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Jaya Jayahe Telangana... Janani Jaya Kethanam...



TELANGANA THALLI

Unveiling
By Hon'ble Chief Minister
Sri **A. Revanth Reddy** Garu

Date : 09th December, 2024

Time : 6:05 P.M.

Venue : Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat

Issued by: Special Commissioner, Department of Information and Public Relations, Government of Telangana.

Monday Mirchi

GURUKULAM STYLE OF SHOOTING THE MESSENGER!

Multiple incidents of food poisoning incidents in Telangana's Gurukulams of late, apart from raising valid questions about the quality and safety of food served to students, have queered the pitch for Alugu Varshini, Secretary of Telangana Social Welfare Gurukul Institutions Society. Instead of putting the record straight as the society's *sutradhari*, she hit the headlines recently for her rude, self-righteous, and defiant attitude. It is a different matter that she came up with no solutions at all as if it is not her business. Varshini's presser was marked by fiery darts and theatrics in place of decorum as she raved and ranted against the media. While singling out a particular outlet associated with the Bharat Rashtra Samithi party, she unabashedly declared, leaving jaws on the floor: "Don't even bother showing up". That was just a drizzle. Varshini, in the course of her *varsham* of recriminations that followed, laid out new rules for journalists wanting to reach her. "First, message in the WhatsApp group that you're trying to contact me, and then I'll call you back," she declared peremptorily, leaving reporters wondering who is the boss when it comes to media coverage in terms of so many seconds on air or column centimeters in print. Opening a window into family flex, she let reporters know that she had in fact advised her father-in-law-a heavyweight politician in Tamil Nadu- to replicate TG's Gurukulams model. She is furious now because of what she dubs as the media's 'negative propaganda' about what she had held out as a 'model'. It looked like Varshini came fully armed for a showdown with the media, caring two hoots for going off the record even when prompted by scribes aghast at her diatribe. Finally, her every word went on record, leaving no scope mischief or misinterpretation. Media persons were like "It is arrogance cloaked in authority".

BUZZ AROUND TOP COP'S KIDS AT DILJIT'S CONCERT

The much-talked-about Dil-Luminati tour by Diljit Dosanjh had its share of backroom drama-and not just those related to permissions or mandated tweaks for on-stage performance. The spotlight briefly shifted to the top cop's children, who were reportedly keen on meeting the Punjabi superstar. However, things didn't go as planned, with the event organizers putting their foot down on the request. What followed has set tongues wagging in high circles. The grapevine has it that two individuals from the singer's team were pulled up and questioned over the incident, though they were quickly let off. The buzz, however, isn't about the questioning-it is about how the kids of top guns always seem to find ways to get what they want. While the concert ended on a high note for most of the audience, the backstage drama has raised questions about what all law-enforcers at high levels can deem or treat as an 'offence'!

WEDDING BELLS RING LOUD IN BUREAUCRATIC CIRCLES

Diwali came and passed without any of

those promised 'political bombs' going off, though that explosives-laden talk had left even some of the babus and memsahibs without sleep for many days in Telangana. Wedding bells are ringing loud in bureaucratic circles now, with a string of ceremonies beginning to light up the social calendar. Gautami, Joint Managing Director of the Musi Riverfront Development Corporation Limited, is preparing to embark on a new chapter in her life as she is readying to tie the knot soon. Likewise, IAS officer Uma Harathi, who had made headlines by securing the 3rd rank in the UPSC 2022 examination, recently exchanged vows in a joyous ceremony. Her score in the civil services examination and her marriage have both become the talking points of admiration in bureaucratic circles. Promising an extended season of marriage-related festivities, news has surfaced that the kid of a senior IPS officer is also getting ready for wedding this month. The saved dates of these celebrations have infused a festive spirit in the otherwise staid corridors of governance. Warm wishes pour in for the happy couples as colleagues and friends celebrate their love and new beginnings. Here's to a season of joy and togetherness in the world of bureaucracy!

NOTE-TAKING SECRETARY SPARKS CURIOSITY

A steno taking notes is a rarity these days. Taking notes is part of a scribe's trappings. However, when Health Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha addressed the media recently, Health Secretary Christina Z Chongthu was spotted busily jotting down notes -- a rather intriguing sight for journalists. Typically, bureaucrats are known to prepare backgrounders into which netas dip often for inputs that could be used to elaborate points during their interactions with the media. But Christina's attention to detail at her own note-taking during the Minister's speech raised eyebrows. It is not that Christina has been seen with a pen in hand, diligently capturing points during the Minister's interactions, for the first time. Noticeably, it has become her habit, whetting curiosity among her colleagues and observers alike about what exactly she is up to? Notably, her note-taking habit is something that not many among those similarly placed would like to inculcate in their daily routine. For, few netas always speak words of wisdom necessitating the services of a secretary to hang on to his every word.

NTR DISTRICT COLLECTOR BEGINS ON A SUNNY NOTE

NTR District collector Dr G Lakshminsha, who assumed charge just two weeks ago, has literally begun on a sunny note, setting an ambitious goal. He is determined to raise awareness about the benefits of using solar power and push for its widespread adoption. Although the initial target for NTR District under the Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana was 20,000 installations; he has upped the ante by aiming at a tenfold increase, targeting 2 lakh solar installations across the district! *Muft bijli, masth Collector!*

--Yours truly

Ponguleti: Will expose BRS leaders' illegal acts

New Dharani app, new Act in Assembly's winter session

KOLISHETTY VENKATESHWARLU
venkat.k.warlu@gmail.com
HYDERABAD

The Congress Government will expose the illegal acts of the BRS Government and its leaders carried out through the Dharani Portal before the people with evidence, Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said.

He said the Congress Government will pass the new ROR Act-2024 Bill during the Assembly's winter session commencing on Monday and will also introduce the Dharani Portal's new App and new Act. Addressing the media at the secretariat on Sunday, Ponguleti said the Congress Government had made changes in the Dharani Portal. "The government removed the Dharani Portal from a foreign company and handed it over to the National Informatic Centre (NIC) on December 1.



Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy addressing the media at Secretariat on Sunday

The government is bringing in the new ROR Act-2024 after correcting the mistakes of the ROR Act-2020. The government will approve the ROR Act-2024 in the Assembly's winter session starting Monday," he said.

Pointing out that the BRS Government abolished the VRO and VRAs system suddenly and transferred them to various departments, Ponguleti said the Congress Government has decided to restore the VROs system and take back

the VROs and VRAs of all villages before Sankranti to protect government lands.

He said the government is going to appoint 1,000 surveyors to strengthen the survey system and that the government will accept all suggestions helpful to farmers.

Declaring that the Congress Government will concentrate on journalists' housing issues after Praja Palana Vijayotsavulu celebrations, he said that the government will provide houses to all the eligible poor.

Will pull up govt, says KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BRS will pull up the government on behalf of the farmers in both the Assembly and Council during the winter session starting Monday, BRS Working President KT Rama Rao said.

Addressing the media after the BRSLP meeting called by BRS supremo K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Sunday at his Erravalli farmhouse, KTR warned the government that the BRS will oppose the establishment of the Pharma City and the forcible taking over of farmers' lands for that. He said the BRS will question the government regarding the forcible takeover of farmers' lands in the name of the Pharma Village at 20 places instead of using the land already acquired for Pharma City.

"We will also raise the Lagacharla issue. We will question the Congress Government for troubling Dalits by not giving them the Dalit Bandhu scheme's second instalment money," he said. He said they had given a

report about the bad conditions in Telangana Government's residential schools to KCR prepared by BRS leader RS Praveen Kumar.

KTR said the BRS will oppose in the Assembly and Council the installation of the new Telangana Thalli statue by the Congress Government on the Secretariat premises as it is being done without knowing the history behind the statue. He said that the rights of MLAs and MLCs are being violated and that Congress came to power by giving impossible-to-implement assurances.

"The BRS will pull up the government based on the Congress manifesto and the party will fight in the Assembly and Council on behalf of the people," he said.

KTR said the Congress Government did not implement the farm loan waiver scheme fully. The government is also not in a position to run paddy procurement centres. However, the Congress Government is deceiving people again in the name of Praja Palana Vijayotsavulu, he said.

Sanjay must know Eatala's ideology, says Seethakka

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, should know the ideology of the BJP's Malkajgiri MP, Eatala Rajender, before levelling allegations against the Congress Government, Panchayat Raj Minister Seethakka said.

It may be recalled that Sanjay had said on Saturday that the Revanth Reddy Government is a captive in the hands of urban Naxals and that former Naxals are in the cabinet.

Reacting to Sanjay's comments on Sunday, Seethakka said that the BJP and the BRS are trying to topple the Congress Government.

Speaking to the media in Mahbubabad district on Sunday, Seethakka said that people have extended their support to the Congress Government during the last

one year.

Taking exception to Sanjay's statement that former Naxals are there in the cabinet, Seethakka said that she condemns Sanjay's comments as she had taken part in the Naxal movement. She recalled that she was a lawyer in Warangal and was elected as a public representative three times.

She said that Sanjay should make comments directly against her and that it is not proper to comment on the entire cabinet.

She said that she was elected as an MLA earlier on a TDP ticket and Sanjay should know that Warangal and Karimnagar were centres of the Naxal movement, she said.

"The BJP's top leaders like Narendra Modi and Amit Shah asked Naxals to join public life. However, Bandi Sanjay Kumar has branded me as an urban Naxal.

Getting ready for statue inauguration



CM A Revanth Reddy inspecting the works of Telangana Thalli statue at the Secretariat along with Ministers on Sunday

STATUE UNVEILING AND ASSEMBLY SESSION

Suspense continues over KCR's attendance

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao will not be attending the winter session of the Assembly commencing on Monday, it is learnt.

It is also learnt that KCR will not be attending the unveiling of the Telangana Thalli statue on the premises of the secretariat at 5.00 pm on Monday.

It may be recalled that Transport Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar had invited KCR by going to KCR's Erravalli farm-

house on Saturday for the unveiling function of the Telangana Thalli statue.

Ponnamp had also invited Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy. But Kishan wrote a letter to Ponnamp saying that he would not be attending due to official preoccupations. No AICC leader is attending the function as all Congress leaders are busy with Parliament's winter session, it is learnt.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy checked out

arrangements for the unveiling of the Telangana Thalli statue on the secretariat premises on Sunday along with the Chief Whip in the Legislative Council, Patnam Mahender Reddy, Speaker Gaddam Prasada Kumar, Ministers N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, D. Sridhar Babu, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Ponnamp Prabhakar, CM's Advisor Vem Narendar Reddy, TPCC Chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud and Chief Secretary Santhi Kumari.

KCR: Is this...

Continued from page 3

the admin based on the Congress manifesto," he said.

KCR also directed the MLAs and MLCs to explain the reasons behind the proposal to establish a Pharma City during BRS rule and the opinions of industrialists.

He also said that BRS MLAs and MLCs should pull up the government regarding the protocol applicable to MLAs and MLCs.

He said that the BRS would appoint all its committees after February and that there would be a membership enrolment drive after the appointment of the committees.

It is learnt that KCR also discussed organising a public meeting after the party committees are constituted.

TG winter session...

Continued from page 3

the saffron party's 'chargesheet', had alleged that the Congress' promises, including Rs 15,000 to farmers and tenant farmers, Rs 12,000 to agriculture workers and bonus for 10 crops, have not been kept.

Meanwhile, the state government would unveil a statue of 'Telangana Thalli' (mother) in state Secretariat premises on December 9.

The government is expected to discuss the issue after the commencement of the assembly session.

BRS leader Rama Rao took exception to the government making a new design and portrait of 'Telangana Thalli'. The redesigned portrait fails to represent the ethos and cultural glory of the state, he alleged.

The government's grand plans for Musi river redevelopment here is also expected to be come up during the assembly session. While the government asserted that Musi redevelopment would lead to economic growth and restore the city's glorious heritage, the BJP and BRS have opposed demolition of poor people's houses and alleged that the project smacks of corruption.

Gearing up for the session, BRS president K Chandrasekhar Rao held a meeting with MLAs on Sunday.

All Indians ...

Continued from page 3

The sources said the embassy is in touch with all Indian nationals, and they are safe.

The embassy remains available to assist Indian nationals in Syria, they said.

According to official data, there are about 90 Indian nationals in Syria, including 14 who are working in various UN organisations.

"Our Embassy continues to remain operational in Damascus, Syria. The Embassy is in touch with all Indian nationals, and they are safe," said a source.

The Syrian government collapsed early Sunday, as rebels seized control of the capital Damascus and Assad reportedly fled the country for an undisclosed location, marking the end of his family's 50-year rule.

Sanjay not attending unveiling function

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, informed Telangana Transport Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar over the phone that he would not be attending the unveiling of the Telangana Thalli statue on the secretariat premises.

Sanjay said that he can't attend the function due to work pressure and Parliament sessions.

Meanwhile, Ponnamp said that AIMIM floor leader Akbaruddin Owaisi's response is not available and that the government had invited him through officials.

Rebels overthrow ...

Continued from page 3

The statement emerged hours after the head of a Syrian opposition war monitor said Assad had left the country for an undisclosed location, fleeing ahead of insurgents who said they had entered Damascus following a remarkably swift advance across the country.

Many of the capital's residents were in disbelief at the speed at which Assad lost his hold on the country after nearly 14 years of civil war that killed hundreds of thousands of people, displaced half the country's prewar population of 23 million and drew in several foreign powers. **CELEBRATIONS ERUPT ACROSS THE CAPITAL**

As daylight broke over Damascus, crowds gathered to pray in the city's mosques and to celebrate in the squares, chanting "God is great." People also chanted anti-Assad slogans and honked car horns. Teen boys picked up weapons that had apparently been discarded by security forces and fired them in the air.

Revellers filled Umayyad Square in the city center, where the Defense Ministry is located. Men fired celebratory gunshots into the air and some waved the three-starred Syrian flag that predates the Assad government and was adopted by the revolutionaries. A few kilometers (miles) away, Syrians stormed the presidential palace, tearing up portraits of the toppled president.

Soldiers and police officers left their posts and fled, and looters broke into the Defense Ministry.

Sridhar reviews ...

Continued from page 3

Council Chairman Gutta Sukhender Reddy and police and civil administration officials.

The Minister said that strict security measures should be enforced during the sessions and asked officials to conduct thorough checks to prevent prohibited items from being brought into the Assembly. He stressed the importance of following protocol when the Speaker and Chairman visit.

Sridhar reminded officials to treat individuals holding constitutional posts with respect and urged the Chief Secretary and Principal Secretaries to ensure that written responses to legislators' questions are provided on

time.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Shanti Kumari, Finance Special Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao, Municipal Administration Principal Secretary Dana Kishore, Home Special Chief Secretary Ravi Gupta, DGP Dr Jitender, Hyderabad Police Commissioner CV Anand, Law and Order Additional DGP Mahesh Bhagwat, Fire Services DG Nagireddy, Cyberabad Police Commissioner Avinash Mahanti, Rachakonda Police Commissioner Sudheer Babu, Intelligence IGP Karthikeya, Intelligence Security Wing Officer Tafseer Iqbal, SB DCP Chaitanya Kumar, SPF Commandant PS Rao and others.

KCR's image will get a boost if he attends unveiling function: Venkat

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Roads and Buildings (R&B) Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said that if KCR attends the unveiling function of the Telangana Thalli statue his image will receive a boost.

Addressing the media on Sunday, Venkat said the birthday of Congress leader Sonia Gandhi is on December 9 and as she gave Telangana state, Chief Minister Revanth

Reddy is unveiling the statue of Telangana Thalli on that day on the secretariat's premises.

On Sunday, Venkat visited the Telangana Thalli statue premises. Later, addressing the media, he said that Telangana doesn't mean 'doras' and 'doraslanulu.' Telangana means the common woman who fought against Razakars, he said. It is in this context that the government made a statue

in the shape of a common woman, he added.

Venkat said that Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy has no connection with Telangana. He said that only former BJP MLA Yendela Laxminarayana quit during the Telangana Movement but Kishan did not do so.

He said that people would teach a lesson to leaders who refuse to attend the unveiling of the Telangana Thalli statue.

KCR means 'Irrigation' ...

Continued from page 3

the directions of Gandhi Bhavan. Harish said the Congress Government damaged the image of Hyderabad in the name of Musi Rejuvenation and HYDRAA and that it failed to maintain law and order in the state.

He said the Revanth government failed in implementing its election assurances and that the CM has been changing his

word whenever asked about his party's assurances.

"The Revanth Government destroyed Telangana's social welfare schemes. The government is being run by Gandhi Bhavan. Communal riots have taken place at nine places after Revanth took over. No houses have been constructed by the government but it has demolished many houses," Harish said.

He said the Congress

Government is troubling old people by not enhancing their pensions.

He said the BRS Government took loans amounting to Rs 4.20 lakh crore in 10 years. However, the Congress is spreading the lie that the BRS admin took loans amounting to Rs 7 lakh crore. The Revanth government took loans amounting to Rs 1 lakh crore in just one year, Harish said.

