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Mahayuti will retain power with thumping majority: Shinde 5

RIGHT TIME TO JOIN INDIA'S GROWTH STORY, MODI TELLS GERMAN BIZ FORUM 8



Pottel: Idea has potential, but its implementation FALLS SHORT P12



QUOTE OF THE DAY the pioneer

Will this political bomb expose how many bundles of cash or stacks of currency were uncovered during the ED raids at Ponguleti's house? Will Ponguleti's 'bomb' disclose details of his alleged connections with the BJP, including attempts to escape cases or the reported Adani links? Is it a Lakshmi bomb, a sutli bomb, or a dud? Everything will come out soon. If you want to file a case against me, go ahead. Do whatever you want. We have seen many such 'beggars' before



— KT Ramarao, BRS MLA P4

DON'T MISS...

Free sand policy being implemented...

Minister for Water Resources Development Nimmala Ramanaidu has reiterated that the government is keen to implement the free sand policy transparently and diligently. The Minister inspected a sand reach at Vadapalli and Aurangabad villages in Kovvuru mandal, accompanied by EG district Collector P Prashanthi and mining officials on Friday. Collector Prashanti explained to the Minister about the availability of sand in the district and the sand reaches. The Minister also interacted with the boatmen's society members and knew their problems....

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Political leaders call for steps to...

Several political leaders on Thursday condemned the terror attacks in the Kashmir valley since the formation of the new government and urged it to take decisive steps to prevent such incidents and ensure the security of migrant workers. Terrorists shot at and injured a labourer from Uttar Pradesh, Shubam Kumar, in the Tral area of Pulwama district on Thursday morning, officials said. This is the third attack on non-local labourers in Kashmir in the past week. Six non-local labourers and a local...

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India's DPI figures in global...

India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) is now part of global conversations around inclusive and scalable infrastructure, and its blueprint can offer others an opportunity to harness technology for improving the lives of citizens, according to experts. Primus Partners, in association with iSPIRT, organised a DPI roundtable that saw key stakeholders such as senior bureaucrats, diplomats, policymakers, industry leaders and thought leaders discussing India's leadership in advancing...

-PAGE: 8

After pace, India fail spin test...

India's inadequacies against quality spin bowling stood thoroughly exposed, leaving the side staring at its first ever home Test series loss to New Zealand after the visitors claimed a formidable 301-run lead on day two of the second Test here on Friday. Tom Latham (86) led New Zealand's charge with the bat after Mitchell Santner's brilliant 7/53 destroyed India. His knock consolidated a handy 103-run first-innings lead that the Kiwis had grabbed before reaching 198/5 at stumps. Tom Blundell (30 not out) had Glenn...

-SPORTS

Free LPG CM's Diwali gift

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar has announced that all arrangements have been made for the distribution of three free LPG cylinders to eligible households across Andhra Pradesh, starting from Diwali on October 31. The government has issued detailed guidelines and procedures for the scheme's implementation.

Addressing the media at the Secretariat on Friday, the Minister stated that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu will formally inaugurate the scheme on October 31, with LPG cylinders delivered directly to eligible households shortly thereafter. The scheme applies to individuals who meet the eligibility criteria based on their LPG connection, white ration card, and Aadhaar card. Currently, there are 1.55 crore LPG connections and 1.47 crore ration cards across the state, all of which will benefit from this scheme.

The government anticipates an annual expenditure of Rs 2,684.75 crore for the scheme. Despite financial challenges, the government is prioritising this initiative for the safety of women, as promised in the election manifesto.



Gas bookings will commence on October 29. Once a booking is made, an SMS notification will be sent to the beneficiary's registered phone number. Deliveries will occur within 24 hours in urban areas and within 48 hours in rural areas. Additionally, within 48 hours of delivery, the subsidy amount will be directly credited to the beneficiaries' accounts via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). Beneficiaries can claim their first cylinder by March 31, the second by July 31, and the third by November 30. Each year will be divided into three distribution periods: April 1 to July 31, August 1 to November 30, and December 1 to March 31.

If beneficiaries encounter any issues, they may contact the toll-free number 1967 for assistance. Talks have been held with three oil companies, and the scheme will be implemented by integrating government data with the data from these oil companies. An advance payment of Rs 894.92 crore will be issued to the oil companies on October 29. Answering media queries, the Minister noted that of the 1.55 crore gas connections in Andhra Pradesh, only 9.65 lakh fall under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana.

The Minister also highlighted the government's commitment to farmers, ensuring payment within 48 hours of paddy purchases. So far, 147 metric tons of paddy have been purchased, with about Rs 34 lakh disbursed within 24 hours. He mentioned that the price of red gram was reduced from Rs 180 to Rs 150 per kg and is supplied at Rs 67 through ration depots.

The Minister added that due to a rise in customs duty on palm oil from 7 per cent to 27 per cent, its price increased from Rs 92 to Rs 130. Following intervention by a government committee, the price was reduced to Rs 110 and is now distributed through 2,300 outlets across the state.

State Civil Supplies Department Commissioner and Secretary Veerapandian and Civil Supplies Corporation Managing Director Manazir Jilani Samoon were also present at the meeting.

Civil Supplies Minister Manohar says beneficiaries will get free LPG cylinders once in four months



- Scheme eligibility based on LPG connection, white ration card, and Aadhaar.
- Gas bookings start on October 29, with urban delivery within 24 hours and rural within 48 hours.
- Subsidy amount to be credited directly to beneficiaries' accounts within 48 hours of delivery.
- Toll-free number 1967 provided for scheme-related support.
- Rs 2,684.75 cr allocated annually for the scheme by the State govt
- Talks held with oil companies; Rs 894.92 cr advance to be paid on Oct 29.
- State govt supporting farmers with 48-hour payments for paddy purchases and price control on essentials.

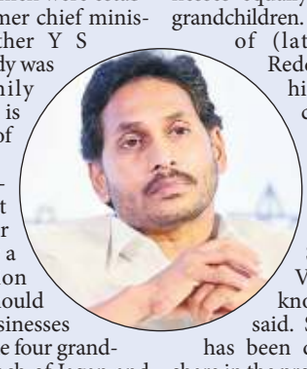
Jagan only 'guardian' of family assets: Sharmila

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Estranged YSRCP chief Jagan Mohan Reddy's sister Y S Sharmila on Friday said that all the businesses which were established when former chief minister and her father Y S Rajasekhara Reddy was alive, are family assets and Jagan is just a 'guardian' of them.

In an open letter, she said that her late father Rajasekhara Reddy's intention was that Jagan should divide all the businesses equally among the four grandchildren - two each of Jagan and Sharmila.

She said she received Rs 200 crore during the past 10 years towards her family share as dividends from various companies which established the fact that all four grandchildren of Rajasekhara Reddy would get equal portions.



"They (all the assets) are not owned by Jagan. He is only the "guardian" of all existing family businesses. It is the responsibility of Jagan to divide all the businesses equally among the four grandchildren. It was the mandate of (late) Rajasekhara Reddy. YSR conveyed his intention to his children and his wife. Close associates, including K V P Ramachandra Rao, YV Subbareddy and Vijayasai Reddy know about this," she said. Sharmila said she has been demanding a due share in the properties as their late father desired that all the grandchildren should get equal pie.

"Transfer of shares (of Saraswati Power and Industries) has nothing to do with the cancellation of his bail," she said.

Continued on Page 2

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GRADUATE MLC POLLS

Naidu gives roadmap for voter enrolment

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP national president and Chief Minister, N. Chandrababu Naidu, on Friday, provided a detailed roadmap to party candidates contesting the graduate constituency elections for the State Legislative Council. He directed the candidates to move forward closely with Jana Sena and BJP leaders to secure a strong outcome.

In a teleconference with TDP MPs, MLAs, and senior leaders from East and West Godavari, Krishna, and Guntur districts, Chandrababu instructed them to work diligently for the victory of TDP's MLC candidates. "After consulting leaders and activists from these districts, we have announced Perabattula Rajasekhar as our candidate for the East and West Godavari districts and Alapati Rajendra Prasad for Krishna and Guntur districts," Chandrababu shared.

With November 6 as the deadline for voter enrollment, the TDP chief urged all leaders to complete the process on time. He advised candidates to hold coordination meetings with leaders from all three alliance partners in each constituency segment, noting that the NDA has secured 93% of the votes cast through the united efforts of the coalition parties.

"We are working tirelessly for the development of the State, and this message should reach every citizen," he remarked. He also highlighted recent developments, including the Centre's approval for the Amravati rail line and the Deputy Chief Minister, Pawan Kalyan, launching several development projects in rural areas.



Allu Arjun gets relief in AP High Court

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Tollywood actor Allu Arjun has received much-needed relief as the Andhra Pradesh High Court granted him interim relief until November 6 in a case filed against him by the Nandyala police.

Continued on Page 2

Tackle garbage issue at once: CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has issued immediate orders to tackle the growing problem of garbage accumulation in the State, aiming to clear an estimated 8.3 million metric tons of waste by June next year. This backlog, attributed to a garbage tax levied by the previous administration, has led to colossal waste buildup. Naidu stressed the need for rapid and comprehensive action, urging officials to address the issue on a 'war footing'.

Naidu called for the establishment and activation of "Waste to Energy and Waste to Wealth" centres across the state, promoting sustainable waste management practices that convert waste into economic resources. He emphasised that visible improvements should be evident across the state by Gandhi Jayanti next year. The Chief Minister also instructed officials to ensure that solid and liquid waste management processes are effective and consistent throughout the state.



- Naidu targets clearance of 8.3 million metric tons of garbage by June next year.
- He calls for establishing "Waste to Energy and Waste to Wealth" centres for sustainable waste management.

In response to allegations of irregularities in Transferable Development Rights (TDR) bonds, Naidu directed officials to gather detailed information on violations across municipal corporations, to rectify these issues as soon as possible.

Continued on Page 2

Rs 100 cr for street light maintenance in villages

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu reviewed the state's energy efficiency programmes with representatives and officials from relevant organisations at the Secretariat on Friday. The CM instructed officials from the Finance department to release Rs 100 crore for maintaining street lights in various gram panchayats across the state and Rs 50 crore for urban areas. He emphasised the need to ensure that 100 per cent LED lights are used to reduce energy consumption.

He noted that the previous government had weakened the gram panchayats and had failed to pay dues for street light maintenance. He stressed that technology should be employed to monitor street light maintenance and that measures should be taken to conserve electricity.

Continued on Page 2

AP an investment destination: I&PR Minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Housing, Information and Public Relations, Kolusu Parthasarathi, has announced that Andhra Pradesh is emerging as a prime investment destination, largely due to the brand image of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. He highlighted that both Indian and foreign industrialists are turning their attention to the state following the introduction of six new policies aimed at attracting investments of approximately Rs 30 lakh crore and creating employment opportunities for 20 lakh people. These policies cover areas such as Industries, Food, MSMEs, Green Energy, Private Parks, and Electronics.



Speaking to the media at the Secretariat on Friday, the Minister commended CM Naidu for his visionary leadership in realigning the state's systems towards development, encapsulated in the brand AP (A-Amaravati, P-Polavaram). He noted that Naidu has successfully secured central funding for the Polavaram project, instilling confidence among the people of Andhra Pradesh that the project will be completed within the next two to three years.

Continued on Page 2



New Tourism Policy from April next: P2

Family's selfless decision gives new life to three patients

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

In a poignant act of generosity amid tragedy, the family of G Jagadeesh, a 41-year-old man from Sompeta, chose to donate his vital organs after he was declared brain-dead by doctors. This selfless decision has given a new lease of life to three patients in need. Jagadeesh lost consciousness suddenly at home, prompting his family to rush him to a nearby private hospital. After a series of tests, doctors discovered that blood was oozing in his brain. Despite their best efforts to revive him, his condition did not improve, and on Friday, they delivered the devastating news of his brain death to his family.

Following this, medical professionals counselled Jagadeesh's wife, son, daughter, and other relatives about the importance of organ donation in saving lives. "It was an incredibly difficult decision, but we felt it was the right thing to do," shared a family member. The family ultimately agreed to donate his vital organs, showing remarkable courage in their time of grief.K Rambabu, the AP State Coordinator for Jeevandan, was informed about the family's decision and subsequently provided consent for the organ retrieval. "We were able to harvest the kidneys and lungs from Jagadeesh, which were then allocated to three patients on the waiting list, following the Jeevandan protocol," he explained. Jagadeesh's family expressed their pride in being able to save others through their loss. "Though we are heartbroken, it brings us comfort to know that his organs will help others live," one family member remarked. Local residents praised the family for their kindness during such a difficult time, recognizing the importance of their decision.

Dr Rambabu noted a positive trend in organ donation, stating, "The number of families coming forward to donate the organs of their brain-dead kin has increased in recent months. This is largely due to the awareness efforts by Jeevandan and hospital.



Jagadeesh's family expressed their pride in being able to save others through their loss. "Though we are heartbroken, it brings us comfort to know that his organs will help others live," one family member remarked.

Poor sleep linked to accelerated brain ageing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Brain scans have revealed higher levels of shrinkage -- a sign of brain ageing -- among people having poor sleep quality in early middle age, according to a study.

A group of 589 people aged 40 years on average responded to sleep questionnaires both at the beginning of the study and again five years later. The participants had their brains scanned 15 years after the study began.

"Our study, which used brain scans to determine participants' brain age, suggests that poor sleep is linked to nearly three years of additional brain ageing as early as middle age," Clémence Cavaillès, from the University of California San Francisco and corresponding author of the study published in the journal Neurology, said.

Poor sleep habits have been linked to poor thinking and memory in later life, putting people at higher risk for dementia, Cavaillès said.



The participants' sleep habits were categorised as such -- short sleep duration, bad sleep quality, difficulty falling asleep, difficulty staying asleep, early morning awakening and daytime sleepiness. They were thus divided into three groups according to low, middle and high levels of poor sleep habits.



The participants' sleep habits were categorised as such -- short sleep duration, bad sleep quality, difficulty falling asleep, difficulty staying asleep, early morning awakening and daytime sleepiness. They were thus divided into three groups according to low, middle and high levels of poor sleep habits.

Brain shrinkage revealed in the brain scans were used for gauging brain age, with higher levels indicating a greater age, the researchers said.

The team found that people having middle levels of poor sleep habits had a brain age that was on average 1.6 years older than that of the people having low levels of poor sleep.

Those having high levels of poor sleep were found to have an average brain age of 2.6 years older than those having low levels of poor sleep habits.

"Our findings highlight the importance of addressing sleep problems earlier in life to preserve brain health, including maintaining a consistent sleep schedule, exercising, avoiding caffeine and alcohol before going to bed and using relaxation techniques," author Kristine Yaffe, from the University of California San Francisco, said.

"Poor sleep was associated with advanced brain age in midlife, highlighting the importance of investigating early sleep interventions for preserving brain health," the authors wrote.

Numbers don't lie: Congress' betrayal exposed

The gladiatorial fights launched by the Congress might divert people's attention from their deception and incompetence for some time. If the Congress persists in its ways, the betrayed voters of Telangana will eventually hold the party accountable and finish it off politically as surely as the betrayed Maximus ended the life of Commodus



KISHORE POREDDY

The storyline of the 2000 movie *Gladiator* is familiar to most Telugu movie fans. Marcus Aurelius, the ageing Roman Emperor, chooses his powerful General, Maximus Decimus Meridius, as his successor to the throne over his son, Commodus. Commodus murders his father and seizes the throne. But, as his father had predicted, Commodus falls short as the Emperor. Commodus, though inept at ruling, is a wicked genius. He offers destruction - gladiatorial fights - as a diversion from his deceit and ineptitude. Maximus, betrayed by Commodus, becomes a gladiator and uses the blood sport to avenge the deaths of his wife, son and emperor by killing Commodus in a fight.

One may ask, what does the story of the *Gladiator* movie have to do with politics in Telangana? Like Commodus, the Congress came to power in Telangana by deceiving the voters with its six guarantees and 400 other promises - which it knew it would not be able to deliver. Even after coming to power, the Congress government continued its deception by introducing an inflated budget eerily similar to that of the earlier BRS government. When Bhatti Vikramarka, Telangana Finance Minister, introduced this year's budget, I pointed out that Bhatti's budget, just like Harish Rao's budgets in the previous years, knowingly inflated revenues and central grants to create the illusion that it has enough funds to deliver on its promises.

In my article titled for this column 'Bhatti's braggadocio budget borrows BRS playbook', I pointed out that just like in the previous years, the "real" expenditure this year too will fall short by more than 20% of the projections. According to the report submitted by the state government to the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), the Telangana government received Rs.75,454 crore revenue in the first six months of this financial year (April to September), a mere 34% of the Rs.2,21,242 crore annual revenues projected in the budget. If the same revenue trends extend to the second half, the state revenues will fall short by a massive 32%, or Rs.70,797 crore, from the budget projections. The report also mentions that the state's expenditure on salaries, pensions, and interest payments has increased substantially. Given these facts, it is clear that the Congress's earlier claims of increasing revenues through heightened development and better financial management with the advice of Harvard-educated senior Congress leaders like Chidambaram were just hot air.

The Congress government in the state, aware of its own deception and inefficiency, like Commodus in the *Gladiator* movie, launched a series of destructive, gladiatorial spectacles to divert the attention of the state's voters. HYDRAA, the Musi beautification project, and the outrageous, crude, salacious accusations on the movie star Nagarjuna's family are just a few examples of these gladiatorial bouts. While the HYDRAA ops and Musi beautification project made a spectacle of destroying homes and properties of citizens who had all requisite permissions from the Telangana government, the salacious verbal attack on the private lives of a movie star's family was equally destructive to their reputations.

Each bout of blood sport ignited by Congress leaders successfully hijacked the public discourse for a while but caused immense and long-lasting collateral damage to the state and its people. For example, the uncertainty and angst generated by HYDRAA ops and the Musi beautification project brought the state's real estate and construction businesses, significant contributors to the state's GDP and revenues, to their knees. The drastic fall in new property registrations reflects this immense damage.

The Congress leadership seems to think it can continuously hoodwink the citizens and keep the opposition busy with its games. Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy's recent comments from South Korea that "a political bomb will go off this Diwali in Telangana", alluding to the arrests of senior BRS leaders for their crimes and corruption while in power appear to be part of a similar strategy. If Congress had been honest, it would have permitted and requested the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to investigate massive allegations of corruption by the earlier BRS government, as it demanded while in Opposition. Instead, the Congress government turned those allegations into media spectacles while taking no action. To date, it hasn't filed a single case against any senior BRS politician for their alleged crimes and corruption in the Kaleswaram project or phone tapping scam, to name a couple.

Abraham Lincoln said, "You can fool some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time." Similarly, the gladiatorial fights launched by Congress might divert all of Telangana's attention from their deception and incompetence for some time. If the Congress persists in its ways, the betrayed voters of Telangana will eventually hold the party accountable and finish it off politically as surely as the betrayed Maximus ended the life of Commodus.

(The author is BJP TS spokesperson.)

New Tourism Policy from April next

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM



The Andhra Pradesh government is set to introduce a new tourism policy for 2025-30 aimed at strengthening the tourism sector across the state. Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Cinematography, Kandula Durgesh, announced the plan at the CII Tourism and Travel Summit in Visakhapatnam on Friday, where he outlined initiatives to promote domestic and international tourism. "The new policy, effective from April 2025, is designed to attract tourists while ensuring benefits for all stakeholders," he said. Minister Durgesh highlighted Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's recent decision to grant industry status to tourism, which was announced during the International Tourism Day celebrations. "With this status, tourism will now enjoy all benefits provided to industries, including subsidies for developmental projects," he noted, adding that the Chief Minister aims to generate at least 20% of the state's employment through tourism initiatives, incorporating input from various sectors.

