

What is the reason behind Chandrababu Naidu's arrest?

Telugu media is full of reports pertaining to the arrest of a former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu in Andhra Pradesh 24 days ago. The news eclipsed any other news, including that of the prestigious Group-20 summit.

The news mainly highlighted the arrest episodes, the CB-CID activity and two major parties in AP heaping criticism on each other, court trial and protest rallies. At the time of the arrest, the G-20 summit was underway in Delhi, but it received no priority in Telugu news.

It appears as though CM Jaganmohan Reddy carefully moved the pawns on political chess-board so that people of the State ignored atrocities, problems of the farmers, common man and the poor, corruption that reached its crescendo, deteriorating law and order situation, haphazard economy and growing unrest among the people in AP.

The arrest and subsequent developments are likely to continue till the next elections. Elected people's representatives are blaming each other as criminals forgetting their accountability to people. Under this context, how can solving the people's problems get priority?

Hitherto, the people are of the view that Jaganmohan Reddy indulged in economic offences and spent 16 months in jail. But, he became the CM while being out on bail.

It is clear that Jagan is of the view that the arrest provides him an opportunity to unleash the propaganda against the former CM accusing him of committing crimes and serving time in jail like him. In case the former CM is out on bail, the YCP leaders would have a point to score against the former CM.

A leader who committed various corrupt practices during his father's regime is now

Arrest of the former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu when polls are just five months away strongly indicates more of the political conspiracy and political vindictive attitude by Jaganmohan Reddy than the actual crime committed.



Y SATYA KUMAR
BJP National Secretary

against him. The objective of Jagan government was to arrest his political rival and lodge him behind the bars and give wide publicity to it to deflect public attention from his own irregularities.

During the past four-and-a-half years, the Jagan Government in AP failed on all fronts. Its failure is strikingly visible in irrigation sector, providing drinking water supply and jobs to the unemployed, electricity sector, and implementation of welfare and development schemes, in establishing industries and failure to allocate funds for execution of irrigation projects in drought-prone Rayalaseema region.

In all, 40 irrigation projects have been kept pending under YSRCP regime. The project cost has escalated and almost doubled due to delay in execution. The Polavaram project came to a grinding halt due to

omissions and commissions of Jagan Govt. The YSRCP has no wisdom to make good use of 69 rivers that flow across the State. Jagan, who sabotaged the interests of his Rayalaseema region, indulged in corruption amounting to thousands of crores in the name of excavation of parallel canals. The locals are observing this.

Seeds were not sown in at least 31 lakh acres in AP. Many regions in the State are reeling under power cuts. A situation had arisen under which power holiday is declared for industries.

Lakhs of unemployed are waiting for government jobs. But, the government is hoodwinking them on the pretext of implementation of job calendar. The crime rate is on the rise in the state.

The state capital was not in sight even after four-and-a-half years. On one hand Jagan promised to implement total prohibition and on the other, he is encouraging illegal liquor brands thereby affecting the health of the people.

As Jagan sensed that the people are seething with discontent over his administration of the State, he is caught in a tricky situation.

Otherwise, where is the need to move a Bill in State legislative Assembly to provide SPG cover to the CM, who rarely goes into public, and to his family members including his children pursuing education overseas?

He should have known better from where the threat perception is as his mentality is that of a criminal. When the State is failing in all sectors of activity, to cover up for his failures, Jagan hatched a plan to politics move around corruption, jails, bails and so on. But, the people are not as innocent as he thought them to be.

Telugu NRIs express solidarity with Naidu

Vizag to be hub of IT jobs: Vijayasai Reddy

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Following the arrest of former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu, who is also the president of the TDP, in a high-profile corruption case involving multi-crores, a groundswell of support, both at home and abroad, has emerged, condemning his detention as unlawful.

The Telugu diaspora in the United States and Australia has come together to express their solidarity with Chandrababu Naidu. Leading the charge in organising protests, the NRI community has taken a prominent stance. The NRI wing of the Jana Sena Party has also joined these demonstrations, resulting in coordinated protests across multiple states in the US., including California, Arizona, Dallas, Jersey, and Chicago.

Over the weekend, the NRI community has scheduled large rallies to demonstrate their unwavering support for Chandrababu Naidu and to



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voice their condemnation of his arrest. These gatherings prominently feature placards bearing the slogan 'We Are With CBN,' and protesters symbolically illuminate the scene with their cell phone lights. In other locations, enthusiastic chants in favor of Chandrababu Naidu resonate through the air, while several women have organized car rallies in Philadelphia as a show of solidarity.

Across the border in

Canada, the Telugu NRI diaspora has converged at Nathan Phillips Square in Toronto to stage peaceful protests and express their unwavering solidarity with Nara Chandrababu Naidu. Despite the short notice, large numbers turned out to protest the unjust arrest of this visionary leader. They emphasized his remarkable 42-year record of successful public service, contributions to the IT sector, and his role in economic development. The

community strongly condemns the undemocratic detention of this esteemed leader and demands justice, as well as the restoration of democracy in Andhra Pradesh. A memorandum on the matter was presented to the Consulate General of India in Toronto.

Meanwhile, Telugu diaspora Indians in Hong Kong have organised a demonstration in support of Chandrababu Naidu, expressing their concerns about the factional politics currently

plaguing Andhra Pradesh. They credit Chandrababu's leadership with the development of Telugu states, enabling middle-class youth to secure foreign employment opportunities through their inherent skills. Lamenting the state of factional politics in Andhra Pradesh, they resoundingly declare, "We stand with CBN."

Protesters lauded Chandrababu Naidu's vision for the Sunrise State of Andhra Pradesh, acknowledging his efforts in attracting technology industries to the region and creating employment opportunities in the IT sector for the youth. They also recognized his unwavering commitment to the welfare of the people, despite facing numerous challenges during his tenure, including natural disasters like Hudhud. His initiatives, such as the Swachh Bharat and Rythu Bazar schemes, are held up as shining examples of his foresight and dedication to the betterment of the region.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The ruling YSRCP national general secretary and member of Rajya Sabha V Vijayasai Reddy has said that Visakhapatnam will turn into the hub of IT jobs in the days to come and there are bright chances for creation of five lakh jobs in Visakhapatnam in the next five years.

Responding to various issues on Monday, the MP stated that there is a possibility of creating 50,000 jobs in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) sector alone in Visakhapatnam and there is a possibility of creating 10 lakh IT jobs across Andhra Pradesh in the next five years.

Vijayasai Reddy said that all the people know how 2 acres landlord Chandrababu



established the huge Heritage empire which is Rs 400 crores if 2 percent shares are sold. He said that whatever Chandrababu tries to cook up people are not in a position to believe him anymore. He said that Chandrababu, who is known for his manipulative skills, would say that it was for the sake of public

service that he intruded his men into the systems.

The MP criticized the TDP supporters for the yellow media photo shooting the Noise protest and the after-belly full of breakfast sitting for Deeksha. According to 'Balli Shastra' it is suggested that Dosha Pariharam should be done to Chandrababu first.

Vijayasai Reddy heaped praise on Padmavathi 'Hrudayalaya' which was adjudged the best Pediatric Cardiac Centre and received an award from the TN Governor for its service to serve infants with cardiac issues and it is a temple of hope for the poor. He further said that Padmavathi 'Hrudayalaya' is the brainchild of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

TDP-JSP alliance...

CM running admin on Gandhian principles: Sajjala

Continued from Page 1

Despite the TDP pledging support for the 'Varahi Yatra' through a tweet from Lokesh, who has been in Delhi for the past few weeks, the minister added that the event remained a major disappointment.

The Avanigadga gathering took an unexpected turn for JSP and Pawan Kalyan, as the Kapu leaders displayed minimal interest in the event. Scheduled for 3 pm, Pawan Kalyan arrived at the venue two hours ahead of time due to the lack of public turnout.

The event eventually commenced with much difficulty at 6 pm. Ambati asserted that Pawan Kalyan had anticipated a substantial

response to his meetings after forging an alliance with the TDP.

However, he alleged that Pawan Kalyan had lost his self-confidence upon witnessing the sparse attendance.

The Minister also criticized Pawan Kalyan for prematurely declaring that a JSP-TDP government would be established, seemingly forgetting the alliance with the BJP. He labelled Pawan Kalyan as one of the most unscrupulous and unreliable figures in politics, second only to Chandrababu.

Ambati questioned why Pawan Kalyan would lend support to a corrupt individual like Chandrababu if he had not accepted a political package.

Bhuvaneswari kicks off...

Continued from Page 1

She revealed that he recognised the potential of Information Technology a quarter-century ago and was instrumental in its growth. Pointing to the success of Cyberabad as evidence of his hard work, she shared his aspiration to make Amaravati even greater than Cyberabad, a vision he relentlessly pursued, often sleeping only 3-4 hours a night. In response to Bhuvaneswari's call for a Deeksha, a substantial number of individuals, predominantly women, emerged from their homes to participate in the protest and show their solidarity.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leaders paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri during their birth anniversary celebrations in the Central party office. The YSRCP leaders claimed that CM Jagan brought Gram Swaraj for the past four years in AP State through Gram and Ward Volunteers and Secretariat system. Advisor to government (public affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy claimed that the administration of YS Jagan in AP is running on the path shown by Mahatma Gandhi.

Ramakrishna Reddy said that Mahatma Gandhi, Phule, and Ambedkar are like Indian souls and Gandhi's Ahimsa and tolerance are noble qualities that we should practice before saying



them. He pointed out, "I say that Chief Minister YS Jagan is running the administration on Gandhian principles. I will say that Gandhian ambitions and ideas are being carried forward in true spirit by CM Jagan. Gandhi's dream of Gram Swaraj is established under Jagan's rule. As many as 98 lakh certificates and services have been received through the Jagananna Suraksha programme at doorsteps. Today, the health protection campaign Jagananna Aarogya Suraksha is going on widely across the state.

All this is possible because of the village and ward secretariats rooted at the village and town level and the village secretariat system is like a hub for this whole process."

Sajjala stated that Chandrababu, has been caught in the skill development scam and is counting the number of jail sentences and questioned why he would go on a hunger strike on the day of Gandhi Jayanti without shame. He said that Chandrababu's initiatives were meant to insult Mahatma Gandhi

as Chandrababu was found with evidence and the court remanded him after looking at the evidence. He said it is ridiculous to exploit public money and do initiations in jail.

Minister for Social Welfare Merugula Nagarajuna said Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri are great people who should be proud of the country. He said that Chief Minister YS Jagan is working to bring the village swaraj that Mahatma Gandhi dreamed of in Andhra Pradesh to the people.

MP Nandigam Suresh said, "YS Jagan is bringing the system of village secretariats as desired by Mahatma Gandhi and providing better administration to the people. Lal Bahadur Shastri fought many battles along with Gandhi. YS Jagan is credited with eradicating poverty."

Former minister Siddha Raghav Rao said that the main reason why Andhra Pradesh is ahead of all the states in India in terms of welfare and development is because YS Jagan followed the path shown by Mahatma Gandhi and brought Gram Swaraj.

Chief Whip in the Legislative Council Ummareddy Venkateswarlu, Former minister Velampalli Srinivas, MLC Lella Appi Reddy, MLA Kayle Anil Kumar, Navaratna Programme Vice Chairman Narayana Murthy, APCO Chairman Ganji Chiranjeevi, Party Spokesperson Naramalli Padmaja, SC Corporation Chairman Kommuri Kanaka Rao, and many other party leaders participated in the programme and hailed CM Jagan for bringing Gram Swaraj.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha

Thithi: Chaturthi: Oct 02 07:36 AM to Oct 03 06:12 AM

Panchami: Oct 03 06:12 AM to Oct 04 05:33 AM

Shashthi: Oct 04 05:33 AM to Oct 05 05:41 AM

Nakshatram:

Krithika: Oct 02 06:24 PM to Oct 03 06:03 PM

Rohini: Oct 03 06:03 PM to Oct 04 06:29 PM

Rahukalam: 3:02 PM to 4:31 PM

Yamagandam: 9:07 AM to 10:36 AM

Varjyam: 10:20 AM to 11:58 AM

Gulika: 12:05 PM to 1:33 PM

Amritakalam: 03:41 PM to 05:16 PM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:41 AM to 12:28 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy

Temp: 34°

Humidity: 70%

Sunrise: 5:58 AM

Sunset: 5:55 PM

Updated: October 2, 2023 5:00 PM

Karik and Drew win nobel...

Continued from Page 1

Dr. Bharat Pankhania, an infectious diseases expert at Exeter University, said that a major advantage of mRNA technology was that vaccines could be made in extremely large quantities since their main components are made in laboratories. Pankhania predicted that the technology used in the vaccines could be used to refine vaccines for other diseases like Ebola, malaria and dengue, and might also be used to create shots that immunize people against certain types of cancer or auto-immune diseases like lupus.

"It's possible that we could vaccinate people against abnormal cancer proteins and have the immune system attack it after being given a targeted mRNA shot," he explained.

"It's a much more targeted technology than has been previously available and could revolutionise how we handle not only outbreaks, but non-communicable diseases."

Nobel Committee member Gunilla Karlsson Hedestam said the prize could go some way to addressing concerns among skeptics about the speed with which COVID-19 vaccines were developed. She said the award highlights "the

decades of basic research that's behind this kind of work."

HOW DID KARIK AND WEISSMAN REACT?

Karik said her husband was the first to pick up the early morning call, handing it to her to hear the news. "I couldn't believe it," she said. "I was very much surprised. But I am very happy." Before COVID-19, mRNA vaccines were already being tested for other diseases like Zika, influenza and rabies but the pandemic brought more attention to this approach, Karik said.

"There was already clinical trials before COVID, but people were not aware," she said.

Thomas Perlmann, the secretary of the Nobel Assembly who announced the prize, said both scientists were "overwhelmed" by the news when he spoke to them shortly before their names became public. The prize carries a cash award of 11 million Swedish kronor (USD 1 million) from a bequest left by the prize's creator, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel. The laureates are invited to receive their awards at ceremonies on December 10, the anniversary of Nobel's death.

Dialogue only way...

Continued from Page 1

Pawan Kalyan stressed the importance of collectively putting an end to such corrupt practices.

Clarifying his position, Pawan Kalyan noted that his disagreement with YSRCP leaders revolves around policy matters rather than personal animosity.

He lamented the apparent abandonment of the 'Gram Swarajam' concept under the YSRCP regime, advocating for a return to the principles that Mahatma Gandhi upheld. He called for the transmission of values-based politics to future generations and urged the Jana Sena Party to distance itself from the tainted state of current politics, much like a lotus emerging from the mud.

In a solemn tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his birth anniversary, Pawan Kalyan garlanded his portrait and paid homage to former prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri. He observed a 30-minute silence to commemorate the occasion.

Is Pawan hinting... Bandaru...

Continued from Page 1

Irrigation Minister Ambati Rambabu didn't mince words when criticising Pawan Kalyan's recent declaration of a JSP-TDP government, seemingly overlooking the BJP. Rambabu labelled Kalyan as one of the most "immoral, unethical, and unreliable" figures in politics, drawing comparisons to Chandrababu Naidu. He questioned Kalyan's motives for supporting someone he referred to as corrupt and even suggested that Pawan Kalyan had created a larger-than-life image of himself within the BJP, overshadowing the party's symbol, the lotus.

Continued from Page 1

Simultaneously, anticipating the impending arrest of the former minister, his supporters, along with TDP leaders and activists, gathered at his residence. Meanwhile, as the police arrived at Bandaru Satyanarayana Murthy's residence, his family members prevented them from meeting the former minister due to his poor health condition. In the meantime, TDP supporters initiated a sit-in protest in front of the former minister's residence on Monday morning, raising slogans against the YSRCP government.

KCR's conspiracy led to Naidu's arrest: Cong

HYDERABAD: Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's conspiracy is behind the arrest of TDP leader N. Chandrababu Naidu, the Congress said. Speaking to the media on Monday, former TPCC general secretary Bakka Judson said that KCR managed courts to implicate TPCC president Revanth Reddy in the Vote-for-Note case again thinking that the Congress is gain-

ing ground in Telangana.

He said that KCR is afraid of the Congress and so he is trying to make the police arrest Revanth by managing courts. Judson asked the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the CBI to explain why they are not launching an inquiry into the corruption of BRS MLC Kavitha and Kaleshwaram project deals.

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Call to turn Vja into clean city

Fortnight-long 'Swachhata hi seva' campaign concludes

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The fortnight-long 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign organised by the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation concluded on Monday. The grand closing ceremony held at the Dr BR Ambedkar Park in Vijayawada was graced by NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao and MLAs Malladi Vishnu and V Srinivas.

Municipal Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar presided over the function. In recognition of their hard work, the sanitary workers were honoured during the ceremony. Prizes were distributed to the winners of various competitions conducted on social media as part of the Swachhata Hi Seva fortnight. Besides, raincoats were distributed to the public



health workers.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Dilli Rao lauded the campaign, as part of which numerous cleanliness initiatives were taken up enhancing the city's beauty. He expressed happiness over the projects being undertaken in coordination with the team, coinciding with Gandhi Jayanti, International Non-Violence Day, and Swachhata Divas.

Collector Dilli Rao highlight-

ed the key role played by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy in the city's cleanliness efforts, which were effectively executed by civic chief Swapnil Dinkar Pundkar. He stressed the importance of continuous effort to achieve a thoroughly clean Vijayawada.

Andhra Pradesh Planning Commission Vice-Chairman and Vijayawada Central MLA Malladi Vishnu praised Swapnil for his unwavering dedication to

the city. He noted that among the cities in Andhra Pradesh, Vijayawada stood out due to the Commissioner's work and commitment beyond regular working hours.

Andhra Pradesh Industrial Development Corporation Chairperson and Corporator Bandi Punyaseela lauded the collective hard work of all, which resulted in the beautification of BR Ambedkar Park. She urged the citizens to share the responsibility of keeping the city clean by refraining from littering.

Deputy Mayors Bellam Durga, Avuthu Sri Sailaja, YSRCP Vijayawada East in-charge Devineni Avinash, 21st Division Corporator P Narasa Kumar, 22nd Division Corporator T Konda Reddy and others were present.