QUOTE OF THE DAY The pioneer The BJP's top leaders like Narendra Modi and Amit Shah asked Naxals to join public life. However, Bandi Sanjay Kumar has branded me as an urban Naxal. Sanjay hurt me psychologically by trolling me on social media when I took over as Minister. His latest comments hurt me a lot. Sanjay should withdraw his comments against me - Seethakka, Panchayati Raj Minister P2

CII urges govt to stick to fiscal deficit target

'REVIEWS ARE NO LONGER INSTINCTIVE; THEY'RE INFLUENCED BY PERSONAL BELIEFS'

Allu Arjun struggles to recall Telangana CM'S NAME

DON'T MISS... 3 big-ticket projects announced IT Minister D Sridhar Babu announced three big-ticket projects for 2024 with Rs 7,592 crore investment, which will provide 5,200 jobs. The Minister participated in the Department of Industries & Commerce, Information Technology, Electronics and Communication's Praja Palana - Praja Vijayotsavulu at Park Hyatt on Sunday. On this occasion, Sridhar Babu emphasised the ...

'Forest Dept prioritises safety of tigers' Several private colleges have been reportedly encouraging mass copying in the examinations conducted by the Kakatiya University (KU). As a result, 127 students have been debarred from the ongoing examinations for their involvement in such malpractices. Flying squads, deployed to conduct raids at various examination centres, have been catching numerous students engaged in mass ...

FDI inflows in India cross \$1 trillion Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into India have crossed the USD one trillion milestone in the April 2000-September 2024 period, firmly establishing the country's reputation as a safe and key investment destination globally. According to data from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), the cumulative amount of FDI, including equity, reinvested earnings and other capital, stood at USD 1,033.40 billion ...

Bumrah can't bowl from both ends: Rohit Jasprit Bumrah is only human and cannot always shoulder the responsibility of bowling opposition out all by himself, skipper Rohit Sharma said on Sunday, urging others to share the load with the premier fast bowler. India lost to Australia by 10 wickets in the second Test and during the home team's first innings, only Bumrah stood out with a four-wicket haul. "We are not just playing with one bowler. There are other bowlers also who will have to take responsibility ...

'We restored democracy and liberal values'



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress Government has 'restored democracy and liberal values' in Telangana, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said. The CM said that during the first year, the government set a record by waiving farm loans, giving bonuses to farmers, creating jobs and securing investments. Posting on X regarding this on Sunday the CM said, "After the successful completion of the first year of #PrajaPalana, I would like to share a few things with my people. During

this first year, your government set a record in farm loan waiver, paying crop bonuses, creating jobs and securing investments. Our welfare schemes for women, caste census, and environment-centred urban development policies are being discussed by other governments. Here, I am listing briefly some of your government's key achievements: WOMEN WELFARE: Free ride in TGSRTC buses, free domestic power supply (up to 200 units), and cooking gas for Rs 500 a cylinder. FARMERS: Waiver of farm loans of

Posting on X regarding this on Sunday the CM said, "After the successful completion of the first year of #PrajaPalana, I would like to share a few things with my people. During this first year, your government set a record in farm loan waiver, paying crop bonuses, creating jobs and securing investments. Our welfare schemes for women, caste census, and environment-centred urban development policies are being discussed by other governments. Here, I am listing briefly some of your government's key achievements

over 25 lakh (25,00,000) farmers, depositing Rs 21,000 crore directly into the bank accounts of farmers, Rs 500 bonus above the MSP for every quintal for fine rice and free 24/7 electricity supply for farmers. HOUSING: Allocation of four lakh (400,000) Indiramma houses underway. JOBS FOR YOUTH: Over 55,000 posts in government service for youth in a single year. Created lakhs of jobs in the private sector, lowest rate of unemployment in 12 years. Young India Integrated Residential Schools. Launched war against narcotics and drugs. Established YI Skills University and YI Sports University. ECONOMIC GROWTH/URBAN DEVELOPMENT: Doubled FDI

during the last nine months, over-all investments in the last 11 months grew by over 200 per cent. Making Hyderabad the first city in India to undertake an urban re-imagining programme to meet climate crisis challenges. Building a Regional Ring Road, Regional Ring Rail, Radial Roads, next phase of Metro Rail and many other projects, including India's first Artificial Intelligence City, within the Future City of Hyderabad to ensure growth. CASTE SURVEY: Telangana has undertaken one of India's first comprehensive caste survey. OTHERS: Hyderabad is soon going to become India's first city whose traffic will be managed by transgender marshalls.



Bashar Assad

Rebels overthrow Assad govt in Syria

Stunning end to 50 years of family rule

PNS ■ DAMASCUS

tutions of "the free Syrian state." Continued on Page 2

The Syrian government collapsed early Sunday, falling to a lightning rebel offensive that seized control of the capital of Damascus and sent crowds into the streets to celebrate the end of the Assad family's 50 years of iron rule. Syrian state television aired a video statement by a group of men saying that President Bashar Assad had been overthrown and all prisoners had been set free. The man who read the statement said the opposition group, known as the Operations Room to Conquer Damascus, called on all rebel fighters and citizens to preserve the insti-

All Indians are safe: Govt All Indian nationals in Syria are safe, government sources said on Sunday, hours after Islamist rebels captured power in Damascus evicting Syrian President Bashar al-Assad from power. The Indian embassy continues to remain operational in Damascus, they said.



Former CM KCR addressing the BRSLP meeting at his Erravalli farmhouse on Sunday

KCR: Is this what governments should do?

Slams changes in Telugu Thalli statue's shape

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu commented that changing the shape of the Telangana Thalli statue is a stupid thing. "Is this what governments should do?" he said. Addressing BRS MLAs and MLCs at his Erravalli farmhouse during a BRSLP meeting on Sunday in the context of the forthcoming winter session of the Assembly and Council starting on Monday, KCR said that the government should concentrate on solving people's problems. "BRS MLAs and MLCs should attend the winter session and strongly attack the government. They should explain the reason for the

introduction of the Rythu Bandhu scheme during BRS rule. Our MLAs and MLCs should explain the need for installing the Telangana Thalli statue and the conditions that existed during the TG movement. They should also explain the Telangana Thalli spirit that existed during that time," KCR said. He said the Congress Government had failed in all aspects. "BRS MLAs and MLCs should expose the attitude behind the Musi Project, HYDRAA and the failures of the Congress Government regarding residential schools and the education sector. You should raise the restrictive policies of the Congress Government in both Houses and the failures of Continued on Page 2

TG winter session likely to be stormy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Election promises of the ruling Congress, attack on government officials during public hearing for land acquisition and Musir river redevelopment and HYDRAA are among the issues likely to figure prominently during the winter session of Telangana Assembly beginning on December 9. The session assumes significance as it coincides with the first anniversary of the Congress government which assumed office on December 7 last year. The session is expected to witness heated exchanges between the opposition and the treasury benches on various issues concern-

Poll promises, Musi, HYDRAA to figure



ing the government's performance. While the government would showcase its achievements, the opposition BRS and BJP plan to

forcefully raise the alleged failures of the Revanth Reddy regime. However, the BRS released a 'chargesheet' against the Congress

government on Sunday, while the BJP had issued its own 'chargesheet' on December 1. BRS MLA T Harish Rao, a nephew of party president K Chandrababu Naidu, who released the 'chargesheet' alleged that the Congress rule during the last one year is 'saga of endless deceit'. Union Coal Minister and state BJP president G Kishan Reddy, who announced Continued on Page 2

'Will expose BRS leaders' illegal acts'

Sridhar reviews preparations for Assembly sessions

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Legislative Affairs Minister D. Sridhar Babu asked senior police officers to ensure that police personnel posted at the main gates of the Assembly can recognise newly elected legislators after complaints of misidentification. He emphasised that such things should not happen again. As the Assembly and Council sessions are starting on Monday, Sridhar held a review meeting on Sunday with Speaker Prasad Kumar, Continued on Page 2

KCR means 'Irrigation' and Revanth means 'Irritation': Harish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that former Chief Minister KCR means 'Irrigation' and current Chief Minister Revanth Reddy means 'Irritation', BRS MLA T. Harish Rao said that Telangana's development has stalled due to the immature attitude of Revanth. He said that conditions in the departments controlled by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy are very bad. Harish released a charge sheet regarding the Congress government's one-year rule titled 'One Year Rule - Unending Hypocrisy' on



Former Minister T Harish Rao explaining the chargesheet released against the Congress government's failures in one year rule on Sunday at Telangana Bhavan

Sunday at the Telangana Bhavan. Speaking on the occasion, he

said the government is making laws as per Continued on Page 2

Trafficker nabbed in Hyd after 2,500-km chase

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police Special Cell has arrested a man from Hyderabad allegedly involved in the illegal trafficking of Indian youths and forcing them to work in fake call centres engaging in cyber fraud, an officer said on Sunday. The arrest came after a 2,500-kilometre non-stop chase, the officer claimed. "After a long persevering chase of 2,500 km, Kamran Haider alias Zaidi was nabbed from Hyderabad," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Manoj C said. Zaidi carried a reward of Rs 2 lakh on information leading to his arrest, declared by the National Investigation Agency. According to police, on May 27, a case was registered at New Friends Colony Police Station on the complaint of one Naresh Lakhavath, who



said he was searching for a job when he came across Ali International Service, a consultancy firm supposedly based in New Delhi. "The firm offered him a job in Thailand and Laos and he was eventually sent to Thailand. But when he reached there, his passport was snatched and he was forced to

work for a Chinese company which used to scam Indian people online," the DCP said. The case was transferred to the National Investigation Agency. An investigation carried out by the NIA identified Manjoor Alam, Sahil, Ashish, Pawan Yadav, and Haider as key conspirators.

The arrest came after a 2,500-kilometre non-stop chase, the officer claimed. "After a long persevering chase of 2,500 km, Kamran Haider alias Zaidi was nabbed from Hyderabad," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Manoj C said

All five were involved in trafficking vulnerable Indian youth to the Golden Triangle Region in Laos where they were forced to commit cyber scams targeting European and American citizens, the officer said. They operated through Ali International Services, which functioned as a front. "The main accused was identified as Kamran Haider. Kamran Haider absconded and despite all efforts accused Kamran Haider could not be arrested. He was trying to go abroad to Thailand and Laos," the DCP said. Haider continuously changed his

locations from one state to another after he absconded. Teams were stationed in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh to nab him, police said. "Zaidi was located in Hyderabad, Telangana. Immediately two different teams of the special cell were sent to Hyderabad. He was apprehended on December 7 after a long persevering chase of 2,500 kilometres by the team without any rest. He was apprehended near Nampally Railway Station, Hyderabad, Telangana while trying to escape to another hideout," said the DCP.

Woman sells three minor sons in TG

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A woman allegedly sold her three minor sons, including twins, in Nizamabad district of Telangana, police said on Sunday. The three children in the age group of between five and seven have been rescued, they said. The woman allegedly sold one of her children around 10 months ago and later two others to three different persons for an amount ranging between Rs one lakh and Rs two lakh, a police official at Armoor police station said

lakh, a police official at Armoor police station said. The matter came to light on December 7, after an Assistant Sub-Inspector reported that during patrolling he discovered that the woman had sold her three sons and upon inquiry, the incident was confirmed to be true, police said. Police on its own registered a case against the woman and those who bought the children. Further investigation is going on.

City Pioneer

the pioneer

HYDERABAD | MONDAY | DECEMBER 9, 2024

04

CITY EVENTS

Palagummi Vishwanadham Birth Anniversary

Venue

Sri Thyagaraja Gana Sabha, Behind Sudha Hotel, Vivek Nagar Road, Ashok Nagar, Chikkadpally December 9, at 6:00 pm

Special Handloom Clothing Exhibition & Sale

Venue

Kamma Sangham Function Hall, 3-949/1/B, 8, Ameerpet Rd, Punjagutta Officers Colony, Ameerpet, December 9 at 10:00 am

Mekathlon

Robotics & Science Event

Venue

District 150, Gate 6, Elixir Tower, Level 4, Knowledge City Rd., Madhapur
December 9 and 10 at 12:00 noon

Elena Gabriele - OK!?

Venue

KLN Prasad Auditorium, December 13, 8 pm onwards

NYU CARNIVAL

With singer KARTHIK

Venue

Boulder Hills, Hyderabad
December 31

Weekend kids cooking camp

Master cooking and baking in 09 fun weekends

Venue

Culinary Guru Institute, Hyderabad.
Till January 11, 2025.



TG govt urged to release Rs 4,500 crore fee arrears

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The National BC Association has urged the Telangana government to release Rs 4,500 crore of fee arrears. President R Krishnaiah appealed to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to clear three years arrears for 16 lakh BC, SC, ST, EBC and Minority students. He also demanded the restoration of the full-fee reimbursement scheme for BC/EBC students in professional courses.

Krishnaiah criticised the government for ignoring student agitations over unpaid fees and outdated scholarship rates. He highlighted that students are unable to obtain certificates, secure jobs, or pursue higher education, affecting their future prospects. He suggested releasing the budget in two phases and increasing scholarships from Rs 5,500 to Rs 10,000, which were last revised eight years ago.

Krishnaiah called for peaceful protests at the Collectorate and RDO/MRO offices on December 10 and warned of intensified agitation if demands are not met. He stressed that education benefits families, communities and the nation's growth.

3 big-ticket projects announced with Rs7,592 crore investment

SAMUEL JOSHUA samueljoshuamjmc@gmail.com ■ HYDERABAD

IT Minister D Sridhar Babu announced three big-ticket projects for 2024 with Rs 7,592 crore investment, which will provide 5,200 jobs.

The Minister participated in the Department of Industries & Commerce, Information Technology, Electronics and Communication's Praja Palana - Praja Vijayotsavalu at Park Hyatt on Sunday.

On this occasion, Sridhar Babu emphasised the government's commitment to innovation, self-reliance and citizen-focused governance, highlighting advancements in national security, agriculture and public welfare.

He announced industries and investment promotion big ticket projects including Lenskart Solutions signing an MoU for the world's largest eyewear factory along with R&D in Hyderabad, investing Rs1,500 crore and creating 2,100 jobs. Coming to



IT Minister Sridhar Babu participates in 8 Task Initiative MoUs; launches three MeeSeva delivery services and 2 T-Fibre initiatives at the IT Department's Praja Palana - Praja Vijayotsavalu; To provide 5,200 jobs

Aerospace and Defence, Azad Engineering will construct a Superalloy plant in Phase 1 at a cost of Rs 300 crore and Rs 500 crore in Phase 2 at IP Ghanpur, providing 600 jobs. Premier Energies plans to build Solar Ingots and Aluminium plants with Rs1,700 crore investment, offering 1,500 jobs in Sitarampur. Another project

will include Rs 3,342 crore solar PV manufacturing unit generating 100 jobs. Meanwhile, Director of Emerging Technologies, Rama Devi Lanka introduced Agri Credit: Agriculture Data Exchange (ADEX), a digital platform for agricultural data to support startups and innovators. The Minister gave away

cheques to farmers upon listening to their feedback. Anti-Narcotics Initiative, the Mitra Telangana app, powered by AI was launched to help assess student behavior, enabling early detection of substance abuse. Project Sanmati was also launched for training women to face bias in the agriculture sector funded by Bill and Melinda foundation.

Coming to Skill Development Programmes, the Telangana Academy of Skills and Knowledge (TASK) signed MoUs with eight companies, including SAP to provide data solutions. My Anatomy will offer career guidance programmes. SCHWING Stetter will train 1,000 faculty in engineering. Creative Careers plans workshops for 5,000 students.

Swecha offers AI training for one lakh entrepreneurs. 100Pins app targets 3.2 lakh TASK students and finally, TATA Strive to skill 5,000 youth and Blackbuck Engineering to train 5,500 individuals in AI/ML.

3 arrested in connection with woman's death in stampede

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Three people were arrested in connection with a woman who died from asphyxiation during a crowd surge at the premiere of Pushpa 2: The Rule. On Sunday, Hyderabad Police arrested the suspects who are Sandhya Theatre owner M Sandeep, 37, manager M Nagaraju, 51 and security manager Vijay Chander, 53. Central Zone DCP Akansh Yadav stated the police were unaware of the actor's visit. The theatre management failed to arrange extra security. A large crowd entered the lower balcony, leading to chaos and the woman's death. He noted that poor planning caused the tragic incident.



Sikhs observe martyrdom day of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Sikhs observed the 349th martyrdom day of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib, the ninth Sikh guru, with devotion and enthusiasm on Sunday. Known for his supreme sacrifice for religious freedom and human rights, Guru Sahib's martyrdom was honoured with prayers and events at the Municipal Grounds, Chilkalguda, Secunderabad.

The Prabhanda Committee of Gurudwara Guru Singh Sabha organised a Vishal Kirtan Darbar. Committee president S Pratap Singh Osahan and secretary S

Ranjit highlighted the significance of the Guru's teachings on unity and harmony. Renowned Ragi Jathas from across India rendered Shabad Kirtans, inspiring communal harmony.

A colourful Nagar Keertan procession followed, featuring Panj Pyaras, Nishan Sahibs and a beautifully decorated vehicle carrying Guru Granth Sahib. Sikh youths showcased Gatka martial arts, captivating onlookers.

