

EXPANDING HORIZONS

Madagada Viewpoint in Araku set for a facelift

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a bid to enhance the tourism experience in the picturesque Araku Valley, plans have been unveiled by Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority (APTA) to develop the Madagada viewpoint, situated approximately 12 km from Araku.

The Madagada viewpoint, nestled in the lush landscapes surrounding Araku, is poised to become a major attraction for visitors seeking breathtaking vistas of the valley. The move aligns with the broader strategy of promoting Araku as a premier tourist destination in the region.

Regional Director of APTA Srinivas Pani, emphasised the commitment to elevating the tourism infrastructure in the area. "We have plans to develop the Madagada viewpoint, about 12 km from Araku," Srinivas Pani stated. This development is part of a comprehensive initiative to showcase the natural beauty and cultural richness of Araku Valley, drawing travelers from far and wide.

The Madagada viewpoint,



As plans for the Madagada viewpoint take shape, the Tourism department invites locals and tourists alike to look forward to a future where Araku Valley stands out not only for its natural splendour but also for the thoughtful and exciting additions that enhance the overall visitor experience.

with its strategic location, is expected to provide panoramic views of the sprawling landscapes and verdant valleys characteristic of the Araku region. The development project is set to include amenities that cater to the comfort and convenience of visitors, ensuring a memorable and enjoyable visit to this upcoming attraction.

As part of the recent enhancements, a thrilling addition near the famed Borra

Caves has been introduced - a 'zipline' that promises to add an adventurous edge to the visitor experience.

The zipline, known for its exhilarating nature, offers tourists a unique perspective as they soar through the verdant surroundings.

This initiative not only aims to boost tourism but also contribute to the economic growth of the region by creating opportunities for local businesses. The unveiling of such

projects reflects a concerted effort to balance the preservation of natural beauty with sustainable tourism development.

As plans for the Madagada viewpoint take shape, the Tourism department invites locals and tourists alike to look forward to a future where Araku Valley stands out not only for its natural splendour but also for the thoughtful and exciting additions that enhance the overall visitor experience.

Number of fraud...

Continued from Page 1

"But in the process of giving each one of us a better livelihood, we are also engaged in providing a better existence to our fellow citizens. That is the big power which all of you command as lawyers," he said.

Referring to the attire of judges and lawyers, the CJI said it reminds us that the "similarity of our attire is a symbol of the common existence which we share". It was for the members of the Bar to make the legal profession broad-based and inclusive, Justice Chandrachud said while highlighting the need to encourage young lawyers.

"And remember, ultimately, it is if you support the institution of justice, which is to ensure that you support the independence of your own judiciary, that the judiciary can truly be able to discharge its duties," he said. "If you are not giving to the judiciary its own sense of due, how will you expect them to discharge their own obligations towards society. Because your judges come from you and they return to you. They are not distinct from you," he said.

He said members of the Bar are also here for the betterment of the profession, to serve the cause of justice and to ensure that the other side of the profession, the judges, who are duty bound to act in aid of justice, continue to do so.

"You have to not merely protect your judges, but you have to hold them to account as well," he said. Sharing a story, Chandrachud said sometime back, one of his colleagues had an attack of dengue and there was a need for blood transfusion.

"But we drew on the credit of the blood which was given by our employees during the last blood donation camp my colleague came back to normalcy very quickly by the blood transfusion," he said.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Krishna Paksha

Tithi:

Chaturthi: Nov 30 02:25 PM to Dec 01 03:31 PM

Panchami:

Dec 01 03:31 PM to Dec 02 05:14 PM

Nakshatram:

Punarvasu: Nov 30 03:01 PM to Dec 01 04:40 PM

Pushya:

Dec 01 04:40 PM to Dec 02 06:54 PM

Rahukalam:

10:42 AM to 12:04 PM

Yamagandam:

2:50 PM to 4:13 PM

Varjyam:

01:25 AM to 03:10 AM

Gulika:

7:56 AM to 09:19 AM

Amritakalam:

02:06 PM to 03:49 PM

Abhijit Muhurtham:

11:42 AM to 12:26 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy

Temp: 34°

Humidity: 59%

Sunrise: 6:20 AM

Sunset: 5:33 PM

Updated: November 30, 2023 5:00 PM

'Breakfast with Community' marks World AIDS Day eve

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the eve of World AIDS Day, Andhra Pradesh State AIDS Control Society (APSACS) along with partners organised a get-together with the community, "Breakfast with Community". The programme began with a welcome address by Dr K Koteswari, APD APSACS, and Dr T Manjula Joint Director, IEC, and STI APSACS.

Then the Project Director of APSACS Dr SB Rajendra Kumar Laghimsetti interacted with the community members and requested them to reach out to his office for any help like education, shelter, etc. The Project Director encouraged children infected and affected by HIV to talk and share their career goals. The people living with HIV, children infected, and those affected by HIV have actively participated and entertained the audience. Many children enthusiastically came forward and performed dances.



As a kind gesture, the community members were given nutrition support and kids also received a school kit. On the eve of World AIDS Day, APSACS conducted painting/drawing competitions, and prizes were distributed to children.

The other dignitaries who attended the event were Dr. Suhasini, DMHO, Dr. J Usha Rani, DLATO HO NTR District, DACO Krishna district Dr G Samaram, Chairman of the Indian Red Cross Society NTR District addressed the gathering.

Dr. Kameshwara Prasad Joint Director BSD, Dr. Subramanyam Joint Director CST, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, PEPFAR Coordinator, Renuka, TNP +, APSACS partners YRG care, UNICEF, WHO, SHARE India, VHS, SAATHI and members from TI NGOs, network, CBOs have participated in the event.

Later the dignitaries had breakfast with the community members.

During the breakfast, the community members had an opportunity to share their experiences with the Project Director.

Hearing in...

Continued from Page 1

The CID has accused him of exerting pressure on officials to favour a certain company that was awarded the Fiber Net contract.

On Tuesday, the apex court issued a notice to Naidu on a plea filed by the state government against the decision of Andhra Pradesh High Court granting him regular bail in the alleged Skill Development Corporation case.

A bench of Justice T Mallikarjuna Rao of the Andhra Pradesh High Court on November 20 ordered that the TDP leader be released on regular bail on the bail bond already furnished by him.

Edge for....

Continued from Page 1

The TV9-Polstrat exit poll predicted a close race between the BRS and the Congress. The BRS is likely to get anywhere between 48 to 58 seats and the Congress 49 to 59 seats. The BJP will get 5 to 10 seats and the AIMIM will get 6 to 8 seats which can be crucial in forming the next government in Telangana.

SRM Univ-AP honoured for excellence in job creation at FICCI HEE Awards

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

SRM University-AP, Andhra Pradesh has been bestowed with "Excellence in Creating Employment" at the 9th FICCI Higher Education Excellence (HEE) Awards organized by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) on Wednesday. Dr Vinayak Kalluri, Dean - Academic Affairs, and Dr Karthik Rajendran, Associate Dean - Quality Assurance & Ranking, SRM University-AP received the award on behalf of the varsity for the institutions' exemplary contribution to creating employment success amongst students at the university.

SRM University-AP has



been ensuring 100% placement since its inception, and the university has formulated a system wherein the quality of outgoing students is on par with industry expectations. The revamped curricula, exemplary faculty with doctoral and post-doctoral degrees, and industry-orient-

ed experiential learning are some of the measures undertaken to ensure the quality of students.

"Receiving special recognition from FICCI for Excellence in Creating Employment is indeed a proud moment for SRM University-AP. The graduate outcome is our ultimate

goal and this worthy achievement has inspired us to further work in significantly improving the graduate outcomes through greater academic rigour and innovative research", commented Prof Manoj K Arora, Vice Chancellor, SRM University-AP.

Pro-Chancellor, SRM University-AP, Dr P Sathyanarayanan congratulated the team and stated that the award is a commendable recognition for the Placement Cell of the Directorate of Corporate Relations & Career Services (CR&CS). He lauded the CR&CS Team for their continuous and consistent efforts in honing students' skills to make them industry-ready.

APJAC-Amaravatis...

Continued from Page 1

Venkateswarlu also lamented Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's failure to disburse dues scheduled for payment by April 2022, emphasising the lack of an official response from government officers. He urged the government to expeditiously fulfill promises outlined in the Cabinet Sub-Committee.

The meeting also addressed pending dues related to the General Provident Fund (GPF), Andhra Pradesh Government Life Insurance (APGLI), and other saved funds.

Venkateswarlu demanded the implementation of the Employees Health Scheme for all retired individuals and their family members.

APJAC - Amaravati general secretary P Damodara Rao, president of the retired employees' association PSSN Sastry, and leaders VV Murali Krishnam Naidu, and B Kishore Kumar, were among those present.

APSSDC to address skills shortage in Indian market

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Government, through the Andhra Pradesh Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC), is planning a one-of-a-kind initiative - 'Leading towards Next Age Programmes.' This project has the potential to revolutionise the state's talent development environment, addressing the perennial problem of skills shortages in the Indian labour market. As part of this visionary programme, the Government aims to bridge the gap between industry demands and workforce skills, positioning Andhra Pradesh as a leader in the rapidly evolving landscape of skills development and employment.

S Suresh Kumar Principal Secretary, Dept. of Skills Development & Training stated, "The 'Leading Towards Next Age Programmes' concept epitomises our commitment to transforming aspirations into accomplishments."



We construct not only careers, but also a resilient and affluent future through skills development. This project aspires to shape destiny, link opportunities with goals, and propel our children into a world of limitless possibilities where their abilities become the currency of a prosperous future."

Andhra Pradesh has strategically integrated its skilling approach to create better placement opportunities for unemployed people by acquiring job-specific skills. In 2019, the Government launched a new integrated Skill Development Ecosystem, integrating all skills and vocational education

wings under the Department of Skills Development & Training (SD&T). The SD&T coordinates numerous wings, giving long-term and short-term vocational and technical training to a varied pool of users. The department has taught 14,42,134 individuals and placed 3,57,334 people in 98 career roles across 20 different industries.

"Investing in skills development is a strategic allocation of resources that transcends the immediate need for employment," said Buganna Rajendranath, Finance Minister of Andhra Pradesh. "It is an investment in the fundamental fabric of our state's future."

The Leading towards Next Age Programme is an important step towards a future of sustainable economic development in which our youth not only find jobs but also create opportunities, promoting a dynamic ecosystem of innovation and advancement."

APTransco, Discoms file ARR for network business

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a significant development, the State Transmission Utility, APTransco, along with the three major Distribution Companies in the State, namely APCPDCL, APEPDCL, and APSPDCL, jointly filed their Multi-Year Aggregate Revenue Requirement (ARR) for the network business.

This filing pertains to the upcoming 5th control period, spanning from the fiscal year 2024-25 to 2028-29. The submission took place before the Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (APERC) in Guntur on Thursday.

For the forthcoming financial



year (FY) 2024-25, the APDISCOMs have submitted their annual ARR specifically for their Retail Supply activity.

The filings were officially received by Chairman APERC, Justice Nagarjuna Reddy, and Member APERC,

Thakur Rama Singh.

The filing process witnessed the active participation of key figures in the energy sector, including Special Chief Secretary Energy GoAP and CMD APTransco, K Vijayanand. Joining him were KVN

Chakradhar Babu, JMD APTransco, and the CMDs of the three Distribution Companies—Prudhivitej (CMD APEPDCL), Padmanjanrdhan Reddy (CMD CPDCL), and K Santosha Rao (CMD SPDCL).

Directors and senior officials from the AP Power sector were also present, making the event a comprehensive representation of the state's power industry.

The filings mark a crucial step in the strategic planning for the next control period, reflecting the commitment of the utilities to ensuring a robust and sustainable power infrastructure for Andhra Pradesh.

Advantage Cong in C'garh; hope...

Continued from Page 1

In Madhya Pradesh, while Jan Ki Baat exit poll predicted that the BJP would get 100-122 seats and the Congress 102-125, Republic TV-Matrise forecast 118-130 seats for the BJP and 97-107 for the Congress.

TV9 Bharatvarsh Polstrat said the BJP would get 106-116 and the Congress would get 111-121.

Today's Chanakya, however, predicted a massive victory for the BJP in Madhya Pradesh, forecasting that the BJP would get 151 (plus minus 12 seats) and the Congress 74 (plus minus 12 seats).

Jist-TIF-NAI said the Congress was enjoying 2018-like edge in Madhya Pradesh, predicting 107-124 seats for the party as against the BJP's 102-119.

In Rajasthan, India Today-Axis My India forecast a tight race, predicting 86-106 seats

for the Congress, 80-100 seats for the BJP and others 9-18.

Ki Baat pollsters forecast that the BJP would get 100-122 and 62-85 for the Congress, TV9 Bharatvarsh Polstrat predicted 100-110 for the BJP and 90-100 for the Congress.

Times Now ETG poll predicts 108-128 seats for the BJP and 56-72 for the Congress in Rajasthan.