Gandhiji's fight has no parallel in history: Guv



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Governor S Abdul Nazeer paid rich tributes to the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi on his 154th birth anniversary and former Prime Minister Bharat Ratna Lal Bahadur Shastri on his 119th birth anniversary, by offering flowers to their portraits at a

programme held in Durbar Hall at Raj Bhavan here on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Abdul Nazeer said that Gandhi Jayanti is observed all over the world as the 'International Day of Non-violence' as he fought against the mighty British rule with the weapons of non-violence and

CM PAYS TRIBUTES

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy paid homage to the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi and former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri at his residence here on Monday on their Jayanti.

The Chief Minister paid floral tributes to their portraits and offered obeisance as a mark of respect to the great leaders. Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister A. Suresh and MLC T Raghuram were among those present.



satyagraha and won freedom for the country, which has no parallel in the history of the world.

Governor Abdul Nazeer has said that former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri was another great leader, whose 119th birth anniversary is celebrated

today. The Governor said Shastriji was a humble, soft-spoken but strong leader, whose call "Jai Jawan Jai Kisan" inspired the entire nation. Officers and staff members of Raj Bhavan have also attended the programme.

KDCA U-23 men's team selected

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Krishna District Cricket Association (KDCA) has selected the under-23 men's team for the season 2023-24. The matches are to be held at Narasaraopet and Pericherla in Guntur district from October 3 to 13, said KDCA adhoc committee chairman T Trinadhi Raju in a press release on Monday. He stated that Youchan and B Geeth were selected for the under-19 ACA one-day team. So, these two players will not be available for the Inter-district multi-day U-23 matches, he added. Under-23 men's cricket team: A Brahma Teja, P Ananthika Karthikeya, T Varun Satwik, G Chanti, M Sumanth Naidu, L Chinnu, V Vishal, Sk Khaza Mohiddin, PV Durga Rao, M Maanas, D Sai Akhil, K Jaswanth, G Nikhil, P Rakesh Babu, Ekatan Singh, Ch Youchan, B Geeth, Stand Bys: GSS Prithvi, N Bhanu Vara Prasad, K Bavani Prasad, Coach: S Ramkumar, KDCA Cricket Head V Vijay Sarathi.

Sarpanches stage protest for funds

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary, the Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Chamber, Andhra Pradesh Sarpanches Association and sarpanches staged a protest, wearing black clothes, with the demand that the funds of the 14th and 15th Finance Commission be returned. The agitation took place at the Mahatma Gandhi statue near Nirmala High School in Machilipatnam in Krishna district on Monday.

Under the leadership of the AP Panchayat Raj Chamber, president and former MLC YVB Rajendra Prasad submitted a representation to the Gandhi statue. Later, they raised slogans against the State government over 'stealing' the 14th and 15th Finance Commission funds, released by the Central government, from the panchayats without informing sarpanches and secretaries.



Speaking on the occasion, YVB Rajendra Prasad said that the State government diverted Rs.8,660 crore from the gram panchayats without any giving intimation to the panchayats and sarpanches. He demanded that those funds

should be credited to the gram panchayats immediately.

Also, he underlined the importance of bringing the Sachivalayam and Gram Voluntary system under the control of gram panchayats. The Mahatma Gandhi

National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGN-REGS) funds should be allocated to the panchayats and the sarpanches should be allowed to spend them. Further, he stated that free power supply should be continued to all gram panchayats in the State.

He urged the government to pay an honorarium of Rs.15,000 for sarpanches and MPTC members, and Rs.30,000 for MPPs and ZPTC members. Similarly, Rs.20,000 and Rs.30,000 should be paid to councillors and corporators, respectively, he said. Further, Rs.1 lakh is to be paid to municipal chairpersons and Rs.2 lakh to corporation mayors and ZP chairpersons as honorarium, he added.

Krishna District Sarpanches Association president Goli Vasantha Kumar, State organising secretary G Timothy, State secretary K Gopala Rao and K Srinivasa Rao were present among others.

'Footpath curbs to be eased after Forest Dept's clearance'

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

In a firm commitment to prioritise the safety and security of pilgrim devotees, TTD Chairman Bhumana Karunakara Reddy clarified that the relaxation of time restrictions for children under the age of 12 along the Alipiri Footpath route will be contingent upon clearance from the forest department, ensuring there is no threat from wild animals.

The Chairman conducted an inspection of the queue lines stretching from Gogarbham Circle to Krishna Teja Circle on Monday, responding to the sustained heavy influx of pilgrims in Tirumala since Thursday evening. He inquired about the availability of essential amenities such as food, drinking water, coffee, tea, and buttermilk for the devotees and directed the authorities to take additional measures to ensure a hassle-free experience for them.

Speaking to the media later, he highlighted a surge in the number of devotees visiting Tirumala over the past four days, owing to the sacred Purattasi month and holiday season. He noted that the queue lines have extended up to 4 to 5 kilometers. In a bid to facilitate quick dar-



shan for ordinary devotees, TTD has canceled VIP breaks, and supatham privileges, and slotted sarva darshanam tokens. Devotees waiting in the queues have reported receiving adequate facilities without any sense of impatience.

The Chairman also mentioned the anticipation of a significant number of devotees for the upcoming Navratni Brahmotsavam scheduled from October 15 to 23. He assured that the TTD authorities are diligently making arrangements to accommodate the large crowd expected for this grand event.

Notification issued for submission of applications for Inter pvt candidates

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Board of Intermediate Education (AP BIE) has issued a notification regarding the grant of exemption from attendance to private candidates who are not enrolled in college programmes for the Intermediate Public Examinations in March 2024. The last date for online application submission and payment of the exemption fee of Rs 1500 is November 30.

For those applying with an additional penal fee of Rs 500, the last date is December 31.

Eligibility criteria for private candidates seeking exemption include having a one-year gap after passing their qualifying

examination (SSC or equivalent) or a two-year gap to appear for both the first and second years of the Intermediate Public Examinations. Candidates who previously appeared for the second year of Intermediate Public Examinations (and failed) and wish to change their optional subjects can also apply for a change of group, following the Board's rules.

Intermediate Pass Certificate holders can choose to appear for a Second Language as an additional subject under Attendance Exemption. Private candidates who are granted attendance exemption and are appearing for the First or

Second year IPE in March 2024 for the first time must follow the syllabus prescribed for regular students. Candidates enrolled in APSS-DC Skilling programs in Skill Hubs or Skill Colleges are exempt from paying any exemption or penal fees. These candidates must provide their Skill ID and details of their skill training.

Applicants must apply for attendance exemption online through the website https://bieap.apcfss.in/ and upload scanned copies of their SSC Pass Certificate and Transfer Certificate (if applicable). Applications submitted by post or in person will not be considered.

Wildlife Week celebrations kick off at Visakhapatnam zoo

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The 69th Wildlife Week 2023 at Indira Gandhi Zoological Park in Visakhapatnam kicked off today with enthusiastic participation from the local community, especially students of all ages who showcased their love for wildlife through a drawing competition on different themes.

Dr Nandani Salaria, IFS, Curator, IGZP, commended the artistic abilities of the young participants and encouraged them to continue raising awareness about wildlife protection and our natural heritage and Sh. Srikantha Natha Reddy, IFS, expressed gratitude for the



support of students, teachers, and attendees, underscoring humanity's role in preserving the ecosystem and the importance of each species.

Wildlife Week 2023 will feature a series of educational events aimed at strengthening the community's commitment

to wildlife conservation. CPE Junior College, Visakhapatnam, demonstrated its dedication to wildlife conservation by adopting various zoo animals and contributed a donation of Rs. 40,000 for the well-being species to the Zoo authorities.

Future generations should strive to fulfil Gandhi's goals: MLA

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi's 154th birth anniversary was celebrated by the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation at the Gandhi Park on the BRP Road in One Town on Monday. NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao, Municipal Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar, Vijayawada West MLA V Srinivas and others paid floral tributes to the Gandhi statue and remembered the services of Gandhi to the nation.

Speaking on the occasion, former minister and Vijayawada West MLA Velampalli Srinivas said that Mahatma Gandhi guided the country towards Independence through non-violent agitations. The future

generations should be aware of the contributions made by Mahatma Gandhi to the nation. Also, they should strive to fulfil the goals of Gandhi, he added.

Dr Dilli Rao said that it was a great honour for India that Mahatma Gandhi was born in the country. Gandhi fought for independence through peace and non-violence, he said. The collector told students to read Gandhi's books and follow the path shown by him.

Andhra Pradesh Industrial Development Corporation Chairperson Bandi Punyaseela, Corporator Mandepudi Chatarji, VMC Additional Commissioner Sakunthala, Chief Medical Officer Dr Ratnawali and others were present.



Andhra Veterans lift VCAT Quadrangular Trophy

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Veterans have won the VCAT Quadrangular Cricket Tournament that took place in Hyderabad on Sunday and Monday. The Andhra Veterans won all three matches against Telangana, Pune and Adilabad to clinch the trophy.

In the final league match held on Monday, the Andhra Veterans beat VCAT Pune Veterans by 37 runs. Andhra won the toss and opted to bat first. In the 25-over match, Andhra scored 167 runs losing nine wickets.

Andhra batter RLV Prasad registered a half-century in just 43 balls. M Raja's 42 runs also helped the team score big. Pune Veterans bowler K Balachandra took three wickets for 30 runs and S Mahesh took two wickets for 28 runs.

In reply, the Pune Veterans managed to score only 130 runs. Except V Nikhil (35) and Sachin Samal (19), all other batsmen failed.

Andhra Veterans bowler I Penchalaiah took three wickets for nine runs playing a key role in the team's win. He bagged the Man of the Match award.

Winners of 'Drama Juniors' felicitated

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Ilayaraja Creations felicitated the winners of Drama Juniors competitions, telecast recently on Zee TV Telugu channel, at Scout Den opposite the Railway Court in Vijayawada on Sunday night.

The organisers honoured Alladi Lekha Lohit Nagasai, who won the first prize of Rs.10 lakh in Zee TV Drama Juniors Season 6, and Chebiyyam Aradhya, who stood second in the same competition. Both the winners belong to Vijayawada.

The organisers also honoured mentor R Vasudeva Rao,



who trained them. Lohit is studying in Amali English Medium School and Aradhya, in Icon Public School.

Speaking on the occasion, artist, director and the owner of the organisation MS Chowdary said it was neces-

sary to have cultural aptitude along with academic qualification for the students to achieve various goals in their lives.

Also, he appreciated the Zee TV management for conducting such competitions for children to inculcate in them the habit of acting.

He said that the first and second prize winners also participated in many theatre activities and that they were going to take part in Nandi Drama competitions to be held soon in Andhra Pradesh.

The parents of the winners and others also participated in the programme.

TDP stages protest in support of Naidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In support of TDP national president and former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's initiation at the Rajamahendravaram Central Jail and his wife Nara Bhuvaneshwari's protest in Rajamahendravaram in the name 'Satyameva Jayate', TDP leaders started protests at Kesineni Bhavan in Vijayawada on Monday. CPI State Secretary and former MLA K Ramakrishna and TDP NTR district president Nettem

Raghuram launched the protest.

Before the start of the protest, the leaders paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi. Later, Ramakrishna and Raghu Ram put on scarves and started the protest. TDP leaders V Munaiah, V Prasad, Gogula Venkata Ramana, and others took part in the protest.

Speaking on the occasion, CPI State secretary Ramakrishna suspected the support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amith Shah in the arrest of TDP supremo



Chandrababu Naidu. The Crime Investigation Department (CID) arrested Chandrababu without any evi-

dence in connection with the Skill Development Corporation scam, he alleged.

Further, he said that the CID

should change its name to Jagan Private Soldier (JPS). In the coming elections, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led YSRCP will lose. He is changing the candidates in several assembly seats, he added.

Former minister and NTR district TDP president Nettem Raghuram said that Jagan Mohan Reddy committed suicide politically with the arrest of Chandrababu Naidu. Besides the Jana Sena Party and CPI, the TDP will fight to defeat the YSRCP in the next elections, he explained.

3 killed as lorry collides with car

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

Three persons were killed and two others were injured when the car in which they were travelling collided with a lorry at Pasupuleru bridge near Vinukonda town on Monday.

Police said that an orchestra troop was returning after performing a concert. Their car collided with a lorry killing Navin, Yohova, and Shiva Reddy. All the three deceased died instantaneously.

Sanitary workers doing great service to society: Collector

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh said that the sanitary workers are doing a great service to the society and their services are invaluable and unparalleled.

On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, a special health check-up camp was organized for sanitation workers in Dwarka Tirumala PHC on Monday and the Collector visited the camp. He also visited various departments in the PHC and inquired about the medical services being provided to the patients there. As many as 200 sanitary workers were examined by the doctors in the medical camp.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Prasanna Venkatesh said that the services rendered by sanitation workers along with doctors and medical staff at all times are unforgettable not only during Coronavirus time.

He said that the government has the responsibility to protect the health of sanitation workers who are working tirelessly



for the protection of public health and complete sanitation in rural, urban and urban areas.

The Collector said: "The Safai Karmachari Act clarifies that medical examinations should be conducted at prescribed times for the health protection of sanitation workers. As part of the Clean Andhra Pradesh programme, medical examinations are being conducted for 'Clap Mitras' who are carrying out sanitation work in PHCs in all

mandal centers of the district. This programme was undertaken for the first time in the state in Eluru district and Eluru district has become an example for the state."

The Collector praised the medical staff and sanitation workers for serving the people disregarding the risk of their lives during the Corona pandemic, and recalled that he worked as Vijayawada Municipal Commissioner for two and a half years and every day his work started with san-

itation workers. For their services, the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation received Swachh Bharat Award as a Clean City at the national level, he highlighted.

Prasanna Venkatesh said that the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi gave great importance to cleanliness, and from his childhood, Gandhi Jayanti was very important to him.

He said that it made him happy to participate in the program along with clap friends on the day of Gandhi Jayanti. According to the call of 'Swachhta Hi Seva' given by the Prime Minister, Shramadanam was performed in the district on Sunday and stood first in the state.

The Collector claimed that salaries are being paid monthly to the sanitary workers and coffee with CLAP mitra programs are also being organized for them. ZP CEO K Ravikumar, DMHO Dr S Sharmista in-charge ZP officer K P Chandrasekhar, and other officials were among those who were present.

YSRC refutes TDP charges over 'Family Doctor'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr Ambati Naga Radhakrishna Yadav, chairman of NTR district YSRC Congress Doctors Cell, has refuted allegations about 'fake propaganda' of Telugu Desam regarding Family Doctor and Jagannanna Aarogya Suraksha that these programmes are copy of Chandranna Sanchara Chikitsa. He said that they wanted to invite public attention towards the corruption worth Rs 93.73 crore which took place during Telugu Desam's tenure, in which the government operated 277 mobile medical units (MMU) in the State.

Dr Radhakrishna Yadav alleged that the TD government caused Rs 93.73-crore loss to the State exchequer. On any given day, only 50 percent of MMUs were operational and in those also, doctors were not available. Even after all these irregularities, the then government religiously used to release service bills. He refuted the allegations and claims of TD over YSRC copying the Family Doctor concept from the TD government.



Modi marching ahead with Gandhi's ideals: BJP leader

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) organised the 'Swachhta Hi Seva' programme here on Monday at Hindu College centre on Monday.

BJP state official spokesperson Valluri Jayaprakash Narayana and state Swacchta Bharat Abhiyan co-convenor Eedara Srinivasa Reddy were among those who participated in the programme. The 'Swacchta Hi Seva' programme was organized at Hindu College island centre.

State Mahila wing vice president Kola Renuka Devi garlanded the state of Mahatma Gandhi on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Renuka Devi thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for providing 33% reservation to the women.

Speaking on the occasion, district president Vanama Narendra Kumar said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is moving forward by realising the Mahatma Gandhi dreams and strengthening the prestige of India.

Paying tributes to Father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi on the occasion of his birth anniversary, the BJP leaders lauded the services of Mahatma Gandhi who played a prominent role in the freedom movement and freed them from British rule

through non-violence and peaceful means.

BJP State Spokesperson Valluri Jayaprakash Narayana said that tributes were being paid to the father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi who fought on the path of non-violence with Satyagraha as a weapon and gave freedom and independence to crores of Indians. The BJP leaders also paid rich tributes to former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri on the occasion of his birth anniversary.

Zilla Sevapaksha District In-charge Eedara Srinivasa Reddy and Swachh Bharat district convener K Badharinarayana were among those who were present.

Only Cong can realise SCS: APCC chief

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Special Category Status (SCS) for the State and Andhra Pradesh Bifurcation Act assurances could be implemented only by the Congress Party, said Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) chief and former MLC Gidugu Rudra Raju. So, the Congress will be going into public with the campaign 'Save the Nation - Save Democracy', he said.

The birth anniversaries of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi and former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri were observed at the Andhra Ratna Bhavan in Vijayawada on Monday. Congress leaders paid floral tributes to their statues. Also, he released the 'Save the Nation - Save Democracy' posters.

Later, Gidugu Rudra Raju addressed the media and said that his party would explain to the people the injustice done to

the State by the ruling YSRC and Opposition TDP. For the sake of the State and the nation, he is going to perform special pujas to Varasiddhi Vinayaka Swamy at Kanipakam along with AICC secretary Meyyappan, he added.

Further, he stated that his party would organise a series of public meetings from October 4. He said that the first public meeting would be held in Chittoor. Also, the second meeting will be conducted at Madanapalle on October 5 and the next one at Kadapa on October 6, he added.

He remembered the assurances given by Sonia Gandhi when the Congress was in power. However, the BJP has not fulfilled these assurances after coming to power. He alleged that both the YSRC and TDP were supporting the BJP, which caused a huge loss to the State.



Port city, a thriving hub for AI-enabled IT professionals

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Visakhapatnam, often referred to as Vizag, is rapidly gaining recognition as a preferred destination for emerging professionals launching their careers, particularly in the realm of Artificial Intelligence (AI), according to Gedela Srinu Babu, the CEO of Pulses Group. Pulses Group, which has successfully created 5,000 job opportunities over the past five years, is poised to add another 5,000 positions within the next five years through the India Business Promotion Scheme.

At a press conference held on Monday, Gedela Srinu Babu highlighted how Pulses Group has played a pivotal role in enhancing Visakhapatnam's global presence by organizing more than 20 Global Tech Summits. These events have facilitated increased visibility for the city and attracted prospective companies looking to establish their foothold in this bustling port city.