Showcasing Andhra Pradesh's rich tourism resources, Durgesh spoke about the state's 974 km coastline, historical sites, and wildlife sanctuaries. "Like Kerala, we have the assets needed for a vibrant tourism industry," he said, expressing confidence in developing circuits connecting temple, eco, adventure, wellness, and agricultural tourism.

Durgesh also noted support from the central government through initiatives like Swadeshi Darshan and Prasad, backed by Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan. "Our commitment to robust tourism development is matched by substantial central funding," he affirmed.

Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has pledged support for Andhra Pradesh's tourism projects, with a comprehensive state tourism report underway for central review. Durgesh announced plans to boost beach tourism, including a beach festival in January. "Despite Andhra Pradesh having the third-longest coastline, only Rushikonda Beach has achieved Blue Flag certification, which we plan to change," he stated.

Reflecting on past challenges, Durgesh acknowledged the setbacks caused by prior government policies, which hampered sector growth. A cabinet sub-committee has been formed to strategize temple and eco-tourism enhancement. "Spiritual sites like Tirupati, Annavaram, and Srisailam draw 90% of our visitors. We aim to develop attractions to encourage tourists to explore nearby areas," he said, detailing plans for resorts, jungle safaris, and ropeways.

As a growth hub recognized by NITI Aayog, Visakhapatnam will be developed as a cruise destination offering luxury cruises to Chennai and Puducherry. "It's encouraging to see top companies like Oberoi and Taj showing interest in investing in our tourism sector," he added.

On the film tourism front, Durgesh shared optimism for Andhra Pradesh's film industry. "Visakhapatnam is ideal for film production, and we are setting up a single-window clearance for film shoots," he said, inviting film producer Daggubati Suresh to suggest further initiatives to bolster film tourism. A meeting with industry leaders will be held soon to discuss these plans.

The summit was attended by prominent figures, including Visakhapatnam MP M Sribharat and Suresh Productions CEO Daggubati Suresh Babu, alongside various representatives from the tourism and business sectors.

SEED-AP workshop focuses on innovation and skills

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



In an effort to connect the youth of Andhra Pradesh with industry and equip them with valuable skills for better employment opportunities, the Society for Employment Generation and Enterprise Development in Andhra Pradesh (SEED-AP) conducted a workshop at its Vijayawada office on Friday. SEED-AP Chairman Deepak Reddy G emphasised the agency's commitment to training young people in key industry-relevant skills, enhancing their employability and enabling them to build successful careers.

Gunapati highlighted that SEED-AP aims to produce skilled youth tailored to meet industry demands, thereby supporting economic growth. The organisation is actively involved in designing six advanced frameworks intended to improve the state's economic infrastructure. These initiatives will not only supply skilled professionals to emerging industries but also generate significant employment opportunities for the youth of the state.

Dr K Shyam Prasad, Executive Chairman of SEED-AP, noted that the organisation has maintained a successful track record in implementing various skill development programmes across the state since 2005. Andhra Pradesh is currently leading the nation in executing the 'Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana' under the Government of India initiative.

The workshop saw participation from representatives of Sector Skill Councils in sectors such as Leather, Furniture & Fittings, Food Industry, Gems & Jewelry, Handicrafts, Homecare Workers, Differently Abled individuals, and Sports. Discussions focused on training programmes across these diverse sectors, with an emphasis on establishing infrastructure centres of excellence as training and production hubs. SEED-AP also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Sector Skill Councils for Leather and Furniture & Fittings to foster training and knowledge partnerships.

The event was attended by SEED-AP staff, representatives from the agencies implementing the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana project, and various industry experts.

Heartbreaking rescue of 11-yr-old girl from father's abuse

PNS ■ YADADRI BHUVANGIRI

In a heart-wrenching incident, an 11-year-old girl was discovered trembling in fear at her school in Choutuppal on Friday. Her terrified demeanor puzzled both teachers and classmates until after much encouragement, she revealed the shocking truth: her father had been starving and abusing her for days.

For many children, fathers are seen as heroes, but this young girl's experience was a stark contrast. The mere mention of her father sent her into hiding, especially when he arrived at the school allegedly intoxicated, searching for her. In a panic, she took refuge in a classroom as he confronted teachers, who ultimately managed to escort him off the premises.

When coaxed by her teachers, the girl recounted the daily torment she endured since her mother had left the family a few days ago. She shared that she had not eaten anything since the previous day, bursting into tears as she spoke.

AP an investment...

Continued from Page 1

The Minister also expressed optimism about Amaravati, the state capital, becoming a reality soon, as its development is progressing rapidly and is set to achieve international standards. He stated that under the CM's special initiative, substantial funds have been allocated from the Centre for the development of Railways and National Highways across the state. Specifically, Rs 9,138 crores have been sanctioned for railway projects, while Rs 6,280 crores have been earmarked for National Highways. Parthasarathi emphasized that these socio-economic development initiatives in Amaravati, Polavaram, Railways, and National Highways will pave the way for a brighter future.

The Chief Minister has mandated the construction of permanent houses for all poor families in the state by 2029, ensuring that no one is left homeless.

Ex-MLA condemns demolition of *goshala*, demands shelter for cows

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Former MLA and YSR Congress central constituency coordinator Malladi Vishnu has strongly criticised the coalition government for its alleged failure to protect temples and cows. He expressed outrage over the demolition of a Goshala (cow shelter) by Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) officials in Madhuranagar during the early hours of Friday. During his visit to the demolished site, Vishnu condemned the act as disgraceful, pointing out that it was carried out at a time when no one was around. He stated that the cows suffered injuries due to the careless actions of VMC and irrigation officials and were left hungry under the hot sun.

Vishnu further accused the government of disrespecting Hindu sentiments by abandoning the cows on the streets. He lamented that, unlike in neighbouring Maharashtra, where cows have been designated the state animal and receive full protection, the cows in their own state remain unprotected.

In addition to the cow shelter, Vishnu noted with dismay that the Durga Devi Temple, Raja Rajeshwari Devi Temple, and Nagendra Swamy Temple were also demolished. He questioned the logic of dismantling places of worship during a period when devotees flock to temples to celebrate festivals.

Recalling the demolition of 23 temples during the Krishna Pushkarams under Chandrababu Naidu's government, Vishnu acknowledged that the YSR Congress had since rebuilt these temples. However, he condemned the recurrence of such actions under the current coalition government. He also questioned leaders like Pawan Kalyan, who claims to uphold Sanatana Dharma, and the BJP, which promotes itself as a defender of Hindutva, on how they would respond to this situation.

Vishnu demanded that the government take immediate action against the officials responsible for the demolitions and make alternative arrangements for the cows within two days. He warned that the YSR Congress Party would stage a protest if these demands were not met.

YSRCP raps Sharmila, Naidu for politicising family matters

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP spokesperson and former MLA, Rachamallu Sivaprasad Reddy, has condemned YS Sharmila's recent statements as false, alleging that she is conspiring against YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's political future by siding with rivals Chandrababu Naidu and Sunitha, motivated by her own political ambitions.

Addressing the media in Proddatur, Rachamallu clarified that YS Jagan holds deep respect and affection for his sister, which is why he gave her a share in his self-acquired assets. He explained that Jagan approached the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) solely due to unavoidable circumstances, not with the intention to claim assets in court. He stressed that YSRCP leaders and workers share a close emotional bond with Jagan, regardless of the challenges he faces.

Questioning Sharmila's intentions, Rachamallu attributed her actions to greed and arrogance, pointing out that despite not having legal claims on certain assets, she is drawing her brother into a public property dispute. He highlighted that Jagan has financially supported Sharmila, providing around 200 crore rupees over the past decade.

Rachamallu also criticised Sharmila for transferring shares against an existing agreement, which led Jagan to seek legal intervention via the NCLT to cancel the transfer. He suggested that Sharmila's actions stem from her ambition for power and commended Jagan's wife, Bharati, for her cooperation in granting Sharmila her rightful share without objection, criticising Sharmila for speaking against her.

Meanwhile, in a separate press conference in Ongole, YSRCP Spokesperson and former MLC Jupudi Prabhakar urged Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu not to politicise personal family matters, warning that the public would not approve of such tactics.

Jupudi claimed that Naidu's coalition government has neglected governance, engaging instead in "diversion politics" that have negatively impacted essential sectors such as education, health, and agriculture. He further challenged Naidu to address property divisions within his own family rather than exploiting Jagan's family matters for political gain.

Allu Arjun gets relief in AP High Court...

Continued from Page 1

The case arose from Allu Arjun's visit to Nandyal to support YSRCP candidate Shilpa Ravichandra Kishore Reddy during the recent election. Authorities alleged that the actor's visit, which was accompanied by a large convoy, violated election rules. Allu Arjun and his legal team contested these allegations, arguing that his presence at the event did not contravene electoral laws. After careful consideration, the High Court sided with the actor's defence, granting him interim relief.

This interim order provides significant respite to Allu Arjun, allowing him to focus on his professional commitments without the burden of ongoing legal proceedings. The court's decision reflects the strength of his legal team's arguments and the merits of his case.

The outcome of this case will not only affect Allu Arjun's career but may also set a precedent regarding the role of celebrities in political campaigns.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Dashami:	Oct 26 03:23 AM to Oct 27 05:24 AM
Ekadashi:	Oct 27 05:24 AM to Oct 28 07:51 AM
Nakshatram:	
Ashlesha:	Oct 25 07:40 AM to Oct 26 09:45 AM
Magha:	Oct 26 09:45 AM to Oct 27 12:24 PM
Rahukalam:	9:08 AM to 10:34 AM
Yamagandam:	1:25 PM to 2:51 PM
Varjyam:	11:05 PM to 12:51 AM
Gulika:	6:16 AM to 7:42 AM
Amritakalam:	08:01 AM to 09:45 AM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	11:37 AM to 12:22 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy
Temp: 34°c
Humidity: 62%
Sunrise: 6:03 AM
Sunset: 5:40 PM

Updated: October 25, 2024 5:00 PM

Tackle garbage issue at once..

Continued from Page 1

The Chief Minister also reviewed progress on water supply in urban local bodies, noting that 3 million households currently have access to tap water, with an additional 750,000 expected to receive connections through the Amrut scheme. He instructed officials to expedite efforts to provide water access to another 750,000 homes under the same scheme.

Naidu further urged the quick finalization of tenders for waste-to-energy plants in Tirupati, Rajahmundry, Kakinada, and Nellore, aiming to make these facilities operational soon. He also received updates on the TIDCO housing project, emphasizing that the government is prepared to allocate funds to complete housing projects for beneficiaries in urban areas. He advised officials to compile a report detailing the scope of upcoming construction.

In the realm of urban planning, the Chief Minister suggested the innovative use of drone technology to enhance waste management and infrastructure monitoring, alongside implementing park and infrastructure projects under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. This directive is part of a broader initiative for sustainable urban development and improved living standards across Andhra Pradesh, focusing on creating a cleaner and more resource-efficient state.

Rs 100 cr for street...

Continued from Page 1

He suggested that the electricity surplus could be increased by 30 to 60 per cent through the use of LED lights and called for action in that direction.

The CM expressed a desire to reinstate the best policies from the previous Telugu Desam regime to keep the state at the forefront of energy efficiency.

The officials were advised to implement electric induction stoves in 55,000 Anganwadi centres across the state to reduce cooking gas consumption, coordinating this effort with Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL).

A three-member committee comprising representatives from the Finance Department, Energy Department, and EESL was directed to submit a report on street light maintenance and efficient electricity use.

Jagan only 'guardian' of family...

Continued from Page 1

She said the shares of Saraswati Power and Industries were not attached by the Enforcement Directorate but only the land of the company worth Rs 32 crore.

Sharmila said Jagan and his supporters feel that she was the reason for his defeat in the last Assembly polls and hence her brother wanted a settlement with the condition that she should never criticise him, his wife Bharathi and Kadapa MP and cousin YS Avinash Reddy. However, Sharmila, who is APCC chief, disagreed saying as leader of a political party it was not possible. She alleged that the settlement with her brother did not fructify as she did not agree to the conditions and subsequently Jagan filed a petition in the National Company Law Tribunal. The APCC chief claimed that Jagan always opposed her entry into politics.

As she entered politics, the former chief minister's teams resorted to her character assassination on social media platforms, the Congress leader alleged.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
TRIBAL WELFARE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
NIT No.77 to 129/2024-25/SE/TWDB/ Date: 24-10-2024
Online tenders are being invited for execution of 53 works in the limits of Visakhapatnam Tribal Welfare Engineering Circle at a cost of Rs. 3180.00 Lakh. Commencement of tender schedules: After 4.00 pm on 28-10-2024. Contact e-market place www.apeprocurement.gov.in to find out the nature of the works and for other details. Contact phone: 0891-2783210.
Sdl- Superintending Engineer,
R.O.No: 1423/CL/ADVT/1(1)2021-22, Dt. 25.10.2024 Tribal Welfare Department, Visakhapatnam

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Expedite repair works at irrigation projects: Min

Rs 284 crore sanctioned by CM for critical maintenance works on projects, reservoirs and canals

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu has directed Irrigation officials to expedite urgent repairs across irrigation projects, reservoirs and canals in the State. In a video conference held from his Vijayawada camp office on Friday, the Minister stressed the immediate utilisation of ?284 crore, recently sanctioned by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, to address critical maintenance works for irrigation projects, reservoirs and canals.

Minister Ramanaidu mentioned that the maintenance of gates, shutters, and ropes of irrigation projects had been neglected, resulting in weakened infrastructure during the previous administration. He urged officials to initiate tenders for 2,323 necessary works across the State, stressing the importance of completing these projects on a war-footing.

Officials briefed the Minister that while Rs 983 crore is required annually for effective operation and maintenance, only ?275 crore was spent over the last five years under the previous regime. The Minister assured that the CM is committed to release the full amount of ?983 crore needed for this year to support these critical repairs.

Additionally, he said that the CM recommended hiring personnel for the upkeep of crop canals, drainages, and reservoirs through outsourced management. Officials reported that 467 lift schemes under the Irrigation Development Corporation were abandoned under prior governance, leading to a reduction in cultivation by 2.90 lakh acres.

Special Chief Secretary Irrigation, G Sai Prasad, and ENC M Venkateswara Rao were among the officials who participated in the conference along with other senior Irrigation Department officials.

All-India Cattle Census kicks off in AP

Aims to gather detailed information on the livestock population across the State

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM



The 21st All-India Cattle Census officially commenced in Andhra Pradesh on Friday, marking the beginning of a comprehensive data collection effort that will extend until February 28. Minister for Agriculture, Cooperation, Marketing, and Animal Husbandry, Kinjarapu Atchannaidu, inaugurated the census at Pedda Bammidi, Kotabommali mandal, in Srikakulam.

The census aims to gather detailed information on the livestock population from approximately 1.5 crore families across the State. According to Minister Atchannaidu, "This data will provide invaluable insights into the livestock sector, enabling us to formulate effective policies and schemes that address the specific needs of farmers and landless families." He also stated that agricultural equipment data will be collected as part of the census.

To conduct the extensive survey, the government has mobilised a team of 5,390 field staff, 1,237 supervisors, and 45 scrutiny officers. These personnel will visit 17,244 villages and 3,929 urban wards, gathering data from both households and non-household individuals. "Our team is well-prepared to collect accurate data across rural and urban areas, which will contribute to the development and monitoring of livestock sector initiatives," said Atchannaidu.

To ensure complete coverage, each household visited will receive a sticker on their door to indicate the completion of data collection. "This door-to-door approach will guarantee that every family's livestock assets are accounted for, which is crucial for effective policy planning," explained Dr R. Muralidhar, Joint Director of the Animal Husbandry Department.

In addition to the census, Minister Atchannaidu announced several welfare measures aimed at improving rural livelihoods. "From this Diwali, every household will receive three LPG cylinders annually, provided at four-month intervals," he stated. He also shared plans for upcoming initiatives, including honouring the Ammaku Vandanam scheme in January and expediting investment assistance for farmers.

Despite the economic challenges faced by the State, Minister Atchannaidu assured citizens that the government remains committed to supporting rural communities and enhancing the infrastructure of the livestock sector.



JC intensifies inspections to curb ration malpractices

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a bid to curb malpractices in the distribution of ration goods, Joint Collector K Mayur Ashok has instructed officials and inspection staff of the Civil Supplies Department to intensify vigilance across storage centres. During a meeting held at the Collectorate on Friday, Ashok emphasised the need for strict adherence to distribution regulations, warning of criminal action against those found guilty of misuse or diversion of ration supplies. "The misuse of ration supplies is a serious offense, and we will not tolerate it," he asserted.

The meeting focused on various aspects of ration distribution, including the delivery process through MDU vehicles, store management, inspection procedures, and case registration practices. Ashok expressed concern over recent reports of shops operating under false names and ration goods being diverted to wholesale markets. "Our officers must be vigilant against such practices and conduct thorough inspections," he stated, urging officials to submit regular reports on the status of ration centres.

'Career Fair' in city tomorrow

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The NSM Old Students Association (NSM OSA) will be hosting a 'Career Fair' at NSM Public School on October 27, from 10:30 am to 2 pm. The event is open to students from Classes 10 to 12 and their parents, providing a valuable opportunity to explore a range of career paths through interactions with representatives from leading Indian and select global universities.

The Career Fair aims to broaden students' perspectives beyond traditional fields like Medicine and Engineering, showcasing diverse course options across various streams. Students can consider unique subject combinations—for example, a Humanities student may choose Biology and Psychology, while a Science student might explore Fashion Studies. This platform encourages students to make informed career choices and avoid common pitfalls in career planning.

With representatives from 36 universities across India, the Career Fair will facilitate direct communication, enabling students to gather essential information on the spot. Participating institutions include Alliance University, Anant National University, Annapurna College of Film and Media, Atria University, MIT–Avantika University, Backstage Pass Institute of Gaming, Bennett University, Birla Institute of Technology & Science Pilani-Dubai, CMR University, École Intuit Lab, EThames, FLAME University, Flytech Aviation Academy, GD Goenka University, GITAM, Indian Institute of Arts and Design (IIAD), ATLAS ISDI School of Design & Innovation, ISTITUTO MARANGONI, K Lakshmipat University, KREA University, Mahindra University, MIT Institute of Design, NIIT University, RV University, Sai University, Chennai, V.M. Salgaocar Institute of International Hospitality, and Shoolini University.



V'wada Division bags first place in Zonal Hindi Drama contest

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The drama staged by the Vijayawada Division, South Central Railway, 'Kapiraj', won the first prize in the Zonal Hindi Drama Competition held at Rail Nilayam, Secunderabad, on Wednesday and Thursday. The Division also bagged eight other prizes in the competition – for Best Direction, Best Lighting, Best Sound Effects, Best Costumes, Best Makeup, Best Music, Best Stage Decoration. The drama won a Special Award for Acting, too.

Rajbasha Adhikari MK Nagaraju, Senior Passenger Train Director M Gopal Krishna and team received the awards from Arun Kumar Jain, General Manager, South Central Railway, at a function held on Thursday. The play 'Kapiraj' is based on the battle between Bali and Sugreeva from Ramayana. Gopal Krishna directed the play.

Divisional Railway Manager Narendra A Patil, ADRM (Infrastructure) PE Edwin, and ADRM (Operations) Srinivasa Rao Konda congratulated the Vijayawada team. The DRM appreciated the efforts of the employees of various departments who worked in the drama.

The Vijayawada Division will represent the South Central Railway Zone at the All-India Hindi Drama Competition, to be held in a few months.

'Move KRMB headquarters to V'wada'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Saagu Neeti Viniyogadarula Sanghala Samakhya, a welfare association for water users and ayacutdars in Andhra Pradesh, has urged the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) to release Nagarjuna Sagar Left Canal water to Zone III starting November 15 and to shift its headquarters to Vijayawada. The association's leaders submitted a memorandum to KRMB Chairman Atul Jain in Hyderabad on Friday.

