

Jagan must revitalize YSRCP; prove he is down, but not out!

Even a supremely confident political leader may become diffident if his party is decimated in the elections. Andhra Pradesh's former chief minister and YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, given his party's drubbing in the recent Assembly elections, may not look diffident; yet it is high time he took concrete steps to galvanize the party again.

The issues that bedevil Jagan and his party include sacrilege of Tirumala Srivari laddu and the narrow-minded response to the recent floods that devastated Vijayawada, among others. Jagan's apparent unwillingness to sign the faith declaration for



PIN POINT

visiting Tirumala has assumed added significance, considering that other prominent personalities like former president Abdul Kalam and former Congress president Sonia Gandhi have signed the mandatory declaration in the past when they visited Tirumala temple.

Jagan has cancelled his visit, leaving common people wondering why he backed down. As for the laddu issue, the Supreme Court has just issued orders asking rulers to "keep Gods out of politics". This is also the least that common people expect from netas. YSRCP has sought the inter-

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vention of the Court (instead of SIT's probe) and has not demanded a CBI enquiry into the issue alleged desecration of Srivari laddu.

Likewise, with regard to floods, YSRCP preferred to highlight the two-kilometre

retaining wall constructed during Jagan's rule to protect people from floods of River Krishna in the Krishna lanka area of Vijayawada city. Considering that the devastation caused by floods of Budameru has been significant,



M D RATNA KUMAR
Senior Journalist

it may not be appropriate for the party to highlight that one point. It may be mentioned here that the VI Nizam of

Hyderabad princely state Mir Mahaboob Ali Khan had taken great corrective measures after the devastating floods of river Musi on 28 September, 1908. The reservoirs then constructed on both sides of river Musi in the limits of Hyderabad are still capable of preventing floods.

Months after defeat in the Assembly polls, YSRCP, left without even the tag of principal opposition in AP, is yet to be revitalized by Jagan to present itself as an alternative political force that is alive. The legacy of late Dr. YS Rajasekhara Reddy helped his son Jagan a lot in building an alternative to both then ruling and opposition parties,

Congress and TDP respectively in 2011, after he had decided to part ways with the Congress, with whose blessings his father could become chief minister after a long wait of 23 years. Jagan chose a different path to become the chief minister of residual AP post bifurcation.

Today, the party's cadre is missing Jagan's enthusiasm in rebuilding the organization. The cadre is rather confused over the future of the party, given the desertions of public representatives and senior leaders. They are not able to digest the exit of leaders with the party head making no efforts to retain them.

Given the spree of desertions, YSRCP may lose its sheen in the

national political arena, particularly with the exit of its Rajya Sabha members. YSRCP is losing its strength in the Upper House of Parliament.

No state level meeting has been convened so far to review the party's defeat in the Assembly elections. This also means no opportunity is being given to grassroots-level workers to interact with the party leadership.

In such trying circumstances, YS Jaganmohan Reddy is yet to start the next phase of his political journey by learning lessons from the recent past. It is high time he galvanized the party and positioned himself as an effective leader who is down but not out.

Traditional purification ritual held in Tirumala

‘Koil Alwar’ performed 4 times in a year: TTD EO

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The traditional temple cleansing ritual, 'Koil Alwar Tirumanjanam' was performed with most religious fervour in Tirumala temple on Tuesday.

After the completion of the ritual, speaking to media outside the temple, TTD EO J Syamala Rao said, this unique Tirumanjanam was performed in view of the annual Brahmotsavams which are scheduled from October 4 to 12. Usually, it is observed four times a year on the preceding Tuesday before Telugu Ugadi, Anivara Asthanam, annual Brahmotsavams and Vaikuntha Ekadasi festivals in Tirumala temple.

As a part of it, the entire



temple, deities, puja utensils were cleaned while a special aromatic mixture called "Parimalam" was smeared all along the walls, roofs, pillars of the temple complex.

The entire activity took place from 6 am till 10 am. During this time, the main

deity was covered with a white veil and after the completion of the cleaning programme, the cover was removed. Later on special pujas and naivedyams were offered to the presiding deity", the EO said.

The devotees will be allowed for darshan after noon onwards.

In view of the Koil Alwar Tirumanjanam, TTD has cancelled Astadala Pada Padmaradhana, VIP break on Tuesday. TTD Additional EO Ch Venkiah Chowdhary, HEO (H&E) Goutami, CVSO Sridhar, DyEO Lokanatham, Peishkar Ramakrishna and other officials were also present.

28 injured as lorry collides with bus

PNS ■ KADAPA

As many as 28 persons were injured when a lorry collided with a bus at Angallu village at Sarkar Thopu in Kurabalakota village in Annamayya district on Tuesday.

The bus was going to Galaiveedu from Gurrunkonda with about 40 passengers when the mishap took place. A speeding lorry collided with the bus in which 28 bus passengers were injured. They were extricated from the ill-fated bus and shifted to various hospitals in Madanapalle.

The lorry driver was also injured in the mishap and he was stuck in the cabin. A JCB was used to extricate the driver from the cabin of the ill-fated lorry. The police registered a case and removed the two vehicles from the road and cleared the traffic.

6,100 constables to be recruited: HM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Home and Disaster Management Minister Vangalapati Anitha has announced that the coalition government is prioritising the constable recruitment process in the State, which had previously come to a halt. The Minister confirmed that the physical ability tests (PMT and PET) for filling 6,100 posts will be completed within five months.

The Minister reported that 4,59,182 candidates had appeared for the preliminary examination conducted in 2022, out of which 95,209 were selected for the next stage. The recruitment process for 3,580 Civil Constables and 2,520 APSP Constables was postponed due to MLC elections and other reasons.

Additionally, she mentioned that 3,622 Home Guards participated in the preliminary written test, with only 382 qualifying. One hundred Home Guards who did not qualify filed 14 writ petitions in the High Court, requesting the court to declare a separate merit list for Home Guards, treating them as a distinct category. The Home Minister explained that the court had issued an interim order allowing these hundred Home



Guards to proceed to the next stage. She noted that the previous government had halted the recruitment process without reaching any decision after that.

Following the coalition government's awareness of this issue, the Minister stated that they would seek legal opinion and promptly continue with the second phase (PMT/PET) of the recruitment process.

Minister Vangalapati Anitha also mentioned that complete details regarding the second-stage application form will be made available on the State Level Police Recruitment Board's website (slprb.ap.gov.in). Furthermore, she indicated that the third phase, which involves the main examination (Final Written Exam), will be conducted for those who qualify in the second phase.

Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh thanked Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha who announced that the constable recruitment examination process which was stopped halfway immediately. The minister said that the unemployed people who came to Praja Darbar brought to his notice the difficulties they were facing due to the postponement of the physical fitness tests which were to be conducted in the second stage of recruitment after the preliminary examination. When their request was sent to the Home Minister for consideration, the HM responded positively and announced that the recruitment process would be initiated which is a positive move for the unemployed who passed the Constable Eligibility Test, said Minister Lokesh.

4,200 VSP...

Continued from Page 1

Protests erupted at the plant gates as they voiced their concerns. In response, a large number of police and Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel were deployed to maintain order and ensure the safety of the protesters and the local community. The contract workers raised alarms about their sudden dismissal, calling for job security and condemning the unfair treatment. "We were not given any prior notice or explanation," said one protester. "Our livelihoods are at stake, and we demand justice."

The VSP management confirmed the cancellation of the passes but defended their decision. "Many of the suspended passes belonged to bogus workers who were hired due to political pressure," a management source explained. "This is part of a necessary workforce reduction, especially with the potential merger with SAIL." CITU State general secretary Ch. Narasinga Rao criticised the management's actions and raised concerns about the Ministry of Steel's involvement. "Joint Secretary Sanjay Roy has been pressuring VSP officials to make a list of workers to be terminated," Rao claimed.

TODAY	
ALMANAC	
Month & Paksham:	Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Amavasya:	Oct 01 09:39 PM to Oct 03 12:19 AM
Sukla Paksha Pratipada:	Oct 03 12:19 AM to Oct 04 02:58 AM
Nakshatram:	
Uttara Phalguni:	Oct 01 09:16 AM to Oct 02 12:22 PM
Hasta:	Oct 02 12:22 PM to Oct 03 03:32 PM
Rahukalam:	12:05 PM to 1:34 PM
Yamagandam:	7:38 AM to 9:07 AM
Varjyam:	09:53 PM to 11:41 PM
Gulika:	10:36 AM to 12:05 PM
Amritakalam:	None
Abhijit Muhurtham:	Nil

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Scattered Thunderstorms
Temp: 36°
Humidity: 70%
Sunrise: 5:58 AM
Sunset: 5:55 PM

Updated: October 1, 2024 5:00 PM

Govt liquor shop workers boycott work

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Government liquor shop workers across the State boycotted work from 11 am. to 5 pm on Tuesday demanding that they be adjusted in other departments as their contract ended on Monday (September 30). While the AP government requested the workers to keep the shops open for another 10 days, the staff refused, knowing they would be out of jobs after the private liquor shops opened statewide. However, they opened the shops in the evening following an assurance for talks.

Most of the 3,240 wine shops remained shut, leaving

customers in a fix. With the closure, the only option for those seeking liquor was to visit bars, where prices are higher than in wine shops.

Pasala Ramachandra Rao, a representative of the Government Liquor Shop Staff Association, said that their contracts, initially established by the previous government, had ended.

He noted that the earlier administration had set up 3,600 government-run liquor shops across the State under the Andhra Pradesh State Beverages Corporation, hiring 15,000 staff through an outsourcing process overseen by district authorities.

APSRTC to run 6,100 Dasara specials from Oct 4 to 20

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In anticipation of the upcoming Dasara festival, the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) has announced the operation of 6,100 special buses from October 4 to 20 to accommodate the increased passenger demand during the celebrations.

In a release on Monday, APSRTC officials stated that, in addition to regular services, special buses will be deployed to major cities and towns across Andhra

Pradesh, including Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Tirupati, Kurnool, Rajamahendravaram, Anantapur, Vizianagaram, Kakinada, Kadapa, Bheemavaram, Amalapuram, Markapuram, Srisailem, Ongole, Tuni, Srikakulam, and Nellore. Services will also extend to significant cities outside the state, such as Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Bhadrachalam.

The special bus services will commence on October 4 and continue until October 20.

Girl student from Nunna dies of heart attack in US

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a tragic incident, Avuthu Divya, a 22-year-old student from Nunna near Vijayawada in the NTR district, passed away due to a heart attack in Atlanta, USA. Divya had gone to the U.S. last year to pursue her MS.

Upon learning of the incident, local TDP leaders informed Gannavaram MLA Yarlagadda Venkata Rao, who reached out to the Telugu Association of North America (TANA) to assist in repatriating Divya's body. The MLA's company has pledged to cover the expenses.

Rayalaseema...

Continued from Page 1

Naidu expressed concern about the financial condition of the State, stating that when he assumed office, the State was burdened with a debt of Rs 10 lakh crore, with Rs 1 lakh crore being paid as interest every month. Despite these challenges, he promised to complete the Vedavathi, Guru Raghavendra, KC Canal, and Gundrevula projects on time to supply water to every acre in Rayalaseema.

The Chief Minister also announced a 90 per cent subsidy for drip irrigation and plans to conduct a test in December to fill 16,347 posts through DSC. He shared plans to create 20 lakh jobs for the youth by providing training in various fields of interest.

Additionally, Naidu said a national highway will be constructed from Kurnool to Bellary, and Orvakallu will be developed as an industrial hub. He mentioned that a new excise policy has curbed the supply of spurious liquor and that initiatives under the 'Swarnandhra@2047' plan are underway to position Andhra Pradesh as a leading state in the country.

Finally, the Chief Minister assured that houses will be provided to those without homes, and small-scale industries will be promoted in Rayalaseema.

AP's new liquor...

Continued from Page 1

Out of the total number of shops to be licensed in 2024-26, as many as 3,396 will be in the open category, while 340 shops will be reserved for allocation to 'Geetha Kulalu' (a toddy tapping community) to empower them and promote equity and social justice.

The selection process for granting licence will be through a draw of lots and an applicant can apply for more than one shop. There shall be no restriction on the number of shop licences a person can hold, it added. Applicants will have to deposit a non-refundable fee of Rs 2 lakh for each shop.

As per the notification, the retail excise tax (RET) ranges from Rs 50 lakh for locality with population of 10,000 to Rs 85 lakh per annum for a municipality or municipal corporation having population above 5 lakh during the fiscal 2024-2025. It will be increased by 10 per cent for 2025-26. The overall exercise is estimated to result in the State government raking in Rs 5,500 crore.

