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QUOTE OF THE DAY  
The pioneer

It is not 'Telangana Rising but Anumula Brothers Rising,' Telangana is falling. Revanth brothers may enter Forbes list or may overtake Adani. Revanth took loans worth Rs 85,000 crore until August. The Congress Government has already closed Rs one lakh crore. Does the CM know the amount of debts or is Dy. CM Bhatti misleading Revanth

- KTR, BRS MLA

Rahul stopped on way to Sambhal



'GOVT TOOK MANY STEPS TO BOOST AVAILABILITY OF DAP'



How one 'last try' led to Kissik MAGIC



DON'T MISS...

## Tigers on prowl in Asifabad district

In Kumram Bheem Asifabad district, concern is growing over the welfare of the tigers roaming the area with forest officials expressing the view that a food shortage may force them to return to their original habitats. Currently, four to five tigers are moving through the forest areas of Asifabad and Sirpur constituencies, but they are facing challenging conditions. On the one hand, they are being pursued by Forest...

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## De-escalation to be discussed with China

Peace and tranquility in border areas is a pre-requisite for the development of bilateral ties with China and the two side will be discussing de-escalation and effective management of activities in these areas in the coming days, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday while making a statement on India-China relations in the Rajya Sabha. A brief uproar was also witnessed following the statement and Opposition MPs walked...

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## Gold slips below Rs 79,000 per 10 gm

Gold prices slipped below Rs 79,000 per 10 kg in the national capital on Wednesday due to poor uptake by stockists and retailers amid weak global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity fell by Rs 150 to Rs 78,850 per 10 grams. It had closed at Rs 79,000 per 10 grams in the previous session. Price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity extended the losses...

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## Kaun banega next BCCI secretary?

With Jay Shah taking over as International Cricket Council's youngest chairman on December 1, the role of secretary in the mighty BCCI lies vacant and as officials wonder who the replacement might be, they have time to figure out the next course of action. Following the constitutional amendment in 2022, the secretary is the most influential office-bearer in the BCCI, having "all powers in relation to cricketing and non-cricketing matters" with the CEO working under his...

-SPORTS

## Women's panel issues notices to Narayana Colleges on suicides

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Women's Commission issued notices to Narayana Colleges on Wednesday regarding the series of suicides by female students. The Women's Commission sought an explanation from the management of Narayana Colleges on why female students are committing suicide. It may be recalled that a first-year student named Anusha, (16), studying at Bachupally Narayana College handed herself to death. After Anusha's suicide, another student handed herself to death in Madhapur Narayana College.



CM'S POSER TO BRS

## Are you anti-BC?

Revanth slams KCR, KTR for ignoring survey ● Says govt will make 1 crore women crorepatis

Showcases achievements on employment, welfare fronts in Peddapalli meeting

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy attended the Yuva Vikasam programme held at Peddapalli on Wednesday, where he handed over appointment letters to 8,084 selected candidates who had appeared for the Group-4 exams. Speaking at the event, he urged

KCR to provide constructive suggestions from his administrative experience and questioned why KCR, KTR, Harish Rao and Santosh Kumar were not participating in the caste census.

"Are you anti-BC? Why not give BCs their due share? BC associations should consider socially boycotting those who oppose the caste census.

When we were in the opposition, we participated in the Samagra Kutumba Survey" he said.

Revanth expressed gratitude to Congress leader Sonia Gandhi, crediting her for keeping her promise of granting Telangana statehood, which fulfilled the aspirations of its people.

"We will make 1 crore women crorepatis. In the next election we

will get one crore votes from women and whatever men votes we have will be an add-on. This time we got 95 lakh votes," CM said

Revanth emphasised that the state was formed with the goal of creating jobs and driving development in the region. He accused former Chief Minister KCR of suppressing Congress

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## 5.3 magnitude quake hits Telangana

Second biggest in TG after 55 years

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The National Centre for Seismology said that an earthquake of 5.3 magnitude on the Richter scale hit TG at 7.27 am on Wednesday and that its epicentre was Medaram in Mulugu district.

The earthquake that hit Telangana on Wednesday morning was the second quake of over magnitude 5 on the Richter scale in the last 55 years.

The region experienced an earthquake of 5.7 magnitude on the Richter scale with epicentre at Bhadrachalam on April 13, 1969.

Scientists said that both earthquakes were linked to the rift in the Godavari valley which is considered a fault zone.

The tremors on Wednesday were



felt in parts of both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh and also in Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra. Tremors were also felt in Hyderabad and its surrounding districts.

The earthquake occurred at a depth of 40 km and it was experienced in an area extending 225 sq. km. There were no reports of any loss of life or damage to property.

The scientists of the CSIR-National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) said that as the

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## Model Indiramma houses at all mandal headquarters: Ponguleti

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress Government will construct Model Indiramma Houses in all mandal headquarters, Housing Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said. Addressing the media here on Wednesday, he said the government is making arrangements to select beneficiaries for Indiramma houses.

The government has solved all problems which had been blocking the Indiramma Housing Scheme and has speeded up

the scheme, he said. He said the government will provide houses to the poor and that the admin has prepared a Mobile App for selecting beneficiaries without giving scope for corruption and ensuring that the selection process is transparent.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy would launch the Mobile App on Thursday, he said.

Ponguleti said the Congress Government is giving an assistance of Rs 5 lakh to the homeless poor and that the government will pay the

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## Winter session may raise political temp

Assembly, Council sessions to start from Dec 9

KCR may abstain; KTR, Harish to lead BRS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The winter session of the Telangana Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council may heat up the state with its heated debates. The Assembly is meeting from December 9 onwards.

The Congress Government is unveiling the Telangana Talli Statue on the same day on the Secretariat premises and conducting celebrations in connection with its first anniversary in power.

Meanwhile, the main opposition BRS and the BJP are getting ready



to corner the state government by raising issues about paddy pro-

urement, implementation of election promises like Rythu Bharosa, enhancing pensions and many other unfulfilled promises given by the Congress.

Opposition leader BRS chief K. Chandrasekhar Rao may not attend the winter session. It may be recalled here that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy recently challenged his predecessor to come to the Assembly and participate in debates.

However, BRS leaders KT Rama Rao and T. Harish Rao will take the lead

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## Anumula brothers rising, Telangana is falling: KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao launched a sharp attack on the Congress and its leadership during an interaction with the media at the Telangana Bhavan on Wednesday.

KTR countered the CM's statement that "Telangana is rising" by saying, "It is not Telangana rising, but Anumula brothers rising, and Telangana falling."

He lambasted Revanth for allegedly indulging in theatrics and accused him of mismanaging the state's finances. KTR said the Chief Minister's approach has not only tarnished the reputation of his office but has also benefited only a select few, including the CM's close relatives.

"In just 11 months, Anumula brothers have risen to unimaginable heights, amassing wealth and influence," he said. He said that if the trend continues, they would soon feature on international wealth rankings.

KTR criticised the Congress Government's failure to attract investments and create job opportunities.

"Companies are not coming in. Existing ones are leaving. Employment opportunities in the state have been dumped in Gandipet," he remarked sarcastically.

## 'A celebration of deception'

Bandi slams 'Vijayotsavulu'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Declaring that the Congress Government's 'Vijayotsavulu' (victory celebrations) are not Vijayotsavulu but 'Unruly Celebrations,' the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, said that the Vijayotsavulu of the Congress is serving worm-infested food to residential school children and killing them. Sanjay asked the

Congress to clarify whether their one year of anarchic rule "is a victory of the Congress."

Posting on X regarding this on Wednesday he said, "For the Congress, victory means serving worm-infested food to children and killing them. The Congress Government's victory is not giving jobs to youth and handcuffing them. Deceiving farmers is a victory for the Congress Government. Deceiving Telangana's daughters is a victory for the Congress Government and their tears are a cause for celebration for them. Deceiving the poor by assuring them that the government will give them houses is the Congress Government's victory."

## Hyd bags Google's Global Safety Engineering Centre

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Google has chosen Hyderabad to establish its prestigious Google Safety Engineering Centre (GSEC), making it the second such centre in the Asia-Pacific region and the fifth in the world.

The Telangana Government, led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, announced the landmark partnership on Wednesday, marking



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## 8 firms sign MoU with Skills varsity

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

MoUs were signed between the Young India Skill University and eight prominent companies to provide skill training aligned with industry needs.

The MoUs were signed in the presence of the Chief Minister, with representatives from Redington, GMR Airports, Dr Reddy's Labs, Aurobindo Pharma, Logistics Skill Council, Lakshya, Blue Wheels and KIMS Hospitals. These partnerships aim to impart specialized training to youth, preparing them for roles in many sectors. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister emphasised the importance of bridging the gap between industry requirements and capabilities.

He said, "Our government is committed to equipping youth with skills

that not only secure jobs but also empower them to lead successful careers." In a significant step towards enhancing employment opportunities for youth, Chief Minister Revanth distributed appointment letters to 17

In a significant step towards enhancing employment opportunities for youth, Chief Minister Revanth distributed appointment letters to 17 candidates on Wednesday. Among these, 14 were appointed in Group 4 and 3 posts in SCCL

Expanding employment avenues, the CM launched the 'Digital Employment Exchange of Telangana (DEET)', a platform designed to

connect private sector opportunities with job seekers. This initiative is expected to revolutionize job accessibility by leveraging digital tools to bring employers and qualified candidates together. The Chief Minister also unveiled the 'CM Cup 2024' brochure, along with real-time live video on YouTube, jerseys and the CM Cup itself. The CM Cup aims to promote sports and youth engagement across the state, fostering a spirit of teamwork and excellence.

The event underscored the Telangana Government's proactive approach to addressing unemployment and ensuring inclusive growth. By integrating skill development, employment opportunities, and youth engagement, the government aims to position Telangana as a leader in workforce development and innovation.



## Nagaraju takes charge as ED of Power Grid SRTS-I

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A Nagaraju has officially assumed the role of Executive Director of Power Grid Southern Region Transmission System-I (SRTS-I), which oversees sub-stations and projects across Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and parts of Karnataka. A graduate in Electrical Engineering from Osmania University, Nagaraju began

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## Immense scope for temple tourism in TG: Jupally

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a move to develop water tourism in Telangana, the Minister for Tourism and Culture, Jupally Krishna Rao, inaugurated water sports events at the Hussain Sagar on Wednesday.

The event, organised by the Amaravati Boating Club, marked the beginning of new opportunities in adventure tourism.

Accompanied by Telangana Tourism Development Corporation (TGTDC) Chairman Patel Ramesh Reddy, Jupally enjoyed a jet ski ride on the lake.

Speaking at the launch, Jupally emphasized Telangana's vast potential in tourism, citing the state's scenic landscapes, historic monuments and spiritual destinations. "There is immense scope for

temple tourism, water and adventure sports in Telangana. Water sports have been gaining massive popularity recently, and the government is committed to promoting water tourism," he said.

He announced plans to develop water bodies across Telangana, including the Krishna River backwaters, Nagarjuna Sagar and reservoirs like Hussain Sagar, to position the state as a prominent water tourism hub. He said that this would generate employment for locals and contribute significantly to the state's revenue.

Criticising past governments, Jupally pointed out that promises to transform Hussain Sagar into a clean water lake had remained unfulfilled. "Cleaning and rejuvenating Hussain Sagar is a necessity, and our government

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# Jagan 'orchestrated' hostile takeover of Rs 3,600 cr Kakinada Port

A shocking revelation has surfaced, shedding light on the alleged misuse of power during YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's tenure as chief minister of Andhra Pradesh. Accusations against Jagan and his close circle suggest that they orchestrated the forced acquisition of shares worth Rs 3,600 crore in Kakinada Port and SEZ for a fraction of their value. The entire operation, executed under threats of legal action and imprisonment, has come to the forefront after businessman Karnati Venkateswara Rao (KV Rao) filed a complaint with the Andhra Pradesh CID on December 2.

According to KV Rao, he was coerced into selling shares worth Rs 2,500 crore in Kakinada Sea Ports Limited (KSPL) for just Rs 494 crore and shares worth Rs 1,109

crore in the Kakinada SEZ for a mere Rs12 crore. Rao alleges that he was threatened with fabricated cases, potential arrest, and the shutdown of his businesses if he refused to comply. The complaint names prominent individuals, including Jagan's uncle YV Subba Reddy's son Vikrant Reddy, YSRCP MP V Vijayasai Reddy, and representatives of Aurobindo Realty. Based on the complaint, the CID has registered a case citing charges such as criminal intimidation, forgery, cheating, and conspiracy.

Before Jagan became chief minister in 2019, KSPL was a thriving business. It reported revenues of Rs 491.47 crore in 2014-15, steadily increasing to Rs 628.71 crore in 2019-20. The company also had Rs 240 crore in cash reserves by that time. Rao states that,

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despite its strong financial position, after Jagan took office, support from port directors and the Andhra Pradesh Maritime Board dwindled, creating an atmosphere ripe for a hostile takeover.

In what appeared to be a prelude to the takeover, the state government ordered an audit of KSPL by PKF Sridhar

& Santhanam LLP. The audit report mentioned that KSPL caused Rs 965.65 crore in losses to the state government -- a claim Rao asserts was fabricated. Still, this report became the foundation for issuing threats and bringing pressure on him to get him to transfer his shares.

KV Rao recounts that after failing to secure an appoint-



**RAMESH KANDULA**  
Chief Editor Swatantra TV and author

ment with Jagan, he was forced to negotiate with Vikrant Reddy, who then prepared the groundwork for the share transfer. Rao was informed that legal documentation was being handled by Varuna Law Associates and that a corporate deposit agree-

ment was being prepared. Rao alleges that the entire operation was orchestrated to benefit Aurobindo Realty.

The shares of KSPL were valued at Rs 2,500 crore, but Aurobindo Realty appraised them at a mere Rs 494 crore using questionable methods. Rao vehemently opposed this valuation, arguing that the company's net assets, profitability, and future earnings potential were disregarded. However, Rao alleges that he was intimidated into signing the sale agreement under threats of dire consequences, including arrest and business closures.

After the deal was finalized, Rao was taken to meet Jagan in Vijayawada. During this meeting, Rao tried to raise objections, but Jagan allegedly silenced him and instructed him to follow Vikrant Reddy's directives. This inter-

action left no doubt in Rao's mind that the entire operation was carried out for Jagan's benefit. The shares were transferred to Aurobindo Realty despite objections from Axis Bank and Bank of India, which had financial interests in KSPL. These banks flagged the transactions and restricted the company's ability to secure loans from other financial institutions. After the share transfer, Aurobindo Realty profited immensely from KSPL, alleges KV Rao.

Between 2020 and 2024, the company received Rs 102 crore as dividends and Rs 280 crore in inter-corporate deposits. Rao claims that KSPL was used as a cash cow to finance Aurobindo's other projects. Rao, who claims he had no choice but to comply during Jagan's regime, has

now filed a complaint following the change in the state's administration. He is seeking justice for what he alleges was a blatant abuse of power for personal gain.

**THE LARGER PICTURE**

The Kakinada Port case is not just about financial exploitation but raises critical questions about governance and accountability during Jagan's tenure. Rao's allegations paint a grim picture of how political power can be misused to intimidate and exploit businesses for personal enrichment.

This case could have significant political and legal repercussions as investigations progress. If proven true, it would further tarnish the image of Jagan's administration and provide a glaring example of corruption at the highest levels of power.



## Sukhbir Badal escapes attempt on life at Golden Temple

Former Khalistani terrorist arrested

PNS ■ AMRITSAR

Shiromani Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Singh Badal escaped a bid on his life on Wednesday when a former Khalistani terrorist fired from a close range at Punjab's ex-chief minister at the Golden Temple's entrance here but missed as plainclothes policemen overpowered him.

The audacious attack, which occurred at around 9:30 am, was captured on cameras by mediapersons who had gathered to cover the second day of Badal performing the duty of 'sewadar' at the main gate of the Sikh shrine as religious penance for "mistakes" committed by the SAD government in Punjab from 2007 to 2017.

As other devotees were entering, the shooter, identified as former terrorist Narain Singh Chaura, slowly walked towards Badal (62), a Z+ protectee who was sitting in a wheelchair due to a fractured leg, and pulled out a gun from his pocket.

## PRAJAPALANA VIJAYOTSAVALU Grand arrangements for closing fete

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari said that the closing ceremonies of Prajapalana Vijayotsavalu, scheduled for December 7, 8 and 9 will be held on a grand scale with a mix of cultural, musical and technological events.

The announcement followed a high-level review meeting at the Secretariat on Wednesday to discuss preparations for the event.

Santhi Kumari detailed the schedule of events, emphasising the grandeur of the celebrations. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy will unveil a statue of the Telangana Thalli on the Secretariat premises on December 9.

A series of musical performances by noted film personalities, including Vandemataram Srinivas on December 7, Rahul Sipligunj on December 8, and Music Director Thaman on December 9, will be the highlight of the festivities.

The events will also include a mega drone show, laser displays, a fireworks extravaganza and cultural programmes at five specially set up venues between Telugu Thalli Flyover and PV Marg.

The stretch from Tank Bund to Rajiv Gandhi Junction, Secretariat and PV Narasimha

Rao Marg will be adorned with vibrant electric lights. Around 120 stalls will be set up along this route, offering food, handicrafts and exhibits from government departments. Selfie points are being installed to draw youth.

The Chief Secretary emphasised the need for meticulous

arrangements to cater to the large turnout. Facilities for drinking water, sanitation, parking, and security will be ensured to accommodate one lakh people during the Telangana Thalli unveiling ceremony. A special control room with officials will oversee these arrangements.

## Vikarabad Court transfers Lagacharla cases

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Vikarabad Principal District and Sessions Court transferred all Lagacharla cases to the Nampally Court on Wednesday as per the High Court direction that the hearing in all cases dealing with attacks on government assets should be held only at the Special Court.

It may be recalled that cases were filed for attacking Vikarabad Collector Pratheek Jain, Additional Collector (Revenue) Lingya Naik, Kodangal Area Development Authority (KADA) Special Officer Venkat Reddy and for destroying government vehicles. After hearing the arguments of both regarding A-1 former MLA Patnam Narender Reddy and other petitioners seeking bail, the Vikarabad Court Principal Judge ordered that the hearing in these cases should be held at the Nampally Special Court and transferred the cases there.

The government took the Lagacharla incident seriously and filed cases against 29 persons including former MLA Patnam Narender Reddy.

Meanwhile, the High Court on Wednesday dismissed a petition filed by Patnam Narender Reddy requesting

the court to dismiss cases filed against him.

**HC REJECTS PATNAM'S PLEA**

The Telangana High Court on Wednesday dismissed former BRS MLA Patnam Narender Reddy's petition, seeking quashing of a case filed against him in connection with the attack on government officials in Vikarabad district.

The High Court, which had last week reserved orders, pronounced it on Wednesday, dismissing the petition of Narender Reddy to quash the orders of a lower court.

Justice K. Lakshman, however, asked the lower court to consider the bail petition of the BRS leader on a merit basis. The High Court on November 29 quashed two of the three FIRs registered against the former MLA. Mahender Reddy's wife Shurthi questioned the registration of three FIRs in the same case. The court agreed with the arguments put forward by the former MLA's counsel and quashed two FIRs.

Vikarabad District Collector Prateek Jain and some other officials were attacked by a mob at Lagacharla village during a public hearing on land acquisition for 'Pharma Village' on November 11.

## ISRO reschedules PROBA-3 launch after detecting 'anomaly'

PNS ■ SRIHARIKOTA

The ISRO has rescheduled the launch of PSLV-C59 to Thursday due to an "anomaly" detected in the PROBA-3 spacecraft, the agency announced on Wednesday, minutes before the scheduled launch.

The Bengaluru-headquartered space agency had originally planned the launch at 4:08 pm on Wednesday from the spaceport here.