AV Gopala Krishna Rao, President of the association, stated that the total registered ayacut under the Nagarjuna Sagar Left Canal in Andhra Pradesh is 3.67 lakh acres, with 1.56 lakh acres in Zone II and 2.11 lakh acres in Zone III. He noted that Andhra Pradesh is allocated 32.25 TMC of water from the 132 TMC under the left canal. The major crops in these regions include mango, tobacco, jowar, cotton, chillies, black gram, and green gram. He emphasized that these crops require continuous water supply from November 15 for a month to ensure a good yield, but unfortunately, the ayacut in these areas is not receiving adequate water according to their demands and schedules.

Krishna Rao expressed concern over the need to relocate the KRMB headquarters to Vijayawada, which is situated on the banks of the Krishna River and is geographically central in Andhra Pradesh. He highlighted that the city is well connected by road, rail, and air, making it easier for KRMB officials to monitor various Krishna projects in both states.

The association's leaders requested that necessary directions be issued for the timely release of water to Zones II and III to protect crops and support farmers, as well as to initiate the process of relocating the KRMB headquarters to Vijayawada.



YSRCP leader lashes out at TDP govt

PNS ■ KADAPA

Former chief whip Gadikota Srikanth Reddy has strongly criticised the TDP-led coalition government for discontinuing the free crop insurance scheme introduced by the previous YS Jagan administration. He stated that this program was essential for supporting farmers, as it covered crop losses without requiring premium payments from them, easing their financial burdens during tough times.

Speaking to the media on Friday, Srikanth Reddy highlighted that the new insurance scheme introduced by the TDP government now mandates farmers to pay premiums, adding additional expenses for them. He noted that this shift comes at a time when farmers are already struggling with rising input costs. According to Reddy, the free crop insurance had been a "lifeline" for farmers, offering them security during natural disasters like droughts and heavy rains.

First-look poster of Jagjivan Ram biopic released

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



The first-look poster of the upcoming movie Jagjivan Ram was unveiled by Andhra Pradesh's Cinematography Minister, Kandula Durgesh. The Minister praised the efforts put into making this movie about the freedom fighter Babu Jagjivan Ram.

The founder president of the Movie Artistes' Association of Andhra Pradesh and director, Dilip Raja, stated that it will take another six months to complete the shooting as the film is based on real events that occurred a century ago. He noted that many scenes are being shot in constructed settings that illustrate the backdrop of that time, including the lack of electricity and improper roads. Dilip Raja mentioned that the biopic, produced by NRI Dr. Chandolu Nagamalleswara Rao, will begin its next schedule in Tenali on November 9.

Customs dept destroys smuggled foreign cigarettes worth Rs 5.5 cr



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a continuing crackdown on illegal imports, the Customs Commissionerate (Preventive) in Vijayawada incinerated over 82 lakh sticks of smuggled foreign-origin cigarettes, valued at approximately ?5.5 crore. The cigarettes were destroyed on Friday as part of the Swachhta Hi Seva Special Campaign 4.0, with the incineration conducted at Jindal Urban Waste Management facilities in Guntur and Visakhapatnam.

The seized cigarettes, from brands such as PARIS and DJARUM BLACK, were confiscated by Customs teams across Vijayawada, Nellore, Kakinada, and Tirupati. These cigarettes failed to comply with "The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Rules, 2008" and violated both the "Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003" and the "Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules, 2011." The Customs Commissionerate clarified that the cigarettes were smuggled into the country in violation of the Indian Customs Act, 1962.

VPA celebrates 91st Foundation Day

Greening and beautification projects launched



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA) marked its 91st Foundation Day on Friday, commemorating a legacy of growth and transformation. To mark this milestone, VPA Chairperson M Angamuthu inaugurated the newly renovated Board Room, now named 'Vizagpatnam'.

In a move towards sustainable development, Angamuthu also laid stones for several greening and beautification projects. These projects aim to enhance the environmental and visual appeal of the port and its surroundings, covering key areas such as the Sea Horse to AOB Road stretch, AOB Premises, and sections along the flyover and pathway.

Speaking on the occasion, Angamuthu highlighted VPA's advancements in operational efficiency, environmental sustainability, and technology. "As we celebrate this milestone, we are focused on building a port that prioritises sustainability, leverages advanced technology, and engages deeply with the community," he said. He further mentioned VPA's impressive cargo handling record of 81.09 million metric tonnes this year, with aspirations to reach 90 million metric tonnes next year.

VPA Secretary T Venu Gopal also addressed the media, emphasising the significance of Foundation Day as a celebration of both tradition and progress. "This day represents our commitment to serving the community while expanding and optimising port operations to meet global standards," he stated.



Minister stresses plans for development of Vizag

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Social Welfare Minister Dola Sree Bala Veeranjaneya Swamy, who is in charge of the district, emphasised the importance of strategic development plans to elevate Visakhapatnam's status and protect its reputation. During a meeting with district officials, he highlighted the city's economic growth and the need for robust measures to combat pollution. "Visakhapatnam is a city of immense potential, and we must strive to maintain its pristine image," the Minister said. He called for increased research and stricter regulations to ensure environmental sustainability.

District Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad presented an overview of upcoming projects, assuring the meeting that these initiatives align with government policies. Police Commissioner Sankhabrata Bagchi discussed the implementation of innovative strategies to maintain law and order, including increased patrolling and the use of drones.

Representatives from the GMR Group proposed infrastructure improvements to facilitate access to Bhogapuram International Airport, including the construction of flyovers and the widening of highways. MP Sribharat emphasised the importance of integrating the metro project with the national highway expansion. Minister Dola Sree Bala Veeranjaneya Swamy announced the allocation of Rs. 200 crore for the establishment of a 25-acre sports ground to nurture local talent. He also highlighted the upcoming free gas cylinder scheme, which is set to benefit numerous households.

Local MLAs raised various concerns, including land encroachment, pollution, and infrastructure development. They called for prompt action on issues such as the construction of a jetty for displaced individuals, relocation of liquor shops, and the provision of housing for fishermen. MLCs also urged for increased vigilance to prevent pollution and ensure efficient public service delivery.

DSC coaching centres will be set up in 26 dists: Minister Savitha

PNS ■ GUNTUR



Minister for BC Welfare and Handloom S Savitha has announced that DSC coaching centres are being set up in all 26 district headquarters to impart coaching to aspiring candidates.

The Minister held a meeting with the officials in the Secretariat on Friday and reviewed various issues and implementation of programmes. Speaking on the occasion, she said that in a bid to support the youths belonging to the BC communities in their search for jobs, BC study circles and coaching centres were set up across the state.

"To provide coaching to the candidates belonging to the BC communities, preparing for the DSC examination, coaching centres will be set up in all district headquarters especially to impart coaching. The Government continues to provide all needed support to the BC job aspirants in getting jobs," the Minister revealed. She directed the officials to run the coaching centres continuously for the sack of job aspirants.

She made it clear that all steps were taken to ensure that there would be no dearth of funds for the implementation of Central government-sponsored welfare schemes for the State. She deplored that since the previous YSRCP government failed to extend its share, many Central government-sponsored schemes could not be implemented in the State.

"The Chandrababu Naidu-headed government is ready to utilize all the Central government-sponsored welfare schemes fully by extending its share in the next five years. We will ensure that there is no dearth of funds to implement BC welfare schemes in the state," Minister Savitha asserted.

The government is committed to fulfilling all the assurances given to the BCs, she pledged. She reviewed the progress of various development works including the construction of BC Bhavans, community centres and Kapu Bhavans in various districts. BC Welfare Secretary Pola Bhaskar, Director Mallikharjun and Gurukula Schools Secretary Krishna Mohan were among those who attended the meeting.



154 lost/stolen mobile phones worth Rs 21 lakh recovered

PNS ■ ELURU

The district police have recovered 154 lost or stolen mobile phones, worth over Rs 21 lakh and handed over some of them to the owners.

SP Pratap Shiva Kishore told the media here on Friday that the police teams led by CCS Inspector Ch Raja Sekhar and cybercrime Inspector Gopal Krishna recovered 154 lost or stolen mobile phones in the 13 phases. The recovered mobile phones are worth Rs 21,56,000.

The police received complaints about lost or stolen mobile phones through IMEI carried out investigations and recovered them.

SP Shiva Kishore said that during the 12 phases of lost or stolen mobile phones recovery drive, the police recovered 1,606 mobile phones worth Rs 3,11,83,684.

So far the district police have recovered 1,760 lost or stolen mobile phones worth Rs 3,33,39,684. The SP said that mobile phones are stolen at crowded places including bus stations, railway stations, banks, ATMs and Rythu Bazars and asked people to be cautious in crowded places.

The SP said people should make a habit of regularly backing up information, strong password protection for apps, taking care of the unique ID number of the phone, setting the Find My Device option and backing up their photos and videos. Notices are issued to all mobile shops/repair shop owners not to sell or buy IMEI-based second-hand mobile phones, iPads and tablets without proper bill/Documents/ID proof. The phone owners thanked the SP for handing over the lost or stolen mobile phone.

Licence must for cracker shops, godowns: SP

PNS ■ BAPATLA



District Superintendent of Police Tushar Dudi has made it clear that the firecracker traders should obtain a licence to open shops and godowns and instructed the firecracker traders to take all precautions to avoid mishaps.

In a statement here on Friday, SP Tushar Dudi said that Diwali firecrackers-selling units, godowns and shops must have government permission and legal action would be taken against those who did not follow the rules prescribed by the government.

Keeping in view the upcoming Diwali festival, the SP directed the police officials about the precautionary measures to be taken to avoid any untoward incidents in the district involving firecrackers, sales outlets and stock points. The SP explained the rules to be followed by the sellers, owners of godowns and manufacturing centres.

He also warned that smoking cigarettes and lighting matchsticks would lead to fire accidents at firecracker-selling outlets and godowns. The firecracker-selling outlets and godowns should be far away from the residential areas, he said.

The SP told the firecracker traders to keep two fire extinguishers at each of the firecracker shops as a precautionary measure.

14 red sanders logs seized, one smuggler arrested

PNS ■ KADAPA

The Red Sanders Anti-Smuggling Task Force personnel seized 14 red sanders logs and arrested a smuggler at Brahmanapalli in Badvel forest division.

DSP G Balireddy said that a task force team led by RI Chiranjeevi and RSI Muralidhar Reddy conducted combing in the forest area. They spotted some persons moving suspiciously in the forest area at Brahmanapalli village. When the task force teams were approaching them, they started fleeing into the forest.

However, the task force team personnel chased and apprehended one of them.

On a tip-off provided by him, the task force personnel seized 14 red sanders logs in the forest area. The arrested smuggler was shifted to the task force police station in Tirupati. CI Suresh Kumar registered a case and began an investigation.

Min: Free sand policy being implemented transparently

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY



Minister for Water Resources Development Nimmala Ramanaidu has reiterated that the government is keen to implement the free sand policy transparently and diligently.

The Minister inspected a sand reach at Vadapalli and Aurangabad villages in Kovvuru mandal, accompanied by EG district Collector P Prashanthi and mining officials on Friday. Collector Prashanti explained to the Minister about the availability of sand in the district and the sand reaches. The Minister also interacted with the boatmen's society members and knew their problems.

Speaking on the occasion, Nimmala Ramanaidu said that the NDA coalition government is working to provide sand free of cost to the people in a more simplified manner as assured by them.

The Minister mentioned that some sand ramps could not be opened due to the objections of the National Tribunal and Pollution Control Board, and it was observed during the field-level inspection that there was pressure on the sand ramps that had been opened.

The Irrigation Minister observed that the sand brought by the members of the Boatsman Society would be fully available online and offline and steps would also be taken to resolve the problem and provide it to the consumers.

The Minister highlighted that due to heavy floods, the Rivers Godavari and Krishna sand extraction has become difficult even though sand is being supplied overcoming the impediment. "If open reaches are also opened, and will be supplied on par demand to the consumers," he asserted, asking the revenue, mines and irrigation officials to work in a coordinated manner.

As many as 10 sand reaches would be made available in 10 days to cater for the needs of construction sectors in the district, he pledged. The Minister made it clear that sand can be taken on tractors and on bullock carts for the construction of houses by consumers.

Kasu flays TDP coalition govt over diarrhoea deaths

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET



Former MLA Kasu Mahesh Reddy has expressed serious concern over the rising diarrhoea-related deaths in Gurazala constituency, pointing to contaminated drinking water as the cause behind the tragic loss of seven lives, primarily affecting the economically weaker sections.

Addressing the media in Narasaraopet, he said that despite repeated complaints by municipal councillors about the contamination, the Municipal Commissioner has failed to take action. He demanded that the government provide immediate compensation of Rs 50 lakh to each family affected by these avoidable deaths.

Reddy accused the TDP coalition government of focusing more on dividing shares in wine shops, belt shops, mines, and gambling clubs than on addressing the public's health and safety. He stated that the government's negligence in ensuring clean drinking water has put lives at risk.

He highlighted that five people had lost their lives to diarrhoea in Lenin Nagar, Piduguralla Municipality, and two more in Anjanapur, Dachepalli town just yesterday. He remarked that such incidents did not occur during his tenure, attributing the crisis to the current government's decision to source water from a different borewell than the one his administration had installed.

He noted that, during his tenure, he had secured central funding of Rs 300 crore for safe drinking water projects in Gurazala and urged the current government to prioritise and complete these projects. He warned that he would stand by the affected families and continue fighting for their rights if the government fails to take immediate action.



Farmer killed as tractor overturns

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

A farmer was killed when the tractor on which he was tilling the field overturned at Yelukuntla village in Dharmavaram rural mandal on Friday.

Police said that the deceased farmer Damodhar (40) was tilling his agriculture field with a tractor.

He lost control over the tractor resulting in it being overturned and he was crushed to death under the tractor. Dharmavaram police registered a case, extricated the body from the overturned tractor and sent it to the GGH for post-mortem.

Tribal coffee farmers to benefit from ITDA procurement drive

Performance-based incentive system introduced

PNS ■ PADERU



To motivate farmers and ITDA staff, Abhishek said a performance-based incentive system has been introduced. Employees achieving 100 per cent collection targets will be rewarded, while those falling short may face deductions. ITDA is exploring collaborations with leading coffee companies like Tata and ITC to secure lucrative deals for tribal farmers. Additionally, ITDA and the Girijan Cooperative Corporation (GCC) are investing in infrastructure development, with a preliminary grant of Rs. 7 crore approved for constructing pulping units in G. Madugula and G. K. Street.

The Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) has launched an ambitious coffee procurement drive for the 2024-25 financial year, aiming to enhance the livelihoods of tribal coffee farmers in the region. ITDA Project Officer V Abhishek stressed the importance of adhering to designated quotas and collecting only fully ripe coffee beans. "This stringent quality control measure is essential to ensure premium prices for the farmers' produce," he said.

To motivate farmers and ITDA staff, Abhishek said a performance-based incentive system has been introduced. Employees achieving 100 per cent collection targets will be rewarded, while those falling short may face deductions. ITDA is exploring collaborations with leading coffee companies like Tata and ITC to secure lucrative deals for tribal farmers. Additionally, ITDA and the Girijan Cooperative Corporation (GCC) are investing in infrastructure development, with a preliminary grant of Rs. 7 crore approved for constructing pulping units in G. Madugula and G. K. Street.

Specific prices for coffee were set, with Arabica parchment coffee being purchased at Rs. 285, Arabica cherry, at Rs. 150, and Robusta at Rs. 80 through GCC. ITDA will buy coffee at Rs. 40 per kg, and farmers will also receive a bonus. Abhishek announced that the ITDA will buy coffee at Rs. 40 per kg, and farmers will also receive a bonus. Ambitious collection targets have been assigned to each mandal, with Paderu leading the way with a target of 250 tonnes.

To facilitate smooth operations, ITDA and GCC have established dedicated call centres: 08935250833 and 7013070990. Farmers and stakeholders can contact these numbers to report concerns or seek assistance.

Officials of the Coffee Board, ITDA, GCC, and field staff were present. "This initiative will not only improve the livelihoods of tribal farmers but also promote sustainable coffee production in the region," said Abhishek.

Do whatever you want on 'political bomb'

PNS ■ SIRCILLA



Responding to Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy's statement that a "bomb" would go off before Diwali, KT Rama Rao (KTR) asked whether this "bomb" had anything to do with the recent Enforcement Directorate (ED) raids on the Minister.

Speaking to the media in Sircilla, KTR made several pointed remarks, suggesting that Ponguleti might reveal more about the outcomes of the raids and the findings. He said "Do whatever you want, we are not afraid."

KTR humorously said, "Will this bomb expose how many bundles of cash or snake-like stacks of currency were uncovered in the ED raids?"

He then asked whether Ponguleti's "bomb" might disclose details of his alleged connections with the BJP, including attempts to avoid cases or the reported Adani links.

KTR also levelled allegations regarding Ponguleti's alleged misuse of funds under the Amrit scheme, where a contract worth Rs 1,137 crore reportedly benefited a relative of the Chief Minister. "Will the BJP react to this or call for an investigation?" he asked.

Taking a satirical tone, KTR added, "Is it a Lakshmi bomb, a sutli bomb, or just a dud? Everything will come out soon."

He dismissed the threats, saying, "If you want to file a case against me, go ahead. We have seen many such 'beggars' before."

Recalling the tough political battles he's faced, KTR said, "We have stood up against leaders like Rajasekhar Reddy and Chandrababu.

This "Chitti Naidu' doesn't worry us."

He added that Telangana's fight involved real risks, unlike the "empty threats" some were making now.

KTR then cautioned about people reportedly using their posts for real estate settlements and extorting RR tax from builders. "If anyone thinks they can get away with it, they're mistaken. Our government will return, and I'll personally handle those matters," he said.

Bumpy roads push over 30 MLAs to send sos to TG Minister

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bad road conditions have resurfaced across Telangana, forcing many MLAs to approach the Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Minister for urgent road repairs.

Sources indicate that around 30 MLAs have requested Panchayat Raj Minister Seethakka for swift action, especially after last month's heavy rainfall worsened the condition of roads in many districts.

Sources said that many roads in villages were not repaired for years and the situation has worsened. MLAs are seeking immediate attention to it as it directly impacts their visits to constituencies.

"In villages, people don't hesitate like in urban areas and bad roads have become a problem for the public," sources said.

Reports reveal that many requests for road repairs came from six key districts heavily impacted by rains. These districts witnessed severe wear and tear, with existing roads deteriorating rapidly, making them nearly unusable. "These roads were laid years ago and are now in such disrepair that they're hardly motorable," sources said.

The Roads and Buildings (R&B) department has also been approached with road repair requests indicating the scale of the issue, with some roads now appearing beyond patchwork and needs complete relaying.

Bank loan to be extended under PM Suryagarh scheme

PNS ■ ONGOLE



Electricity department Superintendent Engineer Katta Venkateswarulu has said that bank loans will be extended under the PM Suryagarh solar electricity scheme and appealed to the people to utilize the opportunity.

Addressing an awareness seminar here on Friday he said solar panels would be supplied on subsidy and bank loans would be extended.

He said that they are working hard to bring every house under the Suryagarh scheme. In the 71 sections of the Prakasam district, 71 section officers and 150 other staff members were visiting every house to sensitize the consumers, he made it clear.

"Those who want one-kilowatt solar power will get Rs 30,000 subsidy while those who want two kilowatts of solar power will get Rs 60,000 subsidy and those who want three kilowatts of solar power will be extended Rs 78,000 subsidy," he explained, adding that the electricity department will buy the surplus electricity of those who have come under the PM Suryagarh scheme and deposit the money in the bank account.

A diversion meter would be installed in place of the existing energy meter for the consumer who takes solar power connections, he asserted. DEs Abdul Karim, Haribabu and Srinivasulu attended the meeting.