Babu went on to reveal that this influx of fresh graduates is expected to pave the way for the creation of one million job opportunities in Andhra Pradesh over the next five years. In particular, Visakhapatnam is set to generate half a million employment opportunities through collaborative efforts between the State and Central governments, as conveyed to the media.

Aside from the information technology sector, Visakhapatnam boasts a diverse range of industries

including healthcare, pharmaceuticals, marine industries, tourism, education, and defense, collectively providing employment for 100,000 individuals. Highlighting the city's growing significance in the field of artificial intelligence, Babu stated, "With the prominent role that artificial intelligence plays, Visakhapatnam is solidifying its position as a thriving hub for AI-enabled IT, making it an appealing destination for companies on the cutting edge of artificial intelligence."

Cop succumbs to head injury

PNS ■ ELURU



Police constable Gandham Narendra, who was attacked and hit by a person on the head during Ganesh immersion, succumbed to his injury on Monday at a private hospital in Hyderabad.

The deceased constable Gandham Narendra (34) was on duty during Ganesh immersion at Agiripalli two days ago at Gouda Centre. The constable asked the Ganesh immersion organisers to reduce the volume of the DJ sound system.

One of the participants, Ulasa Ramakrishna, picked up an argument with the constable and hit him on the head with a stick.

The constable suffered a critical injury and he was admitted to the GGH in Nuzvid. As his condition turned to be serious, he was shifted to a private hospital in Hyderabad where he succumbed to injury while undergoing treatment today.

Novel protest staged demanding repairs to potholed road

PNS ■ ELURU

Members of RK Warriors organised a novel protest demanding the government to take steps to repair the road filled with potholes.

The RK warrior members squatted on a huge pothole which was filled with rainwater located on the new bypass road near Gudivada town. The activists held placards and squatted on the pool on the road raising slogans demanding steps to be taken

to repair the road.

The activists said that there was a huge pothole on the road which was filled with water and it posed a threat to the vehicle users. The water-filled pothole is causing road accidents also, they said adding that the water-filled pothole looks like a mini pond, they lamented.

The RK warrior members Ayyappa and Charan warned of organizing a dharna in front of the Collector's office if steps were not taken to repair the road.



'MODI'S TOURS AIMED AT SPLITTING ANTI-INCUMBENCY VOTES'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Asking Prime Minister Narendra Modi to explain why he did not tell the people of Telangana that he would make the KCR family's corruption public, TPCC president Revanth Reddy said that Modi's tours are intended to split the anti-government vote.

He said that the BJP is trying to split votes where the Congress is strong and Modi is indirectly helping the BRS win elections. Speaking to the media at the Gandhi Bhavan on Monday, Revanth said that these are joint trips of both the BRS and the BJP to defeat the Congress.

The thieves in disguise (KTR and Harish Rao) are roaming around. "I will come with the 2004 and 2009 Congress manifesto. Will they come with their 2014 and 2018 BRS manifestos? Are you ready to discuss the

development achieved by the two governments" Revanth said.

He said that from 2004 to 2014, the Congress was in power in many states and implemented many welfare schemes in Andhra Pradesh. But, these thieves in disguise (referring to KTR, Harish Rao...) are talking as they like about the Congress. The Congress gave free electricity, Indiramma houses, the Arogyashri scheme, farm loan waiver, fee reimbursement and reservations for minorities. YSR implemented the six promises made from 2004 to 2014. We implemented these schemes in united AP like nowhere else in Congress-ruled states, he said.

He said that welfare schemes are based on states' income and people's needs. But, these thieves in disguise (KTR and Harish Rao) do not know the value of the Constitution. They do not have proper knowledge of that



and are talking about implementing it in other states. Throwing a direct challenge to both of them, Revanth said that he is ready for a debate on their 10-year rule and the 10-year rule of the BRS. Are you ready to discuss? The people of Telangana won't believe you even if you cry, he added.

"What is wrong with multi-leadership in the Congress? What is wrong if we give opportunities to weaker sections? We have changed CMs in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka. The Congress is a party that implements something if it gives its word. We implemented it in

the past and now will implement the six guarantees. KTR and Harish do not have any moral right to question the Congress," Revanth said.

He said that Telangana society does not trust and does not forgive KCR. Suppose KTR doubts the tax collections or extra charges of the Karnataka government. If he writes a letter demanding an investigation, I will ask the Karnataka government to accept it and conduct an investigation. I am writing a letter to inquire about the collections being made by the Telangana government. Will it be investigated, Revanth asked.

He said that KTR is using the late NTR's name for votes. "The BRS is trying to win votes in the name of NTR. KTR does not deserve to be compared with NTR. "No one in the BRS has the right to compare himself with NTR," Revanth said.

Gampalagudem VRO swept away in Munneru rivulet

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Village Revenue Officer (VRO) Shaik Imran was swept away while swimming in the Munneru rivulet at Keesara of Kanchikacharla mandal in NTR district on Monday. He died after being caught up in a quagmire in Munneru rivulet.

According to the police, Shaik Imran was working as VRO in Gampalagudem mandal. He came to Pendyala village to attend a function on October 1. On Monday, he went to the Munneru rivulet along with his family members to have fun. As he entered Munneru for a swim, he was swept away. After learning about the incident, the police rushed to the spot and started search operations with the cooperation of fishermen. After some time, the fishermen identified Imran's dead body.

Collector asks people to keep surroundings clean and tidy

PNS ■ ONGOLE

District Collector AS Dinesh Kumar called upon people to keep the surroundings clean and tidy.

The Collector, along with Mayor Gangada Sujata and Commissioner Venkateswara Rao, participated in the Swacchta Hi Seva programme at the Pothuraju canal and surrounding areas and at the Rangaraya tank. He took part in cleaning the area. He removed garbage as part of the programme.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that as per the call of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the program was conducted in two areas within the limits of all the village and ward secretariats of the district under

the 'Swachhta Hi Seva' programme.

The Collector said that all the wastewater of the city goes through the Pothuraju canal, and due to the dumping of garbage in it, nearby areas get flooded during monsoons, stating that 80 percent of the garbage is plastic waste.

He called upon people not to litter the plastic waste on the canals and underlined the need to get rid of the worst problem. Mayor Gangada Sujatha said that the Pothuraju canal, which is spread over 7 kilometers in Ongole town, is full of garbage. She directed the authorities to educate people not to throw garbage, especially plastic waste in it.



AKTP NCC cadets win prizes

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

National Cadet Corps (NCC) Cadets Shazfa Sameen and Pujitha Maheswari of the AKTP Municipal Girls' High School, Gudivada, in Krishna district have won prizes in painting and Rangoli competitions, respectively.

These competitions were conducted by the 4 Andhra Girls' Battalion as part of the 'Swachhata hi seva' campaign which was observed from September 15 to October 2.

On the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary, Cadets Shazfa and Pujitha Maheswari were felicitated by



NCC 4 Andhra Girls' Battalion Commanding Officer Col Balinder Singh. These two NCC Cadets participated in the competitions on the theme 'Waste Management and No Plastic'.

Also, the AKTPMGH School NCC Unit observed the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on the school premises on Monday. NCC Second Officer K Anuradha took the pledge with students on 'Swachhata hi seva'.

AP's housing project earns global recognition

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The flagship programme of the Andhra Pradesh government, the 'Pedalandariki Illu' initiative, operating under the 'Navaratnalu' scheme, has garnered international acclaim for its unwavering commitment to advancing energy efficiency.

Dr. Jonathan Demenge, the Energy Head of Cooperation and Counselor at the Embassy of the Swiss Government in Delhi, conveyed his deep admiration for the remarkable implementation of energy efficiency projects in Housing Schemes by EESL and the

Andhra Pradesh government. In his communication to the Advisor of EESL for Business Development and Government Affairs in South India and Union Territories, he underscored the urgent need to raise public awareness regarding energy conservation and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Dr. Demenge emphasised the significant impact such initiatives can have in effectively addressing climate change. His praise highlighted the global significance of Andhra Pradesh's initiative, positioning it as a potential model for energy



efficiency programs.

He also applauded the efforts of Special Chief Secretary for Housing, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Ajay Jain, and CEO of EESL, Vishal Kapoor, for their collaboration with the Union and State Governments, culminating in an agreement during the G20 Global Summit in Goa to introduce energy efficiency measures in Housing Schemes. He expressed hope that other regions would follow suit, fostering the creation of energy-efficient housing schemes that benefit both the general public and the environment.

Special Chief Secretary Ajay Jain reiterated the government's unwavering commitment to uplifting the underprivileged through the Pedalandariki Illu housing initiative in Jagannanna Colonies, aligning with the Government of India's PMAY scheme. He emphasized the administration's determination to ensure that the benefits of energy efficiency reach every beneficiary, emphasizing the program's dual impact on improving lives and conserving the environment. Mr. Jain expressed his gratitude towards Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan

Reddy and Minister for Housing, Jogi Ramesh, for their steadfast support and determination, which he credited as instrumental in the success of the housing scheme.

Lakshmisha MD, AP Housing Corporation Ltd., noted that the Pedalandariki Illu program serves as a shining example of employing innovative solutions to address social and environmental challenges. It is a model that other states can emulate to provide affordable, sustainable housing for underprivileged communities while enhancing energy efficiency.

INDIA CORNER

One of NIA's most wanted terrorists Shah Nawaz arrested with two associates

Delhi Police on Monday arrested one of NIA's most wanted terrorists Mohammad Shah Nawaz, accused of having links with an ISIS module, along with his two associates and seized incriminating material including those suspected to be used in IED fabrication, officials said. Shah Nawaz was nabbed in Jaitpur in Delhi, while Mohammad Rizwan Ashraf and Mohammad Arshad Warsi were arrested in Lucknow and Moradabad, in Uttar Pradesh, respectively, they said, adding the three have been remanded in police custody for a week. All three have done engineering. Citing preliminary questioning, the police said the accused resided various areas in western and southern India. They wanted to make their base in Western Ghats, the police said. Shah Nawaz had escaped from the custody of Pune Police and was living in Delhi, they said. He carried a reward of Rs 3 lakh. Devices, which could have been used in making explosive devices, were seized.



Gifts, mementos given to PM Modi to be auctioned at NGMA

A wide range of gifts and mementos given to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the recent past have been displayed as part of an exhibition at the National Gallery of Modern Arts here. All gifts will be auctioned at the exhibition, which began on Monday. Modi also shared some pictures from the exhibition on 'X' and said these are a 'testament to the rich culture, tradition and artistic heritage of India'. "Starting today, an exhibition at the @ngma_delhi will display a wide range of gifts and mementoes given to me over the recent past. Presented to me during various programmes and events across India, they are a testament to the rich culture, tradition and artistic heritage of India," he posted. "Like always, these items will be auctioned and the proceeds will support the Namami Gange initiative," he added. Earlier in the day, Union Minister of State for Culture Meenakshi Lekhi held a press conference on the auction.



Army Chief Gen Pande begins 4-day visit to Tanzania

Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande on Monday began a four-day visit to Tanzania with a focus on building a stronger military partnership between the two countries. Gen Pande is scheduled to meet the top civil and military brass of the east African country including President Samia Suluhu Hassan and Defence Minister Stergomena Lawrence Tax, officials said. "This visit of the Chief of Army Staff further consolidates the high-level bilateral defence engagements and close defence ties shared between India and Tanzania," the Army said. "The visit promises to not just celebrate the existing collaborations but also pave the way for a stronger future partnership," it said in a statement. Gen Pande will also hold wide-ranging talks with Tanzania's Chief of Defence Force General Jacob John Mkunda, the officials said.



PM Modi says opposition parties have anti-development attitude

PNS ■ GWALIOR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday slammed the opposition parties for their "anti-development" politics and said they have no vision or road map and hate to see the country's progress in different fields under his government.

He asserted that anti-BJP parties do not like the fact that the country is now a days praised at global forums.

"When the entire world is praising the country and sees their future in India, there are those who indulge in politics and are unable to see anything except their chair...they do not like India being praised the world over. These anti-development people are trying to prove that nothing has happened in the nation and they have pain in their stomach (over India's praise)," he said.



state and also at the Centre) as it ensured Madhya Pradesh's "double-development".

The BJP government has pulled Madhya Pradesh out of the 'BIMARU' (laggard) category and put it in among the top 10 states in the country in terms of development, said Modi.

The PM said in the opposition-ruled states, crime and

corruption are rampant, while infrastructure development and growth in different fields are key features of BJP rule.

"They (opposition) have no vision or road map for development. They hate the country's progress and development schemes. Due to their hatred, they forget the country's achievements," he said. "Our aim is to ensure Madhya Pradesh features among the top three states in the country," Modi stated and added "Your one vote will take MP to the number three position in the country."

The PM said he will ensure India is counted among the top three economies in the world in the next few years.

Referring to the upcoming assembly polls which will decide who forms a new government, he said the next five years are crucial for Madhya Pradesh's development.

Manipur Consumer Affairs Minister Leishangthem Sushindro has rejected the demand of a group of youngsters from the state to replace Chief Minister N Biren Singh and form a new regional party to work in the interest of the state.

The group of youngsters under the banner of Youths of Manipur (YOM) held a meeting with 23 ruling-party MLAs and ministers and Congress leader Okram Ibobi Singh in New Delhi's Manipur Bhavan on Saturday.

Leishangthem, upon his arrival here from Delhi on Sunday, told reporters, "The demand for change of CM is tantamount to inviting President's Rule in the state. The CM is chosen by the elected representatives. Just because they have demanded to replace the CM doesn't mean it has to be done."

Manipur Min rejects demand for CM change

PNS ■ IMPHAL

CBI, NIA refute allegations of excesses in Manipur

PNS ■ IMPHAL

Amid tribal groups accusing the NIA and CBI of high-handedness in Manipur, the central agencies on Monday said every arrest made in the restive state, which has been witnessing ethnic clashes since May, is based on evidence gathered by investigative teams.

The NIA and CBI officials working here in an ethnically charged environment have been facing the daunting task of completing investigations in various cases, including those related to attacks on Army personnel in 2015, the probe agencies said.

Refuting the allegations levelled by the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Front (ITLF), an organisation claiming to represent the Kuki-Zo community of Manipur hills, officials from both agencies said no partiality has been shown against any community, religion or sect, and that only the rule book of the Indian Penal Code was abided by.



Referring to the recent arrest of Seiminlun Gangte, a tribal, the officials said he is one of the key accused in an SUV blast case that took place in the Kwakta area of Bishnupur district on June 21. Three people were injured in the blast.

He was brought to New Delhi after securing his transit remand from the competent court. In the national capital, the accused was produced before a designated court, which remanded him to NIA custody, they added.

Due course of law is being followed and the evidence collected by the anti-terror agency will be placed before the competent court, the officials further said, adding that baseless allegations were being made only to derail the probe and create confusion among the general public.

On September 22, the NIA arrested Moirangthem Anand Singh from Imphal in connection with a different case. Singh, along with four others, was arrested by the Manipur Police for possession of weapons looted from the police armoury.

BIHAR'S CASTE SURVEY OUT OBCs, EBCs nearly two-thirds of total population

PNS ■ PATNA

The Nitish Kumar government in Bihar on Monday released findings of its much-awaited caste survey which revealed that OBCs and EBCs constitute a whopping 63 per cent of the state's total population.

According to the data released here by Development Commissioner Vivek Singh, the state's total population stood at a little over 13.07 crore, out of which the Extremely Backward Classes (36 per cent) were the largest social segment followed by the Other Backward Classes at 27.13 per cent.

The survey also stated that Yadavs, the OBC group to which Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav belongs, were the largest in terms of the population, accounting for 14.27 per cent of the total.

Dalits, also known as the Scheduled Castes, accounted for 19.65 per cent of the total population in the state, which is also home to nearly 22 lakh (1.68 per cent) people belonging to the Scheduled Tribes.

Those belonging to the "unreserved" category, which denotes the proverbial "upper castes" who dominated politics till the Mandal wave of 1990s, comprise 15.52 per cent of the total population.

The survey also establishes that the state's population is overwhelmingly Hindu, with the majority community comprising 81.99 per cent of the total population, followed by Muslims (17.70 per cent).

Christians, Sikhs, Jains and those following other religions as also the non-believers have a miniscule presence, together making up for less than one per cent of the total population.

Lauding the government officials who undertook the gigantic exercise, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said, "A meeting will soon be convened of all the nine political parties with an electoral presence in the state legislature and the facts and figures will be shared with them."

RJD president Lalu Prasad, who is Kumar's ally as well as the father of his deputy Tejashwi Yadav, also issued a statement, declaring that the exercise will set the tone for "a nationwide caste census which will be undertaken when we form the next government at the Centre".

Both Prasad and Kumar have played an instrumental role in the formation of the INDIA coalition, which affirmed its commitment to holding a caste census at a meeting it held in Bengaluru recently.



President Murmu, Vice President Dhankhar pay homage to Mahatma Gandhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu and Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi on his birth anniversary at the Gandhi Smriti museum here on Monday.

They also attended a 'Bhajan Sandhya' at Gandhi Smriti, formerly Birla Bhavan where Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated on January 30, 1948.

On the occasion, a message from United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was also read out. October 2 is observed as the International Day of Non-Violence.

"On this International Day of Non-Violence, we commemorate not only the birth of Mahatma Gandhi but also the timeless values he championed: mutual respect and understanding, justice, and the power of peaceful action," the UN secretary-general's message read. Vijay Goel, vice chairman of the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, was also present in the programme.

MUST PRESENT VISION FOR COUNTRY: KAPIL SIBAL INDIA bloc doesn't need common minimum programme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Monday expressed confidence that the "cracks" in the INDIA bloc would not breach the alliance and asserted that the opposition coalition needs a new vision for the future of the country rather than a common minimum programme.

Sibal, who is a prominent voice in the opposition and had attended the meeting of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) in Mumbai last month, alleged that the Adani issue is a "scandal" but the opposition does not have the data to prove it.

"I don't know how far that (Adani issue) will gel with the people. But the fact of the matter is that as an alliance, we need to look at larger issues that will give hope to the generations of tomorrow," he said in his second episode of his YouTube initiative 'Dil Se'.

Asked about cracks in the opposition alliance including Congress leaders in Delhi and Punjab urging the party's leadership to have a tie-up with the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party, Sibal said, "We must look at it from two different perspectives, one is how is the INDIA alliance is going to face the NDA, the other is the internal politics of the INDIA alliance which is another thing altogether."