"Due to an anomaly detected in PROBA-3 spacecraft PSLV-C59/PROBA-3 launch rescheduled to tomorrow at 16:12 hours," the space agency said in an update minutes before the lift-off.

Dubbed the world's first initiative of its kind, the Proba-3 (Project for Onboard Anatomy) consists of two satellites—Coronagraph (310kgs) and Occulter (240kgs)—in which two spacecraft would fly together as one, maintaining precise formation down to a single millimetre to study the Corona, the Sun's outer atmosphere.

## Congress had several #1s, but #2 Rosaiah was permanent: Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy paid tributes to former United Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister K. Rosaiah on his third death anniversary hailing him as a towering figure in politics whose contributions continue to inspire leaders.

Speaking at an event organised on Wednesday to commemorate Rosaiah's legacy, the CM highlighted the veteran leader's unparalleled influence on governance, fiscal discipline, and legislative conduct.

"The Congress had several CMs. While the number 1 always changed, the number



2, Rosaiah, was permanent," Revanth said.

The Chief Minister recalled Rosaiah's role in shaping the fiscal policies of united Andhra Pradesh.

"Telangana was formed

with a surplus budget of Rs 16,000 crore, thanks to the fiscal discipline imposed by Finance Minister Rosaiah. His meticulous planning laid a strong foundation for our financial stability," he said.

## Nagaraju takes...

Continued from page 1

his career in 1986 as an engineer trainee with the NTPC. He joined Power Grid in 1991 as an Engineer and has accumulated over 38 years of extensive experience in diverse areas, including project management, contracts, commercial operations, environment and social management, ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) and corporate social responsibility.

Throughout his career, Nagaraju has served in various capacities across Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Nagpur and the corporate headquarters. Prior to his current appointment, he worked as Executive Director (ESMD & CSR) at Power Grid's corporate office in Gurugram. His leadership and expertise are expected to further strengthen the operations and impact of Power Grid SRTS-I.

## Winter session ...

Continued from page 1

on behalf of the main opposition party in the absence of their leader KCR.

In fact, the Legislature Secretariat issued a notification as Governor Jishnu Dev Varma summoned the third Telangana Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council to meet for the fourth session from 10.30 am on Monday, that is, December 9.

The government is getting ready to pass the ROR Act-2024 in the winter session besides conducting debates on Rythu Bharosa, HYDRAA, caste census, farmers' issues and the achievements of the government.

The Congress government is completing its first anniversary on December 7. Due to this, the House is likely to witness heated exchanges between the treasury benches and the opposition on various issues.

The Assembly authorities have started installing barricades and other arrangements for the winter session. The job of installing barricades in front of the Assembly gate commenced on Wednesday.

## Immense scope ...

Continued from page 1

is taking concrete steps to restore its glory," he stated. In alignment with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's vision, the Tourism Department has crafted a comprehensive action plan for the sector's development. He said that underutilized government properties are being repurposed through public-private partnerships to create infrastructure that can attract tourists.

"We are adopting the PPP model to develop facilities, ensuring that resources are efficiently utilized without any commercial intent on the part of the government," he added.

## Model Indiramma ...

Continued from page 1

money to beneficiaries in four phases. The government will deposit the money directly in the accounts of beneficiaries without giving brokers a chance. The houses will have an area of 400 square feet and will have kitchen and toilet facilities.

The government allows the scheme's beneficiaries to construct Indiramma Houses of any size but the house should have a minimum size of 400 square feet.

## Police file case against Kaushik Reddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A case has been registered against P. Kaushik Reddy and some others after an incident on Wednesday at the Banjara Hills Police Station, where the group obstructed and allegedly threatened a police officer on duty.

Police said the incident occurred at around 3 pm when the Inspector of Banjara Hills Police Station was leaving the station on emergency field duty.

As the Inspector was leaving, P. Kaushik Reddy and his group stopped the vehicle by parking another car in front of it and demanded the officer get down immediately. Despite being informed of the time-bound nature of the Inspector's duty and being asked to either wait or submit their grievance to the Admin Sub-Inspector, the group refused to comply.

## I dead, two unconscious due to stampede at Pushpa 2 premiere

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

One person died and two others fell unconscious following stampede at a theater featuring *Pushpa 2: The Rule* premiere at Sandhya Theatre, RTC Cross Road in Hyderabad.

The dead among the victim is a 30-year-old female. She had fallen unconscious at the Theatre and was brought to a local hospital for treatment by the police where she was declared dead by doctors.

Two others including a kid are in safe condition. The kid is undergoing treatment at a local private hospital. The body of the deceased is being shifted to

morgue for PME.

Allu Arjun was watching the movie during the time of the incident.

The incident unfolded as fans of actor Allu Arjun thronged the venue ahead of the highly anticipated premiere show of the film, which releases worldwide on December 5.

The massive crowd, eager to catch a glimpse of Allu Arjun, led to chaos at the theatre. Police had to resort to a mild lathi charge to manage the swelling crowd and restore order.

Authorities have urged fans to remain cautious and avoid overcrowding at future events to ensure everyone's safety.

## Hyd bags ...

Continued from page 1

a significant milestone for the city and state. GSEC Hyderabad is poised to become a critical global cybersecurity hub, focusing on advanced research, AI-driven solutions, and online safety products tailored to India's unique digital landscape.

This facility will foster skill development, create thousands of jobs, and enhance the country's cybersecurity capabilities, cementing Hyderabad's reputation as a global IT powerhouse.

The Telangana Government's efforts to secure this investment paid off following Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and IT Minister Sridhar Babu's strategic visit to Google's global headquarters in the United States in August. Their vision and commitment convinced Google to establish this state-of-the-art facility in Hyderabad, ignoring intense competition from other states.

"This partnership is a testament to Hyderabad's standing as a global IT

## Are you ...

Continued from page 1

leaders who fought for farmers' rights, contrasting it with the government's completion of projects worth Rs 1,035 crore.

The Chief Minister highlighted his government's commitment to agricultural development, noting the historic achievement of encouraging paddy cultivation and providing a bonus alongside remunerative prices. "Peddapalli district leads Telangana with paddy cultivation on 2 lakh acres, and bonuses have already been deposited in 95 per cent of farmers' accounts," he said.

Addressing opposition criticism, Revanth challenged Union Ministers Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay to compare employment figures, asking if Prime Minister Modi had ever provided 55,000 jobs in Gujarat within a year of his rule. The Chief Minister also slammed the Kaleshwaram project, alleging massive corruption under KCR's rule.

"Despite Kaleshwaram's collapse, Telangana produced 1.5 crore tons of paddy without using a drop of water from it," he said.

Revanth defended his government's achievements, including waiving farm loans worth Rs 21,000 crore and reviving self-help groups to empower women economically. Revanth announced plans to strengthen universities and establish engineering and law colleges under Satavahana University. He also said the Congress Government increased hostel diet and cosmetic charges after a decade of stagnation under BRS rule.

## 5.3 magnitude ...

Continued from page 1

earthquake's intensity was high the region may experience aftershocks soon.

However, NGRI Director Prakash Kumar said there was no need for people to worry as the earthquake had only "moderate" intensity.

"An earthquake of 5.3 Mw (moment magnitude) occurred at 7.27 am on Wednesday at Mulugu in the Godavari fault area at 40 km focal depth. The shaking was less due to the dissipation of seismic energy deep inside the earth. No damage was reported and the district administration is on high alert, especially for aftershocks," said Arvind Kumar, the Special Chief Secretary of Disaster Management.

As in the case of the 1969 Bhadrachalam earthquake, the Wednesday (December 4) earthquake is also attributed to the Godavari fault zone. Seismologists said there are many fractures and faults along the Godavari Basin.

As Telangana is in seismic zone II, which is categorised as a low-intensity zone, scientists say there is no need for

## panic. D. Srinagesh, a retired chief scientist of NGRI, said Wednesday's earthquake is a reminder for both Telugu states. He said that municipalities in both states should make sure that all buildings can withstand earthquakes.

Speaking to 'The Pioneer', Srinagesh said, "The ground shook in some areas in the northern part of Hyderabad city like Sainikpuri, Habsiguda, Banjara Hills and Sikh Village due to an earthquake of magnitude 5.3 on the Richter scale at Medaram. The last quake of this magnitude occurred 55 years ago, that is, the Bhadrachalam earthquake."

He said that disaster management authorities in both Telugu states should make sure that buildings are designed as per the requirements of the particular seismic zone.

Srinagesh thinks that following earthquake safety norms is very important to minimise damage and loss of lives. He pointed out that geophysical hazards like earthquakes and landslides have claimed 30,000 to 40,000 lives in India since 1982.

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# City Pioneer

the pioneer

HYDERABAD | THURSDAY | DECEMBER 5, 2024

03

84.25% ABOVE NATIONAL AVERAGE

## Women Safety Wing resolves 27 long-pending missing cases

The Women Safety Wing, which focuses on unresolved cases, reported that up to November 2024, 22,780 missing cases were reported in Telangana, with 19,191 successfully traced

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Women Safety Wing has resolved long-pending missing cases, including the recovery of individuals missing for nearly a decade. The State's tracing success rate stands at an impressive 84.25 per cent, well above the national average of 51.1 per cent.

Director-General of the Women Safety Wing Shikha Goel announced that 22-year-old Mohd Khaleel Ghori, who disappeared in 2014 at the age of 12 was traced in Uttar Pradesh. Investigators used advanced digital identity tracking and police investigation tools to uncover his whereabouts. Ghori had been placed in a childcare institution in Kanpur after being found at a railway station. He was later adopted under a new identity.

The Women Safety Wing, which focuses on unresolved cases, reported that up to



Director-General of the Women Safety Wing Shikha Goel with the family of one of traced missing boys

November 2024, 22,780 missing cases were reported in Telangana, with 19,191 successfully traced. Special teams have resolved 27 long-pending cases.

In another case, Ganga, a girl missing since 2015 from a shelter home in Nacharam, was located after nine years in Nizamabad. Investigators discovered that she had become a balloon seller.

Following a meticulous search across Telangana, the team traced her to Nizamabad, where she now lives with her husband and two children.

A third case involved two minors from Chandrayangutta, Hyderabad, who went missing in 2017.

The girl, then 10, and the boy, 8, were traced seven years later in Bengaluru, Karnataka. The team utilised open-source tools and digital identity tracking to locate them. Now aged 17 and 15, respectively, they have been reunited.

## Edu Commission finishes tour of institutions in 25 districts

DEEPIKA PASHAM  
deepikapasham2015@gmail.com  
■ HYDERABAD

Telangana's Education Commission is on a tour to inspect educational institutions in regard to the increasing incidents of students falling sick in government schools, residential and social welfare institutions.

The Education Commission consisting of four members has completed 25 districts while touring a few selected educational institutions such as government schools, residential, social welfare covering all types in regard to food poisoning incidents.

One of the members shared with The Pioneer that the tour began on November 28 and will end on December 7. Each member of the Education Commission is going around to three or four educational institutions in a



day committing to the districts they are assigned.

"We are looking at the facilities, food quality status and noting down the students' complaints," the members added.

All the members will sit down and discuss the reports they have collected and then make one overall report of the status of educational institutions.

The final report will be

submitted to the Chief Minister in the coming week.

The four members have covered districts such as Sangareddy, Hyderabad, Vikarabad, Nagarkurnool, Siddipet, Warangal, Mahbubnagar, Rangareddy, Hanumakonda, Nalgonda, Sircilla, Medchal, Bhupalpally, Suryapet, Khammam, Bhongir, Jangoan, Gadwal, Kothagudem, Medak, Mulugu, Karimnagar and Narayanpet.

## Tiger Reserve gets emergency ambulance; 79 fire blowers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

On the occasion of World Wildlife Day, December 4, a programme was conducted with the theme Connecting People and Planet: Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation. The theme highlighted the role of digital technologies in enhancing wildlife conservation efforts.

It was attended by Dr Vamshi Krishna, MLA of Achampet constituency, and senior forest officials such as Ram Babu, Field Director of Project Tiger (FDPT) and Rohith Gopidi, District Forest Officer (DFO) of Nagarkurnool.

The Apollo Foundation donated an emergency ambulance to support healthcare services for Primitive Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), including the Chenchu community in

the Nallamala Hills. The ambulance will be used for health checkups and emergencies.

Appreciation was conveyed to Upasana Konidella for her support. It will organise medical camps inside forests. MLA Vamshi Krishna urged the public to prevent forest fires and

emphasised the importance of protecting forests and wildlife. He commended the efforts of the Amrabad Tiger Reserve Forest department for their conservation initiatives.

The ICICI Foundation contributed 79 fire blowers to the Amrabad Tiger Reserve to help combat forest fires, which are often caused by human activities along the Srisailem Highway. The blowers aim to minimise damage to the forest and wildlife.



## WORLD WILDLIFE CONSERVATION DAY

### Praja Palana-Praja Vijayotsavalu celebrated at Zoological Park

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

World Wildlife Conservation Day and Praja Palana-Praja Vijayotsavalu were celebrated at Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad, on Wednesday with various activities. The event began with drawing and painting competitions on the theme of wildlife conservation. In all, 120 students from eight schools participated.

Nehru Zoological Park Curator J Vasantha, Deputy Curator Barnoba, and zoo staff took part in a plantation programme near the Black Buck enclosures. Plantations like Juvvi, Marri, Narepa and Aagesa were planted.

Curator Vasantha highlighted the zoo's efforts in wildlife education and eco-day celebrations. A pottery workshop was held under the 'Green Banner Education' initiative, with 900 participants, including students and visitors.

The day concluded with a snake awareness show at the reptile house amphitheater, attended by 1,000 students and visitors. Curator Vasantha congratulated the winners and expressed gratitude to all participants for making the programme a success.



District Revenue Officer E Venkatachari at a review meeting with officers

## 81 beneficiaries from Musheerabad, Jubilee Hills to get 2BHK houses

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad District Revenue Officer has announced that 37 beneficiaries from Bakaram in the Musheerabad constituency and 44 beneficiaries from Kamalanagar in the Jubilee Hills constituency will receive double-bedroom house letters on Thursday.

Ministers Ponnampati Prabhakar and Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy will issue the letters to the beneficiaries, said District Revenue Officer (DRO) E Venkatachari.

Eligible recipients from Jubilee Hills and Musheerabad constituencies are requested to report at Lakdikapul, Hyderabad Collectorate by 8 am with their Aadhaar card and three passport-size photographs.

The DRO shared these details during a preparatory meeting with revenue and housing department officials at the Collectorate's video conference hall on Wednesday. He instructed officials to make comprehensive arrangements for the distribution programme.

## Student suicides: Notice issued to Narayana colleges

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Women's Commission has expressed strong displeasure over the recurring student suicides in Narayana Colleges. The Commission has taken the issue seriously and issued notices to the management of these institutions.

The incidents include the suicide of Anusha at the Bachupally branch, Shiva Kumar Reddy at the Madhapur branch and Vaishnavi at the Mallampet branch of Narayana Colleges.

The Women's Commission has raised concerns about the practices and functioning of Narayana Colleges, holding the administration accountable for the distress faced by students.

## Abyro Capital ties up with T-Hub

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Driving Indo-US Startup Innovations, Abyro Capital, a US-India early-stage venture capital firm, has partnered with T-Hub and has launched its inaugural \$25 million (Rs 210 crore) fund aimed at boosting Telangana's investment ecosystem. Focused on solving real-world challenges, the fund will invest in startups across cutting-edge sectors like AI, GenAI, ERP SaaS, healthcare, financial inclusion, manufacturing, supply chain and delivery.



## CITY EVENTS

### Annual Day celebrations

At Slate School  
Venue

Ravindra Bharathi,  
Near State Assembly,  
Lakdikapul  
December 5, at 9:00 am.

### Birth Anniversary

PL Sanjeeva Reddy's  
birth anniversary  
Venue

Sri Thyagaraja Gana  
Sabha, Ashok Nagar,  
Chikkadpally  
December 5, at 6 pm.

### Live performance

By Yagna (Band)  
Venue

Hyderabad Amnesia  
Sky Bar  
Madhapur, December 5,  
at 8:00 pm

### Workshop

On Overcome Anxiety  
& Tension  
Venue

Swamy Vivekananda  
Institute Of Human  
Excellence (Language  
Schools)  
December 2 to 6 (6 pm)

### Geetha Madhuri Live

Venue

Akan,  
December 6, 9 pm  
onwards

### Arijit Singh Live in concert

HSBC presale is live for  
now. General sale on  
October 23, 1 pm. Get  
tickets only on insider.in  
and paytm.

Venue

Concert in Hyderabad  
on December 7.

### Texture art workshop

This workshop is suitable  
for artists of all levels,  
from beginners looking  
to explore new artistic  
horizons to seasoned  
artists seeking to  
enhance their skills and  
repertoire.

Venue

Multiple venues in  
Hyderabad  
till December 8

## Pure EV expands growth plans with Gen5 AI

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Deploying predictive AI and cloud AI technologies, Hyderabad-based Pure EV, a leading electric two-wheeler manufacturer, unveiled its roadmap to strengthen its presence nation-wide and expand globally while introducing innovative solutions for sustainable mobility.

In a media roundtable on Wednesday, Dr Nishanth Dongari, Founder and MD of Pure EV, highlighted that the platform uses predictive AI and cloud AI to enhance battery and powertrain durability exceeding 50,000 km. He also mentioned that Gen5 AI electronics, developed by IIT Hyderabad, are integrated into their systems, with IIT Hyderabad as an angel investor.

Dr Nishanth highlighted that the company is entering into GenAI, introducing speech-to-text features as the first in gathering customer feedback via Bluetooth dashboards in the EVs.

## REIT-worthy office stock makes up 74% of city's total office inventory

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With Hyderabad leading India in Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) - worthy office stock, accounting for 74% of the city's office inventory, the Indian REITs Association (IRA) and Bharat InvITs Association (BIA) organised their first awareness programme in Hyderabad to educate retail investors about these investment vehicles.

Addressing the media at Taj Krishna on Wednesday, Preeti Chheda, CFO of Mindspace Business Parks REIT, highlighted REITs' growth in India, which began with 10.3% foreign portfolio investments totaling Rs 20,000 crore, followed by Indian insurance companies investing Rs 7,000 crore. She noted that REITs allow investors to earn income from real estate without owning properties. Preeti explained India's four publicly

listed REITs are Brookfield India, Embassy Office Parks, Mindspace and Nexus Select Trust.

Meanwhile, Abhishek Chhajjar, CFO of Highway Infrastructure Trust, noted that InvITs, regulated since 2016, have grown to 26 trusts, including four listed ones. He highlighted that Most InvITs focus on road projects and are crucial to India's infrastructure expansion, backed by government initiatives.

He mentioned that REITs manage Rs 1,50,000 crore in assets, distribute 90% of income semi-annually, and have returned Rs 19,000 crore to investors. Units are affordable, starting at Rs 100 - Rs 400. Abhishek also noted that InvITs manage Rs 5,00,000 crore in assets, with 80% in operational projects. They offer tax-efficient investments and a five-year return of 17.1%.

## COURTESY CALL



M Dana Kishore took charge as Principal Secretary to Governor Jishnu Dev Varma at Raj Bhavan on Wednesday.

## NETHANNA KU CHEYUTHA

## TG govt releases Rs 465 cr dues to weavers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has implemented several programmes to enhance the welfare and development of weavers, releasing Rs 465 crore towards dues and Rs 290 crore under the Nethanna Ku Cheyutha scheme for registered handloom workers, said Shailaja Ramaier, Principal Secretary of the Handlooms and Textiles department.

