.

Officials said two milch cows were also killed in the lightning incident. A pall gloom descended on the village with the death of a couple and injuries to their son. The police registered a case on the incident.

10 injured as private travel bus collides with truck

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

As many as 10 passengers were injured, three of them critically, when the private travel bus in which they were travelling collided with a truck at Kalagasapalli village in Garladinne mandal in Sri Satya Sai district in the wee hours on Sunday.

Police said that the private travel bus was going to Hyderabad from Bangalore. The bus collided with a truck which was going to Kottakota in Mehaboob Nagar. As many as 10 bus passengers

were injured in the mishap. They were admitted to the GGH in Anantapur where the condition of three of the injured was said to be very serious.

After the accident, the two ill-fated vehicles lied across the road disrupting vehicular traffic on the busy Hyderabad-Bangalore highway 44.

Hundreds of vehicles stranded either side of the road. The police, led by SI Gouse Basha, removed the vehicles from the road and cleared the traffic.

Boy fatally knocked down by car

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

An 11-year-old boy lost his life after being fatally knocked down by a car at the SKR Government Degree College premises in Gudur town on Sunday.

According to the police, Vamsi was learning to drive and was behind the wheel

when he lost control of the vehicle, which struck Leela Vikshit (11) as he played on the ground.

Leela was immediately rushed to a hospital but succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment. He was a sixth standard student at a private school. The police have detained Vamsi, the car driver.

Lokesh takes steps for clean and green Mangalagiri

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Education, IT, Electronics and RTG Minister, Nara Lokesh, is focusing on keeping Mangalagiri constituency clean and green. Five grass-cutting machines have been purchased and five workers have been appointed to use them to clear the grass.

The Minister is spending the salaries of the workers from his own funds. They

spent up to Rs 18,000 for the purchase of each grass cutting machine. From Sunday morning, grass and bushes were removed with the help of machines at Panakala Sri Lakshmi Narasimhaswamy Ghat road in Mangalagiri town. TDP leaders closely supervised the works. Locals expressed happiness with the initiative taken by the Minister to keep Mangalagiri town clean.

2K run marks World Heart Day

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Apollo Hospitals here organised a 2K walk on Sunday, involving students from KIET Engineering College and various nursing colleges, to mark World Heart Day.

Apollo Hospitals CEO I.V. Ramana flagged off the walkathon at Apollo Hospitals, which took participants around the main roads and

concluded at Vivekananda Park, where a public meeting was held.

Cardiologists from Apollo Hospitals addressed the participants, highlighting the importance of physical exercise and fitness in preventing cardiac diseases. Cardiologist Dr. Thangella Venkateswara Rao discussed the reasons behind the steady increase in cardiac issues.

ACROSS THE STATES

HAD PAKISTAN MAINTAINED FRIENDLY TIES

India would have given larger bailout package: Rajnath

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said India would have given a larger bailout package to Pakistan than sought by Islamabad from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had the neighbouring nation maintained friendly relations with New Delhi.

Addressing an election rally in Gurez assembly segment of Bandipora district, Singh referred to the prime minister's development package for Jammu and Kashmir announced in 2014-15 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Modi ji in 2014-15 announced a special package for development of Jammu and Kashmir which has now reached Rs 90,000 crore. The amount is much bigger than what Pakistan was seeking from the IMF (as bailout package)," the senior BJP leader said.



Singh referred to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's famous statement that "we can change friends but we cannot change the neighbours". "I said, my Pakistani friends, why have strained relations, we are neighbours. If we had good relations, we would have given more money than the IMF," he added.

Singh said the Centre gives money to Jammu and Kashmir for development while Pakistan has been misusing financial aid for a long time. "It seeks money from other countries to run a terrorism factory on its soil," he added. The defence minister said

Kashmir will again become a paradise on earth when Vajpayee's dream of restoring "Insaniyat, Jamhooriyat and Kashmiriyat" in the valley is achieved. Singh said Pakistan, which has used terrorism as a tool against India, has been isolated at the international forums with some of its trusted allies also stepping back.

"Whenever we have investigated terrorism, we have found Pakistani involvement. Our successive governments have tried to make Pakistan understand that they should stop terror camps but to no avail. Pakistan is frustrated after revocation of Article 370 and is making attempts to revive terror. They do not want democracy to take roots here. (But) India is strong enough that it can take on Pakistan on its soil. If anyone in Pakistan carries out an attack on India, we can crossover and respond," he added.



PM Modi dedicates Bidkin industrial area to nation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday dedicated the Bidkin Industrial Area (BIA) in Maharashtra to the nation with a view to boost domestic manufacturing, an official statement said.

The prime minister joined the event virtually, while the ceremony in Pune was attended by Maharashtra Governor C P Radhakrishnan and chief minister Eknath Shinde, among others.

The Bidkin Industrial Area, a project spanning 7,855 acres, has been developed under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP) as part of the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor. "Situating 20 km south of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar,

Maharashtra, this industrial hub holds immense potential to catalyse economic growth in the Marathwada region," the commerce and industry ministry said.

The Union government approved the project with a total cost of Rs 6,414 crore, to be developed in three phases.

"Phase A, covering 2,511 acres, has been prioritised with an investment of Rs 2,427 crore," it said.

The Maharashtra Industrial Township Limited (MITL), a special purpose vehicle formed with a 51:49 partnership between Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) and National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust (NICDIT), has driven this project.



Terrorist killed in J-K, fresh encounter in Rajouri

A terrorist, suspected to be affiliated with the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit, was killed in a remote village of Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, officials said on Sunday. Also, a fresh encounter broke out in the Thanamandi area of Rajouri district on Sunday evening when security forces launched a cordon and search operation after getting information about the presence of two terrorists, the officials said. "Based on specific intelligence about the presence of terrorists, a joint search operation was launched by security forces at Manial Gali in Thanamandi. Contact has been established and few rounds have been fired from both sides," a police official said. Earlier in the day, a live hand grenade was found on the banks of a stream in the area and the device was later destroyed by experts in a controlled explosion. In Kathua district, the body of an unidentified terrorist was recovered this afternoon from the scene of the Saturday evening encounter at Kog-Mandli in Billawar tahsil, taking the death toll in the two-day operation to two, the officials said.



Cops recover TV from Naxal dump in Chhattisgarh

In a possible first, police on Sunday recovered a television set from a Maoist dump in Sukma district in Chhattisgarh, a senior official said. The television, made by electronics firm BPL, was recovered in the morning in a forested hill near Danteshpuram village under Bheji police station limits when security forces were on an anti-Naxalite operation, Bastar Range Inspector General of Police Sundarraj told PTI. A muzzle loading gun, one tiffin bomb, pressure IED switch, 49 syringes, firecrackers, mobile chargers, Maoist banners and literature as well as medicines were also found at the dump, the Inspector General said. "We have recovered laptops, printers and other electronic gadgets after anti-Naxal operations in the past. But a television has been found possibly for the first time. Naxalites may have got it for senior cadres who camp in core areas or it may have been looted from villagers," he asserted.

Mufti doesn't feel sad when Indian soldier is martyred: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Sunday slammed PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti for cancelling her poll campaign over the killing of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, saying she does not feel sad when an Indian soldier is martyred on the country's border.

The BJP's reaction came a day after Mufti announced that she was going to cancel her poll campaign on Sunday "in solidarity with the martyrs of Lebanon & Gaza, especially Hassan Nasrallah".

"Mehbooba Mufti doesn't feel sad when an Indian soldier is martyred on the border. But if any Nasrallah dies in Lebanon, she feels very sad. What kind of message does she want to send out," former Union Minister and BJP national spokesperson Syed Shah Nawaz Hussain told PTI video when asked for comment.

Hussain, however, said that India also wants peace in the world and Prime Minister



Narendra Modi is appealing that the war should end.

At the UN General Assembly, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar also appealed for peace, he added.

"But Mehbooba Mufti does not mourn for the people of the country. If something happens abroad, she is very sad about it," the BJP leader charged.

Suspending her election campaigns, the PDP chief earlier posted on X, "Cancelling my campaign tomorrow in solidarity with the martyrs of Lebanon & Gaza especially Hassan Nasrallah. We stand with the people of Palestine & Lebanon in this hour of immense grief & exemplary resistance."

Kharge vows not to die till PM Modi 'removed' from power

PNS ■ JASROTA (JAMMU)



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge vowed to fight for the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that he would remain active in politics until Prime Minister Narendra Modi is ousted from power.

Kharge's remarks came amid criticism of the BJP-led government at the Centre for its handling of the Union territory, particularly regarding the delay

of elections.

"We will fight to restore statehood. We are not going to leave it. I am 83 years old, I am not going to die so early. I will stay alive until PM Modi is removed from power. I will listen to you. I will fight for you," Kharge told a public rally here after he was provided medical assistance at the rally venue.

The Congress chief earlier complained of dizziness while speaking and had to be provided medical help.

"He was addressing a public rally in Jasrota when he felt uneasy and dizzy. His colleagues helped him into a chair," Congress general secretary Gulam Ahmed Mir told PTI.

Kharge had flown to Jasrota to address a rally to garner support for his party candidates in the assembly polls.

Jammu and Kashmir Congress vice president Ravindra Sharma said Kharge felt dizzy and was taken to a room, where doctors were called for a check-up. They will advise whether he can attend the second rally at Udhampur or not, he said.

Later, Kharge's second rally at Udhampur was cancelled. He will return to Delhi.

At the Jasrota rally, Kharge continued, "I wanted to talk. But due to dizziness, I have sat down. Please pardon me. They (BJP) are trying to terrorise us."

'Rahul is leading oppn, will lead country too'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress general secretary Sachin Pilot on Sunday said he sees Rahul Gandhi as a leader who will lead the country in future and the entire opposition will stand unitedly behind him when the next Lok Sabha elections happen.

In an interview with PTI, Pilot said Gandhi, following the historic Bharat Jodo Yatra and a good result for the Congress, has taken the Centre to task with the BJP-led government "failing on all fronts".

Asked about the impact of Gandhi assuming the charge of Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Pilot said, "Rahul Gandhi has led from the front as the Leader of the Opposition (in the Lok Sabha). He is asking pertinent questions for which the government has no answers."

After Yechury's death, CPM names Prakash Karat as coordinator

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior CPI(M) leader Prakash Karat will be the coordinator of the party's Politburo and Central Committee as an interim arrangement until the 24th party Congress to be held in April next year, the Left party said on Sunday.

The decision comes in the wake of CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury's death on September 12 at the age of 72.

"The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), now in session in New Delhi, has decided that Comrade Prakash Karat will be the coordinator of the Polit Bureau and the Central Committee, as an interim arrangement until the 24th party Congress to be held in April 2025 at Madurai," the CPI(M) said in a statement.

"This decision was taken due to the sad and sudden demise of the sitting general secretary of the CPI(M), Comrade Sitaram Yechury," it added.



Karat (76), one of the senior-most leaders of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), was its general secretary from 2005 to 2015.

Karat was born on February 7, 1948 in Letpadan in present-day Myanmar, where his father, C P Nair, was employed with the Burma Railways and later, at the Burma Oil Pipeline Project.

He studied in the Madras Christian College Higher Secondary School in Chennai and later, went to the University of Edinburgh in the United Kingdom for a master's degree in politics. He became active in

student politics at the university.

He returned to India and joined the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in 1970 and also worked as an aide to veteran CPI(M) leader A K Gopalan.

One of the founders of the Students' Federation of India (SFI), Karat was elected as the third president of the JNU Students' Union. He also became the second president of the SFI between 1974 and 1979.

He was the secretary of the Delhi state committee of the CPI(M) from 1982 to 1985, was elected to the Central Committee of the party in 1985 and became a member of its Politburo in 1992.

One of the key faces of the party for decades, Karat was at the helm of the CPI(M) when it decided to withdraw support to the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government at the Centre in 2008. The following years saw a decline in the strength of the Left in Parliament.

Nitish govt being run by 4 ex-babus: Prashant Kishor

PNS ■ PATNA

Political strategist-turned-activist Prashant Kishor on Sunday launched a scathing attack on Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, alleging that the state government was being "run by four retired bureaucrats" and the CM was in the "grip of these former babus".

Addressing a press conference here, three days ahead of floating his own political party, Kishor vowed to dislodge the JD(U) president from power.

He charged the longest-serving CM of Bihar with running his government through a handful of "retired bureaucrats".

He also claimed that the 2025 Bihar assembly polls would be fought on the issue of "three S", that is 'sarab' (liquor), 'survey' (land) and 'smart meter', and asserted that these issues would prove to be the 'final nail in the coffin for the current regime'.

"The Nitish Kumar government is being run by four retired bureaucrats. The CM is in the

Says CM in grip of these bureaucrats



grip of these babus. Neither Kumar nor these bureaucrats are aware of the problems being faced by the people. Kumar has changed now. He has lost his morality and is only interested in securing the chief minister's chair," Kishor alleged.