"This dialogue (between



opposition parties) is happening at two levels and because there is some opposition at the other level, you think the INDIA alliance is not going to work but the fact of the matter is that when it comes to the Lok Sabha elections, you will see the kind of unity you have not seen before despite the fact of what you are saying that there are cracks in the alliance," the former Union minister said.

Sibal said he does see the "cracks" in the opposition bloc but does not see them "breaching" the alliance because they are with reference to politics that is happening in various states.

He said alliances at the state level would not be an issue and even in states such as Punjab the fight if at all would be between AAP and the Congress with the victor being part of the

INDIA alliance. "Similarly in Haryana, so there is no problem other than maybe Delhi...even in West Bengal, the Congress is not the main player in that state," he said.

On the leadership question of the INDIA bloc, Sibal said the strategy of the opposition will evolve in the next few months whether they are going to project a leader or not.

"History has shown us that even if you don't project a leader, as long as you raise real issues of the people (it is fine)," he said.

Sibal said his criticism of the INDIA alliance was not at that level but that they have not lined a vision for India.

"The battle is the battle of issues which at the moment the INDIA alliance is not projecting -- what are the issues that confront the nation tomorrow," the former Congress leader said.

"We should not commit ourselves to the narrative of the past. We need a narrative for the future. It should not be personality-oriented, it should not take inspiration from the past so much. ...We need a new vision for India, I don't think we need a common minimum programme, we are talking about it. My personal view is that we don't need a common minimum programme, we need a vision for tomorrow," he said.



Bhiwandi, Kolkata, Arrah among world's 10 cities with slowest traffic: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Three of the world's 10 slowest cities in terms of traffic speeds are in India, according to the findings by a US-based private non-profit research organisation.

As per the report, Bhiwandi in Maharashtra, Kolkata, and Bihar's Arrah are among the 10 slowest cities in the world on the speed index.

The study, conducted by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), covered over 1,200 cities in 152 countries.

According to the report -- 'The Fast, the Slow and the Congested: Urban Transportation in Rich And Poor Countries' -- the average travel speed of motor vehicles throughout the day is the highest in Flint (US), slowest in Bangladesh capital Dhaka, and is the most congested in Bogota (Colombia).

It also said nine of the 10 cities with the slowest uncongested speeds are in Bangladesh, India, and Nigeria.

Researchers used data from Google maps to analyse traf-

fic in more than 1,000 cities having a population of over 300,000.

Bhiwandi ranked 5th in the world's 20 slowest cities on the speed index, followed by Kolkata (6th) Arrah (7th), Bihar Sharif (11th), Mumbai (13th), Aizawl (18th), Bengaluru (19th) and Shillong (20th).

On traffic congestion parameters, Bengaluru ranked 8th among the world's top 20 congested cities, followed by Mumbai (13th) and Delhi (20th).

Urban travellers in rich countries experience about 50 per cent higher speeds than travellers in poor countries, according to the report.

Between June 12 and November 5, 2019, NBER researchers collected 582,956,059 instances of 18,967,344 trips spanning across the 1,228 cities for their sample.

"For our three most populous countries, India, the US, and Indonesia, we collected 66 million, 57 million, and 13 million trip instances, in 173, 121, and 29 cities, respectively," the report added.

India will help maintain Gandhi sites in SA: Envoy

PNS ■ JOHANNESBURG

India will assist in maintaining all sites connected to Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa, the Indian envoy here said on Monday as the world marked the 154th birth anniversary of the global peace icon.

On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, High Commissioner Prabhat Kumar paid floral homage to the bust of Gandhi at the Constitutional Court premises here, which was once a prison where the Mahatma and his followers served sentences during their resistance to discriminatory laws.

Gandhi served four terms of imprisonment between 1908 and 1913 here, including his very first sentence in South

Africa.

The bust was unveiled in 2012 by then-President Pratibha Patil when she paid a visit to South Africa.

"In all my postings abroad, I have always garlanded the statue of Mahatma Gandhi and now in South Africa, where I am doing so for the first time, it is very special, because Gandhiji was here for 21 years," Kumar said.

After the garlanding, Kumar visited permanent exhibitions at the venue dedicated to the lives of both Gandhi and Nelson Mandela, who served 27 years as a political prisoner of the apartheid government before becoming South Africa's first democratically-elected president in May 1994.



The diplomat said he is also looking forward to attending the installation of a seven-foot statue of Gandhi at Tolstoy Farm, the once-thriving commune established by Gandhi about 30 km south of Johannesburg during his tenure as a lawyer in the city.

After falling into complete disrepair due to vandalism, only the foundation of

Gandhi's original zinc and wood home was left, surrounded by tall grass, until interventions by Gandhian activist Mohan Hira and the Mahatma Gandhi Remembrance Organisation (MGRO).

With support largely from the Indian government, Tolstoy Farm has now been restored to some extent with a fruit orchard, a Peace Garden with flowers and shrubs, and a library.

Hira arranged for an artisan from India to sculpt the latest statue at his residence here before moving it to Tolstoy Farm.

Kumar pledged further support for Tolstoy Farm. "The support from India will continue...all the places

connected with Mahatma Gandhi (in South Africa) will receive attention from the government of India," the envoy said.

Standing next to a wall-sized image of the two leaders together, prepared for the exhibition although they had never met, Kumar reflected on the special relationship between Gandhi and the African National Congress (ANC) led by Mandela.

"Gandhiji was here and the ANC got a lot of inspiration from Gandhiji and thereafter Nelson Mandela also always admired Gandhi and said a lot about him, so this exhibition is an inspiration for all of us, Indians and South Africans," he said.

No copyright in scriptures but their adaptations protected : Delhi HC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has restrained several entities from reproducing and disseminating content belonging to Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, established by ISKCON founder Srila Prabhupada, saying while there can be no copyright in religious scriptures, their adaptations which are "transformative works" -- like Ramanand Sagar's Ramayana or BR Chopra's Mahabharat -- are entitled to protection from piracy.

Justice Prathiba M Singh, while dealing with the Trust's lawsuit on the issue, said copyright would vest in original parts of works which preach, teach or



explain the scripture and the piracy of such copyrighted works of the plaintiff cannot be permitted.

"Defendant Nos.1 to 14 shall stand restrained in any manner from printing, reproducing, communicating, disseminating any part of the Plaintiff's works to the public either in print form or in audio-visual form or in electronic form including through websites, mobile applications, weblinks, Instagram

posts or any other posts on the social media as would result in the infringement of Plaintiff's copyright," ordered the court recently in an ex parte interim order.

It also directed Google LLC and Meta Platforms Inc to take down the infringing works from their platforms while ordering suspension and blocking of the offending links by the authorities. The plaintiff submitted that it has copyright in all works of spiritual teacher Abhay Charanaravinda Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada who simplified the religious books and scriptures and made it easy for the common man to understand them.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Power play

Mamata sends her troops to Delhi to embarrass the Centre over non-payment of dues

While the BJP brass is busy formulating strategy for the upcoming Assembly elections in five States and meeting voters there, the wily West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has unleashed a 4,000-strong contingent in Delhi under her TMC MP and nephew Abhishek Banerjee's charge. Mamata's party leaders and cadres are here for a two-day protest rally to highlight the NDA Government's apathy towards non-payment of Central scheme funds to the State's workers. Interestingly, while the BJP is seeking action in the poll-bound States, Mamata has brought her fight right at its very doorstep and fired the Capital's political atmosphere. The rally has garnered attention for several reasons, ranging from demands for the release of funds to the TMC's clash with the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Another interesting point remains as to why Mamata chose to hold her mega show of strength in faraway Delhi and what the BJP feels about it. The two-day protest in Delhi was prompted by mounting concerns



over the Centre's alleged neglect of West Bengal's development and the delay in releasing funds for vital schemes like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Thousands of TMC leaders and supporters descended on the national Capital with a resolute mission — to voice their grievances against the Central Government.

On Gandhi Jayanti, the TMC MPs embarked on a sit-in at Rajghat to highlight their dedication to the principles of Mahatma Gandhi. The peaceful rally followed with TMC supporters and MGNREGA job card holders marching together to air their concerns. However, it was not a smooth ride for the TMC cadres from

Bengal to Delhi, with them facing unexpected hurdles. Initially, a special train was booked for the TMC supporters and MGNREGA job card holders, along with the party's 'panchayat pramukhs'. But the Railway Ministry abruptly cancelled the train, forcing the TMC to arrange for private buses to transport its supporters. Adding to the intrigue, the Enforcement Directorate summoned Mamata's nephew and party's number 2 leader Abhishek Banerjee for questioning on October 3, coinciding with the rally. Abhishek, however, has chosen to ignore the ED summons. As the rally unfolds, the nation awaits the outcome of this high-stakes showdown between the prominent parties. Though Mamata is challenging the BJP in the Capital, she has a lot to answer to people in her home State as there have been alleged irregularities in the disbursement of MGNREGA salaries by her Government, besides numerous cases of misappropriation of such funds. Union Minister Smriti Irani has also questioned the rationale behind the rally as TMC has failed to ensure even the minimum wages to tea garden workers in North Bengal. The BJP Minister is currently in Bengal, where she met tea workers in Siliguri. On the other hand, Mamata is a strong leader in her State and an important member of the INDIA bloc; her message in Delhi is indeed something the BJP must be watching very carefully.

PICTALK



Army personnel briefs students about a weapon during an event of 'Veer Gatha', in Kolkata

PTI

Orders by Govt officers are for the larger good

It is imperative to abide by just orders promulgated by Govt servants in public interest and any objection to such orders, must be through legal channels

What we often come across is the law of contempt concerning courts. It may pertain to maligning the reputation of the judiciary or for that purpose obstructing the functioning of the court. The law of contempt concerning court has now been well established and the educated section across the country mostly have a rough idea about the same if they keep themselves informed by print or electronic media, including social media.

This article aims to bring into the limelight the less known and less discussed issue, which is disobedience of orders that are duly promulgated by government authorities. We have witnessed such orders during an unprecedented time of covid pandemic. As a citizen, we are at the centre of such orders. For brevity of our understanding, I should inform you that such orders are being promulgated under various acts, one such being the Epidemic Disease Act of 1897. Under the said act, Sections 2 & 2A, give powers to the state government and central government respectively to



take such decisions and pass such orders which may help contain the infectious disease. Section 3 of the Epidemic Disease Act imposes a penalty for disobeying any order or regulation made under this act. It makes the act of disobeying or abatement punishable under section 188 of the Indian Penal Code. For instance, if we take the step of price capping by the respective state governments on the treatment of COVID-19 in private hospitals, passing an order under this act or any other act for the time being in force, they impose a duty on private hospitals not to charge above the limits fixed by government authorities.

If private hospitals are charging more than the limit imposed by the government, they are inviting prosecution u/s 188 of the Indian Penal Code i.e., Disobedience to an

order duly promulgated by a public servant. Bombay High Court in the case of HLA Shwe v. State of Maharashtra peeled section 188 and mentioned its ingredients as follows - The order must be duly promulgated by a public servant authorised to do so; The order directs the accused to abstain from certain acts; Accused was aware of such order; Accused disobeyed such order and lastly, such disobeying resulted in obstruction, annoyance or injury.

This section is part of chapter X of IPC which deals with contempt of lawful authority of public servant. Prosecution under this is slightly different to that of other offences where the victim himself/herself reports the crime to police officials. Cognizance under this chapter X of IPC can only be taken under section 195 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) which requires a written complaint by a public servant concerned or of some other public servant to whom he is administratively subordinate. This means, that if a person 'X' is aggrieved that he has been charged more than

the prescribed amount (as prescribed by the government during covid times) in a private hospital for Covid19 treatment, he cannot directly report that to the police station and ask the police to register FIR under section 188 of IPC, but he needs to report the same to the official or ministry that promulgated such order and it will be upon the written complaint of such ministry or official that an action can be brought against the private hospital under section 188 of IPC.

In India, we very well know that crimes often are not reported by individuals because of a lack of awareness which further encourages the wrongdoer, initiative should be taken by the government to check the implementation of their orders. This can be done by audits and taking the views and experiences of the intended beneficiaries of those orders. Therefore, for a peaceful society to exist, it is imperative to abide by just orders promulgated by public servants and any objection to such orders, should only have legal recourse.

(The writer is an advocate in Delhi; views are personal)



KISHLAYA MISHRA

BJP-AIADMK split: What next?

The AIADMK-BJP split does not augur well for the BJP which is trying hard to get a foothold in southern India

Could the split between the AIADMK and BJP be permanent? If so, this could hurt the BJP's chances of winning in Tamil Nadu since the AIADMK had supported them since J Jayalalithaa's passing in 2016. The decision to end its partnership with the NDA on a national and state level may put the BJP at a disadvantage.

The future political landscape could have an impact on the upcoming 2024 elections. It could cause a shift in power among Tamil Nadu parties and their alliances. This may result in the AIADMK losing the support of the Modi government, which has acted as a powerful ally.

According to experts, the separation between the BJP and AIADMK is expected to be temporary. The leaders of both parties have advised their members to refrain from making negative comments about each other. The BJP seeks more support in the Southern region and hopes to secure additional seats through partnerships.

Last week, former AIADMK minister Munuswamy announced that his party is severing ties with the BJP and NDA. He accused the BJP state chief, Annamalai, of deliberately tarnishing the reputation of respected party members, including former Chief Ministers CN Annadurai and Jayalalithaa.

The decision may have a significant impact on state and national politics. AIADMK is the lone major partner of the BJP at the national level. Previously, NDA included bigger parties like Shiv Sena, Akali Dal, Telugu Desam, and AIADMK. Still, now only AIADMK remains in the alliance. For the BJP, the loss is more significant. Despite earnest efforts, it has not established a substantial presence in Tamil Nadu — the power switches between the DMK and AIADMK since 1967. The AIADMK has ruled 30 out of their 50 years.

Tamil Nadu has two main political parties: AIADMK and DMK. AIADMK is a popular party with a large membership of two crore people, and it offers an alternative to DMK. The DMK and AIADMK, the two main



Dravidian parties, have both supported the BJP at different times.

For decades, The BJP has faced a tough challenge in winning over voters in Tamil Nadu. The Dravidian movement started by EV Ramaswamy Naicker has taken deep roots in the form of DMK and AIADMK parties. The party only secured 3% of the vote in the last Lok Sabha elections. In comparison, the two Dravidian parties had a solid 25% base.

Since 2016, the AIADMK party has experienced continuous defeats in all elections. It has no charismatic leaders like Jayalalithaa or founder MG. Ramachandran — both matinee idols. The party's performance in the most recent Assembly polls in 2021 decreased the seats won, from 136 to 75. The DMK-Congress coalition took control of the government. In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, AIADMK only secured one seat, a significant drop compared to their previous 37. Meanwhile, the DMK coalition's seats increased from 0 to 39. Consequently, AIADMK cadres view their connection with the BJP as a hindrance. The BJP's attempt to win over voters in Tamil



THE UPCOMING LOK SABHA ELECTIONS ARE SIGNIFICANT FOR THE BJP, WHILE THE AIADMK FOCUSES ON THE 2026 ASSEMBLY POLLS

Nadu failed due to differing ideologies. The Dravidian parties are non-believers, while BJP's primary election strategy is centred around Ram Temple in Ayodhya earlier and Sanathan dharmas now.

The upcoming Lok Sabha elections are significant for the BJP, while the AIADMK focuses on the 2026 Assembly polls. The outcome will largely depend on the coalitions formed by the two Dravidian parties. Prime Minister Modi is determined to secure a third term in the 2024 elections.

Insiders suggest that Annamalai's behaviour was not the main reason for the split.

Despite numerous complaints, AIADMK is unhappy that the BJP has not taken action against Annamalai. There is a more significant disagreement over seat sharing. Both parties failed to win seats in Tamil Nadu in the 2019 elections due to a lack of shared ideology. Annamalai has suggested running independently in the election, and some BJP members are considering the idea. Annamalai wants to form a coalition with smaller parties.

AIADMK chief Edapadi Palaniswamy has successfully



KALYANI SHANKAR

united the party and worked with senior leaders to prevent the re-entry of Sasikala, TTV Dhinakaran, and former Chief Minister O. Pannarselvam. It is a no-no for him even if the BJP provides them seats under its quota. Palaniswamy was able to remove them from AIADMK and now holds complete control. He apprehends that once they entered, his authority would diminish.

The ruling DMK coalition apprehends it could be affected, and some suggest that Congress may ally with the AIADMK. The results will depend on the number of seats won by each alliance.

The upcoming Lok Sabha elections are crucial for the DMK, AIADMK, Congress and BJP. Among them, the BJP stands to gain or lose the most. Factors such as caste, financial resources, and political influence will also play a significant role in the election. The BJP needs to perform well in the Fice States Assembly polls. While BJP is ahead, in politics, a week is a long time, and anything can happen in the next six months leading up to the Lok Sabha elections.

(The writer is a popular columnist; views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DISTURBING INCIDENT IN THE UK

Sir — The incident that occurred on September 29th, involving the Indian High Commissioner to the UK, Vikram Doraiswami, being prevented from entering a Gurdwara in Glasgow, Scotland, is a deeply condemnable and disturbing event. During this incident, some radical elements not only blocked the envoy's entry but also resorted to threats and abuse. They even attempted to open the envoy's locked car, which fortunately was thwarted due to the timely intervention of the event organizers. The UK, being aware of the potential threat from such extremist elements, should have taken adequate security measures for the visiting Indian envoy.

It is essential to acknowledge that the Khalistan ideology has very limited support among Sikhs in India. The majority of Sikhs in India lead peaceful lives and have made significant contributions to the nation in various fields, including defense and trade. Sikhs in the armed forces have played a pivotal role in defending the nation against external threats from countries like China and Pakistan. Only a small fraction of radical elements resort to violence to pursue their objectives.

The recent incident in Scotland, as well as the July attack on the Indian consulate in San Francisco, serves as a stark reminder that these extremist elements, although numerically small, continue to exist and have grown more emboldened. These incidents are not isolated and are part of a concerning trend, with extremist elements expanding their reach in countries like Canada, the US, the UK, and Australia. This situation demands serious attention from the international community.