The RET per annum shall be paid in six equal advance instalments as applicable for each year during the licence period 2024-26. As per the notification, the retailer margin will be 20 per cent on issue price across all categories of IMFL and FL, including beer, wine and RTDs (ready to drink).

For the premium stores, the notification said, "In order to provide an enhanced and high-end retail experience within the state of Andhra Pradesh, a total of 12 Premium Store Licenses shall be granted as a separate category."

These premium stores shall be strategically located across major municipal corporation cities namely Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Rajamahendravaram, Kakinada, Guntur, Nellore, Kurnool, Kadapa, Anantapur or any other city as notified by the state government from time to time, it added. A cabinet sub-committee of the state government had studied the excise policies of states such as Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and also took extensive feedback from key stakeholders, before framing the latest policy.

It had assessed the performance of the existing policy with respect to public health impact and other critical metrics including revenue generation efficiency, the state government said.

CS: Aim for...

Continued from Page 1

Chief Secretary Prasad also advised officials to formulate a plan for the Backward Area Development of Rayalaseema and North Andhra districts, as there is potential for obtaining funds from the Centre for the development of these areas.

While discussing CSS related to the Primary Medical and Health Department, Special Chief Secretary MT Krishnababu stated that under the Prime Minister's Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM), ₹367 crore has been allocated over five years to enhance medical infrastructure, including increasing bed capacity and establishing critical care blocks in various government medical colleges. Additionally, under the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, a plan is in place to provide ₹5,000 to pregnant women.

AP Tidco Housing Special Chief Secretary Anil Kumar Singhar outlined that the Tidco Housing scheme, valued at ₹21,377 crore, comprises a central share of ₹3,924 crore, a state government share of ₹8,595 crore, and a beneficiaries' share of ₹8,856 crore. Works worth ₹16,900 crore have been completed, while ₹7,000 crore worth of work remains pending.

Special Chief Secretary for Agriculture B Raja Sekhar noted that under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, eight schemes with a budget of ₹737 crore are being implemented in the Agriculture Department, with ₹442 crore funded by the Centre and ₹295 crore by the State Government.

CM to attend 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As part of the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu will be participating in a programme in Machilipatnam on Wednesday, to mark Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary. The CM, along with people's representatives, officials, and students, will take part in the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' initiative.

In connection with this, Minister for Mines & Geology and Excise Kollu Ravindra, Krishna District Collector DK Balaji, and SP R Gangadhara Rao inspected the arrangements in Machilipatnam on Tuesday. Also, they convened a meeting with the officials concerned regarding the Chief Minister's tour to Machilipatnam.

Minister Ravindra visited the National Degree College and inspected the arrangements of the helipad. Later, he inspected the college's surrounding areas and instructed the officials to keep the city clean and green. Minister Ravindra, Collector Balaji, and SP Gangadhara Rao visited Mudusthambhala Centre, Ladies Club, TTD Kalyana Mandapam, Rythu Bazar, Sundaraiyah Colony, Mustakhan Peta and other areas.

During the inspection, the Collector stated that CM Chandrababu Naidu will attend the Safai Karmachari Sanitation workers' meeting to be held at the TTD Kalyana Mandapam. After a face-to-face interaction with the sanitation workers, the CM will distribute clothes and safety equipment to them, he added.



Minister Kollu Ravindra, Machilipatnam MP Bala Shoury, Pedana MLA Krishna Prasad and others participating in the tree plantation drive at Machavaram on Tuesday

Joint Collector Geethanjali Sharma, DRO Chandrasekhar, ZP CEO Kannama Naidu, DPO Dr Aruna, R & B Officer Lokesh, Municipal Commissioners Bapi Raju, Gopala Rao, Venkateswara Rao, Srinivasa Rao, Pollution Control Board EE Srinivas, Fire Officer Narasimha Rao, Public Health EE Ram Prasad and others were present.

Environment protection everyone's responsibility

As part of the campaign, Minister Kollu Ravindra and Machilipatnam MP Vallabhaneni Balashowry planted saplings at Rice Mill at Machavaram on Tuesday. The programme was organised by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

They participated in cleaning roads and planted saplings. Also, they organ-



Minister Kollu Ravindra, Krishna District Collector DK Balaji and SP Gangadhara Rao inspecting the arrangements for CM Chandrababu Naidu's tour programme in Machilipatnam on Tuesday

ised a cycle rally to create awareness among the public. Minister Ravindra said that sapling plants and protecting the environment are everyone's responsibilities.

Pedana MLA Kagitha

Krishna Prasad, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways Chief Engineer Rakesh Kumar, Ex-Municipal Chairman M Baba Prasad, and others were present.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) has made a key decision to distribute drinking water to the devotees waiting in queue lines for having darshan of goddess Durga Devi during the Dasara Sarannavaratri festivities at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam in Vijayawada. The Dasara festivities will take place from October 3 to 12. The responsibility of drinking water distribution has been entrusted to the VMC.

In view of the Dasara celebrations which will begin in the city on October 3, Municipal Commissioner HM Dhyanaachandra held a key meeting with the VMC department heads at the Command Control Room on Tuesday. The conference focused on providing drinking water, sanitation facilities, temporary toilets, cloakrooms, and other amenities.

Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner Dhyanaachandra said that although 25 water distribution points have been established, necessary steps should be taken to provide drinking water directly to the devotees standing in queue lines. Additional staff should be

VMC to distribute water to devotees in queues

25 water distribution points set up in city



VMC Commissioner HM Dhyanaachandra conducting a meeting of department heads ahead of the Dasara festivities, at the Command Control Room on Tuesday

deployed to ensure that the devotees between two water points do not face any shortage of water. For that, necessary instructions have been issued to all department heads, he added.

Further, he emphasised the need for uninterrupted basic amenities for the devotees. He stressed the importance of ensuring that facilities like drinking water, temporary toilets, and cloakrooms are fully operational and maintained cleanly. He instructed

the officials to increase staff presence.

Besides, Dhyanaachandra directed the officials to ensure that temporary toilets are regularly cleaned and maintained without any lapses. He also emphasised monitoring sanitation in 31 designated areas, instructing officials to ensure that sanitation workers are vigilant.

He said that for the convenience of devotees, the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation has set up free

cloakrooms and shoe stands at six locations: Rath Centre, in front of the VMC main office, Seethamma Vari Paadalu, Kummariyalem Centre, Punnami Ghat, and Padmavati Ghat.

VMC Chief Medical Health Officer (CMOH) Dr P Ratnavali, Chief City Planner GVGSV Prasad, Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) G Srijana, in-charge Chief Engineer Rammoana Rao, Estate Officer T Srinivas and others were present.

City MP Sivanath gets invite for Navaratri

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni) has been invited to attend the Dussehra Sharannavaratri mahotsavam that will commence from October 3 to 12 at Sri Durgamalleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam, atop Indrakiladri hill. Temple EO KS Rama Rao, Chief Priests L Durga Prasad and R Srinivasa Sastri presented the invitation card along with the goddess Prasadas and Sesha Vastra to MP Kesineni Sivanath at NTR Bhavan, in Guru Nanak Colony on Tuesday.

Vedic scholar Chitti Ghanapathi gave Vedic blessings to MP Kesineni Sivanath. Later, the MP felicitated the temple EO and others with a shawl. The MP asked about the arrangements for the Sharannavaratri mahotsavam being held on Indrakiladri.



Ex-MP Margani Bharat slams CM Naidu for Polavaram 'misdeeds'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former MP Margani Bharat has criticised Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for mismanaging the Polavaram project by violating technical rules and demanded that Naidu take responsibility and apologize to the public.

Speaking to the media at the party office in Rajahmundry, the former MP said Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu went against established protocols and technical standards, prioritising personal gain over the successful completion of the project.

Margani Bharat emphasised that as per project protocol, the cofferdams should have been completed first, followed by the diaphragm wall. However, Naidu proceeded in the reverse order, allegedly driven by greed for commissions and the desire to increase project bills. This deviation from the norms, Bharat stated, resulted in the project's disarray. He further cited reports from international expert committees that high-

lighted these same issues, stressing that Naidu should be held fully responsible for the project's failures.

Bharat demanded that Naidu publicly apologise to the people, as the mistakes under his leadership led to significant financial losses, with the diaphragm wall being damaged and crores of rupees wasted. He challenged Naidu to explain why the diaphragm wall was constructed before completing the cofferdams and urged him to address the real facts rather than blaming the former government led by former Chief Minister Ys Jagan Mohan Reddy. Bharat also said that the previous government has completed the spillway and installed hydraulic gates but asserted that the damage caused under Naidu's leadership is evident. He noted that a new expert committee has been appointed, and according to their findings, work on the diaphragm wall is set to begin in November 2024, with completion targeted before the monsoon season in April 2025.



PM will virtual inaugurate two Ekalavya Model Residential Schools in Pedabayalu and Araku Valley mandals

PM to interact virtually with tribals today

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually interact with tribals from Alluri Sitharama Raju district on Wednesday, as part of the PM Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN) programme. The interaction will take place with tribals from Jharkhand, while villagers from Palanakudi in Araku Valley mandal will gather to participate in the event.

The Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) has been actively involved in organising the

programme. ITDA Project Officer V. Abhishek said, "We are making all necessary arrangements to ensure the success of the programme and to facilitate smooth interaction between the Prime Minister and the tribal communities."

A major highlight of the event will be the virtual inauguration of two Ekalavya Model Residential Schools in Pedabayalu and Araku Valley mandals, which were constructed at a budget of ₹40 crore. Additionally, Prime Minister Modi will perform the 'Bhoomi Puja' for the construction of two more

schools in Hukumpeta and Chintapalli mandals. "The Ekalavya Model Residential Schools will significantly improve access to quality education for tribal students, especially from remote areas," added Abhishek.

The PM-JANMAN programme, aimed at uplifting Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), has been an ongoing initiative to improve their socio-economic conditions. The Araku Valley region previously hosted the programme in January, where Swabi Ganga, a PVTG woman from Gadyaguda village, had

the opportunity to interact with the Prime Minister. She will now meet him in person in Jharkhand during the event.

Speaking about the programme, Swabi Ganga expressed her excitement, saying, "Meeting the Prime Minister in person is a dream-come-true for me. His concern for the development of our communities gives us hope for a better future." This initiative highlights the government's continued efforts to focus on the welfare and development of tribal communities across the country.

41.79 million MT of cargo handled by VPA

6% growth compared to the same period in previous year

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA) has reached a significant milestone, handling 41.79 million metric tonnes (MMTs) of cargo in the first half of the financial year 2024-25. This achievement reflects a six-per cent growth compared to the 39.60 MMTs handled during the same period in the previous year. According to Chairman of VPA Dr Madhaiyaan Angamuthu, "Our consistent growth and operational advancements are in line with the government's ambitious vision for India's progress."

The increased handling of critical commodities such as crude oil, LPG, coal, and other cargoes has contributed to this remarkable achievement, reinforcing VPA's status as one of India's premier ports. As part of Prime

Minister Narendra Modi's 100-day Action Plan, VPA has undertaken strategic initiatives across digital transformation, green energy adoption, and infrastructure upgrades. "The implementation of NLP has significantly enhanced the Port's operational efficiency," said Dr Angamuthu, highlighting the importance of the National Logistics Portal Marine (NLP) in streamlining processes.

Visakhapatnam Port has emerged as a 100 per cent renewable energy user, setting a benchmark among all major ports in India. The Port has introduced CNG-powered buses and deployed sweeping machines and fire tenders to improve air quality and safety. VPA's '1 Million Plantation Drive' aims to plant and distribute one million saplings to enhance green cover across the region.

Farmers' welfare key to prosperous society: Collector

Reduce agricultural costs, increase yields to make farming more profitable

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad underscored the critical role of farmers in building a prosperous society. "A society thrives when its farmers thrive," he said. Speaking at the Polam Pilustondi programme, organised by the Department of Agriculture, at Rajula Tallavalasa in Bheemili mandal on Tuesday, the Collector emphasised the need to reduce agricultural costs and increase yields to make farming more profitable.

"The goal of this initiative is to bring direct support to farmers, particularly in agriculture and allied sectors like dairy, fishery, and horticulture. We want to address their problems and help them achieve better productivity," said the Collector, who was the chief

guest at the event. He explained that as part of the programme, he visits villages every Tuesday and Wednesday to engage with farmers and understand their challenges.

"We are working to resolve issues related to fertilisers and seeds, ensuring farmers have what they need to reduce costs and increase yields," he added. "Through this programme, we aim to make farming more remunerative."