His 'Jan Suraj' initiative will become a political party on October 2. "When we form the government after the 2025 assembly polls in Bihar, we will end the liquor ban within one hour," he said, adding that "the existing prohibition law in the state is fake". The state has been

incurring a "loss of nearly Rs 20,000 crore every year", while the "liquor mafia and officials continue to make money from illegal trade", Kishor said.

The Jan Suraj chief said he would continue to speak against the policy and was not afraid of losing votes of women.

"Whether I get votes of women or not, I will continue speaking against the liquor ban since it is not in the interest of Bihar," he said.

Kishor also said Kumar was holding on to power as if he had applied adhesive on his chair and that the BJP, as his ally, bore the brunt of his "misrule" just like Congress was also "responsible for Lalu's jungle raj". "If RJD supreme Lalu Prasad and Nitish Kumar are responsible for the destruction of Bihar, the Congress and the BJP are to be equally blamed for the same. Both parties have been supporting Lalu and Nitish respectively for the last few years."

Mayawati urges Dalits not to vote for Cong, BJP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Sunday urged the Dalit community not to "waste" their franchise by voting for the Congress and the BJP. She also accused the Congress of neglecting the Dalits.

In a post in Hindi on X, Mayawati said, "The continuous neglect and contempt of the Dalits by the Congress during the Assembly elections in Haryana proves that when everything is not right in the party right now, (if) it is wrong, then what will happen in the future? In such a situation, people of the Dalit community should not waste their vote by giving it to the Congress and the BJP etc."



"In any case, the leaders of the Congress, which has always been against reservation, now talk about ending reservation when the time comes. "Therefore, the Dalits should vote unanimously for the BSP, because this is the party which is constantly struggling to make them the ruling class by protecting their interests and welfare and giving them constitutional

rights," she said.

In another post, the BSP chief said, "Also, the Dalits of Jammu and Kashmir should not fall prey to the false promises and other allurements of the Congress, the BJP or any other alliance, but keeping in mind their anti-Dalit history, they should give their valuable vote unanimously to the BSP, this is an earnest appeal to all."

Haryana goes to polls on October 5 and the counting of votes will be held on October 8.

Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing a three-phase assembly elections, where voting for 24 seats took place on September 18 in the first phase, and for 26 seats in the second phase on September 25.

Chandrayaan-3 landed on oldest craters of Moon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's lunar mission Chandrayaan-3 possibly landed in one of the oldest craters of the Moon, according to scientists who analysed images from the mission and satellites.

The crater was formed during the Nectarian period, which dates back to 3.85 billion years and is one of the oldest time periods in the Moon's history, the team, including researchers from the Physical Research Laboratory and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Ahmedabad, said.

S Vijayan, an associate professor in the Planetary Sciences Division, Physical Research



Laboratory, told PTI, "Chandrayaan-3 landing site is a unique geological setting where no other missions have gone. The images from the mission's Pragyan rover are the first on-site

ones of the Moon at this latitude. They reveal how the Moon evolved over time".

A crater is formed when an asteroid crashes into the surface of a larger body like a planet or

a Moon, and the displaced material is called 'ejecta'.

Revealing how the Moon evolved over time, the images showed that one half of the crater was buried under material thrown out or 'ejecta' from the South Pole-Aitken basin -- the largest and most known impact basin on the Moon, the researchers said.

An impact basin is a large, complex crater with diameter over 300 km, while a crater measures under 300 km in diameter.

Forming of ejecta is "similar to when you throw a ball on sand and some of it gets displaced or thrown outwards into a small pile," explained Vijayan, who is the corresponding author on the

study that appeared in the journal Icarus.

"When an impact basin is forming, surface material will be thrown out. If the diameter of the impact basin is larger, sub-surface materials from greater depths will be excavated," Vijayan said.

In this case, Chandrayaan-3 was found to have landed within a crater -- about 160 km in diameter -- and detected in the images as a nearly semi-circular structure.

The researchers said this likely indicated one half of the crater, the other half of which was 'degraded' by getting buried under ejecta from the South Pole-Aitken basin.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Saving Sunita Williams

Relying on her mental fortitude, Sunita has not only survived the ordeal but plays a crucial role in her rescue

It is heartening to hear that Sunita Williams will be back home soon. Elon Musk's SpaceX has launched a Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral, Florida to rescue two astronauts stranded in the International Space Station (ISS). The mission aims to retrieve American astronauts Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams, who have been stranded on the International Space Station for months due to issues with Boeing's Starliner spacecraft. Originally planned for an eight-day stay, the astronauts' mission was extended far beyond after technical problems with the Starliner. As every Indian waits for her rescue the image of Kalpana Chawla flashes in the mind who lost her life in a space mission. She was one of the seven crew members who died in the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster when the spacecraft disintegrated during its re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere on February 1, 2003. The vast, unexplored frontier of space offers countless wonders, but it also brings unique challenges. The present snag is no fault of the astronauts but a lapse on the part of NASA and Boeing company which allowed the mission to proceed despite several alarms and glitches.



Sunita Williams, a veteran of two spaceflights and a woman who has spent over 300 days in space, embarked on her latest mission with the confidence and expertise that comes from years of training and commitment. However, space is as unpredictable as it is vast. A critical error occurred during her mission, which disabled vital components of the spacecraft, leaving her stranded in the ISS. The malfunction wasn't just a minor glitch-it was a cascade of failures. Yet, if there was one person equipped to face such adversity, it was Sunita Williams. Her resilience, mental fortitude, and the ability to maintain calm in even the most extreme conditions became the defining elements in her survival. Williams is no stranger to adversity. The daughter of Indian and Slovenian immigrants, she broke barriers early in her career by rising to prominence in a male-dominated field. Her indomitable spirit and work ethic have always stood out. She has done space-walk, she holds the record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman, spending 195 days in space until 2017. Over her career, Williams has accumulated more than 322 days in space, marking her as one of the most experienced female astronauts in history. Sunita Williams approached this life-threatening situation with a mix of grit, hope, and resourcefulness. She immediately got involved in troubleshooting, all the while keeping her own morale high through mental exercises and meditation. Let's hope and pray that the rescue mission succeeds and Sunita along with colleague Butch Wilmore reaches home safely and is united with her family. This mission is also a lesson and learning for NASA and its contractors to ensure zero tolerance for any glitches and snags in their operations.

failures. Yet, if there was one person equipped to face such adversity, it was Sunita Williams. Her resilience, mental fortitude, and the ability to maintain calm in even the most extreme conditions became the defining elements in her survival. Williams is no stranger to adversity. The daughter of Indian and Slovenian immigrants, she broke barriers early in her career by rising to prominence in a male-dominated field. Her indomitable spirit and work ethic have always stood out. She has done space-walk, she holds the record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman, spending 195 days in space until 2017. Over her career, Williams has accumulated more than 322 days in space, marking her as one of the most experienced female astronauts in history. Sunita Williams approached this life-threatening situation with a mix of grit, hope, and resourcefulness. She immediately got involved in troubleshooting, all the while keeping her own morale high through mental exercises and meditation. Let's hope and pray that the rescue mission succeeds and Sunita along with colleague Butch Wilmore reaches home safely and is united with her family. This mission is also a lesson and learning for NASA and its contractors to ensure zero tolerance for any glitches and snags in their operations.

PICTALK



Artistes perform 'Mahishasur Mardini' act ahead of Durga Puja festival, in Nadia district

Transforming India through 'Make in India'



PIUSH GOYAL

The 'Make in India' initiative has completed 10 years of transformative impact. PM Modi's vision has ignited a revival in manufacturing and spurred job creation

On September 25, the country observed 10 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's game-changing 'Make in India' initiative that is transforming India's industrial landscape by encouraging job-creating investments and giving many ordinary citizens the confidence to become wealth creators. It's been a remarkable 10-year journey, which gave renewed vigour to industrial sectors turning these into engines of growth, meeting domestic demand as well as contributing to exports. The exciting journey began at a difficult time when domestic investors were despondent because of the policy paralysis and poor governance by the indecisive Congress government.

The economy was down, confidence was shattered, headlines were dominated by a regular dose of corruption scandals, inflation was soaring, interest rates were high and the rupee had an uncertain outlook. To end the feeling of doom and gloom, the Indian voters decisively voted for PM Modi. Our Prime Minister came with a vision for India. He wanted to ensure that India became a global superpower. He wanted India to provide jobs and opportunities to our youth, recognising that manufacturing was critical to India's success story. That is when the PM launched the 'Make in India' initiative. Ten years has been a remarkable journey, but it would not have been possible for the multidimensional and transformative changes done by the Modi government. Initiatives include GST, the Bankruptcy Code and a multitude of other reforms. To improve the ease of doing business, as many as 42,000 compliance requirements were done away with, and 3,700 provisions that provided for criminal penalties for minor offences were removed from various statutes to protect small businesses from harassment.

India sharply improved its rank in the World Bank's Doing Business Report from 142nd in 2014 to 63rd in 2019. The government's Startup India initiative



has encouraged many job seekers to become job creators with the help of Startup India initiative. This has helped the number of recognised startups increase to 1,40,803 in June this year, bringing in investments, and creating more than 15 lakh jobs.

These startups are driving the innovation ecosystem in the country, working on solutions to pressing issues in areas such as sanitation, space navigation, reducing food wastage, improving access to healthcare, and empowering women. The development of 11 Industrial Corridors is another focus area of the Government. 20 industrial smart cities are being developed under the program, which would help make these corridors the backbone of India's manufacturing growth. Four of these smart cities have already become magnets of investment with infrastructure and clearances available for manufacturing units to be set up. Potential investment of Rs 1.7 lakh crore is already committed which will provide direct employment to 80,000 persons and indirect to many more. The Government's PLI schemes focus on critical sectors such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, automobiles, textiles and medical devices to create the eco-systems in these sectors for sustained growth



MANY COUNTRIES ARE KEEN TO SIGN TRADE DEALS WITH INDIA. THE WORLD IS NOW LOOKING AT INDIA AS A MANUFACTURING DESTINATION. AND THE KEY REASON FOR THIS INTEREST IS INDIA'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AND ROBUST ECONOMIC FUNDAMENTALS

and ensure their global competitiveness. PLI schemes have resulted in Rs 1.32 lakh crore in investment and a significant boost in manufacturing output of around 11 lakh crore. More than 8.5 lakh jobs have been created directly and indirectly through this initiative.

The Prime Minister's initiatives on infrastructure have been another shot in the arm of Indian manufacturing, apart from generating demand for goods and services, infrastructure development is a major facilitator of industrial activity. Today, India has a huge, and growing, network of expressways and highways. New, world-class railway stations are being built, while new freight corridors are coming up. India is increasingly being seen as a very attractive destination for investment. The country provides the 4D advantage - The decisive leadership of PM Modi; the Demographic dividend of our youthful, talented, skilled Indians; the Demand that 140 crore Indians generate in the economy; and Democracy that ensures the safety and security of investors, and the rule of law which will never allow discrimination against one or the other. The 4-D is a very, very compelling case to attract manufacturers to India. Domestic and international investors today find a golden

opportunity to grow their business. There is a flurry of activity in the investor community. A series of delegations is visiting India, hungry for opportunities to invest and participate in the Indian growth story. Foreign governments and global CEOs are keenly eyeing opportunities in India. Many countries are keen to sign trade deals with India.

The world is now looking at India as a manufacturing destination. And the key reason for this interest is India's competitive advantage and robust economic fundamentals. Today, inflation is under control, economic growth is strong and the Modi government is following strict fiscal discipline. This is all the more commendable in the current global situation marred by conflict and uncertainty. The initiatives of PM Modi have helped India rise from the unenviable situation of being regarded as one of the "Fragile Five" in the world in 2014, to being one of the Top Five in the world. In effect, PM Modi's initiatives like Make in India have contributed to making the last 10 years a transformational decade - a quantum jump over the lost decade of Congress rule.

(The writer is Minister of Commerce and Industry; views expressed are personal)

Breaking life into small steps for lasting fulfillment

Happiness is actually the most important project of life. True contentment comes from savouring each step, no matter how small

Happiness is the most important project of life. It should be broken up into smaller activities to attain the eventual goal. The only time that we probably understand this is in our childhood. As a child, I had intuitively learned the art of allocating the hours of the day for various activities, like waking up, getting ready and spending time in school, having lunch on return, completing homework, going out to play, returning for dinner, and going to bed. We lived in the present from one hour to the next. I was a satisfied and happy person as I could complete the 'Project Day'. We did not have the need or the time to look too far into the future. As we outgrew childhood, we forgot the lessons learned. I joined college. Like others, I too started making grand resolutions on the first day of the year. My resolution could be as mundane as losing the 15 kgs within the first three months, which had taken me a year to gain. It could also be an important resolution to secure 90 per cent marks in my semester examinations, a substantial



improvement over the 60 per cent in the previous one. Each resolution would fly out of the window within the first few months. I had forgotten to take small steps to reach the end destination. Things did not improve even after I started working. I found a new toy - a 'To Do List'. A diary would be earmarked for this most important ritual. I would start with one such list and continue adding till I had inked the second or third page with only a few activities completed. I would give up, and start all over again. The previous year's diary was promptly destroyed lest anyone glanced into it and called my bluff. This continued for a few years till I discovered the computer. I could delete these pending activities at will, with

no one any wiser to my shenanigans. I was fooling only myself. I quit my railway job to join a government company working in the execution of construction projects. I was exposed to software-based project management tools for the first time. I reluctantly spent weeks with the consultant to develop an activity-based project breakdown structure. He educated us about the importance of breaking each activity into smaller sub-activities. We were reluctant to accept that more activities to monitor would result in successful and timely completion. He was not satisfied with the first draft of less than 100 activities. He was a tough taskmaster. We marched on, to our ever-increasing despair, and his impatience, till we

called it quits after we had reached 1000 odd activities. It was a revelation to me. I now appreciated the time that my wife spent planning the daily household chores. The exercise in project management also brought into stark focus all the wrong I was doing while making my New Year resolutions and the To-Do Lists, and more importantly, living my life.