The government has also mandated that all departments, corporations, societies and institutions to procure their textile requirements through the Telangana State Handloom Weavers Cooperative Society (TSCO), ensuring consistent work opportunities for weavers. Shailaja Ramaier highlighted these



Shailaja Ramaier, Principal Secretary of the Handlooms and Textiles department inaugurating a handloom expo on Wednesday

initiatives during the inauguration of a Special Handloom Exhibition at the Kamma Sangham Hall in Ameerpet, Hyderabad. The exhibition is part of the

Praja Palana Praja Vijayotsavam and will run from December 4 to 9. She mentioned that Rs 50 crore corpus fund has been allocated for maintain-

ing buffer stock at yarn depots, benefiting weavers in areas like Sircilla. Under the Nethanna Ku Cheyutha scheme, Rs 290 crore was distributed to 36,333 handloom workers and allied workers. Additionally, Rs 5.45 crore was released to benefit 9,576 powerloom weavers and associated workers.

In all, Rs 22 crore has been credited to nominee accounts under the Weavers Insurance Scheme.

A new scheme named Telangana Chenetha Abhyasa Hastham has been proposed for 2024-25 with a budget of Rs 238 crore to ensure the welfare and comprehensive development of weavers. Similarly, Rs 1.09 crore in pending loans under the Jivika Loans Scheme have been disbursed to 60 societies.



## Revamp of Kakatiya University on the cards

The Congress government formed a special committee to give recommendations to bring reforms to varsity administration

PNS ■ HANAMKONDA

In an effort to reform Kakatiya University, which has recently been at the centre of numerous controversies, the State government has formed a special committee tasked with preparing a Detailed Project Report (DPR) outlining proposals to address the university's issues.

The committee will identify the university's major challenges and suggest solutions to improve various aspects of its operations. Key concerns include the lack of funds, unfilled teaching and non-teaching positions, stagnation in introducing new courses, encroachment on university land, irregularities in PhD admissions and students' protests over insufficient amenities in hostels, and the alleged corruption in approval of bills for contractors.

During the tenure of the previous BRS government, the then TPCC president Revanth Reddy, supported student protests against irregularities in PhD



admissions and pledged to reform the university's administration once the Congress took power.

Following the Chief Minister's directions, a team of 30 MLAs, including N Rajender Reddy and MP Kadium Kavya,

visited the university and held discussions with university authorities. They asked the university authorities to prepare a DPR to address its various needs.

As per the Chief Minister's instructions, a committee consisting of 16 professors, led by Prof V Ramachandram, the Dean of the College Development Council, was formed. This committee is working on proposals to resolve the university's issues over the next five years.

A meeting will be held on December 23, where MLAs and other elected representatives will review the DPR and suggest modifications. Once the committee incorporates all the changes, the final DPR will be submitted to the State government. Upon approval by the Chief Minister, the university will undergo a comprehensive reform.

This proactive approach, involving both political leaders and university officials, marks a positive departure from previous efforts and has been well received by students and staff at the university.



## Hungry tigers on prowl in Asifabad district

These wild animals which moved into forests from Maharashtra are struggling to find prey

PNS ■ KUMRAM BHEEM ASIFABAD

In Kumram Bheem Asifabad district, concern is growing over the welfare of the tigers roaming the area with forest officials expressing the view that a food shortage may force them to return to their original habitats. Currently, four to five tigers are moving through the forest areas of Asifabad and Sirpur constituencies, but they are facing challenging conditions. On the one hand, they are being pursued by Forest officials. On the other, the increasing human activity and noise pollution from vehicles are making it difficult for them to settle. With little food to be found, these tigers are likely to leave the area, according to Forest officials.

In the Kerameri hills, the CCTV cameras have captured footage of tigers preying on animals. Additionally, a male tiger has crossed from Maharashtra into Telangana, establishing a territory between the Wankidi and Asifabad mandals. Two more tigers have settled in the forests of Malini and Koutala in the Sirpur (T). These tigers migrated from Maharashtra's Tadoba and Tipeswar sanctuaries in search of mates. During the mat-

ing season, male tigers search for female tigers and vice versa, often leading to increased aggression, with tigers more likely to attack animals or humans.

Recently, two farm labourers in the Sirpur constituency were attacked by a tiger, resulting in the death of a woman, named Lakshmi, and severe injuries to a man, named Suresh. The rise in tiger attacks has sparked anger among local people and they are upset by the failure of Forest officials in capturing the wild animals. People are afraid to leave their homes, and farm workers are hesitant to venture into the fields or take livestock into the forest for grazing. In response, forest officials are actively tracking the tigers to minimize harm to both the animals and the community.

The food shortage for these tigers is becoming increasingly severe, as they are forced to hunt livestock like cattle and goats. Despite the presence of wild animals in the area, opportunities for the tigers to hunt are limited. There are fears that the people in the area may poison the tigers. The Forest officials are taking all measures to protect the tigers.



Khammam MP Raghuram Reddy presenting a memorandum to Postal Secretary Vandita Kaul in Delhi

## Postal officials urged to fill GDS posts with local candidates

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Khammam MP Raghuram Reddy has urged the officials to fill 95 per cent of vacancies of Rural Dak Sevak (GDS) postal jobs in Telangana with local candidates. He submitted a memorandum to Postal Secretary Vandita Kaul in Delhi on Wednesday. He explained the grading system has caused injustice.

He made several suggestions regarding the procedures for filling vacant posts in Telangana circle, stating that those who studied Telugu

locally should be considered eligible. He pointed out that due to the grading system, Telangana candidates are not being fairly represented in the selection process.

Candidates from other states, who are evaluated based on marks rather than grading, are securing these posts, which he claimed happened in previous selections as well. In the recently announced results, 747 non-Telangana candidates were selected. Raghuram Reddy requested a re-evaluation of the process.

## Security beefed up for Maoist martyrs' week

PNS ■ MULUGU

In view of the ongoing Maoist Martyrs Week, security measures have been beefed up in the Maoist-affected areas of Mulugu, Mahabubabad, and Bhupalpally districts which lie on the Telangana-Chhattisgarh border. The outlawed CPI-Maoist is observing the week to honour their fallen comrades who were killed in encounters with the police.

To bolster security, additional forces have been deployed at key sites such as the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KILP) at the Medigadda and Annaram barages, as well as the Kannepalli pumphouse, located in the forested Mahadevur mandal of Jayashankar Bhupalpally district.

The police have been put on high alert across these three districts, with extra police units assigned to patrol the Agency areas near the Godavari River.

A high alert has also been declared along the Andhra-Odisha Border (AOB) and Chhattisgarh border.

## Officials taken to task for not inviting MP to official programme

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Shadnagar witnessed a political storm as BJP State executive member Palamuru Vishnuvardhan Reddy alleged that Shadnagar Municipal officials insulted Palamuru MP DK Aruna by deliberately excluding her from the Amrut 2 programme. Addressing a press conference in Shadnagar, Vishnuvardhan Reddy accused the state government of conspiring to humiliate Aruna.

Speaking at a media conference attended by senior BJP leaders, Vishnuvardhan Reddy claimed that the exclusion of DK Aruna from the Amrut 2 programme in Shadnagar's seventh ward was part of a larger conspiracy following the Lagacharla incident.

He criticised the Municipal Commissioner for conducting programmes funded by Central government without informing the MP, asserting that such actions amounted to disrespecting the MP. He added that DK Aruna is prepared to move a privilege motion in Parliament to address this violation.

Vishnuvardhan Reddy further alleged that the State government is using its influence over officials to politically undermine DK Aruna.

Vishnuvardhan Reddy lashed out at the Congress-led state government, questioning its achievements in the year since it came to power. He asked whether promises made to farmers, youth, and women were fulfilled.

"Did the Congress government waive farmers' loans, provide double-bedroom houses, or offer Rs.

**He criticised the Municipal Commissioner for conducting programmes funded by Central government without informing the MP**

2,500 monthly benefits to women? What are they celebrating?" he questioned.

The BJP leader accused the Congress of taking credit for the works initiated by the previous government, stating that their so-called victory programmes were mere inaugurations and foundation stone ceremonies of the projects which were already existing.

He declared that the BJP would launch an uncompromising fight to expose the Congress' failures.

Vishnuvardhan Reddy also criticised the Congress government for halting the construction of the Chatanpally Railway Overbridge.

He alleged that the project, started during the previous administration, was delayed due to design changes initiated after the Congress came to power.

He questioned the MLA's inability to restart the project and demanded accountability for the funds spent on the incomplete pillar work.

## Wildlife Conservation Day observed

PNS ■ MEDAK

Engineering students participated in a trekking programme under the leadership of District Forest Officer M Joji at the Narsapur Urban Forest Park in Medak district on Wednesday.

As part of the fourth day celebrations of the People's Administration Victory Festival, students from BVRIT College's NSS unit, along with students from Akshara School, participated in cycling and trekking activities.

In the presence of Narsapur Forest Range Officer Arvind and the Narsapur Range staff, classes were held on forest areas, other forest activities, wildlife conservation, and the importance of fire

prevention in the forest.

On the occasion of Wildlife Conservation Day 2024, awareness programme on wildlife conservation was organised at the Pocharam Wildlife Sanctuary in Medak district. Students from Burugupalli District Parishad High School participated in essay writing.

During the event, DFO Joji mentioned that the programme was organised as part Praja Palana Praja Vijayotsavulu being conducted the State government to mark the completion of one year rule.

FRO A Manoj Kumar, FSO A Sravanthi, Beat Officers Ramu, Priyanka, forest staff and others were present.



Engineering students participating in trekking programme under the supervision of Forest officer at Narsapur Forest Park in Medak district on Wednesday

## Ande Moha elected as State YC general secretary

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

The Youth Congress elections brought significant victories for Shadnagar leaders, showcasing their growing influence across Telangana.

Ande Mohan, a prominent youth leader from Shadnagar, once again secured the position of Youth Congress State general secretary with an impressive 8,695 votes. Pulimamidi Rajesh Goud was elected as Shadnagar Youth Congress Assembly unit president with 4,710 votes, while Sai Vamsi emerged victorious as Shadnagar party town unit president with 747 votes.



Ande Moha

Ande Mohan's rise in the Youth Congress has been marked by consistent dedication and leadership. Starting as a booth-level president in Shadnagar, he later served as

the town president before advancing to the roles of state secretary and general secretary. His re-election as YS State general secretary with a massive margin highlighted his influence and popularity within the Congress Party.

Known for his proactive role in the Youth Congress, Ande Mohan has built a strong reputation among party members and supporters.

Pulimamidi Rajesh Goud and Sai Vamsi, who are regarded as close associates of Ande Mohan, also showcased their leadership by securing key positions.

## BRS raises concern over Cong govt's 'failure' to develop Nalgonda dist

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) former MLA Kancherla Bhupal Reddy sharply criticised the Congress government and its leaders, particularly Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, for failing to fulfil promises and neglecting the development of Nalgonda.

At a media conference, attended by former Zilla Parishad (ZP) chairman Banda Narendar Reddy, BRS mandal



unit president Depa Venkat Reddy and party town unit President Bhongiri Deveder, echoed Bhupal Reddy's concerns over the Congress gov-

ernment's failures.

Bhupal Reddy pointed out that it has been one year since Congress came to power, but none of the major promises made to the people have been implemented. He alleged that Congress Ministers and MLAs were busy looting public funds while the people continued to suffer.

He emphasised that Congress had gained power by making false promises, like the 420 guarantees, which had not been kept.

## Rumours of more tremors spark fear

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR

The mild tremors were experienced for four seconds on Wednesday in Bhupalapally, Kataram, Malhar Rao, Mahamuttaram, Mahadevur and Palimelamandals of Kataram revenue division in the undivided Warangal district.

The tremors sent shivers down the spines of the people. People were seen running out of their homes to

safer places.

People were seen huddling together and discussing about the tremors experienced. The tremors figured as the main topic in mobile conversations.

People were living in the grip of fear as a voice message became viral predicting that more tremors are likely. People dreading to step into their homes and sitting on the roads and were discussing about the

tremors.

However, the police allayed the fears of further tremors and assuring the people that the situation was normal. The police warn of stern action against those who spread rumours on social media.

CCTV cameras have recorded the tremors experienced in Bhupalapally and also in Kailasapur in Chityalamandal. In Rangapuram village, tiles of the roof of a house

dropped down under the impact of tremors leading to the villagers gathering near the house.

Senior citizens have been stating that they did not come across such tremors in their regions. Scientists have been allaying the fears by stating that the region is very safe and ruled out any scope of experiencing earthquakes. The scientists say that the people need not worry about the mild tremors.

## Students' illness not due to food poisoning: DC

PNS ■ NALGONDA

District Collector Ila Tripathi on Wednesday clarified that, contrary to media reports, the students of PA Pally Model School were ill, but not due to food poisoning.

On Tuesday, four students fell ill and were shifted to Devarkonda Area Hospital. Upon learning of the incident, the Collector rushed to Devarkonda and visited the students undergoing treatment at the hospital. She directly spoke to the students to understand the cause of their illness.

Later, at a media interaction, the District Collector stated that four students from PA Pally Model School experienced abdominal pain and became ill. They were immediately shifted to Devarkonda Area Hospital where doctors



Nalgonda Collector Ila Tripathi interacting with a PA Pally Model School student who is undergoing treatment in the hospital at Devarkonda on Tuesday night

conducted all necessary tests and provided treatment. Their health condition is stable now, she said.

PA Pally Tahsildar J Srinivasarao stated in his report submitted to the Devarkonda

Revenue Divisional Officer ruled out food poisoning that led to the students becoming ill. The students complained that the rice being served to them was of poor quality.

Five students from Dugyala

Model School fell ill unexpectedly on Tuesday evening. The affected students were Poojita, an MPC first-year student, Maunika, a BiPC first-year student, Malleshwari, a CEC first-year student, Nikhita, a BiPC first-year student, and Kommu Harini, an MPC first-year student. They experienced vomiting and immediately consulted Dr Paramesh, the RMP doctor at PA Palli. After primary treatment, the students were referred to Devarkonda Area Hospital for further care at around 10:30 pm.

Upon receiving information about the incident, the Tahsildar visited Dugyala Model School and the hostel and spoke with the students. The students informed him that they had not been receiving proper food for the past

two to three days, which led to the unexpected incident on Tuesday.

On Tuesday night, District Collector Ila Tripathi, Devarkonda RDO Ramana Reddy, DSP, Gudipalli MEO, and the Devarkonda Area Hospital team visited the hospital to assess the situation.

The duty doctor and hospital superintendent provided immediate medical care to the students, and after conducting necessary tests, they confirmed that there was no food poisoning.

The doctors clarified that the students showed no signs of food poisoning.

According to the Tahsildar's report, the students had only consumed breakfast in the morning and had not eaten anything afterwards, which led to dehydration and illness.



ACROSS THE STATES



Six central universities to offer admissions twice a year

Six central universities have adopted the policy of offering admissions twice a year, the Union Ministry of Education said on Wednesday. The information was shared by Union Minister of State for Education Sukanta Majumdar in response to a written question in the Rajya Sabha. "The University Grants Commission (UGC) has approved the policy of allowing Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) to admit students twice a year, in July/August and January/February. However, admitting students twice a year is optional for the HEIs, depending on their preparedness to handle such biannual admissions," Majumdar said. "The willing HEIs are required to carefully prepare a plan for all the activities related to the policy of admitting the students twice a year, including a plan for semester examinations," he added. The minister informed that six central universities -- Central University of Kerala, Central University of Punjab, Central University of Rajasthan, University of Hyderabad, Tezpur University and Nagaland University -- adopted the policy of offering admissions twice a year.



Bhutan King to arrive in India today

Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck will pay a two-day visit to India beginning Thursday to further advance the already close bilateral partnership between the two nations. Wangchuck will be accompanied by Queen Jetsun Pema Wangchuck and senior officials of the Bhutanese government, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said, announcing the trip. The King will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the two leaders are expected to deliberate on ways to further deepen bilateral cooperation in a wide range of areas. "India and Bhutan enjoy unique ties of friendship and cooperation, which are characterised by mutual understanding and trust," the MEA said. "The visit shall provide both sides an opportunity to review the entire gamut of bilateral cooperation and to further advance the exemplary bilateral partnership across diverse sectors," it said in a statement.



'People of Bastar want to see end of Naxalism'

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Wednesday said his government has fought a decisive battle against Naxalism in the last 11 months of its tenure and is making concerted efforts to fulfil the Centre's resolve to eliminate the menace by March 2026. Sai, who took oath as CM in December 2023 after the BJP stormed back to power, maintained the people of the Bastar region, affected by Left wing extremism (LWE), want to move towards development. He was addressing a meeting called to review the ongoing anti-Naxal operations in the state at police headquarters in Nava Raipur, a government statement said. Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma, who holds the home portfolio, Director General of Police Ashok Juneja and senior officials were present in the meeting, it said. The state's BJP government has fought a decisive battle against Naxalism in the last 11 months and the people of the Bastar region now want to get rid of the menace and move towards development, Sai told the meeting.

J'khand HC exempts CM from personal appearance in court

The Jharkhand High Court on Wednesday exempted Chief Minister Hemant Soren from personal appearance before the MP/MLA court in Ranchi in a case related to disobeying summonses by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). The Court gave a week's time to the Enforcement Directorate to file a reply in the case. The case will be heard again on December 16 and till then Soren was exempted from personally appearing before the MP/MLA court. ED had filed a complaint against Soren before the court of the judicial magistrate for his non-appearance though he has been summoned several times by the central agency in connection with a case of alleged money laundering linked to a land scam. The court ordered Soren to appear before the MP/MLA Court in Ranchi in person on December 4. The chief minister challenged the order of the judicial magistrate before the high court, saying he was unable to appear personally due to official commitments and engagements.

Rahul stopped on way to Sambhal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ghaziabad (UP), Dec 4 (PTI) A delegation of Congress leaders led by Rahul Gandhi on its way to violence-hit Sambhal was stopped by Uttar Pradesh Police at Ghazipur border here on Wednesday and had to return, with the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha terming the action as "anti-constitutional". The opposition party's leaders, including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, returned to Delhi after staying at the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border for about two hours, failing to proceed onwards. A massive traffic jam was witnessed at the Ghazipur border on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway in the morning as Congress workers gathered there amid heavy security

deployment and barricading. The carriageway from Delhi to Uttar Pradesh was heavily congested, with thousands of commuters facing a harrowing time on the road. After being stopped at the Ghazipur border, Rahul Gandhi said he was ready to go alone to Sambhal with police but was not allowed. "We are trying to go to Sambhal. Police are refusing, not allowing us. As the leader of opposition in Lok Sabha, it is my right to go... I said that I am ready to go alone, I am ready to go with the police but they did not accept that either," he said. "Now they are saying that if we come back in a few days, they will let us go. This is actually against the right of the leader of opposition in Lok Sabha. I should be allowed to go," he told reporters. BJP

TERMS POLICE ACTION ANTI-DEMOCRATIC



leaders in Uttar Pradesh decried the Congress's move as a "drama" aimed at "appeasing its Muslim vote bank". Meanwhile, Congress legislative party leader in Uttar Pradesh assembly Aradhana Mishra 'Mona' claimed in Lucknow that she was supposed to be a part of the dele-

gation but was put under "house arrest". "I am under house arrest. This is hooliganism and anarchy by the government. Rahul ji, the Congress party and I will visit Sambhal today, tomorrow or whenever we can," she said. Prohibitory orders are in place in Sambhal where violence erupted on November 24 over a court-ordered mosque survey, killing four people and injuring several others. Holding up a copy of the Constitution in his hands amid heavy security at the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border, Rahul Gandhi said the police's decision was against democracy. "We want to go to Sambhal and see what happened there. We want to meet the people but I'm not being allowed my constitutional right. This is India where attempts are on to end the

Constitution. But we will keep fighting," he added. Priyanka Vadra said what happened in Sambhal was wrong and as the LoP, Rahul Gandhi has the constitutional right to visit it. "He is different from other people. He cannot be stopped. He has the constitutional right to go and meet the victims, he should be allowed," the Wayanad Lok Sabha member added. Later, Rahul Gandhi posted on X: "The police stopped us from going to Sambhal. Being the leader of the opposition, it is my right and duty to go there. Yet I was stopped. I am ready to go alone, but they did not agree to that either. This is against the Constitution. Why is the BJP scared - why is it using the police to hide its failures? Why is it suppressing the message of truth and brotherhood?"