Snacks were distributed along the route and Guru-kalanga was served to devotees, promoting compassion and unity.



Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy witnessing the Suryakiran Aerobatic show in Hyderabad on Sunday

Hundreds gather to witness Suryakiran Aerobatic show

DEEPIKA PASHAM deepikapasham2015@gmail.com ■ HYDERABAD

The Suryakiran Aerobatic Show at Hussain Sagar drew hundreds of enthusiastic spectators, from children to the elderly, who gathered to witness the performance.

Many young fans, inspired by the show and dreaming of joining the Indian Air Force's aerobatic team, shared their excitement.

Others, who had seen the earlier performances on Instagram, were eager to experience it live.

Despite traffic restrictions, the crowd began to gather from 3 pm, slowly making their way to the programme. Some parked their vehicles along the road to catch a glimpse of the aerobatic display, while others enjoyed snacks from stalls set up as part of the Praja Palana - Praja

Vijayotsavam celebrations.

Among the excited attendees was Rakshika, a Class 8 student, who dreams of joining the Indian Air Force's aerobatic team. Holding a mobile phone in her hand, she shared her aspirations, saying, "I have been researching about the Indian Air Force and am fascinated by the idea of performing aerobatic displays."

Many others, who were unfamiliar with the Suryakiran Aerobatic team, learnt about the event through Instagram videos and came to witness the live performance.

Azeem, a local resident, explained, "I found the videos on Instagram, and when I realised the show was happening so close to home, I alerted my friends, and we gathered here."

Families of Indian Air Force personnel, familiar with the Suryakiran team's powerful performances, also attended,

eager to watch the stunning display.

The Indian Air Force's Suryakiran Aerobatic Team (SKAT) delivered an awe-inspiring show over the scenic Hussain Sagar, performing a series of aerobatic maneuvers such as loops, rolls and inverted flying. Spectators cheered as the team waved the tricolour in the sky, and Group Captain Ajay Dasarathi sent a special message from the skies: "Thank you Hyderabad! Mee premaku shukhriya!"

The Suryakiran team consists of 9 Hawk Mk 132 aircraft flying in extremely close proximity, just 5 meters apart.

The team comprises 12 pilots. Recently, the Hawk Mk 132 aircraft have undergone significant indigenous modifications, including the integration of smoke pods capable of producing vibrant coloured smoke, further enhancing their mesmerising displays.

Actor Manchu Manoj admitted to hospital with an injury

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Actor Manchu Manoj was admitted to a hospital in Banjara Hills following an alleged assault at his residence in Jalpally on Sunday. The incident reportedly occurred when unidentified individuals attacked Manoj at his home. Accompanied by his wife and friends, Manoj arrived at the hospital and was immediately taken to the emergency ward for treatment.

On the other hand, there are reports that a property deal in the Manchu family has led to a dispute.

There is speculation that Manchu Manoj filed a complaint at the Pahadi Shareef police station alleging that Mohan Babu had beaten him and his wife. However, Mohan Babu filed a complaint against his son alleging that Manoj had attacked him.

However, amid ongoing speculation about Manchu Manoj filing a case against his father Mohan Babu, PRO of Manchu Vishnu has issued a statement dismissing the claims. The statement clarified, "There is no truth in the news that Mohan Babu and Manchu Manoj have filed complaints against each other."

The PRO urged the public not to believe in such misleading narratives.



Women's degree college students tour NIFT

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Forty students of BSc (Hons) Design and Technology course from TGSWR Women's Degree College, Sircilla in Vemulawada, embarked on an educational tour to the esteemed National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) in Hyderabad.

They explored the entire NIFT campus and its various departments. This visit provided a valuable learning experience, offering a unique insight into a premier fashion technology institute that has the distinction of being the first design institute supported by the Central

government. This valuable exposure will definitely benefit the students to understand new trends in fashion technology. Another highlight of the visit was attending the NIFT's Convocation-2024, during which the students met the esteemed chief guest of the ceremony Giriraj Singh, Union Minister of Textiles, Prof Malini Divakala, Director, Dr Annoj Sharma, COE and Dr. Avinash Rayalally, Joint Director of NIFT, Hyderabad.

All the students, principal and the faculty expressed gratitude to the Secretary, TGSWREIS for providing this great experience.

Preparations for Assembly session reviewed with officials

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Legislative Affairs Minister DSridhar Babu instructed senior police officers to ensure that police personnel at the main gates of the Assembly recognise newly elected legislators, following complaints of misidentification. He emphasised that such issues should not happen again.

With the Assembly and Council sessions starting on Monday, Sridhar Babu held a review meeting on Sunday evening with Speaker Prasad Kumar, Council Chairman Gutta Sukhender Reddy, and police and civil administration officials.

The Minister directed that strict security measures be enforced during the sessions. He also instructed officials to conduct thorough checks to prevent prohibited items from being brought into the Assembly. He stressed the importance of following protocol when the Speaker and Chairman visit.

Sridhar Babu reminded officials to treat individuals in constitutional positions with respect.

He urged the Chief Secretary and Principal Secretaries to ensure that written responses to legislators' questions are provided on time.

The review meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Shanti Kumari, Special Chief Secretary for Finance K Ramakrishna Rao, Principal Secretary for Municipal Administration Dana Kishore, Special Chief Secretary for Home Ravi Gupta, DGP Dr Jitender, Hyderabad Police Commissioner CV Anand, Additional DGP for Law and Order Mahesh Bhagwat, Fire Services DG Nagireddy, Cyberabad Police Commissioner Avinash Mahanti, Rachakonda Police Commissioner Sudheer Babu, Intelligence IGP Karthikeya, Intelligence Security Wing Officer Taiseer Iqbal, SB DCP Chaitanya Kumar and SPF Commandant PS Rao.

Aryaa and Karan are Gamepoint State Squash Championship winners

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Gamepoint Telangana State Squash Championship 2024, held at the Gamepoint Hitec Arena from December 6 to 8, concluded with exciting matches and exceptional talent. With 90 participants competing in eight categories, the championship confirmed its status as one of the top squash tournaments in the State.

Organised by the Telangana Squash Rackets Association and Gamepoint, the three-day event featured strong competition from players across the State. Junior players in categories like Boys U-13 and Girls U-15 impressed with their skills and determination. The men's and women's categories showcased intense



Gamepoint Telangana State Squash Championship 2024 winners seen in Hyderabad on Sunday

matches, with top players displaying outstanding athleticism.

The tournament also included competitive categories for men over 35, 40 and 45, highlighting the skills of veteran

players. Chairman of the Gamepoint Telangana Squash Championship Aditya Reddy appreciated the tournament's high-level of competition, saying, "We are proud to provide a platform for squash players in

Telangana and look forward to seeing them achieve greater heights."

The event concluded with an awards ceremony on Sunday, honouring the winners in each category: Boys U-13 winner - Thanuj Reddy Puli. Girls U-15 winner - Arnaa Dwivedi. Boys U-17 winner - Rajveer Grover. Men's winner - Karan Vashisht. Women's winner - Aryaa Dwivedi. Men's Over 35 Winner - Survesh Chauhan. Men's Over 40 winner - Priyatosh Dubey and Men's Over 45 winner - Bharath Danam

Prizes were presented by Babu Rao, president of the Telangana Boxing Association and Srisailam, vice-president of the Telangana Squash Rackets Association.

Vidya Bharati Akhil Bharatiya meet discusses role of social media

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The All India Conference was held at Sharada Dham, Hyderabad under the auspices of Vidya Bharati Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Sansthan which discussed the role of social media in the current era.

Representatives from all the states of the public and documentation departments attended. A review was held on the programmes organised during the past year. The ways to strengthen the event were discussed. The role of social media in the current era was discussed.

In the inaugural programme, field president and retired IAS officer Dr Chamarthi Umamaheswara Rao and secretary Ayachitula



Participants of Vidya Bharati Akhil Bharatiya meet from various states

Laxman Rao were guests. The reviews were conducted in eight stages. All India Maha Mantri Lalit Goswami, All India organising secretary Govind Mahapatro and All India Campaign mentor Lingam Sudhakar Reddy supervised the conference.

Special discussions were held on the five types of Pancha Parivartan namely family education, environ-

ment, social harmony, civic duty education and self-education. Focus was placed on the social issues that the school should undertake as a centre. Future goals were set for the coming year. It was decided that there should be a specific system for special projects. It was decided to take the initiative to establish an Indian perspective among students and youth.

Decision on rights over assigned lands soon: Minister Ponguleti

PNS ■ MAHABUBABAD

Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy has announced that a decision to grant rights over assigned lands will be taken soon. He has stated that in some areas, the poor are in possession of the lands, but the records show the names of wealthy individuals. The government plans to issue pattas (ownership documents) to the poor for such lands.

The Minister revealed that the government is investigating the encroachment of government lands taking advantage of the Dharani portal, and steps would be taken to do justice to the victims. He mentioned that the government would soon issue pattas for assigned lands distributed earlier under the Indiramma scheme, ensuring that the poor have full rights on these lands, including the right to buy and sell. "Indiramma government is all

about providing welfare to the poor, whether it's land or houses," he said.

In terms of the Indiramma houses, the Minister stated that the eligibility list for beneficiaries would be entered into a new app, from which the list of beneficiaries would be selected step-by-step. He also pointed out that there is a mismatch between the records and the actual land status in the field. He noted that the introduction of the Dharani portal had revealed discrepancies, with land records showing ownership by wealthier individuals while the poor are occupying the lands.

He gave an example from the Tirumalagiri mandal pilot project, where farmers were cultivating 2,600 acres of land without pattas. He assured that the Chief Minister would soon hand over the pattas to these farmers.

The Minister also discussed the



Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy speaking at a meeting in Mahabubabad district on Sunday

issue of land boundaries in the state, highlighting the shortage of surveyors. There are only 232 sur-

veyors for over 10,000 revenue villages. To address this, the government is planning to recruit 1,000

surveyors, mostly from the existing Village Revenue Assistants (VRA) and provide them with six months of training.

Srinivas Reddy criticised the previous government's handling of the Dharani portal, accusing it of handing it over to private agencies. He alleged that around 2,000 acres of prime government land was illegally converted into private land during the previous government's tenure. He also mentioned a case where 19 acres of government land were regularised through illegal means using the 58 and 59 government orders (GOs). The government is investigating these land dealings and will take legal action based on the findings.

He assured the farmers that the government would purchase every grain produced in Telangana.

The Minister laid foundation stones for several projects in the district.



Principal Chief Conservator of Forest RM Dobriyal speaking to the media in Asifabad on Sunday

'Forest Department prioritises safety of tigers'

PNS ■ HANAMKONDA

Several private colleges have been reportedly encouraging mass copying in the examinations conducted by the Kakatiya University (KU). As a result, 127 students have been debarred from the ongoing examinations for their involvement in such malpractices.

Flying squads, deployed to conduct raids at various examination centres, have been catching numerous students engaged in mass copying.

Despite these efforts, the colleges involved in the malpractice have not faced any significant action. It is suspected that some private colleges have formed an alliance to facilitate cheating, providing students with chits to help them copy.

The first, third, and fifth-semester examinations for degree courses at KU began on November 28, across 121 examination centres located in the districts of Adilabad, Warangal, and Khammam.

Over 1.77 lakh students are registered for these examinations. The managements of some private colleges are allegedly aiding their students to improve their students' results by encouraging mass copying, further undermining the credibility of the examinations.

By Friday, the flying squad officials had debarred 127 students for cheating. Of these, 102 were allegedly caught red-handed engaging in mass copying. Additionally, 17 students from Khammam and 8 from Warangal district were barred for similar malpractices.

Prof Katla Rajender, KU's examinations controller, stated that the flying squads are regularly monitoring the examination centres to prevent mass copying. He emphasized that strict action would be taken against any student caught copying. Furthermore, he warned that college managements found to be complicit in encouraging such practices would also face consequences.

'Cong govt claiming credit for projects done during BRS regime'

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Former minister and Suryapet MLA G Jagadish Reddy has described Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's speech in Nalgonda as "laughable."

He was addressing a media conference at the BRS office, along with former MLAs Kancharla Bhupal Reddy, Chirumarthi Lingaiah, Kusukuntla Prabhakar Reddy, Nallabothu Bhaskar Rao, and Nalgonda Municipal former chairman Mandadi Saidi Reddy, here on Sunday.

Jagadish Reddy alleged that Revanth Reddy inaugurated projects completed during the previous Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) regime. He criticised Ministers N Uttam Kumar Reddy and Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, who hailed from undivided Nalgonda district, for failing to launch a single new project in the region. Highlighting achievements made during the previous government headed by K Chandrashekar Rao, he



Former minister G Jagadish Reddy speaking to the media in Nalgonda on Sunday

emphasised that major projects like the Yadadri Thermal Power Project were completed, targeting 24,000 MW electricity generation by 2027.

He also accused the Congress governments in the past had failed to eradicate fluorosis which plagued the people in the undivided Nalgonda district. It was the BRS government which eradicated the problem and ensured that people lead a healthy life, he said. Jagadish Reddy alleged that Congress leaders, including

Revanth Reddy, were falsely claiming credit for projects like the Udaya Samudram Project which were all launched during the BRS regime.

Jagadish Reddy also opposed the Congress party's proposed installation of a Telangana Thalli statue in the Secretariat. He asserted that the BRS party and the people of Telangana do not support the Congress party's symbolic gestures, describing them as hollow and unnecessary.

Woman attacks crippled father-in-law

PNS ■ NALGONDA

In a shocking incident in Nalgonda district, a woman, filled with anger, allegedly attacked her elderly father-in-law mercilessly. The elderly man, who should have been treated with respect in his old age, was brutally attacked by his daughter-in-law.

The incident took place at Shettipalem under the Vemulapally mandal in the district. The elderly man, Buchi Reddy, who is confined to a wheelchair, was the victim.

He has two sons. As per the tradition, Buchi Reddy divided his inherited property equally between his two sons, but two more acres of land remained with him. Currently, his younger son, Shekhar Reddy, is staying with him, according to relatives of the senior citizen.

The elder daughter-in-law, Manimala, became suspicious that the two acres of land which remained with Buchi Reddy, was registered in her younger brother-in-law's name. Driven by this suspicion, she decided to confront her father-in-law. When no one else was at home, she attacked him mercilessly.

The daughter-in-law, Manimala, repeatedly attacked her father-in-law, who is in a wheelchair, with a stick on his face. She also used abusive language while hitting him. He pleaded with her to stop by holding her feet. The entire incident was captured on CCTV cameras placed outside the house. The video went viral on social media platforms, bringing the matter to light.

2 cops killed in hit-and-run case

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

In a tragic hit-and-run incident, two police constables were killed on the spot early Sunday morning while en route to Hyderabad for a marathon. The accident happened on the Jaligama bypass road in Gajwel town, Siddipet district, at around 5 am.

The deceased constables, Parandhamulu and Venkateswarlu, hailed from Gadicharla village under Peddakoduru mandal in Siddipet district. Venkateswarlu was posted to the Daultabad police station, while Parandhamulu was serving at the Rayapol police station.

The police have launched an investigation into the incident, while the former minister and Siddipet MLA expressed deep shock at the tragic deaths. He extended his condolences to the grieving families and assured them of all necessary support during this difficult time.

Six crore women avail free bus travel in Kamareddy

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

The implementation of the Mahalakshmi Scheme, which offers free travel for women on RTC buses, has significantly boosted the revenue of RTC depots in the undivided Nizamabad district. The state government offers free travel for women on RTC's Palle Velugu and Express bus services under the Mahalakshmi Scheme.

In the past year, around six crore women in the Kamareddy and Nizamabad districts availed the shelves of this free travel facility. The state government reimbursed the RTC a total of Rs 223 crore, covering the cost of the free tickets for women.

The highest number of women availed themselves of the free travel facility in Kamareddy district. The number of commuters using RTC bus services has increased, especially after the introduction of the Mahalakshmi Scheme.

In the undivided Nizamabad district, there are six RTC depots with a total fleet of 582 buses, including 317 PalleVelugu buses and 114 Express buses. The total number of Deluxe, Super Luxury, and Rajadhani bus services across all six depots is 151. These buses connect var-



ious places within the district and also transport people to Hyderabad and other areas.

From December 15 last year to November 30 this year, a total of 9,10,76,430 people used the RTC bus services. On average, at least 2.5 lakh people use RTC services daily.

The number of commuters who bought tickets amounted to 3,10,50,600, generating a revenue of Rs 255.71 crore. The Mahalakshmi Scheme contributed to the RTC earning Rs 223.59 crore.

Overall, the RTC earned a total revenue of Rs 479.39 crore.

Under the Kamareddy RTC bus depot, 2.45 crore people travelled by all RTC bus services, which includes 1.69 crore women who availed themselves of the free RTC bus travel facility. The zero-ticket system enabled the Kamareddy depot to earn the highest revenue of Rs 55.44 crore.

Measures taken for the protection of vultures

PNS ■ KUMRAM BHEEM ASIFABAD

The State Forest Department has decided to take strict measures for the protection of vultures, said the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) RK Dobriyal.