Ramesh G Jethwan | Bengaluru

UKRAINE AID QUESTIONED

Sir — The United States narrowly escaped a government shutdown crisis as a bill was passed at the eleventh hour on Saturday, providing emergency funding to federal services. Notably absent from the bill was any mention of continued aid to war-torn

World Cup Excitement



Cricket enthusiasts in India are thrilled as the World Cup inches closer to our doorsteps. The Indian cricket team is poised to compete on home turf, aiming to seize the championship and bring glory to the BCCI. Preparations are progressing as scheduled, with strategic

changes in the team composition to provide opportunities to our top players. Fortunately, we have a wealth of talent, boasting the world's finest all-rounder and the number one bowler. The team is ready to unleash their full potential in various venues. The round-robin format of the tournament offers us a promising path to qualify for the knockout stage, despite even odds.

However, we must address concerns about the team's fitness and fielding prowess, which need improvement. With the best squad at our disposal and a well-balanced team, the 2023 World Cup is a golden opportunity to secure a major victory. Let's rally behind our team and hope for a triumphant campaign!

CK Subramaniam, | Mumbai

Ukraine, raising concerns about the suspension of monetary assistance. The passage of this bill ensures uninterrupted operation of US federal services for the next 45 days.

Failure to approve funding for federal departments and agencies by October 1 would have resulted in a complete government shutdown, with far-reaching consequences, including furloughs without pay for federal employees and a significant economic impact.

While the immediate threat of a shutdown has been averted, there remains the looming challenge of securing government funding in the weeks ahead. Differing viewpoints, particularly among right-wing lawmakers, could lead to further crises, emphasizing the need for a more bipartisan approach.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MINORITIES

Sir — I am writing to express my deep concerns about the discrimination faced by Muslims and religious minorities in India. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's recent statement denying discrimination against minorities is contradicted by alarming statistics. Between 2014 and

2018, there was a shocking 786% increase in hate crimes against minorities. Ethnic violence has persisted for four months in Manipur against minorities, and attacks on Christians have quadrupled between 2011 and 2022.

Furthermore, instances of hate speech by BJP members and leaders, targeting Muslims, have been on the rise. Muslims have been lynched, houses demolished, and violence inflicted upon them merely due to their faith. The government's silence on these matters is deeply concerning. Propaganda films like 'Kashmir Files' have further exacerbated tensions, and religious institutions like mosques and dargahs have been attacked.

The organized violence against Muslims since the current government came to power has created a climate of fear among ordinary Muslims in the country. Discriminatory laws and divisive rhetoric only worsen the situation. It is crucial that we acknowledge these issues and work towards a more inclusive and harmonious society.

Zakir Hussain | Kazipet

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

TOLERANCE IS THE KEY TO PEACE

Tolerance can bring about lasting peace in the world



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Most of us have come across many such situations in life where- in the question of Tolerance comes up and we are required to choose whether to tolerate or retaliate. If, for example, a person who has no control over his tongue or is uncultured, impolite, short-tempered and ill-mannered talks in an offensive or insulting language or behaves rudely and roughly with us, then what would we do?

Well! A cultured and spiritualised person, under such a situation, would choose to tolerate, because he knows very well that when tolerance is lost, temper is also lost and the loss of both means the loss of mental balance. Hence, in such a situation, one should not feel hurt, injured or mauled and should not think of revenge. Instead, one should pity such a person and give him vibrations of peace to recover from his temper. This kind of approach or attitude would enable one to remain calm, composed and dignified. Tolerance, in such provocative situations, is a Value that saves one's life. Tolerance, joined by humility, has great Value even as a matter of policy, strategy or tactic.

So, if one loses tolerance in such hot situations even for a moment, one may even lose one's life or face a still more complicated situation, fraught with grave consequences and unpredictable repercussions. Looking at it from this angle, one can say that tolerance is not only a high-class virtue and moral value but it is a non-violent strategy for self-defence and survival and also a weapon for victory. Remember! Our tolerance and Humility can melt or mellow the minds of our bitter critics and opponents while it enables us to be in a state of peace. It creates harmony in the course of time and even the most arrogant person, at some point in time, expresses appreciation of our amazing tolerance in the face of grave aggravation. Along with this, we should also learn to forget and forgive some lapses and shortcomings of others in the spirit of friendliness or brotherhood, or else we cannot have goodwill, amity co-operation and peace.



However, most people ask this question: how long should we allow our tormentor to continue with his cruel acts, his nefarious designs and his dirty ways? Should we tolerate injustice? If we do so, wouldn't it mean our silent consent to his acts of depriving those who deserve justice? Also, it would mean our connivance in his acts of punishing those who are not at fault. Isn't it a kind of self-imposed servitude, servility and slavery? The answer is that we must put forth our moral resistance. We must make our disapproval manifest through our non-cooperation in such acts. Better still, we must use our skill of persuasion at proper moments. We must make efforts to enable this man of blinded intellect to see the real nature of his act and the attendant evils and the following consequences.

We must have the spiritual power to change his heart, to transform him from being stone-hearted. We must try to give a healing touch to this mentally and morally sick person. We must pity him rather than lose our moral sense and react with a feeling of rancour and vengeance. That would be our tolerance. But the question that ultimately comes up is whether we have that spiritual power to transform a sinner into a saint. For that, we must check our stock of spirituality and fill ourselves with the power again through Yoga-Meditation as one would recharge one's battery with the help of a dynamo. With our high spiritual power, we can use tolerance as a tool of social transformation and can be God's instrument for uplifting a man, fallen from his seat of morality.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views expressed are personal)

Timeless traditions: Thathera metal craft



SUKHDEV SINGH

Thathera metal craft has been on the UNESCO list for almost a decade now, but the struggle of the artisans making these utensils continues



Despite the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage inscription of the thathera craft of Jndiala Guru since 2014, the financial and social condition of the craftsmen has not improved much. Recognising the cultural heritage worth of the 'thathera' metal craft in Jndiala Guru, in its 9th session held in Paris in 2014, UNESCO 'Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage' decided to inscribe the craft on its list. This is the first metal craft from India to find a place in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list. Thus, not only Punjab but India should be proud of it. "But just the pride cannot feed the craftsmen and keep the craft vibrant", says a craftsman seeking anonymity.

S Hardev Singh of the 'father' community says, "The younger generation is opting out of this family profession because it neither earns money nor respect. Although Ayurveda recognises the advantages of eating in copper, bronze and brass utensils, the 'use and throw' cheaper alternatives are pushing it out of use". Instead of popular cosmetic measures, the government should take concrete steps of waiving taxes and continuing the old quota system of issuing scrap as the raw material directly and only to the working craftsmen to reduce the cost and prices of objects to face the competition. Further, it can help market the products as art pieces and utilitarian objects. The government can check the entry of middlemen who buy raw materials from the Indian Army on auction and then distribute them among the craftsmen to produce objects for them at low labour rates. "In the current practice, a craftsman has no claim of ownership of the product and after the day-long hard work earns only 500-600 a day", a craftsman quips. He asks, "Is this the value of skill or the wage of labour? How would my son like to pursue this profession?"



THE SCIENCE OF AYURVEDA IN INDIA RECOGNISES THE RELEVANCE OF THESE METALS FOR HEALTH

(The writer is a retired professor from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar; views are personal)

Recently, the Punjab government has declared the Thathera Bazar a Heritage street and built a gate at the street entry symbolising the value of the craft, but has neither waived off its share in GST nor taken any serious steps to help them improve their condition. The question is how the gate and the heritage street status would help if there were no craftsmen in the street.

The UNESCO recognition has, of course, created some hype in the media. Some agencies have succeeded in getting the study projects sanctioned adding to their profiles and justifying their jobs but have not advocated the case forcefully enough to deliver at the ground. Some art and craft dealers have tried to reap benefits by tagging the products with UNESCO recognition to sell them at premium prices while the craftsmen continue to work as labourers at low rates.

This is where the shoe pinches and the government should step in to save the craft, the craftsmen and the cultural heritage of the state. The thathera craft is practised at several other places in India but the uniqueness of the craftsmen in Jandiala Guru is their continuance as a community to practice the family tradition of handmade copper and brass utensils. The ten to twelve-generation tradition of fathers in Jandiala Guru and their craft is a journey of place and people in and through time. The knowledge systems transmitted from generation to generation and the continued relevance of their products to the people make the craftsmanship a 'living tradition', fulfilling the three-tier criterion of 'people, place and time' to identify the craft as the Cultural Heritage.

According to the Amritsar District Gazetteer of 1883, "Besides the city [Amritsar]...the only trade centre worthy of notice is the town of Jandiala, which is known for its manufacture of brass and copper vessels in which it has a brisk export trade" (p.117). If so, the trade perfected worthy of export must have started during the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh or before.

While the utensils are tangible objects, traditional knowledge, skills and art are intangible. Both the craft and its knowledge conventions have been recognized in the UNESCO inscription. The craftsmen of Jandiala Guru use the conventional knowledge and skills of 'forging' instead of 'casting' metal to shape it as a utensil. Using the method of forging, they hammer the metal plates with the help of a mallet. After heating the plates in a small hand-driven furnace, they consistently thump and beat a plate to make it malleable and ductile.

Then the parts of a utensil are made by cutting, heating and curving the metal sheet; then these parts are joined with each other. There are five methods for joining of metals: soldering, brazing, flux, riveting and welding. The fathers of Jandiala Guru use brazing and riveting. Brazing is a process of joining two or more metals by pouring a molten filler metal into the joint. The utensils made from the metal sheets are then cleaned with diluted acid and scrubbed with tamarind water and sand. The whole process of polishing is carried out with hands and feet. This final process brings out the

rich texture and colour of the metal. Finally, the utensils are ornamented with hand-engraved designs with patterns of delicate dents of small size and round shapes looking like small stars.

Utensils are art objects "produced not only for their use but also for their beauty possessing an artistic image which expresses their function". Thus the contribution of craftsmen to the development of culture and civilization, on the one hand, and to the fulfilment of utilitarian and aesthetic needs, on the other, has been great in human history.

Eating and cooking in the mud, copper, brass and bronze utensils is good for health and taste. The science of Ayurveda in India recognizes the relevance of these metals for health. The references to Bronze for health healing can be found in several tracts like Ashtanga Samgraha/ Hridaya, Rajtarangini and Bhavprakash. In contrast with glass, plastic and steel, bronze shows nil microbial presence one hour after being washed in hot water. Copper is said to kill harmful bacteria and viruses. It helps prevent cell damage and slow ageing due to its antioxidant and anti-carcinogenic properties.

As copper, which is well known as a biocide, is the major content in alloy metal of brasses, utensils made from brass have the beneficial effect of restricting the growth of microorganisms. While the craftsmen must be acknowledged as educated and skilled worthy of social respect and honour; their craft must be supported and promoted as our precious cultural heritage.

Turning challenges of food insecurity into opportunity

Food loss can impact food security and nutrition by influencing the four aspects of food security: food availability, access, utilisation, and stability

Food insecurity, hunger and environmental degradation are being aggravated by food loss and waste, globally. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates that — in terms of economic value — 14 per cent of the world's food is lost from post-harvest up to, but not including, the retail level. In India, 4-6 % of cereal and 5-12 % of vegetables are being lost every year.

FAO on the fourth International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste (IDAFWL), calls upon the need to adopt the Food Loss Index (FLI) methodology and monitor losses throughout the supply chain from production to consumption. In collaboration with FAO, IASRI-ICAR



TAKAYUKI HAGIWARA

(The writer is a country head & representative of FAO in India; views are personal)

has estimated the FLI for India. These estimates are based on the three national-level surveys conducted by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries to estimate the harvest and post-harvest losses of major crops and commodities in the country. India has been a torchbearer for the world as the only country that has established a robust system of regular surveys for monitoring food losses. These surveys conducted in India have provided the foundations for the development of the FLI methodology globally and for the technical support, FAO provides to countries across the world.

Food loss is a recurring issue due to several causes stemming from different stages of the food supply chain and

socio-economic factors. To address these issues and to ensure food security in the country, mitigating the challenges along the supply chain is critical. FAO works closely with the government and relevant bodies to identify these challenges and find solutions. Food Loss, a leading cause of Hunger, Food Insecurity and Climate Change. Food loss can impact food security and nutrition by influencing the four aspects of food security: food availability, access, utilization, and stability. As per FAO's report, India's food loss percentage stands at approximately 4.5%.

The highest levels of food loss occur in nutrient-rich foods such as fruits and vegetables, meat and fish. It is also estimated that 8 to 10 % of

global greenhouse gases are generated by the food that ends up in landfills. This results in unstable climate conditions thereby affecting crop yields, reducing the nutritional crop quality and supply chain disruptions.

FOOD LOSS IN INDIA

Inadequate storage and transportation infrastructure coupled with post-harvest losses contribute to a substantial amount of food loss in the country. The fragmented and complex supply chain with multiple intermediaries involved further escalates the problem leading to food loss at almost every stage.

Food loss is a pervasive issue resulting in critical economic, social, and environmental implications in the country, limiting India's ability

to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

WAY FORWARD

FAO draws attention to the critical need to measure post-harvest losses across the country. This approach aligns with achieving SDG 12, Target 12.3 which seeks to halve per-capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses, and SDG 2 — Zero Hunger.

FAO firmly believes that it is crucial to identify the channels where significant losses occur. Disaggregation of data at subnational levels throughout the supply chain will help locate loss points and their impact. This, in turn, will support targeted intervention

and necessary aids. A critical requirement for effective decision-making is improved data, which can drive innovation, promote best practices, and optimize resource allocation.

Addressing India's food loss challenge requires a comprehensive and coordinated effort from various stakeholders, including the government, farmers, food processors, retailers, and consumers. Improvements in localised infrastructure, storage, transportation, processing, packaging, market linkages, and awareness campaigns to change consumer behaviour, are critical.

It is essential to identify the channels in harvest and post-harvest operations in which substantial losses are taking place for further technological

interventions. Food loss is a global challenge. Countries must adopt the globally agreed methodology and measurement techniques for the computation of FLI which also provides a platform for global comparability and cross-learning opportunities.

Reducing food loss will help conserve resources and reduce the environmental footprint associated with food production and disposal. FAO firmly believes that India as the leader for the Global South can address this issue and demonstrate a way forward in reducing food loss that is essential to achieving efficient, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient agri-food systems for better production, better nutrition, better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind.

MONEY MATTERS

Google, HP start manufacturing Chromebooks in India

Google in partnership with HP has started manufacturing Chromebooks in India, the PC maker said on Monday. The Chromebook devices are being manufactured at the Flex Facility near Chennai, where HP has been producing a range of laptops and desktops since August 2020. "We're partnering with HP to manufacture Chromebooks in India - These are the first Chromebooks to be made in India and will make it easier for Indian students to have access to affordable and secure computing," Google CEO Sundar Pichai on Monday said in a post on X. An HP spokesperson confirmed that the production of Chromebooks has started in India. New Chromebooks are available online from a price range starting at Rs 15,990 apiece. HP is one of the applicants under the government's Rs 17,000 crore production-linked incentive scheme for IT hardware. Chromebooks come at a lower price compared to notebooks with proprietary operating system.



Tea production decreases by around 4 pc to 177.95 mkgs

Tea production across the country declined by around four per cent to 177.95 million kilograms in August this year as compared to the output in the year-ago month. The production volume in August last year was 185.48 million kgs (mkgs). According to Tea Board data, production in north India, primarily comprising the states of Assam and West Bengal, fell to 158.04 mkgs in the month under review from 170.97 mkgs produced in August, 2022. In Assam, production volumes decreased to 99.78 mkgs in August this year as against 109.81 mkgs in the year-ago month. Production in West Bengal also fell to 53.65 mkgs in August 2023, as against 56.19 mkgs in the corresponding month last year. Tea industry sources said that production in north India declined due to adverse weather conditions and pest attacks. However, production volumes increased in South India, which stood at 19.91 mkgs in August this year as compared to 14.51 mkgs in the same month of 2022.



CIL's coal supply to power sector rises 3.4 pc

Supply of coal to the power sector by state-owned Coal India increased 3.4 per cent to 294.8 million tonnes in the first six months of the current fiscal even as the demand for electricity touched record highs in the past two months, the maharatna firm said on Monday. The total amount of coal supplied was 1.8 MT more than the 293 MT demand projected for this period, Coal India Ltd (CIL) said in a statement. "Compared to the high base of same period last fiscal, the volume increase was 9.7 MT, or 3.4 per cent. This could have been higher if the logistics were eased out and intake not regulated by few consumers," CIL said in a statement. "We were given a supply target of 610 MT to the power sector for FY24. This is about 4 per cent higher than the record 586.6 MT supplied in FY23. We met the prorated demand of coal-fired plants till September-end and expect to meet the annual demand as well," a senior CIL official said. Coal is the largest source of electricity in the country and CIL produces over 80 per cent of coal in India.



World shares lower as US Cong averts govt shutdown

PNS ■ BANGKOK

Shares were mostly lower in Europe and Asia on Monday even after the US Congress averted a US government shutdown with a last-minute compromise.

Markets in China are closed for a weeklong holiday. Markets in India and South Korea also were closed.

Oil prices gained and US futures were higher as the threat of a federal government shutdown receded after Congress approved the temporary funding bill late Saturday to keep federal agencies open until November 17.

Germany's DAX lost 0.2 per cent to 15,358.22 and the CAC 40 in Paris shed 0.2 per cent to 7,117.58.

Britain's FTSE 100 declined 0.4 per cent to 7,579.23. The future for the S and P 500 was unchanged and that for the Dow industrials lost less than 0.1 per cent.

A Japanese central bank survey showed business confidence



on the rise, though that failed to lift investor sentiment in Tokyo.

The Bank of Japan's "tankan" quarterly survey measured business sentiment among major manufacturers at plus 9, up from plus 5 in June. Sentiment among major non-manufacturers rose four points to plus 27, in the sixth consecutive quarter of improvement and the most positive result in about three decades.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index gave up early gains, shedding 0.3 per cent to 31,759.88. Australia's S and P/ASX 200 lost 0.2 per cent

to 7,033.20. Taiwan's Taiex gained 1.2 per cent, while the SET in Bangkok edged 0.1 per cent lower.

On Friday, Wall Street closed out its worst month of the year with more losses. The S and P 500 slipped 0.3 per cent and the Dow fell 0.5 per cent. The Nasdaq composite edged 0.1 per cent higher.

After easing earlier in the day on encouraging signals about inflation, Treasury yields resumed their ascent.