I now understand why we remain unhappy most of the time. We forget to derive joy out of each step that we take, however small it may be. The young of today are far more mature. Hina Khan, a young actor, recently diagnosed with cancer, is a courageous woman fighting all that life has to throw at her. Her thoughts are the most inspiring words I have read in some time, "First normalise the challenges of your lives then set goals for yourself and try to live up to them all along the way. No matter how hard. Never back down. Never give up."

(The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)



SANJAY CHANDRA

QUAD STRENGTHENS INDIA'S ROLE

Madam - China's aggressive posture has consistently threatened peace in the Indo-Pacific region. India, has faced quite a few challenges from the latter. It is a matter of pride that New Delhi is looked upon by other countries to be their firm partner on global platforms to tackle Beijing's economic and military prowess. Specifically, the Asia-Pacific region was described as Indo-Pacific to denote India's increasingly active involvement in the region. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) is one international forum that glues the four friendly nations - the United States, Japan, Australia and India-together. All these nations are keen to usher in a free and open Indo-Pacific region, diminishing the influence of a marauding Beijing. The four have been able to sustain a momentum that no country can ignore. In the fourth in-person Quad summit at US' Wilmington, leaders of the four countries underlined the importance of shared democratic values that have kept them together. Issues of health, security, climate change, capacity building and technology occupied the leaders' attention. More importantly, India is emerging as a 'leader' of the four, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has proposed to host the next year's summit in New Delhi in 2025. It can only grow stronger from here.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

TOP COURT REJECTS GUJARAT PLEA

Madam - The Supreme Court has dismissed a plea filed by the Gujarat government seeking a review of the court's verdict, which contained certain observations against the State while quashing the remission granted to 11 men convicted of raping Bilkis Bano and murdering seven of her family during the 2002 riots. Having carefully gone through the review petitions, the order under challenge and the papers annexed therewith, the judges were satisfied

Durga Puja has transformed



This is in response to the article titled "A symphony of tradition and transformation" (September 29). In the mid-1980s, Durga Puja used to get celebrated with utmost devotion according to rituals with dominance of Bhakti encompassing both the organisers and public. Only on Saptami morning, we used to get awakened by the rhythmic beats of Dhak, all puja rituals used to

commence with rendition of Sanskrit mantras and people used to start flocking to the pandals.

But in last 4 decades all things associated with Durga Puja have undergone a sea change! Far from commencing the Puja on Saptami morning, many pandals and idols now open up for public "consumption" right from the Mahalaya itself thereby "promoting" 4-day Puja to a "modern" 10-day extravaganza! After all majority of these "glamorous" Puja committees do not care to actually offer homage to it through rituals mantras holy hymns or flowers! Durga Puja of today is nothing but a fashion show of sorts with exhibition of flexing muscles - be it monetary might or trophies garnered!

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

that there is no error apparent on the face of the record or any merit in the review petitions, warranting reconsideration of the order impugned. The review petitions are, accordingly, dismissed and it is a landmark decision. The Gujarat government in its plea had said the apex court's observation in the January 8 judgement, holding the State guilty of "usurpation of power" and abuse of discretion" for complying with an order of another top court bench, was an "error apparent on the face of the record" primarily on three grounds.

CK Subramani | Kerala

TOURISM EDUCATION EMPOWERMENT

Madam - Tourism plays a pivotal role in the global economy acting as a bridge between cultures and fostering economic growth in various regions. It contributes approximately 10 per cent to the world's GDP and generates millions of employment opportunities, especially in rural and less developed areas.

By integrating tourism studies into academic curricula, institutions can equip students with essential skills in areas such as sustainable tourism practices, travel management and hospitality management.

This education not only prepares students for diverse career opportunities but also fosters a deeper understanding of how to balance tourism's economic benefits with environmental sustainability and cultural preservation. Promoting tourism education in colleges cultivates a new generation ready to take the bull by the horns, driving innovation while advocating for responsible tourism practices that balance economic growth with social and environmental accountability. Moreover, it supports regional development by teaching students how to effectively market and manage local attractions thereby preserving cultural heritage while boosting local economies.

Tanisha Gupta | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

HARNESSING INNER POTENTIAL

The human mind is still an enigma. It has enormous potential and is a reservoir of energy



RAVI VALLURI

His alcoholism became a quotidian habit. Dharmendra was making a last-ditch effort as he boarded a flight from Jaipur to the Art of Living Ashram in Bangalore. Fortunately, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar had given him an appointment at 4 PM that evening. Stinking of liquor, and reeking of stale cigarettes, with an unsteady gait he landed at Bangalore airport. He needed a physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional, parachute. Only a 'Master' through grace could provide such a life support system. For some time, my friend was trying to seek redemption from the lethal disease of alcoholism. My inventory list was prepared: join a rehab, attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, and undertake the Happiness Programme of the Art of Living. Gurudev advanced the appointment to 11 AM., and after one glance asked my friend to get admitted to the Ayurveda Hospital in the Ashram for a complete detoxification of body, mind, and soul, and after a 15-day rehab to undergo the Happiness Programme. The Guru had scripted a change in the life of Dharmendra, it was for his mind to grab the opportunity. But the monkey mind invented an excuse and Dharmendra left the Ayurveda Hospital and once again indulged in brinkmanship. He could not draw the redlines or flag the issues confronting his mind and succumbed to temptation. While the brain is an organ that serves as the centre of the nervous system, the mind is the faculty of consciousness and thoughts. It is an individual's intellect, memory or attention span and will, whose potential needs to be enhanced or live in the past. Such individuals are unable to break the patterns and barriers of their comfort zone. Their prana levels



are exceedingly low and the pendulum of their mind's swings to the past. The moot question is how we use this enormous energy. If we look at the brighter aspects of life, such mental imagery works miraculously. Over some time the mind feels blessed, gains in abundance and becomes grateful. This is what Masters refers to as the

Law of Attraction

The Law of Attraction remains an illusion if it is not in conjunction with the Law of Gratitude. Both these laws operate in tandem and will fuel inner potential to harness growth leading to robust minds. Low and the pendulum of their minds swings to the past. They carry the burden of the past and attempt a course correction without any professional help (Guru) displaying false bravado in their imaginary worlds. They invariably try to also change the behavioural patterns of those close to them, essentially to market their point of view. Such minds invariably resort to shortcuts in life, trying to please everyone without any success. Ignoring the larger picture, this is a cunning and selfish mind, which does not trust anyone; basically, short of confidence and haunted by fear. The human mind is an enigma. It has enormous potential and is a reservoir of energy. The moot question is how we use this enormous energy. If we look at the brighter aspects of life, such mental imagery works miraculously. Over some time the mind feels blessed, gains in abundance and becomes grateful. Positive thoughts beget positivity and have a spiralling effect. The jigsaw puzzle of life gets sorted out. This is what Masters refer to as the Law of Attraction. The Law of Attraction remains an illusion if it is not in conjunction with the Law of Gratitude. Both these laws operate in tandem.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

Can India become a manufacturing hub?



UTTAM GUPTA

Growth is driven by strong domestic demand, export potential, government infrastructure efforts, private sector investment, and initiatives like 'Make in India'



According to a Study Report by IDBI Capital, India is set to add US\$ 1 trillion to its gross domestic product (GDP) every 18 months over the next six years. It goes on to say that "with this momentum, the country is on track to become a US\$ 10 trillion economy positioning itself as the world's third-largest economy by 2030". Currently, India has a GDP of US\$ 4 trillion. The report has also highlighted that "India's accelerated growth will be driven primarily by the manufacturing sector, which is projected to contribute 32 per cent to the incremental Gross Value Added (GVA)". It adds "India will overtake the top five economies in manufacturing IIP (Index of Industrial Production) viz. US, China, Germany, South Korea and Japan..." Manufacturing essentially involves the production of a wide spectrum of consumer products, industrial machinery and so on.

It is the most important component of Industrial activity at a broader level which also includes Construction (primarily building infrastructure); Logistics (transportation and storage of goods); Aerospace (aircraft and spacecraft etc) and maintenance and services required to support industrial activities. The contribution of the Industrial sector to India's GDP is around 30 per cent of which manufacturing alone is 17 per cent. The share of Agriculture and allied activities in GDP is around 18 per cent. The remaining 52 per cent comes from the Services sector (SS).

The SS encompasses 'intangible' services such as education, health, entertainment, hospitality and tourism, banking, insurance and so on.

While, all three sectors play a crucial role in growth, creating jobs and increasing incomes, manufacturing can provide a more sustainable basis for providing jobs and surety of income. This is in sharp contrast to agriculture which is fundamentally a seasonal activity and economic fortunes are largely tied to how monsoon pans out. Manufacturing can also provide a good buffer for absorbing the excess workforce from agriculture with positive spin-offs even for the latter in terms of higher productivity and income. Within the manufacturing sector, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) occupy a pivotal position. The



WHILE, ALL THREE SECTORS PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN GROWTH, CREATING JOBS AND INCREASING INCOMES, MANUFACTURING CAN PROVIDE A MORE SUSTAINABLE BASIS FOR PROVIDING JOBS AND SURETY OF INCOME

MSMEs are ancillary units engaged in the production, manufacturing and processing of goods and commodities (mostly intermediate goods) which are supplied to large enterprises or master units. These units operate on a small scale and are further categorized into micro, small and medium enterprises depending on the 'investment' and 'turnover' threshold. According to the Ministry of Statistics & Program Implementation, the share of MSME manufacturing output in all India Manufacturing output is around 36 per cent. The share of export of MSME-specified products in all India exports has oscillated between 44 - 50 per cent during the last couple of years. As for employment, according to a report released by the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI), MSMEs in India contribute 62 per cent to the total. Yet, in the past, manufacturing hasn't been given the desired push. Its low contribution of 17 per cent in GDP and even lower share of total employment at about 10 per cent says it all.

Now, India aiming at the generation of 32 per cent of the incremental GVA from manufacturing shows its determination to put in the effort during the next six years or so, which is nearly double what it has done cumulatively to date. At this pace, by 2030, the share of manufacturing in GDP will have reached 26 per cent (4x0.17+6x0.32)/10.

Is it doable?

The factors that can make it happen are robust domestic demand; strong export potential; heavy lifting by the Central Government (plus support to States) by building infrastructure; increasing investment by the private sector; key initiatives such as "Make in India" playing a pivotal role in bolstering the country's manufacturing capabilities underpinned by the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes; India taking up a lead role in recalibrating global supply chains to position the country

as a global manufacturing hub; giving a boost to the micro small and medium enterprises (MSME) and so on. Nearly 70 per cent of India's GDP is driven by domestic consumption; Stimulating demand holds the key to putting manufacturing on an 'accelerated' and 'sustained' growth trajectory. For this, not only people's income should grow, but it should also be evenly and widely distributed. What do the facts speak? According to an Oxfam report, 'Inequality Kills', the collective wealth of India's 100 richest people in 2021 hit a record high of US\$ 775 billion or over 25 per cent of India's GDP. This shows the extreme inequalities in the distribution of income and wealth. There are other pointers to confirm that this is indeed so. According to an analysis of the financials of India's largest companies - those comprising the BSE 500 index - over five years, the profits of corporations included in this index more than doubled from Rs 480,000 crore during 2017-18 Rs 1000,000 crore during 2021-22, whereas their revenue growth was only 47 per cent.

This means that payments to factors of production other than the owners of capital such as to employees/workers, etc., have been kept under a tight leash, resulting in a disproportionate boost to profits. The aggregate dividend paid by these firms increased from Rs 176,000 crore during 2017-18 to Rs 302,000 crore during 2021-22, which is an increase of 72 per cent. In those five years, cumulatively, they paid 34 per cent of aggregate net profit as dividends. This is an unusually high payout ratio - even higher than 30 per cent paid by the world's largest companies in America's S&P 500.

The products made in India need to be priced low if they are to be competitive. But, there are three major reasons as to why prices are downward inflexible. First, several big businesses operating in metals

such as copper, zinc, aluminium or hydrocarbons like oil and gas, enjoy a natural monopoly enabling them to set high prices. Firms in the chemical, petrochemicals, pharmaceutical and agrochemicals sectors also charge more courtesy, high tariffs on imports and licensing and registration requirements. Second, you have the impact of high taxation particularly when it comes to petroleum products. These are taxed under the pre-GST regime leading to the high incidence of 80 per cent of the ex-refinery price of petrol (Delhi). Ditto in the case of diesel. Increasing the cost of the movement of goods raises the cost of almost every manufactured item.