On Saturday, he visited the Penchikalpet Range in the Kagaznagar Division along with the State Wildlife Chief Warden Eelu Singh Meru. They climbed up the hilltop of Palarapu Gutta, which is a vulture habitat, to assess the situation.

It is a positive development that the endangered vulture species have established their habitat in a naturally formed cave on the banks of the Peddavagu in the border region between Telangana and Maharashtra in the Komram Bheem Asifabad district.



Protecting this endangered species of vultures is a collective responsibility, said Dobriyal.

He also emphasised the importance of ensuring that the vultures are not disturbed by humans.

District Forest Officer Neeraj Kumar Tibrewal and Wildlife Chief Warden Eelu Singh Meru provided several suggestions on how to safeguard the vultures from human interference. They were accompanied by Kawal Field Director Shantarama, Kagaj Nagar FDO Vinay Kumar Sahu, and other officials.

Shortage of qualified staff cripples healthcare system in RR dist

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Rangareddy district's healthcare system is in a dire state, despite ongoing efforts to upgrade medical facilities. A combination of factors which include severe staffing shortages, outdated infrastructure, and malfunctioning equipment, has left many patients struggling to access timely and quality healthcare.

The district's nine upgraded hospitals, including key centres like the Vanasthalipuram Area Hospital and Kondapur District Hospital, are facing a significant shortage of medical staff. Of the 333 staff members required to run these facilities effectively, only 236 are currently employed. Even community health centres that have been upgraded to area hospitals in places like Chevella, Shadnagar,

Hayatnagar, and Maheshwaram are unable to keep up with the increasing demand, primarily due to the lack of qualified personnel and inadequate accommodations for medical staff.

Many of these hospitals are also experiencing a critical shortage of specialists, including gynaecologists and anaesthetists, forcing patients to turn to expensive private healthcare providers. Pregnant women, in particular, face major challenges due to a lack of functional ultrasound machines or trained radiologists, compelling them to travel over 40 kilometres to Hyderabad for essential scans. The 20-year-old ultrasound machines have been out of order for over 20 years, exacerbating the issue.

Despite government allocations for new hospital buildings and upgrades, progress

has been stymied by incomplete construction and unpaid contractors. Many hospitals still lack essential equipment such as CT scans, MRIs, and lab facilities. The absence of a blood bank in some key hospitals is also a major concern, especially during emergencies.

An oxygen plant installed at a cost of RS 80 lakh in Maheshwaram remains unused due to inadequate infrastructure and a damaged generator. Voltage fluctuations recently caused a short circuit at the dialysis center, further damaging vital equipment.

The situation in Rangareddy highlights critical gaps in the district's public health infrastructure. Despite investments in upgrading and funding, the lack of adequate resources and personnel continues to place a heavy burden on the region's underprivileged population.

Mass copying alleged in exams conducted by KU

PNS ■ HANAMKONDA

Several private colleges have been reportedly encouraging mass copying in the examinations conducted by the Kakatiya University (KU). As a result, 127 students have been debarred from the ongoing examinations for their involvement in such malpractices.

Flying squads, deployed to conduct raids at various examination centres, have been catching numerous students engaged in mass copying. Despite these efforts, the col-

leges involved in the malpractice have not faced any significant action. It is suspected that some private colleges have formed an alliance to facilitate cheating, providing students with chits to help them copy.

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ing. Additionally, 17 students from Khammam and 8 from Warangal district were barred for similar malpractices.

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Woman ends life after killing five-year-old son

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

In a tragic incident, a woman reportedly ended her life by jumping into an agricultural well, after throwing her daughter into it, at Gatewanpalli village under Nawabpet mandal in Vikarabad district. The victims have been identified as Arundhati and her five-year-old son, Ruvhik.

Eyewitness Prajwala, the daughter of the deceased, recounted that her mother said an emotional "goodbye" to someone on her mobile phone before taking the drastic step.

The incident left the villagers in a state of shock and

grief.

Local police rushed to the scene and are investigating the circumstances surrounding the tragedy. Authorities are yet to ascertain the reasons behind the incident, and further details are awaited.

According to the police, Aruna was married to Ramulu, and the family, consisting of Aruna, her daughter Prajwala, and son Pratik, lived in Nawabpet village.

On Sunday morning, Aruna, along with Prajwala and Pratik, went to a well on the outskirts of the village. She, however, asked her daughter to go away. Later, she killed her son and then ended her life.

Police on high alert as Maoist party calls for shutdown

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The outlawed Communist Party of India-Maoist has called for a shutdown in Telangana on December 9 in protest against a police encounter in which seven party members were killed in Mulgu district. It led to police being put on high alert. A letter, issued by Telangana Maoist Party unit spokesperson Jagan, appealed to the people to observe the shutdown. He condemned the brutal killings in the encounter near Pokallamma Vagu in the forests of Chellapaka under Eturunagaram mandal in Mulugu district.

In a letter released to the media on Friday, Jagan expressed strong resentment against the encounter. He claimed that on November 30, seven armed Maoist Party members were captured and ruthlessly killed by police in the Chellapaka Panchayat area in Mulugu district.

He alleged that the police provided food laced with poison to the Maoists through an informer, and killed them after they lost consciousness.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

End of an era

The fall of Damascus to rebel forces and Bashar al-Assad's flight marks a watershed moment in Syrian history

The Assad family's grip on Syria, a legacy spanning more than five decades, has come to an end. The dramatic overthrow of Bashar al-Assad, following the rebel forces' breach of Damascus, marks the end of an era that began with his father, Hafez al-Assad. This monumental shift reshapes Syria's trajectory and poses critical questions for West Asia. The Assad dynasty began in 1970 when Hafez al-Assad seized power in a coup, transforming a politically unstable Syria into a tightly controlled state. Hafez's rule was characterised by ruthless centralisation, sectarian manipulation, and an iron grip on the military. His divide-and-rule tactics entrenched the Alawite minority—a historically marginalised community—to positions of power, ensuring the regime's survival at the expense of institutional robustness. Hafez's successor, his son Bashar, inherited a state rife with contradictions. Initially hailed as a potential reformer, Bashar's presidency quickly descended into authoritarianism, economic cronyism, and brutal suppression of dissent. His consolidation of power alienated Syria's rural majority and exacerbated sectarian tensions, sowing the seeds of unrest that erupted in 2011 during the Arab Spring.



Widespread poverty, corruption, and inequality under Bashar al-Assad's rule alienated vast swathes of the population. Economic mismanagement, compounded by a severe drought in the late 2000s, devastated rural livelihoods and drove migration to overcrowded urban centres, fueling discontent. The 2011 uprising ignited a protracted civil war that fractured Syria. While Bashar managed to cling to power for over a decade, the regime's reliance on military force to suppress dissent alienated many.

The state's inability to provide security or basic services during the war eroded its legitimacy. A coalition led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) capitalised on waning regime strength. Despite its controversial history as a former al-Qaida affiliate, HTS's military success and rebranding under Abu Mohammed al-Jolani enabled it to unify disparate opposition factions, culminating in the capture of Damascus. It fell after weeks of fierce fighting, prompting Bashar and his family to flee. The fall of the Assad regime has far-reaching consequences for Syria and the broader West Asia. Syria faces a precarious future, with no clear political alternative to the Assads. The rise of HTS raises concerns about governance and inclusivity in a post-Assad Syria. Without a unifying national vision, the risk of further fragmentation looms large. The power shift in Syria will likely unsettle neighbouring countries. Turkey, which has supported opposition factions, may seek to expand its influence. Iran, a long-time ally of Assad, faces the prospect of diminished leverage, while Israel watches the developments with caution. Indeed, decades of conflict have left Syria with a shattered economy, displaced millions, and decimated infrastructure. The international community will need to step up with aid and reconstruction efforts to prevent further suffering of Syrian people.

PICTALK



Tourists gear up to take a hot air balloon ride in Manali

Domestic compulsions get the better of Trudeau



SONAL SHUKLA

While the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's focus on India may serve short-term political goals, it risks long-term damage to bilateral relations

Recently, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) made sensational claims accusing Indian diplomats of engaging in acts of violence, intimidation, and murder targeting Khalistani extremists, allegedly with the help of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. This accusation came just two days before Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was scheduled to testify before the Foreign Interference Commission, which was investigating allegations of Chinese interference in elections. These allegations suggested that such interference had benefited Trudeau's Liberal Party, contributing to its electoral success and the loss of seats for Conservative candidates.



Notably, a day before the RCMP's claims, members of Trudeau's government leaked sensitive information to *The Washington Post* (WP) to amplify Ottawa's narrative internationally. On October 16, Trudeau appeared before the commission but devoted significant attention to India instead of addressing the allegations of Chinese interference. He admitted to having no "hard evidence" but only "intelligence inputs" regarding the claims against India, raising questions about his motives.

Political Diversion

Prime Minister Trudeau faces mounting dissatisfaction among Canadians over various domestic crises, including high living costs, an unaffordable real estate market, immigration issues, and rising unemployment. Economic challenges such as slow growth, a widening fiscal deficit, and stagnating per capita GDP have further eroded Trudeau's support. Additionally, accusations of personal extravagance and the unpopular carbon tax have compounded public frustration. Speculation abounds that Trudeau may also be contending with internal dissent within his party.

Khalistani Separatism

For decades, India has criticised Canada for allegedly providing a safe haven to Khalistani separatists, driven largely by domestic vote bank politics. The most egregious example of Canada's

leniency toward Khalistani extremists was the 1985 Air India Flight 182 bombing. Despite prior intelligence, Ottawa has been accused of failing to prevent the attack or bring its perpetrators to justice. Sikhs represent approximately 2.1% of Canada's population but hold disproportionate influence with 4.4% of parliamentary representation. While the majority of Sikh Canadians do not support Khalistan, a vocal minority of Khalistani extremists wields significant political influence through intimidation and mobilization. Their support ensures votes, financial contributions, and political protection, making Canadian politicians reluctant to alienate them. Maxime Bernier, leader of the People's Party of Canada, has openly criticized this dynamic. He condemned Trudeau and Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre for not naming "Khalistani Sikhs" while condemning attacks on Hindu temples, accusing them of pandering to extremist elements. Bernier argued that Canada must collaborate with India to address Khalistani extremism instead of jeopardising bilateral relations. Toronto MP Kevin Vuong also raised concerns over the growing threat to Hindu Canadians following recent attacks on temples.

India's Response



PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU FACES MOUNTING DISSATISFACTION AMONG CANADIANS OVER VARIOUS DOMESTIC CRISES, INCLUDING HIGH LIVING COSTS, AN UNAFFORDABLE REAL ESTATE MARKET, IMMIGRATION ISSUES, AND RISING UNEMPLOYMENT.

Ottawa has accused India of being uncooperative in the investigation into the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a prominent Khalistani figure. However, some analysts suggest the issue lies in Canada's limited geopolitical leverage compared to the United States. For instance, WP reports allege that the CIA assisted in gathering evidence implicating Indian operatives in potential plots against Khalistani leaders. In contrast, Canada has only intelligence inputs from its Five Eyes partners and intercepted conversations of Indian diplomats.

Ironically, while Canada prioritises the safety of Khalistani extremists, acts of violence, hate speech, and threats targeting Indian diplomats, temples, and community leaders have received little attention from Trudeau's government.

Trudeau's Dilemma

Recent revelations have further complicated Trudeau's position. Last month, RCMP Commissioner Mike Duheme claimed to have "irrefutable evidence" implicating senior Indian officials in Nijjar's murder. However, Trudeau later denied possessing any such evidence, calling leaks to *The Globe and Mail* baseless and criminal. This inconsistency has fueled speculation about Trudeau's motives and whether external pressures—such as U.S. intelligence directives or

political considerations—might be influencing his stance.

Future of India-Canada Relations

Despite robust people-to-people ties and ongoing trade, India's relationship with Canada has been fraught with tensions over Khalistani extremism. The issue transcends Trudeau or the Liberal Party and reflects deeper systemic problems in Canadian politics. Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre, while maintaining a neutral stance, has also avoided directly addressing Khalistani extremism, raising doubts about whether a change in government would significantly alter Canada's approach.

India has historically responded to incidents involving Khalistani extremism in Canada with diplomatic protests and calls for accountability. However, experts argue that India should adopt a more proactive and sustained approach, raising the issue at international forums like the United Nations and during bilateral dialogues with Western nations. Emphasising the principles of hate speech and incitement laws, which exist in Canadian legislation, could strengthen India's case against Khalistani violence.

(The writer is a Public Policy Analyst and Lawyer National Law University, Jodhpur; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GOVT IGNORES PROTESTING FARMERS

Madam — The news, the government is not in a mood to talk to protesting farmers (December 8), is received with a lot of concern by many. The country witnessing the largest and the most prolonged protest in this decade is by the farmers. The woes of the farmers are genuine and can be better understood by the fact that millions of farmers had committed suicide due to the hostile policies of the government that plunges them in unbearable debt. Withdrawing subsidies, lack of control over the growing cost of the inputs and above all, lack of certainty over the returns in terms of the produce or the profit are the main reasons.

The price of every product produced is fixed by the manufacturer. But agricultural products are the only exception. The farmer faces all the odds and bears all the pains with lofty hopes but miserably fails in the market due to the lack of a mechanism to get him reasonable returns. The field is left to the domination of the middlemen. Neither the producer nor the consumer gets the benefit. The government should take control of the entire mechanism and regulate it with norms that will not deprive anyone. It is unfortunate that the same person who was the Chief Minister of MP, where 6 protesting farmers were shot dead, is the Union Minister handling this ministry that again shoots at the farmers with teargas shells.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

INS TUSHIL JOINS FLEET

Madam — The Indian Navy will induct its latest multimedia stealth guided missile frigate, INS Tushil during a ceremony in Russia on December 9. It is really another milestone in the history of the Indian Navy. A frigate is a type of warship designed for various naval operations, including escorting large vessels and engaging in combat with enemy ships, submarines, and aircraft. It is the seventh ship in this series and

Air pollution menace



Air pollution is a significant national issue in India, affecting millions of people across the country. Several key points need to be considered to address this grave issue worsening over time. The loss of life expectancy and the impact of air pollution on quality of life are also affecting the economic growth of the country. It degrades the environ-

ment severely and exacerbates climate change by increasing greenhouse gas emissions. The government is quite aware of the major sources of air pollution, and there are laws to control them, but they are not being implemented strictly, for example, vehicular and industrial emissions, construction dust, and stubble burning due to various reasons, including political.

Delhi often receives the most attention for its severe air pollution in terms of the local and central governments blaming each other and passing the buck. Political consensus is required to control sources of air pollution and implement and frame new laws to mitigate its impacts. So, it is appropriate and necessary to discuss air pollution in the Parliament.

O Prasada Rao | Hyderabad

the first of two additional frigates being built under a 2016 agreement between India and Russia. INS Tushil is the result of the continuous toil of hundreds of shipyard workers along with multiple Russian and Indian OEMs. Tushil is equipped with advanced stealth features, making it less detectable by enemy radar. It is really a powerful warship with all kinds of weapons and sensors, fitted with the BrahMos cruise missile as its principal weapon. Upon its commissioning, INS Tushil will be part of the Western Naval Command. It is expected to bolster the Navy's operational capabilities between India and Russia and will rank amongst the most technologically advanced frigates in the world. It will not only be a symbol of the Indian Navy's growing capabilities but also the resilient collaborative strength of the India-Russia partnership.

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

RBI CUTS 50 BASIS POINTS IN CRR

Madam — The RBI's monetary policy has delivered exactly what the economy

and markets need currently, and its decision to cut the 50 basis points in CRR would infuse Rs1.16 trillion in liquidity into the banking system. This lifeline from the RBI will significantly help lenders, as lack of liability growth is hampering their lending growth.

Besides that, real estate, consumer durables and the infrastructure sector also stand to gain. Despite requests for repo rate cuts from many quarters, RBI resisted with it and maintained a balance between economic growth and inflation. With the fact that retail inflation has spiked continuously for two months with food prices leading the pinch, RBI has done well to maintain a check. Last but not least, Govt will have to take a few steps like cutting the duty hike on edible oil and boosting consumption to support RBI's hope of our GDP growth of 6.6 per cent in the current financial year.

Bal Govind | Noida

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

World Climate Day: A call for inclusive and urgent action

Addressing climate change requires shared responsibility. Wealthy nations must fulfill financial and technical support commitments

Climate change disproportionately affects the world's poorest and most vulnerable communities. For them, it's not just an environmental issue but a daily struggle for survival. Living in precarious conditions, these populations bear the brunt of climate-induced disasters such as floods, droughts, and extreme weather, which devastate their homes, livelihoods, and food security. As global warming intensifies, it deepens social divides, further endangering marginalised groups and underscoring the urgent need for inclusive and compassionate action.



people-remains unprotected. These gaps leave millions exposed to the worsening impacts of climate change. In India, climate change has become an immediate reality. The Yale Programme on Climate Change Communication found that 85 per cent of respondents had experienced global warming effects firsthand, an 11 per cent increase since 2021-22.