ACROSS THE STATES



Explosives seized from Naxalite hideout in Gondia

The police have recovered gelatin sticks, detonators and Naxalite literature were recovered from a hideout in a forest in Maharashtra's Gondia district, an official said on Friday. In light of the upcoming state assembly elections, the police's C-60 team, bomb detection and dog squads have increased patrolling along the state's border with Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, the official said. Based on a tip-off, a team of security personnel recovered explosives and Naxalite literature from a hideout in the hills of Takezari under the jurisdiction of Salekasa police station on Thursday, he said. The official said the team found bundles of wire, batteries, an aluminium cooker, gelatin sticks, an electronic detonator, iron nails, iron pieces and other materials. A case has been registered under relevant sections of the Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita and the Unlawful Activity Prevention Act (UAPA), and a probe is underway, he said.



EC pact on tie-up with Uzbeki poll body

The Election Commission on Friday signed an 'electoral cooperation' agreement with Uzbekistan's central poll body during a visit of Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar to Tashkent as international observer for the upcoming elections there. Polls in Uzbekistan are being held on October 27. The EC said the MoU will further strengthen and deepen interaction between the two Election Management Bodies (EMBs) for mutual benefit of democracies. Both the bodies have a history of mutual cooperation with officials participating as observers in each other's elections. During the Lok Sabha elections held earlier this year, a four-member delegation led by Khusanova Mukhtabar, member of CEC-Uzbekistan, also came here as part of international election visitors' programme. "ECI and CEC Uzbekistan also are actively interacting through global forums like Association of World Election Bodies and Association of Asian Election Authorities," the EC posted on X.



JMM-led coalition to retain power in Jharkhand: Lalu

RJD supremo Lalu Prasad on Friday claimed that the JMM-led coalition would retain power in Jharkhand as it was "set to win" the assembly elections with a "comfortable margin". The veteran politician, who is in his seventies, said he would campaign for INDIA bloc and RJD candidates in Jharkhand. Talking to reporters here Prasad said, "The RJD will win all seats where the party is contesting in Jharkhand. We (JMM-led coalition) will once again form the government there as our alliance will win elections with a comfortable margin." When asked by journalists whether he would campaign for INDIA bloc candidates in Jharkhand or not, Prasad said, "Yes...I will soon go to Jharkhand for campaign. Tejashwi (Yadav) is already campaigning there." Elections to the 81-member Jharkhand assembly will take place in two phases on November 13 and 20. Counting is scheduled for November 23. The RJD supremo slammed Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for allegedly maintaining silence over the controversial statement by BJP's Araria MP Pradeep Kumar Singh.

FRICTION POINTS

India, China begin troop disengagement: Sources

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



India and China have begun troop disengagement at the two friction points at Demchok and Depsang Plains in eastern Ladakh and this process is likely to get completed by October 28-29, Army sources said on Friday.

The process follows an agreement firmed up between the two countries on patrolling and disengagement of troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, a major breakthrough to end the over four-year standoff.

Sources said that patrolling will begin at the two friction points once the disengagement is done and both sides will move their respective troops and dismantle temporary structures.

Eventually, they added, the patrolling status is expected to move back to pre-April 2020 level.

The agreement framework was first agreed upon at the diplomatic level and then military-level talks took place, the army sources said, adding the nitty-gritty of agreement was worked in Corps Commander-level talks.

Adhering to agreements between the two sides, Indian troops have begun to pull back equipment to rear locations in these areas.

The ties between the two Asian giants had nosedived following a fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on October 21 said in Delhi that the agreement was finalised following negotiations over the past several weeks and that it would lead to a resolution of the issues that arose in 2020.

Mahayuti will retain power with thumping majority: Shinde

PNS ■ THANE



Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Friday expressed confidence that the Mahayuti alliance will retain power in the state with a thumping majority on the basis of the development works carried out by his government.

Talking to reporters here, Shinde said his party - Shiv Sena - will soon release the second list of candidates.

Earlier this week, the party released the first list of 45 candidates for the November 20 assembly polls, nominating the CM from Kopri-Panchpakhadi constituency in Thane city and more than half a dozen cabinet members from their respective seats.

"We will return to power with a thumping majority on the basis of our development work and welfare initiatives," he said.

"There are no differences among the Mahayuti allies over seat-sharing and all discussions are taking place through consensus," he said.

Besides Shiv Sena, the Mahauyuti comprises Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) led by Ajit Pawar.

Replying to questions over whether his party or the rival Shiv Sena (UBT) would perform better in the polls, he said, "The bow and arrow (his party's symbol) and flaming torch (Sena-UBT symbol) contest has been settled in the Lok Sabha elections as the strike rate of bow and arrow was 47 per cent as against the 40 per cent of flaming torch symbol."

"Their poor performance was despite them contesting more seats and spreading fake narrative," he said.

Shinde said his government will win on the merit of its performance.

"Our dear sisters will support us -- their brothers, and not allow the opposition, which wants to scrap the Ladki Bahin scheme to form a government," he said.

"Uddhav Thackeray said the MVA will scrap the scheme and other initiatives of the Mahayuti, but people will not give them a chance," he said.

Amarinder slams CM, AAP over 'tardy' paddy procurement



PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

BJP leader Amarinder Singh on Friday lashed out at Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann over the "tardy" paddy procurement in the state, alleging the latter "turned his back on the farmers" facing hardships in the mandis.

Visiting the grain market in Khanna where farmers are complaining of slow paddy purchase, the former Punjab chief minister hit out at the Mann-led AAP government, saying the grain markets are bursting at the seams as paddy has not been lifted from the mandis.

Claiming that the farmers never faced any problem in crop procurement when he was the chief minister, Singh, who was accompanied by BJP leader Fateh Jung Bajwa, said, "We always lifted paddy and wheat and never faced any problem. So why are they (AAP government) facing problems? I was a Congress chief minister when BJP was in power at the Centre."

Replying to a query on lesser yield of the PR-126 variant sown in Punjab, Singh asked who told the farmers to sow this particular variety.

"It was the chief minister. But where is he now? He should have come here. When farmers are facing problems, he has turned his back on them," Singh said.

MUDA CASE

Lokayukta police quiz CM's wife

PNS ■ MYSURU

The Lokayukta police on Friday questioned Chief Miife Parvathi B M in the MUDA site allotment case, Lokayukta sources said.

"Parvathi was summoned today and the questioning went on for more than two hours," a Lokayukta official said. Lokayukta police on September 27 registered an FIR against Siddaramaiah, his wife, brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy, Devaraju -- from whom Mallikarjuna Swamy purchased land and gifted it to her -- and others, following a Special Court order on September 25.

The order of the Special Court came a day after the High Court upheld the sanction granted by the Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot to conduct an investigation against Siddaramaiah. The ED has also registered an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR), equivalent to an FIR by police, against the Chief Minister over the alleged irregularities in allotment of 14 sites to his wife by the MUDA (Mysuru Urban Development Authority).



Fadnavis files papers in Nagpur SW seat

Banks on 'Ladki Bahin' to blank out Oppn in polls

PNS ■ NAGPUR

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis on Friday said the ruling Mahayuti will retain power in the assembly polls given its governance record and welfare measures as he filed his nomination from the Nagpur South-West constituency.

Addressing a rally before filing the papers as the BJP candidate, he said the Mahayuti government's work speaks for itself, and hit out at opposition parties, saying the 'Ladki Bahin' scheme, targeted at poor women, and its beneficiaries were enough to defeat them in the November 20 elections.

Fadnavis, who was the chief minister from 2014 to 2019 and for a short tenure in November 2019, has successfully contested the assembly polls for five times from the city -- two times from Nagpur West constituency and three times from Nagpur South-West.

The BJP leader (54) is seeking re-election from Nagpur South-West in what is his sixth electoral contest from his hometown in the state's Vidarbha region. He has been an MLA for the past 25 years starting 1999.

Before filing his nomination form, Fadnavis visited Union minister and former BJP chief Nitin Gadkari's residence here. Both BJP leaders then paid floral tributes to Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's statue at the Sanvidhan Square, followed by a roadshow from there till Akashvani Square.



Court grants bail to Sanjay

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A sessions court here on Friday granted bail to Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut as he challenged his conviction in a defamation case filed by BJP leader Kirit Somaiya's wife Medha Somaiya.

Raut has filed a revision application in the sessions court against his conviction and the 15-day jail sentence awarded by a magistrate's court.

The Rajya Sabha member appeared before the court on Friday and sought bail. The court granted him bail in the sum of Rs 50,000.

Judicial Magistrate (First Class) Aarti Kulkarni on September 26 held Raut guilty of defamation under Indian Penal Code section 500. Besides sentencing him to 15 days in jail, the court also imposed a fine of Rs 25,000 on him. The court, however, suspended the sentence for 30 days to enable him file an appeal.

Raut, in his revision application before the sessions court, said the magistrate's order was "bad in law and improper on facts".

Cyclone Dana: One dead in Bengal, 2 lakh evacuated

PNS ■ KOLKATA



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday said that one person died in the state in cyclone Dana, while the administration evacuated around 2.16 lakh people from low-lying areas.

Banerjee, who held a review meeting at the state secretariat after spending the night there to monitor the situation, directed the officials to ensure that relief materials reach all those affected by the cyclone.

"Only one person died in this natural disaster. The man died at his residence while conducting some cable-related work. It is quite unfortunate. The postmortem examination will give us a clear picture. If required, we (state government) will help the family," Banerjee said, without elaborating.

Referring to a survey conducted by the agricultural department following the recent flood in the state, she directed the officials to initiate another survey of farmlands to find out the degree of damage caused by cyclone Dana.

The chief minister asked them to prepare a list of the damaged agricultural land to help farmers get money from crop insurance.

MP seeks UNESCO world heritage site tag for Thiruvalluvar statue



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress MP from Kanyakumari Vijay Vasanth has written to Union Minister of Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, urging him to propose the nomination of the Thiruvalluvar statue, located in his constituency, as a UNESCO world heritage site.

The Thiruvalluvar Statue, standing majestically at 133 feet, is not only an iconic symbol of Tamil culture but also an embodiment of the universal values espoused by the great philosopher and poet Thiruvalluvar, Vasanth said in his letter to Shekhawat.

This remarkable statue attracts thousands of visitors annually, who come and pay homage to its profound significance in promoting the ideals of love, ethics, and social justice, he said in his letter dated October 24. "The statue's architectural brilliance and its picturesque setting on Kanyakumari's coastline enhances its cultural and historical significance. It is a testament to the rich heritage of the Tamil people and symbolizes our collective aspiration for peace and harmony," the Congress MP said. Furthermore, the statue is an integral part of the broader cultural landscape of Kanyakumari, which includes other important sites that reflect the region's historical depth and diversity, he said.

Political leaders call for steps to prevent terror attacks in Kashmir

PNS ■ JAMMU

Several political leaders on Thursday condemned the terror attacks in the Kashmir valley since the formation of the new government and urged it to take decisive steps to prevent such incidents and ensure the security of migrant workers.

Terrorists shot at and injured a labourer from Uttar Pradesh, Shubam Kumar, in the Tral area of Pulwama district on Thursday morning, officials said.

This is the third attack on non-local labourers in Kashmir in the past week. Six non-local labourers and a local doctor were killed in a terror attack on a construction site in Ganderbal district on Sunday, while a labourer from Bihar was shot dead by terrorists in Shopian district on October 18.

Former deputy chief minister and senior BJP leader Kavinder Gupta stressed the importance of safeguarding migrant labourers in the Kashmir valley.

He called on the central and Union territory administrations to work diligently to prevent any further deterioration of the situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Since the formation of the new government, there has been an attempt to disrupt the peace, and those responsible are trying to send a message. In this context, there have been two incidents, and today, another attack took place where a 19-year-old was targeted. This is clearly a planned attack, and even the terrorists involved were seen on CCTV footage," Gupta told reporters.

He expressed full confidence in the security forces and the police, saying: "I believe that we will apprehend those responsible soon. These two or three consecutive incidents are concerning."

Gupta further emphasized that both the central and the Union territory administrations must act effectively to prevent the situation in Jammu and Kashmir from worsening.

"The peaceful environment that has been established should not be allowed to deteriorate, and we must ensure such incidents do not occur again," he added. National Conference Sheikh Bashir noted that several lives have already been lost, and another attack has occurred now.

"It appears that there are forces that do not want to see the democratic process succeed in Jammu and Kashmir. The government must analyse the situation and take appropriate measures," Bashir said.

He also mentioned that local police officers and officials are working to address the situation and tackle the ongoing challenges.



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VIJAYAWADA | SATURDAY | OCTOBER 26, 2024

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Resilient India

As the threat of climate change grows, the nation's strategies offer a roadmap for dealing with natural calamities more effectively

Cyclone 'Dana' recently made landfall on the eastern coast of India, bringing with it heavy rains, strong winds and high tidal waves. While the cyclone's impact caused damage to infrastructure and disruptions to daily life, the nation's response showcased advancements in disaster preparedness and resilience. The Government's coordinated efforts, improved early warning systems, and proactive measures helped mitigate the cyclone's impact, preventing large-scale casualties and ensuring a quicker recovery. This development marks another step forward in India's ongoing efforts to handle natural calamities more effectively. Cyclone 'Dana' formed over the Bay of Bengal, following a trajectory that saw it intensifying into a severe cyclonic storm as it approached the coast. The eastern states of Odisha and West Bengal, already familiar with the threat of cyclones, were put on high alert. Cyclones are not new to India; in fact, the country has been battling such natural disasters for centuries. However, a significant shift has been seen in recent years with India's proactive approach to cyclone management.



India's approach to disaster management has evolved over the years. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has made significant strides in forecasting the path and intensity of cyclones. With the use of advanced satellite technology, Doppler radar systems, and numerical weather prediction models, the IMD now provides early warnings with much greater accuracy. In the case of Cyclone Dana, the IMD issued timely alerts well in advance, allowing state governments to initiate precautionary measures. Over the past decade, India has vastly improved its capacity to evacuate people from high-risk zones to safety. For Cyclone Dana, over 300,000 residents from coastal districts were moved to cyclone shelters, which had been strengthened as part of disaster preparedness programmes. Another critical component of India's improved disaster response is the emphasis on community awareness and participation. The improvements in India's cyclone preparedness did not happen overnight. The devastating impact of past cyclones, such as Cyclone Phailin (2013), Cyclone Fani (2019), and Cyclone Amphan (2020), served as a wake-up call for policymakers. For instance, Cyclone Phailin, which struck Odisha in 2013, caused widespread damage despite timely evacuations. The experience underscored the need for more resilient infrastructure and better early warning systems. Cyclone Fani in 2019 showed progress in the country's disaster response, as timely evacuations of over a million people saved countless lives. With Cyclone Amphan in 2020, the Government further fine-tuned its strategies, deploying more resources to affected areas and utilising technology for real-time monitoring. These efforts demonstrated that lessons from past cyclones were being effectively incorporated into future preparedness plans.

PICTALK



Farmers harvest paddy as clouds cover the skyline ahead of the landfall of Cyclone 'Dana', in Nadia PTI

UN's relevance at stake as Israel defies it



ARCHANA **DATTA**

Israel's continuous assault on Gaza and blatant violations of international law are threatening the very foundation of the UN's credibility and existence



Israel has been following a concerted policy to destroy Gaza's healthcare system, particularly those devoted to paediatric and neonatal, sexual and reproductive health services, and thus, committing war crimes and crimes against humanity', a UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry said in a new report, which is being presented to the UN General Assembly very soon. Israel has slammed it as 'outrageous', accusing the investigators of bias. Israel has been on a spree of retaliatory attacks on Gaza for the last year, after Hamas, stormed into its territory, killing and kidnapping several Israeli citizens. So far, Israeli retaliatory strikes, reportedly, had killed more than 42,000 civilians in Gaza and displaced almost its entire population.

Ground reports indicate that Israel has adopted a calculated strategy of meting out 'punishment' to people, by systematically targeting Gaza's health infrastructure. Hospitals are now on the brink of collapse due to a shortage of electricity, medicine, equipment and specialised personnel (WHO). The year-long continuous bombardment had not spared operating rooms, medical equipment, health workers or ambulances with the Red Cross or Red Crescent emblem. At least 165 doctors, 260 nurses, 184 health associates, 76 pharmacists 300 management and support staff, and around 85 civil service defence workers lost their lives, and hundreds of bodies have been recovered from several mass graves around hospital grounds. Thousands of wounded people are suffering from life-changing injuries, and their lives are at risk for want of specialised care (WHO).

Israel's denial of medical supplies has endangered also the lives of at least 350,000 chronically ill patients. Patients in hospitals and people in relief centres are also showing signs of diseases associated with overcrowding such as stomach complaints, lung infections and rashes. The incessant bombing has contaminated Gaza's air with asbestos dust, raising the threat of cancer shortly. Even those handful of partially functioning health institutions in Gaza are receiving repeated evacuation orders. WHO described such orders as 'death sentences for the sick and injured'. UNICEF has declared Gaza as the 'most dangerous place to be a child'. Children have become a majority of the patients in hospitals for blunt, penetrating trauma, and direct gunshot wounds, and lack of basic medical facilities has made treatment of such children difficult.

Every day almost 10 children are losing one or both legs, and operations and amputations are conducted with little or no anaesthesia. The absence of a power supply has also enhanced the 'death toll of newborns as incubators stop functioning'. The children staying a long time in hospitals without adequate nutrition are developing nutritional deficiencies which would result in long-term health consequences. Hospitals have turned into 'graveyards for thousands of children'.

The threats to children go beyond 'bombs and mortars', as over 645,000 school children in the Gaza Strip, have lost a full academic year, and more than 800,000 children, three-quarters of Gaza's entire child population, urgently need mental health and psychosocial support.

> GROUND REPORTS INDICATE THAT ISRAEL HAS ADOPTED A CALCULATED STRATEGY OF METING OUT 'PUNISHMENT' TO PEOPLE, BY SYSTEMATICALLY TARGETING GAZA'S HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

The UN Commission's report described the wide-scale disruptions in sexual and reproductive health care services, as 'reproductive violence, and infringement of women and girls' reproductive rights and rights to life, health, human dignity and non-discrimination'. It has had irreversible long-term effects on the mental health and fertility prospects of about 540,000 women and girls of reproductive age.

Women are giving birth in hospitals when hospitals are drastically short of epidurals, anaesthesia and antibiotics. Many have been forced to give birth in unsafe conditions at home or in relief camps, with little or no medical support, risking the danger of life-long injuries and even death. As women's access to food is severely restricted, pregnant and lactating women are at higher health and malnutrition risks (WHO).

The entry of food and water have been blocked to the besieged territory for months together. More than seven hundred water wells have been destroyed, and half of Gaza's cropland (67.6 per cent), over 71 per cent of orchards and other trees, 67 per cent of field crops, and 58.5 per cent of vegetables have been damaged (FAO). Israel has justified its attacks on major medical facilities under the plea that over 85 per cent of them were used by Hamas for terror operations. But, so far, it has not provided evidence to substantiate the claim, the Commission's report mentioned.

Meanwhile, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution, ordering Israel to withdraw from occupied Palestinian territory within one year. Earlier, the ICJ also ruled that Israel's continued occupation was 'unlawful' and ordered to end it 'as rapidly as possible'. Israel, in defiance, intensified onslaughts on the civilian population in Gaza and its natural resources, and declared the UN chief as a persona non grata, barring his entry to Israel.

Israel's actions blatantly breach the Geneva and Hague Conventions, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, by intentionally starving a population, and continuing armed assaults on health apparatus and personnel. As the UN celebrates the adoption of its Charter on October 24, which is binding on the UN Member States, and, categorically, prohibits the use of force in international relations. After eight decades of its adoption, Israel's flagrant violation of its principles has threatened the very existence of the UN.