De-escalation, activities in border areas to be discussed

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Peace and tranquility in border areas is a pre-requisite for the development of bilateral ties with China and the two sides will be discussing de-escalation and effective management of activities in these areas in the coming days, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday while making a statement on India-China relations in the Rajya Sabha. A brief uproar was also witnessed following the statement and Opposition MPs walked out of the House after Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar, disallowed them from seeking some clarifications. Jaishankar, while making a statement on "Recent Developments in India's Relations with China", also said disengagement has now been achieved in full in east-

JAISHANKAR ON INDIA-CHINA TIES



ern Ladakh through a step-by-step process, culminating in Depsang and Demchok. He had earlier made an identical statement in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. Jaishankar, in his statement, said India was and remains very clear that the three key principles must be observed in all circumstances, he said explaining: "one: both sides should strictly respect and observe the Line of Actual

Control (LAC), two: neither side should attempt to unilaterally alter the status quo, and three: agreements and understandings reached in the past must be fully abided by in their entirety". "Our relationship had progressed in many domains, but was obviously negatively affected by recent events. We are clear that the maintenance of peace and tranquility in border areas is a prerequisite for the development of our ties. In the coming days, we will be discussing both de-escalation as well as effective management of our activities in the border areas," he said. He said with the task of disengagement completed, it is now our expectation that discussions would commence in regard to the remaining issues that we had placed on the agenda.



'Govt committed to prevent fraud in cooperative societies'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Modi government is fully committed to preventing frauds in cooperative societies and no culprit will be spared irrespective of their political affiliation, Minister of State for Cooperation Krishan Pal asserted in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. Responding to supplementary queries during the Question Hour in the Upper House on the delinquencies in the multi-state cooperative societies, the minister said ever since this government came to power, several steps have been taken to stop fraud. "Those who commit fraud, whether he is from this side or that side (pointing first towards the government and then the opposition), whether big or small, he will not be spared at any cost," the minister said. He said action is already on in this regard. "After this government came to power and this ministry was formed, several stringent steps have been taken. If you say, I will discuss all that (with you)," the minister added.

He alleged that the cooperative department had been created to harass others. Meanwhile, the deputy speaker intervened and said that nothing would go on record and, if the members were not satisfied with any answers, there were provisions under the rules and procedures. During the discussion, TMC MP Saket Gokhale sought to know the total number of banks operated by multi-state cooperative societies that have been liquidated from 2019 to 2024 because of scams and bad loan ratios. He asked about the steps being taken by the Ministry to protect the money of depositors which is held in these banks that do scams and get caught with bad loan ratios. The minister said there is no place for fraud in this government. "There are 70 such banks in which such activities have happened and out of that seven are in liquidation."

Fadnavis elected BJP legislature party leader

TO BE SWORN IN AS CM TODAY

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Devendra Fadnavis was on Wednesday unanimously elected as Maharashtra BJP legislature party leader, paving the way for his swearing in as the chief minister for a third time. Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde and NCP's Ajit Pawar will be sworn in as deputy chief ministers at the ceremony, to be held at the sprawling Azad Maidan in south Mumbai on Thursday in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sources said. At the legislature party meeting held in Vidhan Bhawan on Wednesday, former Gujarat CM and BJP's central observer Vijay Rupani announced that Fadnavis (54) has been unanimously elected the BJP legislature party leader. Speaking at the meeting, BJP's central observer and Union minister Nirmala



Sitharaman said the "double engine government" in the state and the Centre will boost development. Fadnavis thanked the BJP legislators for reposing trust in him, adding that the thumping victory of the ruling Mahayuti alliance in the November 20 assembly elections was due to the mantra

of "Ek hai toh safe hai" given by PM Modi. At the Vidhan Bhawan meeting, senior state BJP leader Chandrakant Patil proposed the name of Fadnavis as the legislature party leader. Fadnavis' name was finalised for the top post at the state BJP's core committee meet held here ahead of the legislature party meeting. A delegation led by Fadnavis is expected to meet Governor C P Radhakrishnan at 3.30 pm on Wednesday to stake claim to form the new government in the state. The BJP achieved remarkable success in the November 20 Maharashtra elections, securing 132 out of the 288 assembly seats in the state, marking its best performance in the state so far. Together with its allies Shiv Sena and NCP, the BJP-led Mahayuti coalition has a commanding majority of 230 seats.



NAVY'S COMMITMENT ENSURES NATION'S SAFETY, PROSPERITY, SAYS PM MODI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday lauded the Indian Navy on Navy Day, saying its commitment ensures the safety, security and prosperity of the nation. Navy Day is observed as an acknowledgement of the Navy's seminal role in the country's defence, and December 4 was chosen to commemorate its valour against Pakistan during the 1971 war when it inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. "On Navy Day, we salute the valiant personnel of the Indian Navy who protect our seas with unmatched courage and dedication. Their commitment ensures the safety, security and prosperity of our nation. We also take great pride in India's rich maritime history," the prime minister said in a post on X.

'Be ready for unnecessary compliments in politics'

SC IN DEFAMATION CASE

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

One should be ready to receive all sorts of unwarranted and unnecessary compliments upon entering politics, the Supreme Court observed on Wednesday while hearing union minister L Murugan's plea in a defamation case. The apex court in September 2023 stayed the criminal defamation proceedings against Murugan on a complaint filed by Chennai-based Murasoli Trust for his alleged defamatory statements at a press conference in December, 2020. Murugan, union minister of state for Information and Broadcasting, moved the top court challenging the September 5, 2023 order of the Madras High Court, which refused to quash the defamation proceedings.

When the matter came up for hearing on Wednesday before a bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan, it asked his counsel, "Are you willing to make a statement that you had no intention to defame?" The counsel appearing for the trust said that persons holding office had to be responsible. "Free speech issues, you have to have breathing space," the bench said, "when you enter politics, you should be ready to receive all sorts of unwarranted, unnecessary compliments." The counsel appearing for the trust said they were not in politics. "He (petitioner) is making a statement that he did not intend to hurt your sentiments," the bench told the trust's counsel, who sought time till Thursday to seek instructions.

SC ASKS STATES

Furnish details on facilities for the homeless in winter

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the states to furnish details about the facilities available for housing homeless persons in wake of the winters. A bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan said the state governments should file their affidavits without fail within two weeks specifying these details. The top court requested Attorney General R Venkataramani to assist it in the matter and suggested the authorities to take assistance from corporate social responsibility. "You may incentivise," the bench said, "there must be corporates willing to help". The apex court was hearing a matter concerning the right to shelter of homeless persons in the urban areas. During the hearing, one of the advocates appearing for the petitioners said the state governments should be asked to apprise the bench about the facilities available for homeless persons besides their



respective winter action plans. It posted the hearing after two weeks. While hearing the matter on December 3, the apex court sought details from the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) on the facilities available for housing homeless persons in the national capital. "We are concerned. We are on the eve of what is going to be a very chilly winter," the bench observed. The top court asked the DUSIB to give details about the number of persons who could be accommodated in shelter homes and an estimate of those requiring such facilities. The bench then said if there was any deficit in the facilities available, the DUSIB would apprise how it proposed to deal with it.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## No love lost

The relations between India and Bangladesh are on the ebb and if steps are not taken now, could deteriorate further

The relations between India and Bangladesh, long characterised by cultural ties and strategic cooperation, have soured in recent months. Protests, diplomatic outrage and heightened security concerns are the latest manifestations of the growing rift between the two neighbours. The arrest of a Hindu monk in Bangladesh has sparked unrest, further straining ties that have been under pressure since the ousting of former Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August 2024. The minority has historically faced discrimination and sporadic violence, often exacerbated by political upheavals. Sheikh Hasina's government, in power until her abrupt ousting in August, was seen as somewhat supportive of minorities, though her critics argue this support was inconsistent. Hasina's exit, triggered by mass protests against alleged corruption and authoritarianism, plunged Bangladesh into political instability. The arrest of Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das in Bangladesh has reignited long-standing grievances about the treatment of minorities in the country. Das was detained on charges of sedition and inciting unrest during an October protest advocating minority rights in Chittagong. His denied bail and the subsequent delay of his hearing until January 2025 have escalated tensions.



This has led to protests in India, headed by Hindu organisations and supported by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). These protests culminated in an attack on the Bangladeshi consulate in Agartala, causing significant diplomatic fallout. The vandalism at the consulate prompted sharp criticism from Dhaka,

which labeled the incident 'heinous' and demanded stringent action from India. Bangladesh also summoned Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka to show its displeasure over the incident. Meanwhile, Indian authorities, while condemning the attack and increasing security for Bangladeshi diplomatic missions, have struggled to contain public sentiment. In Dhaka, the storming of the consulate sparked counter-protests, with students and activists condemning the incident and demanding accountability from India. The situation has become a flashpoint for nationalist and religious tensions on both sides. The strained relations carry significant risks. For India, Bangladesh is a vital partner in maintaining border security and managing regional stability. The two countries share deep economic ties and cultural connections, making any prolonged estrangement costly. However, mutual trust has eroded. While Indian side urge Bangladesh to address violence against minorities, Bangladeshi officials accuse Indian media of propagating disinformation. Both nations have had good relations and they must urgently de-escalate tensions. Resolving the immediate crisis surrounding the monk's arrest, addressing minority rights concerns in Bangladesh, and curbing inflammatory rhetoric in India are critical steps.

## Election results challenge the Opposition unity

The electoral setbacks have exposed fractures within the INDIA alliance while the BJP has emerged stronger after the recently held state elections



KALYANI SHANKAR

The aftermath of the recent election results in Maharashtra and Jharkhand has led to cracks within the Opposition coalition known as the INDIA alliance. Following these disappointing results, some partners in the INDIA bloc, such as the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Trinamool Congress, are focusing on their agendas and show little interest in collaborating for the current winter session of Parliament. AAP chief Kejriwal has announced that his party will go solo in Delhi Assembly polls, ruling out tie-up with Congress. The INDIA bloc hoped to consolidate anti-BJP votes in the capital.

Still, Kejriwal's announcement signals a potential fracture in unity. Additionally, it seems unlikely that the Uddhav Thackeray coalition will work together in the upcoming civic election. Consequently, the immediate concern for these partners is to unite and collaborate effectively. However, achieving this is proving to be quite challenging. Every political party makes mistakes, but the successful ones learn and improve. The INDIA bloc aimed to defeat the BJP in the Lok Sabha polls, ultimately allowing the BJP to form a government with support from the JD(U) and the Telugu Desam Party. The Assembly polls lacked a joint strategy. Two key points stand out in the recent elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand. First is the significant victory of the BJP-led NDA in Maharashtra. Second is the ease with which Hemant Soren retained his position in Jharkhand despite being jailed on allegations of corruption. Another important question is whether the Congress, NCP and the Uddhav faction of the Shiv Sena misinterpreted the signals on the ground. Did the BJP make errors in Jharkhand? The recent results reveal missed growth opportunities. It could have performed better if Congress had learned from past experiences and made necessary adjustments. Unlike the Pachmarhi or Shimla conclaves,



there has been a lack of post-election analysis.

The Grand Old Party is entirely under the control of Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition, and his chosen associates. Rahul worked hard and campaigned, but the party could not deliver. The results suggest they have yet to learn from the recent Haryana Assembly elections, such as relying heavily on one leader, ignoring the others, and the wrong distribution of tickets despite being in a winning position.

The most crucial aspect of the Congress Party, NCP and the Uddhav faction of Shiv Sena must address is the narrative. For the Congress, the focus on caste issues, defending the Constitution, and making personal attacks on the Prime Minister has not resonated with the voters. This disconnect is a clear sign that the party needs to reevaluate its strategy and focus on issues that truly matter to the electorate, such as the bread and butter issues.

It is a pressing concern that needs alignment. Even earlier, Rahul Gandhi's Gandhi's attack on Savarkar did not garner any support for Congress; instead, it created friction between the Shiv Sena, which idolised Savarkar and Congress. These parties also did not realise the political impact of the BJP's par-



FOR THE CONGRESS, THE FOCUS ON CASTE ISSUES, DEFENDING THE CONSTITUTION, AND MAKING PERSONAL ATTACKS ON THE PRIME MINISTER HAS NOT RESONATED WITH THE VOTERS

ent organisation, RSS, which worked for the party's success. Maratha strongman Sharad Pawar must feel disheartened after losing his party and the election to his nephew, Ajit Pawar, whom he groomed. The warning signs became clear when Ajit joined the BJP, betraying his uncle to help form the government. The situation worsened when the Election Commission recognised Ajit's faction as the real Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), despite Sharad Pawar having founded and led it to power multiple times.

This decision severely undermined Pawar. So must Uddhav Thackeray, son of Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray, who succeeded his father, lost the party and elections to his rebel Eknath Shinde, who helped BJP form the government in Maharashtra in a coalition. Both must introspect about what led to their loss of popularity.

On the other hand, JMM, a partner in the INDIA bloc, has demonstrated how to win despite numerous challenges. JMM Chief Minister Hemant Soren and his wife, Kalpana, faced several hardships, including a jail sentence for Soren. The results of the bye-elections after the Assembly polls show that the BJP is not invincible.

Elections in India happen almost continuously in various states, which means the election season never truly ends. The next significant event will be the Rajya Sabha elections for six seats on December 20. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is expected to win five of these six seats. At the same time, the Trinamool Congress is likely to secure one. If this prediction holds, the NDA will gain a majority in the Upper House, which could weaken the Congress Party's position in Parliament. There are currently eight vacancies: four in the nomination category and four in Jammu and Kashmir. Elections around the world highlight both victories and defeats. Each election offers valuable lessons regarding the successes and mistakes of the candidates and parties involved. These outcomes are not exclusively driven by generational change, as change is a constant process. Future generations must strive to advance their party. Ultimately, the true winner is the one who learns from their mistakes swiftly. Winners should avoid becoming complacent, while those who lose must stay motivated.

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

### PICTALK



Artistes perform during a show of Rambo Circus, in Mumbai



ALKA KAPUR

## The role of teachers in building positive learning spaces

A successful classroom isn't just about books and resources; it's about creating an environment where students feel valued, heard and empowered to succeed

A thriving learning classroom is grounded in the way the students perceive their classroom. It's not just about utilising the appropriate resources but establishing a space where students feel recognised, heard and valued. Teachers are the key catalysts in making this possible by nurturing a balanced, cohesive and well-organised environment that allows students to reach their potential. By implementing strategies to cater to individual requirements, connect thoughtfully, and commemorate milestones, educators can establish an educational atmosphere that supports progress, self-esteem, and teamwork.



Teachers can build a positive and inspiring learning space: **Develop a sense of anticipation:** Teachers should give explicit instructions and procedures to their students so that they feel comfortable. When students know what comes next, their interaction with the lesson increases and their belief in their learning abilities is enhanced, leading to a serene and concentrated mood. Address students' needs. No student is entirely

more. Team-building activities help in practising directives and showing appreciation to others. **Be experiential:** Sometimes, the mistakes, failings and losses of the teachers make the learning environment comfortable and emotionally intelligent. This ensures that students are encouraged to connect and share, indicating that learning is collective and not individual.

**Celebrate success and appreciate students:** Recognising and celebrating students' achievements enhances their self-confidence and encourages them to try again. Teachers must reward such behaviour with verbal appreciation, prizes, or other forms of reward in the classroom. **Avoid judgement:** Acceptance and open-mindedness are evident in a conducive learning environment. Judgement should not be attached to the students so that the students can feel free to explore and even commit mistakes without being laughed at.

**Suppress anger and act strategically:** Emotional regulation is expected from the teachers. Keeping cool during conflicts or problems serves as a good decorum for the students' emotions and problem-solving skills, this practice leads to a learning environment that is calm and goal-oriented. **Listen to their thoughts:** Allowing students to express their opinions also encourages them to take responsibility for their learning. Studies suggest that teachers should nurture students to enable them to speak their minds. **Acknowledge feedback:** The teachers should encourage and respond to any feedback from their students. If the students are appreciated for their response, then the atmosphere becomes interactive. Simple activities such as organising the room, attending to students, or recognising achievement encourage teachers to design a safe, friendly, and welcoming space for students. A welcoming and nurturing classroom facilitates academic achievement among learners and emotional and social development.

(The writer is principal of Modern School; views are personal)

### DELHI NEEDS TO BE DECONGESTED

Madam — Delhi's role as India's political capital and administrative nerve centre has created a lopsided dependence on a single city, which is becoming increasingly untenable for several reasons. Delhi is overcrowded and heavily polluted, with air quality regularly breaching hazardous levels. This is posing several health risks to its residents, particularly children and the elderly, leading to long-term implications for public health. Basic amenities like water and electricity are stretched thin. Traffic congestion and overburdened public transportation systems result in wasted time and reduced productivity. Concentrating the country's entire administrative apparatus in one city makes it vulnerable to dangers of terrorism, natural disasters and other calamities. The concentration of central government offices in Delhi, apart from inflating property prices, skews economic activity and perpetuates regional inequality.

The idea is not to displace Delhi as the national capital entirely but only to distribute its administrative load. The top-level officials of all the ministries and departments may be retained in Delhi for administrative convenience. Ministries and departments within ministries could be relocated to different cities/towns best suited for their focus areas, avoiding already congested metros like Bengaluru and ensuring balanced regional development. The government may start with a pilot involving one or two ministries, followed by an evaluation of costs, benefits, and scalability. Advances in IT and communication enable virtual conferences and seamless coordination, making physical proximity less critical. The conduct of G-20 meetings last year successfully should give the government confidence to take off in this direction. Decentralising national capital is not merely an administrative adjustment; it is also a transformative step toward equitable development and stronger governance.

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Uncertainty in Maharashtra



It is disgusting that after such a huge mandate, the Mahayuti cannot form the new government, though the results were declared on November 23. They are insulting the mandate. By rights, the chief ministerial post belongs to the leader of the party that has more MLAs than the combined total of the other two constituents. With Ajit Pawar publicly endorsing Fadnis for chief ministership, Shinde should gracefully bow

to the inevitable and propose the BJP leader's name for heading the new government. He betrays the trust the Maharashtra voter has reposed in the Mahayuti by throwing a sulking fit and vanishing to his village, while the more urgent task of government formation awaits him in Mumbai. Such childish behaviour is unbefitting of a senior politician like him.

Decency requires that the leaders of the Mahayuti work together in the same cooperative and concerted manner with which they had worked to win the large popular mandate. Now with Fadnis as chief minister and Shinde and Ajit Pawar as Dy CMs, they should show the same zeal and energy to resolve the myriad socio-economic problems facing the people of Maharashtra. Excessive ambition, especially unsupported by numbers in the Assembly, can be counterproductive.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

#### INVESTORS LOSE WEALTH

Madam — Since October, the ongoing decline in the stock market has resulted in investors losing ₹47 lakh crore in wealth. On September 27, the total market capitalisation of companies in the market was ₹477.90 lakh crore, which has now reduced to ₹430.60 lakh crore. Increasing uncertainty and apprehension in the market have driven investors back to banks. According to data released by the RBI, deposits in banks surged to ₹2.35 lakh crore in the second fortnight of October.

Before the Sensex hit a record high, total bank deposits in the second fortnight of August were around ₹215.50 lakh crore. In the first fortnight of September, there was a decline of ₹45,000 crore in total bank deposits. By the end of September, a phase of market decline began, during which bank deposits started to rise. In October, total deposits in banks reached ₹219 lakh crore. Thus, in the face of uncertain market risks, Indian banks are perceived as a safe haven by investors. For investors affected by market risks, bank

deposits are proving to be a reliable support.