Unequal Toll

Vulnerable regions face higher mortality rates during climate-related disasters. Between 2010 and 2020, deaths from floods, droughts, and storms in high-vulnerability areas were 15 times higher than in low-vulnerability ones. In South Asia, climate-induced migration poses a growing threat. Research estimates that up to 45 million people in India could be displaced by 2050 due to rising sea levels and

shifting rainfall patterns. These patterns highlight the unequal risks faced by marginalised communities.

Socio-Economic Trade-Offs

Transitioning to renewable energy presents both opportunities and challenges. In India, while 85 per cent of people believe renewable energy will reduce air pollution, concerns about job losses and rising electricity costs persist. Balancing environmental goals with socio-economic realities is essential for equitable progress.

Addressing Inequities

Effective climate solutions must consider inequality. For example, carbon pricing can disproportionately burden low-income households if not implemented thoughtfully. Similarly, conservation efforts restricting access to forests can harm Indigenous livelihoods. Community engagement is crucial to creating inclusive policies. In India's Bundelkhand region, local water management projects have reduced migration by improving resource access, demonstrating the potential of community-led solutions.

Equitable Climate Action
India's commitment to carbon

neutrality by 2070 and interim goals for 2030 signal progress. Achieving these targets will require collaboration across governments, businesses, and communities, alongside investments in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and green infrastructure. Educational initiatives promoting climate literacy are vital. Empowering communities with knowledge enables them to advocate for their needs and engage in decision-making.

The Cost of Inaction

Failing to act will have catastrophic consequences. Global temperatures could rise by over 3°C, intensifying extreme weather and threatening ecosystems. In South Asia, climate disasters already displace millions, while extreme heatwaves in India with temperatures surpassing 50°C—disrupt lives and livelihoods. Human-induced warming now accelerates at 0.26°C per decade, emphasising the urgency for immediate and sustained action. (The writer is a leader in disaster management, specialising in governance, climate change adaptation, and gender inclusion. Views are personal)



EILIA JAFAR



FIRST COLUMN

DUMBPHONE IS A SMART CHOICE

Their growing popularity reflects a cultural shift, one that values mindful technology use over constant connectivity



SHAINY SHARMA

In a world where smartphones dominate our lives, many adults are turning to dumbphones to reclaim their time and mental well-being. Today, the young generation is realising that giving a child a smartphone means not just giving them access to the world but vice-versa too. Smartphones are more than just a tool for connection. It is a portal that opens them up to endless possibilities, distractions, and influences beyond one's control. Dumbphones which are also known as feature phones, are basic mobile phones that are designed primarily for calling and texting, with limited or no access to advanced internet features, applications or modern smartphone capabilities.

Unlike smartphones, which run on complex operating systems like iOS or Android, such phones usually have a simple operating system that is focused on basic functions like voice calls, text messaging, and sometimes simple games. Such phones often lack features such as social media apps, internet browsing, and advanced gaming.

They have a small monochrome or basic colour screen with no touch interface and a physical keypad. Moreover, due to their simple hardware and minimal functionality, such phones last for several days on a single charge, which is a significant advantage over smartphones. Today, the popularity of dumbphones stems from the increasing realisation of how smartphones have transformed daily life.

For many, smartphones are indispensable tools for communication, navigation, and productivity. However, their omnipresence also



comes with downsides such as excessive screen time, reduced attention spans, social media addiction, and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.

There is no denying that technology is a powerful tool, but one mustn't forget that it is also one that can easily overshadow real-life experiences. In giving a child a phone, one must be prepared to teach them how to balance its use and ensure that the digital world doesn't replace the beauty of curiosity, creativity, and genuine human connection. The rise of dumbphones reflects a broader cultural shift toward digital mindfulness and the re-evaluation of technology's role in our lives.

As more individuals and families prioritise mental health and meaningful interactions, technological companies may feel pressured to design devices and platforms that promote healthier usage patterns. Moreover, this trend serves as a reminder of the need for balance in a hyper-connected world. While technology has undoubtedly enhanced productivity and convenience, its overuse can detract from the quality of life. Dumbphones symbolise a conscious effort to reclaim control and foster a deeper connection with the world around us.

The growing adoption of dumbphones highlights a societal push-back against the distractions and pressures of modern technology. By choosing dumbphones, individuals are making a bold statement that life's richness is found not in the screens we stare at, but in the people and experiences that surround us.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

Advancing the Centre's liberalisation agenda



UTTAM GUPTA

Agri-marketing reforms can be achieved by enabling bulk buyers to purchase directly at farm gates and creating multiple private-sector e-trading platforms

In June 2024, the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' welfare set up a 12-member committee, under the chairmanship of additional secretary, Faiz Ahmed Kidwai with the mandate to formulate a national policy framework for marketing of farm items and suggest measures to ensure the remunerative prices to farmers. The committee has recommended (i) allowing direct farm-gate purchases of agriculture commodities by bulk buyers, including organised retailers, without having to go through the state-notified mandis or pay the various levies that the operators of these market yards charge; (ii) declaring warehouses, silos and cold storages, including those run by private agencies, as "deemed market yards" (DMYs); (iii) establish and operate multiple e-trading platforms, including e-NAMs (electronic-national agriculture market) in the private sector.

Will the suggested measures help in achieving the stated objective? At present, agriculture marketing is carried out under the respective state laws viz. APMC (Agricultural Produce Market Committee) Act which has widely varying provisions. This hampers the free movement of the agri-produce between different states. Even within a state, there isn't a free flow of the agri-produce as for the administration of marketing it is divided into several market areas and farmers in a given area can sell their agri-produce only at the designated APMC Mandi.

Between APMC Mandis, also market regulations vary widely. At the mandi, a cartel of licensed traders and commission agents (known as artisans in local parlance, their job is facilitating transactions between the farmer and the buyer) rules the roost.

The duo exploit the farmer to the hilt by giving a low price, rejections, weighing less, delaying payment, etc. Levies such as market fees, anthias commission, rural development cess (RDC) etc further erode her netback. The APMC mandis can handle only a fraction of the quantity farmers bring to sell. So, most of them are forced to come to private local markets, where sales are legally barred.

At these markets, they end up selling their produce to traders at throwaway prices. The latter have the blessings of corrupt bureaucrats and politicians and hence, won't face any action for violating the law. True, state agencies such as The Food Corporation of India (FCI), purchase in mandis specified crops for running welfare Schemes. They make purchases at the minimum support price (MSP) notified by the Centre. But, their purchases are limited. Even so only 6 per cent of farmers, mostly rich with larger land holdings – get access to government procurement.

Although many states have made enabling provisions for setting up private wholesale markets, private markets have come up only in a few states. This is because some states have not framed rules and in others, the rules are far from conducive to attract private entrepreneurs. A few states like Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Karnataka have made provisions for farm-gate purchases but these transactions are restricted to select commodities for defined periods, and that too, after paying the taxes to the respective APMCs. Even the e-NAM (an online trading platform for agri-produce launched by the Centre in April 2016, was



ALTHOUGH MANY STATES HAVE MADE ENABLING PROVISIONS FOR SETTING UP PRIVATE WHOLESALE MARKETS, PRIVATE MARKETS HAVE COME UP ONLY IN A FEW STATES. THIS IS BECAUSE SOME STATES HAVE NOT FRAMED RULES AND IN OTHERS, THE RULES ARE FAR FROM CONDUCTIVE TO ATTRACT PRIVATE ENTREPRENEURS

intended to provide a unified market – at the national and state level – to give multiple options to farmers for selling their produce and fetch a better price helped much.

This is because the states haven't made necessary amendments in their laws to provide for electronic trading in agri-produce. Moreover, many APMCs have not set up an e-auction platform. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Out of a little over 7000 regulated wholesale APMC mandis, just about 20 per cent of 1400 have been integrated into the e-NAM platform. Besides, the farmers registered on the e-NAM portal are 17.5 million which is around 12.5 per cent of the total 140 million.

As for business transacted on the portal, that is a little over 12 per cent of the total value of annual trade in agri-commodities (excluding dairy and meat products). At a fundamental level, the problem has to do with the continued stranglehold of the states on APMCs. In fact, for almost everything that stakeholders need to do for doing business on e-NAM be it pan-state/India license for traders, letting farmers sell on the portal (instead of only at designated Mandi) and so on, they need to get permission from the state authorities.

To cap it all, extant laws don't permit private entities to engage in agri-marketing. Now, the Committee's recommendations to allow direct farm-gate purchases of agri-commodities by bulk buyers, including organised retailers without having to go through the state-notified mandis or pay the various levies that the opera-

tors of these market yards charge; giving warehouses, silos and cold storages, including those run by private agencies, DMYs status and setting up multiple e-trading platforms including e-NAMs in the private sector essentially seek to give more options to farmers for selling their produce. But, the million-dollar question is How do you make these ideas work? For bulk buyers to directly purchase from farmers – bypassing APMCs – the concerned State will have to make provision in its APMC Act. Likewise, to enable farmers to sell straight from warehouses, silos and cold storages etc, the State has to amend the law. Similarly, for buying and selling to happen on the e-platform, the State will have to make necessary amendments to the Act.

This is acknowledged by none other than the Committee itself when it says "To align with the proposed national policy, the states and union territories would have to notify state policy on agri-marketing as the subject falls in the domain of states". But, the states are unlikely to give the desired relaxations in their laws. In the past, they have done little to liberalise agri-marketing despite much prodding by the Centre; Remember a Model Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion and Facilitation) Law passed by the latter in 2017 which gave more options to farmers for selling besides a 'single pan-State license' for traders buying from anywhere in the State. But, this was ignored by the states.

Faced with the unwillingness of States to unshackle the farmers

from the clutches of APMCs and the dire need to open up agri-marketing, the Union government used its powers under the Constitution to offer them a parallel front. In September 2020, it enacted the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 to regulate inter-state trade and intra-state trade, providing freedom of choice to the farmer or trader to conduct trade and commerce while allowing traders to purchase specified farm commodities directly from farmers anywhere in the country, even outside the State APMCs.

To realise the full potential of this law and give legal protection to farmers while engaging with buyers, it enacted two other laws viz. Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020. Unfortunately, bowing to year-long protests by a handful of farmers and the Supreme Court order in January 2021 staying their implementation, Modi announced their repeal on November 19, 2021. The SC never said these laws were unconstitutional.

A revolutionary move by the Centre to give a remunerative price to the majority of poor farmers and increase their income was sabotaged by middlemen/traders who had much to gain from the continuation of the status quo.

The situation can be retrieved only if the SC pronounces its verdict on merit.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Embedded insurance: Bridging India's coverage gap and transforming insurtech

By enhancing accessibility, streamlining processes and catering to underserved markets, embedded insurance is poised to revolutionise insurtech sector

As one of the largest and fastest-growing economies in the world, India has a lot of potential in both general and commercial insurance sectors. Even though the coverage of life and health insurance in India has been consistently increasing, there is a significant gap in terms of commercial insurance, as around 95 per cent of SMEs in the country are uninsured. However, this gap can be bridged by the emergence of embedded insurance, which has disrupted the Insurtech sector.

Unlike traditional models, where customers actively seek out policies, embedded insurance offers coverage at the point of sale—whether purchasing a smartphone, booking a flight, or subscribing to



ADITYA DADIA

a service. Embedded insurance is quite popular among retail and individual customers. At the same time, its role will be extremely critical in the commercial insurance segment. **What is Embedded Insurance:** Embedded insurance refers to integrating insurance products with the journey of non-insurance products and services. It is different

from conventional insurance processes where customers look for policies. Here, insurance is offered as an integral part of a transaction and is often tailored to the buyer's needs.

The model is based on leveraging the latest technologies, such as APIs, that help in providing instant coverage at the point of sale. One such example is travel insurance offered by airline companies, railways, and bus operators offered to travellers when booking tickets. The concept is a bit different in the context of commercial insurance. Here, embedded solutions are gaining traction through partnerships with supply chain platforms and B2B marketplaces.

Some examples include cargo insurance, business liability

coverage and other protections that help companies protect their assets.

Driving the Growth of Insurtech: The convenience and accessibility offered by embedded insurance are quite significant. Since it is integrated with different services, various aspects, including customer KYC, are often not required. Policies are generated and applicable at the point of sale.

This enhances the scope of insurance and ensures that overall customer experience is improved drastically. The overall level of customer experience and trust in the core service and the insurance offered improves due to this integration. It also enables insurers to reach underpenetrated markets like Tier-2 and Tier-3



cities in India, where digital platforms accelerate adoption. With digitalisation and an increase in the number of internet users (and smartphones), this trend will continue in the future as well. Impact on the Indian Insurtech Sector Embedded insurance can provide a much-needed boost to the Insurtech sector by devising the development of personalized, on-demand

products tailored to customer needs.

Since the demand for different types of digital services such as e-commerce, fintech apps, and ride-sharing platforms, is increasing, insurance companies have an excellent chance to enhance user convenience and relevance by integrating their services. This trend has led to increased partnerships between legacy insurance players and start-ups.

Even the existing service providers (besides insurance companies) have tried embedded insurance to ensure scalability and operational efficiency. As there is significant scope for bridging the underinsured in India, this can be an excellent tool through which insurance companies can reach untapped markets and deliver

high returns. Embedded insurance can be critical in bridging the insurance gap and fostering financial inclusion.

Challenges and Opportunities: However, despite the increase in overall popularity and usage, embedded insurance faces numerous challenges in India.

First, there are regulatory issues, as integrating insurance with non-insurance products demands compliance with stringent industry norms and approvals. There can be challenges relating to filing insurance claims.

There are also privacy-related issues, as embedded insurance depends on leveraging customer data for personalised offers. However, despite these limitations, there are numerous opportunities to

cover a large proportion of the uninsured population. As different sectors and industries are digitised at a good pace, the future of embedded insurance has immense potential for customised and micro-insurance products catering to diverse consumer needs.

Summing Up Embedded insurance has redefined the delivery of insurance services through integration in daily transactions. In the Indian context, the overall increase in the number of digital users and rapid transformation of industries gives an excellent opportunity for insurance companies to bridge the existing insurance gap; the opportunities in this field will be immense.

(The writer is the founder of Alwrit; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



'Himachal Pradesh leads in natural farming'

Himachal Pradesh has become a pioneer in offering the highest minimum support price for wheat and maize produced through natural farming methods, state agriculture minister Chander Kumar said on Sunday. While addressing reporters here, Kumar said as part of the government's guarantee, natural farming wheat is being purchased at Rs 40 per kg and maize at Rs 30 per kg, benefiting 1,506 farmer families, with over 4,000 quintals of maize already procured. Highlighting the progress, Kumar stated that natural farming is practised on 35,000 hectares, involving 1.98 lakh farmers. "To support them, over 1.5 lakh farmers have received free certification, and 36,000 more are being linked to natural farming initiatives this year. Infrastructure upgrades in 10 agricultural mandis are underway to streamline the sale of natural farming produce," said the minister.



ITC scales up cultivation of medicinal, aromatic plants

ITC Agri Business Division is encouraging the cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants to expand the conglomerate's presence in the fast-growing health and wellness products market in the food, personal care and other categories. The agri-division of ITC is working with farmers and helping them to diversify their crops by encouraging them to cultivate high-demand crops like Ashwagandha, Tulsi, and Kalmansi in Madhya Pradesh and turmeric in southern states. Through this initiative, ITC looks to meet its requirements by chasing its FMCG ambitions and also leverages the B2B nutraceuticals space, bridging the demand-supply gap in the market, which has evolved rapidly after the pandemic.



Markets to track inflation data, global trends, FII trading

Investors' sentiments will be guided by a host of domestic and global macroeconomic data announcements this week, along with the trading activity of foreign investors and trends in world stocks, analysts said. Besides, the rupee-dollar trend and movement of global oil benchmark Brent crude will also be crucial in dictating terms in the market, experts added. "The domestic stock market is likely to be shaped by a mix of global cues, domestic economic indicators, and the flow of investments from foreign and domestic institutional investors. Key factors like the rupee's exchange rate and crude oil prices will play a critical role in determining market trends. "Globally, geopolitical tensions, particularly the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, continue to pose challenges. However, recent declines in the dollar index and US bond yields have created a more favourable environment for emerging markets like India," Praveesh Gour, Senior Technical Analyst, Swastika Investmart Ltd, said.

'Adani's solar contract has tariff lower than competition'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Adani Group's solar power contract, which is at the centre of bribery allegations, has tariffs that are lower than competition and can find new buyers in case the pact is cancelled, according to analysts. US authorities have charged Adani Group Founder-Chairman Gautam Adani and others for being part of a scheme to offer USD 265 million bribe to Indian officials to gain a contract to supply 8 gigawatt of electricity generated from solar energy by Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL). The group has denied all charges.

"If Adani promoters are found guilty, we believe the size of potential penalty is manageable given it is up to three times the value of the bribe," Nomura said in a report.

The brokerage said there are about 1.8 GW solar projects commissioned in Gujarat from February-March 2024, with tariff of Rs 2.42 per unit under the 25-year power purchase agreements (PPAs).

These operational projects are running under 5 special purpose vehicles, namely Adani Green Energy Twenty Four A Ltd (AGE24AL), AGE24BL, AGE25AL, AGE25BL, and AGE26BL.