Third, how can one be oblivious of the exorbitant power tariff set in double digits in many states? The power distribution companies or discoms (mostly owned and controlled by the States) are forced to charge high rates on supplies to industries as they have to make up for the under-recoveries incurred on supplies to farmers and households, either free or at a heavily subsidized price.

Finally, industries are operating in highly interesting environments. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has kept the policy rate (the interest rate at which it lends money to banks) unchanged at a high of 6.5 per cent along with a 'withdrawal of accommodation' stance (a jargon for tight liquidity) for nearly 20 months.

This leads to high cost loans to all industries across the board. The MSMEs are more vulnerable to all the above cost-push factors. To add salt to the injury, they get delayed payment for their dues from large firms. Unless the above fault lines are addressed, Initiatives under "Make in India" won't yield the desired result and India becoming a manufacturing hub of the world will remain a distant dream.

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

India's education system must prioritise learning over infrastructure

Despite schools being filled with students, foundational skills like basic literacy and numeracy continue to lag

Since gaining independence, India has made significant strides in the field of education, especially in terms of infrastructure and expanding access to schools. Classrooms now accommodate children from all walks of life, and government initiatives have succeeded in bringing millions of students into the education system.

However, despite these achievements, a critical component remains neglected—the quality of learning. Infrastructure may be flourishing, but the foundational skills that students require for future success often lag behind. To understand this, imagine a farmer who diligently sows seeds in well-tilled soil, only to find the harvest insufficient because the seeds weren't suit



ASHU KAPOOR

ed to the soil. In the same way, India's educational progress in infrastructure is commendable, but the students' foundational skills—the seeds of education—are still not producing the robust results we hope for. Year after year, surveys like the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) and the National Achievement Survey (NAS) reveal a startling reality: a large proportion of students struggle with essential

skills like basic literacy and numeracy.

These are the building blocks of education, without which the entire edifice remains shaky. Students are spending years in school, but many are not learning at the expected level. The alarming gap between schooling and actual learning points to a crucial flaw in the system. If foundational skills are not nurtured early on, the benefits of educational progress will remain elusive, much like the farmer's poor harvest.

The introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 brings a renewed sense of hope. It promises transformative change and a shift towards a system that values not just access to education but the quality of learning.

Together with the National Curriculum Framework for Foundational and School Education, NEP 2020 emphasizes the need to measure educational progress through well-designed assessments and to tailor interventions accordingly. The goal is clear: to raise a generation of learners who are not only equipped with knowledge but also the critical thinking skills required to thrive in the modern world. Research consistently shows that assessments play a transformative role in improving education. Their primary goal is not to rank students or schools but to provide insights into where learners stand on their educational journey. By identifying what students know and can do at individual, school, and

system levels, assessments offer a roadmap for educators to develop targeted interventions that can address specific learning gaps. In the quest to transform learning, large-scale assessments like ASER and NAS will be pivotal. ASER, a household-based survey, provides insights into basic literacy and numeracy skills, while NAS offers a broader view of students' achievement of curricular outcomes. Recently, the State Educational Achievement Survey (SEAS) was conducted by NCERT to provide state-level insights into educational progress.

Simply generating report cards on students' performance is not enough. The data must be used to inform policy decisions and to implement specif-

ic interventions aimed at improving learning outcomes. If not, students will continue to face the same challenges year after year, with little improvement. Large-scale assessments should be seen as the first step in a larger strategy to address educational inequities.

While NAS offers a broad overview of the education system, state-level assessment surveys (SAS) have the potential to zoom in on specific issues at the school level. NEP 2020 recognizes the importance of these surveys and recommends that each state conduct its own census-based assessment to drive continuous improvement. By focusing on local contexts, SAS can provide valuable insights into the unique challenges faced by

individual states, enabling more targeted interventions. However, the effectiveness of SAS depends on how well states define their objectives. To make SAS truly impactful, states need to align their assessment frameworks with clear objectives. A well-designed assessment should consider the needs of the educational system at the state level, and the data collected should be used to support and improve schools, rather than ranking them. India's states would do well to ensure that all stakeholders in the education system—teachers, school administrators, and district-level educators—are trained in data use and analysis. The road ahead is challenging, but the promise of census-based state assessments is

transformative. By monitoring student progress and providing data-driven insights, SAS can reshape India's educational landscape. When combined with national-level assessments like NAS, SAS has the power to create a more responsive, equitable education system. With a strategic approach and strong governance, India can ensure that every student has the opportunity to thrive.

The writer is a Research Fellow for Australian Council for Educational Research (India) and a former Senior Academic Consultant at NCERT and Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India. Views are personal. Inputs by Dr Priyanka Sharma, Director ACER (India)

IN BRIEF



GSTN restores Jul, Aug 2017 GST returns data

GST Network on Sunday said the monthly returns data of July and August 2017, the initial months of the Goods and Services Tax rollout, has been restored on the portal. The GSTN had last week said it is implementing its data policy, as per which data for taxpayers will be retained for seven years only. Thus, GST returns data will not be available beyond 7 years for taxpayers, and they would be archived. Accordingly, on August 1, 2024, returns filed for July 2017 were archived, and on September 1, 2024, data for August 2017 was archived. However, trade and industry had sought some more time before implementing this policy so that they could download their relevant data from the GST portal for any future reference. In an advisory to taxpayers, GSTN on Sunday said GST returns for 17-18 were made available again on the feedback received from the trade and industry. "...in view of the requests received from the trade due to the difficulties faced, data has been restored back on the portal.



Global tourists prefer durable travel products

Consumers' preference for environmentally sustainable practices, experiential travel, and a significant spending on self-care are the latest trends in the global tourism market, said experts at the 12th edition of Kerala Travel Mart (KTM) here on Sunday. During a seminar on 'Evolution in Tourism Trends' at KTM 2024 held at Willingdon Island here, they opined that efficiency and personalisation matter the most to travellers. Commenting on the emerging trends, Dipak Deva, managing director, SITA, said sustainable travel products will influence choices of tourists, whose spending on self-care in the tourism sector is projected to quadruple by 2027. According to him, travellers will prioritise experiential travel over daily luxuries and Gen AI is going to impact areas like developer efficiencies, customer support, reputation management and performance advertising of the industry.



AI Express-AIX Connect merger in October

AIX Connect as well as airline designator code '15' will fly into the past in the first week of October as the merger of the no-frills carrier with Air India Express becomes a reality. "Everything is on track," a senior airline official told PTI earlier this week about the merger process that has been in progress for nearly one year. AIX Connect, which was earlier known as AirAsia India, will cease to exist after flying for 11 years. The aircraft registered under its Air Operator Certificate (AOC) will be transferred to the AOC of Air India Express under the legal merger that is to come into effect in the first week of October, another official said. Currently, Air India Express and AIX Connect operate around 400 flights daily and the operations are set to expand in the coming months. It has a fleet of 88 planes, including 61 Boeing 737 NGs and MAXs, and 27 A320neos. With the legal merger, all flights of erstwhile AIX Connect will be operated with the airline designator code of Air India Express -- 'IX' and the code '15' will not be there, the official said.

GOYAL'S VISIT TO AMERICA

India, US to push collaboration in critical mineral supply chains

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and the US are negotiating a pact to enhance collaboration in essential critical minerals, and the issue will figure during the visit of Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal to Washington this week.

At the invitation of the US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, Goyal will undertake a visit from September 30-October 3.

The commerce ministry said, in a statement on Sunday, that Goyal and Raimondo will also discuss steps to expand and diversify critical minerals supply chains between India and the US.

"The two sides are negotiating a MoU which intends to enhance bilateral collaboration to increase and diversify essential critical mineral supply chains and leverage their complementary strengths," it said.

Critical minerals, such as cobalt, copper, lithium, nickel and rare earths, play a crucial role in the production of clean energy technologies,



from wind turbines to electric cars. They are particularly in demand for the production of batteries for electric cars.

Goyal will also meet the US Trade Representative Ambassador Katherine Tai in Washington DC to discuss the ongoing collaboration under the Trade Policy Forum and ways to further add to bilateral trade between the two countries.

The minister will co-chair with Raimondo the India-USA CEO Forum on October 2 and the 6th India-USA

Commercial Dialogue on October 3 to be held in Washington DC.

During the deliberations, both sides will discuss ways to generate sustainable economic growth, improve the business and investment climate and deepen ties between the Indian and the American business communities.

The minister will also interact with leading American and Indian CEOs and industry leaders to highlight the vast opportunities for investment in India.

PRODUCTION-LINKED INCENTIVES

Minister holds talks with 140 firms

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday held detailed discussions with companies that are getting fiscal benefits under the production linked incentive (PLI) scheme. The minister engaged with 140 companies out of the 1,300 manufacturing units across 14 sectors, which have been the beneficiaries of the scheme. "We had estimated that in the 14 sectors, about Rs 1.46 lakh crore would be invested...Our estimate is that we could look at an investment of upward of Rs 2 lakh crores being seeded through the production linked incentive scheme (throughout the scheme period)," Goyal told reporters. At the job front, he added that looking at the numbers that some of them are saying, "we could easily look at about 12 lakh jobs".

India has become manufacturing powerhouse: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With his government's flagship 'Make in India' initiative completing 10 years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said India has become a manufacturing powerhouse and it is because of the youth power of the country that the whole world is looking up to us. Be it automobiles, textiles, aviation, electronics or defence... every sector in the country's exports are constantly on the rise," he added.



The prime minister said the continual rise of FDI in the country is narrating the success saga of 'Make in India'.

"Now we are mainly focusing on two things... The first is 'Quality', that is, goods made in our country should be of global standards... and the other is 'Vocal for Local. That means, local products should get maximum promotion," Modi said.

"In 'Mann Ki Baat' we've also discussed 'My Product My Pride'. How the people of the country can benefit from promoting local products can be understood through an example. In Bhandara district of Maharashtra, there is an old textile tradition of 'Bhandara Tussar Silk Handloom'.

Reliance Infra wins Rs 780 cr arbitration case against Damodar Valley Corp

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Calcutta High Court has upheld a Rs 780 crore arbitration award in favour of Reliance Infrastructure Ltd in a dispute with West Bengal-based Damodar Valley Corporation, the Anil Ambani group firm said in a stock exchange filing.

More than a decade back, Reliance Infrastructure had won a contract to set up a 1,200 MW thermal power plant in Purulia in West Bengal for Rs 3,750 crore.

The project was delayed due to disputes and other reasons, leading to DVC seeking damages from Reliance Infrastructure. Reliance Infrastructure, however, challenged this, and an arbitration tribunal in 2019 ruled in favour of the company and directed DVC to pay Rs 896 crore to the company.

DVC challenged the order of the arbitral tri-

bunal in the Calcutta High Court, which was dismissed by the court.

"This is to inform that on September 27, 2024, the Division Bench of Hon'ble High Court of Calcutta delivered its judgment in a petition filed by Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) challenging the arbitration award under Section 34, dated September 29, 2023, amounting to approximately Rs 780 crore, including accrued interest in favour of the company concerning the Raghunathpur Thermal Power Project," the firm said in the filing.



The company said the court "with the exception of relief on pre-award interest and reduction in the rate of interest on bank guarantee totalling to Rs 181 crore and upheld the (arbitration) award, totalling approximately Rs 780 crore, including accrued interest. In addition, the bank guarantee of Rs 600 crore will also be released".

SBI plans to boost deposit growth: Chairman

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to attract depositors, State Bank of India is contemplating to come out with innovative products including a combo product of recurring deposit and SIP, said the bank's chairman C S Setty.

With the economy progressing, he said, customers are becoming financially more aware and demanding, and have started looking for innovative investment instruments.

Today the customers are looking at the value proposition as financial literacy improves and the concept of asset allocation will gain greater importance, he said.

"Obviously, nobody wants to put everything in a risky asset or a speculative asset...banking products will always be part of the basket. So, we are trying to bring products which will appeal to them," he told PTI in an interview.

"We are trying to bring innovation in some of the conventional products like recurring deposit, which is actually a conventional SIP...Maybe, we can combine both fixed deposit/recurring deposit and SIP, a combo product that could be digitally accessible," he said.

So, he said, these are the innovations which the bank is thinking of in terms of popularising the deposit products among the Gen Z.

Besides, he said, the bank has undertaken a massive outreach programme for the deposit mobilisation.

"As I said, for us, deposit mobilisation is a franchisee job. We have the largest number of physical outlets across the country. We are leveraging our huge physical reach by initiating outreach programmes where customers are contacted. Today, the effort on part of SBI is to reach out to every cus-



tomers both existing as well as new customers," he said.

Stressing that deposit is a function of interest rate and customer service, Setty said, "obviously, there is a requirement of adequately compensating our customers, but we would not like to fight in the rate war. I think most of the banks are also pursuing a balancing act of giving the right rate as well as right service. So, our focus is on improving the customer service and also adequately compensating our customers."