The yield on the 10-year

Treasury yield returned to 4.58 per cent, where it was late Thursday, after dipping to 4.52 per cent. It's again near its highest level since 2007.

Treasuries are seen as some of the safest investments possible, and when they pay higher yields, investors are less likely to pay high prices for stocks and other riskier investments. That's a big reason why the S and P 500 dropped 4.9 per cent in September to drag what had been a big gain for the year down to 11.7 per cent. Treasury yields have been climbing sharply as Wall Street accepts a new normal where the Federal Reserve is likely to keep interest rates high for longer. The Fed is trying to push still-high inflation down to its target, and its main tool of high interest rates does that by trying to slow the economy and hurting prices for investments.

The Fed's main interest rate is at its highest level since 2001, and the central bank indicated last week it may cut interest rates next year by less than it earlier expected.

Khadi panel should propagate Gandhian ideals: Union Minister

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Union minister Narayan Rane on Monday said the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) should work to achieve profits and propagate Gandhian ideals.

Speaking at an event here to mark Mahatma Gandhi's 154th birth anniversary, the Union minister for micro, small and medium enterprises said since 2014, the KVIC profits have gone up from around Rs 800 crore to Rs 34,000 crore. He noted that the KVIC is situated in Mumbai which contributes 34 per cent to the national treasury. "KVIC premises is in a prime location of the city and its products and artisans can be promoted vigorously to ensure profits while also being committed to Gandhian ideals," he said.

Rane said the KVIC should boost the rural economy as well. "It should ensure viable profits and propagate Gandhian ideals," he said, adding that the rural per capita income should also increase.

Exporters seek govt intervention in providing affordable credit to MSMEs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Exporters have sought the central government's intervention in providing affordable and easy availability of credit to MSMEs amid global headwinds due to lack of liquidity.

In a letter to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, apex exporters' body Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) requested for the extension of Emergency Credit Linked Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) till March 31, 2024 and restoration of interest subsidy benefit of 5 per cent to manufacturer MSMEs.

It said some of the MSME sectors are affected due to a dip in exports on account of a global demand slowdown.

FIEO has urged extending the ECLGS "till March 31, 2024" as it will help micro, small and medium enterprises sail through this difficult time and bounce back when the situation improves.

"With interest rates firming up, MSMEs are getting credit at not less than 8-11 per cent. The subvention for the interest equalisation scheme was



reduced as interest rates were coming down. However with complete change in situation, there is an urgent need to restore interest equalisation benefit of 5 per cent," it added.

MSMEs account for about 40 per cent in the country's total exports.

India's exports declined 6.86 per cent to USD 34.48 billion in August, for the seventh month in a row, due to a fall in shipments from key sectors like petroleum and gems and jewellery on subdued global demand.

The trade deficit (difference between imports and exports) during the month touched a 10-month high of USD 24.16 billion.

Cumulatively, exports during April-August this fiscal contracted 11.9 per cent to USD 172.95 billion. India's exports contracted 15.88 per cent in July.

Exports sectors, which recorded negative growth in August, include tea, coffee, rice, spices, leather, gems and jewellery, textiles, and petroleum products.

Power consumption grows 10.7 pc to 140.49 b units

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country's power consumption grew 10.7 per cent to 140.49 billion units in September mainly due to increased use of cooling appliances amid unusually humid weather conditions.

In the year-ago period, power consumption stood at 126.91 Billion Units (BU), higher than 112.43 billion units in September 2021, according to government data.

The peak power demand met -- the highest supply in a day -- rose to 239.97 GW in September. The peak power supply stood at 199.50 GW in September 2022 and 180.73 GW in September 2021.

The power ministry had estimated the country's electricity demand to touch 229 GW during summer. The demand did not reach the projected level in April-July due to unseasonal rain.



The peak supply, however, touched a new high of 224.1 GW in June and before dropping to 209.03 GW in July. Peak demand touched 238.19 GW in August.

Spokesperson of the Tata Power Delhi Distribution Ltd, which supplies electricity to 70

lakh people in Delhi, told PTI that the demand has remained higher mainly due to unusually higher temperature levels this year. The spokesperson said in the coming months, demand is expected to remain on the higher side due to festivities.

5G adoption drives India's global speed ranking 72 places higher: Ookla

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The mobile download speeds in India have seen significant boost with launch of 5G services, and the country has climbed 72 places higher to clinch 47th spot in Speedtest Global Index, according to Ookla. This puts India not only ahead of its neighbours like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan, but also some G20 countries, such as Mexico (90th), Turkey (68th), the UK (62nd), Japan (58th), Brazil (50th place), and South Africa (48th place).

India's speed performance has seen a 3.59 times increase since the introduction of 5G, with median download speeds improving to 50.21 Mbps in August 2023, from 13.87 Mbps in September 2022.

"This improvement has led to India's rise in the Speedtest Global Index, moving up 72 places, from 119th place to the 47th position," it said.

The 5G deployments have led to an improved overall user



experience across all telecom circles with operators investing in backhaul infrastructure.

The launch of 5G technology by operators like Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel has led to a substantial increase in 5G subscribers, and operators still have ambitious roll-out plans, with the deployment of a significant number of 5G base stations across the country.

In fact, 5G has not only brought faster speeds but also higher customer satisfaction, as indicated by the Net Promoter Score (NPS), which shows that 5G users in India consistently rate their network operators more positively compared to 4G users.

Adani plans to build 10 GW solar manufacturing capacity by 2027

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Billionaire Gautam Adani's group is planning to build 10 GW of integrated solar manufacturing capacity by 2027, as it looks to capture energy transition business, sources close to the company said.

Adani Group currently has a solar manufacturing capacity of 4 GW.

Adani Solar has a confirmed order book of over 3,000 MW in exports that are to be serviced over the next 15 months, they said, adding Adani, recently, raised USD 394 million for solar manufacturing from Barclays PLC and Deutsche Banks AG through a trade finance facility.

While India scaled up its solar energy generation from 2.63 GW in March 2014 to 71.10 GW in July 2023, the manufacturing ecosystem did not match the pace.

To change, the government



adopted a two-pronged strategy - used trade and non-trade barriers, such as safeguard duty, an approved list of module manufacturers (ALMM), and a production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme.

This gave Indian solar manufacturing the necessary impetus to encourage private players like the Adani group to

scale up investments in the solar manufacturing sector.

After the success of Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) - the listed renewable energy generation entity of the group, Adani Enterprises (AEL) made strides in lining up and incubating solar PV manufacturing with Adani Solar in 2015.

Kerala CM launches seven mega projects

PNS ■ KOCHI

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday inaugurated seven "mega projects" at Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) here.

The chief minister launched the operation of the Import Cargo Terminal, DigiYatra software and Airport Emergency Services at the international airport at an event held at CIAL.

He also launched the projects for the first phase of the expansion of Terminal 3, the '0484' luxury aero lounge, an intrusion detection system at the airport and golf resorts.

Addressing the gathering, Vijayan said Kerala is showing the public an alternative when even the strategic public sector undertakings in the country, including airports, are being privatised in the country.

India to clock GDP growth of 6.5 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian economy will grow at around 6.5 per cent in the current fiscal as the country's macro-economic situation is benefiting from the reforms that have been taken up in the last nine years by the Narendra Modi-led government, former NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar said on Monday.

Kumar further said that India needs and can grow at 8 per cent-plus as that level of economic growth is required to meet aspirations of the country's young population and to generate sufficient jobs for its workforce.

"My growth projection (of India's GDP growth in FY 2023-24) is 6.5 per cent. "And I think we can easily maintain this (growth) over the next few years," he told PTI in an interview.

India's GDP growth in 2022-23 was 7.2 per cent, lower than 9.1 per cent in 2021-22.

According to Reserve Bank of India's projections, India's GDP is likely to grow at 6.5 per cent in the current fiscal year.

Kumar further said, "Macroeconomic situation India is benefiting from the reforms



that have been implemented in the last nine years. Therefore, both the external macroeconomic balance as well as the domestic ones are in good shape."

He said that India's current account deficit is manageable, the country's foreign exchange reserves are sufficient to cover about 11 months of imports and the foreign direct investment flows are continuing.

On the domestic side, Kumar said inflation is beginning to come down to the target levels and the government tax revenues have shown a good 16 per cent increase over last year.

"So, this will take care of the fiscal situation and lead to fiscal consolidation. As a result of this improvement, the rating agencies have improved their ratings and JP Morgan has included India in

its international bond indices," he said.

According to Kumar, the only weakness that he sees is that the private corporate investment is not yet responding in the manner that "we would expect, but that also is beginning to improve as demonstrated by the increase in bank credit growth over the last six months".

Expressing concern over decline of India's exports between April and August by about 11 per cent compared to the same period last year, he said, "This reflects our age old situation which is that India's export performance is strongly correlated with the global trade performance."

Kumar pointed out that as the global trade has weakened, India's exports performance has also weakened given the weak demand in Europe, the US and other developed economies.

"We have to change this. We must do whatever we can to ensure that our exports have a greater share of world markets," he said.

On some US-based economists' claim that India is overstating economic growth, Kumar

said that the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) must take a firm position and give enough reasons as to why they are using the wholesale price index (WPI) deflator and not the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as GDP deflator.

"And that needs to be firmly established once and for all," Kumar emphasised.

Meanwhile, India's real GDP growth was 7.8 per cent on a year-on-year basis in Q1 FY24, as per the Income or Production Approach.

Recently, former chief economic advisor Arvind Subramanian, in an article, argued that India's GDP is not measured from the expenditure side and measured only from the income side. This tends to over estimate GDP growth.

Last month, chief economic advisor V Anantha Nageswaran rejected criticism of "statistical discrepancy" in the first quarter GDP data, saying when the same statistical authority reported the severest contraction in the first quarter of 2020, the naysayers had called it credible as it suited their narrative.

Indian mining tycoon, son among six killed in plane crash in Zimbabwe

PNS ■ JOHANNESBURG

An Indian billionaire and his son were among the six individuals killed when their private plane crashed near a diamond mine in southwestern Zimbabwe after experiencing a technical fault, according to media reports.

Harpal Randhawa, the owner of RioZim, a diversified mining company producing gold and coal as well as refining nickel and copper, along with his son and four others was killed when the plane crashed in the Zvamahande area of Mashava, iHarare, a news and media website in Zimbabwe, reported.

The Cessna 206 aircraft, owned by RioZim, was en route from Harare to the Murowa diamond mine when the tragic incident occurred on Friday.

The single-engined aircraft crashed near the Murowa Diamonds mine, which is partly owned by RioZim.



The plane experienced a technical fault, possibly resulting in a mid-air explosion, before plummeting into Peter Farm in the Zvamahande region.

All passengers and crew onboard lost their lives in this accident, the report said.

The Herald, a state-owned daily newspaper, quoted police as saying four of the victims were foreigners and the other two Zimbabweans.

"The Zimbabwe Republic Police reports a plane crash which occurred on September 29 between 7.30 am and 8 am,

where six people are confirmed dead," police said.

"The Murowa Diamond Company (RioZim)-owned white and red Zcam aircraft had left Harare for the mine at 6 am and crashed about 6km from Mashava."

RioZim confirmed the crash and said it was working with relevant authorities to gather more information.

Names of the deceased are yet to be released by police but journalist and filmmaker Hopewell Chinono, who was a friend of Randhawa, confirmed his death.

Pakistani actress Mahira Khan weds businessman Salim Karim in intimate ceremony

Pakistani actress Mahira Khan and Salim Karim tied the knot on Sunday, in an intimate cliff-top ceremony in the resort town of Bhurban. Clips of the picturesque outdoor wedding were shared by the actress's manager on Instagram, in which Khan is seen walking down the aisle in an intricate pastel lehenga with a cascading veil. The video also shows a teary-eyed Karim wearing a black sherwani and blue turban.

The ceremony took place at the five-star Pearl-Continental Hotel Bhurban, which sits on top of a hill overlooking the Kashmir Valley.

The couple have been together for five years and got engaged in Turkey in 2019. Khan is known for her leading role in Pakistani telenovela *Humsafar* and for her Bollywood stint opposite Shah Rukh Khan in the 2017 movie *Raees*. Groom Karim is the founder of Pakistani technology start-up Simpaisa, and is also a professional DJ. According to reports, the couple first met during a launch event by TV service provider Tapmad in 2017.

The ceremony marks Khan's second marriage. She and her first husband Ali Askari, who have a son together, divorced in 2015. In a podcast published last month, Khan recalled her "painful and difficult" divorce with Askari, whom she described as her "childhood sweetheart". She also opened up about the backlash she faced after acting in an Indian film. The official video clip of the wedding, which was shot by celebrity photographer and cinematographer Izzah Shaheen Malik, was reshared several times on social media, both by local media and fans.

Born in Karachi, Khan is one of Pakistan's most beloved celebrities. She started her career as a host on MTV Pakistan in 2006, and later bagged her self-titled reality show *Weekends* with Mahira on Urdu network AAG TV. But it was *Humsafar* that catapulted Khan to stardom, marking the beginning of her award-winning acting career. Khan was last seen in *The Legend of Maula Jatt*, which released last year, and which has become the highest-grossing Pakistani film of all time.



Nicole Scherzinger opens up about having CBD gummies to help her whirring mind sleep

Nicole Scherzinger takes Cannabidiol gummies to help her sleep. The former Pussycat Doll, 45, who splits her time between Los Angeles and Britain, and takes them to help her wired brain sleep after starting her days at 6.30am with exercise and maybe not getting to bed until 4am. She told The Sunday Times: "CBD gummies are legal in LA. They work for me."

Despite millions of users hailing CBD for helping them with everything from pain to anxiety, CBD can cause side effects, such as dry mouth, diarrhoea, reduced appetite, drowsiness and fatigue. It can also interact with other medications such as blood thinners, with experts also warning about the

unreliability of the purity and dosage of CBD in products. Nicole gets up 6.30am, takes a sauna "to sweat out toxins", and works out with her trainer before rehearsing from 10am – six days a week – for her role as Norma Desmond in the play *Sunset Boulevard*, which is running on London's West End until January 2024. The cast of the show tease her for always working through lunch break and at 6pm she goes home for a shift of phone calls to her team in LA and makes notes before getting to bed "at 12, if I'm doing good" and "if I'm not, more like 4".

Nicole – whose therapist once told her "I lash myself forward", added about her relentless work ethic: "My mentality is: if you're not suffering enough, then it's not going to be good enough. "Criticism is good for me, it ignites something in me."

The former *X Factor* judge added she has now had "enough counselling" to know less work would be "healthier", but she admitted: "I'm still finding that balance."

She said self-discipline gives her the "security and the confidence I need because I am very insecure."

When asked if she suffers self-doubt when she relaxes Nicole said: "To be honest with you, I've never not been disciplined, so I don't know."



AISHWARYA RAI BACHCHAN TURNS GOLDEN GIRL AS SHE WALKS THE RAMP AT PARIS FASHION WEEK

Aishwarya Rai was a true beauty as she walked the ramp at the Paris Fashion Week. Several pictures and videos of the actress from the grand event have now emerged online.

Aishwarya was among several celebrities, including Kendall Jenner, Eva Longoria, Andie MacDowell, Helen Mirren, Aja Naomi King, Viola Davis and more.

The celebrities walked the runway during Paris Fashion Week for the L'Oréal Paris fashion show held by the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

Aishwarya Rai walked the runway at Paris Fashion Week sparkling on the stage in a gold shimmering cape gown.

For the event, Aishwarya was dressed in a brown and golden outfit along with a cape and earrings.

She matched her hair colour to the dress. A video of Aishwarya Rai posing with Kendall Jenner also went viral.

The duo was seen laughing and chatting happily.

In another picture, Aishwarya Rai was seen posing on stage with Kendall Jenner, Eva Longoria, Camila Cabello, and Elle Fanning, among others.

Later, Katherine Langford was also seen adjusting the cape of Aishwarya's outfit as she walked on the stage.

Reacting to the pictures, a fan wrote: "People say that in this world no one is constant but they are wrong."

"All changed but Ash's flying kiss is still constant. It started in 2003-04 but didn't change."

Kit Harington recalls being uncomfortable during filming sex scenes with Emilia Clarke

Game of Thrones actor Kit Harington felt uncomfortable when filming sex scenes with his close friend Emilia Clarke.

Although it wasn't "hard" to film scenes in the final season of the show where their characters Jon Snow and Daenerys Targaryen's relationship turned romantic, the 36-year-old actor and his *Game of Thrones* co-star often giggled and ultimately found it quite "weird," according to femalefirst.co.uk.

Harington, who is married to Rose Leslie, another actress from the HBO fantasy drama series, told Candis magazine: "It wasn't hard to kiss her, although I used to pretend it was. The thing was that we were best friends over a seven-year period before we had to kiss, so it did take a while of looking at each other and laughing before we could get into it."

"And there was definitely an element of

weirdness if she, Rose and I would be having dinner, and Rose would say, 'So ... how was your scene?' And we'd say, 'Yes, well, it was good... I don't think it's ever comfortable.'"

Meanwhile, Kit previously revealed that he broke down in tears when the show's ending really dawned on him, despite being convinced he'd be able to be "cool" about it.

During an appearance on *The Graham Norton Show*, Harrington shared: "I was determined to be cool about the end and decided that when people came up to me and said, 'Are you Jon Snow?' that I would say very calmly, 'I used to be! When I left the set for the final time I was very emotional, and when a girl came up to me and asked the inevitable question, I broke down and cried, 'I used to be! She backed off pretty quickly!'"



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



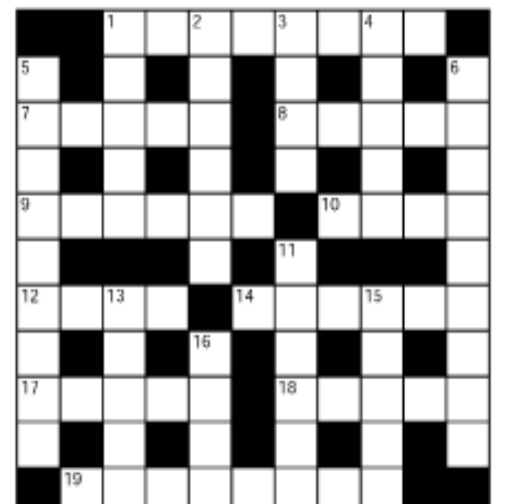
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Large stone buildings built in ancient Egypt as tombs
- Steel pins knocked into wood
- Call in on
- Get
- A song sung by one person
- Have a lie down
- Thin cord for tying parcels
- Fabric
- Defrosts
- So smooth it is difficult to get hold of

DOWN

- Indicate direction with your finger
- Moscow is in this country

SOLUTION



SUDOKU

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

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

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.