Jist-TIF-NAI predicted that in Rajasthan there would be continuation of the state's revolving door tradition, forecasting 110 seats for the BJP and the Congress 70.

For Chhattisgarh, while ABP News-C Voter predicted 36-48 seats for the BJP and 41-53 for the Congress, India Today-Axis My India forecast 36-46 seats for the BJP and 40-50 seats for the Congress.

India TV-CNX forecast 30-40 seats for the BJP and 46-56 seats for the Congress.

According to Jan Ki Baat, the BJP would get 34-45 and the Congress would get 42-53.

Today's Chanakya predicted that the BJP would get 33 seats (plus-minus 8 seats) and the Congress would bag a clear majority 57 seats (plus-minus 8).

For Telangana, while India TV-CNX forecast 63-79 seats for the Congress, 31-47 for the BRS, 2-4 for the BJP and 5-7 for the AIMIM, Jan Ki Baat forecast that the Congress would get 48-64 seats, the BRS would get 40-55, BJP 7-13 and AIMIM 4-7.

Republic TV-Matrise pre-

dicted that in Telangana, the Congress would get 58-68 seats, BRS 46-56, BJP 4-9 and AIMIM 5-9. TV9 Bharatvarsh Polstrat stated that the Congress would get 49-59 seats and the BRS would get 48-58.

In Mizoram, while India TV-CNX said the MNF would get 14-18, ZPM 12-16, Congress 8-10 and BJP 0-2, ABP News-C Voter said MNF would get 15-21, ZPM 12-18 and Congress 2-8.

Jan Ki Baat said the MNF would get 10-14 seats, ZPM 15-25 seats, Congress 5-9 and the BJP 0-2.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

No. 683 to 755/TO/e-procurement/2023-24

Date: 28-11-2023

Online tenders are being invited for execution of 73 works of providing drinking water amenities in villages and other works under the limits of Guntur under Jal-Jeevan Mission at an estimated cost of Rs. 137.61 Lakh. Tender documents can be accessed online from 02-12-2023. For details, contact

www.appeprocurement.gov.in for further details.

SO: Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Guntur

APCRDA destroys two unauthorised layouts

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) authorities on Thursday destroyed internal roads and survey stones of two real estate ventures in which unauthorised layouts were laid at Sheri Narasannapalem (SN Palem) of Bapulapadu mandal in the Krishna district without obtaining approval from the CRDA. Also, they removed water pipelines in these layouts besides destroying the drainage system.

APCRDA Commissioner Vivek Yadav has given directions to the officials concerned to destroy unauthorised layouts within the limits of the CRDA. As per directions of the Commissioner, officials destroyed the unauthorised layout at Sheri Narasannapalem (SN Palem) village and they removed the survey stones and internal roads by using excavators. The authorities destroyed the layout in the RS No.37/1C and



36/1D in this village.

APCRDA Commissioner Vivek Yadav warned the real estate people that selling plots without obtaining permission from the APCRDA was a crime and that they were punishable. Further, he suggested to people that they would lose if they purchased unauthorised plots in these layouts. Subsequently, he said that they would also be responsible for the actions.

Meanwhile, he told the people that those who purchase plots in the unauthorised layouts should not start any building construction. If anybody purchases those plots, they would not be issued permission

for construction in the unauthorised layouts, he said, and added that the CRDA would suffered income due to these real estate ventures which do not obtain permission, he said.

He clarified that permissions would be given to the ventures that followed the rules and regulations and provided infrastructure facilities such as roads, water supply, drainage, and other amenities. He asked the people to inform the CRDA officials about the unauthorised layouts to prevent further loss to people. The people can complain to CRDA about unauthorised layouts on WhatsApp No.7095599838 and website http://crda.ap.gov.in.



Now, micro stay AC room services at Vja railway station

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Narendra A Patil, Divisional Railway Manager, Vijayawada Division, SCR declared the micro stay facility AC room services open for the public on Thursday at Vijayawada Railway Station. This Micro Stay Facility is located on the first floor above East booking Office-II at Vijayawada Railway Station.

This Micro Stay Facility AC Rooms set up contains 19 air-conditioned vacant rooms along with a cafeteria facility exclusively for bonafide railway passengers. Wi-Fi, bath kit, laundry, snacks, and beverages services are also available for the passengers. The contract is awarded to Balaji Food and Beverages for five years under the Non-Fare Revenue initiative of the Commercial Department.

The new facility comes under the "PAY AS YOU USE" model, departing from the traditional 24-hour room booking concept. The facility provides passengers with a flexible and classy space for relaxation, offering various in-house amenities. Passengers can limit the duration of their stay as per their convenience in the time slots of 3, 6, 9, or 24 hours. Both offline and online booking services are available.

Srikakulam ORR still a pipe dream

Conceived a decade ago, the project is bogged down in delays

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

The Outer Ring Road (ORR) project around Srikakulam city, a dream envisioned nearly a decade ago, continues to remain a distant reality, trapped in the quagmire of delays and bureaucratic hurdles. Initially proposed in 2013 by the then-Congress government, the project aimed to alleviate traffic congestion and streamline connectivity within the city.

The initial blueprint for the ORR outlined an ambitious 12 km stretch, connecting multiple areas around Srikakulam city. However, after careful consideration, the project was scaled down to a more manageable 5 km. Despite this adjustment, the project encountered significant roadblocks during the verification process at Peddapadu village, bringing it to a standstill.

Over the past decade, the ORR project has remained confined to paper, its potential benefits unrealized. Critics have pointed to a

lack of proper planning and commitment from the authorities as the primary reasons for the project's stagnation. This delay has exacerbated traffic woes within Srikakulam city, causing inconvenience and frustration for residents.

In a recent development, officials from the Srikakulam Municipal Corporation (SMC) received suggestions from Dharmana Prasada Rao, the MLA and Minister for Revenue from the ruling YSRCP. However, opposition leaders from the TDP have dismissed these developments as mere election stunts, lacking any concrete action plan.

Amidst the ongoing debate and political rhetoric, residents of Srikakulam remain hopeful for a resolution to the long-standing issue. The ORR project holds the potential to transform the city's infrastructure, easing traffic congestion and enhancing connectivity. As the city gears up for further development, the ORR's realization remains crucial for its



Guv takes part in 'Viksit Bharat Yatra' in Masula

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Governor S Abdul Nazeer participated as chief guest in the 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra' programme held in Machilipatnam on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that it is a nationwide campaign to raise awareness through outreach activities to achieve saturation of schemes of the Government of India, covering all urban and rural areas with an aim to reach out to the vulnerable sections of people who are eligible under various schemes but have not availed of the benefits so far.

The Governor said that the flagship programmes like Har Ghar Jal, PM Poshan,



Ayushman Bharat Yojana, PM Awas Yojana, Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana, PM SVANidhi, PM Ujjwala Yojana, PM Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman, PM Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana, are aimed at to be implemented on

saturation basis.

On the occasion, Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually participated in a nationwide live programme and interacted with the beneficiaries from different States and Union Territories and

addressed the people to create awareness among all eligible people to avail of the benefits provided under various flagship programmes. On this occasion, a member of women's self-groups from the Prakasam district shared her

experience of flying the drone given to the group, to be used for spraying fertilisers, etc. Simhadri Ramesh Babu, MLA, Avanigadda, U Harika, Chairperson, Zilla Parishad, Krishna district, MVS Nagi Reddy, Vice Chairman, Andhra Pradesh State Agriculture Mission, and other officials and public representatives attended the programme. P Raja Babu, Collector & District Magistrate, Krishna district, presided over the programme.

Earlier, beneficiaries of several programmes shared their experiences and achievers under certain programmes were felicitated. The 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp' pledge was also administered on the occasion.

Rich tributes paid to Gurajada

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Department of Telugu of PB Siddhartha Arts and Science College, Mogalrajapuram, on Thursday, observed the death anniversary of Mahakavi Gurajada Venkata Appa Rao.

NCC cadets, NSS volunteers, and student club members wore Tricolour caps and formed a map of India on the college grounds.

On the occasion of Gurajada's death anniversary, they sang his

popular poem Desamuni Preminchumanna. Firstly, Siddhartha Academy of General and Technical Education Secretary Paladugu Lakshman Rao hoisted the national flag.

Lakshmana Rao said that Gurajada Venkata Appa Rao was a great poet and he inspired many with his writings, especially on social themes. He told the students that they should know about Gurajada and his writings and how they are useful for society. Particularly, Telugu stu-

dents should know the complete life history of Gurajada, he added.

PB Siddhartha College Director Vemuri Baburao, Academic Dean Prof Rajesh C Jampala, Principal Dr Meka Ramesh, Head of Department of Telugu Dr N Siva Kumar, faculty members Dr P Neeraja, Dr Ch Masthan Rao, Dr AV Ramana Murthy, other department heads, faculty, club in-charges and NCC, NSS programme officers were present.



World Cyber Security Day observed

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Computer Science Department of Sri Durga Malleswara Siddhartha Mahila Kalasala organised an event to mark 'World Cyber Security Day' on the college premises in Vijayawada on Thursday. The event saw active participation from students, who showcased informative posters highlighting the significance of Cyber Security. During the event, students elucidated on the prevention of computer hardware and software theft, emphasizing the role of cybersecurity as a protective measure. In an era where the present generation heavily relies on computers, the internet, Bluetooth, and Wi-Fi, the students underscored the importance of safeguarding digital assets.

Jagan's rule impartial: Vishnu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Planning Board Vice Chairman and Central MLA Malladi Vishnu has said that with the impartial rule of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, sustainable development has been possible across the State and the living standards of the poor have improved. He participated in the 'Why AP Needs Jagan' programme held on Thursday in the premises of Ward 211 Secretariat along with Deputy Mayor Sreesailaja Reddy and local corporator Penumatsa Sirisha Sathya.

On the occasion, the party flag was hoisted by paying tributes to the portrait of the great leader YS Rajasekhara Reddy. Later, the Board of Welfare Development Programmes was inaugurated at the Secretariat.

On this occasion, Malladi



Vishnu said that CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has the honor of taking development and welfare forward in the state. He said that the YSR Congress government is the only government in independent India that has benefited 92 percent

of people in rural areas and 87 percent of people in urban areas through various schemes.

He pointed out that Chandrababu could not undertake even one programme like Navaratna while TDP was in power.

HAL donates Rs 1.51 cr to Hridayalaya

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Bengaluru-based Hindustan Aeronautics Limited has donated Rs 1.51 crore to the Padmavati Children's Heart Care hospital towards the purchase of medical equipment.

An MoU was signed by representatives of the HAL and TTD EO AV Dharma Reddy along with hospital Director Dr Srinath Reddy on Thursday at the TTD Administrative Building in Tirupati.

Speaking on the occasion CB Ananta Krishnan, CMD of HAL said the hospital under TTD is providing excellent service to the poor and saved many children with heart ailments.

The HAL contribution is towards necessary operation theatres, anaesthesia workstations, and ventilators with monitors as part of the company's CSR efforts.

Spl portal for complaints on offences under SC/ST Act

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao has said that the State government has launched a special portal to implement the SC, ST (Prevention of Atrocity) Act more effectively. Such a portal has not been implemented in any other State in the country. The victims may file their complaints on this portal from anywhere in the country, he said.

In a press release issued here on Thursday, Collector Dilli Rao said that based on the complaint's nature, it would be sent to the officials concerned immediately. For example, complaints pertaining to police FIR, charge sheet etc. would be sent to the Police Department, he said. Complaints related to compensation would be sent to the Revenue Department. The concerned departments would log in and take necessary steps to resolve the issues by updating them from time to time, he said.



UJJIVAN SFB OPENS BRANCH IN CITY

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Expanding its footprint into Andhra Pradesh Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (Ujjivan SFB) launched its first branch in the historic city of Vijayawada on Thursday. As a part of this expansion, the Bank will open

three branches in the region, namely Vijayawada, Rajahmundry, and Visakhapatnam. This move marks the bank's presence in 26 states and Union territories, with 700 branches serving over 79 lakh customers nationwide.

Physical test for SI aspirants on December 4

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The AP High Court has given important orders on the appointments of Sub-Inspector of Police in AP.

The candidates approached the court claiming that there was injustice in measuring the height of the candidates and the AP high court ordered all the petitioners to appear before the court on Monday (December 4) for measurements.

Petitioner's lawyer Jada Sravan Kumar filed an affidavit that the person who had previously worked as a reserve sub-inspector was also rejected as he was not tall enough.

The lawyer reported to the High Court that all the petitioners were ready to comply with the High Court's order that the height of all the candidates would be taken in the HC premises.



GIMSR white coat ceremony welcomes new medical professionals

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The GITAM Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (GIMSR) marked a significant milestone in its history as it hosted the white coat ceremony for the newly enrolled MBBS students of the 2023 batch on Thursday at the GITAM Deemed to be University campus.