(The author is former Director General, Doordarshan & All India Radio; views are personal)

Overcoming investment biases: The real key to portfolio success

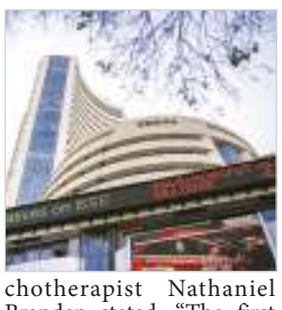


NILESH **NAYAK**

While market conditions and external events do play a role, the primary driver of investment success is often the investor's own behaviour

The saying "You are not a failure until you start blaming others for your mistakes" by renowned basketball coach John Wooden holds significant truth, especially when evaluating the performance of our personal investment portfolios. It's a common tendency among investors to attribute poor results to external factors such as the choice of stocks or funds, the portfolio managers, market conditions, or other events beyond their control. Although these elements can influence investment outcomes, the primary factor affecting portfolio performance often lies in the investor's own behaviour. As investment expert Benjamin Graham famously noted, "The investor's chief problem, and even his worst enemy, is likely to be himself."

Recent investment trends, including significant inflows into thematic, sectoral, or small-cap funds, suggest that certain behavioural biases may already be influencing investor decision-making. Recognising these biases is crucial for investors to overcome them and make better investment choices. As psychotherapist Nathaniel Branden stated, "The first step toward change is awareness. The second step is acceptance." While various investor biases can lead to suboptimal decisions and unsatisfactory outcomes, some are particularly prevalent during a bull market like the one we are currently experiencing. Here are a few common behavioral biases:



Overconfidence Bias: This bias leads investors to believe they possess more knowledge about the financial markets or specific investments than they actually do, causing them to disregard expert advice or factual data. The impressive returns on equity investments in recent years have left many investors overly confident in their decision-making skills, often without acknowledging that much of this success is due to the general bull market. Such overconfidence can be dangerous when the markets reverse course, as it may prompt investors to over-allocate to stocks or sectors they think will continue to perform well.

Anchoring Bias: Many newer investors, especially those who entered the market post-COVID-19, have come to expect unusually high returns from equities, based on the exceptional gains seen in recent years. This anchoring can lead them to expect annual returns of 20 per cent or more, assuming such performance is typical. Setting expectations at these levels is risky because it may influence financial plans that later prove unrealistic when market conditions change.

Herding Bias: Also known as the bandwagon effect, herding bias is common during bull markets, where many investors follow the crowd. The prevailing optimism in a bull market creates an illusion that stock prices will only keep rising, leading to irrational decision-making. This mentality can inflate asset prices and eventually result in significant losses when the market corrects itself.

Recency Bias: This bias causes investors to place too much emphasis on recent events while ignoring long-term historical data. For those who began investing after the COVID-19 pandemic, the past few years have shown consistent market growth, leading to the false impression that downturns are rare or manageable. To navigate these biases, investors should strive to make informed and rational decisions, especially during periods of strong market growth. A long-term investment strategy can help counteract the temptations posed by behavioral biases. Regularly investing through systematic investment plans (SIPs), maintaining a disciplined asset allocation and setting realistic expectations are practical approaches to reducing the impact of biases on one's portfolio. Ultimately, the key to successful investing lies in acknowledging that our behaviours and mindsets significantly influence outcomes.

(The writer is head of Investment Products, Share Market; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DIPLOMACY AMIDST TENSION

Madam — Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the BRICS summit has been hailed as historic, particularly for India. The summit, dubbed the "Kazan Diplomacy," made significant strides in easing tensions between India and China, marking a critical ice-breaker since the 2020 Ladakh border dispute. This easing of Sino-Indian tensions has renewed hopes of restoring trade relations. For the first time, BRICS was presented as a non-western grouping, syncing India's tone of dehyphenation between Russia and the West. On the economic front, discussions centred around strengthening the New Development Bank, moving towards alternatives to the SWIFT system, and promoting de-dollarisation.

Additionally, the Nijjar issue, raised by the Five Eyes Alliance, saw India respond with a strong message of international solidarity, affirming that India is not alone. However, while these outcomes appear positive, they may not fully serve India's strategic interests. BRICS, often alliterated as 'non-western', is actually the brainchild of American giant Goldman Sachs. Practically, reviving Indo-China talks is not a landmark achievement but a necessity for BRICS to avoid the fate of SAARC. Plus, China's investments in India have been associated with intellectual property violations, data theft, and interference in domestic politics. The push for de-dollarisation could further tilt the balance towards 'Yuan', exacerbating India's trade deficit with China. In this scenario, India must focus on "strategic self-interest." As External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar notes in The India Way, India's foreign policy must be driven by realpolitik, especially in the context of BRICS, where China's dominance is unmistakable.

Abhisek Pani | *Bhubaneswar*

OVERWORK JEOPARDISES LIFE

Madam — A four-year-old child and her father died after being run over by a taxi with an allegedly dozing driver when they were walking to board a bus for school in Kolkata on Tuesday morning. Amid the persistent demand for a 70-hour work culture by Infosys co-founder, N R Narayana Murthy, and other corporate entrepreneurs, overwork makes drowsy drivers meet fateful accidents on highways.

According to a study, almost a third of app-based cab drivers work for 14 hours a day, while more than 83 per cent work over 10 hours and 60 per cent work over 12 hours. This kind of overwork is a slow way to slaughter people. Long work hours made drivers physically exhausted. Plus, the 10-minute delivery at the doorstep policy of certain e-commerce platforms are two of the reasons behind many road traffic accidents in our country. On the other hand, Indian Railways have been playing with our lives by not filling up vacant posts and by forcing their personnel, even loco pilots, to overwork. An RTI reply says that of 1,27,644 sanctioned posts of loco pilots and assistant loco pilots, 18,766-nearly 15 per cent were vacant as of March 1 this year. How can a loco pilot remain alert if he has to do extra shifts?

Sujit De | *Kolkata*

FOCUS ON REAL ISSUES

Madam — The Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma has promised to name all the districts in Assam with the names of Ram and Krishna. While this may be in consonance with his religious sentiments, how is it going to help the people of the state? Name changing is getting to be the main thrust of the politics of the BJP. Infiltration is a serious problem in Assam, but the numbers dished out seem to be arbitrary with no real data to back it up.

There are much more serious problems Assam is facing than the need for name changing. It would be better for the people and the nation if CM's dealt with issues that matter and not silly games!

Anthony Henriques | *Mumbai*

Priyanka's political debut



Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is all set for her political debut from the seat of Wayanad, the peculiar constituency from the heartland of southern India. The Congress is all set to make Wayanad an important position to fortify the states of the south, particularly after facing a win-win situation in the recent elections, where the INDIA Alliance lost Haryana but managed to settle well in J and K. So far, Priyanka Vadra wishes to enter into full-fledged politics since really long, but never ever fills her the nomination to officially join her political family into reality.

But now that she has finalised her commitment and filled out her nomination on October 23. This will help Congress to gain a personal touch with the people of South India, as after Rahul Gandhi chooses to keep Rae Bareilly, there creates a vaccum of political connection in targeting the southern states specifically. Now it is up to the people of south heartland states, that how the people will response and support her in her political decision. Whether her debut turns smooth or not, is something only time can tell.

Kirti Wadhawan | *Kanpur*

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

VIJAYAWADA | SATURDAY | OCTOBER 26, 2024

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analysis 07

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FIRST COLUMN

DO YOU HAVE A GALLOPING MIND

Through meditation and practices like pranayama, one can anchor the wandering mind

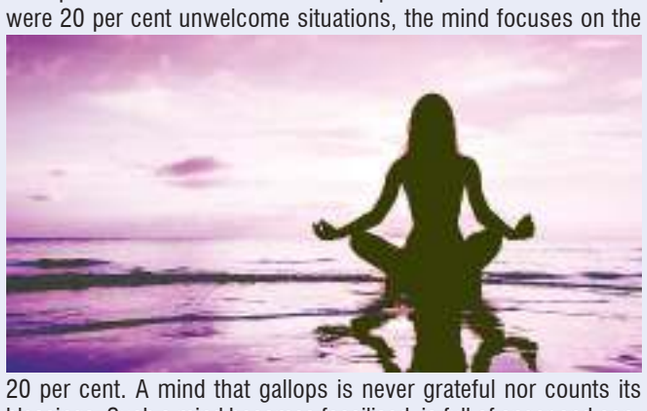


RAVI **VALLURI**

Long ago, there lived an old farmer who was barely productive. Day after day, he would sit on the porch and gaze at the farmland as his son toiled hard and cultivated the land. Seeing his father unemployed frustrated the son. Finally, he gave in to the obnoxious thoughts in his mind and decided to nail his father in a coffin and throw him off a cliff. As he was about to do so, he heard a knock from inside the coffin. The startled son opened the coffin and saw his father sleeping peacefully in it, and remarked, "Throw me if you want, but save the wood of the coffin for your dire times." The old man was mindful and aware. The ungrateful son had a galloping mind. 'Vitrushnasya vashikara sajana vairagyam' is an aphorism in Sanskrit that implies that a mind that gallops is an obstruction in itself.

We hear from fellow meditators that they experienced bliss, or saw a shimmering light, and felt that they could observe some celestial beings holding and touching them during the process of meditation. And then the mind starts wandering and galloping. Meditation happens very naturally, like a person brushing his teeth or undertaking his daily chores. The human mind, which is free from feverish desires, cravings, illusions and dreams attains poise. Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita, "You cannot get into yoga (union with self) unless you drop the hankering for desires in you."

A former colleague who retired recently mentioned during our morning walks that he was unable to sleep or rest peacefully as his mind was cannonaded with innumerable thoughts, worries and anxieties. If 80 per cent efficacious events transpired in our lives and there were 20 per cent unwelcome situations, the mind focuses on the



20 per cent. A mind that gallops is never grateful nor counts its blessings. Such a mind becomes fossilised, is full of anger and continues living in the events of the past. It suffers from attitudinal problems and great lack. A person with such tendencies should realise and pause to think that everything in life is transitory and ephemeral. The hope of spring is replaced by the simmering heat of the summer, followed by welcome rains in the monsoons, which the dry lands ache for. Autumn provides us with opportunities and then winter makes out a balance sheet of the assets and liabilities of work done and those not undertaken. A wandering mind is akin to a pendulum, swinging between daydreaming and wishful thinking, consequently landing in mediocrity and unproductive activity.

The retired colleague probed further as to whether meditation or reading would assist the mind in composing itself for a good night's rest or sleep. It is indeed a paradoxical situation. The mind needs to be occupied and yet be free from cravings so that it does not gallop or wander. This trait or quality can be cultivated only through the practice of vairagya or dispassion. The 'I' factor in the mind lives in the past or future. Instead of being a repetitive parrot, it needs to reinvent and reengineer its configuration and layout. Freshness ignites a spark for providing a new trajectory or direction in life. Politeness makes the mind humble and is propelled out of its closet to learn and it becomes contemporary to acquire skills hitherto not tried. When challenged, the mind slowly but surely stops galloping and regains composure. By practising pranayama, breathing techniques, yoga and pursuing knowledge over a period, the mind stops galloping, regains its alacrity and glides into a space of dispassionate meditation and joyous living.

(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)

BRICS Summit: A defining moment for the Global South



NILANTHA **ILANGAMUWA**

With calls for economic stability, environmental action and cultural unity, the Kazan Declaration emerges as a manifesto for South-South collaboration



A few days after India's External Affairs Minister's historic visit to Islamabad for the 23rd meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government, the most significant annual event of the Global South unfolded in Kazan, Russia: the BRICS summit. Kazan, conquered by Ivan the Terrible in 1552, marks the end of the Kazan Khanate and the beginning of Russian expansion eastward.

As the local Tatar proverb warns, "If the heavens give, they also take away," it serves as a sobering reminder of the precarious balance between fortune and misfortune, urging humility and preparedness for inevitable change. This week's summit signifies a pivotal moment for the Global South, challenging Western dominance while exposing its mockery of international humanitarian laws and the chaos it fuels in West Asia, particularly in Palestine and Lebanon, threatening to plunge the entire world into unprecedented conflict and despair.

As leaders from Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa and their new members, along with other observers, convene, this summit transcends a mere gathering of nations and boldly asserts the aspirations and capabilities of the Global South. While Brazil's President Lula da Silva could not attend due to health issues, the voices of his counterparts resonated powerfully, highlighting a profound commitment to cooperation, peace and mutual respect—values starkly contrasting the narrative perpetuated by the West.

At this critical juncture, it is essential to clarify that BRICS, a coalition dedicated to tackling the pressing issues of our time—from economic instability to environmental crises—is not merely a reaction to Western hegemony but a proactive strategy aimed at reshaping the global order based on equity and collaboration.

As Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi articulated during his address, "In a world facing unprecedented challenges, our cooperation must be grounded in mutual respect and common interests. The world looks to us for leadership that transcends borders and fosters peace." Meanwhile, Chinese President Xi Jinping insisted, "As we navigate the complexities of a multipolar world, our shared responsibility is to promote peace, stability and development. BRICS must stand as a pillar of support for developing nations, ensuring their voices are heard on the global stage." This alliance signals a fundamental shift in how nations engage with one another, moving away from zero-sum games toward a collaborative approach that recognises the interconnectedness of global challenges.

> AS LEADERS FROM BRAZIL, RUSSIA, INDIA, CHINA, SOUTH AFRICA, AND NEW MEMBERS, ALONG WITH OTHER OBSERVERS, CONVENE, THIS SUMMIT TRANSCENDS A MERE GATHERING OF NATIONS AND BOLDLY ASSERTS THE ASPIRATIONS AND CAPABILITIES OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH

As Kishore Mahbubani recently pointed out in an interview with this writer, we are all in the same boat; if the boat is sinking, there's little value in arguing about who has the bigger cabin. The West, by contrast, continues to entrench itself in a militaristic and hostile narrative, frequently resorting to propaganda that demonises nations like China and Russia. Their actions manifest deadly conflicts that leave the rest of the world in turmoil, profiting from the misfortunes of others.

This perverse approach often disregards the cultural and historical contexts of the Global South, presuming to lecture them on how to behave. The West has abandoned its wisdom; as Henry Kissinger once reflected, "The ability to think and act rationally in the face of adversity is the hallmark of a great power." The BRICS nations exemplify this capacity, constructively detailed in the Kazan Declaration, prioritising collaboration over confrontation. As President Vladimir Putin asserted during the summit, "Our collective strength lies not in military might but in our ability to forge alliances based on shared interests and mutual respect. It is time for us to reject the outdated paradigms that have long governed international relations."

The declaration issued at the summit serves as a powerful manifesto for South-South cooperation, highlighting that the true strength of nations lies in their ability to unite for mutual benefit, rather than succumbing to the divisive tactics historically employed by imperial powers. As leaders from BRICS nations deliberate on economic collaboration, environmental sustainability, and cultural exchange, they reaffirm their commitment to creating a world where cooperation supersedes historical grievances and petty political squabbles.

This is not a manifestation of warmongering; rather, it represents countries historically struggling to achieve mutual respect and dignity for all citizens. This commitment starkly contrasts the Western obsession with maintaining hegemony through military interventions and economic coercion—shamelessly punishing small nations like Cuba with sanctions while turning a blind eye to the massacre of unarmed civilians in Palestine and Lebanon. Yet, they continue to preach about how to protect democracy and universal human rights. In this precarious period where the West often exploits humanitarian crises as a pretext for military interventions, BRICS champions a principled approach that prioritises dialogue and partnership.

The commitment to peace-building reflects a deep understanding that true security cannot be achieved through military might but through fostering genuine relationships grounded in respect and equality. This summit represents a pivotal call to action, where BRICS nations acknowledge that their strength lies in recognising shared destinies rather than past grievances. Historical lessons caution against allowing mistrust to dictate international relations, as genuine peace stems from understanding and collaboration.

The BRICS summit challenges the prevailing narrative of fear and division. It highlights the urgent need to tackle global challenges like climate change and economic instability, showcasing the Global South's proactive stance in crafting a future rooted in cooperation and collective growth. Let us hope for a better world, where these Asian giants, India and China, will come together to heal historic scars of mistrust, opening more gates for Indo-Pakistani peace, ensuring no room for proxies to manipulate these countries into becoming pawns of the West. Have we been used and manipulated, bullied enough? Is this the final moment for us to unite for greater emancipation?

(The writer is a journalist and author; views expressed are personal)

Has celebrity endorsement eclipsed the art of advertising

While famous faces lend instant appeal, the question arises: Have we lost the human touch that made ads meaningful



CHAITANYA K **PRASAD**

In the early days of advertising, brands leaned heavily on compelling stories and memorable taglines to forge deep emotional connections with consumers. Think of the Hutch ad with the loyal dog faithfully following a boy, Cadbury Dairy Milk's joyous dancer celebrating in a stadium, or Surf Excel's "Daag Ache Hain" campaign.

These weren't just commercials; they became cultural touchstones that left lasting impressions on how we remember those brands. Brands like Hutch and Airtel built their reputations on narrative-driven ads without relying on celebrities, focusing on themes like reliability, friendship and joy. The success of these campaigns lay in making the story the hero and seamlessly integrating the product into narratives that resonated deeply with audiences. However, there's been a noticeable shift toward extensive celebrity endorsements, with famous faces promoting everything from luxury cars to everyday appliances. This raises the question: Has the art of storytelling been overshadowed by the allure of celebrity charisma? Yet, some celebrity-driven ads have managed to maintain that emotional connection through powerful narratives. Amitabh Bachchan's association with "Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC)" is a prime example.

The show's branding isn't just about a game show; it's about dreams, aspirations, and life-changing moments for ordinary people. Similarly, Shah Rukh Khan's long-standing partnership with Hyundai has produced ads that go beyond showcasing cars. The recent Hyundai Samarth initiative highlights inclusivity and empowerment for people with disabilities. In these ads, Shah Rukh Khan doesn't just endorse a product; he becomes part of a narrative that promotes positive social values, resonating deeply with audiences.

These campaigns succeeded not merely because they featured a celebrity but because they tapped into universal emotions and values that consumers could relate to. The story remained the hero, and the celebrity enhanced the narrative without overshadowing it. It was advertising at its purest-focused on connection and meaning.

From Bollywood actors endorsing financial products like mutual funds to cricketers promoting real estate or soft drinks, celebrity endorsements have become penetrative. MS Dhoni's involvement in mutual fund advertisements is a prime example of this. His trustworthiness, especially in tier 2 and tier 3 cities, has made financial products seem more approachable and credible to audiences that might otherwise be skeptical. Similarly, big-name stars in paan masala ads, while controversial, have undeniably increased the visibility and sales of these products.



But why has there been such a shift toward celebrity-centric advertising? Several factors contribute to this trend. In an age of fragmented attention spans, grabbing consumer attention has become more challenging, and celebrities provide an instant hook.

Their recognisable faces and star power can make a product stand out in a crowded media space. Celebrities also embody trust and credibility; consumers often associate a celebrity's success with the quality of the product they endorse, especially where trust in unfamiliar brands may be lacking. The rise of social media has transformed celebrities into influencers with massive followings, and brands tap into these personal connections to reach audiences. As brands expand globally, they use celebrities with international appeal to reach wider, more diverse markets.

While celebrities can help create buzz, technology-particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI)-also plays a significant role in shaping modern advertising strategies. AI algorithms analyse consumer behaviour, preferences, and trends, helping brands create highly personalised and targeted campaigns. However, this data-driven approach can sometimes lead to formulaic ads that prioritise metrics over creativity, risking the loss of the human touch that makes storytelling so powerful.

The rise of social media influencers has introduced a new dynamic to endorsements. Unlike traditional celebrities, influencers often have niche audiences and engage with them on a more personal level. Their brand value lies in relatability and authenticity, which can feel more genuine compared to the polished image of mainstream celebrities. Brands now balance using high-profile celebrities for mass appeal with influencers for targeted, authentic engagement, understanding that while star power is influential, content and genuine connections with consumers still matter deeply.