FPI inflow hits Rs 57,359 cr; surpasses Rs 1 lakh cr mark

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors have poured Rs 57,359 crore into Indian equities in September, making it the highest inflow in nine months, mainly driven by a rate cut by the US Federal Reserve.

With this infusion, foreign portfolio investors' (FPIs) investment in equities has surpassed the Rs 1 lakh crore mark in 2024, data with the depositories showed.

Going ahead, FPI inflows are likely to remain robust, driven by global interest rate easing and India's strong fundamentals. However, the RBI's decisions, particularly regarding inflation management and liquidity, will be key in sustaining this momentum, Robin Arya, smallcase Manager and founder & CEO of research analyst firm GoalFi, said.

According to the data, FPIs made a net investment of Rs 57,359 crore in equities until September 27, with one trading session still left this month.



indices, better growth prospects, and a series of large IPOs, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director- Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said.

The 50 basis points rate cut by the US Fed on September 18 increased the liquidity in the Indian markets since the Indian rupee was aided by currency fluctuations. This interest rate differential is expected to attract more FPI inflows into India, Manoj Purohit, Partner and leader, FS Tax, Tax and Regulatory Services, BDO India, said.

"With quite a few main-board IPOs with healthy valuations listing on the stock market, foreign money has been flowing in for the new opportunities," Bharat Gala, COO of Equity broking-Ventura Securities, said.

In terms of FPI inflows, the Hong Kong market was the top performer in September, with the Hang Seng index rising 14 per cent.

ASUS aims to become India's top PC brand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Taiwanese tech giant ASUS aims to become India's top PC (personal computer) brand having 25-30 per cent market share in two years, with aggressive retail expansion as one of its key strategies.

ASUS has already tripled its market share in India from 6.3 per cent in 2017 to 17.8 per cent in 2023, making it the number two consumer notebook brand in the country, said Arnold Su, Vice President, Consumer & Gaming PC, System Business Group, ASUS India.

Regulatory, policy reforms crucial for pharma R&D: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's regulatory and policy reforms are crucial for shaping the future of pharmaceutical research and development by streamlining approval processes, strengthening IP protections and incentivising innovation, as several policy challenges continue to hinder the growth of R&D in the sector, according to a report.

As the country modernises its regulatory framework and enhances collaboration with global regulatory agencies, India is well-positioned to become a global leader in pharmaceutical innovation, as per the report by Deloitte and industry chamber ASSOCHAM.

It acknowledged that India's pharmaceutical ecosystem is transforming significantly, supported by comprehensive regulatory and policy reforms to foster innovation and growth.

The regulatory framework, which governs drug discovery, development and commercialisation, is being actively enhanced to streamline

approval processes, increase transparency and reduce barriers to entry for innovative products.

However, the report said "several policy challenges continue to hinder the growth of India's pharmaceutical R&D sector, such as inadequate capacity for drug regulation, the need for advanced testing facilities and the lack of a strong framework for monitoring quality compliance in manufacturing units".

There is scope for harmonisation between state and central policies to ensure a uniform regulatory environment across the country.

There is also a lack of alignment among different regulatory bodies, resulting in overlapping jurisdictions and inconsistent regulatory outcomes, the report said.

"Additionally, bureaucratic complexities within the regulatory framework led to extended timelines for drug approvals and clinical trials, making India less attractive for conducting high-quality clinical research," it noted.



Govt considering foreign investment regulatory mechanism

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is considering setting up a foreign investment regulatory mechanism for post-investment review and monitoring in the country, according to sources.

At present, the consideration is at the discussion level only, they added. "It has been observed that all countries do oversight on the FDI (foreign direct investment), which is coming into their country. People suggest that in India also, there should be an oversight mechanism. It's a kind of oversight on money, which is coming up in the country as FDI," one of the sources said.

It can help ascertain that the FDI coming into the country is beneficial to the economy and originates from legitimate sources.

India is a major destination for foreign direct investments given its 1.4



billion market, stable policies, demographic dividend, good investment returns and skilled workforce.

The government has taken a series of measures to attract overseas investments like promoting ease of doing business through simplifying proce-

dures and significantly reducing compliance burden for the industry.

The government has also eased FDI norms in several sectors, such as space, e-commerce, pharma, civil aviation, contract manufacturing, digital media, coal mining, and

The government has taken a series of measures to attract overseas investments like promoting ease of doing business through simplifying procedures and significantly reducing compliance burden for the industry

defence, besides rolling out the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for 14 sectors like electronics and white goods.

The official added that the measures to improve ease of doing business, zero tolerance for corruption

and the focused effort on emerging sectors like electronics have helped promote 'Make In India' and boost domestic and foreign investments in the country.

The 'Make in India' initiative was launched on September 25, 2014, to facilitate investment, foster innovation, build world-class infrastructure, and make the country a hub for manufacturing, design, and innovation.

Over the last 10 financial years, FDI inflow has increased by 119 per cent, reaching USD 667 billion compared to USD 304 billion in the previous 10 years (2005-14), with over 90 per cent of total FDI received through the automatic route.

Foreign direct investment in India jumped 47.8 per cent to USD 16.17 billion in April-June this fiscal on healthy inflows in services, computer, telecom and pharma sectors, according to government data.



Bobby Deol diverges on 'tough time' breaking his image

Actor Bobby Deol, who will next be seen playing the antagonist in Tamil star Suriya's movie *Kanguva*, says it was "tough" to break his onscreen hero image. After a dull phase in the late 2000s and early 2010s, Deol saw a revival with the success of multi-starrers such as *Race 3* and *Housefull 4*. His career took off in a big way after the Netflix feature film *Class of 83* and Prakash Jha's web series *Aashram* garnered critical acclaim. Last year's blockbuster hit *Animal*, in which he played the villain, changed things for him overnight. There are reports that the actor will star as an antagonist in the Alia Bhatt-starrer *Alpha*. Asked whether the industry is capitalising on his villainous avatar, Deol shared: "When you do a role, you get similar kinds of roles (being offered), but this is something that has been happening for years. It's not that it is happening now. It was a tough time... to change my image and finally, I've changed my image and I've done characters that are different from each other." The actor was speaking on the green carpet of IIFA Awards 2024 on Saturday, where he received the award for best performance in a negative role for *Animal*.

Deol said he can't talk about *Alpha* at the moment and is hoping the audience will love him in *Kanguva*, set to be released on November 14. Son of Bollywood veteran Dharmendra, the actor made a promising lead debut with Rajkumar Santoshi's *Barsaat* opposite another star child Twinkle Khanna in 1995. He followed it up with hits like *Gupt*, *Soldier*, *Ajnabee*, *Bichhoo* and *Humraaz*, before experiencing a dry spell at the movies. The actor believes everyone goes through ups and downs. "I don't like to look and think, 'Oh my god! I went through that period'. It's a journey every person goes through in life. If you work hard, a day comes when you get some (kind of) acknowledgement," he added. On the IIFA awards stage, Deol also shook a leg with Shahid Kapoor on his popular track *Tera Rang Balle Balle* from 1998's *Soldier*.



LOVE WINS! REBEL WILSON SAYS 'I DO' TO RAMONA AGRUMA

Rebel Wilson has tied the knot! Wilson and her partner Ramona Agruma tied the knot in a destination wedding in Sardinia, Italy on Saturday, September 28th to profess their eternal love. The couple made their relationship public in June 2022 and became engaged on Valentine's Day at Disneyland in 2023. People reported that Wilson, aged 44 and Agruma, aged 40, made the decision to tie the knot in Italy. It holds a unique significance for the couple as it was their initial vacation spot following the announcement of their relationship. In June 2022, upon revealing their relationship, Wilson shared on Instagram that she had discovered her ideal "Disney Princess" after looking for a "Disney Prince." Shortly after making their relationship public, the couple took their first trip together to Porto Cervo, Italy and stayed at the luxurious hotel Cala Di Volpe. Wilson had previously mentioned being in a relationship, but the actress chose to keep it confidential. According to the source, they were introduced by a mutual acquaintance and began conversing over the phone, a traditional approach to romance that she found appealing. Agruma has been with Wilson since they welcomed their surrogate-born daughter, Royce Lillian, in November 2022. During an interview on The Morning Show in Australia, Agruma mentioned that the presence of Royce had significantly altered many aspects of their lives, causing the couple to shift their attention from work to family and relaxation. She stated that when you begin to consider someone else instead of yourself, your priorities shift.



Raj Kundra disavows ties to Bangladeshi actor

Businessman Raj Kundra denied claims that the Bangladeshi adult film actor arrested for illegal residence in India was working for one of his production companies. Kundra, the spouse of Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty, made it clear that he has no connections to the actress, Riya Arvinda Barde, who was detained in Maharashtra for unlawfully residing in India and obtaining an Indian passport using fake documents. Raj Kundra, says that he has no connection with arrested Bangladeshi actor Riya Arvinda Barde. However, Kundra tells that all these allegations are "false". He says he is "deeply disturbed" by the news doing the rounds, "I am deeply disturbed by recent news articles circulating false allegations about me. These reports claim that an individual, allegedly an illegal immigrant, worked for me or was associated with one of my supposed production companies. Let me be very clear - I have never met this person, nor have I ever owned or been involved with any production company that this individual has worked for." He further calls the claims "baseless", which are harming his reputation,

"These baseless claims are not only damaging to my reputation but are also an attempt to exploit my name for sensationalism and media traction. I have always conducted my business with the utmost integrity and I will not tolerate such false accusations." He is planning legal action. His lawyer Prashant Patil states, "There are certain reports in social, digital and print media regarding some alleged illegal immigrant getting arrested by Mumbai police. The fake reports are linking the said alleged accused to the production team of my clients Shilpa Shetty Kundra and Raj Kundra. This is misleading and has been intentionally done to defame my clients. There is a clear ulterior motive of dragging my client's name in a controversial case for which my clients have no direct or indirect connection at all. Due to such mischievous act of creating such offensive content on social media, my clients are initiating criminal case with the cyber crime Mumbai police immediately under the provisions of Information and Technology Act." He adds, "Let me assure the public at large, as a lawyer representing Raj Kundra and Shilpa Shetty Kundra. The criminals involved in creating a fake narrative with an intention to defame my clients shall be booked under stringent provisions of criminal law. We shall request for immediate arrests of such criminals who are circulating fake news regarding my clients. A separate suit for rupees 100 crores, for defamation, shall be initiated before the Honourable Bombay High Court against the media houses reporting this fake news."



Lookbook

'Saudi Welcome to Arabia', has kickstarted its first-ever immersive event, 'Spectacular Saudi'. Currently being hosted at the R2 Ground in BKC, the 8-day-long extravaganza began with an exclusive VIP showcase welcoming popular personalities from the film industry like Vicky Kaushal, Shradha Kapoor, Bhumi Pednekar, Arjun Kapoor, Aditya Roy Kapoor, Sonakshi Sinha and Suniel Shetty, among others; each experience offered an interactive element starting with traditional coffee, dates and Bakhour.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



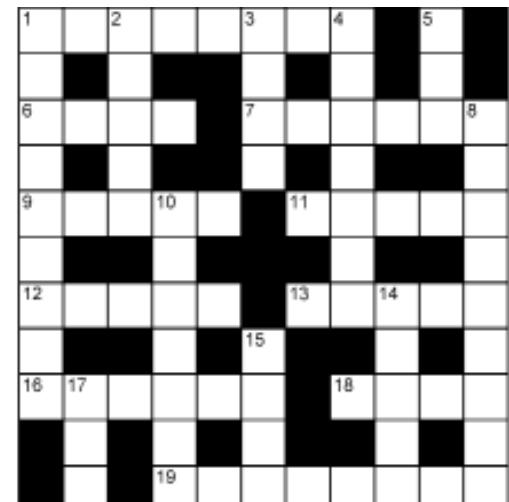
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution
 6 9 3 8 2 1 7 5 4
 7 2 8 4 3 5 1 6 9
 1 4 5 7 9 6 3 8 2
 2 1 9 6 4 3 8 7 5
 5 7 6 9 1 8 2 4 3
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 3 8 1 5 6 4 9 2 7
 4 6 2 3 7 9 5 1 8
 9 5 7 1 8 2 4 3 6

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

ACROSS

- 1 Worth lots of money
- 6 A short letter
- 7 Tasting very sour
- 9 Vapour from boiling water
- 11 Pain caused by a muscle tightening suddenly
- 12 From Ireland
- 13 A kind of snake
- 16 Athens is the capital of this country
- 18 Become weary
- 19 People in the army

DOWN

- 1 Disappearing
- 2 A measure of liquid



GINGER MEGGS



‘QUEEN OF NEGATIVE ROLES’ WITH A HEART FOR WELFARE

TEJAL SINHA
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Regardless of the character or the story, an antagonist does play a major role to make the story intriguing. In this world of villains and vamps, Jaya Bhattacharya is a sassy demeanour, not just on-screen but also off-screen with her quick-witted aura. While films like *Devdas*, *Ek Vivaah Aisa Bhi* or *Mimi* have seen her in diverse characters, her television shows have highlighted her prowess in bringing out something new and fresh in her negative roles.