This momentous occasion signified the symbolic initiation of the budding physicians into the noble medical profession. Clad in their pristine white coats, the students recited the

Hippocratic Oath for the first time, affirming their commitment to uphold the ethical principles of medicine. Gracing the ceremony as chief Guest, renowned Orthopedic specialist Dr S Adinarayana Rao, eloquently emphasized the vital role of medical professionals in society. He underscored the privilege associated with providing medical care and the responsibility of building trust with patients and their families. His words resonated with the students, instilling in them a sense of purpose and dedication to

their chosen path.

Dr Gitanjali Batmanabane, Pro Vice-Chancellor of GIMSR, shed light on the symbolic significance of the white coat in a doctor's journey. She conveyed that by donning this coat, the MBBS students were accepting the noble duty of dedicating their lives to addressing the health needs of society. She emphasized that the white coat bestows identity, confidence, and respect upon the wearer, bringing forth both challenges and responsibilities.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr

SP Rao, Dean of GIMSR, underscored the noble nature of the medical profession, emphasizing the hard work, dedication, commitment, compassion, and empathy it demands from practitioners. In a noteworthy announcement, he revealed that GIMSR medical college and hospital have introduced scholarships for students who secured exemplary ranks in the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET). This groundbreaking initiative has benefitted approximately 40% of the students from the 2023 batch, representing 19 states.



147 stolen/lost mobile phones recovered

PNS ■ ELURU

The district police have recovered 147 lost/stolen mobile phones worth Rs 28.55 lakh and handed them over to the owners.

SP Mary D Prashanthi told the media that the police used IMEI technology, found those who were using the lost/stolen mobile phones, and recovered them. The police in the 10 phase recovered 147 lost/stolen mobile phones worth Rs 28,66,500 and handed them over to the owners.

The SP said that a special toll-free number 9550351100 was set up especially to receive complaints on stolen/lost mobile phones. On the directions of SP Mary Prashanthi, a police team led by Central Crime Station Inspector Ch V Muralikrishna recovered 147 lost/stolen mobile phones during the 10th phase. The mobile phones were recovered in WG Godavari, NTR, Konaseema, Krishna, and Visakhapatnam districts and also in Telangana



state.

The Eluru district police recovered 80 lost/stolen mobile phones in the first phase worth Rs 16,00,000, 94 mobile phones in the second phase worth Rs 20,50 lakh, 108 mobile phones in the third phase, and 103 mobile phones in the four times worth Rs 22 lakh.

In the fifth phase between December 22 and January 23, the police recovered 116 lost/stolen mobile phones worth Rs 25,66,384, 207

mobile phones in the sixth phase worth Rs 41.40 lakh, 113 mobile phones in the seventh phase worth Rs 22.60, 182 mobile phones in the 8 th phase worth Rs 36.40 lakh, 175 mobile phones in the 9 th phase worth Rs 36.75 lakh.

So far the district police have recovered 1,325 lost/stolen mobile phones out of 2,522, worth Rs 2,71,19,684 and the recovery is 53%. The police arrested 10 persons in this connection and registered 12 cases against them.

Collector, SP, Chief Whip inspect steps for CM's visit

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

District Collector P Prashanthi, Chief Whip Grandhi Srinivas and SP U Ravi Prakash inspected the arrangements being made for the programme of Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy will participate in a programme to be held in Bhimavaram on December 8. The Chief Minister will release the Vidya Dheevana benefits to the students and address a public meeting on the day.

Chief Minister's programme coordinator and MLC Talashila Raghuram, the Collector, the



SP, and the Whip visited the venue of the public meeting and the helipad and inspected the ongoing arrangements on

Thursday. They made some suggestions to the officials in this regard.

They inspected the layout

located near Vishnu College and decided to set up a helipad on the premises of Lutheran High School.

The public meeting will be held on the layout located adjacent to Grandhi Venkateswara Rao Junior College on the bypass road. A trail run was conducted with a private bus from the helipad to a public meeting venue. The Collector ordered the municipal commissioner to take steps to clean the area around the Lutheran high school.

The Collector, SP, and coordinator held a meeting with the officials and reviewed the arrangements for the Chief

Minister's programme.

The Collector directed the officials to complete the construction of the helipad and the barricading at the earliest. Coordinator Raghuram directed the officials not to remove plants on either side of the road. The shops should not be closed during the Chief Minister's programme, he told them. State Kyathriya Corporation chairman P Srinivasa Raju, DRO B Shivanarayana Reddy, RDO K Srinivasulu Raju, R&B officer B Lokeswara Rao, and other officials were among those who accompanied the Collector and the SP.

20-year jail term for convict in rape case

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The Ongole POCSO Court sentenced the convict in the rape of a minor girl to 20 years imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 1000 here on Thursday.

On April 16, 2020, the victim was alone at home as her parents went to the field for work. Taking an advantage, the accused Ch Venkateswara Reddy (53) lured the minor girl with a chocolate, took her inside his house, and sexually

assaulted her. He also threatened to kill her if she revealed it to her parents.

The then ASI Sai Reddy registered a case in Darsi PS under the POCSO Act and then DSP K. Prakasarao conducted a thorough investigation arrested the accused and filed a charge sheet in the court. After the hearings, the POCSO Court Judge M.A.Somasekar sentenced the accused to imprisonment for 20 years and a fine of Rs.1000. Also, the judge asked the district legal service authority

to provide compensation of Rs 50,000 to the minor girl.

The District SP especially appreciated Darsi DSPs K.Prakash Rao, Ashok Vardhan, and Special PP r Y.Venkateswarlu who played a major role in getting the accused to punishment in the above case.

There is zero tolerance towards anyone committing sexual abuse and atrocities on children and women, SP Malika Garg warned.



MP gives a clap to 'Muhurtam' shot of Telugu flick

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Rajahmundry MP Margani Bharat Ram gave a clap to the opening scene of a Telugu future film being shot in the city on Thursday.

The MP gave a clap to the muhurtam shot on the hero

and heroine. The Telugu movie is being shot in the city and surrounding areas. The Telugu film is being produced by the Vigneswara Creations Production number 1. The MP conveyed best wishes to the producer and the film unit crew.

Utilize Central, State welfare schemes: Magunta

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Local MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy has called upon the people to utilise the welfare scheme benefits being provided by the State and Central governments.

The MP participated in the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra (VBSY) of the Central government here on Thursday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the programme from New Delhi virtually. The Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra is being organized across the country to create awareness among people on the Central government-sponsored welfare schemes.

The Pakala village in Sinkarayakona mandal was selected for the programme in

the state. Collector AS Dinesh Kumar, the VBSY programme state in-charge M Ramachandrudu, SEARCH CEO Mohammad Intiaz, and Joint Collector K Srinivasulu was among those who took part in the programme.

Self Help Group member K Venkataramanamma spoke to the Prime Minister on the occasion. She apprised the Prime Minister of the benefits of Central government schemes which she got.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, MP Srinivasulu Reddy said that the Central government is also implementing various welfare schemes.

Awareness is being created among people in every village



on the Central government schemes and including the eligible people in the schemes.

Collector Dinesh Kumar said that people would be made aware of the welfare schemes through the VBSY in all the secretariats of the district. The Collector asked all to draw inspiration

from Venkataramanamma, who came

forward to use technology in agriculture in the villages. The Collector apprised the government machinery for making arrangements for the VBSY on war footing to make the programme a success.

VBSY in-charge Ramachandrudu hoped that Bharat would become a developed country by 2047. The

VBSY would be organized across the country till January 26, 2024, to sensitize people on the 17 welfare schemes being implemented by the Central government in all states, he said.

"The VBSY is being organized to provide welfare benefits and also by making people aware of the changing technology and getting a better livelihood through its use," Ramachandrudu said.

The beneficiaries of various schemes were given cheques for the programmes. RDO Visweswara Rao, ZP vice chairman Aruna, and MPP Katta Sobha Rani were among those who participated in the programme.

APNRTS holds awareness drive on safe migration abroad

PNS ■ NARASAPURAM

A large number of people from the State are increasingly seeking employment opportunities abroad, drawn by the promise of better prospects. Regrettably, some who migrate to Gulf countries find themselves ensnared by unscrupulous agents, encountering challenges due to a lack of awareness.

In response to this issue, the Andhra Pradesh Non-Resident Telugu Society (APNRTS) has embarked on a mission to raise awareness in migration-prone regions, in line with the directives of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Under the able guidance of Venkat S Medapati, President of APNRTS, the society, in collaboration with District Collectors, Police, Revenue, and District Administration Officials, conducted an enlightening awareness program on safe migration for prospective migrants planning to go abroad. This event took place on Thursday in



Narasapuram, West Godavari district.

During the programme, DSP G Paideshawar Rao underscored the prevalence of unscrupulous agents exploiting individuals in pursuit of overseas employment. He highlighted the lack of sufficient information and support faced by many potential migrants, leading to challenging situations abroad. Commending APNRTS's Safe Migration Awareness Campaign, he acknowledged the initiative's

role in equipping potential migrants with the necessary knowledge and resources to make informed decisions.

CI K Govind Rao (Rural) issued a cautionary note against illegal migration, particularly in rural areas. He urged potential migrants to exercise caution against false promises of lucrative employment abroad and advised seeking guidance from government-authorized recruiting agencies such as APNRTS.

These agencies, he emphasized, provide comprehensive assis-



tance to those seeking employment overseas. Stressing the significance of safe and legal migration procedures, he encouraged individuals to contact APNRTS for accurate information and guidance, actively participating in awareness meetings to gain valuable insights for informed decision-making about traveling abroad.

CI Srinivas (Urban) emphasised the importance of understanding foreign laws, cultures, and traditions before embarking on journeys abroad. He

advised prospective migrants to conduct thorough research, familiarizing themselves with local customs and regulations.

Individuals planning to go abroad or currently residing overseas can avail themselves of assistance by contacting APNRTS through their 24/7 helpline numbers: 0863 2340678 or WhatsApp: 85000 27678. The society remains committed to providing support and guidance to ensure safe and informed migration practices.

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'HIV/AIDS impact extends far beyond medical realm'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

World AIDS Day, observed annually on December 1st each year, stands as a global reminder of the ongoing battle against HIV/AIDS. The day originated back in 1988, conceived by the World Health Organization (WHO) to raise awareness, commemorate those we've lost, support those living with the virus, and educate the world with prevention strategies. This year's theme is "Let Communities Lead," which underscores the pivotal role communities play in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Dr Harika Uppalapati, Consultant, General Physician, at Manipal Hospital said that HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) attacks the immune system, weakening the body's ability to fight infections and diseases.



Over time, if left untreated, HIV can progress to AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome), leading to severe health complications and even death. It also has a viral effect on mental and emotional well-being, relationships, and soci-

etal integration.

Dr Harika states that the impact of HIV/AIDS extends far beyond the medical realm, affecting individuals, families, and entire communities. Stigma and discrimination against those living with HIV remain prevalent, hindering access to treatment and support. Understanding and compassion are crucial in combating this societal barrier.

She said that advancements in medicine have transformed HIV/AIDS from a once-debilitating diagnosis to a manageable chronic condition. Antiretroviral therapy (ART) has revolutionized treatment, enabling individuals with HIV to lead longer and healthier lives. Moreover, preventative measures like PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) offer protection to those at high risk of contracting the virus.

'KCR changes seat when he smells defeat'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Reacting to exit poll results TPCC President Revanth Reddy said that KCR would change constituencies whenever he is on the verge of defeat and declared that KCR is going to be defeated in Kamareddy.

"The Congress saved democracy. Thank you for defeating KCR in Kamareddy. KCR changes constituency whenever he smells defeat. It is commendable



Congress government is going to take charge on December 9. We have faith in the people. Let's fight whoever is elected. The KCR media did not come forward as the results are not in their favour," he said."A challenge to KTR. Have you missed the exit polls? If they are true, will you apologise to the people? The opposition and the ruling party should act responsibly. If KCR wins he acts like a king and if he loses he is a slave. The Congress has

restored democracy. It gives confidence to all sections of society. Media will also get freedom from today. We are not rulers, but servants. The four crore people of TS have allowed us to serve them. Our first and last enemies are the four members of KCR's family. The BRS will not cross 25 seats," Revanth said.

BRS WILL WIN 70 SEATS

● KTR pooh-poohs exit polls

NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao said that the party led by Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar would return to power with over 70 seats.

"On December 3, it will be an egg on your face, the BRS will get nothing less than 70 seats in Telangana and KCR will lead the next government. I ask all my party workers not to go by exit polls. The national media conducts surveys by speaking to just 200 people. It is the same national media which went wrong earlier with their exit polls. Out of the five exit polls, only one got it right in 2018," he said on Thursday.