CLAUDIA CIESLA

I wondered why ten years ago, actresses were fascinated with ‘size zero’

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Claudia is a highly regarded nutritionist, model, and actress with a deep-rooted passion for promoting a healthy and balanced lifestyle. While her career began in the glamour industry, her true calling lies in the field of nutrition and wellness. With a successful career, the actress and model expresses in an exclusive interview with us, “My mother is Polish, I hold a dual-citizenship. I grew up in Poland. Gradually over the years, I shifted to Germany for professional reasons. It was through modelling that I got an opportunity to come to India and act in mainstream Bollywood. But Poland is a more family-oriented country and this is the only reason I could shift my base to India because the cultures complement each other. The people of Germany are only interested in realising net profit, and so much of formalities. I remember my man-

ager from Germany who actually used to take appointments to meet his mother, I was appalled.”

We understood her transition to mainstream Bollywood additionally, we are sure the *Bigg Boss* fans remember her television outing. Rather interesting! So how did Claudia’s work take her there? Well, she mentions, “I didn’t have much knowledge about *Bigg Boss* then—got this offer in Germany. I was just following the scenario of Big Brother and went ahead with the Indian version of it. Now the manager made me understand that it’s the country’s biggest reality show! I immediately flew to India without knowing Hindi but I was positively surprised with the fame I received. The popularity made me stay back. Now India is my home and I am so pleased to be here.”

There was a bijou hiatus, where was Claudia for a little while? The certified nutritionist clarified, “Look, my work took me to different countries, exposing me to diverse people, cultures, and experiences. During these travels, my insatiable appetite for food and nutrition was ignited, sparking a quest to delve deeper into the culinary world. My nutrition talk show is running successfully! Of course, people

know me as an actress, but my involvement in the film industry emphasized the importance of maintaining a fit and healthy body, not only as a priority but also as a necessity. I am getting offers from the movies but they are not standard work for me. I cannot boost my image by picking up anything and everything. I am not feeling motivated enough to come back on-screen. I don’t sign roles for money. Perhaps, that’s why you saw me less. Presently, I am in talks with some big production houses.”

She dedicated herself to understanding and nourishing her body, spending countless hours studying books, research articles, journals, magazines, and blogs that explored the intricate relationship between nutrition and the human body. This thirst for knowledge led her to pursue a degree in diet and nutrition, further solidifying her expertise in the field.

Furthermore, Claudia believes, “Ten years ago in this industry, the only news that was circulating was of size zero. Actresses were determined to follow this fad just to be on some magazine covers. Or maybe look great when they take a holiday! I wonder why they took this shortcut diet. I used to see so many models surviving only on black coffee.

So throughout my career, I frequently encountered individuals who inquired about my own methods of maintaining a healthy physique. I believe that there is no secret formula, and the answer is surprisingly simple: a commitment to consuming a healthy, balanced, and wholesome diet. I am passionate about dispelling the misconceptions surrounding the term diet. I also believe that a diet should not involve torture, tasteless food, or deprivation. Instead, it should be seen as a sustainable lifestyle change, forming the foundation of one’s food habits and daily routine.”

In her book, *Keep Eating Keep Losing*, Claudia confronts the world’s biggest misconception surrounding diets and provides invaluable insights on how to achieve and maintain a healthy body. Her aim is to transform the perception of dieting, making it a positive and enjoyable experience. By offering practical tips and advice, she guides individuals toward embracing a healthy lifestyle without sacrificing flavor or experiencing feelings of weakness and frustration. She advocates for consuming the right food at the right time and proportions to unlock boundless energy, confidence, happiness, and satisfaction.

CHAITANYA CHOUDHRY FEELS *SUKHEE* STARRING OPPOSITE SHILPA SHETTY

TEJAL SINHA

Light-hearted, slice-of-the-life story that’s been enrapturing hearts quite a lot—*Sukhee*, starring the very gorgeous Shilpa Shetty in the lead role. The stellar cast that the film has, also marks a major comeback of actor Chaitanya Choudhry, who has been a pretty big name in the Television industry. And the *Kahiin To Hoga* actor has been very *Sukhee* because, “This has been a great opportunity for me to be cast as a lead opposite Shilpa Shetty. As an actor, it’s been a dream to play this character Guru, a very interesting character.”

His character Guru is a victim of his own circumstances, responsibilities, and the society he lives in. He used to be an independent, fun-loving, and ambitious man, but due to certain events in his life, he changed. Henceforth, in order for him to live the character, the *Sarvggun Sampanna* actor first made sure to understand Guru from the director-writer Sonal Joshi. “She knew Guru very well and she had told me that the trickiest casting for me was Guru’s chastising. Someone who would play Guru needed to have that versatility to play this complex character. To understand who Guru was I really had to get into Sonal’s mind. So I had a lot of interactions with her regarding Guru, a lot of workshops, did a lot of work on scenes for like a month and a half, and days to days with her, and got my career graph very clear.” With all of it, he got so prepared for his character that once he was on the sets, he says he was not Chaitanya Choudhry, but submerged completely into his character Guru.

Now be it in the trailer or the film itself, his character gives us a legit idea of the typical Indian husband. But for him, playing Guru had nothing sort of negative but a great and complex character. “You see a very human side of Guru. Its a very human character. It’s about how we are in real life; we have our good moments and bad moments. Guru is basically a victim of circumstances, he’s not a bad human being. One gets to see the evolution of this character that tell you the story about what he was and why he has become that he is. That is why Sonal was very clear to me that he is not a negative character but he is a human. And I had to understand that very clearly because it is very easy for an actor to give a character if it is positive or negative. It is just a character because then it becomes parallels with my life. If I have a bad day, I might end up shouting at somebody, it does happen. But then after shouting you realise you shouldn’t have had, then you apologise.”

In an acting workshop, actors and other people in the same field get together to work on their skills and make connections with casting directors, performers, and acting coaches. Many actors give and take advice on how to improve their preparation for parts, auditions, and performance skills. And so for him, “It basically helped me to understand my character properly and understand who Guru is. That is important for me because if I don’t understand the character I am playing, the traits, and what is his back story, I don’t understand the reason why he is the way he is then how

can I perceive the character?

What I can say personally is that with the help of workshops, I get to understand from the makers and writer what the character was in her mind. She had Guru’s backstory ready and was working on the scene to see how she wanted the scenes, what should be the outcomes for the scenes, how a scene takes the story forward and the positioning of the scene, what’s Guru’s frame of mind during that scene, and what he is going through in this particular scene.” He even reveals how he was so engrossed during the workshops that he had made notes and markings all through in his script. He even made a whole character definition of Guru.

Well, working with an actor like Shilpa, an experienced seasoned actor that she is, is no less than a dream. And guess what? Initially, Sonal and the production house had called Chaitanya and Shilpa together before and soon began their reading sessions together. “With this, the comfort level was established. I was a bit intimidated because she is such a big name and such a big actress. For me to be able to work with her, I had to first get my shyness away. They’d been really helpful and Shilpa has been so gracious. She was so sweet and accepting and it was wonderful that I developed a friendship with her.” Well, he even recalls enjoying a great time with his co-star with a huge Patiala glass of Lassi, having a fun time. He even speaks of how encouraging the diva has been to him after that he’d done some really intense scenes.

A big name in the Television industry, a much-deserved comeback, no doubt he has been exploring his craft

with immense love. With having such immense experience in the Television industry, he says, “Television teaches you to be seasoned doing scenes day in and day out. It’s not easy! You get the scripts 5 minutes before the scene is on. It really makes you solid as an actor, your base becomes very solid and I think that really helps. Also, there’s a flip side to this as well—when you overdo something you become very monotonous and you stop developing as an actor. But again looking at the good, it makes you so much more resilient and strong that you can do anything, it becomes your best friend. No other actor intimidates

you because you are already so well-tuned to your craft by that time. However, I do feel that doing scenes too much, ends up in creativity suffering a bit. But yes, TV is a very tough job and it teaches you a lot. It’s a brilliant stepping stone to learn the craft and move ahead in life.”

Ending this chitter-chatter on a lighter note, he highlights how he makes sure to keep his cool and calm in different unconventional situations that come his way in real life. Yes, sometimes it gets difficult to keep calm, but he says you just have to let that situation be as it is and then slowly-steadily work towards solving it.



ACTOR CHAITANYA CHOUDHRY, WHO RECENTLY MADE A COMEBACK WITH THE SHILPA SHETTY STARRER *SUKHEE*, GETS CANDID WITH *THE PIONEER* ABOUT WORKING ON HIS CHARACTER, PREPS FOR THE ROLE, AND MORE.



Dispelling myths about Bungee Jumping

In the realm of adrenaline-pumping experiences, few can match the heart-racing intensity of bungee jumping. Yet, for all its thrill-seeking glory, this extreme sport is often shrouded in a veil of misconceptions and urban legends. From concerns about safety to assumptions about who can partake, the world of bungee jumping has amassed a collection of myths that deserve to be debunked. In this article, we embark on a journey to unravel eight common misconceptions surrounding bungee jumping, shedding light on the truth behind the harnesses, heights, and exhilarating free falls that define this extraordinary adventure. So, fasten your virtual seatbelt, and let’s leap headfirst into the world of bungee jumping, separating fact from fiction one myth at a time.

MYTH 1: BUNGEE JUMPING POSES SAFETY RISKS IN INDIA

When Jumpin Heights, the pioneering Bungy people of India was started, there were no official regulations in place. To address safety concerns, however, we brought in experts from New Zealand and not only followed the Australia and New Zealand standards of commercial bungee jumping but also had them incorporated to form the Indian safety standards of Bungee jumping. This ensures that bungee jumping experiences in the country meet the highest international safety benchmarks. In fact, since then, India has made a landmark for adventure tourism in India by operating a global record of 1,50,000 jumps within a decade—the highest for any bungy operator globally.

MYTH 2: BUNGEE JUMPING CAN CAUSE PHYSICAL PROBLEMS

Contrary to popular belief, executing a well-executed head-first leap from the platform leads to a remarkably smooth descent. The bungee cord chosen is specifically tailored to your weight, allowing for a gradual stretch as you approach the nadir of your plunge. This ensures a gentle and elegant deceleration, minimising any abrupt jerks. Prior to your jump, the experienced crew will provide you with guidance on the optimal take-off technique, ensuring a seamless experience.

MYTH 3: ONE NEEDS TO BE VERY FIT TO UNDERTAKE BUNGY

You are deemed fit to jump unless you suffer from medical conditions such as back or neck injuries, recent Fractures, high blood pressure, asthma, epilepsy, heart conditions, or osteoporosis. While

better fitness always enhances any physical experience, bungee jumping does not demand above average stamina or athletic bodies. The age criteria in India is 12-45 years and weight limit is 40-110 kgs.

MYTH 4: THE BUNGEE CORD MIGHT SNAP

Despite its seemingly simple appearance, the bungee cord boasts a complex and meticulously engineered design. Crafted from thousands of strands of durable latex rubber, each cord undergoes a rigorous battery of tests and approvals to ensure its safety and reliability. Rest assured, when you take the leap, you’re relying on a cord that’s been thoroughly vetted and proven to withstand the forces of the jump. The cords usually snap when its been overused, thereby violating safety standards by compromising on quality by way of wear and tear for the sake of quantity. Every bungy chord has a lifespan and the number of jumps it should be used for. Choosing a reputable operator is therefore of utmost importance, one with experience and expertise.

MYTH 5: BUNGEE JUMPING IS EXCESSIVELY DANGEROUS

Fact: Surprisingly, statistical data indicates that the risk of fatality associated with a bungee jump is comparable to that of being in a car traveling at 60 kilometers per hour. In the realm of commercial extreme sports, both bungee jumping and skydiving stand out as some of the safest activities. To put it into perspective, they are approximately six times safer than operating a car, let alone a motorcycle. This eye-opening comparison underscores the relative safety of these exhilarating experiences.

CONCLUSION

As we debunk these seven prevalent myths surrounding bungee jumping, it becomes evident that this exhilarating adventure is not only a heart-pounding experience but also one that prioritizes safety above all else. From the stringent adherence to international standards in India to the careful engineering of bungee cords, every aspect of this sport is meticulously designed for a secure and enjoyable thrill. So, whether you’re young or young at heart, rest assured that bungee jumping offers an adrenaline rush like no other, all within the bounds of a remarkably safe environment.

(The author, Niharika Nigam is the director of Jumpin Height)

INDIA MAKE QUARTERS IN ALL SIX TEAM EVENTS

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Indian archers showed tenacity and authority in equal measure to storm into the quarterfinals in all the six team events of the Asian Games here on Monday.

The Indians played five team elimination rounds and dropped just one set on way to their respective quarterfinal matches in both recurve and compound sections.

India have got a bye into the quarters by virtue of topping the qualifications in the women's compound team event.

India remained in contention in all five gold medals up for grabs in compound section with all the four archers — Ojas Deotale, Abhishek Verma, Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Aditi Swami — progressing to their respective individual quarterfinals in the afternoon session.

In the recurve section, Dhiraj Bommadevara and Ananu Das advanced, while India's campaign ended in women's individual section, in the only blip of the day.

First, it was the top-seeded compound mixed team of Ojas Deotale and Jyothi Surekha Vennam, who showed the way as they dropped just one point from 16 arrows to eliminate UAE's Amna Alawadhi and Mohammed Binamro 159-151.

The duo will take on formidable Malaysia (No 8 seed) in the quarters, and thereafter, they should have an easy draw till the final.

Then, the Indian recurve mixed pair duo of Ananu Das and Ankita Bhakat were at their resilient best and overcome a first-set deficit to defeat Malaysia in a three-setter.

The fifth seeded Indian duo of Das and Ankita rallied to beat the Malaysian team of Syaqlera Binti Mashayikh and Muhammad Zarif Syahir Bin Zolkepli 6-2 (39-38, 37-36, 39-33).

The Malaysia pair enjoyed a 2-0 lead with three 10s including one X in the first set. But, the experienced Indian duo bounced back with two 10s and went on to draw level, as the Malaysians crumbled under pressure.

The Malaysians hit the red-ring (8) once and went on to lose the second by a slender one-point margin.

There was more misery in store for the Malaysians who shot into the red ring thrice (8-8-8), while Das-Ankita drilled in three perfect 10s en route to a six-point win in the third set.

The Indian pair sealed the issue with three more 10s in the fourth set and set up a last-eight clash against the fourth-seeded Indonesians.

Should they overcome the Indonesian challenge, the Indians may run into the top-seeded Koreans in a potential semifinal clash in the Olympic-qualifying event.

There are six quota spots available from the Asian Games — the recurve mixed team winners and two archers ranked high in the individual events.

CAMPAIGN ENDS IN WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL RECURVE SECTION



In compound men's team event, the second-seeded Indian trio of Ojas, Abhishek Verma and Prathamesh Jawkar thrashed 15th seed Singapore (Woon Teng NG, Lee Chung Hee Alan, Jun Hui Goh) 235-219.

The Indian triumvirate had a cautious start and had four 10s to take

a 58-55 lead. But the Indians came on their own from second end onwards and dropped just three points to rout their rivals by a 16-point margin.

The compound men's team is pitted against lower-ranked Bhutan in the quarters and will likely face the third seeded Chinese Taipei in the

semifinals. The top-seeded Indian women's compound team of Jyothi, Aditi Swami and Parneet Kaur, who got a bye into the quarters, will open its campaign against ninth-seeded Hong Kong, who ousted Bangladesh 225-218.

The Indian men's recurve team

of Das, Dhiraj and Tushar Shelke beat Hong Kong's Kwok Yin Chai, Law Kwun Pok Lucien and Wn Chun Kit 6-0 (58-47, 57-49, 57-55) in a lopsided contest.

The third-seeded Indians, who face lower-ranked Mongolia (No 11) in the last-eight, have an easy draw till the final, with Korea and Japan in the top half. The unfancied women's recurve team of Ankita Bhakat, Bhajan Kaur and Simranjeet Kaur also shone through, ousting 12th seeded Thailand.

The fifth-seeded Indians won 5-1 (49-47, 54-54, 55-54) and are pitted against fourth-seeded Japan in a tough quarterfinal match-up.

ARCHERS EXCEL IN INDIVIDUAL ELIMINATIONS

Reigning world champion Deotale began with an easy defeat of Ahmad Alshatti (Kuwait) 148-138. He then overcame Chen Chieh-Lun of Chinese Taipei 146-145 in a tough contest.

The fourth seeded Verma defeated Belal Ayman Alawadi of Saudi Arabia 147-139, and then ousted Nguyen Van Day (Vietnam) 146-142 to make the last-eight.

Verma and Deotale are in the opposite halves and will head for a potential final clash, should they win their respective semi-finals.

Jyothi and her protege Aditi, once again, are headed for a possible face-off after sailing into their respective quarters without much fuss.

Aditi had beaten Jyothi 145-149 in the semifinal before becoming the world champion at Berlin in August this year.

Jyothi beat Anuradha Wijesinghe Karunaratne of Sri Lanka 145-132, and then accounted for Fatimah Saad Mahmood Almarshhadani 146-141.

Aditi prevailed over Imanyung Rai of Nepal 149-137, while she overwhelmed Syahara Khoerunisa of Indonesia 148-146.

In recurve section, Ananu Das beat Bin Mohamad Khairul Anuar of Malaysia 6-4 (27-27, 29-28, 24-28, 26-26, 29-28) in a challenging five-setter.

He then overcame Robert Nam of Tajikistan 7-1 (28-26, 28-28, 26-25, 28-26) to make the last-eight.

Dhiraj Bommadevara had to come through a tie-breaker to make the quarters with a tough 6-5 (27-27, 28-30, 28-27, 28-27, 25-29) (10-8) win over Muhammad Hakim Ahmed Rubel of Bangladesh.

The Army man rallied to beat Lam Dorji of Bhutan 6-2 (27-28, 30-29, 30-26, 28-27).

India's campaign ended in women's individual section. Bhajan made a pre-quarters exit, going down to reigning Olympic champion An San of South Korea 3-7 (28-27, 25-28, 28-28, 27-28, 27-28).