Dattaprasad Shirodkar | Mumbai

#### MRP REGULATION NEEDED

Madam — Manipulating the MRP (Maximum Retail Price) of medicines is a significant issue in India. Pharmaceutical companies often set MRPs much higher than the production cost, burdening patients financially. Retailers further exploit this by charging inflated prices. While the government's Drug Price Control Order (DPCO) regulates essential medicines, many drugs remain outside its scope, allowing companies to set arbitrary prices. Initiatives like Jan Aushadhi Kendras, which provide affordable generic medicines, are commendable but need wider promotion. Transparency, awareness, and the promotion of generics are key to ensuring affordable healthcare for all.

R K Jain | Barwani

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com





## FIRST COLUMN

### SVABHAVNA: A PATH TO TRANSFORMATION

Our innate nature is both, a defining force in our lives and a formidable adversary



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

We are born with it. Nature ('svabhava') is what we have done in earlier lives and our deep desires, which are still unfulfilled. It is part of our fate and big events, both good and bad ('parabdha'). Svabhava defines us. Character, personality, behaviour, moods, attitude, opinions, faith, preferences, how we decide, how we interact and what we care about, all have links with our natures. Spiritually speaking, three modes ('gunas') constitute this. They are present in every person in different percentages. For example, a good man will have more of the goodness mode; not a good man will have more of the mode of darkness and the rest will fall in between. However, these modes always compete for supremacy. "Goodness become predominant by overpowering passion and darkness; darkness becomes predominant by overpowering even goodness and passion; and passion becomes predominant by overpowering goodness and darkness." (The Bhagavad-Geeta 14.10) This is what happens with good people.

Temporarily, their thinking and actions come under darkness, and they behave lustily, angrily, etc. Compare this with what happens with bad people, who naturally behave badly. Only when the mode of goodness gains ascendancy they behave better. Unfortunately, a common man falls in between, and he has many faults in his svabhava. What does he normally do? He wishes to enjoy his senses as much as possible; likes to avoid duties; tries to act smart, even resorts to cheating; feels superior; laughs at others; and hates suffering, whenever



it comes, blames others for it. This is not so bad as to come under negative emotions like lust, anger, greed, hate, etc. Driven by them, one acts badly and becomes deserving of punishment. For example, when lust overpowers, one crosses limits ('maryada') and does what will taint for life. A greedy person thinks nothing beyond gaining more and wastes precious human life. Anger raises its ugly head when lust is denied. (18.66) And hate, when it is uncontrolled, dooms a person. (16.19) Therefore, one has to be very careful at all times. Svabhava, which controls our thinking and surely our actions can be our worst enemy. What can be done to safeguard ourselves?

The very first thing is to introspect at all times. Are my deep desires faulty? Am I crossing social norms? Am I violating dharma? Am I avoiding duties? We will find that we are. Then, what is to be done? Can I control myself? Maybe, a little, but not fully. Am I stuck? Yes and no. Yes, because drastic change in nature is not possible, as svabhava is part of our destiny, just like big occurrences such as losing one's job will come and we cannot stop them from coming. No, as God is very merciful. He has left an opening in both cases. If one takes shelter from God sincerely, God helps one to come out of all one's troubles (18.58) As far as nature goes, God can help change it for the better if one is determined. This is tough and a slow process, but doable. What is the conclusion? We have a problem with our natures. Whether it is lust or anger or greed or hate or overinflated ego, we are well and truly stuck. Therefore, rush to God's shelter, i.e. get started to please Him now. Let God be convinced that you are determined; He will surely help. And when we do that, those around us will also begin to have some inspiration from us, rather than trying to correct one another, which is an impossibility.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

# COP29: A disappointing climate finance deal



B K SINGH

COP29, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, left developing nations frustrated over unmet climate finance commitment making chances of climate reversal bleak



UNFCCC's COP29 concluded in Baku, Azerbaijan on November 24, leaving the vulnerable countries disappointed in the deal made in climate finance. The deal was announced by the Presidency to mobilise \$300 million annually by 2035 as against the \$1.3 trillion target put forth by developing nations, which was also supported by India. Developed countries have abandoned the global south, and have to muster their resources for mitigation and adaptation towards the challenges of the climatic crisis.

It is more than three decades that Scientists have been constantly reminding us of the transition of our energy dependency from coal, oil and gas to solar, wind and other renewables. Burning of fossil fuels ever since industrialisation began in 1919 has caused the cumulative emission of 2400 gigabits (Gt) of CO2 equivalent greenhouse gases (CO2, methane, oxides of nitrogen and fluorocarbons - measured as CO2 equivalent). It was also added that an additional 500 Gt would warm the planet by 1.50 C above the preindustrial level leading to frequent and destructive climate events like cyclones, cloudbursts, forest fires, floods, droughts and heat waves disrupting our lives and livelihoods.

Despite such a warning, global annual emission is nearly 40 Gt of CO2 equivalent. World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has found 2023 as the warmest year in recorded history and evident from the data till September 2024 is set to register a new temperature record.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has brought all 200 countries together to review actions on their pledges in the annual conference of parties (COP). At COP29 held in Paris in 2015, countries made certain pledges to be fulfilled by 2030 about cutting dependency on fossil fuels, transitioning towards renewables and providing finance to vulnerable countries for adaptation and mitigation etc. G20 countries which contribute 80 per cent of the global emissions and also hold 85 per cent of global GDP have become rich at the cost of global warming. Except for India, none of the G20 countries is on course to fulfil NDC pledges by 2030. South Asian, African and island countries have been the most vulnerable and greatest suf-

ferers of extreme climate events and have been deprived of adequate funds for adaptation and mitigation. It was resolved at the COP held in 2009 in Copenhagen that developed nations would provide climate finance of \$100 billion to vulnerable countries annually with effect from 2020, but only \$400 million was provided till 2022. The annual \$100 billion fund committed by developed nations is set to continue till 2035 and only after that, it would be \$300 billion. Though the Paris climate deal set in 2015 called for an upward revision of the annual fund of \$100 billion in 2025, the Baku conference did not respect it and revised it only with effect from 2035.

A new collective quantified goal (NCQG) on climate finance was mandated to be set by COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, to support vulnerable and developing countries. In 2025 it was to replace the \$100 billion annually set in 2009. UN evaluation estimated \$500 billion annually, while some other projections suggested that \$1.3 trillion is needed annually. Developing countries that are at the receiving end estimate an annual requirement of \$5 trillion for the purpose. Trump is not likely to contribute, COP29 in the first week of deliberations, failed to get any solid commitment from other developed nations to contribute towards it. Big emitters like the US and China were not even represented by heads of state at Baku.

As COP29 could not take a call on NCQG in the first week, UN climate chief Simon Stiell urged world leaders assembled at Rio de Janeiro for the G20 meeting, to send a strong signal that climate action is the core business for the world's biggest economies and step up climate finance globally but they too did not make any firm commitment and failed to break the deadlock. The cumulative emission of the US since industrialization began has been 537 Gt CO2 equivalent, China 324 Gt, EU 305 Gt, Russia 184,

Brazil 122, Indonesia 101 and India 89. The cumulative figure of China has recently gone passed the EU. At present annual emissions of China have been 14 Gt, the US 8 Gt, the EU 6 Gt and India under 3 Gt. China's cumulative emission is 213 Gt behind the US and as it closes the gap by 6 Gt every year, it would take 36 years at this rate to surpass the US's cumulative emission.

Developed countries that contributed to 2400 Gt cumulative emission have announced measures and pledged to cut emissions, but their action is not visible on the ground and the emissions are rising every year. Also, there has been an expansion of oil and gas production in the EU, US, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Russia etc. and many fold expansion of coal in China. Developed countries that want bigger economies like China, India, Indonesia, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia should also contribute to climate finance towards NCQG. China's scuttling this move is unjustified. At present China is contributing to warming the planet in a big way. Why should it not pay? Scott Bessent who has been picked as Treasury Secretary for Trump 2.0, has announced a "3-3-3" plan that includes 3 per cent annual growth in GDP, bringing down the budget deficit to 3 per cent of GDP and additionally producing 3 million barrels of oil and gas daily. This is bound to spike the GHG emissions globally and further the increase in temperature. The vulnerable nations at the end of COP29 argued for raising at least \$1.3 trillion towards NCQG, but amidst a hard fight, protests by a group of 77 and walk out by island nations, the developed nations agreed to provide \$300 billion annually that too by 2035 and continue with the existing \$100 billion till then. India also supported the demand of the developing nations and said that without adequate support in terms of finance, technology and capacity building the fight against climate change

would be severely impacted. The delegates from developing nations voiced anger and lambasted wealthy nations for not doing enough. The rich countries responsible for warming the planet are now leaving vulnerable countries in the lurch to face the consequences. Starting from 2005, Carbon trading has been increasing exponentially, but a lot of fraudulent accounting and greenwashing have undermined its credibility.

Rule 6 dealing with the carbon market needed some resolution and the same was pending for the last few COPs, although the funds are quite useful for climate mitigation works. COP29 cleared this long pending agreement allowing countries to trade carbon credits - certified reductions of carbon emissions at prices determined as a consequence of emission caps imposed by the countries. It has also been agreed that the operations of the carbon market would be supervised by the UN body.

Strict UN control is needed, as a project proponent in the developed nation can pay for an afforestation project to absorb 1000 tons of CO2 in a developing nation where trees fail to put in desired growth and are unable to sequester the entire quantity of carbon credited. Further, whether the countries claim credit generated across borders and also whether it can be counted in their NDC? Last year at Dubai COP 28 it was agreed to transition away from fossil fuel consumption, but none of the developed nations have demonstrated to cut the emissions. It is distressing that COP29 did not take up a review. The leading economies are consuming fossil fuels increasingly, without bothering about disastrous consequences. I recommend countries to slow down GDP growth, till renewable energy is fully developed.

(The writer is principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Head of Forest Force, Karnataka; views are personal)



EXCEPT FOR INDIA, NONE OF THE G20 COUNTRIES IS ON COURSE TO FULFIL NDC PLEDGES BY 2030. SOUTH ASIAN, AFRICAN AND ISLAND COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN THE MOST VULNERABLE AND GREATEST SUFFERERS OF EXTREME CLIMATE EVENTS AND HAVE BEEN DEPRIVED OF ADEQUATE FUNDS FOR ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION

## Maharashtra villages embrace green energy, move towards zero waste, zero bills

### The State is setting a benchmark for climate resilience by integrating water security with renewable energy

In a significant push towards climate resilience and sustainable development, Maharashtra is pioneering innovative solutions that combine water security with renewable energy. The state's groundbreaking initiatives are transforming rural communities while addressing the dual challenges of water scarcity and energy transition.



SANJAY SINGH

The Water Supply and Sanitation Department, along with the Ground Water Surveys and Development Agency (GSDA), has initiated a revolutionary automated solar-hybrid water pumping system across 69 communities. This innovative approach, supported by UNICEF Mumbai, represents a major leap in rural

water management technology. These systems reduce grid energy consumption by up to 80 per cent while ensuring 24/7 water availability. The hybrid technology prioritizes solar power and supplements it with grid electricity only when necessary, resulting in potential energy bill reductions of up to 90 per cent. The system's sophistication lies in its IoT-

enabled infrastructure. Digital flow meters and sensors installed at storage tanks allow Gram Panchayats to monitor and control water distribution remotely, preventing over-extraction and waste.

The technology includes an automatic solar panel cleaning mechanism, making it highly sustainable and low-maintenance. In Nagpur, the innovative "Green Project" demonstrates how integrated approaches can yield multiple environmental benefits. The project combines solar systems, rooftop rain-water harvesting, ground-water recharge and innovative cooling solutions. Early results are promising: a typical 250-square-meter rooftop can harvest approx-

imately 200,000 litres of water while reducing electricity consumption by 50 per cent. Perhaps the most inspiring success story comes from Manyachiwadi village in Satara district, which has become Maharashtra's first fully solar-powered village. Through the installation of over 100 rooftop solar panels, the village has achieved energy independence, eliminating electricity bills for its residents.

The project, funded through the Majhi Vasundhara Campaign state award money and community contributions, serves as a model for rural energy transition. Similarly, Tikekarwadi village has earned recognition under the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj



Abhiyan (RGSA) for its comprehensive approach to sustainability. The village has successfully integrated solar and wind energy, biogas plants, and reverse osmosis water treatment systems, setting new standards for rural development. These initiatives are particularly significant given Maharashtra's

vulnerability to climate change.

The state faces recurring droughts, intense heat waves, and water scarcity issues. The year 2020, tied with 2016, was recorded as the hottest year, highlighting the urgent need for cooling solutions in rural areas where air conditioning is often unaffordable.

The state's approach aligns with multiple national programs, including the Jal Jeevan Mission, Atal Bhujal Yojana, Catch the Rain Campaign, and the Majhi Vasundhara Campaign. This convergence of schemes has enabled comprehensive solutions that address both immediate needs and long-term sustainability goals. The economic viability of these

projects is particularly noteworthy.

The Green Project, with an investment of approximately INR 420,000, achieves break-even within 3-4 years while providing lasting environmental benefits. The solar-hybrid water pumping systems have a payback period of 5-6 years, generating significant long-term savings for rural communities. These innovations represent a significant shift in rural development strategy, demonstrating that environmental sustainability and economic viability can go hand in hand.

The success of these projects has caught the attention of other states, with many looking to replicate Maharashtra's model.

These initiatives are in a way unlocking significant productivity gains and strengthening the development outcomes by accessing clean and green energy for water, health, etc.

As climate change continues to pose increasing challenges, Maharashtra's integrated approach to water security and energy transition offers valuable lessons for sustainable development. These initiatives not only address immediate environmental concerns but also build long-term resilience in rural communities, proving that local solutions can have a global impact in the fight against climate change.

(The writer is chief, UNICEF Maharashtra Office; views are personal)



## IN BRIEF



### Truck rentals decline as demand softens

Truck rentals, which had returned to normal levels in October after the festive season rush, saw a decline in November in most trunk routes as demand for transportation services softened with fleet occupancy levels dropping to around 60 per cent sequentially in the previous month, according to an industry report. This decline is largely attributed to a combination of factors, including poor urban demand across categories, the BS4 truck ban in the NCR region on account of air pollution issues, polling activities in Maharashtra, and reduced agricultural produce movement, Shriram Finance said in its monthly bulletin. A majority trucks in the business are BS IV-compliant and given the existing entry ban in the NCR, these trucks transport items to the NCR border from where the goods are loaded into smaller BS VI or CNG trucks to be transported for delivery, according to the company. This has resulted in increasing the logistics costs in the region, it added. Elections in Maharashtra also slowing down logistics activity, as per Shriram Finance. Truck rental rates (round tips) followed a downward trend, with returns on key trunk routes like Delhi-Chennai-Delhi and Delhi-Bengaluru-Delhi declining 1.4 per cent and 1 per cent, respectively, on a month-on-month basis, it said.



### India's external debt rises to \$ 647 bn

India's total external debt has increased by USD 31 billion to USD 646.79 billion in 2023, according to World Bank International Debt Report. The report further said that interest payment increased from USD 15.08 billion in 2022 to USD 22.54 billion in 2023. While the long-term debt stocks have risen 7 per cent to USD 498 billion in 2023, short-term debt stocks declined marginally to USD 126.32 billion in 2023. According to the report, external debt stock as percentage of exports was 80 per cent, while debt servicing was 10 per cent of exports in 2023. The World Bank International Debt Report, 2024, further said that net debt inflows during the year worked out to be USD 33.42 billion, while the net equity inflows was higher at USD 46.94 billion in 2023.



### 'Digital platforms not required to obtain SDP status'

Market regulator Sebi on Wednesday clarified that digital platforms, used by registered or regulated entities to associate with third parties, are not obligated to seek recognition as Specified Digital Platforms (SDPs). The market regulator also stated that there is currently no regulatory framework in place for governing SDPs. An SDP is a digital platform approved by Sebi that has mechanisms to prevent and address any prohibited activities, such as unregulated advice or claims. In a statement, Sebi clarified that becoming an SDP is entirely voluntary for digital platforms. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has issued a clarification after queries have been raised in various news articles about the obligation of digital platforms to get recognition as a Specified Digital Platform.

## 'Govt took many steps to boost availability of DAP'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Anupriya Patel on Wednesday said the geopolitical disturbances this year caused disruptions in fertiliser supply chain and also impacted domestic availability of di-ammonium phosphate (DAP), but the government took many steps to overcome challenges of providing nutrients to farmers on time.

Addressing an annual seminar of Fertilisers Association of India, Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers Anupriya Patel said India's agricultural sector depends significantly on the import of some of the critical fertilizers like DAP (Di-ammonium phosphate), MoP (Muriate of Potash), NPKs and partially even urea.

"And this year, there have been some geopolitical disturbances which led to supply chain disruption and that had an impact on the availability of fertilizers, especially of DAP in the country. But the Department (of fertilizers) rose to the occasion," she said. To overcome this challenge, Patel said the Centre took several proactive measures.



**This year, there have been some geopolitical disturbances which led to supply chain disruption and that had an impact on the availability of fertilizers, especially of DAP in the country**

"Along with the proactive steps that we took in terms of procuring fertilizers through long-term agreements with the supplier countries, the government also kept its focus on promoting the use of alternate fertilizers as well as indigenous nano-fertilizers like Nano-DAP and Nano-Urea," the minister said.

That apart, Patel said, regular coordination was made with the state governments, the port authorities, the ministry of railways and even the fertilizer companies to ensure faster dispatch of fertilizers to the demand intensive regions.

Patel said the government took two major decisions to address the challenges for the

current Rabi (winter-sown) season, 2024-25.

The first decision is regarding offering of a special package of Rs 3,500 per tonne on DAP, costing Rs 2,625 crore to the central exchequer, which is to make the price sustainable for the companies to import DAP amid global price volatility, the minister said.

Secondly, Patel said that the overall increase in the prices of P&K fertilisers in the international market has been linked to the market prices. "If the procurement price of P&K fertilizers including DAP increases in the global market, the procurement capacities of the companies are not going to be affected," she added.

### UPI Lite: RBI raises limit of wallet to Rs 5,000, per transaction to Rs 1,000

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank on Wednesday increased the UPI Lite wallet limit to Rs 5,000 and per-transaction limit to Rs 1,000 in order to encourage wider adoption of the popular instant payment system through mobile phones. UPI Lite transactions are offline to the extent that Additional Factor of Authentication (AFA) is not required, and transaction alerts are not sent in real time.

Currently, the upper limit of an offline payment transaction is Rs 500 and the total limit for offline transactions on a payment instrument is Rs 2,000 at any point in time.

The Reserve Bank on Wednesday amended the 'offline framework' issued in January 2022 with an aim at facilitating small value digital payments in offline mode.

"...the enhanced limits for UPI Lite shall be Rs 1,000 per transaction, with Rs 5,000 being the total limit at any point in time," said a Reserve Bank circular.

## Steps taken to speed up rooftop solar installations: Official

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has taken a series of steps such as building robust IT systems, cutting down regulatory barriers, and efficiency in subsidy disbursement to speed up domestic rooftop solar installations, which are expected to reach 10 lakh by the end of this fiscal under a scheme, a senior official said on Wednesday.

Around 1.45 crore registrations have been made under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana (PMSGMBY) and 6.34 lakh installations completed. The scheme targets to achieve one crore installations in the residential sector by FY27 with an outlay of Rs 75,021 crore.

As per official data, Gujarat has seen the maximum solar installations under the scheme at 2,86,545, followed by Maharashtra with 1,26,344 installations and Uttar Pradesh at 53,423.