"On December 3, it will be an egg on your (media houses publishing exit polls) face and on your reputation. Your institution's credibility will be at stake. When people are still queuing up to vote how can they declare results? How can you publish such exit polls? It is meaningless for the ECI to revise timings. These exit polls



"I called the Chief Election Commissioner and asked him why exit poll results are allowed to be published when people are still waiting to vote"

will affect the morale of candidates. Do you (media houses) have the guts to publish the

right numbers afterwards? Do you have the courage to accept your fault? Unfortunately, you don't. I want to convey to BRS cadres not to believe exit polls. We are 100 per cent sure our government will come to power. Let us hope that we will win with bigger numbers. Once the full numbers are out, then we can analyse. Let's hold our horses and talk about it on December 3," KTR said.

He also criticised the Election Commission for allowing exit polls to be aired at 5.30 pm while many voters were still queuing up to vote.

"I called the Chief Election Commissioner and asked him why exit poll results are allowed to be published when people are still waiting to vote. Why not ensure exit polls are published after polling is over? We have seen these exit polls in the past too and most of them were wrong. I promise to all supporters of KCR and the BRS that we will get nothing less than 70 seats and we will form the next government," he said.

KCR, wife vote in Chintamadaka

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao voted in Chintamadaka village in his native Siddipet district in Telangana on Thursday.

Accompanied by his wife Shobha Rao, the BRS Chief participated in the polling process at a booth in the village. He greeted voters with folded hands before returning from the polling booth.

Chintamadaka village is a part of Siddipet constituency, where his nephew Health Minister T. Harish Rao is seeking re-election.

Industries Minister KT Rama Rao, Congress leader Revanth Reddy, and Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy also voted. Celebrities like Allu Arjun, Chiranjeevi and Jr. NTR also exercised their franchise.

Expressing hope that the BRS would form a government for the third time in the state, KTR tweeted, "Getting reports from all over the state.

CAR in Top Gear. Jai Telangana."

Political leaders including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge urged the public to exercise their franchise.

"I call upon my brothers and sisters in Telangana to vote in record numbers and strengthen our democracy. I urge youth, especially first-time voters, to exercise their right to vote," tweeted Modi.

Union Minister Amit Shah tweeted, "Only a corruption-free and pro-poor

government can work selflessly for Telangana. I appeal to the people of Telangana to come out in large numbers and elect a government whose priority is empowerment and not appeasement."

"No force on earth can stop an idea whose time has come," tweeted Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge urging the people of Telangana, especially first-time voters, to exercise their franchise.

WE ARE SERVANTS

Revanth confident of Congress victory

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC President Revanth Reddy said that he is happy to defeat KCR

Kamareddy as he had been tormenting Telangana for the last 10 years and that Telangana has once again proved its dynamism.

Speaking to the media at Kamareddy on Thursday, Revanth paid tributes to the immortal Srikantha Chary who was martyred in the final stages of the Telangana movement. The Telangana movement took off after Srikantha Chary died on December 3, he said, adding that coincidentally the Telangana election results too are coming out on December 3.

He said that the first statement was made on December 9, 2009. Now, coincidentally on the same day, Telangana will be freed from the rule of 'aristocrats', he said.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

The CAA scare

Amit Shah rakes up citizenship Act amid State elections, much to the consternation of minorities

Union Home Minister Amit Shah's recent statement regarding the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) has reignited a vigorous debate and speculation. The CAA, a bone of contention since being introduced in December 2019, aims to provide citizenship to persecuted minorities from neighbouring Muslim-majority countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. At the time, it faced widespread protests and criticism over its potential impact on India's secular principles and the rights of religious minorities. This time again, Shah's reiteration about the CAA's implementation has triggered doubts and discussions. Due to its association with the National Register of Citizens (NRC), the fear of potential discrimination and exclusion – especially against the Muslim community – fueled protests across the nation. The Government's response to these protests involved reassurances that the CAA was not meant to harm any particular community and that it aimed to provide a haven for persecuted minorities from the neighbouring countries. However, the controversy surrounding the Act persisted, leading to an unspecified delay in its implementation. But due to nation-wide protests Government chose to put it on the backburner. Meanwhile other issues took over and CAA was almost forgotten. But with Amit Shah's statement it is back on the centre stage. Proponents argue that the CAA is a humanitarian gesture, offering refuge to neighbours facing religious persecution. They contend that it aligns with India's tradition of sheltering persecuted communities and upholds the principle of religious freedom. On the



other hand, critics express concerns about the Act's potential impact on India's secular fabric. They argue that by selectively providing citizenship based on religion, the CAA undermines the principle of equal treatment for all regardless of religious affiliation. Critics fear it may set a precedent that challenges the secular foundation of the Constitution. Furthermore, the CAA has been closely associated with the NRC, a process aimed at identifying and expelling undocumented immigrants. The combination of CAA and NRC has raised apprehensions about possible discrimination and exclusion, particularly affecting vulnerable communities who may struggle to produce the necessary documentation. Shah's statement on the CAA's implementation, especially during Assembly polls, raises questions about the timing and political motivations. Elections often bring specific policy issues to the fore as leaders seek to rally support. The CAA, with its polarising nature, can be strategically used to appeal to certain voter bases. The nation does need a comprehensive refugee policy but that must not be discriminatory, to say the least. Besides, dislocating people living in India for generations would be inhumane as it violates India's commitment to uphold human rights.

PICTALK



School students form 'red ribbon', Universal symbol of awareness about HIV, in Moradabad

PTI

Are foreign universities best bet for better education?

Foreign university campuses in India may be good for many reasons but improvement of higher education is not one of them

With the latest UGC notification regarding the regulations for foreign universities to be set up in India, getting a degree from a reputed foreign university may not be difficult for the privileged class. In recent times, there has been an exodus of Indian students to foreign countries for higher studies and jobs. In states like Kerala and Punjab, this trend is increasing daily. The trend is so alarming that even after schooling, students leave the mother country, and many foresee a generation of old-age couples living in posh houses. Why are people moving to alien countries? Is it due to the lack of quality education in our country? Is it a lack of poor infrastructure in our educational institutions? Or is it the colonial mindset that made us look at foreign countries as better than our homeland? If we analyze the issues behind this exodus, we find that there are multiple issues, and it is challenging to pinpoint one problem. One main issue in our higher education is the unnecessary administrative procedures followed in our public



sector universities and colleges. It's more challenging to tackle the administrative people of these institutions than to learn complicated subjects. Half of the productive time of students doing doctoral degrees in these institutions is wasted on tackling the people in the administration. Students must get no-objection certificates from different sections, even sections unrelated to their course. Even after awarding the PhD degree, if the student wants a NET exemption certificate, they have to repeat the complete cycle of paperwork. What is the need for these complicated administrative procedures? Is it to protect the job of jobless staff members? Few new-generation public sector universities like the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research (AcSIR) have streamlined these com-

plicated procedures, reducing the paperwork and completing the work within the stipulated timeline on their website. However, the majority still follow the old culture. Many students move to foreign countries to complete their degree within the specified time without hassles. The second reason for the mass exodus is their lucrative salary in foreign countries. Gone are the days when students worked jobs as service. Nowadays, for even minor assistance, a student expects remuneration. When we were students, we used to help our teachers to maintain departmental libraries and gardens. Only people from the affluent class could get admission to these universities because of the higher tuition fees. More than that, even if a student receives a degree from a foreign university having a campus in India, it won't have the same weightage as studying in their main campus in the respective countries. The culture of a university is directly related to the culture followed in society. So, even if a foreign university tries to follow an alien culture, the native societal culture is

bound to reflect on their campuses. Even though starting foreign university campuses is a welcome step, it won't bring long-term benefits. Instead, we must improve the quality of education and research in our public sector universities and attract international students to India. The presence of international students on our campuses will enhance our academic quality and bring money to the public exchequer. Since the Indus Valley civilization, education and learning have been deeply ingrained in the Indian subcontinent. Our ancient universities, like Takshashila and Nalanda, have attracted students from around the globe. We have to envision the day when students from foreign countries visit our public sector universities, and we start our university campuses in other countries. As a driving force, this will also help propagate Indian values and philosophy across the globe. (The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru; views are personal)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

India rising but China still ahead

India is becoming proactive in international arena and getting good response but the China's dominance in the Global South remains undisputed



SANTHOSH MATHEW

In the ever-shifting landscape of global power dynamics, India finds itself at the forefront of a compelling narrative—the quest to be the “voice” of the Global South. As it assumes the G-20 Presidency, India's ambitions to represent the diverse nations of Africa, Latin America, and Asia echo loudly, challenging its formidable neighbour, China, in a musical chairs game of influence. The ongoing great power struggle between these two nations raises crucial questions about the future trajectory of the Global South and who will emerge as its torchbearer.

In this intricate dance of geopolitics, the article ultimately raises the question of what it truly means to be the “voice” of the Global South. As the world watches the interplay between the Dragon and the Elephant, whether India's soft power and ideals of brotherhood can attract nations, contrasting with China's more robust physical and economic might. In the late 1980s, Deng Xiaoping prophetically declared the advent of the “Asian Century” during a meeting with India's then-Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. This prediction has materialized, but the pivotal question remains: which nation will lead this Asian century? Statistical data, unequivocally, places China ahead of India in military prowess, economic size, and technological advancements. Yet, this article explores the unique strengths and potential contributions India can offer as it endeavours to become the “voice” of the Global South. Coined in 1952 during the Cold War, the term “Third World” has evolved into the more neutral “Global South.” This term transcends through the diverse group of nations from Africa, Latin America, and Asia, evolving into a symbol of shared historical experiences of colonization, economic challenges, and a collective desire for a more equitable global order. India, currently hosting the G-20 Presidency, has taken proactive steps, hosting a virtual “Voice of the Global South” summit and championing the issues of developing nations. As India positions itself as a



leader, it offers distinct advantages over China. India's vibrant democracy, commitment to pluralism, human rights, and the rule of law resonate with nations worldwide. With a young and tech-savvy population, India's scientific community has already made significant global contributions. India's diplomatic finesse comes to the forefront as it navigates challenges posed by China's economic investments in neighbouring regions. Unlike China's perceived debt-trap diplomacy, India's trade relations and diplomatic acumen position it as a bridge between the Global North and South. The question lies in whether India's commitment to collaboration and building trust can outshine China's more assertive tactics. A recent report published by Pew Research Surveys has unveiled a noteworthy trend: India has greater favourability than China in the developed world. However, when it comes to developing countries (the Global South), China has an edge over India as the more favourably favoured nation. This trend can be seen because, within the Global South, many countries grapple with shared historical experiences, socio-economic challenges, and aspirations for equitable global representation. China's ascendancy as the preferred nation is predictable

“INDIA'S ADVANTAGES LIE IN NOT BEING PERCEIVED AS AN AGGRESSOR OR ENCROACHER, IN CONTRAST TO CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE VIEWED AS A POTENTIAL DEBT TRAP

due to its economic prowess and infrastructure investments, which will help developing countries achieve their developmental goals. Amidst a backdrop of geopolitical shifts and economic realignments, India's democratic values, commitment to human rights, and rule of law sets it apart. Its young, tech-savvy population and thriving scientific community position it as a catalyst for innovation. India, with its evolving intellectual property regime, excels in process technology and manufacturing. US-based multinationals heavily invest in both China and India. The allure of less expensive skilled labour, market access, collaboration opportunities, and government incentives draws these corporations to India. In sectors such as information technology, telecommunications, transport equipment, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, and energy, India faces both opportunities and challenges. The lack of a sophisticated customer base hampers significant innovation in IT, but this gap may close in the coming decades. The growing sophistication of engineering and design services in aircraft and automotive industries positions India as a significant player in global markets. India is moving beyond replicating designs to contributing to cutting-edge innovation.

India's ascent in the Global South leadership struggle against China is not only influenced by geopolitical dynamics but also by its innovation landscape. Chinese and Indian firms are increasingly involved in early-stage research and clinical trials, showcasing a shift towards innovative product development. India's advantages lie in not being perceived as an aggressor or encroacher, in contrast to China's Belt and Road Initiative viewed as a potential debt trap. India's trade significance and good relations globally position it as a bridge between the Global North and South. While China may have firepower, India's diplomatic prowess and cordial relations give it a better ability to lead the world. India's journey from shadows to spotlight in the global innovation arena is nothing short of a triumph. As the dragon of China breathes its economic fire, the elephant of India is trumpeting its unique strengths on the global stage. So, as the dragon and elephant dance in this innovation duet, India's ascent is not just a rise; it's a melody, echoing across the realms of progress. (The writer is Associate Professor, centre for South Asian Studies, School of International Studies & Social Sciences Pondicherry Central University, views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ALLOW DUAL CITIZENSHIP

Sir — Very often, this age-old issue about dual citizenship despite various utterances by different politicians over the years comes to the fore. It is an issue that has been of concern to many people. It would be in everyone's best interests to resolve this issue once and for all. The government and the courts need to find a solution that may resolve the issue faced by many who have obtained Portuguese and other nationalities find themselves in, many through birth and for historical reasons. It would be prudent for the central government to allow people dual nationality or citizenship as they can have a foreign nationality and still maintain close links with the motherland. According to the World Population Review, 49% of all countries worldwide allow dual citizenship which means that a person can be a citizen of more than one country. We are living in an age where the world is a global village just like no man is an island.