The programme also aims to promote agricultural mechanisation. "We are providing equipment based on farmers' needs, and currently, chop cutters are being distributed with subsidies. All farmers who have requested them will receive them in the coming days," the Collector assured.

Additionally, he announced that drip and sprinkler systems for horticultural crops will be



provided through the APMIP. "We will conduct a survey to evaluate the performance of previously installed systems and ensure proper distribution to farmers with borewells," he said. The Collector also took the opportunity to inspect registered crops at the field level to monitor the progress of the programme.

Key officials including K. Appala Swamy, JD of Agriculture, Ramakrishna from Animal Husbandry, Scientist Srilatha, APMIP PD Manmadharao, AP CNF DPM A. Mohana Rao, Agriculture Department AD Vijaya Prasad, Horticulture Officer Swathi, Tahsildar Rama Rao, Local Agriculture Officer Siva Komali, ZPTC G. Venkatappadu, and several farmers and officials from various departments attended the event.

APCPDCL posts SEs for all seven districts

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Chairman and Managing Director of the Andhra Pradesh Central Power Distribution Corporation Limited (APCPDCL), Ravi Pattanshetti, recently appointed Superintending Engineers (SEs) for all seven districts, including a special post for the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA), following the State's new district divisions. Previously, APCPDCL covered only three districts: Vijayawada (Krishna), Guntur, and Ongole. However, with the government's division of 13 districts into 26, the corporation has now assigned SEs to all seven districts.

A Murali Mohan was retained as the SE for Vijayawada. A new SE post was created for



Machilipatnam, with M Satyanandam appointed to the position. Other appointments include: P Subramanyam as SE for CRDA, P Vijaya Kumar for Narasaraopet, KVLN Murthy for Guntur, G Anjaneyulu for Bapatla, and K Venkateswarlu has been posted as SE for Ongole.

Senior citizens' clubs in villages for grievance redressal: Minister

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Minister for Social Welfare Dola Bala Veeranjanyulu has said that the government has decided to set up senior citizens clubs at the village level across the State to address the grievances of senior citizens.

The Minister, flanked by Prakasam district Collector Thameem Ansariya and MLA BN Vijay Kumar, participated in a programme organized to mark the 34th International Senior Citizens Day here on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that steps would be taken to set up special wards in the Government General Hospitals, especially for senior citizens and give priority to them during the registration of Out Patients. The Minister revealed that steps would be taken to revive the toll-free number 14567 to receive complaints from elderly people on their grievances.

"Physiotherapy services are provided to the elderly people in the community health centres and the centres will be



linked up with the Department of Elderly Welfare to ensure that the elderly people properly utilize the services," the Minister made it clear.

Minister Bala Veeranjanyulu highlighted that the Narendra Modi-headed Central government has provided PM Voya Vandana

health scheme to benefit those above 70 years, irrespective of their financial status. The State government is providing wheelchairs, hearing buds, and optical at free of cost to eligible senior citizens. The Minister also highlighted that the State government is disbursing Rs 4000 to the elderly

people as an old age pension.

Collector Thameem Ansariya assured of taking steps to protect the rights of elderly people and provide all benefits to them under various schemes. MLA Vijaya Kumar stressed the need of uplifting the living standards of elderly people in the State.

Senior Citizen Welfare Department Director B Ravi Prakash Reddy, MD M A Kumar Raja, AP Senior Citizens Welfare Association state president V Narayana Muerthy and ASP K Nageswara Rao also spoke.

Later some senior citizens were felicitated.

1 kg of red gram at Rs 67 at fair price shops: Nadendla

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Ration card holders can now purchase 1 kg red gram for ₹67 and half a kg of sugar for ₹17 at fair price shops. Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar inaugurated the distribution of these subsidised items at ration shops here on Tuesday.

Speaking at the event, Nadendla Manohar stated that arrangements have been made to provide 1 kg of red gram at ₹67 and half a kg of sugar at ₹17 to 1,48,43,671 ration cardholders across the State.

The Minister mentioned that following the directives of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan, efforts were made to reduce the prices of rice and red gram twice.

He noted that currently, 1 kg red gram is priced at ₹150, while one kilogram of rice (steamed BPT/Sona Masuri) is available for ₹48 in Rythu Bazars across the state. Ration card holders can now buy one kilogram of red gram at a subsidised rate of



₹67 in the ration shops.

Nadendla Manohar also emphasised that the government had provided 25 kilograms of rice, one kilogram

of edible oil, 1 kg of sugar, 1 kg of red gram, 2 kg of onions, and 2 kg of potatoes to flood victims during the recent floods.

DPR preparation for railway line will begin soon: JSP MP Balashowry

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

Machilipatnam Lok Sabha member Balashowry has announced that the long-standing dream and decade-long demand of the people of Diviseema in Krishna District for the Machilipatnam-Repalle railway line has taken its first step.

Speaking at a press meet held here on Tuesday, MP Balashowry stated that this railway line was a promise which he made during the last elections and after continuous efforts the first step has now been taken. "The survey and DPR (Detailed Project Report) for the railway line will be prepared soon" The MP said.

"I have prioritized the construction of the Machilipatnam - Repalle railway line in my manifesto. With the intention of ensuring its completion, I

met with Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw several times and convinced him about the importance of this project," he mentioned.

Initially, the plan was to build a railway line from Machilipatnam to Repalle. However, it would seem impractical for trains to have to turn back to reach Tenali, he explained, adding that therefore, he requested the Railway Minister to extend the line from Machilipatnam to Challapalli, Bhattiprolu, Nidubrolu, and Bapatla.

This extension would reduce both distance and travel time, as well as save costs, which we communicated to the railway officials. They are now supportive of undertaking this project.

"Additionally, a railway line from Narsapuram to Machilipatnam has already

been sanctioned. If a new railway line from Machilipatnam to Bapatla is established, together these lines will form a Coastal Railway Line along the seashore. This line will not only benefit passengers but will also be highly useful for freight transportation," he highlighted.

Vijayawada station is one of the busiest railway stations in India. With numerous goods and express trains passing through, it is becoming increasingly congested. In this context, if a new railway line from Machilipatnam to Bapatla is established, the traffic burden on Vijayawada Junction will be reduced. The distance for passengers travelling from Machilipatnam to Tirupati and Chennai will be reduced by 70-80 kilometres, saving a significant amount of time as well.



32 students have miraculous escape as college bus overturns

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

As many as 32 engineering college students had a miraculous escape as their college bus overturned at Chintavaram in Chittlakuru mandal on Tuesday. Police said that a private engineering college bus was going to College with students.

The mishap took place when the bus picked up students at Muthukur village and was going to the College, located at Vidyanagar. The driver lost control over the bus resulting in it

veering off the road and overturned in an agriculture field. All the 32 students, who were going to College on the bus, escaped unhurt.

The passersby rushed to the accident place and extricated the students, who struck inside the ill-fated bus. The school management and the officials heaved a sigh of relief as no one suffered a major injury in the accident. Rash driving the bus driver was suspected to be the reason for the mishap. The police registered a case and held the bus driver.

Two inter-district bike lifters held, 45 vehicles recovered

PNS ■ ELURU

The police arrested two inter-district notorious bike lifters and recovered 45 motorcycles and an autorickshaw in Ganapavaram.

DSP D Sravan Kumar told the media on Tuesday that the police arrested two notorious inter-district bike lifters and recovered 45 motorcycles and an auto rickshaw, worth about Rs 40 lakh. The police arrested Shetti Chinna on September 9 and recovered 29 motorcycles worth Rs 22 lakh. According to the information provided by Shetti Chinna, the police arrested Chappadi Musalaiah on October 1 and recovered 14 motorcycles and an auto rickshaw.

The police recovered a total of 45 motorcycles and an auto



rickshaw, worth about Rs 40 lakh, from the two notorious bike lifters. The police registered cases as Cr.No.129/2024 U/s 331(4), 305 BNS Act in the Gannavaram police station.

Superintendent of Police K Prathap Shiva Kishore appre-

ciated Ganapavaram SI A Mani Kumar, Constables AUG Shankar, B Hemasundar, P Kanthaiah, D Ratna Babu, K Satyanarayana and P Jagapathi Babu for arresting the two notorious bike lifters and recovering the bikes and auto rickshaw.

Interstate gang of burglars busted, Rs 70 L worth of booty recovered

PNS ■ AMALAPURAM

The Konaseema district police arrested a five-member notorious burglar gang and recovered Rs 70 lakh worth of booty, including gold jewellery and silver ornaments.

SP B Krishna Rao told the media on Tuesday that the burglars committed a major heist

in the Venkateswara temple, located on the premises of KIMS hospital, here 20 days ago.

The police set up a Special Investigation Team to arrest the burglars. The SIT police team examined the CCTV footage identified the burglars and arrested them.

The police recovered gold

jewellery, and silver ornaments worth over Rs 70 lakh from the burglars gang. The gang was involved in 37 burglaries and other offences in Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, Guntur and Medak districts. The SP announced cash rewards to the police team which arrested the interstate burglars and recovered the booty.



PROTECTING ENVIRONMENT People's role imperative: Collector

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K Vetri Selvi has called upon people to come forward to protect the environment by cleaning the surroundings clean and tidy. A cycle rally was taken out here on Tuesday to create awareness on environmental protection.

The rally was flagged off by District Revenue Officer D Pushpamani and Collector Vetri Selvi and MLA Badeti Radhakrishnaiah were among those who took part in the cycle rally. The cycle rally began at the Alluri Sitarama Raju statue at Jute Mill Centre and ended at Sir CRR Engineering College after covering 3 km.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, Collector Vetri Selvi said that the cycle rally was taken out to create environmental awareness among all the people. She called upon the people to participate in the Swachhata Hi Seva programme and cooperate to make the district clean and tidy. The Collector made it clear that keeping the surroundings clean and tidy is a collective responsibility of all and public participation in the programme is very important.



The Collector noted that as part of the Swachhata Hi Seva programme, awareness about keeping the environment clean and tidy was created and health camps were set up. Medicines and other facilities required for sanitation programmes were also provided, she added. Collector Vetri Selvi highlighted that Eluru district had stood at the top in the State by completing 98 percent through the

various events organized as part of the Swachhata Hi Seva programme, organized across the district.

MLA Badeti Radhakrishnaiah (Chanti) underlined the need of keeping surroundings clean to protect health. In order to educate people to keep their surroundings clean and tidy, the cycle rally was taken out today, he stated.

ZP CEO K Subba Rao said that so far garbage removal had been carried out at 795 units so far in the district. DRDA PD R Vijaya Raju, Municipal Commissioner N Bhanu Pratap DSDO Srinivasa Rao and animal husbandry JD G Nehru Babu were among those who were present. A large number of students from various educational institutions participated in the cycle rally.

Ganja worth Rs 2 cr seized

PNS ■ PADERU

The police seized 850 kg of ganja, worth over Rs 2 crore, while being transported illegally, at Bhudarala village in Koyyuru mandal in ASR district and arrested two peddlers. Police said that on a tip-off, a police team conducted checking of vehicles.

The police found 850 kg of ganja, which was neatly packed in 279 packets, was being transported in two cars. The police arrested two persons and seized 850 kg of ganja, worth about Rs 2 crore, two cars, one motorcycle and a mobile phone.

Five persons were absconding and the police have launched a search to arrest them. The two arrested peddlers were produced before the court which sent them to judicial remand.



Raghunandan lashes out at BRS social media activists

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that the BRS's social media warriors are uncultured and that they do not appreciate the differences between an elder sister, younger sister and mother, the BJP's Medak MP, M. Raghunandan Rao, said that as a younger brother he stands by Endowment Minister Konda Surekha and that cases will be filed against those who post offensive material on social media.

"BRS social media activists posted uncultured material on

the relationship between mother, elder sister and younger sister. As a younger brother, I offered a handloom garland to Surekha after getting her permission. When Prime Minister Modi came, I offered such a garland. The BRS spread lies regarding this. As a brother, I am deeply sorry for the pain caused to my sister. Those who posted this will be dragged to court. There is a photo of Harish Rao and KCR on the person's DP. Are BRS leaders having no control over their social media warriors? If those

who post offensive material are yours hand them over to the police. Details of the trolls have been collected and a complaint has been filed with the police," Raghunandan said.

He said that he had offered the handloom garland to Surekha to bring handloom weavers' problems to her attention.

"I did not expect that they would speak in such an uncultured manner. KTR and Harish Rao should respond to this and control their social media warriors and also apologise. The



BRS has no regard for women. The BRS did not give a place to women in Telangana's first cabinet. It is painful to see the criticism as the programme was held in the presence of thousands of people. I am sorry for the inconvenience caused to my sister Surekha," he said.