The ministry is also coordinating with all stakeholders including REC, DISCOMs, and vendors, to resolve any challenge for the successful implementation of the scheme.

The official said that transformative initiatives of this scale necessitate solid foundational work to ensure long-term success and sustainability as the scheme is the world's largest domestic rooftop solar programme.

Prior to its launch in February 2024, only 8.1 lakh installations were completed over a decade (2014-2024), averaging 7,000 per month.

In contrast, within just nine months of PMSGMBY, 6.34 lakh installations have been achieved, an average of 70,000 per month.

The official said that the numbers are increasing at a healthy rate as initial implementation challenges were effectively addressed to accelerate the rollout.



## Sensex advances 110 pts in choppy trade

### Banks gain ahead of RBI policy

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex advanced 110 points in a choppy trade on Wednesday, extending its gains to the fourth day in a row helped by buying in HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and fresh foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share barometer rose by 110.58 points or 0.14 per cent to settle at 80,956.33 with 14 of its constituents ending with gains and 16 stocks with losses. During the day, it jumped 399.64 points or 0.49 per cent to 81,245.39 and dipped to a low of 80,630.53.

The NSE Nifty rose marginally by 10.30 points or 0.04 per cent to 24,467.45 as gains in IT, realty and banking shares were offset by profit-taking in auto and FMCG shares. From the 30-share Sensex pack, HDFC Bank,

Bajaj Finserv, NTPC, Titan, Tata Consultancy Services, Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finance and ICICI Bank were the biggest gainers.

Bharti Airtel, Tata Motors, Adani Ports, Power Grid, Maruti, ITC, Reliance Industries and UltraTech Cement were among the laggards.

Foreign institutional investors turned buyers on Tuesday as they bought equities worth Rs 3,664.67 crore, according to exchange data.

"The domestic market maintained a positive trajectory, despite some volatility stemming from mixed sentiments in Asian markets due to the situation in South Korea. Broader indices showed strong performance, with the banking and financial sectors continuing to excel.

## Rupee plummets to all-time low of 84.76 against US dollar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee slumped to its all-time low of 84.76 (provisional) against the US dollar after dropping 8 paise on Wednesday amid a strengthening greenback and increase in crude prices.

Forex traders said a positive trend in domestic equity markets and foreign fund inflows supported the local unit at lower level.

At the interbank currency exchange, the rupee opened at 84.66 and traded in the range of 84.65-84.76. Eventually it settled at 84.76 (provisional), 8 paise lower than Tuesday's close of 84.68.

Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said, the rupee lost initial gains amid strong dollar and a positive tone in crude oil prices. "Dollar strengthened amid



upbeat JOLTS job openings data from the US and disappointing Caixin Services PMI data from China, he said, adding, "USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in the range of Rs 84.50 to Rs 85."

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading higher by 0.11 per cent at 106.47.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, surged 0.83 per

cent to USD 74.23 per barrel in futures trade.

On the domestic equity markets, Sensex climbed 110.58 points to settle at 80,956.33, while Nifty was marginally up 10.30 points to 24,467.45.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Tuesday, purchasing shares worth Rs 3,664.67 crore, according to exchange data.

## Consistently scored high on punctuality: IndiGo

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IndiGo on Wednesday said it has consistently scored high on punctuality, and refuted a survey that claimed the airline is among the worst based on certain parameters, including punctuality.

The survey was done by by AirHelp, an EU claim processing agency. It compared the world's biggest and most popular airlines and rated them according to their punctuality, quality of service, and how well they handle claims for compensation. In a statement, IndiGo said the data published in the survey does not report the sample size from India, and neither takes into account the methodology or compensation guidelines used by the global aviation industry - "casting a doubt on its credibility".

## PURE EV to set up 250 dealerships pan-India

Electric two-wheeler maker PURE EV on Wednesday announced plans to open 250 dealerships pan-India over the next 30 months as part of a roadmap to strengthen its presence nationwide and expand globally. The expansion will be driven by the growing demand for long-range scooters, electric motorcycles, large B2B contracts, and the company's entry into the household brand space, the Hyderabad-based firm said.

Besides, the company said expanding beyond India, it plans to commence exports to the Middle East and Africa by March next year, marking a significant step in its journey to become a global player in the electric mobility market. It currently exports its e-two-wheelers to Nepal and Bhutan.

Over the next 30 months, the company aims to add 250 new dealerships, taking its total network to over 320 across India, PURE EV said.

## Gold slips below Rs 79,000 per 10 gm on reduced demand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices slipped below Rs 79,000 per 10 gm in the national capital on Wednesday due to poor off-take by stockists and retailers amid weak global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity fell by Rs 150 to Rs 78,850 per 10 grams. It had closed at Rs 79,000 per 10 grams in the previous session.

Price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity extended the losses for the third straight day, declining by Rs 150 to Rs 78,450 per 10 grams from the previous close of Rs 78,600 per 10 grams.

However, silver rose Rs 100 to Rs 92,500 per kg. On Tuesday, the white metal had settled at Rs 92,400 per kg. In futures trade on the



Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for February delivery fell Rs 93 or 0.12 per cent to trade at Rs 76,810 per 10 grams.

Silver contracts for March delivery declined Rs 322 or 0.35 per cent to Rs 91,875 per kg on the bourse.

Comex gold futures in the Asian market hours edged lower by USD 4.90 per ounce or 0.18 per cent to USD 2,663 per ounce.

"Gold held steady on Wednesday as traders continued to assess the recent polit-

ical developments and monetary outlook while awaiting key US economic data releases in the week ahead," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

According to Manav Modi, Analyst, Commodity Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, gold prices traded steady after inching higher in Tuesday's session, on one end, strong US jobs data hinted at a cautious approach to rate cuts, while a softer dollar and easing Treasury yields capped losses as markets awaited further economic cues.

Along with geo-political tensions in the Middle East, disturbance in South Korea also led to some safe-haven buying, Modi said.

Silver also traded 0.17 per cent lower at USD 31.33 per ounce in the global markets.

## 'Food inflation in policy formulation is a complex issue'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Nilesh Shah, a part-time member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, on Wednesday said the debate on whether to include food inflation in policy formulation is a complex issue, and questioned if we are computing the number correctly.

Shah, who is the managing director and chief executive of Kotak Mutual Fund, questioned if the computation takes into account free food to over 80 crore Indians under the

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) while arriving at the number.

Making it clear that the EAC-PM is yet to deliberate on the issue, Shah said the free or subsidised food grains to 80 crore Indians will lead to a decline in the headline number but was quick to add that the 2-6 per cent inflation band given to the RBI will also need to undergo a change.

"My only submission will be are we measuring food inflation correctly? For example, 80 crore Indians are provided free food.

## Services sector growth eases moderately

### Employment growth fastest since 2005

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's services PMI marginally dipped to 58.4 in November while employment in the segment recorded robust growth, a monthly survey said on Wednesday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services Business Activity Index was down marginally to 58.4 from 58.5 in October as sales increased at a softer pace. Last month, the country's services PMI recovered from its 10-month low.

In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"India posted a strong 58.4 services PMI in November, down only a fraction from the prior month's 58.5. During November, services sector employment notably grew at the fastest pace ever recorded since this survey began in 2005," Pranjal Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC,



said. "The hiring surge reflected the sector's improving business confidence, growing new orders, and vigorous international demand. At the same

time, high food and labour costs drove up input and output prices to their fastest rates in 15 months and nearly 12 years, respectively," Bhandari said.

Panellists of the survey continued to signal improving international demand for their services, while new export orders increased at the quickest rate in three months, but well below those seen around mid-year.

Private sector companies indicated that demand

strength supported further growth of new business and output in November. Ongoing increases in sales continued to add to capacity pressures, which led firms to hire staff at the quickest pace since comparable data became available 19 years ago.

Paired with rising input prices, labour costs exerted upward pressure on inflation. Overall, expenses and output charges rose at the fastest rates in 15 months and almost 12 years, respectively.

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA PANCHAYATH RAJ ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT**  
E-mail: eprtdandur@gmail.com, Contact No: 9676930666

**SHORT TENDER NOTICE**

No. T1/137-209/2024-25 Dt: 04.12.2024.  
No. of works (73) Tandur Division works, Total Estimate Cost Rs.296.00 Lakhs.  
Schedules issued start date: 05.12.2024 to Close Date 12.12.2024 3.00 PM.  
Further details can be had Executive Engineer PR Division Tandur.  
Sd/- Executive Engineer.  
P.R. Division Tandur, Vikarabad Dist.

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA PANCHAYATH RAJ ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT**  
E-PROCUREMENT SHORT TENDER NOTICE

NIT No: 19 to 32/2024-25 Dt: 03.12.2024.  
No. of works (14), Name of the works: SDF in Barswada Assembly Constituency and Ajjakai Assembly constituency in Kamareddy District, total ECW: 129.90 lakhs tenders invited undersigned. Tenders can download the tender schedules from Date: 06.12.2024 10.30 PM onwards and last date is (T) working days from date of publishing of each NIT in online. All further details can be seen on the online at e-procurement market place i.e. www.tender.telangana.gov.in  
Sd/- Executive Engineer.  
PRED, Barswada

**GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION GHMC**  
e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE

NIT No. 17/SE/KPZ/GHMC/2024-25 Date: 04.12.2024  
Name of Work: Maintenance of mechanical sweeping on CRMP roads,  
Estimate Amount / ECW: Rs. 157.00 Lakhs, Start Date / Last Date & Time for Receipt of Bids: 06.12.2024 @ 04.00 PM and 13.12.2024 @ 04.00 PM.  
Name & Address Officer Cell No.: SSE/KPZ, GHMC, 9989930363.  
Sd/- Superintending Engineer,  
Kukatpally Zone, GHMC



## 'Om Shanti' revolution

AARTI SREENATH  
aarti.sreenath9@gmail.com

"Om Shanti," with these serene words, the conversation with sister Vasanta began, opening a gateway to understanding the profound philosophy of this spiritual organisation. At its heart, the Brahma Kumaris emphasise the importance of integrating values into everyday life.

"Our teachings focus on inculcating values and divine virtues as part of daily living," she explained. "We all talk about values, but what matters is practicing them consistently. Alongside this, meditation plays a crucial role, it rejuvenates, energises and relaxes, creating a harmonious balance." Tracing its origins to 1936 in undivided India's Sindh (now in Pakistan), the Brahma Kumaris began as a small spiritual initiative and has since expanded its reach to over 140 countries.

When asked what makes the Brahma Kumaris distinct from other spiritual movements, the answer was rooted in simplicity and integration. "We don't treat meditation or values as separate entities; they are seamlessly woven into our daily lives," she said.

Values such as honesty, peace and joy manifest in small, meaningful gestures—like greeting someone with a genuine smile. "These aren't abstract concepts; they're integral to how we live. For example, wearing white symbolises peace and unity. White encompasses all colours, much like our philosophy embraces all emotions and perspectives."

Central to their teachings is *Raja Yoga* meditation, which the representative described as a transformative mental practice. "Meditation is not just about sitting in a specific posture. It's about a state of being—a way of living," she elaborated. She elaborated, "If I control what I see,

choosing to focus only on what uplifts me, then I am the king of my eyes. If I can resist listening to gossip or negativity, I become the master of my ears. But if I let my senses or mind overpower me—absorbing what I know isn't right—then I'm no longer the ruler of my being."

The Brahma Kumaris extend their teachings beyond individual transformation, making meaningful contributions to society. "Our organisation addresses a wide spectrum of social challenges through 21



dedicated wings," she explained. "These wings cater to the unique needs of diverse groups—be it media professionals, business leaders, sportspeople, or women." When discussing women's empowerment, she emphasised the importance of inner strength. "Empowerment isn't just about overcoming gender bias, though that's crucial. True empowerment comes from within. When a woman feels free, powerful and aligned with her inner self, she naturally radiates strength and confidence."

On environmental sustainability, the representative connected the external world to the internal. "Nature has two aspects: the external—what we see in flora and fauna—and the internal—our own nature. If my inner nature is peaceful and harmonious, it reflects in how I treat the world around me. Sustainability begins with self-awareness."

The Brahma Kumaris' philosophy extends far beyond personal transformation, encompassing global initiatives like *COP 29*, currently being held in Baku, Azerbaijan. "Spirituality is being recognised as a critical element in addressing environmental challenges," shared the representative. "At *COP 29*, we have speakers, stalls and services showcasing how spiritual practices like *Raj Yoga* can inspire minimalism and sustainability. When we cultivate contentment and positivity within, we naturally consume less and respect the environment more."

Whether it's fostering harmony in personal relationships or addressing workplace challenges, the Brahma Kumaris provide tools for building resilience and emotional intelligence.

The impact of the Brahma Kumaris' work is vividly seen in local communities. Their headquarters houses the Global Hospital and Research Centre, which serves a vast radius with trauma care and nursing education. "This hospital is a lifeline for the area, offering free or affordable healthcare to underserved populations," she said.

The organisation also champions innovative projects like yogic agriculture, where farmers practice meditation to imbue their crops with positive energy.



"Plants respond to human energy," she explained, citing indigenous practices where trees are gently 'cursed' to fall naturally, demonstrating the profound connection between human vibrations and nature.

In Hyderabad's Shanti Sarovar center, countless lives have been transformed through spiritual guidance. One such story stands out. "A young woman struggling with anxiety and strained family relationships came to us. Through consistent meditation and workshops on self-awareness, she gradually found peace within herself. This inner calm helped her rebuild her relationships and approach her career with confidence. Today, she actively volunteers, inspiring others with her journey."

The Brahma Kumaris' work reminds us that in every sector—be it healthcare, education, or environmental sustainability—values like compassion, care and love are indispensable. "Money can build hospitals and buy medicines, but without empathy and warmth, true healing is incomplete," she remarked, sharing a recent story of a patient who nearly lost her life due to negligence but survived due to timely intervention from a caring doctor. "This is the need of the hour," she concluded. "To combine technical expertise with spiritual values. When love and care guide our actions, the world becomes a better place—for individuals, communities, and the planet as a whole."

For over 12 years, the Brahma Kumaris have been a transformative presence in Gachibowli, Hyderabad, bringing hope and positive change to individuals and families. One compelling example is a family they supported through spiritual guidance and meditation.

"Thousands of lives have been transformed this way," she added. "People struggling with substance abuse, suicidal tendencies, or negativity have found purpose and inner strength through spirituality. They no longer need substances to feel 'high'—they're self-motivated and naturally happy." The path of spreading goodness isn't without obstacles. Misinterpretations about the organisation, such as misconceptions around their white attire being indicative of a cult, have posed challenges.

With a rich history spanning over eight decades, the Brahma Kumaris have been steadfast in their mission to empower individuals, foster global unity and promote sustainable living. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, a representative of the Brahma Kumaris sheds light on the organisation's profound philosophy and its impact on transforming lives worldwide

## 'Playing Sarojini Naidu was not just an 'acting challenge' but a 'tremendous responsibility'

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In a world where voices are often silenced, one woman's words have been shaking the status quo—it's none other than Malishka Mendonsa, aka the very popular RJ Malishka. With her quick wit, infectious laughter and unapologetic charm, she has captured the hearts of millions as the host of Mumbai's popular radio show, *Morning No. 1*. Now, she's taking on the role of a lifetime as Sarojini Naidu in the highly anticipated web series *Freedom at Midnight*. So, how could we just miss out on the opportunity? In this exclusive chat with us, the "Mumbai Ki Raani" reflects on her early fascination with Sarojini Naidu, recalling how she dressed up as the iconic poetess as a child. "I had dressed up as Sarojini Naidu when I was a child and I was always fascinated by the way her hair did that particular wave upfront. And I thought she had short hair, but she didn't. Or that tiger tooth necklace that she wore, which as a kid was a 'Haathi daant'. I, however, later figured it was the tiger tooth or the way she wore her sarees, the kind of blouses, the high bindi and all of it."

The *Fear Factor: Khatron Ke Khiladi* fame acknowledged the challenges of working with prosthetics; she describes it as "a long, arduous, crazy time." "The prosthetics helped bring her young and old appearances to life. From the face mold, where I had to close my eyes, ears and nose and simply breathe, to the hours spent wearing the prosthetics as older Sarojini, it was physically demanding," she recalls. Another challenge was portraying scenes that required the actors to wear shawls and jackets in the scorching heat to depict winter. "On such a large-scale production, even a small mistake could delay everything. The logistics of managing so many actors, all portraying historical figures, were complex."

She, however, found that Sarojini Naidu's personality resonated with her. "Her warmth, wit and ability to light up a room," Malishka says. "Working with the cast was a fabulous experience. These were exceptional actors, chosen not only because we resembled the characters but also for our ability to portray them convincingly." Despite the difficulties, she appreciates the opportunity to learn and grow as an actress. "I feel like because I played Sarojini, not only did I get an opportunity to be part of a wonderful historical made by Mikhail Advani, but I also got to learn so much about the craft and so much about patience." To integrate the literary essence and eloquence of Sarojini Naidu into her performance, she delved into the poetess's works. "Sarojini was known as the Nightingale of India because she wrote very lyrical poetry... I bought her book, I've read her speeches." She was particularly struck by Sarojini's voice, noting

its "beautiful flow of language" and "clipped" English, which she sought to replicate in her performance. Mendonsa reflects on Naidu's relationships with her contemporaries, including Jinnah and Gandhi, highlighting the unique dynamics and camaraderie they shared.

Naidu's relationship with Jinnah, for instance, was built on mutual respect and friendship. As Mendonsa notes, "Her relationship with Jinnah, for example, is that they're friends, their contemporaries... At one point, she talks about him as the beacon or the symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity in India." Mendonsa also touches on Naidu's relationship with Gandhi, revealing a fascinating anecdote. "I read somewhere that she nicknamed him Mickey Mouse," she says, hinting at the affectionate and playful dynamic between the two leaders.

As an actress, the *Tumhari Sulu* star brought her own unique perspective to the role, drawing from her background in radio. "My experience as an RJ would help me with any kind of vocal work. I think being on the mic when your face is not being shown allows you to portray emotions in so many different ways." This expertise proved invaluable in capturing Naidu's vocal presence and charisma. Going ahead, she delves, "Sarojini Naidu was, of course, a freedom fighter, a poet, a women's rights activist, a feminist in that sense and she was also a very, I mean, almost a child prodigy. She was very learned and belonged to a family of educated people. She belonged to high society. She had no hesitation in speaking to our leaders of that time, male political leaders, because you've hardly seen any other female political freedom fighters."

To portray Naidu's strong personality, Malishka drew inspiration from her own experiences as a woman in a male-dominated industry. "I had to kind of be an extended version of myself because I used to keep saying that this is a modern woman. This is a woman of today. You saw her in saris and bindis, but she was everything and more than a modern woman of today would be with a great voice that was listened to. I brought all these things together also because I feel that, elementarily, in this day and age, I am that person. A lot of women like me exist. Maybe we don't wear sarees or bindis, or maybe we do. And that's really that being a strong, independent woman is not just about how you dress but about embodying those qualities in your daily life."

The *Incredibles* star's portrayal of Naidu also highlights her remarkable womanly essence. "She was a lady with a mighty mind if you ask me

From her early fascination with Sarojini Naidu to the challenges of bringing this complex figure to life on screen. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, the multifaceted Malishka Mendonsa opens up about her latest role as the iconic Sarojini Naidu in the highly anticipated web series *Freedom at Midnight*



because, obviously, she decided she figured out that Jinnah's philosophy did not suit the nation, did not suit perhaps even the women of the nation because she was so much about women's empowerment." As she explored Naidu's character, she discovered moments where she felt a deep connection to the historical figure. "When they asked me to do this role and when Nikhil explained this to me, I was completely of the opinion that Sarojini Naidu is the modern-day woman that is today," the *Thor: Ragnarok* fame says. "In very many ways, I was like, Yes, this is who I am."