These may have project debt of about USD 685 million, if assuming capex cost of USD 500,00 per megawatt and 75 per cent capex as debt.

CII urges govt to stick to fiscal deficit target

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Industry body CII has urged the government to stick to the fiscal deficit target of 4.9 per cent of GDP for 2024-25 and 4.5 per cent for 2025-26, cautioning that "overly aggressive targets" beyond these could adversely affect India's economic growth.

"India has been growing rapidly amidst a slowing global economy. Prudent fiscal management for macroeconomic stability has been pivotal to this growth," said Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII, elaborating on suggestions for the forthcoming Union Budget.

CII also highlighted the announcement in the Union Budget 2024-25 to keep the fiscal deficit at levels that help reduce the debt-to-GDP ratio.

In preparation for this, the forthcoming budget could lay out a glide path to bring the central government's debt to below 50 per cent of GDP in the medium term (by 2030-31), and below 40 per cent of GDP in the long term, CII has suggested.

Such an explicit target will have a positive impact on India's sovereign credit rating and further on the interest rates in the economy, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) stated.

"To aid longer-term fiscal planning, the government should consider instituting



"India has been growing rapidly amidst a slowing global economy. Prudent fiscal management for macroeconomic stability has been pivotal to this growth," said Chandrajit



Fiscal Stability Reporting.

This could include issuing annual reports on fiscal risks under different stress scenarios and the outlook for fiscal stability. The exercise will help forecast potential economic headwinds or tail-

winds and assess their impact on the fiscal path," it said.

The reporting can also include long-term (10-25 years) forecasting of fiscal positions, accounting for the impact of factors like economic growth, technological change, climate change, demographic changes, etc.

Several countries have adopted this proactive ranging from 10 years in Brazil to 50 years in the UK.

"Looking at the next year's budget, CII has suggested sticking to the fiscal deficit target of 4.9 per cent of GDP for FY25 and a target of 4.5 per cent for FY26. However, CII has also pointed out that overly aggressive targets beyond the ones mentioned could adversely affect growth," the industry body said.

CII has suggested three interventions to nudge states towards fiscal prudence.

Firstly, the states could be encouraged to institute state-level Fiscal Stability Reporting.

Insurance Amendment Bill proposing 100 per cent FDI unlikely in winter session

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Insurance Amendment Bill, which proposes 100 per cent FDI in the insurance sector, may not be introduced in Parliament in the ongoing session, sources said.

Some finetuning may be required in the draft Bill after receiving comments from stakeholders, sources said.

Given the paucity of time, it is difficult to present the Bill in the ongoing session, sources said, adding it may, however, come in the Budget session.

The finance ministry has proposed to amend various provisions of the Insurance Act, of 1938, including raising foreign direct investment (FDI) in the insurance sector to 100 per cent, reduction in paid-up capital, and provision for composite licence.

The Department of Financial Services (DFS) has sought public comments on the proposed amendments by December 10.

As per the proposal, the FDI limit in Indian insurance companies will be raised from 74 per cent to 100 per cent.

This is the second public consultation that the DFS has sought on the proposed amendments to the Insurance Act 1938, the Life Insurance

Corporation Act 1956, and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999.

The finance ministry in December 2022 invited comments on the proposed amendments to the Insurance Act, 1938, and the Insurance Regulatory Development Act, 1999.

According to a recent office memorandum, it is proposed to amend certain provisions of insurance laws to ensure access-

ibility and affordability of insurance to citizens, foster expansion and development of the insurance industry, and streamline business processes.

In this regard, a comprehensive review of the legislation governing the sector has been done in consultation with the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) and the industry, it said. The proposed amendments primarily focus on promoting policyholders' interests, enhancing their financial security, and facilitating the entry of more players into the insurance market leading to economic growth and employment generation, the memorandum stated.



The Department of Financial Services (DFS) has sought public comments on the proposed amendments by December 10

Cars set to get expensive as OEMs announce price hikes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prices of various car models -- ranging from entry-level hatchbacks to high-end luxury offerings -- are set to rise as automakers have announced price hikes with effect from January. Carmakers cite an increase in input costs and operational expenses as the main reason to implement price increases from the next month.

Industry experts, however, note that the exercise is also undertaken by automakers every year in December to shore up sales volume in the last month of the year, as customers postpone buyouts to later months to get the new year manufactured units.

"We have seen a few cycles of price increase in India. It happens at the beginning of the calendar

year and financial year, but few OEMs pick the timing based on their planned launches as well," Deloitte India Partner Rajat Mahajan said.

While there could be multiple factors for the price increase, the key one is due to a decline in profitability of a few large auto OEMs in the second quarter, he added.

"Due to the festive season, the price revisions were not done. Hence, this is expected at the beginning of Q4. "Rising input costs of few materials, shifting consumer preferences on advanced features but a low willingness to pay, clubbed with the pressure of supporting dealers to offset high inventory carrying costs despite high festive discounts are putting a burden on profitability," Mahajan stated.

Five main-board, 6 SMEs to raise Rs 18,500 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The IPO market is set to be bustling next week, with 11 companies like Vishal Mega Mart, TPG Capital-backed Sai Life Sciences and fintech firm One Mobikwik Systems gearing up to launch their initial share sales, collectively aiming to raise nearly Rs 18,500 crore.

Other mainboard IPOs to be launched during this period are Inventurus Knowledge Solutions Ltd and Blackstone-owned diamond grading firm International Gemmological Institute (India) Ltd.

Alongside the five mainboard IPOs, six SMEs are preparing to float their maiden public issues next week to garner over Rs 150 crore collectively.



IPO Frenzy

Together, these 11 companies aim to raise approximately Rs 18,500 crore through public offerings.

These IPOs will span various sectors and deal sizes and include fresh issues and offers for sale. The companies are tapping the primary market to

provide an exit route to the existing shareholders, raise funds for expansion plans, retire debt and support working capital requirements.

Trivesh D, COO of Tradejini, an online brokerage house, had said the Maharashtra election verdict and the UP Lok Sabha by-election results created a positive market sentiment that could boost IPO activity and fundraising efforts.

While 2024 has been a strong year for IPOs overall, some recent issues have strug-

gled in the secondary market, highlighting the recurring challenge of pricing during a bull run when issuers often aim for higher valuations, he stated.

So far in 2024, 78 mainboard companies, including Hyundai Motor India, Swiggy, NTPC Green Energy, Bajaj Housing Finance and Ola Electric Mobility, have mobilised around Rs 1.4 lakh crore collectively via mainboard.

This was way higher than Rs 49,436 crore garnered by 57 firms through the route in 2023. The IPOs of Vishal Mega Mart, Sai Life Sciences and Mobikwik will be open for public subscription on December 11 and conclude on December 13.

FDI inflows in India cross \$1 trillion

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into India have crossed the USD one trillion milestone in the April 2000-September 2024 period, firmly establishing the country's reputation as a safe and key investment destination globally.

According to data from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), the cumulative amount of FDI, including equity, reinvested earnings and other capital, stood at USD 1,033.40 billion during the said period.

About 25 per cent of the FDI came through the Mauritius route. It was followed by Singapore (24 per cent), the US (10 per cent), the Netherlands (7 per cent), Japan (6 per cent), the UK (5 per cent), UAE (3 per cent) and Cayman Islands, Germany and Cyprus accounted for 2 per cent each. India received USD 177.18



billion from Mauritius, USD 167.47 billion from Singapore and USD 67.8 billion from the US during the period under review, as per the data.

The key sectors attracting the maximum of these inflows include the services segment, computer software and hardware, telecommunications, trading, construction development, automobile, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals.

According to the Commerce and Industry Ministry, since 2014, India has attracted a cumulative FDI inflow of USD 667.4 billion (2014-24), regis-

tering an increase of 119 per cent over the preceding decade (2004-14).

"This investment inflow spans 31 states and 57 sectors, driving growth across diverse industries. Most sectors, except strategically important sectors, are open for 100 per cent FDI under the automatic route.

FDI equity inflows into the manufacturing sector over the past decade (2014-24) reached USD 165.1 billion, marking a 69 per cent increase over the previous decade (2004-14), which saw inflows of USD 97.7 billion, an official has said.

Aadhar Housing Finance aims AUM of over Rs 25,000 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aadhar Housing Finance, which caters to the affordable segment, expects its asset under management (AUM) to cross Rs 25,000 crore by the end of the current financial year.

"We closed the first half with the AUM of Rs 22,817 crore (from Rs 18,885 crore as of September 30, 2023). Going by the growth rate of 23-24 per cent, AUM should increase to Rs 25,000-26,000 crore by the end of March 2025," Aadhar Housing Finance, MD and CEO Rishi Anand said. Focused on the low-income housing segment, he said, "Our average ticket size stands at Rs 10 lakh with an average loan-to-value ratio at 59%."

Business firms that participated in the survey conducted between May 22 and November 30, 2024, said that 75 per cent of the bribes were paid to officials of departments such as legal, metrology, food, drug, health, etc.

Electronics component makers seek Rs 72,500 cr financial package

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Electronics component makers body Elcina has sought a Rs 72,500 crore (USD 8.57 billion) support package to boost local production of raw materials and cut reliance on imports, an industry official said.

Electronic Industries Association of India (Elcina), the country's oldest industry body of the Indian electronics sector, estimates that the demand-supply deficit for inputs in the electronics segment will increase to USD 248 billion (about Rs 21 lakh crore) by 2030 to cater to projected USD 500 billion electronics production and it would be met largely by imports.

The industry body expects that the government's support for non-semiconductor components can help reduce the deficit in the country by USD 146 billion (Rs 12.36 lakh crore) to USD 102 billion (Rs 8.63 lakh crore).

Elcina Secretary General Rajoo Goel told PTI that unlike finished products where the factory output can go up to 16 times the investment, an electronic components factory can

at the most generate an output of three times the invested capital.

"People hesitate to expand their investment in electronic components due to low return, high operational cost and long gestation period. Therefore we have requested the government for USD 8.57 billion comprising USD 2.14 billion for capex to encourage expansion of the industry and USD 6.43 billion as PLI," Goel said.

The government is actively considering a comprehensive package to support the production of non-semiconductor electronic components.

Elcina has included miniature electronic components, printed circuit boards, some discrete semiconductors and active components, metallic components etc in the estimates.

According to the industry body, the components for which support is required account for 60 per cent of the total cost of a finished product.

Goel said that out of 60 per cent, non-semiconductor components account for 40 per cent of the total product value and 20 per cent are semiconductors.

66 pc businesses surveyed paid a bribe: Survey

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A report by online platform LocalCircles said on Sunday that around 66 per cent of business firms surveyed across 159 districts admitted that they paid bribes in the last 12 months.

The survey, which received 18,000 responses, found that 54 per cent were forced to pay bribes while 46 per cent paid voluntarily to expedite the process.

"As many businesses would vouch anonymously, bribes remain a way of life when wanting to get government

departments to speed up the permit or compliance process, even getting duplicate copy of the authority license or anything to do with property matters. 66 per cent of businesses surveyed paid a bribe in the last 12 months," the report said.

Only 16 per cent of businesses surveyed claimed that they always managed to get work done without paying a bribe and 19 per cent said they "did not have a need" to do so.

"Of businesses that paid bribes in the last 12 months, 54 per cent were forced to do so, while 46 per cent paid it for



timely processing. This kind of bribery amounts to extortion where permits, supplier qualification, files, orders, and payments are routinely held up when dealing with Government agencies," the report said.

According to the report, bribery paid by businesses continues to take place despite computerisation in several places, and behind closed doors away from CCTVs.

Businesses admitted to paying a bribe in the last 12 months to different types of entities for qualifying as a supplier, secure quotations

and orders and collect payments.

"Though initiatives like the Government eProcurement marketplace are good steps to reduce corruption, there are still openings to engage in corruption for supplier qualification, bid manipulation, completion certificate and payments," the report said.

Business firms that participated in the survey conducted between May 22 and November 30, 2024, said that 75 per cent of the bribes were paid to officials of departments such as legal, metrology, food, drug, health, etc.



Sajid Khan ventures into Chinese and Arabic music

PNS|HYDERABAD

IN A CAREER SPANNING DECADES, SAJID KHAN HAS BEEN THE MELODIC HEARTBEAT OF BOLLYWOOD, CRAFTING ICONIC TUNES WITH HIS LATE BROTHER WAJID KHAN. NOW AS HE EMBARKS ON A SOLO JOURNEY, SAJID OPENS UP TO THE PIONEER ABOUT HIS LATEST 'JASHN-E-GHAZAL', GIVING A POIGNANT TRIBUTE TO HIS BROTHER AND MORE

With *Jashn-E-Ghazal*, Sajid Khan rekindles the soul of ghazals, weaving a poignant tribute to his brother Wajid while bridging the echoes of tradition with the rhythms of modernity. In the vibrant corridors of Bollywood, the music of Sajid-Wajid has resonated as more than mere melody; it has been a heartbeat. But when Wajid Khan, one half of the legendary duo, passed away in 2020, the rhythm faltered. Left to navigate the music world without his partner, brother and anchor, Sajid Khan crafted *Jashn-E-Ghazal*—a tribute to their shared legacy and the timeless music they created together.

In this exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, Sajid reflects on his journey of transformation, the making of *Jashn-E-Ghazal* and the evolving landscape of the music industry.

"It's a mix of emotions—unexpected and bittersweet," Sajid begins, reflecting on stepping into a solo career after Wajid's passing. "I never imagined working without him, let alone not seeing him by my side. But I feel his presence in everything I do. Life is unpredictable and while I miss him deeply, I'm embracing this new journey. Wajid would have wanted that."

For Sajid, the void left by Wajid was both personal and professional and it extended beyond their family to the industry and fans who cherished their collaboration. "It's natural for people to wonder how one half of a duo will move forward. But I've realised my strength lies within me—music has always been my power. I'm collaborating with new artists, programmers and technicians. Even my daughter, Muskaan, has become a guiding force, suggesting collab-



I NEVER IMAGINED WORKING WITHOUT HIM, LET ALONE NOT SEEING HIM BY MY SIDE. BUT I FEEL HIS PRESENCE IN EVERYTHING I DO

orations and offering fresh perspectives."

Reflecting on his creative process, the *Suruli Akhion Wale* composer emphasises his commitment to preserving the essence of Indian musical traditions. "Melody is the soul of our music and I am determined not to let it fade," he says. His passion for ghazals, a genre he believes has lost some of its allure in pursuit of profit over artistry, drives his latest project.

Khan's connection to ghazals is deeply personal. "Our first earnings came from performing at ghazal events," he recalls. As children, Wajid accompanied him on the tabla. "Our father would give us twenty rupees

as pocket money. Later, we began earning more by playing at qawwali and ghazal sessions." Now, collaborating with the very maestros he once admired feels, as he puts it, "like life has come full circle."

With *Jashn-E-Ghazal*, Sajid seeks to honour both his brother's memory and the music they loved. The album's first ghazal, *Jab Bhi Kisi Nigah Se*, performed by Padma Shri Ustad Ahmed Hussain and Padma Shri Ustad Mohammed Hussain, is a soulful reminder of the genre's enduring beauty. Featuring ten ghazals sung by a stellar lineup, including Padma Shri Kavita Krishnamurthy, Hariharan, Anup Jalota and younger voices like Sayli Kamble

and *Muskan*, the album bridges generations with its blend of classical richness and contemporary appeal.

The *Tenu Leke* composer also reflects on the importance of appreciating legends during their lifetimes. "It's heartbreaking how we remember icons like R.D. Burman only after they're gone. I feel blessed to collaborate with maestros like Shivamani, whom I still call my boss. These partnerships remind me of the cyclical nature of life and music."

While Bollywood has defined much of his career, he is now eager to explore global music markets. "Wajid and I always believed we could make an impact inter-

nationally. We even worked on projects with global artists, though they remain unreleased. For now, my focus is on creating a catalog rooted in Sufism and collaborating with incredible voices."

Known for always staying ahead of his time, he attributes this instinct to his father's teachings. "The songs we recorded often released two years later, so planning ahead became second nature. As a solo artist, I'm embracing the freedom to multitask and experiment with genres. Bollywood has taken a backseat for now, but I'm excited to explore Chinese or Arabic music and surprise my fans."

The *Jahwa* composer also hints at a wealth of unreleased work. "I've composed songs for major films, but if they don't make it to the screen, I'll release them on my channel. For me, it's about reaching a genuine audience, not chasing numbers."

The transition to a solo career has allowed Sajid to reconnect with his family in meaningful ways. "Our careers often take precedence and before you know it, your kids are grown and your parents are aging. Spending quality time with my wife has been especially fulfilling—I'm falling in love with her all over again."

Despite his decades-long career, he approaches his solo journey with the enthusiasm of a newcomer. "I feel like a fresh struggler, discovering new paths and possibilities. Music has always been my sanctuary and I'm excited to see where this journey takes me."

'Reviews are no longer instinctive; they're influenced by personal beliefs'

TEJAL SINHA
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

Kshitij Patwardhan, a multifaceted writer and screenwriter, has made a significant impact in the Marathi film industry. His diverse background in computer science, journalism and advertising has shaped his unique writing style. His writing journey commenced around 2010, following stints as an advertising copywriter and reporter. His educational foundation in computer science and a master's degree in communication and journalism laid the groundwork.