Raghunandan said that BRS leaders have to face adversaries politically and must not post material against women. The police must arrest such people within 24 hours or they will do such things again, he said.

Flood rescue team lauded

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Agriculture and Cooperative Department Special Chief Secretary Budithi Rajasekhara and Agriculture Department Director Dr S Dilli Rao commended a flood rescue team during a special event held at the secretariat on Tuesday. The team, comprising Ravikumar, Karri Posaiah, Karri Nani, Malladi Charan, and Vinod from a fishermen's boat society in Gollapudi, was recognised for their courageous efforts in saving numerous people during the heavy rains on September 24.

Living in Gollapudi for 15 years and running Sairam Catering, the team used boats to rescue elderly citizens, women, children, and other residents from flood-affected, low-lying areas. Their humanitarian actions ensured the safe evacuation of people whose homes were submerged by floodwaters.

Special Chief Secretary Budithi Rajasekhara, who acted as the special officer during the calamity, praised the team's bravery and recognised their selfless service as an essential part of the flood relief efforts.

ACROSS THE STATES



Govinda injured after revolver accident, safe

Actor Govinda was injured in the leg on Tuesday after his revolver accidentally went off at his Mumbai residence when he was about to leave for the airport, police said. Dr Ramesh Agarwal, who tended to the 60-year-old actor actor after the accident, said Govinda is recuperating at a private hospital and will be discharged in a few days. Govinda, a favourite with audiences for his impeccable comic timing and dancing skills, later issued a statement informing his fans he is doing better. "With the blessings of my fans, my parents and god, I am doing better now. I was hit by a bullet, which has now been removed. I thank the doctor here, Dr Agarwal ji. I thank all of you for your prayers," the "Hero No 1" actor and a member of the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena said in the audio message. According to the doctor, the bullet hit him below his left knee and that he had got 8-10 stitches.



Doval calls on French Prez; conveys PM greetings

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on Tuesday called on French President Emmanuel Macron and conveyed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's greetings. He also met the Armed Forces Minister of France and discussed enhancing bilateral defence relations and advancing space collaboration, as well as the "evolving" global situation. "NSA Ajit Doval calls on French President HE @EmmanuelMacron. Conveyed PM @narendramodi's greetings. Reiterated commitment to implement the India-France Horizon 2047 roadmap," the Indian embassy in France said in a post on X. "President stressed the value of India-France efforts to advance peace and address global challenges; appreciated PM Modi's initiatives," it added. Doval held extensive discussions with French Armed Forces Minister Sebastien Lecornu.



Chirag calls Bihar flood situation 'frightening'

amid grim flood situation in Bihar with 11.84 lakh people reeling under water, Union Minister Chirag Paswan, who hails from the state, visited the affected areas and said that he would share details of the "frightening" conditions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who returned from New Delhi a day ago, also undertook an aerial survey of the areas inundated as a result of release of millions of cusecs of water, in a barrage along the border, by Nepal which was battered by record rainfall over the weekend. According to the state disaster management department, packets of food and other relief materials were air-dropped by Indian Air Force helicopters which benefitted more than two lakh people in Sitamarhi and Darbhanga districts. Deputy Chief Minister and BJP leader Samrat Choudhary, who met Union Jalshakti Minister C R Patil in Delhi a day ago, said he has urged the latter to consider construction of "an additional barrage" to check recurring floods that wreak devastation in areas bordering Nepal every year.

DEMOLITION OF PROPERTIES

Will lay down pan-India guidelines, asserts SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it will lay down pan-India guidelines on demolition of properties and any religious structure in the middle of a road, be it a 'dargah' or a temple, "has to go" because public interest is paramount.

Observing that merely because somebody is an accused or even a convict cannot be a ground for demolition of property, the apex court reserved its verdict on a batch of pleas which have alleged that properties, including of those accused of crime, were being demolished in several states.

A bench of Justices B R Gavi and K V Viswanathan said unauthorised construction made by any person, irrespective of his religion or belief, has to be removed. The bench said its September 17 order, which had said there will be no demolition of properties till October 1 without its permission, will continue till it decides the matter.



Whatever we are laying down, we are a secular country. We are laying it down for all the citizens, for all the institutions,

not for any particular community," the bench said.

"On the first day we had pointed out, if there is any religious structure on the middle of a road, may it be a 'dargah' or some temple, it has to go because public safety and public interest is paramount," it said. The bench also observed that

there cannot be a different law for a particular religion.

"We are going to make it clear that merely because somebody is an accused, or even somebody is a convict, can't be a ground for demolition," it said.

The apex court made it clear that it will not protect any encroachment on public places, roads, footpaths, government lands, forests, water bodies and the likes. "Whatever directions we issue, it will be applicable pan-India," it said, adding, "We will take care to ensure that our order does not help the encroachers on any of the public places."

During the hearing, the bench observed that notices for demolition of properties be sent through registered post to the owners and it should also be displayed on an online portal so that a digital record is there.

Modi working for handful of billionaires: Rahul

PNS ■ SONIPAT

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday accused the Narendra Modi government of attacking the Constitution and also slammed it over various issues including unemployment, the Agniveer scheme and farmers' welfare.

Addressing a public meeting in Sonipat while campaigning for the October 5 Haryana assembly polls, he also alleged that the government was working for a handful of billionaires in the country.

"While en route to this place, a man stopped me. He told me he runs a small business. He said Modi and the Haryana government destroyed him," the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said as he blamed demotisation and "wrong" GST.

"He (the man) told me they did this to help Adani and Ambani," claimed Gandhi.



"Everyone knows that the central and Haryana governments are being run to help two-three 'arabpatis'. Whatever avenues of employment you had, they have been shut," he alleged.

Attacking the BJP-led government over the issue of the Agniveer scheme, he alleged "the military recruitment programme was a way to 'steal' a

soldier's pension, canteen facilities and martyr status he gets (when he lays down life for his motherland)."

Earlier, there used to be public sector, government factories, these have been privatised. Wherever, you see, you will only see Adani and Ambani names, he further alleged.

Gandhi claimed that the motive behind "stealing" jawans' pension was to hand over the defence budget to Adani.

He alleged that a company owned by Adani was putting its labels on weapons which were manufactured by foreign companies.

"Modi only wanted to give a defence contract to Adani," he charged. "On one side the pension of jawans was snatched, martyr status and the same money goes into Adani's pocket," he alleged.

He raised the drug menace issue in Haryana and said everyone knows drugs are spreading tentacles. "I want to ask Modi ji when thousands of kilos of heroin was seized from your friend Adani's Mundra port, what action did you take? How many did you send to jails for this," he asked. "When thousands of kilos of drugs were seized, Narendra Modi, Gujarat government did not take any action," he claimed.

LS polls showed people cannot tolerate arrogance: PK

PNS ■ PATNA

Political strategist-turned-activist Prashant Kishor on Tuesday said people have sent out a clear message in the recent Lok Sabha polls that they cannot tolerate 'arrogance' or allow any leader to take them for granted.

In an interview with PTI on the eve of launching his own political party, Kishor said the poll results have also removed the question mark over Rahul Gandhi's ability to lead the Congress but added that the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha still has to cover some distance before the country can accept him as its leader.

"His (Gandhi's) supporters now believe that the Congress can be revived under him. But there is also another dimension. Has the country accepted him as a leader? I don't think so," Kishor said.

Asked about his reading of the Lok Sabha poll results, Kishor said, "The results tell us that no



leader in this country can take people for granted. People can stand anything but not arrogance. Be it the BJP, the Congress or regional parties, wherever people have seen arrogance and overconfidence, they have demonstrated who is the master."

The verdict has boosted the idea that no one is invincible, he added. While the BJP lost the majority in the polls for the first time in the last three elections under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the National Democratic Alliance led by the party comfortably crossed the halfway mark.

The opposition INDIA bloc

also put up a strong show, defying predictions. Without naming Modi, Kishor said the voters decided that even if they had to hand him power, they would do so with certain curbs.

Slamming the BJP, he said the ruling party tried to create an impression that the masses lack understanding and will go by whatever claims it made irrespective of its work. "The BJP thought votes will be inevitably cast in Modi's name. Voters told the party that they may appear illiterate and divided along caste and mandir-masjid lines, but they can rise above them to put you in a place you deserve," he said. In India no party or leader can become so big that they can have a one-sided sway over the country, said Kishor, who as an election strategist worked for all major parties, including the BJP and the Congress, at different points in time before turning focus entirely to his Jan Suraj campaign in his home state Bihar.

K'taka CM Siddaramaiah rules out resignation

Questions ED for slapping money-laundering case



PNS ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday questioned the ED slapping a money laundering case against him in the MUDA 'scam' and once again ruled out his resignation over the issue.

Siddaramaiah also alleged that his wife Parvathi B M, who decided to relinquish the ownership and possession of 14 plots that was allotted to her by the MUDA (Mysuru Urban Development Authority), was a victim of 'politics of hate' against him and he was surprised by her move. A team of Lokayukta police probing MUDA site allotment case against Siddaramaiah and others on Tuesday surveyed the land, in lieu of which 14 sites were "illegally" allotted to his wife in Mysuru.

Hours after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) booked Siddaramaiah in a money laundering case, his wife on Monday wrote to MUDA conveying her decision to return the 14 plots stating that no site, home, asset and wealth is bigger for her than her husband's respect, dignity, honour and peace of mind.

"I don't know on what grounds it's a money-laundering case. Probably you (reporters) too feel the same. According to me, it does not attract the money laundering case because compensatory sites were given. So, how is it a money-laundering case?", the Chief Minister said here.

The ED registered an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR), equivalent to an FIR by police, against the Chief Minister over the alleged irregularities in allotment of 14 sites to his wife by the MUDA. The agency had also invoked relevant sections of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) case against him.

Meanwhile, the Lokayukta police team that visited the 3.16 acre land was joined by the special land acquisition officer, surveyors and town planning members from the MUDA, and they surveyed the land and took notes, official sources said.

Social activist Snehamayi Krishna on whose complaint the Lokayukta police has registered an FIR against Siddaramaiah, his wife and two others, was also present, they said, adding, he also appeared before the Lokayukta police in Mysuru, following the notice issued to him by the investigating officers.

Parvathi's letter conveying her a decision to return the plots, was personally submitted to MUDA Commissioner A N Raghunandan's office by her son and MLC Yathindra Siddaramaiah, in Mysuru earlier today. "The letter received will be processed after going through the provisions in the law," a MUDA official said.



voice is heard -- "Bharosa dil se, BJP phir se," he said.

Attacking the Congress, Modi said its politics remains limited to false promises, whereas the BJP's politics is to put in hard work and is result-oriented.

Those who looted rights of poor, gave slogan of 'Garibi hatao', he said.

Modi said the Congress kept every issue important for the country entangled. "Woh uljane mein expert rahe hai."

"Congress did not let Ram temple to be built in Ayodhya, they did allow B R Ambedkar's Constitution to be fully implemented in Jammu & Kashmir, they kept our sisters deprived of reservation in Parliament and vidhan saba, they kept Muslim sisters entangled in triple talaq problem," he said.

The Congress did not resolve problems of country and countrymen, but they put all their might in establishing their son, daughter and family, he said.

Stop stoking fire in Manipur cauldron: BJP to Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday asked the Congress to stop "stoking fire" in the "cauldron" of Manipur and join the efforts being made to resolve the issues in the state.

The party's remark came a day after Congress general secretary-in-charge communications Jai Ram Ramesh alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu but had not found time to speak to the lawmakers or political leaders from Manipur.

"I will ask a counter question. Does he support the stand of Prime Minister Modi so far as unity against terrorism is concerned," BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad told a press



conference here when asked for comment.

"Congress party needs to come out beyond Manipur. Manipur is a sensitive area. All of us need to work together. Work is going on. Let the Congress stop stoking fire in the cauldron of Manipur," he said.

"The Manipur problem should be resolved, attempts are being made...All of us should collectively join ..." he added.

Slamming the Congress over Ramesh's comments, Prasad also asked the Congress to clear its stand on the now-scraped Article 370 of the Constitution and terrorism.

"Congress maintains a conspicuous silence. It should clear its stand. They neither speak on 370, nor Kashmir, nor terrorism," he said, adding, "Only harping about Manipur and maintaining silence on other issues is not right."

Hitting back, Ramesh in a post on X said, "Will Mr Ravi Shankar Prasad answer a simple question. Why has the non-biological PM not found the time as yet to visit Manipur since May 2023 when he has gone all over the world as self-styled Vishwabandhu / Vishwaguru?"