A much-celebrated actress and a sweetheart by nature, *The Pioneer* brings her onboard for an exclusive chat and here she begins, “My journey has been wonderful with a little bit of ups and downs, down the hill; not the canyons, not the Everest. But yes, see, that is also very important to keep everybody in check and focused. If everything is always hunky dory, we would never appreciate the ups. I appreciate whatever, wherever and however I have reached, taken my little dip and with my own perseverance and willpower”

Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi was the first show that one saw her playing a negative character, Payal. And guess what? She had herself never envisioned playing a negative character. Well, who even would? “That is certainly not my nature, I was very timid before I had played the character,” she harks back on. Just as they say, ‘As you get the power, things change’ and that’s what had happened with her too. “*Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi* was supposed to be the fire starter and was supposed to be a cameo. Thankfully, it clicked and I played that character for 8 years.” Isn’t that amazing, like literally! “For that, the preparations I did was just being the puppet of my director’s hands to suggest what we could do. A lot of help actually came in from my learning of dance and music. Dance automatically got my eyebrows up and things worked out well. My dialogues has always been commanded by the music I learned. Most Bengalis speak in a little tune. Even when I’m speaking now, it all goes in music. So whenever I give a *gali* also, it always is musical (we laugh out loud). It was quite fun actually. Doing this show, my on screen image, that strong negative image came very handy. Not just professionally but also personally, I got to start doing animal welfare work. I also got a lot of films. I got *Devdas*, *Hindustan Ki Kasam* and *Lajja*.”

Now here she is, she’s seen playing the character of Urmila in her latest show *Chhathi Maiyaa Ki Bitiya* in Sun Neo. In this, we see her character bringing in different dimensions and that was what made her say a ‘yes’ to the project. “She is a negative person, by far. She gives a masala also. But then there is also the aspect where she’s very sweet, around her stepson. It gives a lot of places for me to play around. I had also done *Thapki Pyaar Ki* with the same production house. So it was like coming back to the same family. Also because it is on a new channel. Then *Imlie* was shutting so why not?” The meaty role that she’s got to play in this latest show was a ‘no-brainer’. “I am aware that wherever I will go, I’ll get good footage.”

With negative characters, there’s always a sense of fear about playing it. However, the *Delhi Crime* fame says, “I was put into this bracket because of my character I played *Kyunki*. I became such a huge success that I was labelled that I am going to be a negative character only. And sadly, whoever or whichever character I was



being offered after that for many years, were all similar characters. They had already had it in mind that they are not going to be deviating from that path. They are not going to be experimenting with anything else. I kept on doing it for some time. Obviously, we are required to be working. So we actors do some projects to make money, we do some projects to fulfill the requirements of our soul, experiment on our acting skills and give something different to the audience to watch and appreciate also.”

But then came a time when, “I felt very restricted and I started questioning my ability because I was not allowed to come out of the box. I stopped doing work for about 7 years. I was working behind the camera. I was working with Siddharth Nagar, my Rakhi brother. Since 1993, he’s been a producer. So, I was writing. I was doing the costumes. I was doing the art decor. I was hanging every very thing almost. I also produced a show for Doordarshan, but there was a back stabbing so I myself went ahead and closed the showdown. My motto has never been only to mint money. Giving something good and a good thought is also very important according to me. I take it very seriously that whatever story, be it for theatre, film, anything, there is a moral attached to it and that should be conveyed to the audience.”

After the 7 years of hiatus, she landed another antagonist, a different negative role in the show *Ganga*, where she played a strict widow, a strong woman because she was looking after all the other widow ladies and children who are widowed. “I had a variety. The whole panorama of that particular character of the series was so very brilliant and I’m grateful that I got that particular character. The journey goes on and I get very many roles to play. I did *Delhi Crime* season 1. I am going to be doing *Delhi Crime* season 3. I’m super excited about it,” says the *Jigyasa* star, who further highlights, “It’s important to bring diversity everytime on-screen. It’s always a challenge when you are allowed to explore something, then you make the best use of it.”

But then came a point when reports started claiming her to be ‘penniless’ and ‘pleading for work in order to earn some money’. Recalling of those times, she shares with us, “When the post came out that I was penniless, bankrupt, I was not. I certainly was not. Indeed, Yes, There have been times where I have been penniless. During the lockdown, my bank account was 0 and I was laughing. That was the point where I asked my father to allow me to use his savings that he had received in pensions in the form of pensions, which he never touched. I asked my father to allow me to utilise that money to share rations with needy people. I am that stronger person and I come from that lineage. That is what I did when I was penniless, actually. During that time, not only was I helping out human beings, I also went to the area to distribute rations, even at the red light areas to people who had retired, the needy’s at the railway stations and more. There were various other organisations who made a fool out of me also.”

Not that she’s stopped the cause in any way because she runs the NGO Thank You Earth for the last 5 years now that takes in injured and ill animals. However, getting the right amount of funds have been a task.

“I don’t want to keep asking people to help me with funds. I’m just grateful that I keep getting work because I wish to have a huge parcel of land where I can make my own 24/7 hospital. I would like to make a proper animal friendly hotel, along with our hospital which will work free of cost for the needy.”



Bohemian designs elevating your minimalist aesthetics

A mixture of bohemian and minimalist designs can result in a harmoniously balanced space, despite their apparent differences. The simplicity of minimalism offers a great contrast to the intricate details and rustic colors of Bohemian decor.

By merging the simplicity of minimalism with the warmth and vibrancy of Boho elements, you can create a balanced space that exudes tranquility and personality. Through a combination of carefully choosing diverse accessories and layering natural elements, this blend of styles creates a distinct and welcoming home atmosphere that embodies both tranquility and innovation.

Bohemian design can beautifully complement a minimalist aesthetic in several ways:

- **Adding texture and depth:** Bohemian elements like vintage rugs, macrame wall hangings and woven baskets bring texture and visual interest to a minimalist space.

- **Introducing natural elements:** Bohemian style often incorporates natural elements like plants, branches, and stones, which can add warmth and coziness to a minimalist space.

- **Creating a cozy atmosphere:** Lighting, such as candles and lanterns, can create a warm and inviting ambiance in a minimalist space.

- **Incorporating statement pieces:** Bohemian decor often features unique, eye-catching pieces like colourful artwork, vintage furniture, or eclectic accessories, which can add per-

sonality to a minimalist space.

- **Embracing imperfection:** Bohemian style celebrates imperfection and uniqueness, which can help balance out the clean lines and simplicity of a minimalist aesthetic. It celebrates individuality and self-expression, allowing people to add personality to their space.

- **Need for visual interest:** Bohemian decor adds depth, texture and visual interest to a minimalist space, preventing it from feeling too sterile or empty.

- **Interest in sustainability:** Bohemian style often incorporates vintage, repurposed, or second-hand items, aligning with the growing interest in sustainable living.

- **Desire for a sense of adventure:** Bohemian design can evoke a sense of travel, exploration and adventure, adding a layer of excitement to a minimalist space.

- **Reaction against mass-produced decor:** Bohemian style rejects mass-produced, generic decor, allowing people to create a truly one-of-a-kind space.

- **Seeking a sense of community:** Bohemian design often incorporates elements from different cultures and traditions, fostering a sense of connection and community.

- **Embracing imperfection:** Bohemian style celebrates imperfection and uniqueness, allowing people to embrace the beauty of imperfection in their homes.

(The author, Tushar Joshi, is the founder of Utkarsh Vastukaran.)

RAISE YOUR GLASS AND EXPECTATIONS!

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On the inauguration evening of Diageo’s X Series, the party scene has transitioned from whisky-on-the-rocks to cocktails-on-the-wildside, with everyone—from Gen Z to seasoned millennials seeking a fresher sip of life. The rise of the “cocktail culture” has become the new status symbol, with the latest concoctions focusing on boldness, experimentation and just plain fun.

Imagine a berry festival happening in your mouth. The combination of house vanilla and Italian lemon adds a touch of sophistication, but let’s be honest—you’re here for that raspberry zing that keeps you sipping for more. It’s sweet, it’s tart; it’s like the quirky rom-com of cocktails.

The Unexpected Devil; this one’s like inviting a mild-mannered librarian to your party and discovering she moonlights as a salsa dancer. A cilantro garnish just sits there, smirking, knowing full well that this drink packs a punch.

With activated charcoal and jaggery joining forces, it’s got a goth look with a golden soul. The lime and grapefruit lift it from being too broody, and with a sprinkle of salt, you’ll feel like a moody artist sipping on liquid creativity. It’s mysterious yet oddly comforting, just like every late-night existential conversation.

Who needs tomato juice when you can spice things up with some rasam? This is that’s come back from an ashram with a fresh twist. A bit desi, a bit daring, and definitely not for the faint-hearted. Sip it slowly, lest you end up doing yoga on the table.

Back to Cuba, Ginger and honey have teamed up to take your taste buds on a nostalgic ride to the golden days of rum cocktails. It’s like sitting with a charming old friend who still knows how to party.

What-a-Delightful-Melon! A watermelon in a party mood, this drink is sunshine in a glass. Basically, it’s a beach vacation for your senses, even if you’re stuck at a crowded bar.

Now about the ambiance, it was nothing short of a sensory spectacle.



Imagine stepping into an art installation that decided cocktails were its muse. Four vibrant booths stood proudly, each wrapped in one of the four primary colours: blue, green, red and yellow. It wasn’t just a colour-coded dream, though; each hue had its spirited dedication. If you were hoping for subtlety, you were in the wrong place. Neon lights bathed everything in an electric glow, turning guests into shadows, silhouettes, and abstract shapes. And just in case you thought this couldn’t get more theatrical, a juggler appeared out of nowhere, tossing neon-lit balls in the air like he’d been born to boggle minds at fancy cocktail gatherings.

The entire evening had this mysterious yet slightly absurd vibe, which was only amplified by the inauguration of the Grand X Series. Who knew what we were inaugurating so grandly? Neon lights punctuated the darkness like party punctuation, and suddenly, every cocktail station seemed like an invitation to an exclusive club for the mildly curious and slightly unhinged.

But the best part? Picture this: You hit a bell for a drink (more like smashing the bell in sheer curiosity) and a mysterious hand appears from behind a velvet curtain, holding your cocktail like an offering. You couldn’t see the face, and it was all a bit reminiscent of being in some shady alley, except this dark alley offered refreshments, garnished with an elegant orchid petal no less. Honestly, it was like *Alice in Wonderland* meets a speakeasy, complete with neon lights and a sprinkle of “What on earth is happening?”

And so, there we were, sipping mystery drinks from phantom hands, as the juggler spun light into the darkness. If that’s not a night well spent, then I don’t know what is.

Sri Lanka crushes New Zealand to clinch historic series win

AP ■ GALLE (SRI LANKA)

Sri Lanka stormed to a series victory over New Zealand, securing the two-match test series with a resounding innings and 154-run triumph on the fourth day in Galle on Sunday. This victory, Sri Lanka's most dominant over the Kiwis, also marks their first win against New Zealand in 15 years. The hero of the games, left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya, was named Player of the Series after a masterful performance, claiming 18 wickets across the two matches. Meanwhile, Kamindu Mendis took home Man of the Match honours for his unbeaten 182, anchoring Sri Lanka's colossal total of 602-5 declared. With this knock, Mendis etched his name in history, joining the great Sir Don Bradman as the third joint-fastest player to reach 1,000 test runs. Jayasuriya, who took nine wickets in the first test, was at his best again, snaring



another nine wickets in the second test as New Zealand's batters struggled to cope with Sri Lanka's spin-heavy attack. Debutant Nishan Peiris was the perfect foil, chipping in with nine wickets of his own, including a five-wicket haul in the second innings. "We discussed the need to score big in the first innings. That has been something that has been worrying us for a while. Glad we rectified that this innings," said Sri Lanka captain Dananjaya de Silva. "The spinners were superb. They kept creating pressure and didn't allow New Zealand to get away with things. It was

a superb display. That's how we want to compete in home conditions, dominate the opposition from ball one," he added. New Zealand's woes began early, bundled out for a paltry 88 in their first innings. Forced to follow on, the Kiwis showed more fight in their second innings, posting 360 - their highest total of the tour and in Galle - but it was too little, too late. Tom Blundell, Glenn Phillips and Mitchell Santner all contributed half-centuries in the second innings, but the tourists needed far more to challenge Sri Lanka's

dominance. Resuming at 199-5, New Zealand lost three wickets before lunch on the fourth day. Despite Sri Lanka's fielding lapses, which saw three catches dropped, they eventually cleaned up after lunch. Jayasuriya removed Ajaz Patel and Peiris took the final scalp of Santner, stumped by Kusal Mendis, sealing the series win for Sri Lanka. "We had our moments in the series, but disappointed with the end result," said New Zealand captain Tim Southee. "That morning session on day three when we lost nine wickets was very disappointing. There were dropped catches and missed stumpings as well in the Sri Lankan innings and in these conditions when you don't hold onto those chances it is very difficult." With this victory, Sri Lanka has now won three consecutive test matches and bolstered their hopes of qualifying for the ICC World Test Championship final at Lord's next June.