Ramanath Krishan | Kozhikode

TELANGANA ELECTIONS

Sir — Telangana sees a triangular contest between the BJP, Congress, and Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS). BRS has fielded candidates in all 119 seats. As per the seat-sharing agreement, the BJP and actor Pawan Kalyan-headed Jana Sena are contesting in 111 and 8 seats, respectively, while Congress has given one seat to its ally CPI and is fighting from 118 others. Meanwhile, Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM has put up candidates in nine segments in the city. The key candidates include Chief Minister KCR, his minister-son K T Rama Rao, state Congress president A Revanth Reddy, and BJP Lok Sabha members Bandi Sanjay Kumar and D Arvind. Ahead of the polls, the state saw top national leaders, including PM Modi, Rahul Gandhi, and ruling BRS supreme K Chandrasekar Rao, wooing voters.

Silkayara rescue operation



Prayers from the entire nation towards rescuing the 41 workers trapped inside the Silkayara tunnel in Uttarkashi bore fruit after a 17-day ordeal. The mission that has been accomplished is a triumph of human labour over

machinery, as the rat-hole mining experts managed to manually break through the final 12 metres of rubble using only hand drills and pulleys. This extensive and challenging rescue work, spanning over 400 hours, showcases the resoluteness and determination of the rescuers and the indomitable spirit of the trapped workers. It also highlights the might of our nation and the combined spirit of its people to stand united in the face of any adversity, and we can go to great lengths when it comes to the well-being of our people. But as we watched on television the hardship and struggle over the operations, questions emerged as to whether the mountainous area in Uttarakhand can withstand the level of this kind of heavy tunnelling work.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

The saffron party's campaign stressed the necessity of electing a “double engine government” and pointed to the “family rule” of KCR and alleged corruption. The BRS's campaign centred around the previous Congress regime's failures and ongoing welfare measures for farmers, women, and other sections of society, as well as his struggle to achieve Telangana statehood. Congress's campaign focused mainly on the alleged corruption of the BRS government while highlighting its six poll guarantees. The results of Telangana will be out on December 3 along with the other four states that went to polls. It would be interesting to see which way the wind is blowing. The general elections are not very far and these results would definitely give an indication of public mood.

Ashraf Hussain | Howrah

ALL INDIA JUDICIAL SERVICE

Sir — Since lower courts are the lifelines of the common man, picking their presiding officers with care and caution cannot be overemphasised. At present, the jurisdictional high courts or state

governments are vested with the power to select subordinate court judges either through examination, interview, or both. At the same time, however, the process of selecting lower court judges has not consistently met the nod of approval from the know-how. The need to have a uniform mechanism for picking judges at the entry level on an all-India basis is widely felt. President Drupadi Murmu recently pitched for an All India Judicial Service, and there are a plethora of legal experts who believe the time is ripe for such a system on the lines of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). The generally tough IAS exams attract the best talents in India. In the same vein, an All India Judicial Service could captivate meritorious young minds that are at present not keen on the judiciary as a career. The Centre does not seem averse to the idea, but it may not easily pass muster with the judiciary because the latter's authority stands threatened.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

MONEY MATTERS

Karnataka Govt unveils 35 innovative products

The Karnataka government on Thursday unveiled 35 "ground-breaking" products and solutions developed by startups at the 26th edition of the ongoing Bengaluru Tech Summit 2023 here. Out of the 35 startups, nine are women-led, underlining the inclusive and diverse nature of Karnataka's startup ecosystem, a press release from the state government's Department of Electronics, Information technology, Biotechnology and Science and Technology said. Several of the startups received financial support through the state's seed funding programme, which indicates the government's commitment to nurturing entrepreneurial talent and fostering a culture of innovation, it added. A majority of the startups have flourished within Government of Karnataka-supported incubators, such as K-tech Innovation Hubs, Centres of Excellence (CoEs), and Technology Business Incubators (TBIs) and anchored by institutions like C-CAMP, NASSCOM, Jain Incubation Centre.



PVR Inox to open 150 screens next fiscal

The country's largest multiplex operator PVR Inox will open 150 screens in the next fiscal with an investment of about Rs 500 crore, a top company official has said. The company, which opened a six-screen luxury cinema at Maison Inox here on Thursday, already runs 118 screens across 23 properties in the megapolis. Overall, including its property in Colombo, it operates 1,711 screens at 359 properties across 114 cities. We are planning to add 150 more screens at an investment of around Rs 500 crore next fiscal. Sanjeev Kumar Bijli, an Executive Director at PVR Inox, told PTI here. On the Maison Inox, he said normally a screen required an investment of Rs 5 crore but given that it's a luxury collection and comes with the first attached bar (Gastby Bar), the per screen cost is about Rs 7 crore. On the company's overseas expansion plans, he said they will have more screens in Sri Lanka only and not anywhere else.



Tanishq opens two stores in Texas, expands global biz

Tanishq, an Indian jewellery brand, has opened its store here and in Frisco as part of its global business expansion strategy and to cater to the growing needs of the Indian diaspora in the US. The US state of Texas, with the second largest Indian Diaspora, is now home to two of Tanishq's stores, one in Houston and the other in Frisco, near Dallas. At the inaugural event, the Consul General of India in Houston, DC Manjunath was the Chief Guest. He was joined by CK Venkataraman, Managing Director, Titan Company Limited, Kuruvilla Markose, CEO of Titan International business and Michael McCabe, Resident Director, North America, Tata Sons. The brand is owned by The Tata Group, a Mumbai-based multinational conglomerate. "Delighted to see that Tanishq, Tata company's jewellery arm opened its 2 new stores in Texas; Houston & Frisco, thus enhancing India-US connection", Consul General Manjunath said.



India, Africa key players in peak global crude oil demand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The global demand for crude oil is expected to see its peak in 2030 at 112 million barrels a day mark with India and Africa to be major contributors, according to S&P Global Commodity Insights.

The current global demand of crude oil is at 103 million barrels per day, Pulkit Agarwal, head of India Content at S&P Global Commodity Insights, said on Thursday.

The global demand for crude oil will peak to stay in the range of 112 million barrels a day in 2030 from the present level of 103 million barrels a day, he told PTI at S&P Global Commodity Insights: Media Roundtable Outlook 2024.

India and Africa will be the major contributors to the 8.73 per cent increase in demand by 2030 as industrial activities will pick up in the region, Agarwal said.

There will be increased use of clean cooking, automobiles and setting up of refineries by various economies, he said.



However, the demand for crude oil in India will see its peak in 2040 to reach 7.2 million barrels a day from 5.2 million barrels a day at present, he said. On the price outlook he said, "In our base case, oil prices will likely hover above USD 80/barrel and can inch closer to USD 90/barrel by Q3 2024."

Gauri Jauhar, Executive Director, Energy Transitions & CleanTech Consulting, S&P Global Commodity Insights, said as India grows, it will also transition at a sustainable pace based on an underlying eco-

nommic transition of mobility, urbanization and a desire for reliability. An energy transition will inevitably be a technology transition to reduce emissions, and the cleaner technology spectrum offers a range of near-term, medium-term and long-term solutions. These cleaner technologies will need financing and policy support, globally and in India, to reach giga scale, she said.

Stuti Chawla, Associate Director, India/Middle East Chemicals Pricing, S&P Global Commodity Insights, said

India is expected to remain a bright spot in Asia for petrochemical demand in 2024, given its strong economic growth and resilient industrial production. Greater demand, however, is unlikely to bring much relief to domestic producers struggling with pressure on margins, as prices of key bulk chemicals are expected to remain suppressed due to ample supplies and new capacities coming on stream.

The market for chemical commodity products in India is expected to grow at around 7 per cent in 2023 and 8 per cent in 2024. The robust demand growth is being driven by a sharp pickup in India's economic activity after it emerged from COVID-19 lockdowns.

Elvis John of S&P Global Commodity Insights said India imposed a slew of restrictions on grains trade in 2023 amid rising domestic prices, fear of El Nino affecting crop production, and ahead of state elections and general elections in 2024.

Two-wheeler volumes expected to grow

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Two-wheeler retail sales are expected to increase by just 4-7 per cent in volume terms in the domestic market this fiscal year despite logging strong growth in the festive period, according to a report.

The festive season this year saw robust growth in two-wheeler retail sales aided by the upcoming wedding season and some recovery in rural demand, which supported sales growth in the entry-level (110 cc) segment, the report by rating firm Icrs said.

The dealer inventory remained at near normal levels, with the OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) wary of a build-up in inventory at the dealerships, it added. "The industry is expected to record a moderate growth in volumes in FY 2024 (4-7 per cent) even as export volumes remain impacted by weak demand," Icrs said. Elaborating on the passenger vehicles, Icrs stated that the segment is expected to record a moderate growth in volumes in FY2024 (6-9 per cent) and reach an all-time high during the period.

India should not take new commitments at COP28 climate talks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India should not take new commitments at the ongoing United Nations COP28 climate talks in Dubai and continue its green transition without additional assurances, think tank GTRI suggested on Thursday.

The climate conference is being held at the Dubai Expo City from November 30 to December 12.

The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that India has already made significant commitments at COP27 (Conference of Parties) and the Paris Agreement, aligning with its Long-term Low Emissions and Development Strategy. India's commitment to generating half of its electricity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030 and achieving net-zero emissions by 2070 is noteworthy.

"At COP28 India need not take new commitments at COP28. Instead, it may con-



tinue its green transition without additional commitments," GTRI Co-Founder Ajay Srivastava said. However, he added that the country's high methane emissions, especially from the agriculture sector, pose a challenge.

"Any improvement will require changing crop pattern which may take decades of efforts. Balancing emission reduction with the livelihood impact on the agriculture sector is crucial," Srivastava said.

The think-tank also suggested that as 70 per cent of electricity is generated from coal power here and many large industries rely on captive and not grid power.

Stock markets eke out gains in highly volatile trade

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty settled with marginal gains on Thursday in a highly volatile trade amid the scheduled monthly derivatives expiry and muted trend in the US markets. The 30-share BSE Sensex closed 86.53 points or 0.13 per cent higher at 66,988.44, registering its third day of gains. During the day, it hit a high of 67,069.89 and a low of 66,610.35.

Despite heavy volatility in equities during the day, the combined market valuation of all listed companies on the leading stock exchange BSE continued to remain above the USD 4-trillion mark for the second day in a row. The combined market valuation of all listed companies on the BSE reached the USD 4-trillion milestone for the first time ever on Wednesday. The broader Nifty50 of the National Stock Exchange edged up 36.55 points or 0.18 per cent to close at 20,133.15.

Indian economy grew 7.6% in Sep quarter

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's economy grew 7.6 per cent in the September quarter as against 6.2 per cent in the year-ago period, according to official data released on Thursday.

India remains the fastest-growing major economy, as China's GDP growth in the July-September quarter this year was 4.9 per cent.

As per the National Statistical Office (NSO) data, the GVA (Gross Value Added) of the agriculture sector recorded a 1.2 per cent growth, down from 2.5 per cent in the July-September quarter of 2022-23.

The GVA growth of the manufacturing sector accelerated to 13.9 per cent in the second quarter of the current fiscal against a decline of 3.8 per cent a year ago.

The growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during the April-September period in 2023-24 stood at 7.7 per cent compared to 9.5 per cent in the first half of the last financial year.

The GDP growth in the first quarter of the current fiscal remained unchanged at 7.8 per cent.

DUBAI INTERNATIONAL FOOTWEAR AND LEATHER EXHIBITION

More than 60 Indian firms to showcase leather products

PNS ■ DUBAI

More than 60 top Indian footwear and leather goods manufacturers will participate in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region's largest exhibition of such products here from December 11-13.

Dubai International Footwear and Leather Exhibition (DIFLEX 2023) is being held in the backdrop of the demand upswing for footwear and leather goods in the Middle East and N Africa (MENA) estimated to be growing at a compound



annual growth rate of over 7 per cent and poised to touch upwards of US\$ 20 billion by next year.

The Indian pavilion participation is under the auspices of the Council for Leather Exports (CLE), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of

India, and is aimed at boosting exports which stood at US\$ 5.26 billion in 2022-23, as per CLE data.

Footwear exports, both leather and non-leather exports account for over 50 per cent of the trade.

India is the second-largest exporter of leather garments, third-largest exporter of saddlery and harnesses and 4th largest exporter of leather goods in the world. Verifair, organisers of DIFLEX 2023 which will be hosted at Dubai Festival Arena, Dubai Festival.

Infosys inks pact with Shell for sustainable data centres

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IT major Infosys on Thursday said it has partnered with energy company Shell to accelerate the adoption of immersion cooling services for data centres.

Infosys and Shell will bring together their capabilities in digital and energy, respectively, along with an ecosystem of partners to create an integrated offering for green data centres, the IT firm said in a statement.