"I have been fascinated by writing since my teenage years. I explored various forms—advertising, political communication, journalism, radio writing and jingle writing. This exposure helped me grasp different facets of writing."

Patwardhan's first commercial full-length play marked his entrance into the Marathi entertainment arena, leading to his debut film. "Starting as a reporter, then copywriter, playwright and screenwriter was quite a journey," he reflected.

His maiden success came with the 2010 Marathi play, directed by Sameer, now a renowned director. "The play was a sensation in Maharashtra, drawing young audiences back to theaters," Kshitij proudly shared, adding how the film was translated into 5 languages, adapted into a motion picture, how he completed 480 Marathi shows and over 300 Gujarati shows, oh and also received major Maharashtra awards.

"This success validated our writing's relevance to youngsters and today's audience," the *Taali* screenwriter emphasised adding, "Understanding the audience, staying updated with trends and experimenting with genres keeps my writing fresh." His inspiration stems from real-life experiences, literature and cinema.

Following his success in Marathi cinema, he ventured into Hindi cinema, driven by curiosity. "The transition stemmed from curiosity. Regional industries often harbour biases about Hindi cinema being inaccessible, money-centric and style-driven, relegating creativity." Determined to form his own opinions, Kshitij explored Hindi cinema.

Maddock Films offered Kshitij his first break! Director Michel Musale approached him as a consultant for *Sajini Shinde Ka Viral Video* (Netflix). Impressed by his work, they collaborated, making Kshitij the dialogue writer and additional screenwriter.

This partnership led to two more projects: a recently filmed project slated for release next year and another written specifically for Maddock Films. Mikhil Musale introduced Kshitij to Ajay Devgn's assistant, securing him a spot on the writing team for *Singham Again*.

"Previously, I collaborated solely with Sameer. This time, I worked with two female writers, Anushin Chaudhary (Aria, Graham) and Parinda Joshi (acclaimed book writer and film writer). They taught him invaluable lessons: inclusivity, female perspectives and challenging biases. These writers enriched my writing, making it more inclusive and fresh. I learned to shed assumptions and adopt new lenses," Kshitij reflected. On the response to his work, Kshitij humbly acknowl-



edged, "Audience love has been pouring in since 2010, growing daily." His focus remains on crafting relatable, relevant and responsive stories.

With projects in Hindi cinema, he aims to explore socially relevant themes. *Sajini Shinde Ka Viral Video* addressed the pressing issue of suicide abatement. "We wanted to start a conversation," he explained. "Sometimes, living is an act of courage. We aim to give hope to those struggling, reminding them to hold onto hope and goodness." This message resonated globally, trending in several countries.

However, with *Singham Again*, during a brainstorming session with Rohit Shetty, Kshitij proposed retelling the Ramayana through

Singham's character. "I felt Singham embodied Prabhu Ram's philosophy—justice, righteousness and respect for women." Rohit Shetty was impressed and the idea evolved collaboratively with fellow writers.

Working with nine writers was "interesting and democratic." Going further, he described the process: "We had story and screenplay writers for six months, followed by dialogue writers. After gaining objectivity, we returned with fresh perspectives, providing feedback." This approach gave the film an edge. "It was like a classroom of writers," he reminisced. "We shared food, thoughts and books with childlike enthusiasm. We've become friends for life." Rohit Shetty's inclusive approach fostered a supportive environment.

He recalls visiting the sets of *Singham Again* twice, specifically for the Ramayana-inspired portions. "Rohit Shetty values writers' input," he noted. Dialogue writer Shantanu Srivastava was also present on set.

But what about Shakti Shetty's character, portrayed by Deepika Padukone? Reports claim an exclusive film on it; we ask him and he says, "The idea emerged from a brainstorming session, but development was Rohit Shetty's vision." He wasn't directly involved in writing Shakti Shetty's character.

Going ahead, he acknowledges the prevalence of biased reviews driven by ideology. "Reviews are no longer instinctive; they're influenced by agendas or personal beliefs." He distinguishes between constructive criticism and unjustified bashing, emphasising the value of fair reviews. Patwardhan stresses the importance of being open, gathering life experiences and understanding human nature. "Craftsmanship is secondary; emotional impact comes from compassionate observation and imagination."

Talking of his upcoming projects, there's a Maddock film, India's first AI-based Marathi play, nearing 100 shows, an untitled Hindi film and songwriting credits in multiple Hindi and Marathi films.

In an exclusive chat with The Pioneer, Kshitij Patwardhan opens up about the shifting landscape of art and criticism, his experience working in Singham Again and more



Preventing and treating pediatric obesity

Obesity in children is one of the fastest-growing challenges that parents and pediatricians are facing alike. A staggering 390 million children and adolescents aged 5–19 years were overweight in 2022, including 160 million who were living with obesity. It is not just limited to children over the age of 5; 37 million children under the age of 5 were overweight. Overweight and obesity in childhood increase the risk of many lifestyle diseases like Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases in adulthood.

Obesity and overweight are estimated on the basis of Body Mass Index (BMI). A BMI of more than 23 kg/m² is said to be overweight and more than 27 kg/m² is said to be obese. Almost 98% of children with obesity do not have any underlying illness. It arises from a sedentary lifestyle and poor dietary choices.

Managing and treating obesity is a challenging task for both parents and children. As the old adage says, 'prevention is better than cure'; there are small modifications that can be done in our lifestyle that can prevent this chronic condition from hampering a child's happiness.

Exclusive breastfeeding till 6 months of age has been seen to reduce the chances of obesity. Children should have regular meal timings, including breakfast. They should have at least 8 hours of sleep daily at night. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends fighting childhood obesity with the '5-2-1-0' rule. It implies children can consume 5 servings of fruits and vegetables, screen time below 2 hours, participate in one hour of physical activity, and consume 0 sugar-sweetened beverages daily. Healthy eating behaviours

should be developed in children from the start. The satiety centre, or the centre that signals the brain that hunger is over, doesn't work when a child consumes food in front of the TV or mobile. Hence, eating meals with a screen 'on' should be stopped. Junk food in the home should be replaced with fruits, and sugary drinks should be replaced with drinking water. Children copy parents in every act, including this one. So parents should start with these habits themselves, which will leave a long-lasting impact on children.

Once diagnosed with obesity, management should start with lifestyle and dietary modifications. Children should consume regular meals. Breakfast should not be skipped. He/she should have 45 minutes of regular moderate to vigorous physical activity and screen time should be below 1 hour daily. Teenagers are more prone to being body conscious and might face body shaming in the current online world. They should never go for crash dieting or starvation. It could do a lot more harm than being beneficial. Parents should be on the lookout for red flag signs like sudden weight gain, delayed growth and puberty, school absenteeism or teasing by peers regarding weight/appearance, persistent anxiety, depression, or self-harm, anger outbursts, substance abuse and eating disorders. Specialist referral must be sought after in the presence of these signs.

Remember, obesity runs in families who do not run. Getting obesity under control not only improves health; it also gives a feeling of achievement and happiness.

(The author, Dr. Anand Narayanan, is an associate consultant - pediatrics, in Sarvodaya Hospital.)



● Ankhee Ghosh



Villa Marie Degree College for Women hosted a memorable Convocation ceremony for the batch of 2021-2024, reinforcing its commitment to quality education and holistic student development. The ceremony was attended by Prof. Kumar Molugaram, Vice Chancellor of Osmania University, who delivered a keynote address encouraging graduates to embrace lifelong learning and face challenges head-on.



● Satya Krishna



● Tabitha



● Aisha



● Muskaan Kapur and Syalodha



● Latha

PARTY



● Sara



● Anika Khara



● Shazia



● Sushila Bokadia

The Glam Squad Ladies Club, founded by Shazia Bakal, made a dazzling debut with an Arabic-themed soiree at Tara Moroccan Kitchen in Jubilee Hills. Hosted by Shazia, Sara and Anika, the evening was a vibrant celebration of Arabic culture, with guests turning heads in stunning traditional attire.



● Mittal



● Farha



The inaugural GoFlo Run created history as thousands of women united to celebrate fitness, empowerment and menstrual hygiene awareness. The event was flagged off by actress Neha Dhupia, actor and humanitarian Sonu Sood and Anita Lobo, an ex-national level athlete and Director of GoFloRun, whose commitment to women's health and wellness served as the driving force behind this initiative.



Bandish Bandits brought its soulful melodies and musical magic to AP Dhillon's much-anticipated concert, leaving the audience mesmerised. The evening kicked off with the electrifying performance by the very talented singer Nikhita Gandhi, who enthralled the crowd with her renditions of *Ghar Aa Maahi* from the show's music album.

Photos by- SV Chary



● Alka



● Lakshmi and Swathi

Harley's India, Fine Baking has set a remarkable milestone by achieving a Guinness World Record for crafting the world's largest Russian Medovik Honey Cake. The grand Programme took place at the Maaya Convention Centre, Kondapur Hyderabad, drawing participation from over 500 bakers, chefs and support staff, who joined hands to create this culinary masterpiece.



● Divya



● Suresh Naik and Rishi Nath



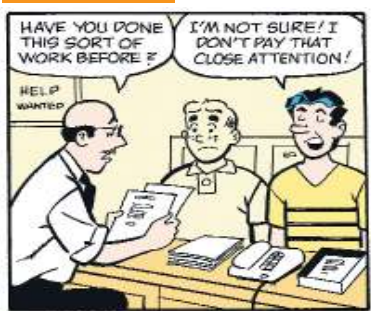
● Mahek

As part of the ongoing 'Drug-Free Telangana' initiative, the Telangana Vidya Samithi is set to host a 2K run on Necklace Road on December 21. The poster unveiled by Anasuya Seethakka, Minister for Women and Child Welfare held at Secretariat.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



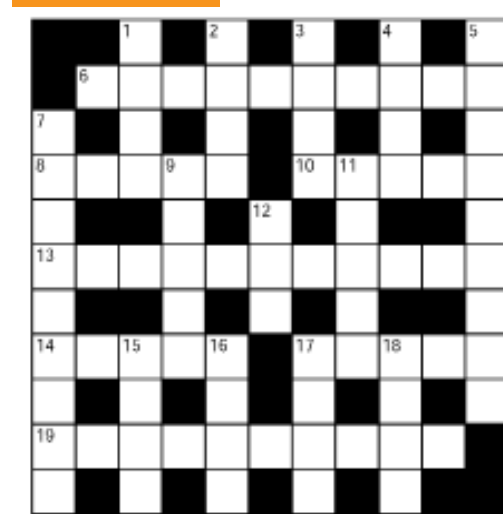
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



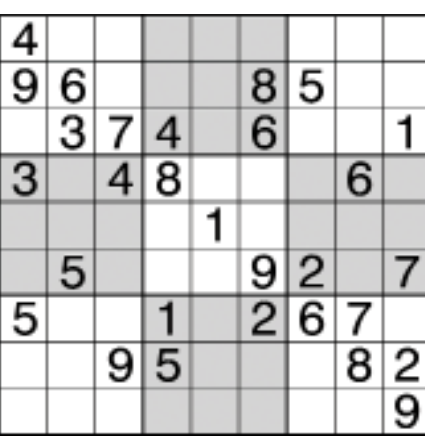
NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

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

- 6 Someone who writes for a newspaper or magazine
- 8 Rome is the capital of this country
- 10 Listen to music on this
- 13 Thinking over
- 14 A hairdresser works here
- 17 Window pane material
- 19 Giving reasons for
- 7 Talked over
- 9 A looped rope used by a cowboy
- 11 A month
- 12 Unusual
- 15 These surround the mouth
- 16 Tidy
- 17 Firearms
- 18 A female relation

DOWN

- 1 A long soft seat
 - 2 A large group of soldiers
 - 3 Not favouring one person or another
 - 4 Discover
 - 5 The most powerful
- SOLUTION**
- | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | I | L | V | E | R | G | O | L |
| A | T | T | E | R | E | N | E | A |
| F | E | L | D | S | I | | | |
| D | E | N | M | A | R | K | | |
| G | A | M | O | S | | | | |
| U | N | I | G | N | O | R | E | D |
| E | T | I | M | W | C | | | |
| S | P | R | I | N | G | R | | |
| T | O | E | L | A | | | | |
| S | T | R | I | N | G | | | |

ALLU ARJUN STRUGGLES TO RECALL TELANGANA CM'S NAME



The makers of *Pushpa 2* held a media conference to announce the film's collections and express gratitude to the audience for its success. The press meet, was attended by lead actor Allu Arjun, director Sukumar and producers Yelamanchili Ravi and Naveen Yerneni.

The producers spoke briefly, thanking the audience for making the film a huge success. Director Sukumar then introduced his assistant directors, acknowledging their valuable contributions to the film. Sukumar's gesture of recognising each assistant director by name and highlighting their specific contributions was particularly noteworthy!

Allu Arjun then took to the stage, expressing his gratitude for the film's success. However, he surprisingly forgot the name of Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Andhra Pradesh's cinematography minister Kandula Durgesh's names respectively.

Allu began by thanking the producers for investing in the film and believing in him and Sukumar. "Behind every film's success lies the hard work of many individuals," he said. "However, I attribute my success

solely to Sukumar. While people praise my performance, I believe the entire credit goes to Sukumar." Arjun then attempted to thank the Telangana Government and its chief minister but paused, struggling to recall the chief minister's name. After a brief pause, he asked for water and then continued, eventually mentioning Revanth Reddy's name.

He also thanked the Andhra Pradesh Government and its Chief Minister, Nara Chandrababu Naidu. Allu expressed gratitude to Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan for facilitating a special GO to permit a ticket price hike. "On a personal note, thank you so much, Kalyan Babai," he added. When attempting to thank the AP Cinematography Minister, Allu again forgot the name. After inquiring with his team, he was informed that the minister's name was Kandula Durgesh. Arjun then pretended to have known the name all along, thanking the minister for his support. Some have speculated that Arjun's team failed to prepare him adequately for his speech.

Pushpa 2: The Rule has been creating new records at the box office, becoming the highest-grossing Indian film on its opening day and the fastest to reach Rs 500 crores in just two days. This achievement is a historic moment for the Telugu film industry, cementing Allu Arjun's position as a leading actor.



Manchu family feud escalates

The Manchu family is in the news again and this time, it's due to an alleged altercation involving Manoj, the younger son of actor Mohan Babu. This isn't the first time the family has made headlines. Earlier, in March last year, Manoj released a video claiming that some individuals associated with his brother Vishnu had assaulted his friends at their residence. The video went viral and the Manchu family was at the center of attention. At the time, Manchu Vishnu responded by posting a video clip on his social media, jokingly referring to the incident as a "Manchu Family

reality show." However, it was reported that there were underlying differences between the brothers, Manoj and Vishnu.

Now, the Manchu family is in the news again, with Manoj allegedly seeking police protection. According to reports, he called the police emergency number '100', claiming that some individuals associated with his father, Mohan Babu, had attacked him. Manoj reportedly wanted to visit the hospital before filing a complaint at the Pahadi Sharif police station.

Although the Manchu family's PR team has denied these reports as baseless, the police have confirmed

receiving a call from Manoj. Whether the allegations are true or false, the Manchu family's internal differences have once again become a topic of discussion in the Telugu film industry.

It appears that veteran actor Mohan Babu is struggling to maintain control over his sons amidst their ongoing differences. Some reports suggest that the family's substantial assets and share distribution may be contributing factors to their public feud. It remains to be seen how Manchu Vishnu will respond to this issue. According to sources, Vishnu is currently not in India.

Haritha Gogineni talks about her directorial debut, *Fear*

Director Haritha Gogineni is making her debut with the film *Fear*, a horror thriller starring Vedhika in the lead role. "Actually, Vedhika was not our first choice," Haritha revealed. "We approached many actresses for the role, but they asked us to wait for a year. Then, we approached Vedhika and she agreed. Once the film was completed, we were satisfied that Vedhika was the perfect choice."

Haritha added that Vedhika's experience in horror films like *Kanchana* and *Muni* made her an ideal choice for the role. Haritha, who has been interested in films since childhood, also enjoys reading books and writing stories. "I wanted to become a director, and three years ago, the story of *Fear* came to me," she said.

Initially, the film was titled *Bhayam*, but Haritha decided to change it to *Fear* because it is a more universal and catchy title. The film has screened at several film festivals and won awards, but Haritha believes that the true test of success is the audience's response. "Even if we won awards at a film festival, if the Telugu audience likes it, that's equal to an award," she said.

The film was originally scheduled for release earlier, but Haritha decided to postpone it to December 14 to avoid clashing with other films. "We will release it first in Telugu and later in other languages," she said.

Haritha praised actor Aravind Krishna, who played a key role in the film. "Although it's a small role, he accepted it immediately," she said. She believes that her film offers a unique take on the horror genre. "Generally, family audiences don't watch horror films, but they can watch my film. Music director Anup Rubens has given his best background music for this film," she said.