MIGRATION HISTORY OF ELEPHANTS

Genetic study finds 'dilution of diversity'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A genetic study has charted the migration history of elephants in India from north to south, revealing multiple bottlenecks encountered along the way that threatened their existence and likely caused a "dilution of genetic diversity".

Genetic diversity is important for a resilience to disease and long-term survival, including an ability to adapt to environmental changes.

The findings can help shape the future of elephant species in India by informing conservation strategies, researchers from the National Centre for Biological Sciences and the Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru, said.

The Asian elephant has been listed as 'Endangered' species on the IUCN Red List since 1986.



The list was established by the International Union for Conservation of Nature in 1964.

Elephants in India -- known to make up 60 per cent of the global Asian elephant population -- started migrating about 1,00,000 years ago, eventually settling in different parts of the country.

The researchers analysed 34 whole genome sequences, obtained from blood samples

taken from wild elephants across the country's landscapes.

The analysis, published in the journal Current Biology, identified five genetically distinct populations, as opposed to previously reported three or four, "emphasising their antiquity and unique evolutionary histories", according to the authors.

Of the five distinct breeds, two are located in north and central

India, and three in the south, separated by the Palghat and Shencottah Gaps or 'breaks' in the Western Ghats, they said.

The Palghat Gap lies between Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu and Palakkad in Kerala, while the Shencottah Gap connects Tamil Nadu's Madurai with the district Kottayam, Kerala.

Further, the northern breeds were found to be more genetically diverse and have low inbreeding -- where creatures having very similar genetic material breed -- compared to the southern ones, two of which had low diversity and were inbred, they said.

Co-lead author Uma Ramakrishnan, a molecular ecologist and a professor at the National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bengaluru, told PTI that the team observed a "dilution of diversity".

"Imagine an ink blot on a filter paper, dropped at the top right corner. The further we go from this, towards the bottom left, the less dark the ink is. Similarly, the diversity in southern western ghats is less than that in the northeast and north populations," she said.

Ramakrishnan added that the inbreeding in the southern populations suggested that "there has been either a bottleneck, or mating between relatives recently".

The researchers also found evidence of historical exploitation endured by the land mammals in the form of "bottlenecks". Wild elephants in India are known to be regularly exploited for military and domestic use, since they began to be tamed during Harappan times.

Saving Ladakh

Sonam Wangchuk's foot march highlights the urgent need for ecological protection and local autonomy of Ladakh

Ladakh, a region known for its breathtaking landscapes and unique culture, is now under threat from an ecological disaster. Climate change and unchecked development are eroding its delicate environment, pushing it towards a tipping point. In the face of this growing crisis, climate activist Sonam Wangchuk has emerged as a key figure in the fight to protect Ladakh. Recently, he, along with over 100 supporters, embarked on a foot march from Leh to New Delhi to demand concrete steps for safeguarding Ladakh's fragile ecosystem and securing the region's autonomy under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. However, upon reaching Delhi's Singhu border, Wangchuk and his supporters were detained by the police for violating prohibitory orders. Despite this setback, the march has already sparked widespread attention and support for his demands. Ladakh's environment is one of the most sensitive in India. Nestled in the Himalayan range, the region is already witnessing alarming impacts of climate change. Melting glaciers, shrinking water sources, and unpredictable weather patterns are threatening not only the ecosystem but also the livelihoods of the local population.



The rapid melting of glaciers is particularly concerning as they are the primary source of water for the region. This has caused Ladakh to face a severe water crisis, with rivers and streams drying up at an unprecedented rate. Unchecked tourism and infrastructure development further exacerbate the issue. Waste management remains a significant challenge, and the increasing construction of roads and buildings has disrupted the natural landscape. Wangchuk, who is known for his innovative environmental solutions like the 'Ice Stupa' project, has been vocal about the need for sustainable development in Ladakh.

His demands are not only about preserving the environment but also about giving the local people the power to manage their resources and protect their cultural identity. One of his primary demands is to include Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. The Sixth Schedule provides special protections and autonomy to certain tribal areas in India, allowing them to preserve their culture, manage their resources, and have law-making powers over local matters. Ladakh, with its predominantly tribal population and distinct cultural heritage, has been seeking similar protection. The people of Ladakh in general have expressed disappointment with the current governance structure, which is led by a Lieutenant Governor appointed by the central government. Right now the people of Ladakh have a limited say in decision making. Granting Ladakh Sixth Schedule status would empower its people to make decisions that are in line with their unique environmental and cultural needs. It would allow them to enact laws that protect their fragile ecosystem, manage resources more effectively, and ensure sustainable development. The people of Ladakh are making their voices heard. Now, it is up to the government and the rest of the nation to listen and take meaningful action.

PICTALK



A view of Humayun's Tomb, a UNESCO world heritage site, in New Delhi

PTI

Remembering Gandhi: A journey of justice and simplicity

Gandhi's transformative journey, which began with racial discrimination in South Africa, helped shape his lifelong pursuit of justice, equality and nonviolence

On September 11, 2024, Union Minister for Culture, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, inaugurated a restored railway coach at Gandhi Darshan, Rajghat, New Delhi. This coach, donated by the Ministry of Railways and painted in brown with a 'III' marking for third class, represents Mahatma Gandhi's simple lifestyle and his close relationship with the Indian railways. A life-size sculpture of Gandhi stepping off the train further emphasises his connection with the masses. Organised by the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, the exhibition offers an immersive experience of Gandhi's rail journeys. Shekhawat, in his address, highlighted how Gandhi turned the freedom struggle into a mass movement, remarking that the coach will inspire future generations to uphold the values of justice, equality, and peace for which Gandhi stood. Gandhi's association with the railways was deeply symbolic and formative in his transformation from an ordinary lawyer to the leader of India's independence movement.



A key moment occurred on June 7, 1893, in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, when Gandhi, then a young barrister, was forcibly removed from a first-class train compartment despite having a valid ticket. This act of racial discrimination left a lasting impact on Gandhi and ignited his lifelong dedication to justice and nonviolent resistance. He often referred to this incident as the turning point that set him on the path toward becoming the Mahatma. Gopal Krishna Gandhi, Gandhi's grandson, poignantly reflected on this moment. He wrote that when Gandhi was thrown off the train, an Indian fell, but when Gandhi rose, both India and South Africa rose with him. The experience transformed Gandhi, turning a personal

humiliation into a public cause. What began as a lawyer's indignation became a revolutionary's commitment to human justice. His later train journeys in South Africa, including those to Johannesburg and Pretoria, deepened his understanding of racial discrimination in the railway system. Gandhi confronted railway officials and managed to negotiate some concessions for Indian passengers, marking the beginning of his use of negotiation and protest as tools for change. Upon returning to India in 1914, Gandhi's relationship with the railways grew stronger. He followed the advice of his mentor, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, by traveling in third-class compartments to stay connected with India's impoverished masses. For

Gandhi, trains were a means to engage with ordinary people and understand their struggles firsthand. The challenging conditions he faced—overcrowded compartments, unsanitary surroundings—only strengthened his resolve to fight for social justice. His decision to travel third class symbolised his commitment to egalitarianism and helped transform the freedom struggle into a mass movement that resonated with the broader population. Gandhi traveled by train from Calcutta to Delhi and stayed at Birla House where he spent the last 144 days of his life. During this time, he tirelessly worked for peace amidst the communal violence of Partition. His assassination in January 1948 ended a life devoted to nonviolence and service to humanity. As we celebrate Gandhi Jayanti today as the International Day of Nonviolence, we are reminded of Gandhi's self-sacrifice, dedication, and compassion. (The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Walking through the woods in UK

Suspension of winter fuel allowances, Starmer's push to reset relations with Europe, and the forgotten legacy of the Gorkhas are echoing in the woods of the UK

Hadlow Stair is a village in Tonbridge Kent, UK, with the Old Hadlow Road leading to it. Tonbridge is a poorer cousin of the historic Tunbridge Wells but a great place for a walking-talking vacation this September when the sun broke through the clouds permitting invigorating small walks. Hadlow Stair is the perfect escape from rain-spoilt London, just 40 minutes away by train to Charing Cross in Trafalgar Square. Ordinary Brits have been stunned by the new Labour, suspending Pound 200 winter fuel allowance to pensioners, ostensibly to fill the Pound 22 bn deficit left by the Tories though inflation is below 3 per cent. In the village, most read newspapers only on the weekend: the talk is about Ukraine, Gaza and Lebanon and Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his wife accepting gifts. Former civil servant Sue Gray who sorted out Boris Johnson for his indiscretions during the pandemic is now the chief advisor to Starmer with a pay package of Pounds 180,000, surpassing the wages the PM gets. Modernising Britain's Continuous Sea Deterrence as well as upgrading its nuclear submarines from Vanguard to Dreadnought class is also underway. Peers in the House of Lords warned that 2.5 per cent on defence spending (at present 2.3 per cent) may not be enough to meet the challenges and fix the military.

Here too, there is a Pound 10 bn hole which is proposed to be filled up by taxes. India's spending is below 2 per cent with immeasurably bigger threats. But who cares! All this and more, John Lawson, my walking companion shares with me. Amongst all the walks the one in the undulating woods nearby is most enjoyable as John takes myriad routes and detours along the soggy earthy soil. You can do a dozen different trails here and not know they are in the same woods. Go south from Hadlow Road past the Scottish St Andrews Church across fields and through apple orchards with apples to eat and apples to cook. But there are no pickers due to Brexit, laments John.



The Chinese have invented an apple-picking machine which is yet to make its commercial debut. Here, in the fields too, John has manufactured several walking trails – the special one is along the Medway river to Tonbridge town which has everything from Marks and Spencers to Waitrose and Sainsburys to Kathmandu Valley and Dalchini restaurants to Humphrey and Bean Pub where we were privy to a brawl. There is also the Tonbridge Castle. My favourite walk though is through the Higham Woods. This I did every morning, meeting making friends with people walking their dogs. Every house here has a cat or a dog or even a horse! Almost every afternoon John and I did serious walking bringing the milometer to roughly 120 plus miles in 12 days. In his spare time, John moves auto parts and trucks in the UK and Europe where too, Brexit means cost and time overruns. At the Labour Party annual conference, Starmer said he wants to reset relations with European Union and make Brexit work with the EU reset. The biggest applause at the conference was reserved for the Home Secretary, who decried the recent racial riots. Migrants continue to sail



THE PLAN TO RAISE A THIRD BATTALION OF GORKHA RIFLES WAS ABANDONED THOUGH THREE GORKHA COMPANIES WERE RAISED FOR THE SPECIAL FORCES. ALDERSHOT IS WHERE RETIRED GORKHAS ALLOWED RESIDENCY IN BRITAIN LIVE, WHILE THE BATTALION IS FURTHER SOUTH

across the Channel and since Rwanda is a closed issue, they will be settled in Britain. I've been travelling to the UK since the 1970s and can say this: Indian or Asian or coloured are no longer looked down upon even though many of the menial jobs are still being done by them. I was horrified to learn that there is a Gorkha Cleaning Company in Kent. The Gorkhas, the Brits once worshipped in battle are all but forgotten except by the likes of Joanna Lumley. This became more evident in London where along a side lane from Whitehall Avenue resides the life-sized stone statue of the eternal Gorkha soldier. The plan to raise a third battalion of Gorkha Rifles was abandoned though three Gorkha companies were raised for the Special Forces. Aldershot is where retired Gorkhas allowed residency in Britain live, while the battalion is further south. The other battalion is in Brunei for which the Sultan pays. Sadly, very few recognise the badges of the Gorkha Regiment any more. Why blame the Brits when we have offered the poor choice of Agniveer to Nepali Gorkhas who stopped joining five years ago? The British Army is 70,000 (with a reserve of 30,000) soldiers and Infantry

less than the size of our Gorkha Brigade. The Navy and Air Force together make another 70,000 warriors but all field state-of-the-art equipment including conventional and strategic forces which are the best in Europe. The military component of the Indian High Commission in Aldwych has been downsize from three officers to just one with a Naval Commodore holding the fort instead of the Army Brigadier. Returning to my trudge on the tarmac along Whitehall Avenue, the old MoD has become Raffles Hotel, RUSI next door renovated and a few meters ahead are bronze statues of leaders who won fame in India: Field Marshals Slim, Auchinleck, and Allandbrook. Another Indian famous is the Duke of Wellington honoured in Trafalgar Square and Wellington Corner. The Brits nurture the military and that's one reason they are respected. Thoughts that wafted during the walk in the woods. We must learn.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff; The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WEST ASIA TURMOIL