Indian shooters win two gold medals in Peru

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian shooters began their ISSF Junior World Championship (Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun) campaign in Peru on a good note, winning team gold in men's and women's 10m air pistol events, though a potential top-podium finish was lost in the individual category after a marksman was docked two points for reporting late for the final. The junior men's trio of Umesh Choudhary, Pradyumn Singh and Mukesh Nelavalli topped the men's team competition in 10m air pistol with a tally of 1726 points. They finished 10 points ahead of second-placed Romania, while Italy took bronze with a score of 1707. Choudhary though missed a potential individual gold after being penalised two points for reporting late for the final. Choudhary and Singh had earlier made it to the individual finals placed third and fourth respectively in the qualification round. Choudhary shot 580 and



Singh 578 but missed out on individual medals, ending up sixth and eighth respectively. Luca Joldea of Romania won the gold medal, while Chinese Taipei's Hsieh Hsiang-Chen clinched the silver. Nelavalli was ninth in qualification with a score of 574. The combination of Kanishka Dagar, Lakshita and Anjali Chaudhary tallied 1708 to clinch the junior women's 10m air pistol team gold. They

pipped Azerbaijan by a point and bronze-winning Ukraine by four points. Dagar also made the individual final in third place with a score of 573 along with Kanak who also shot the same score but with lesser inner 10s, to bag the fifth qualifying spot. In the final, Kanak won bronze with a score of 217.6, while Dagar finished eighth. Chinese Taipei's Chen Yu-Chun won gold, while Slovakia's Manja Slak bagged the silver.

Wet outfield wipes out play for second day

PTI ■ KANPUR

No play was possible for the second consecutive day in the second Test between India and Bangladesh due to a wet outfield at the Green Park Stadium here. Overnight rain had caused a delay to the start of action but even as the sun was shining bright around 2:00pm and there were no soggy patches on the ground, the officials decided to call off the play. Almost eight sessions have been lost in the game due to persistent rain that has played havoc with the final match of the two-game series. Questions on the drainage system used at the venue have been duly raised. Bangladesh had ended the rain-shortened opening day at 107 for 3. The entire second day was washed out without a ball being bowled, and only 35 overs were bowled on the opening day. India pacer Akash Deep (2/34) and Ravichandran Ashwin (1/22) were among the wickets.

Champions League returns missing Mbappé, Rodri, Barella as injury wave hits European soccer

AP ■ PARIS

Key players will be sidelined when the Champions League resumes on Tuesday after a wave of injuries within a week of the new-look competition starting. Kylian Mbappé's sore hamstring is likely to sideline him beyond Wednesday when he was due to return to France with defending champion Real Madrid to face Lille. Serious knee injuries mean Manchester City midfielder Rodri is out for the season and Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-André ter Stegen will miss at least most of it. Inter Milan midfielder Nicolò Barella, who was a standout playing against Rodri on September 18, will miss at least one Champions League game because of a thigh strain. The injuries to four players who were involved at the European Championship into the knockout phase have sharpened the debate about player workload in a calendar made more congested by the bigger Champions League.

The extended program is what influential clubs all-but forced UEFA to create and the 18 games this week, split between Tuesday and Wednesday, still leaves each of them with six more to play through January. Another final rematch There were two repeats of past finals in the first week of games that relaunched the Champions League in a single-standings format. Man City and Inter drew 0-0 and Liverpool won 3-1 at AC Milan. The next rematch comes Wednesday when Aston Villa hosts Bayern Munich, a giant of the European Cup era that was shocked 1-0 in the 1982 final. Villa Park will host a first game in the competition since March 1983 when the English side's title defense was ended by Juventus. Both eased to winning starts two weeks ago. Villa won 3-0 at Young Boys and Bayern's nine goals against Dinamo Zagreb was a record for any team in the 33-season Champions League era. Harry Kane scored four in Bayern's 9-2 win and has a good record visiting Villa, with five goals there in five Premier League games for Tottenham. He faces a late check on an ankle injury. Kane edges Haaland Kane's fast start to the season with 10 goals in seven games for Bayern has outpaced even Erling Haaland's 10 in eight games for Man City. Haaland was kept quiet by Inter for the



second time in 16 months, a fact he was reminded of in a post-game talk with the Italian champion's center back Francesco Acerbi, who smiled and held up two fingers. Haaland should find it easier on

Tuesday in Slovakia when Man City faces Slovan Bratislava, which took the second biggest beating in the opening round, 5-1 at Celtic. Crowd size and fan fervour The pulsating atmosphere at Celtic Park

for a rare European win by the Scottish champion stood out in an opening week where anticipation was not universal. Pundits including former Man City goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel noted a quietness about the stadium for the Inter game. The attendance was nearly 2,000 higher five days later when Man City met Arsenal in a tempestuous Premier League clash where title ambitions were already in play. Milan-Liverpool was a heavyweight European fixture yet far from sold out, with fewer than 60,000 at San Siro. The crowd topped 70,000 at each of Milan's first two Serie A home games this season, and 66,000 on the equivalent Champions League opening night last season to see another English club, Newcastle. Paris Saint-Germain drew at least 46,000 fans for each home game in Ligue 1 this season - and all three Champions League group-stage games last season - yet fewer than 40,000 were at Parc des Princes to see European debutant Girona two weeks ago. Sporting Lisbon also had 40,000 fans for a Champions League opener against Lille that was 6,000 down on the crowd for a domestic league game against Porto. The attendance and atmosphere trends

will be watched as fans respond to the longer and more expensive program of four Champions League home games. The 36-team standings is set to be more dynamic for the final two rounds in January. Tuesday's games The raucous atmosphere should follow Celtic to Borussia Dortmund whose fans in the Yellow Wall tribune are among the noisiest in Europe. Bundesliga champion Bayer Leverkusen hosts Milan after making a fast start in a 4-0 rout at Feyenoord. San Siro now reverts to Inter to host Red Star Belgrade. Arsenal hosts PSG in a meeting of two teams chasing a trophy they never won. Each was a beaten finalist once. Also, Barcelona hosts Young Boys. Wednesday's games Even without Mbappé, Madrid should have too much for Lille playing in the stadium that hosted basketball group-stage games at the Paris Olympics. Premier League leader Liverpool hosts Bologna, and Girona's first European visitor to the Montilivi stadium is Feyenoord. Dinamo Zagreb fired its coach, Sergej Jakirovic, after the drubbing at Bayern and brought back Nenad Bjelica for a second spell.

Osasuna stuns Barcelona 4-2 record for best start



AP ■ BARCELONA

Ryan Zaragoza scored one goal and set up another to spark Osasuna's stunning 4-2 win over Barcelona, dealing the Spanish league leader its first loss.

The lightning-fast forward on loan from Bayern Munich crossed for Ante Budimir to open the scoring in the 17th minute. Zaragoza then showed some fancy high-speed dribbling to round goalkeeper Iñaki Peña on the break for 2-0 in the 28th on Saturday. Barcelona youth player Pau Victor pulled one back for the visitors in the 53rd, but Budimir earned and converted a penalty to put the result beyond doubt in the 72nd. Abel Bretones made it 4-1 in the 85th and substitute Lamine Yamal scored Barcelona's second goal. Barcelona recorded wins in the first seven rounds of the league. An eighth victory would have equaled a club record established in 2013. Barcelona remained atop the league standings at four points ahead of Real Madrid before the defending champion visits Atletico Madrid in a derby on Sunday. Osasuna moved into sixth place and stayed unbeaten in Pamplona in this campaign with four wins and a draw.

India U17 look to maintain dominance against Bangladesh in final

PTI ■ THIMPHU

India will fancy their chances of maintaining their stranglehold on Bangladesh when the two sides meet in the final of the SAFF U17 Championship here on Monday. India began their tournament nine days ago with a last-gasp 1-0 victory over Bangladesh in the group stage. The same script unfolded last year as well, when the India U16 boys beat their eastern neighbours 1-0 in the first game and then 2-0 in the final. Head coach Ishfaq Ahmed and his boys will hope for a repeat of that on Monday for a successful title defence. For the record, the two teams have met four times in the finals of SAFF men's age-group tournaments, with India winning thrice (U18 in



2019, U20 in 2022 and U16 in 2023) and Bangladesh emerging victorious once (U16 in 2015). "We know Bangladesh are a good side. They did well to come from behind in the

semi-final. They had some hiccups but they've been more stable as compared to the other teams. Our win against them is in the past. A final is a different game," said Ahmed in the pre-match

press conference. India beat Nepal 4-2 in a frenetic semi-final on Saturday, which saw four goals scored in the last 10 minutes. Vishal Yadav's second-half

brace put India in control but Nepal didn't go down easily as they kept reducing the Blue Colts' lead. In the end, goals from substitutes Ningthoukhongjam Rishi Singh and Hemneichung Lunlun sealed the Indian win. Set-pieces are something India have been excellent with so far. They've scored four goals from dead ball situations so far and Ahmed has been delighted with that. In the second semi-final, Bangladesh showed indomitable spirit as they came from two goals down to level it at 2-2 against Pakistan thanks to Md Manik's 74th and 94th minute goals. They then converted all eight of their penalties to cap off a memorable comeback and enter the final.

Messi scores, Inter Miami moves closer to No. 1 seed with 1-1 draw

AP ■ FORT LAUDERDALE (US)

Lionel Messi moved Inter Miami another step closer to the No. 1 seed for the MLS Cup playoffs. And the MLS single-season points record remains in the club's reach as well. Messi scored in the 67th minute and Inter Miami pushed its unbeaten streak to eight straight Major League Soccer matches with a 1-1 tie against Charlotte FC on Saturday night. It was Messi's 15th goal in 16 league matches this season. Messi became the sixth player in MLS history with at least 15 goals and 15 assists in a single season - and he's done that while missing 15 of Inter Miami's league contests. The tie, combined with

Columbus' 2-2 draw with D.C. United on Saturday, left Inter Miami eight points clear of the Crew for the No. 1 seed in the Eastern Conference. Inter Miami is also seven points up on the LA Galaxy for the No. 1 overall seed in the MLS playoffs. Inter Miami plays at Columbus on Wednesday, and a win would wrap up the No. 1 overall seed - not just the East, but the Supporters Shield as the regular-season winners as well. Inter Miami (19-4-8) has 65 points with three matches left; Columbus (16-5-9) has 57 points with four matches remaining. "We are playing a great team that is chasing us in the Supporters Shield," Inter Miami coach Gerardo "Tata"



Martino said. "It is a very important game

but so are the games against Toronto and New England.

We will be ready for these remaining dates."

But first, the Columbus match looms and Inter Miami knows exactly what's at stake. "It's very important," defender Jordi Alba said. The Supporters Shield would give Inter Miami home-field edge throughout the playoffs, including for a potential MLS Cup final December 7. And if Inter Miami wins out, it will finish with 74 points - one more than the MLS record of 73 set by New England in 2021. DC United helped Inter Miami a bit on Saturday. Columbus led 2-1 late in the second half but surrendered the tying goal in the 81st minute; otherwise, the Crew could have been two points closer to Inter Miami in the standings and made

Wednesday's match far more interesting. Messi's goal was his typical brilliance. He took a pass near the top of the penalty box, dribbling once and threading his natural left-footed shot between four defenders and into the net to tie the match. It came 10 minutes after Charlotte (11-11-9, 42 points, seventh in the East) struck first, with Karol Swiderski deflecting a shot into the net. But Messi answered, and Inter Miami settled for its third consecutive draw. The team is 5-0-3 in its last eight league matches and 9-1-3 in MLS play since June 1. "Obviously, we are frustrated with the three consecutive ties," Martino said. "But the story continues." There were

two great chances for Inter Miami in the final moments. Messi lobbied for a shot at the gamewinner in the 10th minute of stoppage time, after getting taken down near the top of the penalty area. No foul was called - one almost certainly would have led to a penalty shot opportunity - and about two minutes later, Luis Suarez somehow missed from point-blank range on the final play of the match. The match was the next-to-last of the home regular season slate for Inter Miami. After the showdown at Columbus on Wednesday, the club goes to Toronto on October 5 and then wraps up the 34-match schedule at home against New England on October 19.

Satyam Sundaram: Classic portrayal of love

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Director C. Prem Kumar, who previously made the hit Tamil film *96*, an emotional love story that took place in a single night, has returned nearly six years later with *Satyam Sundaram*, starring Karthi and Aravind Swamy in the lead roles. Similar to his earlier work, the story of this film also unfolds over one night. Produced by Suriya and Jyothika, the promotional videos of this movie were intriguing. This is the dubbed version of *Meiyazhagan*, with the Tamil version which was released on September 27 and the Telugu version a day later.

STORY

Sathyam (Aravind Swamy) is settled in Vizag with his parents, wife (Divyadarshini) and daughter. His native place is Uddandarayunipalem, but during his teenage years, his father lost their house due to fraud committed by relatives, forcing the family to move to Vizag. Despite being settled, Sathyam cherishes memories of his native village, the people and his old house. When Sathyam receives a wedding invitation from his cousin's sister, he reluctantly decides to

attend, planning only to gift his sister and return immediately. However, at the wedding, a mysterious person (Karthi) encounters him, calling him "bava" and showering him with affection. Sathyam is baffled he doesn't recognise this man nor knows his name. Who is this mysterious person and how does he change Sathyam's perspective? The crux of the story lies in Sathyam's journey of finally recognising him.