"In our joint efforts with Shell, we aim to create a more sustainable future. This collaboration will leverage AI-based digital solutions that will create environmentally responsible data centres that can manage high computing loads with optimised hardware.

Tata Tech makes bumper stock market debut

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Tata Technologies, an arm of Tata Motors, made a dream stock market debut on Thursday and ended with a huge premium of nearly 163 per cent, against the issue price of Rs 500.

The stock of the company, which provides engineering and product development digital services, was listed at Rs 1,199.95, registering a sharp jump of 139.99 per cent from the issue price on the BSE. During the day, it zoomed 180 per cent to Rs 1,400. Shares of the company ended at Rs 1,314.25 apiece, rallying 162.85 per cent.

On the NSE, it began the trade at Rs 1,200, climbing 140



per cent. The stock jumped to Rs 1,400 during the day. Shares of the firm ended at Rs 1,313 per piece, a jump of 162.6 per cent. The company's market valuation stood at Rs 53,314.99 crore. The Rs 3,042.5 crore initial public offer of Tata Technologies was subscribed 69.43 times on the final day of subscription on Friday, driven by remarkable participation from institu-

tional buyers.

This was the first company from the Tata Group to float an Initial Public Offer (IPO) in nearly two decades. Tata Consultancy Services was the last IPO from the group in 2004. The IPO of Tata Technologies was fully subscribed within minutes of opening for bidding on Wednesday last week.

"As expected, a bumper listing above our expectation respecting the legacy of the Tata brand. After witnessing a remarkable subscription demand Tata Technologies garnered significant attention in the stock market," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research) at Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

India's GDP grows 7.6%; fastest-growing economy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's economy grew 7.6 per cent in the September quarter of this fiscal and remained the fastest-growing large economy, mainly due to better performance by manufacturing, mining and services sectors, the government data showed on Thursday.

The gross domestic product (GDP) expanded by 6.2 per cent in the July-September quarter of 2022-23. India remained the fastest-growing

major economy, as China posted a 4.9 per cent growth in July-September 2023. According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) data, the agriculture sector GVA (Gross Value Added) growth decelerated to 1.2 per cent in the September 2023 quarter from 2.5 per cent a year ago.

The expansion in financial, real estate and professional services' GVA was 6 per cent, down from 7.1 per cent in the year-ago quarter.

The GVA in the manufac-

turing sector showed a growth of 13.9 per cent in the second quarter of the current fiscal compared to a contraction of 3.8 per cent in the year-ago period.

As per the data, the output (GVA) in the 'mining and quarrying' accelerated to 10 per cent in the second quarter against a contraction of 0.1 per cent a year ago.

Electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services' grew by 10.1 per cent from 6.1 per cent.

Mkt valuation of BSE-listed firms over \$4 trn

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The combined market valuation of all listed companies on the leading stock exchange BSE remained above the US\$ 4 trillion-mark for the second straight day on Thursday amid an overall optimistic trend in equities.

Rallying for the third consecutive day, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 86.53 points or 0.13 per cent to settle at 66,988.44 points despite volatile trends during the day.



In intra-day, it touched a high of 67,069.89 points and a low of 66,610.35 points.

The combined market valuation of all listed companies on the BSE reached the US\$ 4 tril-

lion-milestone for the first time ever on Wednesday.

At the end of trade on Thursday, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies hit an all-time peak of Rs 3,35,60,155.58 crore, translating into US\$ 4 trillion, at the exchange rate of 83.30.

In three days of the market rally, investors' wealth have jumped by Rs 6.88 lakh crore.

It took just two-and-a-half years for the exchange to hit the US\$ 4 trillion landmark after the market capitalisation

(m-cap) of all listed companies on the BSE touched the US\$ 3 trillion-mark on May 24, 2021. The total valuation of the exchange-listed companies went past the USD 1 trillion level on May 28, 2007.

The journey from US\$ 1 trillion to US\$ 1.5 trillion was covered in 2,566 days or just over seven years on June 6, 2014. The m-cap of listed companies on the BSE reached US\$ 2 trillion on July 10, 2017 -- taking 1,130 days from the US\$ 1.5 trillion level.

Petrol, diesel price revision after oil price stabilises

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned fuel marketing companies are likely to revert to daily revision in prices of petrol and diesel only when international oil prices stabilise below USD 80 per barrel on a sustained basis, industry officials said.

Three state-owned fuel retailers -- Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) -- which control roughly 90 per cent of the market, have kept petrol and diesel prices on freeze for a record 20th month in a row.

This is despite the raw material (crude oil) cost surging last

year, leading to heavy losses in the first half of 2022-23 fiscal year before easing rates propelled them to profitability.

"There is considerable volatility in the international oil market and prices fluctuate wildly," an official said. "Oil companies can cut prices by Re 1 per litre and everyone will applaud. But when international oil prices go up, will they be allowed to raise rates remains in doubt."

India is the world's third largest oil consuming and importing nation. It imports more than 85 per cent of its oil needs and hence domestic pricing is linked to international rates.

The basket of crude oil that India buys has averaged USD



83.42 per barrel in November, down from USD 90.08 of October and USD 93.54 of September.

While at current prices, oil companies are making some money on petrol, diesel -- the

most consumed fuel accounting for almost 40 per cent of all petroleum products consumed in the country -- but it has been in a "touch-and-go" scenario in recent weeks, another official said. "On some days there is

profit on diesel but on other days there is loss. There is no consistent trend."

Three retailers had been recouping losses they incurred for holding rates when crude oil prices shot through the roof last year. In May, international oil prices and retail pump rates had come at par, but the subsequent surge widened the gulf between cost and price realised.

"For oil companies to revert to daily market based price revision, oil prices will have to come below USD 80 on a sustained basis," an official said.

Petrol and diesel prices have been on a freeze since April 6 last year. Petrol costs Rs 96.72 a litre in the national capital and diesel comes for Rs 89.62

per litre.

The three firms made bumper profits in April-September -- first half of the current fiscal -- but considering the low earnings of last year, they are yet to recoup all losses, officials said.

Consider this, IOCL posted a net profit of Rs 26,717.76 crore this year as compared with a full year profit of Rs 8,241.82 crore in 2022-23 (April 2022 to March 2023).

In 2021-22 (considered a normal year), the company had posted a profit of Rs 21,762 crore for the full year. Considering that to be a normalised earnings, for two years (2022-23 and 2023-24), it should make about Rs 42,000 crore.

Key infra industries' growth up at 12.1% ; 5 sectors expand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The output of eight key infrastructure sectors jumped by 12.1 per cent in October 2023 against 0.7 per cent expansion in the year-ago period on account of a sharp uptick in production of coal, steel, cement and electricity, according to the official data released on Thursday.

These numbers assume significance as the eight core sectors -- coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity -- contribute 40.27 per cent to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).


Growth was primarily driven by a low base effect and double-digit growth in five

sectors -- coal, steel, cement and electricity.

Infrastructure sectors grew by 9.2 per cent in September. The output growth of eight sectors was at 8.6 per cent in April-October 2023-24 against 8.4 per cent in the year-ago period.

Coal output rose by 18.4 per cent while steel production jumped 11 per cent during the month under review as against 3.8 per cent and 5.8 per cent in October 2022 respectively.

Cement production grew by 17.1 per cent against a 4.2 per cent contraction in the year-ago period. Electricity generation rose by 20.3 per cent in October 2023 against 1.2 per cent in the same month last year.



Ayushmann Khurrana's Nindiya captures undying human spirit in THE RAILWAY MAN

Versatile actor and singer Ayushmann Khurrana has lent his voice to the recently released cover of 'Nindiya' from the series 'The Railway Men', and said it is a heartfelt tribute to the bravery and courage of people to face the darkest of hours.

The four-part mini-series helmed by Shiv Rawail, stars R. Madhavan, Kay Kay Menon, Babil, and Divyendru in the lead roles. It is a thrilling tale of heroism, hope and

humanity.

In a heartfelt tribute to the people who sacrificed their lives to protect others on the fateful night of the Bhopal gas tragedy in 1984, National Award winner Ayushmann has now lent his voice for the reprise version of 'Nindiya'.

Talking about the same, Ayushmann said: "When I was watching the series, apart from the fact that it is brilliantly made, what stayed with me is how it instilled hope in me."

"While we all are aware of the tragedy and its aftermath, the indomitable human spirit moved me. Nindiya, in the series, encapsulated the emotions through two young children at the railway platform.

"This is my heartfelt tribute to the bravery,

courage and the ability of people to face the darkest of hours and rebuild themselves from scratch. This show and this track 'Nindiya' hold a special place in my heart," he added.

Set against the backdrop of the world's worst industrial disaster, the Bhopal gas tragedy, 'The Railway Men' follows a group of railway employees whose unshakeable tenacity compels them to help save countless lives during the city's darkest hours.

'Nindiya' (Reprise) is an ode to the undying human spirit and the determination to overcome any difficult situation.

The show is a first from the partnership between Netflix and YRF Entertainment. It is streaming on Netflix.



With The Archies, Vedang Raina not only makes his acting, but also singing debut

The entire gang of The Archies comprises some very charming newbies who foray into Bollywood with the Zoya Akhtar film. The Archies star Suhana Khan, Vedang Raina, Khushi Kapoor, Agastya Nanda, Dot, Yuvraj Menda, and Mihir Ahuja. From these young guns, Vedang seems to have a fan base of his own. Yes, he left many charmed in the trailer of his debut film The Archies, but do you know there is more to this?

The Archies does not just mark Vedang's debut as an actor but as a singer too. The actor who plays Reggie Mantle in the film has lent his voice to the song Everyone Is Politics. The song is a groovy, peppy number that literally gets you hooked. Everything Is Politics has gotten music from Shankar, Ehsaan, Loy, and is quite a mood lifter.

Even before his debut, Vedang gained the new chocolate boy image in Bollywood. He has left many smitten with his charm in The Archies and is reportedly doing another big project with Alia Bhatt next. All ready to prove his mettle as an actor, Vedang has set heartbeats racing already.

Ethan Hawke to return for 'The Black Phone 2'

Hollywood star Ethan Hawke is set to return for the sequel to his supernatural horror film The Black Phone.

Filmmaker Scott Derrickson is also returning for the sequel to the 2021 movie, along with cast members Mason Thames, Madeleine McGraw, Jeremy Davies and Miguel Mora, reported Deadline.

The Black Phone 2 is backed by Blumhouse, Crooked Highway Production and Universal. The movie has been slated for release in theatres on June 27, 2025.

The first film was about a 13-year-old boy, who is abducted by a child killer (Hawke) in a suburban neighbourhood and locked in a soundproof basement, begins to receive calls on a disconnected phone from the killer's previous victims.

Derrickson and his frequent collaborator C Robert Cargill had adapted the screenplay from a short story by author Joe Hill, who had served as an executive producer. The Black Phone had earned over USD 161 million worldwide, becoming a sleeper hit in a rebounding summer from COVID-19 pandemic.



Randeep Hooda, Lin Laishram drop wedding clicks; say 'We are one'



Randeep captioned the photos as: "From today, we are One #justmarried," followed by a red heart and infinite emoji.

Ahead of the wedding, Randeep had expressed his excitement on getting married in Laishram's Meitei traditions.

Randeep and Lin have been in a relationship for a long time. Lin has been a part of films such as 'Mary Kom', 'Rangoon' and recently in 'Jaane Jaan'.

The reception will take place at a later date in Mumbai.

Sebastian Stan to play young Donald Trump in Ali Abbasi's 'The Apprentice'



Sebastian Stan, the star of Pam & Tommy and multiple Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) films, is set to play a younger version of former US president Donald Trump in upcoming movie The Apprentice from Iranian filmmaker Ali Abbasi.

According to Deadline, Succession alum Jeremy Strong and Oscar nominee Maria Bakalova will also appear in the movie, touted as an "exploration of power and ambition set in a world of corruption and deceit".

The Apprentice will examine Trump's efforts to build his real estate business in New York in the 1970s and 1980s, also digging into his relationship with infamous attorney Roy Cohn. It's a mentor-pupil story that charts the origins of a major American dynasty, as per the official logline.


Strong, also known for his film roles in The Trial of the Chicago 7, Molly's Game and The Big Short, will portray Cohn, a notorious lawyer and fixer who Trump considered a mentor early in his career. Bakalova, who received an Academy Award nomination for Borat

Subsequent Moviefilm, will appear as the late Ivana Trump, a business woman who partnered with then-husband Donald Trump on some of his most prominent real estate projects.