Madam —Apropos, 'West Asia on fire' (September 30). Israel which had vowed 'enough is enough' in the aftermath of a brutal terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7 last year, has dealt a body blow to Hezbollah, the most powerful militant and political force in Lebanon, by eliminating its head Hassan Nasrallah, who had been a global figurehead of anti-Israel resistance for decades. He had been a prime target of Israel since the last Lebanon War of 2008. Now, Hezbollah, considered the vital part of the Axis of Resistance, is leaderless and thus rudderless. However, Nasrallah's demise may only keep Hezbollah lying down for a while. It cannot be written off. Wounded but not destroyed, it may not be long before Hezbollah tries to avenge Nasrallah by raining a barrage of missiles on Israel to keep its people from returning to the northern region. Netanyahu stakes his political fortunes on this. Meanwhile, with thousands of its citizens fleeing northern Israel in wake of Hezbollah strikes, Israel's main task remains unaccomplished. Its bombarding Lebanon may go on till Netanyahu gets war-weary and domestic pressures mount or until breakthrough on the hostage issue. It is an opportune time for the international community should it desire to prevail upon Tel Aviv to agree for ceasefire. But peace is unlikely to return to Gaza till Hamas frees hostages and a ceasefire is reached.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Washington

NON BJP STATES WITHDRAW CBI CONSENT

Madam —Karnataka has joined the long list of states that have withdrawn general consent to the CBI to conduct investigations relating to corruption, economic offences and crime or violence in that particular state. The Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946, under which the CBI was setup, has defined general consent and

Women education empowers India



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar made insightful remarks on the significance of women's education. He said that a developed India is incomplete without women's empowerment, which is a powerful reminder of the crucial role they play in our society. Women constitute a substantial portion of our

population, and their active participation in all spheres of life is essential for holistic development. By investing in women's education, we not only unlock their individual potential but also empower their families and communities. Educated women are more likely to make informed decisions regarding health, nutrition, and child-rearing, leading to healthier and more prosperous families. Moreover, women's education is a catalyst for economic growth. When women have access to education and employment opportunities, they contribute to the workforce, boost GDP, and reduce poverty. Their participation in decision-making processes ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, leading to more inclusive and equitable policies.

Fiza Fatima | Hyderabad

specific consent that can be accorded by the states to the CBI to function in their territories. Only the Supreme Court and the High Courts can order a CBI investigation in any state without the state's nod if consent is withdrawn. It has to be remembered that states that have refused permission for the CBI are non-BJP ruled thereby underscoring the political undertones in the issue. The Supreme Court, in 2013, said the CBI was a 'caged parrot' following the orders of its 'master', the government. The federal system of governance in India has clearly demarcated powers between the Centre and the states. By the 1946 rule itself, the CBI is an agency that has no autonomous powers. The apex court has said that keeping in mind the federal structure of the country the CBI cannot infringe upon the states. By the same token, if the agency is accorded unbridled power without making it an autonomous body, its misuse may be the order of the day.

Ganapathi Bhat| Akola

POTHoles OF CORRUPTION

Madam —No matter which party is in power, the conditions of the roads all over the nation are pathetic. It requires no rocket science to understand why this is happening. Corruption is the root cause as inferior quality materials are used due to cuts taken by everybody from top to bottom in passing tenders and clearing bills. Therefore, it is hard to be enthused about the promise of pothole free roads by the CM of Delhi Atishi Marlena. Accidents caused by bad roads have come at a great cost including injury and sometimes fatality with no accountability fixed for the loss, what is worse, it is not just potholes but literally craters the vehicles are expected to navigate. Recently, there was a container truck that was completely swallowed by the road. This despite the vehicle owners being made to pay all kinds of taxes for permission to park their vehicles on such roads!

Anthony Henriques | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

IN BRIEF



Gold snaps 10-day rally; declines Rs 200

Gold prices declined by Rs 200 to Rs 78,100 per 10 grams, snapping a 10-day winning streak, in the national capital on Tuesday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal closed at Rs 78,300 per 10 grams on Monday. However, silver remained flat at Rs 92,500 per kilogram on Tuesday. Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity fell by Rs 200 to Rs 77,700 per 10 grams. It had finished at Rs 77,900 per 10 grams in the previous close on Monday. Meanwhile, in futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for December delivery jumped by Rs 347 or 0.46 per cent to Rs 75,958 per 10 grams. Silver also climbed Rs 441 or 0.49 per cent to trade at Rs 91,160 per kg on the bourse. "Gold prices traded positively with gains. Market participants are closely watching this data-packed week, with the prime focus on non-farm payrolls and unemployment data scheduled for Friday."



Working with MCA to roll out PM Internship Scheme: CII

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on Tuesday said it is working closely with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) to facilitate the implementation of the Prime Minister's Internship Scheme that was announced in the Budget. The PM Internship Scheme aims to provide internship opportunities to one crore youth in 500 top CSR spend companies in the next five years. CII is acting as a critical facilitator between the government and the industry, ensuring the scheme's effective rollout, the industry body stated. The PM Internship Scheme will enhance youth employability in India by offering them hands-on exposure to real-world business environments. The scheme will also benefit the industry by creating a pipeline of skilled, work-ready youth who can be employed post-internship both in large as well as micro, small and medium enterprise, CII stated.



Maruti Suzuki sales up 2 pc to 1,84,727 units

Maruti Suzuki India on Tuesday reported a 2 per cent year-on-year increase in total sales at 1,84,727 units in September. The company had sold 1,81,343 units in the same month last year, Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said in a statement. Total domestic passenger vehicle sales were at 1,44,962 units as compared to 1,50,812 units in the year-ago month, a decline of 4 per cent, it added. Sales of mini segment cars, comprising Alto and S-Presso, grew to 10,363 units as against 10,351 units in September 2023. Sales of compact cars, including Baleno, Celerio, Dzire, Ignis, Swift, Tour S and WagonR, however, declined to 60,480 units as compared to 68,551 units in the year-ago month. Utility vehicles, consisting of Brezza, Ertiga, Grand Vitara and XL6, clocked sales of 61,549 units last month, as compared to 59,272 units earlier, a growth of 4 per cent. Sales of van Eeco were at 11,908 units last month as against 11,147 units in September 2023, while that of light commercial vehicle Super Carry stood at 3,099 units as against 2,294 units earlier.

Govt looking to tweak regulatory norms for MedTech, pharma

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

"We are working on it with a very open mind. We are conscious of the fact that even in the classical space, there is room for improvement. But certainly, when it comes to frontline technology, cell and gene therapies for the individualised care and perhaps even integrated systems that we are looking at, the regulatory system needs to be tweaked to be improved," Paul said. As per the government's stated vision of making India a developed country by 2047, there is a need to enhance exports from India, he added. The country should not only be the largest market for diagnostics but also the biggest creator of technologies in the sector, the member noted. The government is considering tweaking regulatory norms for MedTech and pharma sectors and sought industry inputs for the same, Niti Aayog member (Health) VK Paul said on Tuesday. Speaking at an ASSOCHAM event here, he said that with changing times the regulatory framework also needs to be worked upon. "Under the ages of principal scientific adviser to the Government of India, regulatory improvements for medical technology and pharma are under active consideration," Paul said. He sought industry participation in making the system better.

Goyal meets Warburg Pincus, Blackstone; seeks investments

PNS ■ NEW YORK

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday held bilateral meetings with global private equity firm Warburg Pincus and global investment company Blackstone here to discuss investment opportunities in India in sectors like electronics and renewable energy.

At the invitation of United States Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, Goyal is in the US till October 3, 2024. He will co-chair with Raimondo the India-USA CEO Forum on October 2, and the 6th India-USA Commercial Dialogue on October 3 in Washington D.C.

In a series of posts on social media platform X, Goyal said that he met Timothy F Geithner, Chairman of Warburg Pincus, and discussed the efforts made by India to facilitate business entry, ease of doing business, single-window clearances and industrial infrastructure.

"We explored new ideas and collaboration opportunities in sectors such as renew-



At the invitation of US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, Goyal is in the US till October 3, 2024. He will co-chair with Raimondo the India-USA CEO Forum on October 2, and the 6th India-USA Commercial Dialogue on October 3 in Washington D.C.

able energy, data infrastructure and R&D," he said.

He also met Stephen A Schwarzman, Chairman, CEO and Co-Founder of Blackstone, and discussed the company's future investment

plans as India continues its exponential growth trajectory.

"Invited them to explore opportunities in sectors like infrastructure, housing and renewable energy, among oth-

Kumaraswamy tells automakers to follow PM E-DRIVE norms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy told automakers to follow the guidelines while availing incentives under the Rs 10,900 crore PM E-DRIVE scheme launched on Tuesday, asserting that there should be "no scope" for controversy like in the FAME-II scheme.

The heavy industries minister's remarks assume significance as the second phase of FAME-II (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles) scheme was marred by allegations of some companies availing fiscal incentives by violating the norms.

The FAME-II regulations permitted incentives for producing electric vehicles using made-in-India components. However, a probe by the heavy industries ministry had revealed that some companies purportedly utilized imported components.

NMDC hikes iron ore rates by Rs 400/tonne

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country's largest iron ore miner NMDC on Tuesday increased the rates of lump ore and fines by Rs 400 per tonne with immediate effect.

The company has revised the price of lump ore -- containing 65.5 per cent iron -- to Rs 5,750 per tonne from Rs 5,350 a tonne fixed on August 8.

The rate of fines or low-grade ore, with 64 per cent and below iron content, has been hiked to Rs 5,010 per tonne from Rs 4,610 per tonne fixed in August this year.

The prices are effective from October 1 and include royalty and contributions towards the district mineral fund (DMF), and National Mineral Exploration Trust (DMET). It excludes cess, forest permit fees and other taxes, the company said.

Iron ore is one of the key raw materials used in the manufacturing of steel, and any movement in its prices has a direct impact on rates of steel, an alloy widely used in segments like construction, infrastructure, automobile and railways.

According to BigMint, the price hike is in line with the rise of global iron ore prices after China recently announced a stimulus to boost its economy.

"The rates of iron ore in the global market have moved up

by around 15-20 per cent in the last one week after the announcement of a financial package by the government in China," the markets research firm said. Hyderabad-based NMDC is India's largest iron ore mining company catering to the country's up to 20 per cent demand for steel-making raw material.



Flood of IPOs: 13 cos file draft papers with Sebi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A wave of initial public offerings (IPOs) is set to hit Dalal Street with over a dozen companies, including Vikram Solar, Aditya Infotech, and Varindera Constructions, filing preliminary papers with markets regulator Sebi in a single day.

These firms are expected to collectively garner at least Rs 8,000 crore, according to the draft papers filed by them on Monday.

These IPOs are across sectors, deal size and combination of fresh issues and offer for sale (OFS). The filing comes at a time when the primary market is experiencing strong interest from both issuers and investors across various sectors.

Moreover, 62 companies have already mobilised around Rs



64,000 crore collectively via mainboard, marking a 29 per cent increase from Rs 49,436 crore collected by 57 firms through the route in the entire 2023. The strong momentum in IPO markets is driven by several key macroeconomic, sector-specific factors and willingness of funds to look at new ideas, partially led by strong inflows into domestic mutual funds as well as the robust capital formation hap-

pening across corporate India, Munish Aggarwal, Managing Director Head - Equity Capital Markets at Equirus, said.

"Unless there is a major black swan event which disrupts global economy and markets, we expect the markets to continue with the momentum in 2025 with both number of transactions and issuance amount going up further," he added.

Apart from Vikram Solar, Aditya Infotech, and Varindera Constructions, other companies that filed draft papers on Monday are Ajax Engineering, Rahee Infratech, Vikran Engineering, Midwest, Viney Corporation, Sambhvi Steel Tubes, Jaro Institute of Technology Management and Research, All Time Plastics Ltd, Scoda Tubes, and Dev Accelerator.

GST mop-up rises 6.5 pc to Rs 1.73 lakh cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gross GST collection in September grew 6.5 per cent to about Rs 1.73 lakh crore, according to government data released on Tuesday.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue in September last year was Rs 1.63 lakh crore. In August 2024, the mop-up was Rs 1.75 lakh crore. Last month, domestic revenue grew 5.9 per cent to about Rs 1.27 lakh crore. Revenue from import of goods was up 8 per cent to Rs 45,390 crore.

Refunds worth Rs 20,458 crore were issued during the month, an increase of 31 per cent over the year-ago period.



West Asia conflict hurting India's trade with Israel, Jordan, Lebanon: GTRI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The escalating conflict in West Asia is hurting India's trade with countries like Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon that are involved directly in the war, think tank GTRI said on Tuesday.

To navigate these turbulent times, India must stay vigilant and adaptable to the fast-changing geopolitical and trade landscape in West Asia, the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said.