The *Dancing Queen* star was particularly drawn to Naidu's confident and charming personality. "She lit up a room and I was like, This is me (She laughs). And most importantly, that she did—at no point did we ever think for a second that Sarojini Naidu or a woman of that time was lesser than a man, even though it was that time." Oh and also, she appreciated Naidu's use of humour as a device to get her point across. "I find that fabulous because I think that is my personality trait also. I've used humour on the radio all my life. I find humour a great stabiliser. It puts across your point beautifully. No one can take offense, really, and the job is done."

Then, she also spoke about how she received a 15- to 20-minute voice note about Sarojini Naidu's life, interests and personality. She was also told that she might have to learn a bit of Bengali, as Naidu was Bengali but spent most of her life in Hyderabad. She sat down with a Bengali colleague to go through the lines, but they eventually realised that they didn't need to use them. Through her research, she discovered that Sarojini Naidu was a woman who held her own among men, walking shoulder to shoulder with them. For Malishka, playing Sarojini Naidu on screen was not just an acting challenge but a tremendous responsibility. She admires how Naidu would often leave the men around her embarrassed, yet impressed, by her sharp wit and fearless humour. "She would say things, even jokingly, that would leave the men around her a bit embarrassed, thinking, 'Wow, what did she just say?'"

Malishka recalls, chuckling. "For example, there's this one scene where she says, 'I'm here only to do poetry,' and everyone looks at each other and laughs." One memorable moment for Malishka was during a ballroom scene. "Vallabhbhai and I danced a waltz in our costumes during a break while the crew was setting up," she recalls. "It was such a lovely moment and I hope it's captured somewhere."



## Sowing seeds for sustainable farming

Soil degradation in rural India poses a formidable challenge to the country's agricultural sustainability, economic stability, and food security. With smallholder farmers constituting 80% of India's agricultural workforce, the deteriorating health of soil directly affects their livelihoods. Unsustainable farming practices, overreliance on synthetic inputs, and climate change exacerbate soil erosion, nutrient depletion, salinization, and acidification. Addressing this issue requires an integrated approach to preserve and restore soil health.

Role of Smallholder Farmers: Smallholder farmers are vital contributors to the global food system but remain marginalized in development efforts. Smallholder and marginal farmers, owning less than two hectares of land, makeup 86.2% of all farmers in India, yet they own only 47.3% of the arable land. Investing in balanced nutrition for the crops can improve productivity but also heighten risks for resource-constrained farmers. This presents a barrier to adopting improved practices. A curated approach is necessary combining strategic and tactical interventions. Strategic investments like correcting soil acidity, adopting conservation agriculture, and increasing soil organic matter are critical to ensuring long-term productivity.

Extent and consequences of soil degradation: India faces extensive soil degradation, according to the National Bureau of Soil Survey and Land Use Planning (NBSS&LUP), around 30% of India's total land area (approximately 120 million hectares) is affected by soil degradation. The primary causes are misuse and unbalanced application of fertilizers, monocropping, poor irrigation practices, and inadequate crop rotation, all of which contribute to the depletion of soil nutrients and the loss of soil organic matter. This degradation directly impacts:

1. **Crop yields:** Declining soil fertility reduces crop productivity. For instance, monocropping in Punjab has depleted nutrients, leading to lower yields, while erosion in Rajasthan affects wheat and barley production.

2. **Farmer livelihoods:** Decreasing agricultural income often traps smallholders in poverty, forcing them to migrate to cities or engage in less profitable nonfarm activities. For example, soil degradation in Tamil Nadu has driven many farmers into low-paying construction work.

3. **Food security:** Soil degradation limits crop production, reducing food availability and causing nutritional deficiencies in farming households. In Chhattisgarh, poor irrigation infrastructure combined with soil erosion has led to lower yields, directly affecting dietary needs.

### Pathways to sustainable soil management

**Strategic and tactical approaches to soil management:** Strategic approaches focus on long-term solutions to restore and sustain soil health. These include addressing soil acidity and salinity through amendments like lime, improving soil organic matter (SOM) by incorporating crop residues, compost,

and practicing agroforestry, and adopting conservation agriculture (CA) practices such as reduced tillage and crop diversification. Developing local water resources like farm ponds and check dams ensures supplemental irrigation, reducing risks of crop failure in rainfed systems. Balanced nutrient management, involving a combination of organic and inorganic fertilizers, and the use of soil testing tools optimize fertility and minimize degradation. Strategic investments also prioritize resilience through agroecological farming systems that integrate livestock, crops, and trees to improve long-term soil health. Tactical approaches are short-term, adaptive strategies to manage risks and variability, particularly in rainfed systems. Flexible agronomy allows farmers to adjust crop choices and fertilizer inputs based on rainfall predictions and yield potential. Participatory learning, such as Farmer Field Schools (FFS), equips farmers with localized solutions. Risk mitigation tactics like crop diversification, staggered planting, and supplemental irrigation stabilize production. Decision-making tools, including nutrient calculators and rainfall forecasts, enable informed, adaptive practices. Integrating these approaches empowers farmers to balance productivity with sustainability while navigating climate and resource uncertainties.

### Overcoming barriers to adoption

For sustainable practices to succeed, farmer education and access to resources are essential:

1. **Farmer training programs:** Initiatives such as the National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) equip farmers with skills in organic farming, integrated nutrient management, and conservation practices.

2. **Farmer field schools (FFS):** These hands-on programs encourage peer learning and experimentation, fostering community-driven solutions.

3. **Access to inputs:** Affordable access to organic fertilizers, soil amendments, and irrigation systems is critical. Government programs like the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchay Yojana (PMKSY) aim to reduce water wastage and subsidize sustainable inputs.

### Modern technology plays a pivotal role in enhancing soil health management:

1. **Soil health monitoring:** Tools like in-situ soil testing kits and mobile apps provide real-time assessments of nutrient levels, pH, and organic matter. The Soil Health Card Scheme promotes judicious fertilizer use.

2. **Precision agriculture:** Technologies like GPS and sensors optimize input applications, reducing waste and environmental harm. Maharashtra has adopted smart irrigation systems to conserve water and improve soil moisture.

3. **Drones and remote sensing:** Equipped with sensors, drones monitor soil health and crop growth, enabling timely interventions to manage soil degradation effectively.





Monika

Chandini

Vijaya

Chaya Devi Rudraraju

Mrs. India Telangana & Andhra Pradesh 2023, Chaya Devi Rudraraju, inaugurated the 6-day National Silk Expo-2024 at Kalinga Cultural Hall, Banjara Hills, promoting India's rich textile heritage and supporting local artisans.

PARTY

## Akums Drugs & Pharmaceuticals partners with Caregen Co., Ltd.

Akums Drugs & Pharmaceuticals Ltd., has entered into an in-licensing agreement with Caregen Co., Ltd., a global biotechnology leader based in South Korea. This strategic alliance marks a significant step in introducing specialty nutraceuticals, pharmaceuticals, differentiated topical and injectable cosmetics—including advanced skincare and haircare—tailored to meet the unique needs of Indian consumers.

## Dhanuka announces strategic acquisition agreement with Bayer AG

Dhanuka Agritech Limited has signed an agreement to acquire international rights to the active ingredients Iprovalicarb and Triadimenol. With this acquisition, Dhanuka plans to expand its footprint in more than 20 countries, including the regions of LATAM, EMEA and Asia including India. These products were invented by Bayer AG, a global leader in agriculture input solutions and farming innovations. This acquisition will enable Dhanuka to embark on a journey of global market expansion.

## Revolutionising investing & trading for everyone by Master Trust

In a highly competitive market where numerous brokers are striving to deliver user-friendly trading solutions, Master Trust, has introduced Agnik, a breakthrough mobile trading app. Designed to make trading and investing accessible to traders and investors of all levels, it combines an intuitive interface, robust security, and innovative features, setting a new standard in mobile trading.

## Jagat Pharma enters nutraceuticals

Jagat Pharma is now launching its new wellness supplement—Marine Collagen. The product is skillfully formulated to support joint, skin, hair, nail and bone health and is available in the capsule form. It basically provides a comprehensive solution for the individuals seeking to elevate both internal and external wellness.

## Talaabwali - a unique culinary experience

Embark on an immersive culinary adventure with traditional Indian flavours, where every bite tells a story of heritage, sustainability and the beauty of Tipai's natural surroundings. It is an exclusive wellness and wildlife sanctuary Tipeswar Forest, spanning 34 acres on the edge of Tipeswar Wildlife Sanctuary, it blends luxury, sustainability and nature. Guests can relax in forest villas or private bio-pool villas, designed with earthy, rustic elegance and offering panoramic views. Committed to eco-conscious luxury, it offers safaris, nature walks, junior naturalist programs, stargazing and more, all rooted in responsible tourism and wellness.



The opening day of the Tennis Premier League (TPL) Season 6 served up a series of delicious and well-contested games at the Cricket Club of India, with the likes of Rohan Bopanna putting on quite a show for the fans. The matches took place on a charcoal-colored court and saw all eight teams being a part of the action.

Photos by- SV Chary

Synchrony successfully organised its annual Thanksgiving Town Hall in Hyderabad on Thursday, November 28, 2024, at the Novotel HICC. The event brought together over 3,100 employees for a day of celebration, engagement and connection



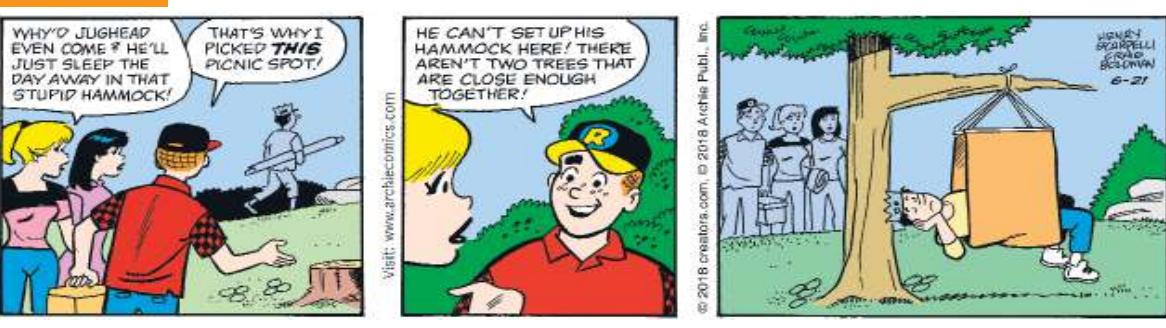
The NSS Unit of Avinash College of Commerce, Himayathnagar, observed World AIDS Day with a poignant awareness rally, themed "One World, One Fight. End HIV Together." Led by Principal Dr. YSS Savitri Devi, NSS Program Officer, faculty coordinators and 100 student volunteers, the rally commenced from the college campus and proceeded to the Ambedkar statue. The rally served as a powerful reminder of the collective responsibility to combat the virus and support those impacted by it.



CHIREC International School launched its ambitious project, CHIREC 2.0, a transformative educational vision for 21st-century children. The launch of the new international curriculum campus in Serilingampally was attended by esteemed guests from abroad and Hyderabad. The event featured mesmerising performances by world-renowned speed painter Vilas Nayak and musical maestro Bickram Ghosh and his team.

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



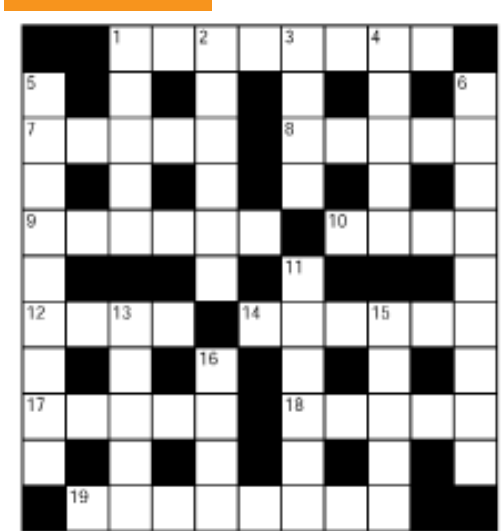
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### NANCY



### SUDOKU



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

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

### ACROSS

- 1 Using your brain
- 2 A small green or black fruit from a tree
- 3 Strike with the foot
- 4 Time of darkness
- 5 Moving stairway
- 6 Spinning aeroplane part
- 7 Tugged
- 8 The capital of Egypt
- 9 A health worker
- 10 Close by

### DOWN

- 1 Bread cooked brown
- 2 A young child

### GINGER MEGGS





WEDDING ALERT!

# Bellamkonda Suresh's elder son to tie knot soon

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Producer Bellamkonda Suresh has completed 25 years in the Telugu Film Industry. He made his debut with the film *Sambayya* that stars late Srihari as the lead. The film was released in 1999. Today, Bellamkonda is celebrating his 57th birthday. "It's been a wonderful journey for me. I've made about 38 films as a producer and my last film, *Ganga* in 2015," recalls Bellamkonda. However, the hiatus? Reason he says it was his sons. "My elder son Sai Sreenivas is well settled and busy with few projects and my younger son Ganesh is also settling now. I am planning to produce a film next April," said Suresh. The producer said though he didn't produce any film, he is in the industry and working. "I executed the Hindi film *Chatrapathi* in which my son Sreenivas made his debut in Hindi," said the producer. The film, however, didn't do well. "Some of my friends told me that May 12 was the best date, so we released it on that date. It collected 98 lakhs gross on the first day and we expected a good collection on the second day. But one week before this film *The Kerala Story* was released our film didn't do well initially, but picked up in the second week remarkably. So, our film didn't collect much on the second day as it collected Rs 30 lakhs. We made a mistake somewhere,



so it didn't go well," said the producer. Talking about his journey of 25 years, the producer was a bit sad that his first film's lead actor is no more. "My first film was with Srihari and he is no more now. He passed away at a young age and he was a very good friend of mine. The director of the film KS Nageswara Rao is also no more, so I always feel bad whenever I think of my debut film," said the producer.

The producer aid that he is now in a good position because of the Telugu film industry. He is planning to release a film every three months. The producer said in these years he has seen lows and highs. "There is no regret for anything. I balanced both highs and lows in the same way and that's why I can continue till now. In 2015 once I looked at my balance sheet, I got Rs 38 crore loss and I settled each and everyone selling my properties. Those properties are now Rs 1,000 worth and I never regret it. But in these nine years, I earned a lot of money and now I am ready to produce films," said Bellamkonda.

Bellamkonda also introduced VV Vinayak as director with the film *Aadi*. Vinayak became one of the top directors of Telugu Cinema. "I am in touch with him regularly and also many others in the industry," said Suresh. He added that before he turned as producer, he worked as Manager for Mohan Babu's film. "Mohan Babu garu is my Godfather, he actually offered me as manager for his film," he said.

Bellamkonda did few remakes as producer in his career like *Naa Autograph*, *Sambo Siva Sambo*, *Lakshmi Narasimha* and *Bodyguard*. "Though there is an OTT platform where you can see films in all languages, I still feel that we can do remakes. I bought the rights for a film to remake in Telugu and I will announce the details soon," said. He added that if the film has good entertainment and emotions, it is definitely successful whether it's a remake or a straight film. When asked at present which director he wanted to work with? "Definitely, Puri Jagannadh. He is a director who can project the lead actor in a different way and he also completes the film in 90 days. If you ask, I want to work with Puri Jagannadh," said Bellamkonda.

For another question he said that his elder son is getting married soon. "It's almost confirmed and I will announce the details in a few days," he said.

**PRODUCER BELLAMKONDA SURESH, WHO IS CURRENTLY CELEBRATING HIS 25 YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY AS A PRODUCER, SPEAKS OF HIS HIATUS, HIS SON'S DEBUT FILM CHATRAPATHI BEING A FLOP AND MORE**



## CHAY AND SOBHITA TIE KNOT WITH TRADITIONAL BLISS

Naga Chaitanya and Sobhita Dhulipala tied the knot in an intimate ceremony on Wednesday, surrounded by close family and friends.

The wedding, held at Annapurna Studios in Hyderabad, was a beautiful blend of traditional and modern elements. The 8-hour-long wedding ceremony was rooted in age-old customs, showcasing the couple's commitment to their cultural heritage. Guests praised the couple's simplicity and reverence for their roots, amidst the grandeur of the celebrations.

As of 8:55 pm, the couple's wedding photos were out on social media. While, Sobhita was seen wearing a traditional golden saree, Chaitanya, on the other hand, wore a traditional pancha, which was paired with a kurta.

Meanwhile, according to an independent source, "As per traditional customs, the first thing a couple is expected to do after the wedding is visit a temple to express their gratitude for the wonderful journey ahead. Sobhita and Naga Chaitanya will be following this ritual and are planning to visit either the Tirupati Balaji Temple or the Srisailem Temple."

The guest list includes prominent names such as Allu Arjun With family, Prabhas, SS Rajamouli, Chiranjeevi, PV Sindhu, Nayanthara, the entire Akkineni and Daggubati families, NTR, as well as power couples Ram Charan and Upasana Konidela and Mahesh Babu and Namrata Shirodkar.

# How one 'last try' led to *Kissik* magic

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S ublashingi, the voice behind the sensational *Kissik* from *Pushpa 2*, has become the talk of the town. In an exclusive chat, the rising star shared insights into her journey and the energy-packed process of creating this chart-topping hit. Her journey into the world of music began as a natural expression of her love for singing, a talent she nurtured from her childhood.

Without formal training, she found her voice in school competitions, where the seeds of her musical passion were sown. The timbre of her voice and the vocal ranges of English tracks resonated with her far more than Tamil or regional music, which felt distant in tone and pitch.

As she explored this new world of sound, her creative instincts flourished. Writing poetry had always been a part of her life, an instinctive way of capturing her thoughts. "I wouldn't call myself a voracious writer, but I loved expressing myself through words whenever inspiration struck," she admits. From self-discovery to collaboration, has shaped her identity as an artist, setting the stage for her breakout with *Kissik*, the trending track from *Pushpa 2: The Rule*. Her debut single, *Katadi*, marked the first milestone in her musical career, a song that started as a casual experiment but turned into something unexpectedly significant.

"It wasn't planned as a grand release or anything," she shares. "We initially created it for Instagram, but once we realised how much we loved it, we decided to develop a full version." When asked about her foray into playback singing, she revealed that it wasn't a career she had envisioned. "Playback singing just happened," she admits. During her school days, even as she practiced diligently, she never saw herself entering the playback world. "The voices I heard on screen felt unattainable—too high-pitched and out of my range. It was always easier for me to replicate male voices rather than female ones," she explains.

Her journey to *Pushpa 2*'s much-anticipated track *Kissik* began serendipitously. Renowned composer Devi Sri Prasad (DSP) was on the hunt for a fresh voice, something unique and unexplored. "He and his team were listening to a variety of songs late one night and my track *Golden Sparrow* was among them. He found my voice interesting and that's how it all started. At the time, I had no idea it was for *Pushpa 2*. It wasn't until I got the event invitation that his manager casually mentioned, 'Oh, this is for *Pushpa 2*.' I was stunned."

Working with DSP proved to be an unforgettable experience. "He's the most energetic person I've met in the industry," she shares, her admiration clear. "Even when the track is recorded, he's dancing and completely immersed in the music. His energy is contagious." She recalls how his warmth and approachability turned the studio into a second home. "I was nervous on my first day, but he's built an environment that feels like a family. It's a space where creativity flows naturally, without any intimidation."

When it came to delivering the electrifying vocals for *Kissik*, she admits it was a challenge to rise to the song's intense energy. "It took me an entire day to crack it," she recalls. "I was in the studio from morning and while they recorded and tested, doubts started creeping in, both for me and maybe for them too. By night, we were all exhausted and ready to give up, but then someone suggested, 'Let's try one last time.' That's when something clicked."