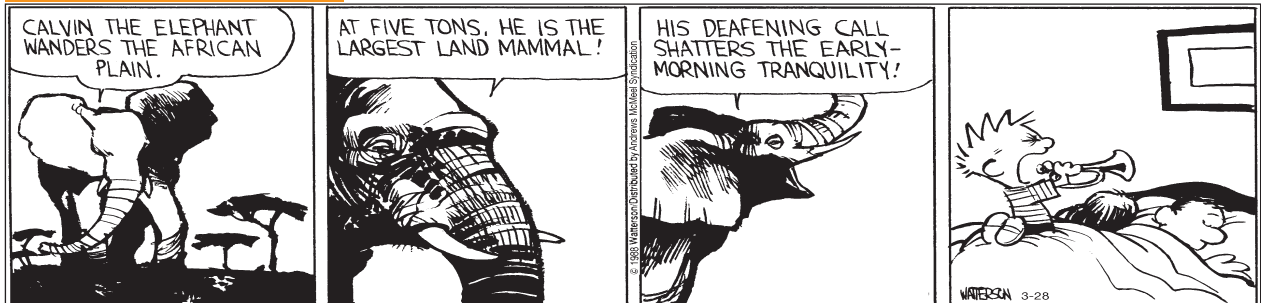
The two divorced in 1992, and Ivana Trump died last year. Gabriel Sherman, whose bestseller The Loudest Voice in the Room inspired Showtime's miniseries The Loudest Voice, starring Russell Crowe as Fox News founder Roger Ailes, will serve as the writer on the project. The Apprentice will be produced by Daniel Beckerman of Scythia Films, Jacob Jerek of Profile Pictures and Ruth Treacy of Taylored Films.

FUN


ARCHIE




CALVIN AND HOBBS




GARFIELD




NANCY



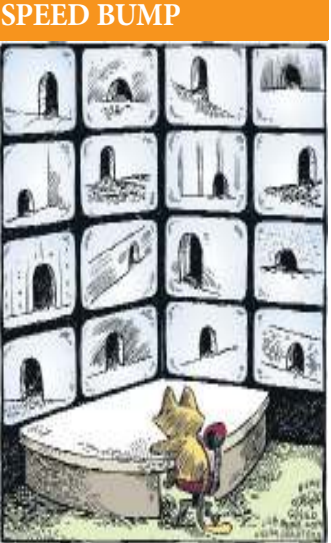
GINGER MEGGS



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



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ACROSS

8 Good-looking

10 Feeling cheerful

11 One third of twenty-four

13 This many-legged creature is the young form of a butterfly

14 Queues

17 An animal to ride

19 People on journeys

DOWN

1 Come to a halt

2 Mix black and white to make this

3 A throbbing pain

4 Make music with the voice

5 Periods of a hundred years

SOLUTION

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Yesterday's solution

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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.

INDIA NEED YOUNG BOWLERS TO DELIVER

PTI ■ RAIPUR

India's young bowling unit, which has been under the pump, will look to better its death overs performance while utilising Glenn Maxwell's absence to its advantage in the fourth T20 International against Australia here on Friday.

India's second-string attack did not paint a good picture of itself by not defending 40-plus runs in the final two overs in the third match which the Australians won while chasing a daunting 223-run target.

"There is a possibility of a minor tweak in the Indian line-up after Prasidh Krishna gave away 68 runs in four overs, including 21 in the final over.

"Deepak Chahar is back in the T20 mix and his ability to move the new ball should be considered for his inclusion in the playing XI along with death overs specialist Mukesh Kumar, who is back after one-match break.

"Both Prasidh and Avesh Khan lack variety and innovation as they keep pitching the ball at the same length. Both bowl in late 130s or early 140s but consistently pitch it back of the length and the nature of Indian tracks make it a cannon fodder for batters. 'Also not being able to use variations like conventional or wide yorkers has been the undoing of these bowlers who also didn't execute slower deliveries properly.



"In the batting line up, Shreyas Iyer's comeback means only Tilak Varma looks a candidate who could be benched as five others -- Yashasvi Jaiswal, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Ishan Kishan, skipper Suryakumar Yadav and finisher Rinku Singh select

themselves.

"India will also look to exploit the absence of a marauding Maxwell who pulled off a heist of sorts to singlehandedly bring Australia back into the five-match series with a win in a last-ball finish in Guwahati.

"But the hosts will fancy their chances with Maxwell, and other influential players such as Steve Smith and Adam Zampa not figuring in the playing XI here, having left for home after a long stay in the country where they won their sixth

World Cup title recently.

"Cricket Australia (CA) released many of its top players including Maxwell midway into the series keeping in mind their workload and fitness ahead of the T20 World Cup.

"The Suryakumar Yadav-led second-string India are smarting from a classic Maxwell innings, and the home team bowlers will be relieved that he will not walk out to bat at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium.

"Instead, they will probably be bowling to players such as Tim David, Josh Philippe and big-hitter Ben McDermott, a far better proposition at the moment than challenging Maxwell, who has enhanced his reputation as one of Australia's greatest white-ball batters in the past five-weeks.

"The runs, and the manner and situation in which he has accumulated them, has catapulted Maxwell into a level not meant for others.

"India's bowlers, though, will still have to contend with Travis Head, on a high after his scintillating match-winning hundred in the World Cup final against India, and the seasoned Matthew Wade, who is leading the side in the ongoing series.

"Like in Guwahati, dew could again have a say on a December evening in this part of the world, and the captain winning the toss would opt to bat second without an iota of doubt, leaving the team batting first to deal with the wet ball in the second innings.

"The reinforcements have already joined the Australian squad and are available for the penultimate match of the series that started barely three days after their triumphant World

Cup campaign, the tight scheduling leaving many former players surprised.

"India's batting has been served well by the likes of young Yashasvi Jaiswal, Ishan Kishan, Rinku Singh, Tilak Varma and the skipper himself when required.

"These players are expected to fire again but one man whose confidence will be sky high is Ruturaj Gaikwad, who is coming off a blazing 123 off 57 balls.

"The likes of Jason Behrendorff, Kane Richardson and Tanveer Sangha could find the going tough one more time.

"So far, the unfriendly conditions meant the series has been a nightmare for the bowlers with five 200-plus totals in six innings, and the trend is expected to continue in the remainder of the rubber.

"Teams (from):

"India: Suryakumar Yadav (captain), Ruturaj Gaikwad (vice-captain), Ishan Kishan, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Tilak Varma, Rinku Singh, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Shivam Dube, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Prasidh Krishna, Avesh Khan, Deepak Chahar.

"Australia: Matthew Wade (capt), Jason Behrendorff, Tim David, Ben Dwarshuis, Nathan Ellis, Chris Green, Aaron Hardie, Travis Head, Ben McDermott, Josh Philippe, Tanveer Sangha, Matt Short, Kane Richardson.



Rohit will handle it with grace: Ashwin 'If Mumbai Indians make Hardik captain'

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Spin stalwart Ravichandran Ashwin feels that if all-rounder Hardik Pandya is made the Mumbai Indians skipper, Rohit Sharma will "handle it with grace" as the Team India captain "does not have much ego".

"Pandya returned to Mumbai Indians recently after an all-cash deal trade-off with Gujarat Titans, the IPL side he led for two years.

"Pandya, who had started his IPL journey with Mumbai Indians in 2015 and won four titles, moved to Gujarat Titans in 2022 and led the side to title triumph the same season, besides helping it finish runners-up in IPL 2023.

"The trade-off to bring Pandya back to the MI fold raised several eyebrows, especially in terms of the franchise's captaincy, which is currently with Rohit.

"Rohit Sharma does not have much ego. He is a great human being and a sound leader. He will handle it with grace (if Pandya is made MI leader)," Ashwin said during his YouTube interaction with former cricketer S. Badrinath.

"In the history of IPL, apart from the top four to five teams, all have released players. Mumbai and CSK have never done it. I know Hardik to an

extent. I see this move as a milestone achievement," he added.

"The day I lose this motivation, I know it's over" "Asked about his retirement plan, Ashwin, 37, said the day he loses motivation, he would call it quits.

"I am not being diplomatic, but for four to five years (since 2019), I found myself in a very dark space in life, and took help for mental health as well. In the dark space, I realised I have to be ready for any eventuality," he said.

"I have been preparing for life after cricket for five years. But I continue to work hard on my cricket; to contribute with the bat, I went to the USA and practised baseball.

"The day I lose this motivation, I feel irritated about waking up in the morning to bowl or bat, I know it is over. I will then quit immediately, say thanks to all and go on to the next chapter in life."

"Ashwin, however, clarified that he has not yet decided on his post-retirement career.

"I am searching for something to do beyond cricket. I am interested in marketing and a lot of other things. But even if nothing else, I can't stop watching cricket. I am a cricket-enthusiast. I will do something in cricket and something other than that," he concluded.

Shanto's century helps Bangladesh

AP ■ SYLHET (BANGLADESH)

Najmul Hossain Shanto became the first Bangladeshi cricket to hit a century on his debut as captain as the hosts tightened its grip on the first Test against New Zealand here on Thursday.

"Shanto's 104 helped Bangladesh extend its lead to 205 runs by reaching 212-3 at stumps on Day 3. Mushfiqur Rahim was batting on 43, after adding 96 runs with Shanto for the fourth wicket. "The captain helped his team regain the upper hand on a spin-friendly track after Bangladesh lost two openers in quick succession to leave them on 26-2.

"Left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel got the better of Zakir Hasan (17) for the second time in the match, with a delivery that spun sharply to rap him in front of leg-stump.

"Mahmudul Hasan, who top-scored for Bangladesh with 86 in the first innings, was run out in unlucky manner as a drive from Shanto touched bowler Tim Southee's palm on the followthrough to hit his stump.



"The two wickets in two overs brought the Black Caps back into the game but Shanto and Mominul Haque added 90 runs for the third wicket to give Bangladesh the edge. "Mominul survived a leg-

before shout as New Zealand reviewed in vain but appeared to be confident against his favorite opponent, against which he has averaged a whopping 55.61. He was run out on 40 after hitting four

boundaries from 68 balls.

"Unlike his aggressive first-innings 37, Shanto stayed clam throughout the day to frustrate the New Zealand bowlers. He raised his fifth test hundred off 192 balls and his third in the

last four innings, pushing a fuller delivery of Patel past extra cover from a single.

"He then hit a boundary in the last ball of that over, his 10th in 193 balls as bad light forced stumps for the third consecutive day.

"New Zealand had resumed the day on 268-8 and was bowled out for 317, in reply Bangladesh's 310 in the first innings.

"Captain Tim Southee Southee played the key role, scoring 35 off 62 with three fours while Kyle Jamieson added 23 off 70.

"With the main bowlers failing to make any breakthrough, Shanto introduced occasional bowler Mominul who wrapped up New Zealand's innings, dealing a double blow.

"He trapped Jamieson leg-before to end a 52-run ninth-wicket partnership and, four balls later, also got the better of Southee to finish on his career-best 3-4.

"Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam took four wickets on Wednesday, including top scorer Kane Williamson for 104, but didn't add to his haul on Day 3 and returned figures of 4-109 from 39 overs.



Uganda qualify for T20 World Cup, join Namibia

PTI ■ WINDHOEK (NAMIBIA)

Uganda qualified for next year's T20 World Cup, set to be held in the West Indies and the USA, with a nine-wicket win over Rwanda here on Thursday.

"It will be joining Namibia as the second side to enter the main tournament from the ongoing Africa Qualifier.

"In the regional final of the Africa Qualifier, Uganda ensured a top-two finish with the victory over Rwanda, their fifth in six matches.

"Batting first, Rwanda were all out for 65 in 18.5 overs. In reply, Uganda completed the formality in 8.1 overs while losing just one wicket.

"Uganda will become the fifth African nation to play in the T20 World Cup.

"On the other hand, Africa Qualifier favourite Zimbabwe failed to secure a berth. Zimbabwe are currently placed third in the regional final with six points, having won three of their five games.

"After the results of the Africa Qualifier, the slots for the 20 participating teams have been filled.

"The main tournament is set to take place between June 4-30 next year.

"The top two sides from each group make it to the Super 8 stage, followed by the semi-finals and the final.

"The qualified teams for the 2024 T20 World Cup:

"USA, West Indies, Australia, England, India, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ireland, Scotland, Papua New Guinea, Canada, Nepal, Oman, Namibia and Uganda.

Delhi didn't keep promise to retain me: ABD recalls 2010 snub

PTI ■ DURBAN

One of the greatest batters of modern era, AB de Villiers has revealed that he was snubbed by erstwhile Delhi Daredevils after spending three seasons at the IPL franchise.

"Before making it big at the Royal Challengers Bangalore, the South African batting legend had three lukewarm season with the Delhi franchise, now known as Delhi Capitals.

"But in a team meeting, also attended by explosive Australian opener David Warner, de Villiers was told that he was going to be "retained" but it happened otherwise as the franchise released him before the 2011 auction.

"Recalling the incident in his YouTube channel, 'AB de Villiers 360', the former South African skipper said: "When I played in the 2010 season, I got called into the office and was told 'you are going to get retained, young AB de Villiers'."

"I sat alongside David Warner in that meeting. It came as a huge surprise to me a week or two later when I realised I had been released.

"So the communication wasn't great back in the day, that must be different these days but it's not a nice feeling," De Villiers added.

"The 39-year-old said it was a huge blow and he was very nervous before the auction.