During January-July 2024, India's trade with countries directly impacted by the conflict has faced significant challenges. "Exports to Israel dropped sharply by 63.5 per cent, Jordan

saw a 38.5 per cent decline due to spillover effects, and Lebanon experienced a 6.8 per cent decrease," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said. He added that the Israel-Hamas war, which erupted in October 2023, has now extended to Lebanon, Syria, and is indirectly impacting Jordan and Iran. Key regional players like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar have thus far remained uninvolved in the conflict. "This neutrality has allowed India's trade with these Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to increase by 17.8 per cent between January and July 2024 compared to the same period the previous year," Srivastava said.

Sensex, Nifty fall on profit-taking in oil & gas, FMCG shares

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty edged lower on Tuesday, extending the losing run to the third day amid profit-taking in oil & gas and select FMCG shares.

The BSE Sensex dipped 33.49 points or 0.04 per cent to settle at 84,266.29. During the day, it hit a high of 84,648.40 and a low of 84,098.94.

The NSE Nifty closed marginally lower by 13.95 points or 0.05 per cent to 25,796.90.

Muted trends in global markets and heavy foreign fund outflows weighed on investor sentiment, analysts said.

Sensex has shed nearly 1,570 points or nearly 2 per cent and Nifty declined 419 points or 1.6 per cent since Friday after China announced stimulus measures to prop-up its economy.

Among 30 Sensex companies, IndusInd Bank fell the most by 2.68 per cent. Asian Paints dropped 1.54 per cent and Hindustan Unilever by 1.27 per cent.



Tata Motors fell nearly 1 per cent on disappointing September sales numbers. Tata Steel, Titan, Reliance Industries and NTPC were also among the major laggards.

"Triggered by the recent stimulus policies by the Chinese central bank, funds are shifting to cheaper Chinese stocks from expensive markets like India. This, along with the possible increase in interest rates by the BoJ due to recent political changes, may impact the domestic market in the near term," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. IT shares bucked the trend and helped indices trim

losses. Tech Mahindra rose the most by 2.93 per cent among Sensex shares. Mahindra & Mahindra rose by 2.22 per cent on strong sales numbers in September.

Kotak Mahindra Bank, Infosys, HCL Technologies and State Bank of India were among the major gainers.

The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.56 per cent and mid-cap index went up by 0.27 per cent.

Among the indices, telecom-communication declined 0.86 per cent, oil & gas (0.71 per cent), utilities (0.35 per cent), realty (0.24 per cent) and power (0.17 per cent).

India initiates dumping probe on six products imported from China

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has initiated a probe into alleged dumping of as many as six products, including certain chemicals, and cold rolled electrical steel and black toner powder cartridge, imported from China following separate complaints from domestic players.

The commerce ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) is probing the dumping of 1,1,1,2-Tetrafluoroethane or R-134a; Acrylonitrile Butadiene Rubber; certain Antioxidants; polytetrafluoroethylene; black toner powder cartridge; and cold rolled non-oriented electrical steel from China.

According to six separate notifications, the applicants have alleged that material injury is being caused to the domestic industry due to the dumped imports of these products originating in or exported from China into India.

They have requested for imposition of anti-dumping duty on these imports with a view to guard them from cheap imports.

SRF Ltd has filed an application for initiation of an anti-

dumping investigation on the imports of 'R134a', primarily used as a high-temperature refrigerant for automobile air conditioners.

Apcotex Industries Ltd has filed the application for starting the probe on imports of Acrylonitrile Butadiene Rubber from China, the European Union, Korea and Russia. It is used in the oil and gas sector besides the auto segment as it is resistant to various chemicals and can withstand extreme temperatures.

Similarly, Vinati Organics Ltd has approached the DGTR for initiation of the anti-dumping investigation on certain antioxidants from China and Singapore. It is majorly used in petrochemical companies producing plastics.

The request application for dumping probe on polytetrafluoroethylene (used in electronic, mechanical and chemicals industries) imports was filed by Gujarat Fluorochemicals Ltd.

"The applicant has alleged that dumped imports of the subject goods from China and Singapore are causing material injury...and has requested for the imposition of anti-dumping duty on the import," the DGTR has said.





Govinda hospitalised after accidentally shooting himself in leg, condition stable

Govinda was admitted to a hospital in Mumbai on Tuesday after he inadvertently discharged his licensed revolver and injured his leg. Govinda's manager informed that the bullet has been taken out and Govinda is in a stable condition.

The event occurred at 4.45 am while Govinda was getting ready to leave, and he was polishing his licensed gun. Nevertheless, the gun discharged when it slipped out of his grasp and dropped. Sources mentioned that Govinda was getting ready to depart for Kolkata for a scheduled event.

The actor was taken to Mumbai's

CritiCare Hospital's intensive care unit (ICU). Govinda's wife, Sunita Ahuja, was not present in Mumbai during the incident. Ahuja mentioned she was informed that Govinda was doing well and was no longer in danger. Govinda's daughter is currently in the hospital.

Govinda's manager, Shashi Sinha, said the bullet hit the actor below his knee. "Govinda was getting ready to leave for Kolkata and was putting his licensed revolver back in the cupboard when it slipped from his hand and the gun went off, hitting him in the leg," Sinha said.

TAHIRA, SONALI, HINA KHAN'S WALK FOR CANCER AWARENESS!

Filmmaker and author Tahira Kashyap is set to walk for Manish Malhotra's upcoming fashion show, which will have a special focus on cancer survivors. The show, organised by the renowned designer, will feature Tahira Kashyap, along with actresses Sonali Bendre and Hina Khan, as the key faces of the event.

The concept centers on cancer survivors and the main part of the show will highlight these three ladies walking. Apart from these powerful women, Bollywood stars Karthik Aryan and Tripti Dimri will also be walking the ramp. However, the highlight will be the participation of Tahira, Sonalis and Hina, all of whom share a personal connection to the cause.

For those unaware, Tahira Kashyap was diagnosed with stage 0 breast cancer, also known as ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), in her right breast. Similarly, Sonali Bendre was diagnosed with stage 4 metastatic cancer in 2018, undergoing treatment in New York and entering remission in 2021. Hina Khan, who recently revealed her diagnosis of stage 3 breast cancer in June 2024, has been documenting her journey on social media, keeping her fans informed about her ongoing treatment.



Sobhita is 'beaming with pride' with overwhelming liking for *Love, Sitara*



Sobhita Dhulipala has once again mesmerised audiences with her portrayal of Sitara in her latest release, *Love, Sitara*. This performance marks the third time Sobhita has taken on the role of a character named Tara, following her roles in (2018) and the popular series *Made In Heaven* (2019). Sobhita recently opened up about the love she received for her film and she shared, "Sitara to me is a heady mix of strong and sensitive. A successful career girlie who finds the courage to question and shatter her own behaviour patterns and conditioning. The dignity and rawness of the women that are at the centre of this story is staggering." She went on to explain her choice to play such a distinct character, expressing how much the recognition means to her, quoting, "To be seen playing a character that is completely different from the ones I've done so far - it was an important choice to make and when that choice is recognised and loved from critics and audiences, it feels deeply motivating and fulfilling. I am inspired! And beaming!"



LISA MISHRA TO DAZZLE WITH ZEENAT

Musician Lisa Mishra is ready to take the OTT world by storm with her acting debut in not one but two highly anticipated shows. After capturing hearts with her melodious voice, Lisa is now stepping into the lime-light as an actress with *Call Me Bae* and *The Royals*.

The Royals explores the opulence, intrigue and power struggles within a high-class society, starring a stellar cast including Ishaan Khatter, Bhumi Pednekar and the legendary Zeenat Aman.



A R Rahman to create magical score for *Gandhi*

On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, Applause Entertainment announced that Grammy Award winner and musical legend, A R Rahman, has come on board to compose the music for their highly anticipated series, *Gandhi*. Rahman, whose name is synonymous with musical brilliance, will bring his unparalleled craft to this sweeping saga of Indian Independence, elevating the series to new artistic heights.




Directed by Hansal Mehta and based on Ramachandra Guha's definitive writings, this collaboration promises to weave together history, emotion and sound in ways never before experienced on screen. His compositions will not only support the visuals but also capture the essence of Gandhi's teachings on truth, love and non-violence, becoming a powerful part of the narrative.

"Watching Gandhiji's younger life is a revelation—his experiments with truth, life, and so many other things show the evolution of his character. I am deeply honored to be scoring the music for this story," shares the musical maestro.




Meanwhile, the director, Hansal Mehta, said, "*Gandhi* is a deeply human retelling of M K Gandhi's life story, a story that continues to inspire generations. Having A R Rahman join us on this journey is truly a dream come true. is music has the unique ability to elevate storytelling and for a project of this scale and significance, we couldn't think of anyone better to bring the emotional and spiritual nuances of Gandhi's life to the forefront."

FUN




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NANCY




GINGER MEGGS




CALVIN AND HOBBS



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SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	
6			7		8
9			10		
12	13			14	15
17			18		
19					

ACROSS

- A large group of musicians
- The steps of a ladder
- Do this when you are thirsty
- Knotted
- Opposite of newest
- Mend
- A holder for cut flowers
- A slow-moving creature
- Jewellery for fingers
- People who hide on ships to avoid paying a fare

DOWN

- Wash the soap out of
- A snake noise

SOLUTION

P	E	A	C	E	F	U	L
S	A	V	E	N	R		
E	A	G	L	E			
P	E	N	S	E	P		
T	I	S	S	E			
E	F						
M	I	N	D				
B	E	S					
E	N	E					
M	E	A	S				

Father of Indian Abstractionism's story

(The author, Dr. Rupika Singh, MBBS, MD, is a dermatologist and founder of Akiya Aesthetics)

Swag is one of the top films in my career: Sree Vishnu

Sree Vishnu, known for choosing diverse subjects and characters, is back with his latest film, *Swag*, in which he portrays four distinct roles. In a candid conversation, he discusses the film, his upcoming projects and his personal interests!

Sree Vishnu always experiments with different types of cinema and portrays unique roles in his films. His latest project, *Swag*, carries the Telugu title *Swaganika Vamshaniki Swagatham* and is directed by Hasith Goli. This marks their second collaboration after working together on *Raja Raja Chola*. "I'm playing four characters in this film, which is a completely new experience for me. I haven't played dual roles," said Sree Vishnu.

Regarding the film's title, he explained, "Nowadays, most youngsters aren't familiar with Telugu slang, so we used *Swag* for them. For those who appreciate the Telugu language, we kept the full title, *Swaganika Vamshaniki Swagatham*. We wanted everyone to be able to connect with the film, including those from other languages who can easily catch *Swag*. That's why we chose this dual title approach."

Sree Vishnu further elaborated, "Today, people only understand when you mention 'family tree,' but many in the current generation might not be familiar with *Vamsa Vruksham*. Our story revolves around gender issues and understanding one's lineage. It begins 1500 years ago and explores who held the upper hand—men or women. We've told this story in an entertaining, cat-and-mouse style." All four of Vishnu's characters belong to the same lineage, hence the similar appearance across generations! He praised Ritu Varma's role, saying, "She has portrayed her character beautifully. After this film, people will respect women even more. Women will definitely love Bhavabhuti's character."