She describes the moment as almost magical, a sudden surge of energy unlocking the power needed for the track. "I'm just grateful that out of nowhere, the energy poured out of me and we finally got what we wanted." For her, the transition from creating independent music to playback singing came with its own set of adjustments. "When I'm making independent music, I'm in complete control. I know exactly what I want. But in playback, especially when there's no reference vocal, it's about cracking what others envision. That takes time for me," she explains.

The high-energy vibe of *Kissik* also meant stepping into the shadow of *Oo Antava Oo Oo Antava*, a massive success from *Pushpa*. Did the weight of expectations affect her? Surprisingly, it didn't. "I didn't even know I had to match *Oo Antava*'s energy," she laughs. "Being in the dark about the song's context worked in my favour. I wasn't overwhelmed by the pressure and everything fell into place naturally. But I definitely think I would have been intimidated had I known I had to match that song's energy," she confesses.



**ADDING TO THE CHART-BUSTER LIST OF THE PUSHPA FRANCHISE, KISSIK HAS BEEN CREATING ITS OWN NOISE, WITH THE VOCALS BY SUBLASHINI. IN AN EXCLUSIVE CHAT WITH THE PIONEER, SHE SPEAKS OF HER INCLINATION TOWARDS MUSIC, SINGING THE TRACK AND MORE**

With *Kissik*, she's proven that sometimes, trusting the process and the magic of one last take, can lead to unforgettable results.

She describes the recording process of *Kissik* as a transformative and theatrical experience, one that pushed her out of her comfort zone. "It felt like I was acting, not just singing. I had to bring out a whole sensual vibe that I had never explored before," she shares. "To deliver that energy vocally, I had to embody it physically, whether through gestures, expressions, or even imagined movements. It wasn't just about hitting the right notes; it was about performing with my whole being." This new approach came with its challenges. "The first day was tough," she admits. "It took time to soak in the energy required and match the sensual tone they wanted. And with the Telugu version, there were multiple lyric iterations, so I became deeply familiar with the song, almost memorizing each version by heart. It felt more natural with time, but it was definitely a learning curve."

The high-energy track marks a milestone in her career, as *Kissik* is her first major Telugu playback release, and also her first song in Hindi. "The response has been incredible. People from different parts of India have reached out to say they loved it, even if they didn't understand the lyrics," she says. "It's amazing to connect with listeners in their own languages and resonate with such a wide audience."

As for the future, she is keeping her creative options open. "I don't like boxing myself into one genre. I write what I feel, and the music takes its shape from there. Working in multiple languages this time was such a rewarding experience that I'd love to continue experimenting with different styles and learning new languages," she says. "I want to remain fluid and explore as much as I possibly can."

When asked about her dream collaborations, her excitement is contagious. "At this point, the list is endless," she laughs. "Playback singing wasn't something I even considered possible, and now that it's happening, the doors feel wide open. I'd love to work with so many music directors, and even contribute as a lyricist, if the opportunity arises. I write my own lyrics in Tamil and English, so that's something I'd like to explore further."

"AR Rahman definitely," she says, one name stands out in her wishlist. Anirudh Ravichander, she says with enthusiasm. "Even if it's far-fetched, I'd be thrilled to work with him someday. Fingers crossed, it could happen when I'm 60 and he's 70! Whenever it happens, I'll be ready and happy."

## Balakrishna completes *Daaku Maharaj* shoot

Actor-turned-politician Nandamuri Balakrishna is busy with politics and also as an actor. The actor is seeing his best phase as an actor with successful films. He is now working with Bobby Kolli for the film *Daaku Maharaj* which the teaser released recently. Sithara Entertainments is producing this film and this is one of the high budget films in Balakrishna's career. Director Bobby Kolli, known for his powerful and stylish presentation of his leading actors, is making this movie with a huge ambition on a massive scale. With stunning visuals, the director has promised an unique theatrical experience for everyone. He stated that the movie and the character will be most violent and he kept his promise with high voltage sequences.

Now, the makers have revealed that the movie shoot is wrapped and they are going to release the movie on schedule. S Thaman is scoring music for the film. *Daaku Maharaj* is set to hit the screens for Sankranti 2025, worldwide in a grand manner.



sparkling excitement among fans eager for the next chapter in this beloved time-travel saga.

Balakrishna's son, Nandamuri Mokshagna, will take the lead role in this sequel. Balakrishna is closely involved in the script, ensuring that the sequel preserves

the legacy of the original while incorporating modern cinematic elements. In this episode the actor is seen in *Aditya 369* avatar, revealing more details about the sequel and offering an exclusive glimpse into the making of *Aditya 999 Max*.

### SEQUEL TO ADITYA 369

Meanwhile, in an exciting development, Balakrishna announced a sequel to *Aditya 369* during the sixth episode of *Unstoppable With NBK* (Season 4), set to air on December 6, 2024. The sequel, titled *Aditya 999 Max*, is officially in the works,



## Gunasekhar and Bhumi Chawla reunite after 20 years

Director Gunasekhar, renowned for his unique storytelling and hit films, is currently busy with a new youthful social drama titled *Euphoria*. The film is an edgy and fast-paced take on contemporary evils and it has raised curiosity ever since it was announced. The recently released glimpse was a stunner, taking expectations to the next level. The film is currently under production and began the second schedule with euphoric energy. Revealing a special update, the makers unveiled a short video from the sets.

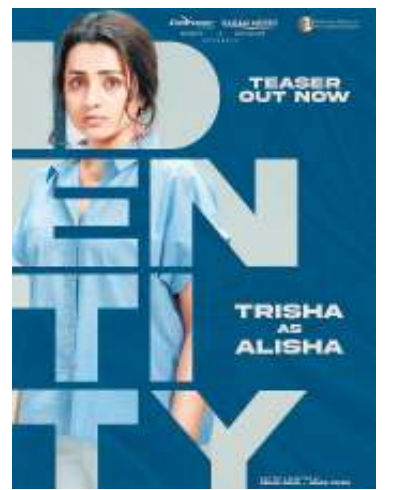


In the video, the ever-gorgeous actress Bhumi Chawla is seen entering the sets, doing her makeup, and joining the shoot. Her presence makes the set come alive.

Bhumi Chawla and Gunasekhar previously collaborated for the massive blockbuster *Okkadu*. Now, this combination has reunited after 20 years for *Euphoria*. Gunasekhar has written a powerful and important character for Bhumi Chawla in the film. *Euphoria* will be produced by Neelima Guna with Kaala Bhairava scoring the music.

## IDENTITY DROPS TEASER!

The much-awaited official teaser for *Identity* has just dropped, offering a sneak peek into an intriguing and suspense-filled narrative. Starring Tovino Thomas and Trisha Krishnan, this gripping thriller directed by Akhil Paul is set to keep viewers on the edge of their seats. Produced by Raju Malliath, Dr. Roy CJ and Gokula Gopalan, *Identity* promises an exciting cinematic journey, with a plot that is sure to captivate audiences.





# Indian team is a group of superstars, we are not focussing just on Bumrah or Kohli: Lyon

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

India is a team of superstars, and Australia is not focused on countering just 'extraordinary' players like Jasprit Bumrah and Virat Kohli, but the entire group as everyone is incredibly talented, spinner Nathan Lyon said on Wednesday. In the buildup to the Border Gavaskar Trophy and post India's emphatic 295-run with the series-opener in Perth, the chatter has revolved around specific Indian players including Kohli and Bumrah. "I look at the Indian squad and see a group of superstars. Cricket, however, is a team game, winning requires the entire side to perform well. India boasts extraordinary players like Bumrah and others, but it's not just about the superstars," Lyon said ahead of the pink ball Test here.

"The rest of the Indian squad is also incredibly talented. They're an incredible cricket team. We're not focusing



solely on any one player, that's for sure. "We have nothing but respect for every Indian cricketer

who takes the field on Friday. That doesn't mean we're not going to compete. We respect them, but we're determined



to play our brand of cricket and compete hard against a quality side. India is one of the best teams in the world,"

he added. Seasoned India off-spinner R Ashwin, who has 536 Test wickets, could not find space

in India's playing XI in Perth with the tourists opting to play all-rounder Washington Sundar as the sole spin option.

"More than surprises me. But the quality of Indian cricketers that they got in that squad, don't they? You've got Ashwin with 530 odd wickets and then you got Ravindra Jadeja over 300 wickets or whatever it may be.

"So it's pretty remarkable to see the quality of player that are sitting on the bench. But I can't control with who they run out, but it would be a good challenge, no matter who they bring out," Lyon said.

Debutant Nitish reddy displayed his attacking instincts by taking on the Australian off-spinner, hitting him for several boundaries in Perth. However Lyon wasn't surprised.

"I wasn't surprised. But yet again, here for boundaries, it provides opportunities for me to hopefully take a few chances along the way," he added.



## Kaun banega next BCCI secretary?

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With Jay Shah taking over as International Cricket Council's youngest chairman on December 1, the role of secretary in the mighty BCCI lies vacant and as officials wonder who the replacement might be, they have time to figure out the next course of action. Following the constitutional amendment in 2022, the secretary is the most influential office-bearer in the BCCI, having "all powers in relation to cricketing and non-cricketing matters" with the CEO working under his supervision.

Shah was elected unopposed for the ICC top position in August and the stakeholders have been wondering ever since how the transition process will take place.

Gujarat's Anil Patel and current BCCI joint secretary Devjit Saikia could replace Shah in the BCCI. The name of DCCA president Rohan Jaitley was also floated but remained just speculation.

"We don't know what is happening. Everyone (BCCI officials and state units) is quiet on the matter. Most likely joint secretary (Saikia) will be interim for the time being," said a BCCI administrator.

"There are issues that need to be dealt with on a day to day basis and anyone who comes in, needs to have a bit of knowledge on how the BCCI is run," he added. From the time an elected office-bearer resigns, the

board has 45 days to call for a Special General Meeting and choose his successor. If one calculates the 45 days from the day Shah took charge of ICC, the board has time till mid-January to fill up the position.

The BCCI also needs to appoint an electoral officer at least four weeks prior to the election, as per the constitution. A senior state unit official said the board had ample time to complete the transition.

"Transition should have been complete by now. The secretary has to sign majority of documents. This matter should have been taken up at the AGM (in September) but nobody questioned at that time," said the official.

"There is a power vacuum right now at the BCCI, the most powerful cricketing body in the world," added another office-bearer of a state unit.

With the current three-year term of officer-bearers coming to end in September next year, the incoming secretary will be in charge for close to one year.

There is also no word yet on who the new BCCI representative in the ICC board would be.

Shah held that position too and Board president Roger Binny is in the list of alternate directors. IPL chairman Arun Dhimal is India's representative in the ICC's Chief Executives' Committee.



## Yashasvi is standing exactly where I was 10 years back: KL Rahul

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

KL Rahul sees shades of himself in 22-year-old Yashasvi Jaiswal, who on his first trip Down Under, seems to be in a similar position like he was on his maiden Australia tour 10 years back. In the 2014-15 series, the then 22-year-old Rahul, batting at No. 6, had scores of 3 and 1 on debut at the MCG but came back strongly as an opener in the very next game with a eye-catching 110 in Sydney.

He also faced nerves but during the second innings in Sydney where he scored 16, he battled for an hour with Murali Vijay which eased him a lot.

Rahul is trying to play a similar role with Jaiswal what Vijay, the former opener and his national team senior had done to him back then.

Rahul and Jaiswal shared an Indian record opening stand of 201 in the second innings in Perth where Jaiswal scored a classy century but Rahul played his part with a very useful 77.

"I saw a bit of myself in him how I was 10 years ago, opening the batting for the first time, lots of doubts, lot of nerves and you keep doubting

your own game and a lot that happens in your head, and so all you can do is try and slow things down, try and take a few deep breaths," Rahul replied when asked about his conversations with Indian cricket's next 'pin-up' boy. "That's what was passed on to me by my fellow opening partner (M Vijay), I just passed that on to him," Rahul remembered his Test hundred in Sydney, which was his second game of his career. Having said that, Rahul doesn't deny that self doubts could creep in time and again but he has tried to preach Jaiswal what he practices.

"I am not saying I don't have all these thoughts, I do. But having been there, I know what I need to do to get past those doubts and thoughts you have in your head. And so whatever I told Jaiswal was what I have myself practiced," he said.

Rahul felt that once he had played around 40 balls, Jaiswal seemed more and more confident about his game.

"Once he got past those first 30-40 balls, he started feeling more confident, he was seeing the ball really well and batted beautifully," he said.

## Ollie Pope stays as stand-in wicketkeeper for England in second Test against New Zealand

AP ■ WELLINGTON

England has kept Ollie Pope as its stand-in wicketkeeper for the second Test against New Zealand starting Thursday.

After Jordan Cox broke his thumb ahead of the series opener in Christchurch last week, Ollie Robinson was called up as wicketkeeping cover and was in contention to make his maiden international appearance in the second Test at Wellington's Basin Reserve.

However, England kept faith with the same team that won by eight wickets on the fourth afternoon of the first test at



Hagley Oval, meaning Pope retained the gloves and Jacob Bethell stayed at No. 3. Pope was solid behind the

stumps and hit 77 after moving down to No. 6 in the batting order. Bethell was also impressive on his debut,

hitting 50 not out in the second innings.

"They always say when you don't notice a keeper, he's done a good job and Ollie certainly did that," England fast bowler Chris Woakes said. "To step up at short notice like that and do the job he did was fantastic. "For him to score runs just shows his character, putting his hand up for the team without any fuss and cracking on."

England: Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Jacob Bethell, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Ollie Pope, Ben Stokes (c), Chris Woakes, Gus Atkinson, Brydon Carse and Shoaib Bashir.

## Spin expected to play a role in the second Test: Adelaide Oval's head curator

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Spin is expected to play a role in the second Test between India and Australia, but the Adelaide Oval's head curator Damian Hough has also promised a 6mm grass cover to ensure that the ball doesn't wear out early during the day-night game here.

Hough said the grass will assist the pacers early on with the spinners coming into play as the match progresses.

"History suggests that it is hard to bat under lights in Adelaide. The pitch will have 6mm of grass. We're trying to allow all facets of the game to shine at some stage during the game," Hough told media ahead of the second Test starting Friday.

"What we're trying to do is have a coarse mat grass -- thatchy type of grass that's dry and hard. And the reason

we do that is we're trying to get as much pace and bounce out of the pitch as what we can get for us, for Adelaide, which is a lower clay content," he added.

The opening Perth Test, which India won by a record 295 runs, lasted four days with batting becoming easier as the game moved ahead. Hough has similar plans for the pink-ball game.

"Spin normally plays a role so it can get a good bite or purchase out of that grass and it normally gets good bounce. So that's a game plan. Hopefully, as the ball gets older, the batters can cash in and if there's a partnership out there, they cash in and go from there."

While spinners didn't have much to do in the Perth Test, Hough said the tweekers will have more assistance at the Adelaide Oval.



"Spin always plays a role in Adelaide. You need to pick a front-line spinner. There should never be a question of 'do we, don't we?' It should always be 'do,'" Hough said highlighting the role of spinners in Adelaide.

"From my side, always pick a spinner. The idea of leaving that extra bit of grass and that

matty grass is for the spinner to be able to get purchase out of that mat and get it to bite, grip, and bounce," he added. "We want spin to play a role at Adelaide. We might not be able to get as much as other places around the world, but spin traditionally plays a role." He reiterated that the aim is

to have a good, balanced contest.

"Normally the quicks should be able to get some assistance throughout the game. And we know the quicks can. Spin can come into it in that night session. Under lights, if they can get hold of a new ball in that night session, normally it is quite entertaining.

"We're trying to get that balance right...We're trying really hard to ensure that the balance between bat and ball is there and we can allow the batters to shine strategically throughout the course of the game."

Potential thunderstorms are forecast for the opening day of the match, which is unusual for Adelaide at this time of the year.

"I am not sure exactly on the timing of those storms coming through, but we're expecting to pull covers a bit

on Friday. Hopefully it clears out on Saturday morning ... Then it should be good for the remainder of the Test."

Hough said weather has a huge role to play in the movement of the pink ball. "The ball hooping around has got nothing to do with the pitch. Under right conditions, right weather, the ball will move."

It will be India's first pink-ball Test in Australia since they were famously bundled out for 36 at the same venue back in 2020 but Hough maintained there were no demons in the pitch even back then.

"On the morning of day three, no one would have expected that Test match to finish in three days. That was just really good bowling from Australia...I don't think the pitch played a part in that," he said.

## Rishabh Pant has taken to Test cricket like a duck to water, says Rahul Dravid

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The void left by MS Dhoni's retirement in Indian cricket lineup was quickly filled by Rishabh Pant, who embraced Test cricket like a "duck to water", feels former head coach Rahul Dravid.

The flamboyant wicketkeeper-batter, who returned after surviving a horrific car crash in December 2022, scored a match-winning 89 in the fourth Test at the Gabba and contributed 274 runs throughout the series, playing a key role in India's historic 2-1 triumph in the 2020-21 tour.

"It's hard to imagine that, after Dhoni left, you felt there might be some time for someone to come in and replace him," Dravid told Star Sports.

"I'm not saying he's replaced him, but certainly in Test cricket, his performances have been absolutely sensational, an incredible performance.

"Watching Rishabh there and chasing to get 89 to win that Test match at the Gabba, with

everything on the line and such a depleted side, to put in that kind of performance under that kind of pressure -- truly sensational... What a special cricketer he's been. He's just taken to Test cricket like a duck to water. It's just phenomenal."

Pant's heroics that included two fifties at 68.50 in five innings helped India become the first Asian side to win successive Test series wins Down Under.

In the ongoing five-Test series, the 27-year-old scored a vital 37 off 78 balls in the first innings of the Perth Test, including a remarkable six that lifted India's spirits, helping them recover from 59/5 to 150 all out. The Jasprit Bumrah-led team then bowled out Australia for 104 and won the match by 295 runs to take a 1-0 lead going into the Adelaide Test beginning on Friday.

While India have dominated Australia lately, Dravid's knock of 233 during the Adelaide Test in 2003 still remains a fan-favourite. Nostalgia and regrets

Reflecting on his knock, Dravid admitted that he still regrets not winning the series. "I'm grateful for it, but I wouldn't



have voted for myself, put it that way. Probably, I've got a lot of recency bias as well," he

continued. "I think the way India has performed in Australia over the

last two series in particular -- winning series there -- that counts for a lot.

"However great my performances or India's performances were, we couldn't actually win that series. We came close, but we couldn't get the wickets on the final day in Sydney that we needed.

"The last two teams that have gone to Australia have done that, and that's a fantastic achievement -- a terrific achievement -- and there have been some absolutely sensational performances right through those."

Dravid was joined by VVS Laxman when India were reeling at 85/4, especially after the hosts had posted a mammoth 556 in just a day and a half.

Ganguly run-out: My mistake The 51-year-old reflected on the incident where he had accidentally run out his captain Sourav Ganguly and admitted it was his "mistake".

"I was thinking, 'I've got the captain run out. I better do something meaningful.' It was totally my mistake getting Sourav (Ganguly) run out. I will own up

to that one -- it was my mistake. "But, I think you're just trying to bat, you're just trying to build a partnership, you're just trying to get to the target."

"The thing with Laxman and me is that we had batted together a couple of really big partnerships before that. We did it once in Kolkata in 2001 and even in a domestic game when we first played South Zone against West Zone.

"So, we had kind of batted a lot together and built this partnership. Not that we were thinking about that when we got out there, but I think the idea was really just to bat and try and build partnerships, stitch something together."

"It's always nice batting with Laxman as well... Because he's just a beautiful player to watch and such a lovely player.

"He really attacked back, which, in some ways, complemented me quite well in how we went about our innings," he recalled as Indian won the Adelaide Test by four wickets but the series ended in a 1-1 draw.