(The writer is former additional DG, DFF and festival director, IFFI. Inputs provided by Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavie Srinivasan; Views are personal)

the pioneer

Money 08

VIJAYAWADA | SATURDAY | OCTOBER 26, 2024

IN BRIEF



RBI revokes authorisation certificate of UAE Exchange

The Reserve Bank has revoked the certificate of authorisation of UAE Exchange Centre LLC for non-compliance with regulatory requirements and now it cannot transact the business of cross border in-bound money transfer. UAE Exchange Centre LLC (UAEEC), with registered office in Dubai, was issued Certificate of Authorisation (CoA) for cross border in-bound money transfer operator (customer-to-customer) as 'Overseas Principal'. In a statement, the RBI said the CoA of the payment system operator has been revoked for non-compliance with regulatory requirements. Following the revocation of CoA, UAEEC cannot transact the business of cross border in-bound money transfer as 'Overseas Principal', it added.



Gold drops to Rs 80,050; silver declines Rs 2,000

Gold price dropped Rs 1,150 to Rs 80,050 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday on slackened demand from jewellers and retailers, according to All India Sarafa Association. Silver also remained under selling pressure and slipped below the Rs 1 lakh mark by declining Rs 2,000 to Rs 99,000 per kg. The metal had closed at Rs 1.01 lakh per kg in the previous close on Thursday. Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity fell Rs 350 to Rs 80,450 per 10 grams against the previous close of Rs 80,800, while the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity declined Rs 1,150 to Rs 80,050 per 10 grams against Rs 81,200 on Thursday. Traders said tepid demand from jewellers and retailers in the local markets and a weak trend in the overseas markets weighed on gold prices.
In futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for December delivery declined Rs 406 or 0.52 per cent to trade at Rs 77,921 per 10 grams.
Silver contracts for December delivery plummeted Rs 1,134 or 1.17 per cent to Rs 95,898 per kg on the bourse.

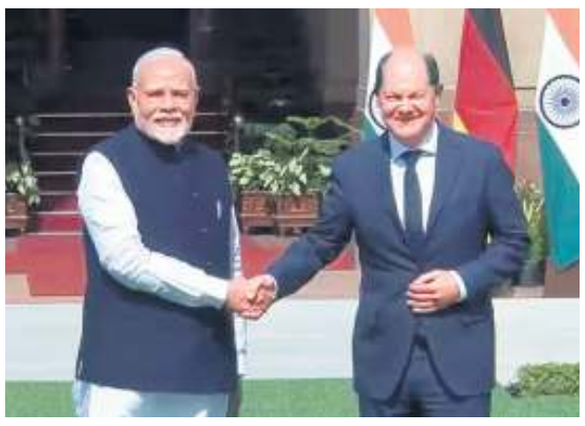


Thermax to acquire Buildtech Products India

Thermax on Friday said it has inked a pact to acquire critical construction chemicals maker Buildtech Products India for about Rs 72 crore. This partnership solidifies Thermax's presence in the construction chemicals sector, the energy and environment solutions firm said in a statement. According to the statement, the company has signed an agreement to acquire a 100 per cent stake in Buildtech Products India Pvt Ltd for approximately Rs 72 crore, subject to various transaction adjustments. Established in 1995, Buildtech Products India manufactures admixtures, accelerators and capsules used in tunnels, infrastructure and railway projects. The Indian construction chemicals market is worth USD 3.76 billion and is expected to reach USD 5.17 billion by 2030 with a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 5.64 per cent, it stated.

Right time to join India's growth story, Modi tells German biz forum

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Modi said the confidence that Germany has expressed in India's skilled manpower is amazing as the European nation has decided to increase visas for the skilled Indian workforce from 20,000 to 90,000 per year and this will give a further push to the economic growth of Germany

Inviting German businesses to invest in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said there is no better place for investment than India and this is the right time to join the country's growth story.

Addressing the 18th Asia-Pacific Conference of German Business 2024 here, the prime minister emphasised that the time was 'right' for foreign investors to participate in India's growth story, join 'make in India' initiative and 'make for the world'.

He also said the confidence that Germany has expressed in India's skilled manpower is amazing as the European nation has decided to increase visas for the skilled Indian workforce from 20,000 to 90,000 per year and this will give a further push to the economic growth of Germany.

"This is the right time to join India's growth story... India becoming a global trade and manufacturing hub," Modi said, adding, today India stands on strong pillars of democracy, demography, demand and data.

He further said that India is doing record investments in roads, railways, airports and ports and the Indo-Pacific region is very important for the future of the world.

The conference was held on Friday after a gap of 12 years.

Modi said that the government has prepared a roadmap for making India a developed nation by 2047 and in this important time, the German cabinet has released a "Focus on India" document to further strengthen ties between the two countries.

He added that India is becoming a major hub for diversification, de-risking, trade and manufacturing, and it provides huge business opportunities for German firms.

For investors and businesses, he said, "what could be a better place than India?"

He added that the four key pillars of India's growth are talent, technology, innovation, and infrastructure, and to drive all this, "we have the power of aspirational India (AI).

India is focussing on skills and democratisation of technology and its important missions related to sectors such as artificial intelligence, semiconductor, green hydrogen, and space technology too provide opportunities for investments and collaborations, the prime minister said.

He added that the visiting delegation should enjoy India's culture, cuisines and shopping also.

Credit growth for banks to moderate to 12 pc in FY25: Icra

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ratings agency Icra anticipates a steady slowdown in credit growth for banks and non-bank financial companies (NBFCs) on account of regulatory measures and tighter funding conditions in the domestic markets.

The agency estimates the incremental bank credit growth to slow down to Rs 19-20.5 lakh crore in 2024-25, around 12 per cent Year-on-Year (YoY) growth, compared to Rs 22.3 lakh crore, or 16.3 per cent rise, in the previous fiscal.

For the NBFCs, Icra said the growth in assets under management (AUMs) is expected to slow down sharply to 16-18 per cent in the current financial year from 25 per cent in 2023-24.

The recent regulatory actions on certain entities are expected to push others to adjust their business practices and models, which shall also have a bearing on near-term growth, it said.

Once the rate cut cycle starts, "the regulatory measures to slow down bank credit growth will be crucial for banks to cut their deposit rates...This will especially be important for maintaining the margins, as the cut in policy rates expected in H1 CY2025 will exert downward pressure on lending rates," Anil Gupta, Senior Vice President & Co-Group Head - Financial Sector Ratings at Icra, said.

However, the proposed changes in guidelines for liquidity coverage ratio could mean the immediate cut in deposit rates, resulting in delayed transmission of rate cuts, Gupta added.

During the last two years, the high credit growth in the retail segment has potentially resulted in overleveraging and slower credit growth, impairing the refinancing ability of some of these borrowers.

Govt's role to enable conditions to boost exports: WB industry secy

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The West Bengal government on Friday said its export and logistics policies will strengthen the state's export sector, which currently generates approximately USD 11.7 billion in merchandise exports.



At the launch of the Kolkata chapter of the National Centre for Export Promotion (NCEP), Bengal Industry and Commerce Secretary Vandana Yadav highlighted that engineering goods exports alone account for nearly USD 3.5 billion.

Addressing industry representatives at the Institute of Indian Foundrymen (IIF), Yadav emphasised that the policies are designed to create favourable conditions for the private sector, which drives 100 per cent of the state's exports. "The government's role is to enable conditions whereby you can export more," Yadav said, noting that the focus is on sustaining traditional sectors like the foundry industry while integrating modern, knowledge-based methods.

She described the establishment of the NCEP as a timely initiative to enhance traditional skills and provide essential support in areas such as training and presentation.

The new centre, IIF's fourth Centre of Excellence, joins the National Centre for Skill Development (NCSD) in Chennai, the National Centre for Technical Services (NCTS) in Pune, and the Foundry Informatics Centre (FIC) in New Delhi, reinforcing IIF's commitment to advancing the sector.

With the mission to elevate the Indian foundry industry's global presence, NCEP will focus on enhancing competitiveness through strategic support in capacity building, export procedures, and sustainable growth.

PMP adds step-down subsidiary in Dubai

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Power Mech Projects (PMP) on Friday announced incorporating a step-down subsidiary company in Dubai.

P M T S Technology L.L.C was incorporated on October 24 with 100 per cent holding by its wholly-owned subsidiary PMTS private Limited, Power Mech Projects said in an exchange filing. With the new entity, the company aims to deliver innovative and efficient solutions to its clients, enabling them to enhance their operations, productivity, and competitiveness.

The services will encompass a wide range of activities, such as custom software development, web and mobile app development, database management, IT consulting, and support, it said.

NLC India Q2 profit drops 9.5 pc to Rs 982 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned NLC India Ltd on Friday reported a 9.5 per cent decline in consolidated profit at Rs 982.41 crore for the quarter ended September 30, 2024 on the back of higher expenses.

NLC India Ltd (NLCIL) had posted a consolidated profit of Rs 1,085.93 crore in the year-ago period, NLC India Ltd said in a regulatory filing.

However, the revenue from operations in the July-September quarter increased to Rs 3,657.27 crore, over Rs 2,977.53 crore in the year-ago period.

The total expenses of the company in the second quarter rose to Rs 3,173.39 crore, over Rs 2,811.88 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal.

The mining segment of NLC India includes both lignite and coal mining and power segment includes both thermal and renewables.

NLC India is a Navratna company under the Ministry of Coal. Its core business is mining and power generation.

NLCIL operates three opencast lignite mines of total installed capacity 28 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) at Neyveli, one opencast lignite mine at Barsingsar in Rajasthan with an installed capacity of 2.10 MTPA and an open cast coal mine at Talabira in Odisha with an installed capacity of 20 MTPA.

The company also operates four lignite based pit-head thermal power stations with an aggregate capacity of 3,390 mw at Neyveli and one 250 mw lignite-based thermal power station at Barsingsar, Rajasthan.

A 1,000 mw coal-based thermal power station is also in operation at Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu through its subsidiary company, NLC Tamilnadu Power Ltd (NTPL), a joint venture between NLCIL and TANGEDCO (Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation Ltd).

NLCIL has also forayed into renewable energy sector. Presently, the company is operating 1380 mw of solar power plants in various districts of Tamil Nadu and Andaman & Nicobar islands and 51 MW wind power plant in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu.

AI will open up opportunities for youth in various sectors: Prez

PNS ■ RAIPUR



President Droupadi Murmu on Friday said Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a priority area for the entire world and asserted the emerging technology will open up vast opportunities for youths in various sectors.

She said interdisciplinary approach will encourage innovation in the engineering sector.

Speaking at the 14th convocation of the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Raipur, Murmu highlighted how AI, a transformative tool that enable computers to perform a variety of advanced functions, will open up opportunities for youths in various sectors.

"Development of technology depends on science. It will be helpful for all of you to have information about ultra-modern technology to make outstanding contributions in the field of engineering," she told students at the convocation.

In 2024, two physics and four chemistry scientists, who were linked with Artificial Intelligence, received the Nobel prize, the President pointed out.

"An interdisciplinary approach will encourage innovation in engineering. The way industrial revolution provided machine assistance and expansion of human labour, in the same way AI revolution will bring major transformation. AI has become a priority in the entire world," she said.

President Murmu emphasised AI is going to have a profound impact in various spheres of life and added the central government is promoting the cutting-edge technology to foster innovation.

"India is a founding member of Global Partnership and Artificial Intelligence. AI will have a deep impact on social, political, economic, strategic and other sectors. Under IndiaAI mission, start-ups are being promoted in the country. Young engineers will have ample opportunities in the AI sector," she said.

The President said use of technology in the healthcare sector has been constantly rising and stressed that students from both fields (engineering and health) should actively work on interdisciplinary cooperation.

Eris Lifesciences Q2 net profit declines 20 pc to Rs 97 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Eris Lifesciences on Friday said its consolidated profit after tax declined 20 per cent year-on-year to Rs 97 crore in the September quarter.

The drug firm had reported a Profit After Tax (PAT) of Rs 122 crore in the July-September period of last fiscal.

Revenue increased to Rs 741 crore in the second quarter compared to Rs 505 crore in the year-ago period, the company said in a statement.

"The acquired businesses of Biocon and Swiss Parenterals have been integrated and are scaling up in line with our expectations," Eris Lifesciences Chairman and Managing Director Amit Bakshi said.

Sebi comes out with periodic reporting format for RAs, PAs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Friday came out with a standardised format for periodic reporting for research analysts (RAs) and proxy advisers (PAs).

The regulator has recognised the Research Analyst Administration and Supervisory Body (RAASB) for the administration and supervision of RAs under the RA Regulations. As the Proxy Advisers (PAs) are registered under the RA norms, they will also come under the purview of RAASB.

In its circular, Sebi said that RAs will submit their periodic report to RAASB, and PAs will submit their periodic reports to Sebi. The periodic reports will be submitted by RAs/PAs within 30 days from the last date of the reporting period.

Further, RAs/PAs are required to submit periodic reports for half-yearly periods ending on September 30 and March 31 of every financial year. The first reporting period will be a half-yearly period ending on March 31, 2025, and reports thereof will be required to be submitted by April 30, 2025.

Hence, a time of around six months has been provided to RAs and PAs for submission of their first periodic report to give them sufficient time to make necessary arrangements for providing the required data.

Under the periodic reporting format, research analysts/proxy advisors need to disclose details of registration number, official website address, details of social media handles, advertisements issued, bank accounts used for receiving fees from clients, details of directors/ partners, shareholding pattern and details of the complaints against them, among others.

In a separate circular, Sebi has allowed a non-individual investment advisor to obtain an annual compliance certificate for client-level segregation from any auditor to promote ease of doing business.

Under the rule, a non-individual investment adviser is required to maintain on record an annual certificate from its statutory auditor, confirming compliance with the client level segregation requirements.



DLF Q2 profit jumps over 2-fold to Rs 1,381.08 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Realty major DLF on Friday reported a more than two-fold jump in its consolidated net profit to Rs 1,381.08 crore for the quarter ended September 2024. Its net profit stood at Rs 622.78 crore in the year-ago period. The total income rose to Rs 2,180.83 crore during the April-September period of the 2024-25 fiscal from Rs 1,476.42 crore in the corresponding period of the preceding year, according to a regulatory filing.

India's DPI figures in global conversations: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) is now part of global conversations around inclusive and scalable infrastructure, and its blueprint can offer others an opportunity to harness technology for improving the lives of citizens, according to experts.

Primus Partners, in association with iSPIRT, organised a DPI roundtable that saw key stakeholders such as senior bureaucrats, diplomats, policymakers, industry leaders and thought leaders discussing India's leadership in advancing DPI and its crucial role in driving socio-economic transformation.

Delivering keynote address, G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant noted India's remarkable leap in becoming the voice of the Global South in DPI, and in achieving in 9 years what would have taken 50 years, otherwise.

"This sentiment was echoed during India's G20 Presidency, where countries reached a common consensus that DPIs are essential for equitable development and to improve the lives of citizens, especially in the global south," he said.

The first session at the roundtable on 'Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through DPI' drew attention to the vast potential of DPI in accelerating sustainable development across the Global South.

Anil Sooklal, High Commissioner of South Africa to India, discussed India's seminal role in using DPI to drive progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and added that India must take the lead in the global DPI progress.

In another session, panellists shared insights on how India Stack has revolutionised businesses by promoting financial inclusion and enhancing operational efficiencies and by leveraging Aadhaar-enabled services to facilitate easier access to credit for small businesses.

the pioneer
Vijayawada | Saturday October 26, 2024

what's brewing?



Abhishek Bachchan's *I Want To Talk* reveals quirky, emotional world

The rather unique title reveal of *I Want To Talk*, has got people; what else but 'Talking' and taking the quirk a notch higher comes the first look poster that Abhishek Bachchan shared on his social media handles. 'A picture speaks a thousand words,' the caption said and this poster does talk to you!

Shoojit Sircar is known to bring alive the uniqueness in his characters while keeping them real and relatable. Going by the poster, the lead character of *I Want To Talk*, played by Abhishek, surely looks interesting, to say the least. While seeped in the unassuming slice-of-life narrative of a classic Sircar film, a closer look reveals many intriguing elements of the story as well as the character and gives a peek into the funny, quirky emotional world of the film.

I Want To Talk brings together National Award-winning director Shoojit Sircar and powerhouse performer Abhishek Bachchan. And as the first images roll out, it only promises a fascinating tale that will take audiences on a fascinating ride of entertaining emotions.

The engaging title announcement teaser has already created huge anticipation amongst the cinephiles for the trailer. This striking poster has further added to the excitement, for sure.

I Want To Talk is set to be released in theatres worldwide on November 22.

The film is produced by Rising Sun Films and Kino Works.

Alia Bhatt fires back at "ridiculous" botox rumours!



Alia Bhatt did not hold back in condemning a portion of the news media that had released articles suggesting she had experienced a failed Botox treatment. The actor used Instagram Stories to share a lengthy message addressing the rumours and educating critics on body-shaming.

Alia wrote in her note that she did not judge anybody who 'chooses cosmetic corrections or surgery'. Still, she added that a 'random video' claiming she had Botox gone wrong was 'beyond ridiculous.' She further wrote, "To the random video floating around literally claiming I've had Botox gone wrong (and to the numerous clickbait articles)—I have a "crooked smile" and a "weird way of speaking."

This is your hypercritical, microscopic judgment of a human face. And now you're confidently tossing around "scientific explanations, claiming I'm paralysed on one side? Are you kidding me?"

"These are SERIOUS claims being casually thrown out there with zero proof, no confirmation and absolutely nothing to back it up. What's worse, you're influencing young, impressionable minds who might actually believe this garbage. Why are you saying this? For clickbait? Attention? Because none of it makes sense," the note further read.

Alia, aged 31, who gave birth to her daughter Raha two years ago, added that women are frequently criticised for their bodies and even baby bumps, to the point where it is considered acceptable.

"Let's take a minute to address the absurd lens through which women are judged and objectified on the internet—our faces, bodies, personal lives, even our bumps (!!!) are up for critique. We should be celebrating individuality, not tearing it apart under a microscope. These types of judgments perpetuate unrealistic standards, making people feel like they're never "enough." It's damaging and it's exhausting," she wrote.

Alia added that the 'saddest part' of this episode was that 'a lot of this judgment comes from other women'. The actor lamented, "We've become so accustomed to picking each other apart that it's almost normalised. Meanwhile, just another day of even thorougher entertainment with scripts made up by the Internet."

Nicole shares challenges of playing 'sexually' charged roles



During a recent conversation, Nicole Kidman openly talked about her time shooting her newest film, *Babygirl*, which has received a lot of praise. In the movie, Nicole depicts a prosperous career woman appearing to have a satisfying life with Antonio Banderas as her spouse. Complications arise with the arrival of a new intern, played by Harris Dickinson, causing an affair that disrupts her life.

One of the principal parts of the interview was when Nicole opened up about playing a sexually charged character in the film. "There was an enormous amount of sharing and trust and then frustration. It's like, 'Don't touch me.' There were times when we were shooting where I was like, 'I don't want to orgasm any more. Don't come near me. I hate doing this. I don't care if I am never touched again in my life!' I'm over it. It was so present all the time for me that it was almost like a burnout," she said.

Fans had a lot to say about this rather strange revelation. The first reaction was amused support. "I support her actually; let Nicole be publicly weird," said a netizen. "We've all been there," beguiled another while one more fan commented, "I'll have whatever she's having." Others pinpointed the reason behind this weird confession, saying it was more about getting publicity for the movie. "This is just the new PR move to create buzz about your movie? Florence Pugh and Andrew Garfield just told such a similar anecdote about their little romance movie," said one.

Cruel Intentions reborn!



Prime Video has released the enticing official trailer and key art for *Cruel Intentions* and announced all eight episodes of the highly anticipated series will premiere November 21. Twenty-five years after the iconic film captivated audiences with its provocative drama, sex and scandal, this series introduces a new class of cruel characters who are ready to take their games and manipulation to a whole new level.