ANALYSIS

C Prem Kumar's earlier film *96* was an emotional love story centered around a 22-year reunion of the '96 batch students, creating a sense of nostalgia for the audience and achieving great success. In *Satyam Sundaram*, Prem Kumar brings the audience back to their roots, this time focusing on the emotions shared between two men. After watching the film, audiences will feel nostalgia akin to *96*. The story revolves around a family that left their village due to the betrayal of relatives. Rather than fight or blame, they shifted to Vizag. Sathyam, though now settled in Vizag, remains haunted by memories of his native village. When he attends a wedding there, a mysterious person warmly welcomes him. Initially, Sathyam intends to catch the last bus back but ends up staying longer due to the affection shown by this stranger. The story turns emotional



Cast: Karthi, Aravind Swamy, Sri Divya, Devadarshini, Raj Kiran, Jayaprakash and others
Music: Govind Vasantha
Cinematography: Mahendran Jayaraj
Producers: Jyothika-Suriya
Writer and Director: C Prem Kumar
Rating: 3.5/5

as Sathyam tries, yet struggles, to discover this person's identity.

The film begins by showing why Sathyam left the village during his teenage years and some of his lingering memories. Unlike a typical commercial film with songs, dances, or action drama, *Satyam*

Sundaram is a deeply emotional narrative about two individuals. The wedding scenes, how people talk, eat and behave are portrayed realistically and these scenes will resonate with anyone who has experienced similar family gatherings. Despite its nearly three-hour runtime, the film

doesn't feel long; it moves at an engrossing pace. Full credit goes to the director for his storytelling, with scenes that are both authentic and emotionally touching. The moment where Sathyam gifts his sister is particularly poignant.

In the second half, the story shifts to Karthi's house, introducing several humorous yet emotional moments. The cycle episode stands out as a highlight, marking the beginning of Sathyam's quest to discover Karthi's name. Creating emotionally rich scenes between two male characters is challenging, but Prem Kumar manages to do so skillfully, keeping the audience intrigued throughout. In fact, the audience is left anxiously waiting to hear Karthi's name, which is cleverly kept a suspense until the end.

One thing is certain: while many Telugu filmmakers often rely on typical commercial elements, Tamil filmmakers like Prem Kumar are bringing innovative storytelling, as seen in *Satyam Sundaram*. There are no songs, forced action sequences, or double entendres just a story that feels real and relatable. It evokes nostalgia, much like reading a cherished novel, and is enriched by stellar performances from the cast.

PERFORMANCE

The lead actors, Aravind Swamy and Karthi, deliver excellent performances.

Aravind Swamy, returning to the screen after a long time, impresses as Sathyam. His expressions in scenes like when Karthi asks him to bless his family members and during the climax when he speaks to Karthi on the phone, are superb. Karthi, a versatile actor known for his work in commercial films, reaches new heights in this role. He fits perfectly into his character and has dubbed his Telugu lines convincingly. Sri Divya is adequate as Karthi's wife, and Devadarshini portrays Sathyam's wife well. The supporting cast also delivers commendable performances. Mahendran Jayaraj's cinematography captures every scene beautifully, while Govind Vasantha's background score breathes life into the film. Most of the technicians from Prem Kumar's film *96* have returned for this one, contributing significantly to its success.

VERDICT

In conclusion, *Satyam Sundaram* is a must-watch film, with full credit going to director Prem Kumar and lead actors Aravind Swamy and Karthi. It's an emotional tale that takes viewers back to their past. The film doesn't feel like a dubbed version, as every Telugu detail, from village names to characters, has been thoughtfully localised. Though the pace of narration may be a bit slow for some, it's worth watching for its rare, heartwarming storytelling.



Free health check-up for all MAA members: Vishnu Manchu

A free health check-up camp was organized on Sunday for all members of the Movie Artists Association (MAA) by President Vishnu Manchu and Vice President Madala Ravi. It was set up in collaboration with GVK Health Hub, and a large number of MAA members participated in this free check-up drive. "Thanks to Dr. Sastry and GVK Health Hub for conducting this free health camp for all MAA members. We are grateful for providing this expensive check-up at no cost. I hope this initiative continues in the future," said MAA President Manchu Vishnu.

Vishnu Manchu has always prioritised the

health of MAA members and health cards have also been issued for their well-being, with a request that everyone makes use of them, said Madala Ravi, Vice President of MAA. He added that this is the fourth comprehensive medical camp for MAA members. "We have also provided free health insurance cards to all MAA members for inpatient treatments in all hospitals," Ravi said.

"Artists often experience high stress, so we are conducting a special master check-up for them. Adequate sleep and attention to spiritual health are also essential," said Dr. Sastry of GVK Health Hub.

Ravi Teja's nephew Madhav impresses with *Mr Idiot* trailer

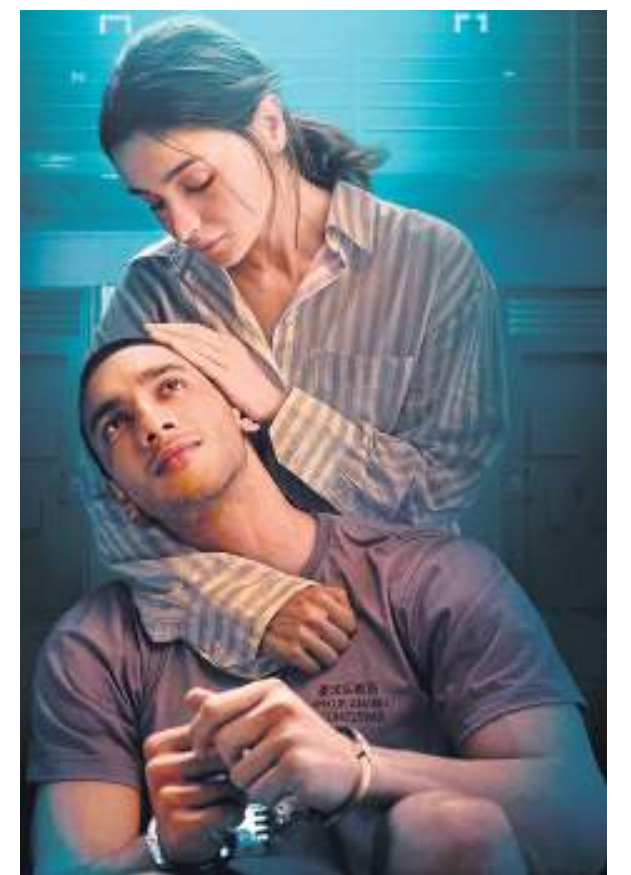
Actor Ravi Teja rose to stardom with the film *Idiot*, directed by Puri Jagannadh. Now, his nephew (his younger brother Raghu's son), Madhav, is set to make his debut as a lead actor with the film *Mr Idiot*. Gowri Ronanki, who previously made her debut as a director with *Pelli Sandada*, is directing *Mr Idiot*. Simran Sharma plays the female lead and JJR Ravichand is producing the film. Prasanth Varma, the director of *Hanuman* fame, attended the trailer launch as the chief guest.

Lead actor Madhav thanked director Prasanth Varma for attending the trailer launch of his film. "I'm speaking in front of the media for the first time. The movie has been delayed a bit because I wanted to ensure the final output met high standards. We released the trailer and I hope you all like it," said Madhav. He also expressed gratitude to producer Ravichand and his uncle Ravi

Teja for their constant support, adding that they are planning to release the film in November. Anup Rubens is providing the music.

Director Gowri Ronanki stated that the film would be a musical hit. "From the beginning, I told music director Anup that the film needed great music, and he understood our story and delivered excellent compositions," she said.

Prasanth Varma, who attended as the chief guest, said that Ravi Teja has been a guiding force for many in the industry. "I felt it was my responsibility to support Madhav when I was invited to this event. Hearing the title *Mr Idiot* reminded me of the days when I watched Ravi Teja's film *Idiot*," said Prasanth Varma. He praised Madhav after seeing the trailer and his performance in it. "He has acted with a lot of energy and aspires to reach Ravi Teja's level," said Prasanth Varma.



JIGRA GOES TELUGU; RAM CHARAN RELEASES TELUGU TRAILER

Besides Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada films, Hindi films are now also releasing in Telugu. Alia Bhatt, familiar to Telugu audiences through *RRR*, is set to release her upcoming film *Jigra*, also in Telugu. Not only is she the lead actress, but also one of the producers, alongside Karan Johar. Asian Suresh Entertainment is handling the Telugu version's release. Vedang Raina plays Alia's brother in the film, directed by Vasun Bala. Notably, popular actor Rana Daggubati is involved in the Telugu version.

Last week saw the release of the Hindi trailer, and now Ram Charan has unveiled the Telugu trailer on his social media, wishing the team all the best.

"I'm proud to collaborate with the renowned Dharmaproductions in bringing this film to the Telugu audience. *Jigra* is more than just an action-packed film, it's a story rooted in family and the lengths we go to protect the ones we love. With exceptional performances from Alia Bhatt and Vedang Raina, *Jigra* is sure to deliver a breathtaking film experience that goes beyond language and cultural barriers, appealing to audiences from all walks of life," said Rana Daggubati.

Ram Charan's folk-tastic entry in *Game Changer*

The entry of actor Ram Charan in his upcoming movie *Game Changer* will be a grand affair. His introduction in the film is marked by the song *Raa Macha Macha* (titled *Dam Tu Dikha Jaa* in Hindi), featuring 1,000 folk dancers performing various traditional dance forms of India. The song, choreographed by Ganesh Acharya, is a tribute to India's diverse cultural heritage, showcasing an array of folk dances from different regions of the country. The song features unique and visually captivating forms like Gussadi from Adilabad, Chau from West Bengal, Ghumra from

Odisha's Matilkala, Goravara Kunitha from Karnataka and many more. Nakash Aziz has lent his vocals to all three language versions of the track. Telugu, Tamil, and Hindi with lyrics written by Anantha Sriram.

Thaman S adds, "This is something never been seen before. Our idea was to capture all the diverse cultures and make this song the most visually expansive in recent times. The way to achieve this was to bring in 1,000 dancers and feature them alongside Ram Charan." The film is directed by Shankar and produced by Dil Raju.



Nani Best Actor for *Dasara*, SRK for *Jawan* at IIFA

The International Indian Film Academy Awards (IIFA) event was held in Abu Dhabi and presented the prestigious awards to the talented individuals in Indian cinema, covering the Hindi, Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam industries. This year at IIFA, the Telugu cinema icon and megastar Chiranjeevi was honoured with the Outstanding Achievement Award. The megastar a few days back got his name into the Guinness World Records and now he has been honored at IIFA.

Bollywood actress Shabana Azmi and renowned lyricist Javed Akhtar presented the award to the megastar at this event. "This award is not just recognition of my work but a testament to the love and encouragement I have received from my fans. I am forever indebted to them," he said, amidst the thunderous applause and a standing ovation. Interestingly, the event was hosted by Tollywood actors Rana Daggubati and Teja Sajja. Nani, who has received an award for his

performance in *Dasara* at every awards function, won the Best Actor Award for the same role at IIFA as well. Legendary comedian Brahmanandam received the Best Supporting Actor Award for his performance in *Ranga Marthanda*. The Best Director Award went to Anil Ravipudi for *Bhagavanth Kesari*. The film stars Nandamuri Balakrishna, Kajal Aggarwal and Sreeleela and was a successful film. The other actress who was at the center of attention was Samantha Ruth Prabhu. She

won the Woman of the Year in Indian Cinema Award at the 2024 IIFA Utsavam. Many South stars attended the event, including Nasser, Brahmanandam, Priyadarshan, Priyamani, Jayaraman, Sarathkumar, Radhika and Varalaxmi. The three-day IIFA Festival celebrates the best of Indian cinema, and Chiranjeevi's award is a fitting tribute to his remarkable contribution to the world of entertainment. Meanwhile, actress Keerthy Suresh was

honoured with the Best Actress Award for *Dasara*. Mani Ratnam helmed *Ponniyin Selvan: II* made it big at the awards by being honoured with four awards, Best Actor (Tamil): Vikram, Best Actress (Tamil): Aishwarya Rai, Best Director (Tamil): Mani Ratnam and Best Music Direction (Tamil): AR Rahman. Meanwhile, *Animal* swept most of the awards. In a night filled with glamour and celebration, *Animal* emerged as the undisputed champion at the IIFA Awards

2024, capturing hearts and accolades alike. With a total of five prestigious awards, including Best Picture and two significant acting honors, the film has proven to be a monumental success. The film was awarded Best Picture and actors Anil Kapoor and Bobby Deol received the Best Supporting Role (Male) and Performance in a Negative Role awards, respectively. Siddharth Singh and Garima Wahal also received the Best Lyrics Award for the film *Animal*.