"You're unsure of your career,



at that time in 2010 I think I only played five games in that IPL season so a lot of doubts crept up in my mind.

"But I did have a very good international season. I kept

playing good cricket and luckily for me the auction happened and I got picked up by RCB, and it changed my life forever, so great memories with regards to that.

"I was so nervous. Then I got the news from Twitter that I was picked by RCB and the next moment Virat (Kohli) called."

"De Villiers went on to mesmerise the Indian fans with his stroke-making and formed a dream combination with star batter Kohli at the top of the order for 11 seasons.

"De Villiers said the released players should not feel disappointed as it's not the "end of the road".

"For all the released players, it's not the end of the road, keep a close eye on the auction. But if you're not picked up, it gives an opportunity to go back to the drawing board and work even harder," he added.

'Rohit, Virat were crying in dressing room after heartbreaking loss'

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Skipper Rohit Sharma and star batter Virat Kohli were in tears in the dressing room following India's heartbreaking loss to Australia in the recent ODI World Cup final in Ahmedabad, veteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin said.

"Australia beat India by six wickets on November 19 in the final to win a record sixth ODI World Cup title.

"After the loss, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the Indian dressing room and tried to cheer up Rohit and Kohli.

"But Ashwin said the dressing room witnessed some heart-breaking scenes.

"Yes, we were feeling the pain. Rohit and Virat were in tears, (and) seeing it felt bad. Anyway, (it was) not meant to be. This team was an experienced side, (and) everyone knew what to do," he told former cricketer Subramaniam Badrinath on his YouTube channel.

"Although India failed to emerge successful in the World Cup, Kohli and Rohit lit up the event up with their explosive batting. Ashwin heaped praise on Rohit, both as a batter and leader.



"If you take a look at Indian cricket, everybody will be telling you that MS Dhoni is the best captain. (But), Rohit Sharma is an outstanding person, (and) he understands every single player in the team," he said.

"He knows the likes and dislikes of each of us and has a great understanding. He puts in the effort to know each player personally," he reckoned.

"Ashwin played just a game in the entire World Cup, India's opener against Australia in Chennai, finishing with figures of one for 34.

"Asked why Rohit didn't

include him in the playing XI for the final, he backed the skipper saying it's not easy to change the winning combination.

"As far as I playing the final is concerned, the team combination and all is secondary. Firstly, it's about empathy, (and) I keep stressing it a lot. "It's like standing in someone else's shoes and looking at things from his/her perspective. Had I been in Rohit's shoes, I would have thought 100 times about altering the (winning) combination," he said.

"It was going alright for the team, so why rest a fast

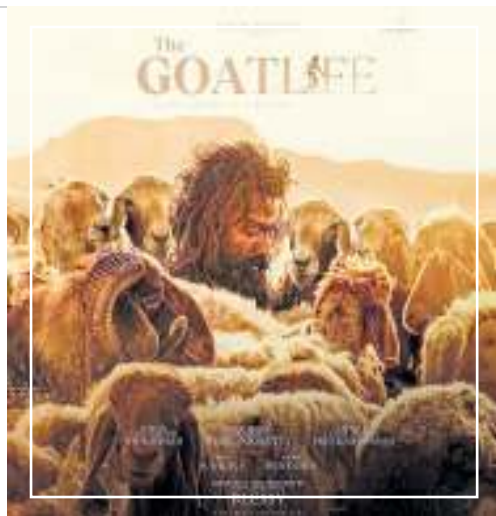
bowler for three spinners?" he wondered.

"Ashwin said he was prepared for the grand finale, but was not certain about his place in the playing XI.

"Honestly, I understood Rohit Sharma's thought process. Playing the final is big, (and) I was preparing for three days in the lead-up," Ashwin said.

"At the same time, I was also prepared to cheer for the side and run in with energy drinks if I was not given the opportunity.

I was mentally prepared for that as well," the spinner concluded.



Prithviraj Sukumaran starrer *The Goat Life* in worldwide theatres on April 10, 2024

Directed by National Award Winner Blessy, *The Goat Life* features Superstar Prithviraj Sukumaran in the lead role and is based on the novel *Goat Days* by Benyamin.

The greatest ever desert film Indian cinema has seen will be releasing in theatres near you on 10th April 2024, in five languages: Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada.

The wait is finally over! After a decade-long endeavour, the greatest survival adventure, based on a true story, *The Goat Life*, starring Malayalam superstar Prithviraj Sukumaran is all set to release in theatres worldwide on 10th April, 2024. Produced by Visual Romance, directed by National Award Winner Blessy, the film also features Hollywood actor Jimmy Jean-Louis, Amala Paul, Indian actor K.R.Gokul, and renowned Arab actors Talib al Balushi and RikAby in pivotal roles. *The Goat Life* boasts of music direction and sound design by Academy Award winners A.R. Rahman and Resul Pookkuttu respectively. The stunning visuals of the film have been shot by Sunil KS and the film has been edited by Sreekar Prasad. Being shot in multiple countries around the world, the film is the biggest ever venture in the Malayalam film industry, showcasing remarkable production standards, aesthetic elements, storytelling, aspirations, and acting prowess. With its ace acting and soul-stirring background score, the film is a larger than life theatrical experience.

The movie is based on the novel 'Aadujeevitham', one of the most popular best sellers ever from the Malayalam literary world, which has been translated into 12 different languages, including those that are foreign. Penned by noted writer Benyamin, it follows the true story of the life of a young man Najeeb, who, in the early 1990s, migrates from the lush green shores of Kerala in search of fortune in a land abroad.

Speaking about this Indian film, which is made for a global audience, director, Blessy said, "The greatest challenge in front of me was that *The Goat Life* is a subject with universal appeal and I would have to stay true to its narrative style. The novel is based on some real incidents and I want to captivate the viewers with each moment that something unbelievable happens to someone. The truth has never been stranger than fiction. The scale of the movie demands to be felt within the confines of a theatre and we are excited to bring this magnum opus to audiences around the world."

The Goat Life is all set to release in theatres near you on 10th April 2024, in Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada.



'Calling Sahasra is a pure experiment-based film for me'

Actor Sudigali Sudheer interacts with *The Pioneer*, sharing some interesting tidbits about his film *Calling Sahasra* released today, breaking stereotypes and more.

K. RAMYA SREE

Actor-host-comedian Sudigali Sudheer's *Calling Sahasra* was released in theatres today (December 1), and one must admit that the actor has taken a huge risk with this project. In fact, Sudheer himself confessed to us that this movie is purely experimental for him.

The film, starring Dollysha, is directed by Arun Vikkiral. Sudheer's previous film *Gaalodu* was a good hit, and he shared that he has been extremely cautious about his films, so much so that he revealed having heard close to 138 scripts before signing for *Calling Sahasra*. "I want to come to the audience with good content. People expect something hilarious from me, but as an actor, I need to explore other genres too, and *Calling Sahasra* is one such experiment I did. With the release of this, I will know what the audience is 'actually' expecting from me. If the movie works out well, I will get clarity that the audience is ready to watch me do different genres, so I can choose my scripts wisely later."

To put it in simple words, Sudheer shared that he signed *Calling Sahasra* just to break the stereotype about him just

being able to do comedy and make the audience aware of what they can also see him do.

Calling Sahasra is a suspense thriller that has many layers to it, including love, the dark web, and others. "I am still confused if I performed well or not in calling Sahasra as I attempted something new for the first time. The movie's key point is something new to me, and I felt like giving it an attempt. I felt to myself like I was watching some new person on screen," he shared about his performance in the movie.

Shifting his career to films on the small screen, Sudheer felt the heat so much that he even consulted a doctor for extreme stress. "I feel the burden to entertain the audience," he shared.

Sudheer is popularly known for his comedy; hence, he doesn't want to sideline comedy in his films while also experimenting with other genres. He shared that his next movie, *Goat*, is complete out-and-out commercial entertainment. However, he also confessed to us: "Apart from comedy, I like the movies that Adivi Sesh Garu does, which are into crime suspense, mystery, and thrillers. I want to try those genres," added the *Three Monkeys* star.

Speaking of his camaraderie with his co-star Dollysha, he mentioned, "She is a very

good actress, and she grasps things very quickly. In fact, I took some time to get into the skin of my character, Ajay Srivatsav, in the movie. She is a very competitive actress. There is a fight sequence in the end, and one will know her hard work after watching that sequence."

Lastly, asked about what the audience can expect from the movie, and he shared, "I want the audience to go to theaters without expecting anything from Sudheer. They will see Sudheer in a new way, unlike in regular comedy or dance. This is a different and new thriller film."



Adhik Ravichandran still on board for *AK63*

Popular production house of Tollywood Mythri Movie Makers, is trying to spread its wings to Kollywood. As a part of expansion, they have confirmed Ajith Kumar's film in Adhik Ravichandran's direction. But, all of a sudden Gopichand Malineni came into the picture and since the last two days reports are rife that Adhik has been replaced by Gopichand Malineni to direct *AK63*. Ajith Kumar is currently busy with Vidaa Muiyarchi,



directed by Magizh Thirumeni, which is expected to be released soon. Adhik, who made his

debut with the adult comedy *Trisha Illana Nayanthara*, is an ardent admirer of Ajith and has

expressed his desire to work with him several times. Now, after years of waiting, Adhik has finally got the opportunity to direct his idol in *AK 63*, which is said to be a mass entertainer with a lot of surprises. The film is being produced by the popular Tollywood production house, Mythri Movie Makers, who have delivered several remarkable hits. The film is expected to go on floors after Ajith completes his current project, *Vidaamuiyarchi*, which is

being directed by Magizh Thirumeni. But, as it turns out, the rumours were false and Adhik is still the director of *AK 63*. According to sources, Ajith Kumar's PRO Suresh Chandra denied the rumours and confirmed that Adhik isn't being replaced. Adhik Ravichandran is known for his bold and unconventional films, and known for his quirky themes. It will be interesting to see what kind of film he will make with Ajith Kumar.

Lokesh Kanagaraj's produced *Fight Club* stars Vijayakumar in lead

Happening director Lokesh Kanagaraj, who has recently delivered blockbuster *Leo*, has launched his own production house, 'G Squad'. He announced that he will be making films with his close accomplices and friends initially, and then he will be producing movies that showcase the vision with new talent. He has already announced his first project under his banner.

The film is titled *Fight Club* and it is directed by *Uriyadi* films fame Vijayakumar, who also plays the lead role. The film is said to be an action thriller with a social message. The first look poster of the film was released by Lokesh Kanagaraj on X, simply wrote, "*#FightClub* - The

bravest gang will meet you all soon!" The poster shows Vijayakumar in a fierce pose with a gang that has goal with vengeance. The film is written and directed by Abbas A Rahmat, who is also an assistant to Lokesh Kanagaraj. The music is composed by Govind Vasantha, who is known for his soulful melodies in films like *96* and *Jaanu*. The film is to hit the screens by December 2023.

Lokesh Kanagaraj, is currently working on his next directorial venture *Thalaivar 171*. He is currently scripting for *Thalaivar 171*, which is a standalone film without being a part of his LCU. He vowed to showcase Superstar Rajinikanth like never before.



VD-Rashmika's pic at *Hi Nanna's* event upsets fans



At the pre-release event of *Hi Nanna*, a picture featuring Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna was displayed on the big screen. The image was allegedly clicked on a Maldives vacation by the duo more than a year ago. It is known that the *Geetha Govindam* pair are rumoured dating partners.

The image was shown in a lighter vein at the *Hi Nanna* event. However, the same hasn't gone down well with the fans of the *Kushi* actor, who feel

that it was an attempt to needlessly publicize a private moment. Many fans of the *Arjun Reddy* actor have gotten riled up. They took out their anger on the organizers of the event, the *Dasara* actor as well as host Suma Kanakala.

As per the vocal fans of Vijay, Nani and Co. should have avoided displaying the pic when the VD-Rashmika duo has not come out in the open with their alleged relationship. Others feel that such things are par for the course in the celebrity culture. "The image has been in the public domain. What is wrong with displaying it at a public event? There is nothing cheap or crass about it," a Netizen shared.



PRABHAS-PRASHANTH'S STILL FROM

Salaar intrigues fans, trailer out today

Salaar : Part 1 - Ceasefire is set to captivate movie lovers globally, starting December 22, 2023. Directed by Prashanth Neel and starring Prabhas in the lead role, expectations for the movie are incredibly high.

In anticipation of the theatrical debut, the makers plan to release the movie's trailer tomorrow at 07:19 PM. To keep fans engaged, they dropped an on-set still featuring the pillars of *Salaar* - Prabhas and Prashanth Neel - deeply engrossed in smartphone, discussing something related to the film. The still has received an immense response from fandom.

Sruthi Haasan is the female lead in this highly-anticipated pan-Indian film, with Prithviraj Sukumaran, Easwari Rao, Jagapathi Babu, Tinnu Anand, and Sriya Reddy in prominent roles. Hombale Films funded this action-packed venture, with music composed by Ravi Basrur.