In this new adaptation, *Cruel Intentions* follows the elite students of Manchester College, a Washington, D.C.-adjacent university, where reputation means everything, fraternities and sororities are the gold standard and two ruthless step-siblings, Caroline Merteuil and Lucien Belmont, will do anything to stay on top of the cutthroat social hierarchy. After a brutal hazing incident threatens the entire Greek Life system, they'll do whatever is necessary to preserve their power and reputation—even if that means seducing Annie Grover, the daughter of the Vice President of the United States. Hearts will be broken, loyalties will be tested, and secrets will be revealed in this modern-day royal court that is Manchester College.

The series is produced by Sony Pictures Television, Amazon MGM Studios and Original Film. Sara Goodman and Phoebe Fisher serve as co-showrunners, writers and executive producers. Neal H Moritz and Pavun Shetty of Original Film also executive produce along with Roger Kumble. Moritz produced the original film, which was written and directed by Kumble. Bruce Mellon, along with Andrea Iervolino and Monika Bacardi of Iervolino & Bacardi Entertainment, are producers.



Gerard Butler finds spiritual bliss in Varanasi

In a viral video, Scottish actor Gerard Butler discussed his deep spiritual exploration in Varanasi, India, calling it "beautiful, magical, mystical." Butler recounted feeling a strong sense of joy when he arrived at the historic city.

"When I arrived in Varanasi, I felt completely high. I meditated on the banks of the Ganges at the ghats. I did a private puja, which was so powerful to me," said Butler.

The actor proceeded to describe a magical night he spent at the famous Ganga Aarti, where he watched the ritual from a boat. Enthralled by the dedication and vitality of the ceremony, Butler referred to it as "one of the most enchanting days of [his] life," exclaiming, "I felt that this was the greatest day I've ever experienced, so united, so lovely, so enchanting."

The London Has Fallen actor was last in Varanasi a decade ago and the footage was captured at Safarnama House, one of the city's most famous guesthouses.

Butler's thoughts on his stay in Varanasi emphasise the city's lasting cultural and spiritual charm, attracting individuals globally in search of deep, transformative encounters along the sacred Ganges.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBES



GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

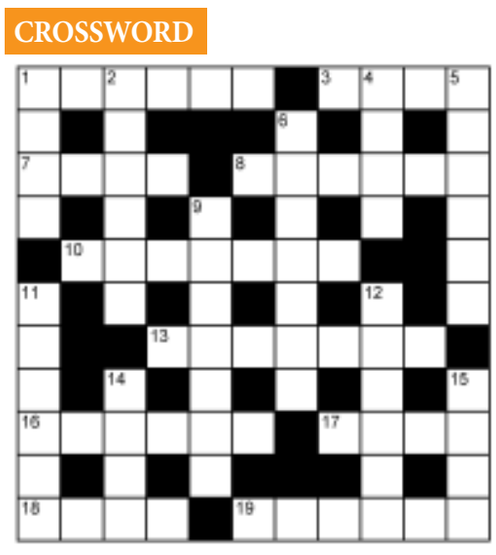
Yesterday's solution

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

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1 Mend
3 Very thin metal sheet used in the kitchen
7 The line where material is joined
8 Murdered
10 Tales
13 The later part of the day
16 Wanting food
17 Money someone has to pay as a punishment
18 A fruit from a palm tree
19 A light wind

DOWN

1 Have a lie down
2 Braided lengths of hair
4 These birds hunt at night
5 A climbing aid with rungs
6 Birds that fly back home
9 Courage
11 Shoved
12 Ask to come
14 A tangle in your hair
15 At this place

SOLUTION

	L	I	G	H	T	N	I	N	G	
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the pioneer

Vijayawada

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Saturday
October 26, 2024



The Legend of Hanuman Season 5

Beyond mythology; visual spectacle like no other!

TEJAL SINHA
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

DIRECTED BY : Jeevan J. Kang and Navin John

PRODUCED BY : Sharad Devarajan, Jeevan J. Kang and Charuvi Agrawal

CAST : Daman Baggan, Sharad Kelkar, Sanket Mhatre, Shakti Singh, Pushkar Vijay, Amit Deondi, Krishna Kumar, Rohan Verma, Richard Joel, Vikrant Chaturvedi, Maaz Ali, Gireesh Sahdev, Surbhi Pandey

STREAMING ON : Disney + Hotstar

RATING : 4.3/5

The Legend of Hanuman Season 5 is the latest installment in the critically acclaimed animated series, which has captivated audiences worldwide with its mesmerising blend of mythology, action and drama. This season promises to be the most epic yet, with Lord Hanuman's transformation into a god and his battles against evil forces reaching new heights.

PLOT

Season 5 picks up where its predecessor left off, with Hanuman's journey taking a dramatic turn. Season 5 delves deeper into Hanuman's transformation from a mighty warrior to a god, serving Lord Rama. The narrative expertly weaves together mythology, action, and drama, keeping viewers engaged. The pacing is well balanced, with intense battle sequences and emotional moments that tug at the heartstrings.

Review

HIGHLIGHTS

This season delves into the concept of self-discovery and purpose, with Hanuman's journey serving as a metaphor for finding one's true calling. Then comes loyalty and devotion, as the series highlights the importance of unwavering commitment.

The narrative expertly weaves together mythology, action and drama, keeping viewers engaged. The pacing is well balanced, with intense battle sequences and emotional moments that tug at the heartstrings.

DRAWBACKS

The nonlinear storytelling in the show can sometimes be confusing and occasional lip-sync issues may be the only drawbacks. However, that can still be excused.

PERFORMANCES

The Legend of Hanuman is always amazed by its nearly flawless choice of voice actors. Daman Baggan is like a modern-day version of Hanuman.

Once again, Sharad Kelkar shines as the voice of Ravana. His deep voice dominates every moment, overshadowing all other characters.

Such a skilled performer! Meanwhile, Sanket Mhatre as Ram, Richard Joel as Lakshman, Pushkar Vijay as Angad, Vikrant Chaturvedi as Sugreev and Gireesh Sahdev as Vibheeshan, among the other supporting cast, can just not be ignored, with their astonishing skills as their respective characters.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Whether it is Lanka, the forest, or Pataal Lok, every part of the series appears to be impeccably designed. The colour scheme is attractive and bright. The animation quality has improved significantly since the previous seasons. Vibrant colours, intricate details, and fluid motion make the visuals stunning. The 'Paanchmukhi' avatar of Hanuman is breathtakingly rendered, showcasing the animators' skill. The voice cast delivers impressive performances, bringing the characters to life. The background score complements the on-screen action, elevating the emotional impact.

VERDICT

The Legend of Hanuman Season 5 is a testament to the power of storytelling, blending action, drama, and mythology into an unforgettable experience. If you're looking for an engaging and emotionally resonant series, look no further. It is an outstanding conclusion to the series. With its captivating storyline, stunning animation, and profound themes, it's a must-watch for fans of mythology, animation and epic adventures.

RECOMMENDATION:

If you're new to the series, start from Season 1 to fully appreciate the narrative. For returning viewers, Season 5 is a satisfying continuation of Hanuman's legendary journey. Will I watch it again? Absolutely! *The Legend of Hanuman Season 5* is a masterpiece that deserves multiple viewings.

UP born, Telugu at heart

AARTI SREENATH
aarti.sreenath9@gmail.com

Janaki Ram Sharma's life is a fascinating tale of two cities: Varanasi, his birthplace and Hyderabad, his karma bhoomi. This finance expert's remarkable journey exemplifies the city's welcoming nature, cultural richness, and spiritual depth

HYDERABOND



Janaki Ram Sharma's life has been one of transformation, not just geographically but spiritually. Born in the vibrant city of Varanasi, his journey brought him to Hyderabad, a place he now lovingly calls his 'Karma Bhoomi'. "Varanasi is my birthplace, which I love dearly and Hyderabad is my 'Karma Bhoomi! Both mean everything to me," he says, reflecting on the two cities that have shaped him into the person he is today. Although his roots are in Uttar Pradesh, he doesn't see himself bound by the identity of a UPite. "I'm a Telugu fellow. You can call me an Indian, but I'm also very much a Telugu man at heart," he explains with pride, embodying a true pan-Indian spirit that has come to define his life in Hyderabad.

A finance professional with over 40 years of experience, his expertise has shaped businesses and lives across sectors. "I've been in the field of finance for over 40 years now," he says with modesty. Although his background includes being a Chartered Accountant, he prefers the simpler title of financial consultant. For him, it's not about epithets or titles—just the work and service that define his life.

His life, however, isn't solely about numbers and balance sheets. His devotion to spirituality has taken him on a unique path, including years spent at the Puttaparthi ashram of Sri Sathya Sai Baba. "I lived in Puttaparthi for a few years because Swami had called me there. I'm devoted to him a lot. But then he asked me to return to the outside world and continue my work," he recounts. This spiritual side of his life has become an intrinsic part of his being.

When talking about Hyderabad, his affection for the city is palpable. Having travelled to various cities and even abroad, he says there is something unique about Hyderabad that makes everyone feel at home. "This city is special because anyone can gel with each other here—happily and comfortably. It doesn't matter if someone comes from Kashmir, Assam, or even Kanyakumari; they'll find their people here. It's the spirit of brotherhood that sets Hyderabad apart."

In his eyes, language is merely a tool for communication and in Hyderabad, that communication flows easily. "If you can understand the language, you can connect with people. That's what Hyderabad offers—a human connection beyond caste, creed, or religion. It's about being human to human."

One of the things he appreciates most about Hyderabad is its balanced climate. "The weather here is excellent—no extremes," he says. However, he's quick to point out that traffic has become a significant challenge. "It used to take me 15 minutes to reach Begumpet; now it takes 50. We're wasting fuel, time and energy because of the inefficiencies in managing the city's growth."

Despite the modern inconveniences, his love for the city is unwavering. "Hyderabad means everything to me. You can find everything here—whether it's material things like malls and cinema theatres or spiritual places like the Ramakrishna Math or Shringeri Peetham."

However, he wishes the city could do more to preserve and promote its rich history. "The zoo, the Golconda Fort—they could've been developed and marketed better. There's so much culture here that isn't being highlighted the way it should be."

As a financial consultant, he sees both potential and challenges in Hyderabad's professional landscape. While he appreciates the city, he admits that it doesn't offer the same opportunities as Mumbai. "In Bombay, there are far more opportunities. Here, it's hard work, but there's also a problem with people not paying for services," he says candidly. Still, Hyderabad is home and he has no regrets.

When asked about his most cherished memory, he immediately recalls his first meeting with Sathya Sai Baba at the tender age of 14. "That first meeting with him—just four minutes—gave me goosebumps. It's a memory I will take with me even into my next life," he shares, his voice tinged with emotion.

For him, his life in Hyderabad isn't just about work or even personal satisfaction. He's driven by a higher purpose, one of service and giving back. "I love doing Shuddha (pure) service. It's my passion," he explains. In his eyes, living a life of service is the ultimate expression of his spiritual beliefs, a way to blend his karmic duties with his love for humanity.

Future-proofing for consumer business investors

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) environment is a relentless race against change, driven by technological advancements and a surge of agile competitors eager to disrupt the status quo. Economic volatility, shifting consumer preferences and the formidable bargaining power of retail customers are reshaping the business landscape. Globally, advanced economies are predicted to slow down significantly, with growth dropping from 2.7% in 2022 to 1.3% in 2023. These forces compel FMCG players to not just adapt but also innovate to create and sustain long-term shareholder value.

While factors such as growth, margin and cash flow impact long-term shareholder value, growth has a disproportionate influence on it. Achieving growth, however, is becoming increasingly challenging for consumer companies as the number of untapped markets and unserved consumer segments dwindle. Today, growth requires direct competition for new consumers and the promotion of premium products to encourage existing consumers to trade up. To thrive, companies must identify their strengths and differentiation to create



compelling value propositions. For example, Hindustan Unilever's strong equity across product segments and focus on sustainability and innovation set it apart. With consumers now more informed and empowered by digital platforms, companies must strategically pivot, innovate, and navigate complexity to succeed.

Historically, economies of scale provided significant advantages in the FMCG sector, enabling companies to achieve cost efficiencies, extensive distribution networks and robust recognition. Yet, new technologies, social media and e-commerce have democratised these benefits, enabling agile competitors to challenge established giants with disruption. Large consumer businesses must enhance consumer segmentation with advanced analytics and machine learning to understand better and respond to changing preferences in this evolving landscape.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES FOR TOP COMPANIES

To navigate this demanding environment and build long-term shareholder value, top FMCG companies must adopt a multifaceted strategy. The two strategic pillars —refining consumer segmentation and building sustainable competitive differentiation — will enable companies to identify the optimal intersection of where to play and how to win. By focusing their efforts on the most promising market opportunities and tailoring their offerings to meet the specific demands of their target segments, companies can drive sustainable growth and build enduring shareholder value.

- **Innovation and agility**: Companies should invest in R&D to develop new products suited to evolving consumer tastes. Agility in product development and go-to-market strategies can provide a competitive edge.
- **Digital transformation**: From optimising supply chains with AI and machine learning to enhancing customer engagement through personalised marketing, harnessing the power of digital transformation can drive efficiency and growth. E-commerce offers significant opportunities by developing a strong online presence and direct-to-consumer channels, reducing reliance on traditional retail partners.
- **Sustainability & social responsibility:** Consumers are increasingly valuing sustainability and ethics. Companies that focus on Environmental, Sustainability, and Governance (ESG) practices can enhance brand loyalty and attract mindful consumers, using sustainable sourcing and supply chains as strategic advantages. In India, 42% of CEOs expect substantial returns on ESG investments within three to five years.
- **Cost and value optimisation**: While innovation and digital transformation are crucial, cost efficiency is essential for long-term value creation. Optimising the value chain through automation, strategic sourcing and lean manufacturing can boost margins.
- **Talent and culture:** Fostering innovation and agility hinges on attracting and retaining top talent through robust employee development, promoting continuous improvement and fostering cross-functional collaboration.

VIRTUES OF BEING VIGILANT

After building a strong strategic foundation, it is crucial to remain vigilant to avoid pitfalls that threaten long-term growth. Simultaneously, investing in robust competitive intelligence systems is essential to anticipate competitors, maintain a competitive edge, and uncover avenues for growth while safeguarding against market share erosion.

- **Chasing short-lived, high-decibel trends:** The allure of trendy, high-profile innovations can distract companies from their core growth strategies. While experimentation and innovation are vital, it's crucial to differentiate between fads and sustainable trends.
- **Neglecting data-driven agility:** Relying solely on intuition or outdated methods is inadequate today. Companies must use advanced analytics and real-time data for informed, agile decision-making, enabling swift adaptation to market changes, operational optimisation and enhanced consumer responsiveness.
- **Transitioning from blue-ocean to red-ocean skills**: As markets become more saturated, companies must shift from blue-ocean strategies, which focus on untapped markets, to red-ocean strategies, involving competing in existing markets.

(The author, Prasun Kumar, is the head of strategy and program delivery, at Philip Morris International Inc (PMI)'s India affiliate, IPM India Wholesale Trading Pvt Ltd.)

the pioneer
VIJAYAWADA | SATURDAY | OCTOBER 26, 2024

AFTER PACE, INDIA FAIL SPIN TEST

NEW ZEALAND LEAD SOARS TO 301 RUNS IN PUNE



PTI ■ PUNE

India's inadequacies against quality spin bowling stood thoroughly exposed, leaving the side staring at its first ever home Test series loss to New Zealand after the visitors claimed a formidable 301-run lead on day two of the second Test here on Friday.

Tom Latham (86) led New Zealand's charge with the bat after Mitchell Santner's brilliant 7/53 destroyed India. His knock consolidated a handy 103-run first-innings lead that the Kiwis had grabbed before reaching 198/5 at stumps.

Tom Blundell (30 not out) had Glenn Phillips (7 not out) for company when stumps were drawn. The only silver lining for India was Washington Sundar's continuing good show. He completed 11 wickets in the match, adding four more to his career-best first-innings haul of seven.

New Zealand are looking at a historic maiden Test series win in India, having first come here in 1955-56.

None of the New Zealand batters faced any apparent trouble batting on the pitch shortly after the star-studded Indian line-up cut a sorry figure for the second time in this series, making elementary mistakes.

In the last Test in Bengaluru, their all-time lowest score at home of 46 all-out caused India's first loss to New Zealand in 36 years in their own backyard.

India haven't lost a Test series at home since their defeat to England in the 2012-13 season and their unbeaten record in 18 series since then is under serious threat now.

India's highest successful chase in Tests at home was 387 against England at Chennai in December 2008.

On Friday afternoon, India folded at a mere 156 in 45.3 overs as spunky New Zealand continued to perform way better than the hosts.

As India endured yet another 'one bad session of play', six wickets fell in the morning for a mere 91 runs which made the pitch look unfavourable for batting when it was not the case.

Skipper Latham led from the front as he blunted the Indian spinners with ease but New Zealand batters deserved full credit for executing their plans.

The Kiwis' batters were formidable in defence while they rotated the strike deftly to keep pressure on the Indians.

Latham did well to raise hopes for a first century since December 2022 but Washington Sundar ended his progress at 86 off 133 balls with 10 fours.

Every added run tightened the screws further on India whose spinners appeared to have been out-bowled by their Kiwi counterparts.

While Sundar completed his maiden 10-for in Tests with 4/56 after his 7/59 in the first innings, R Ashwin took 1/64. Ravindra Jadeja (11-1-50-0) continued to be wicket-less in the game wherein spinners have ruled the roost.

While Santner's orthodox spin tested the Indians' defence and resolve, India's failure to rotate strike added to their woes.

The biggest shock for India in the day arrived in the 24th over when their batting superstar Virat Kohli missed a juicy full toss from Santner to be cleaned up for a nine-ball one.

The sight of Kohli missing an innocuous full toss angling into his wickets, going past his awkwardly swinging bat to crash into the middle and leg stumps and leaving the batter stare at the ground beneath him in utter despair, was something that will linger for some time to come.

Yashasvi Jaiswal had done fairly well to reach 30 with four boundaries but going with hard hands to defend a delivery outside off, spinning away from his bat to take an edge to the first slip, gave Glenn Phillips his first wicket.

If that wasn't enough, Rishabh Pant's (18) failure to read the lack of bounce while going for a mighty heave across the line against the part-time spin of Phillips, resulted in the ball crashing into his off-stump, leaving India in a desperate situation at 83 for five.

Sarfaraz Khan (11), whose recent outings include 222 not out in Irani Cup and 150 in the last innings at Bengaluru, only had himself to blame after recklessly hitting one straight to mid-off for William O'Rourke to grab an easy catch, off Santner.



David Warner's leadership ban has been lifted by Cricket Australia

AP ■ SYDNEY

David Warner's lifetime captaincy and leadership ban has been lifted by Cricket Australia, a move which could see the retired test player captain the Sydney Thunder in the Twenty20 Big Bash league this season.

Warner received the penalty for his role in the 2018 sandpaper scandal in South Africa, on top of a one-year ban from cricket, which was also imposed on Steve Smith with a lesser playing suspension given to Cameron Bancroft, who was caught on film rubbing and scuffing the ball with yellow sandpaper at a test match in Cape Town.

But the leadership sanction was lifted Friday by an independent three-member review panel who deemed the opener had met the necessary criteria. Warner appeared before the independent panel content earlier this month. It ruled that he met the criteria to be considered for future leadership roles.

"The respectful and contrite tone of his (Warner's) responses, as well as the content impressed the Review Panel and led it to the unanimous view that he was sincere and genuine in acknowledging responsibility for the conduct and in his statement that he had extreme remorse for his conduct," the panel said in a statement Friday.

"Mr. Warner's conduct and behavior since the imposition of the sanction has been excellent and he appears to have made a substantial change, one example of which is that he no longer sledges or tries to provoke the opposing team."

Warner played his final test match in January against Pakistan, an Australian win. He has also said he will no longer play one-day internationals, only the T20 format of the game.