Ankita lost to Rezza Octavia in the second round, enduring a 5-6 (26-27, 28-27, 27-28, 25-25, 26-25) (9-10) defeat in the shoot-off.



Parul, Priti bag silver and bronze in 3000m steeplechase

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

India's Parul Chaudhary and Priti secured silver and bronze medal respectively in the women's 3000m steeplechase at the Asian Games here on Monday.

Parul clocked 9:27.63 sec to claim the silver medal ahead of compatriot Priti, who made a strong finish to clinch the bronze with a personal best time of

9:43.32 sec.

Winfred Mutile Yavi of Bahrain won the gold with a Games record timing of 9:18.28 sec.

In August this year at the World Championships held in Budapest, Parul registered a national record in 3000m steeplechase with a time of 9:15.31 sec, and in the process qualified for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

AP ■ HANGZHOU (CHINA)

China is simply relentless in its domination of the Asian Games.

At the games five years ago in Jakarta, Indonesia, the country won 132 gold medals and 287 medals overall.

This time, into Day 9 with five full days remaining, China has already broken its mark for gold medals and is very close to matching the overall total from five years ago. With 290 gold medals awarded, China has won almost half - 141. Its overall total stood at 255, just short of the 287 mark set in 2018. Host nations typically get a "home field" bounce when hosting the Olympics or a large multi-sport event like the Asian Games.

ROLLER SKATING: Skater Jung Cheolwon crossed the line in Monday's 3,000-meter relay and began to celebrate thinking he'd won the gold medal for South Korea.

But he was shocked when the scoreboard showed South Korea had finished second to Taiwan, which clocked 4 minutes, 05.692 seconds. South

Korea finished in 4:05.702.

Jung apologised to his teammates for his costly error.

"I made a rather big mistake," the 27-year-old Jung said. "I didn't come at full speed to the finish line. I let my guard down too early. I am very sorry."

KURASH ENDS: Uzbekistan failed to completely dominate the ancient martial art of kurash, which has its roots in the Central Asian country. The sport debuted in the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia.

Uzbekistan won four of the seven gold medals available. But China picked up two gold and Iran added another.

On Monday on the closing day, Liu Yi of China defeated Zahra Bagheri of Iran 3-0 in the women's 87-kilogram division, and Sadegh Azarang of Iran defeated Kim Ming-yo of South Korea 10-0.

On Sunday, Yu Dan of China won the women's 70-

footsteps, she has completed MBBS from SRM Medical College in Chennai, and has also done Masters in Clinical Embryology. "My mother runs a hospital and I have joined there. I have taken a break for the Asian Games. I will join after I reach home," said Aarathy. "It is difficult at times to divide time between studies and my sport but I was able to manage it with support from my family and my husband," she said.

Aarathy trains at the Nehru Indoor Stadium in Chennai.

"I trained for two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening. Before the Asian Games, we took special permission to train longer there."

Aarathy married Tamil Nadu cricketer Sandeep Warrior in 2019 and she said he is her "best supporter".

"I am continuing my passion and he has not told me anything to change it after marriage. He is very supportive."

Talking about the bronze medal in Hangzhou, she said, "Skating for 22 years has obviously paid off. I'm very happy about the younger players who have come into the team. They did a good job and kept calm."

"Sadly, roller skating is not an Olympic sport. But winning bronze will definitely open up a lot of opportunities for the players because skating is not on the priority list in India."

20 cuts and 26 stitches later, Aarathy rises to win medal

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Things looked gloomy for Aarathy Kasturi Raj after a nasty fall in May that required 26 stitches to treat more than 20 cuts, including few deep ones on her forehead.

But, with her physician mother by her side, the Indian roller skater recovered in time to win a historic bronze medal at the Asian Games. Her goal achieved, Aarathy, who has completed her MBBS, will rejoin her mother in running the hospital they own.

Aarathy suffered the injury during training exactly four months before the start of the continental showpiece.

The 29-year-old said it was scary but she took the injury in her stride and recovered quickly after rehabilitation with her physician mother taking care of her.

"I had a scary incident on May 26 this year and I had 26 stitches. There were deep cuts on my forehead," Aarathy told PTI after playing a part in the bronze medal win in the women's 3000m team relay. "I started training on the bike, did rehab."

Daughter of a businessman



father C Kasturi Raj and gynaecologist mother Mala Raj in Chennai, Aarathy took to skating at the age of seven and after frequent falls, numerous bruises and bleeding, she is now an Asian Games medalist.

"It's a dream come true moment. I took to this sport at the age of seven and since then, it has been my passion."

"My parents wanted me to play some sport and my mom

was the one who was behind this," said Aarathy.

Having competed in several national and international events, Aarthy has won more than 100 medals. She was also ranked world number five.

Asked why she took up a sport which can injure her often, she said, "Every sport involves some risks of getting injured. It is part and parcel of sport."

Following in her mother's



Ghosal progresses, Joshna exits from Asian Games

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Star Indian squash player Joshna Chinappa made a shock exit from the women's singles event but veteran Sourav Ghosal sailed into the quarterfinals of men's singles at the Asian Games here on Monday.

Taking the court first, Chinappa lost 1-3 to lower-ranked Heo Mingyeong of South Korea in the pre-quarterfinals.

The 37-year-old, who received a first-round bye, went down 4-11, 12-10, 9-11, 8-11 in 37 minutes to the South Korean, ranked 158th, in the round of 16. The result is a major upset as Joshna was a medal favourite.

The Chennai player had won a singles bronze in the 2018 edition.

and kurash," Yu said. "It has helped me a lot."

TRIATHLON: Japan completed its sweep of the triathlon gold medals by winning the mixed relay on Monday.

Kenji Nener won the men's gold on Friday and Yuko Takahashi added the women's

title on Saturday. Both ran on Monday in the winning team event, which saw China take the silver and Honk Kong the bronze.

"It was tough," Takahashi said. "I was almost dead at the end, but I gave it everything."

Many triathletes competed in the world championships in Pontevedra, Spain, on Sept. 22-24 and then rushed to China.

ESPORTS: Esports wrapped up Monday as one of the most talked about events at the Asian Games.

Going into bronze- and gold-medal games, China led the medal table with three gold and four overall. South Korea had two gold and also four overall. Thailand was the only other nation with gold and also had four overall. Tawian had four overall but failed to win gold.

Malaysia won the bronze on Monday in Dota 2, defeating Kyrgyzstan 2-0.

Indian women's kabaddi team plays out 34-34 draw against Chinese Taipei



PTI ■ HANGZHOU

In an unexpected start to its campaign, the Indian women's kabaddi team was on Monday held to a surprise 34-34 draw by Chinese Taipei in a Group A match at the Asian Games here.

The Indians were made to work hard throughout the contest by their opponents, who earned a bonus point on the last raid of the match to force a draw.

The women side's next assignment will be against South Korea on Tuesday, while the men's team will take on Bangladesh in their Group A match.

India team official V. Tejaswini Bai attributed the draw to nervousness and asserted that her girls will win gold.

"Our team will fight and our team will win. Today we were a little bit nervous, but from now on we will be more relaxed and we will win. I believe and I hope we will win gold."

She added the Chinese Taipei team had improved over the years.

"They are a very good team and they have improved a lot. They are very focussed in kabaddi and I'm happy for that."

After seeing today's perfor-

mance, kabaddi aficionados would have been reminded of the shocking defeat the Indian women's team suffered at the hands of a gritty Iranian side in the gold medal match at the 2018 Jakarta Asian Games.

The Indian women's team did not have an ideal start today but recovered well to finish ahead at the end of the first half.

Defender Hsiu-Chen Feng troubled the Indians, who scripted a late recovery to finish 17-15 after the first half.

For India, Ritu Negi earned the first defensive point on an ankle hold, while Pooja Hathwala took the bonus point in the second half.

India managed to extend their lead by five points at 23-17 before grabbing a 26-20 lead at one stage, but thereafter the Chinese Taipei side came back roaring to level the scores.

Towards the end of the game, Nidhi claimed that she had a touch but the referees did not agree. Pooja then managed a raid point, which took the scoreline to 32-32.

India once again took the lead but the Chinese Taipei side kept coming back and walked off with a drawn result.

After seeing today's perfor-

Neha Sshetty: I am nervous whether Rules Ranjann will be a hattrick for me

PNS| HYDERABAD

Neha Sshetty became an overnight star, thanks to *DJ Tillu*. Off recent, she was seen as the female lead in *Bedurulanka 2012*, and now she awaits the release of *Rules Ranjann*. The Kiran Abbavaram-starrer entertainer is directed by Rathinam Krishna, AM Ratnam's son. In this interview, Neha, who is elated that her first-ever dance-based song *Sammohanuda* grossing over 32 million views, speaks about the key merits of the October 6th release. Well, the song, shot on Neha and Kiran, is expected to be one of the key highlights of *Rules Ranjann*. "My mother is into numerology," begins Neha as she goes ahead, "She asked me to change my spelling from Neha Shetty to Neha Sshetty, which is what I am doing on social media. I was born in Mangalore and brought up in Bengaluru. Everyone knew that I would become an actress. *Mehbooba*, which was

directed by Puri Jagannadh sir, was my first movie in Telugu. Before that, I had done ads and a movie in Kannada. In addition to becoming a model, I was crowned Miss South India. I travelled to New York to enroll in an acting course after *Mehbooba* in Telugu." She feels her expressive eyes are her biggest asset and is yet to identify her weakness. She has been a little selective on the script front. The script is what matters most. "I am feeling grateful. I hope I am on the right path in my career. *DJ Tillu* came as one full circle because I started with *Mehbooba*, which didn't work well. My character Radhika in *DJ Tillu* was a tricky one. Had something gone wrong, the audience would have hated me. I must thank its director and co-star (Siddhu) for that. Despite it being a tricky character, the response from the audience was great." In the film, Neha plays the character of Sana, and she shares that her character is not as selfish as that of

Radhika in *DJ Tillu*." She is a happy-go-lucky girl hailing from Tirupati. She is adventurous and wants to explore the world. As a character, Sana is glamorous. She is cute, bubbly and a girl-next-door character. How does she bump into Mano Ranjan (played by Kiran Abbavaram)? How the journey sets into motion in the story has thrills and frills." The film is nearing to its release, and Neha says, "I am nervous whether *Rules Ranjann* will be a hat trick one for me. No doubt, we all have worked out pretty well, bringing out a wholesome entertainer. But there is a slight nervousness in me. After *DJ Tillu*, I was skeptical how audiences would receive my character in *Bedurulanka 2012*, donning a cute, village girl from a conservative family. I had doubts about whether fans would accept me. But my inhibitions were all shattered when it was released in theatres. I am sure the character Sana would surely strike a chord with fans." In *DJ Tillu*, her character was bold, and she did what she felt was right. She had a selfish character, which Neha doesn't think is negative in itself. "Sometimes, you have to make selfish decisions to progress in life. In *Rules Ranjann*, Sana wants to explore the world. She wants to step out of her small-town constraints. It's a glamorous character. That said, she is more of a girl-next-door, bubbly,

cute woman. *Rules Ranjann* is not a typical love story. There is a new conflict point, there is lots of comedy, and you will know what I am talking about. My director followed a set routine. He is rule-oriented, and focused. As someone who comes from a film background, cinema runs in his blood. He is going to prove himself with *Rules Ranjann*." She shares a great bond with both her co-stars. Siddhu, she says, is hyper-active by nature and hardworking. Kiran Abbavaram on the other hand is quiet, polite, humble and talks less. At the same time, he works really hard. Their chemistry in the movie has worked out very well. Katikeya Gummakonda (her *Bedurulanka* co-star) and she shares a lot of common tastes. Her first-ever dance-based song *Sammohanuda*, which has received such great responses has been the most challenging part for her in the entire film. "Music director Amrith has given the best for *Rules Ranjann*. *Sammohanuda* is the result of collective creative contributions. Shreya Ghoshal's voice, too, has played a major role in its success. Shooting for the song was challenging. The picturisation involved me dancing in tough circumstances. Until this song happened, I didn't have a glam girl image. In southern Indian, a glam girl can be seen in a saree as well." In Vishwak Sen's *Gangs of Godavari*,

which is a period film, she will once again be seen wearing a traditional attire. She is balancing glamour and other types of looks in movies. People have been asking me if she is a part of *Tillu Square*. Her fans want her to be seen in the comedy caper. But its story is different, and so I am not part of it. She is glad that her fans accepted her in *Bedurulanka*. They realized that she could perform a village girl's role as well. "I don't know if it is God's blessings, or my parents' blessings, or the audience's blessings, but I am fortunate to have got a film like *DJ Tillu* early on in my career. When I bagged my first Telugu film, I watched about 60 Telugu movies over a period of three months to learn how the language sounds and is spoken. Four years later, my understanding of the language has improved." While at present she doubts her coming timing, she says she really enjoys comedy movies. During this chat, she shares that she also wants to do an action film. "I've been a very big fan of Srivide. She started out young and never had any boundaries. Like her, I want to keep my options open, and not turn down a period film just because I want to play a glamorous role. I don't really care about the trolls. I understand people have their own opinions in this world. I don't let the opinions of others affect me or my decision in any manner."

Actress Neha Sshetty, who has made it big with her recent previous film, is all set to grace the screens with *Rules Ranjann*. Ahead of the film's release, the actress speaks to the Hyderabad media sharing some interesting insights about the film.

Jithender Reddy poster leaves audience with bated breath about Rakesh Varre's character

Rakesh Varre, who gained popularity with movies *Baahubali* and *Evvarikee Cheppoddu* is known for taking on challenging roles. Recently, released mysterious posters with the name Jithender Reddy, raised curiosity about the character and the film's title. In one of the intriguing posters, the character is shown sitting in front of group, leaving people curious about the actor's iden-

tity and the unique storyline. The posters feature a dynamic character but didn't reveal the hero's name, leaving the audience in suspense.

Rakesh Varre seems to be playing a role of a leader, and the mystery surrounding his character is generating excitement. The director, Virinchi Varma, who made waves with his earlier projects, anticipates a blockbuster with this intriguing story.



SALAAR MAKERS TO ADOPT SIMILAR PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY AS KGF-1



Pan-Indian star Prabhas is set to appear in his upcoming film *Salaar: Part 1 - Ceasefire*, directed by Prashanth Neel, with Shruti Haasan as the leading lady. The movie is scheduled for release in cinemas on December 22, 2023.

There's an interesting online buzz suggesting that the makers of *Salaar* might adopt a similar promotional strategy as they did for *KGF Chapter 1*.

Rumours are circulating that they plan to release a couple of trailers for *Salaar* before its release, with one expected in October and the other in the first week of December. However,

an official announcement from the production team is still pending.

Salaar boasts an impressive ensemble cast, including Prithviraj Sukumaran, Jagapathi Babu, Eeswari Rao, Tinnu Anand, and others in significant roles.

The film is produced by Hombale Films and features music composed by Ravi Basrur.

Martin Luther King promises a captivating political drama

Sampoornesh Babu's latest film, *Martin Luther King*, directed by newcomer Puja Aparna Kolluru, is set to hit cinemas on October 27, 2023. On Monday, the teaser for the movie was unveiled online, and it has generated significant intrigue.

The story revolves around the fierce rivalry between Venkatesh Maha and Nares, who are competing for the role of Village President. The key element is Martin Luther King's deciding vote, portrayed by Sampoornesh Babu. The rest of the plot unfolds on the big screen, focusing on who Martin Luther King will vote for and how both candidates try to win his support. The teaser gives a captivating glimpse of this political drama, backed by an engaging musical score.

Apart from Venkatesh Maha, Nares, and Sampoornesh Babu, the film also features Sharanya Pradeep in a crucial role. *Martin Luther King* offers a satirical take on the political landscape and is a joint production of YNOT Studios, Reliance Entertainment, and Venkatesh Maha's Mahayana Motion Pictures. Smaran Sai has composed the film's music, enhancing its storytelling experience.



Srikanth Addala reveals the 'two big actors' who declined working in Kotha Bangaru Lokam



Director Srikanth Addala is back with another action-packed drama, *Peddha Kapu 1*, featuring Virat Karana and Pragathi Srivastava in the lead roles. The movie hit screens last Friday and has garnered a positive response from audiences.

In a recent interview, Srikanth Addala, renowned for his family-oriented films like *Kotha Bangaru Lokam* and *Seethamma Vakitlo Sirimalle Chettu*, revealed an interesting anecdote about his debut movie, *Kotha Bangaru Lokam*.

He mentioned that, initially, he pitched the story to Akkineni Nagarjuna for his son Naga Chaitanya and later to Ram Pothineni. But both the actors declined the opportunity to star in the film.

However, *Kotha Bangaru Lokam* became a sensational hit at the box office and marked a significant milestone in the careers of both the director Srikanth Addala and actor Varun Sandesh.

Meenaakshi Chaudhary to star alongside Vijay in Thalapathy 68

With Vijay's *Leo* directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj gearing up for release on October 19, 2023, the star actor is getting ready to begin shooting for his next film, tentatively known as *Thalapathy 68* directed by Venkat Prabhu. The latest buzz is that actress Meenaakshi Chaudhary, who made her Tamil debut with Vijay Antony-starrer *Kolai* this year, has been roped in to play the female lead opposite Vijay in the film.

Interestingly, we had earlier reported that actress Priyanka Mohan is most likely to pair up with Vijay as the female lead.

The film is said to be a complete action thriller that will have Vijay playing dual roles. So, Meenaakshi Chaudhary is most likely to play the pair of one of the Vijay in the film.

However, an official confirmation from the team is still awaited. The film's pooja apparently happened earlier on Monday, and the team will begin shooting for a song sequence from today in Chennai. The first schedule of shooting will happen in Chennai and the team will move abroad for the second schedule of shooting. Earlier last month, actor Vijay went to Los Angeles along with director Venkat Prabhu for a 3D VFX scan of himself for the film.

Meanwhile, actress Meenaakshi Chaudhary will also be seen in RJ Balaji-starrer *Singapore Saloon* directed by Gokul. The film features RJ Balaji as a hairstylist with Sathyaraj, Lal, Robo Shankar, Meenaakshi Chaudhary and Shivani Rajashekar in important roles, while director Lokesh Kanagaraj and actor Jiiva will be appearing in cameo roles.