Speaking about the challenges of playing these roles, he said, "Except for my present character, Singa, the

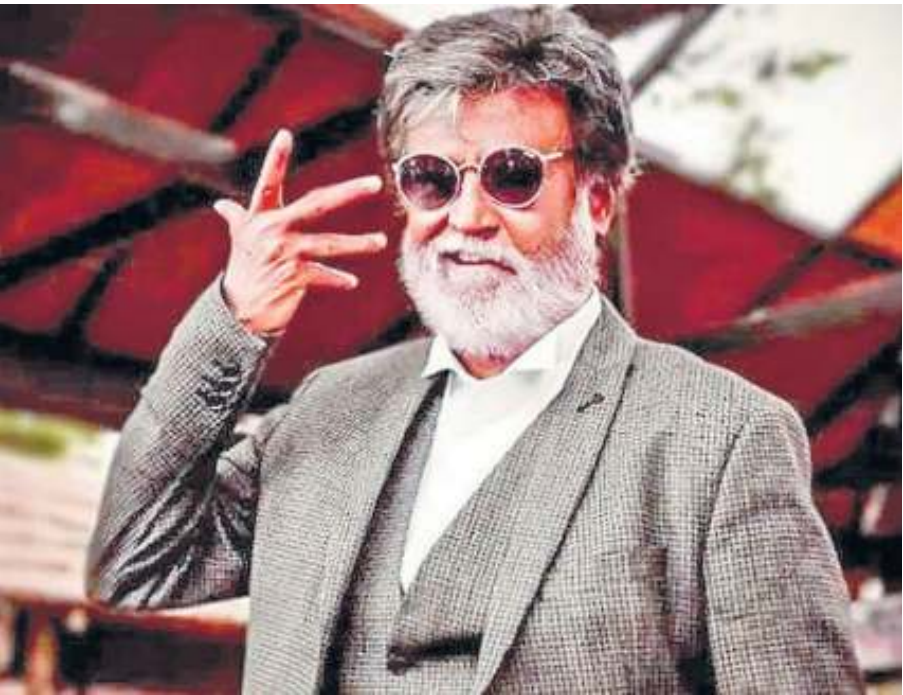
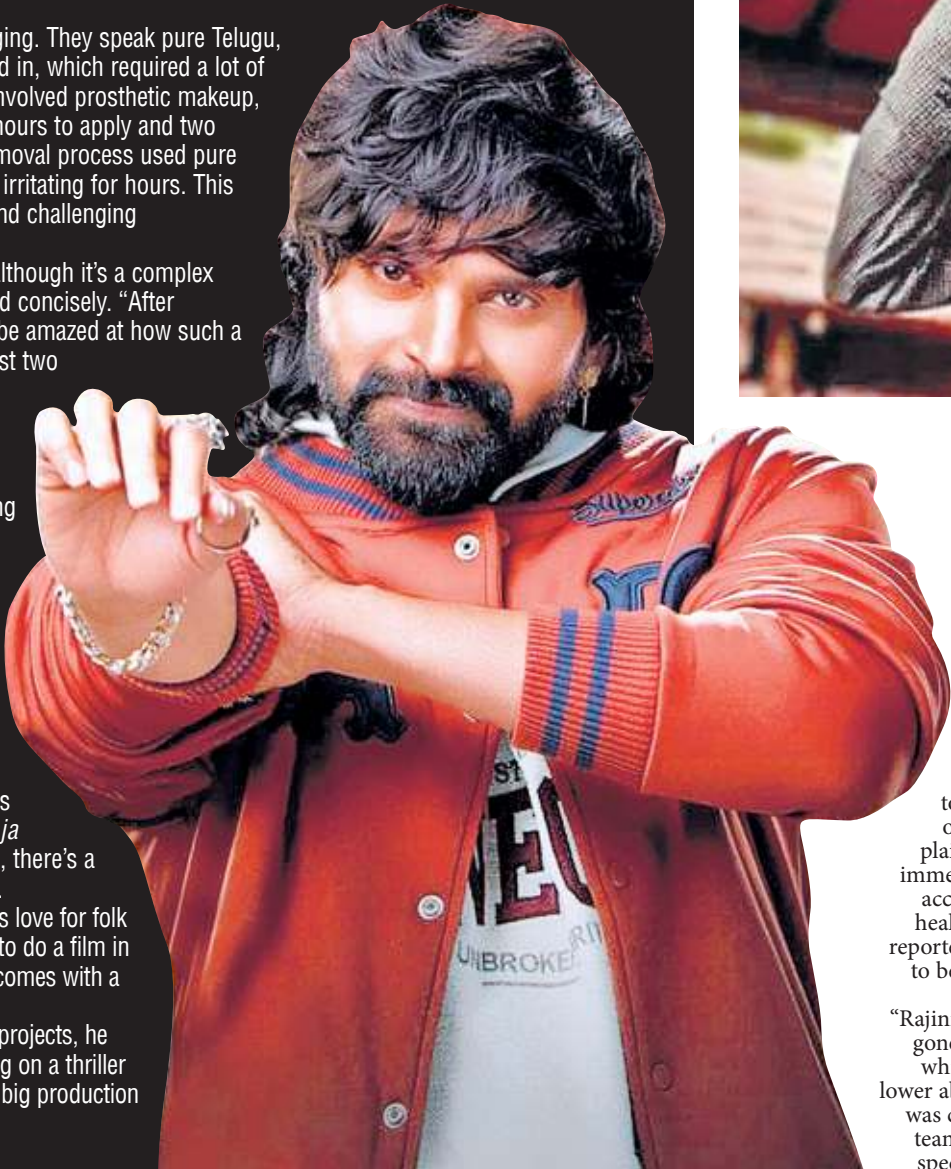
other three were challenging. They speak pure Telugu, with some Sanskrit mixed in, which required a lot of practice. One character involved prosthetic makeup, which took around four hours to apply and two hours to remove. The removal process used pure alcohol, which was quite irritating for hours. This film has been a unique and challenging experience."

Vishnu mentioned that, although it's a complex story, it has been narrated concisely. "After watching the film, you'll be amazed at how such a large story was told in just two and a half hours. This is definitely one of the top films of my career."

He also spoke about the production houses, noting that this is his second project with them. "After *Raja Raja Chola*, we decided to make another film together. Though the production house has faced some setbacks, I'm confident they will bounce back with *Swag*. This film feels like a prequel to *Raja Raja Chola*. Every 20 minutes, there's a new surprise," he added.

Sree Vishnu expressed his love for folk movies, stating, "I'd love to do a film in the folk genre. If anyone comes with a good script, I'm ready."

Regarding his upcoming projects, he revealed that he is working on a thriller and another film with the big production house, Geetha Arts.

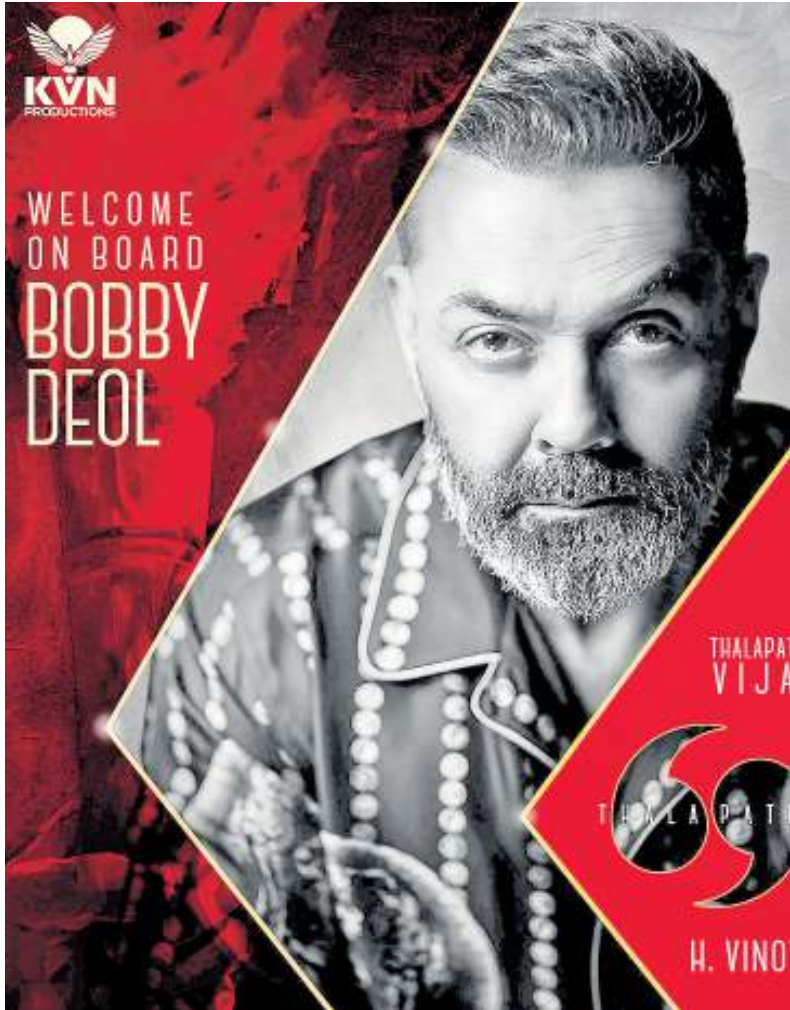


Rajinikanth's health stable; to be discharged soon

Tamil superstar Rajinikanth was admitted to Apollo Hospitals in Chennai on Monday evening after complaining of stomach pain. He was immediately rushed to the hospital, according to reports. In the latest health update, the veteran actor is reported to be stable and is expected to be discharged from the hospital within two to three days.

"Rajinikanth has successfully undergone an elective procedure during which a stent was placed near his lower abdominal area. The procedure was carried out by a team of three specialty

doctors in a cath lab. Currently, he is stable and is being kept under observation. He will be recuperating at the hospital for the next 2-3 days before being discharged," said the reports. Rajinikanth's film *Vettaiyan* is slated to release on October 10. In the lead-up to its release, the actor has been actively promoting the film. He recently attended the pre-release event, where he danced alongside music director Anirudh Ravichander. The film is directed by Gnanavel. Rajinikanth has also begun shooting for his upcoming film *Coolie*, directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj. The actor has been actively involved in the production over the past few days.



BOBBY ROPED IN FOR THALAPATHY'S LAST FILM

Bobby Deol offlate has been regular in South cinema, with multiple Telugu and Tamil films. The Bollywood actor is now roped in for another South film. He has now been roped in for Tamil superstar Vijay's film, *Thalapathy 69*, directed by H. Vinoth and with music by Anirudh Ravichander.

The production house announced the cast on Tuesday, expressing their excitement to have Bobby Deol on board. This film marks Vijay's final project before he transitions to full-time politics, having announced his political party in February 2024 and intending to contest in the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections.

Thalapathy 69 has been generating significant buzz, especially after Vijay's recent film, *GOAT*, didn't quite live up to expectations at the box office. Despite this, Vijay decided to act in one more film and *Thalapathy 69* is expected to be a high-octane action entertainer.



Satyam Sundaram's reception leaves Karthi overwhelmed

Actor Karthi is in Hyderabad promoting his recent film *Satyam Sundaram*. The film is directed by Prem Kumar of *96* fame, with Aravind Swamy as the other leading actor. *Satyam Sundaram* has received critical acclaim and the makers organised a success meet. On this occasion, Karthi spoke about similar films made long ago by directors Viswanath, Balachander and Dasari Narayana Rao. "When I first read the script, I had a doubt in my mind—would people watch this kind of film? But then I felt that if we come up with a new concept, the audience will definitely appreciate it. True to my words, today people are talking about this film," said Karthi. "I received calls from many people who got emotional while discussing the film with me. I felt happy about it, but this kind of film should also be commercially successful. If it succeeds commercially, producers will come forward to make more good films," Karthi added. He didn't want to say much more about the film's success. "When I came to this event, the way people received, hugged, wished me—made me emotional. I'm very happy with the response," he said.



Unstoppable with NBK 3 shooting begins in Hyderabad

Nandamuri Balakrishna is currently juggling his upcoming film, directed by K.S. Ravindra (Bobby) and the new season of his popular talk show *Unstoppable* on Aha. According to sources, the show is presently filming an episode featuring Malayalam superstar Dulquer Salmaan, who has gained popularity in Telugu cinema through his direct Telugu films.

However, a source revealed, "Dulquer Salmaan's episode won't be the first to air in the new season, which premieres on October 24 on Aha." According to the latest update, the shooting of the third season of *Unstoppable* has begun in Hyderabad. The first episode is expected to feature the team of *Lucky Baskhar*. SThe makers are planning to shoot additional episodes with notable actors like Chiranjeevi, Venkatesh, Ram Charan and Allu Arjun.

One question on everyone's mind is whether Balakrishna will invite Nagarajuna onto the show, given their reported long-standing rift. Notably, Balakrishna missed having Chiranjeevi on the show in the last two seasons, but the source confirms Chiranjeevi is on the guest list for this season.

Last year, Chiranjeevi's brother Pawan Kalyan's appearance on the show was a massive hit.

Matka set for November 14 release

Varun Tej's last successful film was *Gaddalakonda Ganesh*, which released in 2019. Since then, a few of his films have hit the big screen, but they were not successful at the box office. Now, Varun Tej teams up with *Palasa* director Karuna Kumar for the period drama *Matka*, where he takes on a unique avatar. According to the makers, it's a mass action entertainers and the shoot is nearing completion.

Matka is one of the highest-budget films in Varun Tej's career, produced by Dr. Vejender Reddy Teegala and Rajani Thalluri. Currently, they are shooting an important action sequence involving Varun Tej and fighters. With the production almost complete, the makers have officially locked the release date for November 14.

Varun Tej stuns in two distinct looks that beautifully depict his character's evolution over time. Director Karuna Kumar has crafted a powerful script with a period backdrop spanning 24 years, from 1958 to 1982, showcasing Varun Tej in four different avatars. Meenakshi Chaudhry and Nora Fatehi star as the female leads opposite Varun Tej, while GV Prakash Kumar has provided the music for the film.