The move could also be considered an early birthday present from Cricket Australia - Warner turns 38 on Sunday.



Loss in 2018-19 series more hurtful than 2020-21 defeat to India: Cummins

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australia skipper Pat Cummins believes that the 2018-19 Test series loss to India was more hurtful than the 2020-21 debacle under his captaincy as the home team was simply outplayed in that engagement.

India, under Virat Kohli, defeated Australia 2-1 in the 2018-19 rubber with the skipper and Cheteshwar Pujara playing a pivotal role in the historic triumph against the Tim Paine-led side.

During the 2020-2021 series, a hugely-depleted Indian side again bagged the series 2-1, defeating the hosts at their stronghold Gabba for the first time in a Test match in 32 years.

"I actually thought the series before (2018-19) was worse because we got completely beaten whereas that series (in 2020-21) was quite (keenly) fought. I thought they (India) played like fantastically well to win at the Gabba," Cummis told The Grade Cricketer podcast.

"That (defeat) was annoying but I felt like the series before, where we were like completely outplayed, that would hurt more for me," he said.

WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME INDIA WITH GREEN-TOPS: The pace bowling stalwart, who will again be leading in a five-match Test series against India starting November 22 in Perth, said that if he had his way, he would welcome India with green tops to make life difficult for the visitors.

"I wish if I had it my way I would be looking like those bushes behind you. Unfortunately, I don't have any sway (on the preparation of wickets), so we'll wait and see," said Cummins in response to the host's question on the amount of grass he would like to see on the pitches for the crucial series.

David Warner has offered to come out of retirement to help the side if need be but Cummins indicated that the team has moved on.

"Dave we are very interested, we're taking it very seriously and we'll be in touch, mate just watch that phone," said Cummins in jest before adding, "Uh, we love Davey (Warner) but he's retired, sorry."

Giving up on Test dream would be doing injustice to my younger self: Glenn Maxwell

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Australia's white-ball star Glenn Maxwell may not have donned the Baggy Green for seven years, but the 36-year-old believes he would be doing "injustice" to his younger self by giving up his Test cricket dream, which still burns brightly within him.

From overcoming a broken leg to scoring Australia's fastest double century with his 201 in the lead-up to their 2023 World Cup triumph, Maxwell has enjoyed remarkable highs in his career.

However, his Test appearances remain limited to just seven matches, with his last outing during Australia's 2017 tour of Bangladesh.

"I think if I gave up on that Test dream now, I don't think I'd be doing justice to that younger Glenn Maxwell who was dying to put on the baggy green when he was a kid," he tells ESPNcricinfo. "And I think while there's still a glimmer of hope, I'll keep going for it."

Though his selection for the upcoming India series is unlikely, Maxwell remains committed to chasing a Test spot on the Sri Lanka tour in January after narrowly missing out in 2022.

"I think the hard thing with Test cricket is, when I grew up, that's all I wanted to do," Maxwell says. "I definitely got my chance at Test level a bit prematurely. It all happened really fast when I got my chance to debut. It was just a whirlwind. I had no idea what I was doing. I probably hadn't had the experience at first-class level that I would have liked.



"And then when I came back in 2017, I felt like I was a ready-made first-class cricketer and was really at peace with my game and where I was at. A lot of these things in Test cricket are timing. Adam Voges is probably the perfect example. He came in and he averaged 60-odd (61.87) in his Test career. He got his opportunity when he was at the top of this game." "I suppose the thing I'm proud about in my Test career — I was able to sort of fight back at different times, get back in squads and be really resilient that way."

Maxwell's lack of first-class centuries — only seven in 69 matches, including a lone Test ton in Ranchi — has been a hurdle for Test selection, Maxwell writes in his soon-to-be-released autobiography.

He recalls a frustrating exchange with selector Trevor Hohns during the 2017-18 season, after notching scores of 60, 64, 45 not out, 278, and 96 in consecutive games.

When Maxwell questioned his exclusion from the Ashes squad, "'The answer was blunt: 'Not enough tons.'" "It's the only time I've come close to losing it in a situation like that," Maxwell writes in The Showman.

Australia's selectors have eased requirements for Shield cricket in preparing for Sri Lankan Tests, encouraging Maxwell's quiet red-ball return with Victoria's second XI.

Managing a leg injury, Maxwell feels ready to adapt quickly to red-ball batting if picked for the Sri Lanka tour.

"The interesting thing about last week, even just playing the second XI game, was having a few technical changes and working through them, having a few different sets of eyes looking at your batting, and just trying to work your way through that has been really enjoyable," he says.

India hold NZ to a thrilling 3-3 draw at Sultan of Johor Cup

PTI ■ JOHOR BAHRU (MALAYSIA)



India colts displayed remarkable composure to finish their round-robin stage with a thrilling 3-3 draw against New Zealand at the Sultan of Johor Cup here on Friday.

Gurjot Singh (6'), Rohit (17') and Talem Priyobarta (60') put their names on the scoresheet, while drag-flicker Jonty Elmes (17', 32', 45') scored a hat-trick of goals for New Zealand.

While India continue to lead the points table with 10 points, their fate to make the final will be determined by Great Britain and Australia's matches against Japan and Malaysia respectively later in the day.

India got off to a strong start with a fine goal from Gurjot in the 6th minute.

Gurjot's first shot on goal, assisted by Sukhvinder, bounced straight back after the goalkeeper made the save.

In his second attempt, he skillfully lofted the ball to the roof of the net to earn India an important 1-0 lead.

India had a chance to extend their lead in the 8th minute after earning two back-to-back PCs but the New Zealand custodian produced outstanding saves.

In the following minutes, New Zealand created an attacking formation that helped them make a successful foray into the striking circle, but Rosan Kujur was sharp in his defence to keep them from scoring.

New Zealand eventually worked their way through Indian defence in the 17th minute when Elmes scored a fine field goal to equalise. But India was quick to respond, with Rohit striking from the PC to regain the momentum and also lead 2-1.

Both teams played with frantic speed and though India created a flurry of PCs towards the end of the second quarter, they could not find success.

To their dismay, New Zealand began the third quarter with a fine PC conversion by Elmes, who had struck for the second time.

Elmes' fierce power in his drag-flick was a pain-point for Indian defence, as he completed a hat-trick of goals in the 45th minute to take New Zealand 3-2 ahead.

India's woes with penalty corner conversion continued in the fourth quarter as they missed a chance in the 46th minute.

New Zealand, on the other hand, came up with brilliant counter attacks in the following minutes but Indian defence held sway.

With 90 seconds left on the clock, India found a golden opportunity to equalise when they earned a PC.

This time, they found success with a splendid variation which was executed to perfection by Priyobarta, ending the thrilling encounter with a 3-3 draw.

NorthEast United FC hope to halt Jamshedpur FC's winning streak

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Jamshedpur FC will look to continue their winning streak when they face a doughty NorthEast United FC in an away Indian Super League (ISL) match here on Saturday.

The Jamshedpur side is placed second on the table, having accumulated 12 points from five games, and the hosts have managed only five points from as many contests and are positioned 10th.

But beyond those contrasting numbers, the Highlanders have remained unbeaten in their previous two fixtures against the Red Miners.

Meanwhile, scoring a goal in this match will mark NEUFC's joint-longest goal-scoring streak against JFC, having done so earlier between January 2021 and February 2022.

But JFC have also been taking risks up front, as indicated by their passing accuracy of 57.1% in the opposition's half this season.

The number also proves that they have been creating chances in the final third, allowing them to score 10 goals until now.

Their possession rate of 36.2% is the lowest in this ISL, but it allows them to play fearless football by letting the opposition dominate with the ball before launching their counter-attack.

NorthEast head coach Juan Pedro Benali played down the talk that his team is under pressure after managing just one win in their last five games.

However, he stressed on the need to improve their defence.

"There is no pressure on us. But, we are hungry. I don't look at points, but I look at the goals scored against us. Two goals against us per game is too much," Benali said on the eve of the clash.

"We need to decrease that and if we do so, then we will automatically do well as we are one of the teams to have scored the most goals this season."

Messi and Inter Miami will take on Atlanta United in MLS Cup playoff opener

AP ■ FORT LAUDERDALE (USA)

Inter Miami's Lionel Messi played in only one Major League Soccer loss in 2024. It was in May, at home, against Atlanta United.

Messi makes his MLS playoff debut Friday night - at home, against Atlanta United.

Inter Miami, which set the MLS records for most points and best winning percentage in the regular season, gets a big challenge right out of the gate in the playoffs by facing an Atlanta team in a best-of-three Eastern Conference first-round series. Messi is coming off a hat trick in the regular-season finale, a 6-2 romp past New England.

And even though he missed nearly half the MLS season because of injury and commitments to Argentina's national team, Messi is still a serious contender for league MVP after 20 goals and 16 assists in 19 appearances.

"If I could vote for him, I would have voted for him," Inter Miami defender Julian Gressel said. "Yes, because for me, the MVP stands for the best player in the league. And Leo, is that, by far. You know, there's other people out there that have the definition of an MVP that maybe makes the team better or that a team can't live without. In a sense, to me, Leo is that, too."

MVP or not, Messi is obviously the key to Inter Miami's MLS Cup hopes.

Friday night will be the first home playoff match in club history. If Inter Miami wins this series, it would stay home for the rest of the season - with home-field edge for the single-game conference semifinals, conference final and MLS Cup, provided it keeps winning.

"This was always about creating history for Miami," said soccer icon David Beckham, part of Inter Miami's ownership group - and the person who originally announced plans to bring an MLS team back to Miami more than a decade ago. "This was always about our family, La Familia, the people in this stadium, the people in this city."

Messi's arrival midway through 2023 was the big step toward Inter Miami getting to the global stage. The team won the Leagues Cup last year shortly after Messi arrived, won the Supporters Shield this year as the best MLS regular-season team and now goes after the MLS playoff title.



Pottel: Idea has potential, but its implementation falls short

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REVIEW

Pottel is one of the small films hitting screens and the promotional videos have piqued interest, with people like Sandeep Reddy Vanga speaking highly of it. Though the cast lacks big names, the film's promotions have attracted a sizable audience. Yuva Chandra and Ananya Nagalla play the lead roles, while Ajay takes on a significant part. Sahit Mothkhuri, who previously directed Savari, helms this film.

STORY

The story is set in the rural village of Gurram Gattu in Telangana. The villagers believe in their local goddess Balamma, and every 12 years, a Jathara is held in her honour, where a pottel (goat) is sacrificed. A village family, tasked with caring for the pottel through generations, has now passed this responsibility to Gangadhari (Yuva Chandra). A local landlord, Patel (Ajay), dominates the village and discourages lower-caste villagers from pursuing education. He wields the villagers' faith in the goddess to intimidate them, keeping them from defying him. Gangadhari, who is married to Bujjamma (Ananya Nagalla), has a young daughter named Saraswathi (Thanasvi). Haunted by the belief that his own lack of education led to his brother's tragic accident, Gangadhari is determined to educate his six-year-old daughter. Patel, however, stands firmly against it. The film follows Gangadhari's struggles to get his daughter educated and his battle against Patel's oppression.

ANALYSIS

Director Sahit Mothkhuri draws on a setting reminiscent of rural Telangana in the 1980s, depicting landlords or "Patels" who once controlled entire villages. The premise of a villager's fight to educate his daughter against the backdrop of superstition and social inequality is compelling. However, while the film's subject matter is promising, the director struggles to deliver it effectively onscreen. Certain scenes drag, and the central issue is not conveyed with the necessary impact.

Superstition, an integral part of the era, is woven into the story, adding some engaging moments. However, the film's overall execution lacks a gripping narrative. The first half-hour introduces the village, the landlord, the goddess Balamma, and the *Pottel*, though the love story between Gangadhari and Bujjamma is hastily developed, with only a few scenes and songs dedicated to it. The main storyline picks up with Gangadhari's attempts to enroll his daughter in school, which Patel opposes. In the second half, certain violent scenes feel unnecessary. While some sequences are effective, others appear dragged and illogical. For instance, in one scene, Gangadhari is caught attempting to steal a Ganesh idol from Patel's house but is inexplicably let go unharmed, despite Patel's otherwise hostile intentions. While the climax is executed well, some character depth is lacking, particularly in the Sigam festival scenes, which fail to captivate. In one instance, when Patel (Ajay) kicks Bujjamma (Ananya Nagalla), the scene fails to evoke a strong reaction from the audience. On a positive note, the background music complements the rustic tone of the film, and the cinematography stands out with striking visuals. The songs, especially the one in the climax, are well-done.

PERFORMANCES

Yuva Chandra, as the protagonist, gives a sincere performance and fits the role well. Ananya Nagalla also performs capably as Bujjamma, though her role is largely confined to the second half. Her character could have been more fully developed, but she shines in her limited scenes. Thanasvi, playing the child, delivers a commendable performance. Ajay has a significant presence throughout the film, though his character lacks depth. Srikanth Aiyengar as the teacher, Noel as Seenu, and Priyanka Sharma as Ajay's wife all play their parts well.

VERDICT

Ultimately, *Pottel* tackles a thought-provoking topic but fails to fully realise it on screen. With more attention to certain elements, especially in the second half, it could have been a stronger film. The music, cinematography, and songs are well-crafted, with solid production values.





Content-based film *Jathara* on Nov 8

A new breed of filmmakers is trying out new narratives and presenting them in a creative way. Most likely, these captivating stories are causing a sensation in theaters. A thrilling new team is responsible for the film *Jathara,* bringing together multi-talented individuals with diverse viewpoints.

The producers are Radhakrishna Reddy and Shivashankar Reddy, with Sathish Babu Ratakonda as the director. Satish Babu is also starring in the main role in the film. The setting of the story is in Chittoor district, *Jathara* guarantees a gripping drama with a fresh premise that stands out from the rest. The producers are scheduling the movie to come out on November 8.

Deeya Raj plays the main female role, while RK Naidu, Gopal Reddy, Mahaboob Basha, and Sai Vikranth play supporting characters. The composition of music is done by Sreejith Edavana.



Kiran Abbavaram's pulse-pounding action ride with *KA*

The trailer for the highly anticipated period thriller *KA*, starring the talented Kiran Abbavaram, has been unveiled. This impressive trailer features unique elements typical of an action thriller. Nayan Sarika and Tanvi Ram star alongside Abbavaram as the leading ladies. Presented by Chinta Varalakshmi, the film is produced by Chinta Gopalakrishna Reddy under the banner of Srichakraas Entertainments, showcasing high production values. Directors Sujeeth and Sandeep bring to life a gripping story set against a village backdrop. *KA* is set for a grand theatrical release in Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada on Diwali.

In the trailer for *KA*, we see Abhinaya Vasudev, a postman in the picturesque village of Krishnagiri, which is uniquely surrounded by hills. The village experiences darkness only in the afternoon, adding to its geographical intrigue. Vasudev falls in love with a beautiful girl named Satyabhama, but his life takes a dramatic turn when he receives a letter addressed to Abhishek, dated April 22, 1979. A masked man threatens Vasudev, demanding to know the contents of this letter. The tension builds as viewers are left wondering about the letter's significance and why Vasudev is being pursued by the masked man and his gang. The trailer concludes with a surprise twist as Vasudev appears as a masked figure, declaring, *Jaathara Modalupedadama*.



Nagarjuna's invitation to Chiru

The 100th birth anniversary of legendary actor Akkineni Nageswara Rao was celebrated on September 20. At that time, ANR's son and actor Nagarjuna announced that this year's prestigious ANR would be conferred to Megastar Chiranjeevi in recognition of his contribution to Indian cinema. The award ceremony will be held on October 28 and the family wanted to make it a memorable event, to be attended by a host of celebrities from the film industry.

At the same time, Nagarjuna said that legendary Indian actor Amitabh Bachchan has accepted to attend this event as the chief guest, giving away the ANR award to Chiranjeevi.

On this occasion, actor Nagarjuna met Chiranjeevi and formally invited him for the ANR Award ceremony. While Akkineni Nageswara Rao was the first Telugu star to receive Padma Vibhushan, Chiranjeevi was recently honoured with Padma Vibhushan. "This year is extra special as we celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of my father, ANR garu! Honoured to invite Amitabh Bachchan ji and Megastar Chiranjeevi garu to the ANR Awards 2024 to mark this milestone! Let's make this award function unforgettable!" said Nagarjuna on his social media. The ANR award has previously been bestowed upon iconic personalities such as Devanand, Shabana Azmi, Vyjayantimala Bali, Anjali Devi, Lata Mangeshkar, K. Balachander, Hema Malini, Shyam Benegal and Amitabh Bachchan.

Kanguva will bring you a never-seen-before experience: Suriya

Tamil actor Suriya has been a popular actor among the Telugu audiences, making his film get released in Telugu. Now, the actor is currently promoting his upcoming film *Kanguva* vigorously, which is set to be released on November 14. The actor was in Mumbai the other day and is now back in the city. The actor feels that *Kanguva* is a very prestigious project for him. Directed by Siva, this film is a significant period action drama featuring Disha Patani and Bobby Deol in pivotal roles. KE Gnanavel Raja, Vamsi and Pramod are the producers.

Director Siva first entered the film industry with a Telugu movie called *Souryam* in 2008 before moving on to direct more Telugu films. Following that, he transitioned to working in Tamil films and made several before being given the chance to direct the high-budget film *Kanguva* with Suriya. He mentioned that being in Hyderabad after a long time always brings him a good feeling.

"I made *Kanguva* with immense passion alongside an extraordinary actor like Suriya. We started the script with the concept of creating a period film based on the conflicts among five tribes from less than a thousand years ago. This story has been shot on a grand scale with high production values," said Siva. He added that top director SS Rajamouli is a big inspiration to him because he has shown to elevate South Indian cinema. "I remade Rajamouli's *Vikramarkudu* in Tamil as 'Siruthai' and that film holds a special place for me," said Siva.

Actor Suriya thanked his fans and also appreciated all the partners involved in releasing *Kanguva*. "It's been two years since my last theatrical release, but I was incredibly touched by the response to the re-release of 'Surya Son of Krishnan.' I created *Kanguva* to provide you with a remarkable cinematic experience as a token of gratitude for your support. It took us two and a half years to craft a unique film unlike anything you've seen before, made possible by director Siva's passion," said Suriya about the film.

The actor said director Rajamouli is a big inspiration for him making films like *Kanguva*. "*Kanguva* is a straight Telugu movie rooted in Indian cinema. This is not just a film about a warrior; it's about a warrior who fights for his people and the dharma he believes in," said Suriya. The actor is also appearing on Balakrishna's talk show *Unstoppable*. "Participating in *Unstoppable* show was an unforgettable experience. Witnessing Balakrishna's punctuality, hard work, and passion made me realise why he has reached such great heights," said Suriya about Balakrishna.

The actor said that great movies can bring significant change to society. "For instance, someone became an IPS officer after watching *Kaakha Kaakha* and following the release of *Jai Bhim*, 300,000 people in Tamil Nadu received house, ration cards and all the necessary facilities," said Suriya. He added that for this *Kanguva*, 3,000 people worked every day, and it is through everyone's hard work that this remarkable film has come to fruition.



Team *Kannappa* visits Jyotirlingas and seeks blessings

Actor Mohan Babu, his son Vishnu Manchu, filmmaker Mukesh Kumar and actor Arpit Ranka went on a religious journey to the sacred temples of Kedarnath, Badrinath and Rishikesh. The team embarked on this sacred pilgrimage to seek divine blessings from these historic locations for their upcoming movie *Kannappa*. The group began their journey at Kedarnath, one of the twelve jyotirlingas devoted to Lord Shiva, and ended with a trip to Rishikesh.

"Our trip to Kedarnath, Badrinath and Rishikesh was a deeply personal and humbling experience. My aim is to visit all 12 Jyotirlingas before the release of our film *Kannappa* which is based on the biggest devotee of Lord Shiva," said Vishnu Manchu on his visit.