Haritha emphasised the importance of content in small films. "Big films should be made with top stars, but for small films, the content should be good. Many people advised me to add elements for OTT and theatre audiences, but I didn't follow that advice because I genuinely made this film," she said.



Naresh's character is completely different from *Pushpa's*: Director Subbu

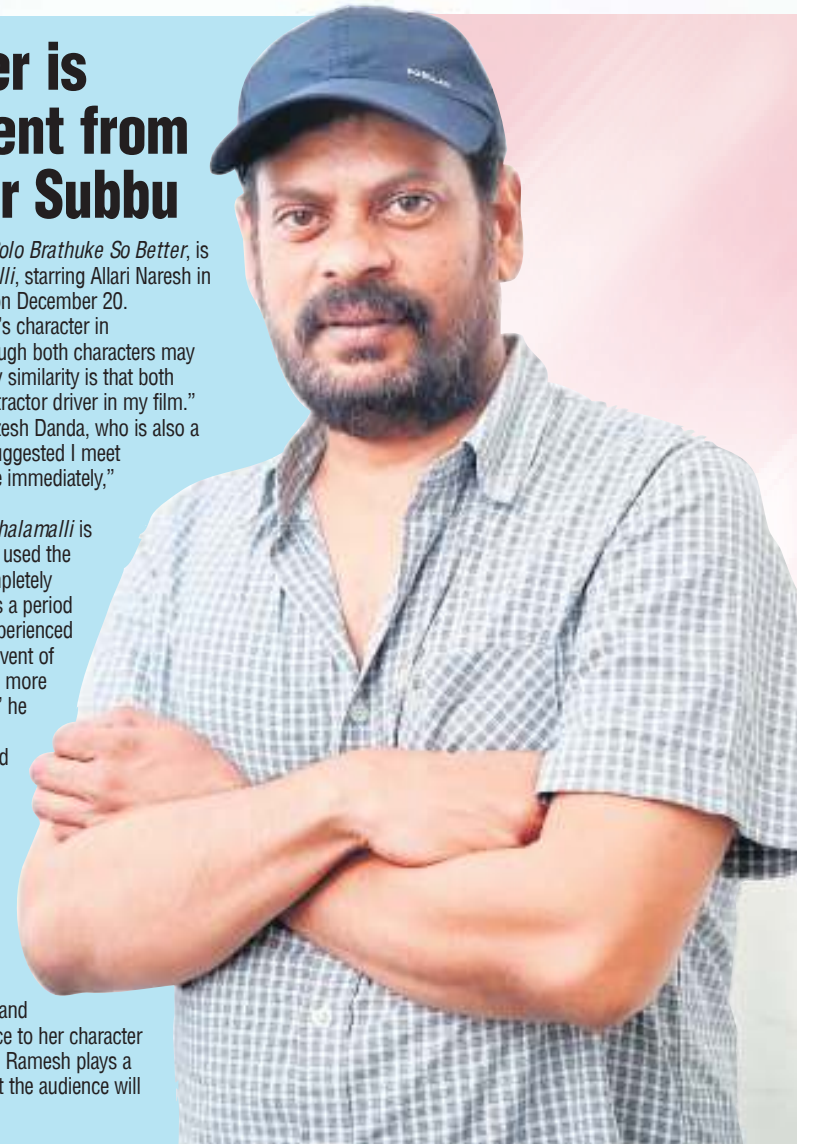
Director Subbu Mangadevi, known for his film *Solo Brathuke So Better*, is now directing another film titled *Bachchalamalli*, starring Allari Naresh in the lead role. The film is scheduled to release on December 20.

When asked about the comparisons between Naresh's character in *Bachchalamalli* and *Pushpa*, Subbu clarified, "Although both characters may appear similar, they are completely different. The only similarity is that both characters work as labourers, with Naresh playing a tractor driver in my film." Subbu expressed his gratitude towards producer Ramesh Danda, who is also a close friend. "When I narrated the story to him, he suggested I meet Naresh, and to my surprise, Naresh accepted the role immediately," Subbu said.

The director emphasised that the character of *Bachchalamalli* is entirely fictional and not based on any real person. "I used the name Bachchalamalli, but the characterisation is completely imaginary," he clarified. Subbu described the story as a period drama set in the 1990s. "Growing up in the 90s, I experienced a more natural and emotional way of life. With the advent of technology and social media, emotions have become more artificial. That's why I chose to write a period drama," he explained.

Subbu also shared a personal experience that inspired him to write the story. "I lost my mother during the pandemic and I wanted to convey the emotions of a mother in this film. The story revolves around the theme of regret and the importance of expressing emotions before it's too late," he said.

The film's shooting took place primarily in live locations near Tuni. "One of the biggest challenges we faced was hiding mobile phones on set, as everyone was using them," Subbu recalled. Amritha Aiyer plays the female lead opposite Naresh and Subbu praised her performance. "We gave importance to her character and she delivered a great performance," he said. Rao Ramesh plays a significant role in the film and Subbu is confident that the audience will appreciate his performance.



Intensity personified with Vijay Sethupathi's fury in *Vidudala 2*



Vidudala 2, which highlights Vijay Sethupathi's performance, is a much-awaited sequel. The Telugu release rights for this film have been acquired by the renowned producer and head of Sri Vedaakshara Movies, Chintapalli Ramarao. Made as an intense period crime thriller by the visionary director Vetri Maaran, the film will hit the screens on December 20.

Already, the first song from the movie, titled *Pavurama Pavurama*, has been successful. Maestro Ilaiyaraaja's tune is haunting.

The makers have unveiled the film's terrific trailer. The powerful sequel explores the suspenseful past of Perumal (Vijay Sethupathi), chronicling his formative years, his romantic relationship and the transformative journey that propelled him from a charismatic union leader to the formidable head of the influential Makkal Padai. The trailer offers a glimpse into Perumal's complex character, hinting at a pivotal moment where he finds himself in challenging circumstances. This dramatic trailer sets the stage for an intense equations between Perumal and Kumaresan (Soori).

The sequel is coming at a time when another sequel is going great guns at the box office. *Pushpa 2* is a much bigger hit than its first part. In the same way, *Vidudala 2* has a vast potential to become a bigger blockbuster than *Vidudala: Part 1*.

Rahul Ramakrishna teams up with Loukya Entertainments for his next



The Indian film industry is abuzz with excitement as talented actor Rahul Ramakrishna joins forces with Loukya Entertainments for their upcoming project, Production No. 5. This highly anticipated collaboration promises to bring together the best of storytelling, acting and direction.

Rahul Ramakrishna, known for his impressive performances in films like *Arjun Reddy* and *Taxiwaala*, will be working with Loukya Entertainments. The project will be directed by Benny Muppaneni.

The film's cast includes Maniika and Sivaji, who are expected to deliver impressive performances. While details about the film's plot and genre are still under wraps, sources close to the project have hinted that it will be a unique and engaging story that will appeal to a wide range of audiences.

With Rahul Ramakrishna teaming up with Loukya Entertainments, fans can expect a cinematic experience that is both entertaining and thought-provoking.

Stay tuned for more updates on Production No. 5, which is sure to be one of the most talked-about films of the year.

Bumrah can't bowl from both ends, others need to take responsibility: Rohit

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Jasprit Bumrah is only human and cannot always shoulder the responsibility of bowling opposition out all by himself, skipper Rohit Sharma said on Sunday, urging others to share the load with the premier fast bowler. India lost to Australia by 10 wickets in the second Test and during the home team's first innings, only Bumrah stood out with a four-wicket haul. "We are not just playing with one bowler. There are other bowlers also who will have to take responsibility and get the job done for the team, be it (Mohammed) Siraj, Harshit Rana, Nitish Reddy, Akash Deep or Prasadh (Krishna)," skipper Rohit had a loud and clear message for his bowling unit. The captain understands that there is a bit of inexperience in the line-up and they will grow in confidence with time. "These bowlers have just arrived in Test cricket, it's important to give them confidence. Whenever they play a match, it's important to give them confidence. We keep planning and discussing. But you

can't expect Bumrah to bowl from both the ends and from morning to evening," Rohit said. "It's very important to manage (all) bowlers. We discuss all this with each other. We talk to the bowler and then we make the decisions." Rohit said that he takes workload management of bowlers very seriously. "I speak with him (Bumrah) whenever he finishes a spell. I enquire about how his body is feeling, is he (feeling) fresh or not? It's a five-match series, we want Bumrah to play all the matches and remain fresh," Rohit knows what his lethal weapon means in the larger context of the series. Backing for young Harshit Rana Young Harshit Rana was clobbered for 86 in just 16 overs but the skipper was against making a two-Test youngster the fall guy for a comprehensive defeat in Adelaide. "Rana didn't do anything wrong in the first Test. He did very well. He gave the team crucial breakthroughs when they were needed. I believe that if someone hasn't done anything wrong, he cannot be left out without a reason



because then what confidence does the team get? "It happens, sometimes the team doesn't get what it wants. He came up against a good batsman who put pressure on him. But he has a heart and a passion so we should back such (qualities in a player)," Rohit said. "The player might think that you give me one match but leave me out in the next. This is not good

for any player or any team, that's what I think. We should assess what the situation is and how helpful the conditions are," he elaborated. While he doesn't want to judge Rana on the basis of one game but if change is warranted it would be done for benefit of the team. "But judging someone after one match is not the right thing. We always keep (all) options open for any player to play since we have to win a Test match. If we must make such changes to win a Test, we will do that." Rohit doesn't want to read too much into Siraj-Head incident. The Indian skipper feels that one doesn't need to read too much into the verbal altercation between Travis Head and pacer Siraj after the latter gave the left-hander angry send-off after a brilliant century. While Head insisted that he acknowledged Siraj, saying "well bowled" after his dismissal, the Indian pacer countered by alleging that the Aussie batter was lying. "There is a thin line between getting aggressive and over-aggressive. It is my job as captain

to see that no one crosses the line. But a few words can be exchanged. Siraj knows what he needs to do for the team and he will do everything required," Rohit defended his teammate. Probed further by the Australian media, Rohit said: "When India and Australia play, these things happen. My job is not to look at one incident but at bigger picture." We didn't bat well enough, skipper admits. Not even being able to score 200 across both innings is certainly disappointing, and the skipper made no bones about it. "When you come to Australia, I feel the best chance of winning a Test match is by putting runs on the board. We knew that there would be challenges with that ball. "But in the past, we've done that many times where the conditions have been a little challenging, and we've batted really well to put runs on the board, and then try and put pressure on the opposition," Rohit said. "Like I said, that is the disappointing part, that we didn't bat well enough. We probably were 30-40 runs short with the bat in the first innings."



We left Perth in Perth and shut outside noise: Starc after Adelaide success

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Mitchell Starc, one of the architects of Australia's comeback win in Adelaide, said the hosts had left the Perth debacle behind by shutting the "outside noise" following their heavy defeat in the series-opener. A 295-run embarrassing defeat despite bowling India out for just 150 in the first innings invited criticism from the hosts from all quarters. Living up to his reputation with the pink ball, left-arm quick Starc handed Australia a dream start by dismissing Perth centurion Yashasvi Jaiswal in the very first ball of the second Test en route to finishing with an impressive match haul of 8/108. "There was a lot of outside noise after the game but we left Perth in Perth. Cannot really put my finger on it," Starc said after the end of the match. About his approach with the pink ball, he said: "Nothing changes in my approach. Probably slightly fuller lengths. It (pink ball) is more like the white ball than the red ball. "We were really positive with bat and ball and got the rewards. It's nice when the ball hits the stumps." He further credited his skipper Pat Cummins for helping in his growth and highlighted improvements in his bowling,

including mastering deliveries that move away and those that swing back. He also talked about enhancement in his accuracy with the wobble seam technique. "I have been learning a lot from Pat Cummins over the last seven years or so. So I have added to my bow the one that goes away and still able to bring one back. "I always had that air speed and swing but I have also been someone who leaked a bit. Developing the wobble seam helped me improve my accuracy over the years. To be able to have the longevity is putting that hard yards in that people don't always see," he added. Cummins also hailed Starc for his impact. "He's amazing. He's been doing it for over a decade. I feel very lucky and privileged to have him in the team." "That's a great week for us. We were far from the team we wanted to be in Perth, but this was much better. It's always good to contribute with a few wickets myself." Cummins also lauded Travis Head's game-changing innings of 140 from 141 balls that gave Australia a decisive first-innings lead. "Head loves batting here. The game could have gone either way when he walked in, but he shifted the momentum in our favor."

World Chess Championship: Gukesh takes lead in 11th game as Ding Liren blunders

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Grandmaster D Gukesh made a huge strike forward towards becoming the youngest-ever world champion defeating Ding Liren of China in the 11th game of the World Chess Championship here on Sunday. With just three games to come, Gukesh took the lead for the first time in the match, with scoreline now reading 6-5 in favour of the 18-year-old Indian. History is now on Gukesh's side as no challenger in modern chess has ever scored a win after being tied 5-5 after the 10th game. For Liren, the only comforting thing could be the fact that he had won the 12th game in the last World Championship match against Ivan Nepomniachtchi of Russia. The Indian started off with the Knight move on his first turn and was surprised as Liren went for a reverse Benoni opening. The move was shocking as it



looked like it was an over-the-board decision rather than a planned one. After only five moves, Gukesh had a lead of over an hour on the clock, which is never too easy for the opponent to recover in crunch games. However, if everyone thought that the opening had gone seriously wrong for Liren, the Chinese had different ideas as he capitalised on an erroneous plan by Gukesh in the early middle game. Things turned upside down when Liren went for completing his development and missed out on a simple manoeuvre that would have probably given the defending champion slightly better prospects. Gukesh himself spent a lot of time in the middle game but the nature of the position remained double-edged. As the clouds began to clear, Gukesh came up with a spectacular pawn sacrifice on

the queen side to give moving space for his rooks. Just as he doubled them on the file to exert pressure, Liren simply crashed and made the blunder in a blink. The Chinese player was left dejected as he immediately realised the mistake. Gukesh played the winning move in quick time. In the remaining three games, Liren will have two games as white and this would be the best chance for him if he has to stage a comeback. Gukesh is just three draws away from winning his maiden world championship title. The moves: D Gukesh - Ding Liren 1.Nf3 d5 2.C4 d4 3.B4 c5 4.E3 Nf6 5.A3 Bg4 6.Exd4 cxd4 7.H3 Bxf3 8.Qxf3 Qc7 9.D3 a5 10.B5 Nbd7 11.G3 Nc5 12.Bg2 Nf7 13.0-0 Ne5 14.Qf4 Rd8 15.Rd1 g6 16.A4 h5 17.B6 Qd6 18.Ba3 Bh6 19.Bxc5 Qxc5 20.Qe4 Nc6 21.Na3 Rd7 22.Nc2 Qxb6 23.Rab1 Qc7 24.Rb5 0-0 25.Na1 Rb8 26.Nb3 e6 27.Nc5 Re7 28.Rdb1 Qc8 29.Qxc6 black resigned.



Don't waste time in hotel, no room for optional practice sessions, says Gavaskar

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Batting legend Sunil Gavaskar has urged India not to "waste" time in their hotel rooms after the early finish of the pink ball Test, but utilise the two extra days by sweating it out in training so they can bounce back in the third game. India were thoroughly exposed in their 10-wicket loss in the second Test of the Border Gavaskar Trophy with the match ending in less than two-and-a-half days as Australia bounced back to level the five-game series 1-1. "Look at the remainder of the series as a three-match series. Forget it was a five-Test series. What I would like this Indian team to do is use the next couple of days for practice," Gavaskar told the official broadcaster. "It's very important. You can't be sitting in your hotel room or wherever you're going because you have come here to play cricket. "You don't have to practice the whole day. You can practice a session in the morning or afternoon, whichever time you choose, but do not waste these days. You would have been here playing a Test match if the Test match were to go on for five days," he added. The third Test begins on December 14 and Gavaskar said the Indians should utilise the intervening time to get

their rhythm back. "You have to get yourself that much more time to get into the rhythm because you have not got the runs. Your bowlers haven't got the rhythm. There are others too who need time in the middle," he added. Indian pacers were found wanting on a fast wicket that offered lateral movement, giving away plenty of runs in the first innings and allowing Australia, especially centurion Travis Head, to take a huge 157-run lead. Gavaskar added that he did not believe in the concept of optional practice sessions, stating that the decision should solely rest with the captain and coach, not the players. "This optional practice session is something that I don't believe. The decision for optional training should rest with the captain and the coach. The coach should say, 'Hey, you hit 150, you don't need to come to practice. Hey, you bowled 40 overs in the match, you don't need to come to practice.' "They should not be given the option. If you give the players that option, a lot of them, especially the certainties, will say, 'No, I am going to stay in my room.' And that's not what Indian cricket needs." He reminded the players that it was a privilege to play for India and they should do it wholeheartedly.

India defeat Singapore, eye best-ever finish Asian Women's Handball Championship

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India registered a commanding 35-22 win over Singapore at the Asian Women's Handball Championship here on Sunday, opening up the opportunity for their best-ever finish in the tournament. India, who have never finished above sixth, will face China on Tuesday in the 5th/6th place playoff match. Charged by the backing of their fans, India opened the placement match against Singapore with high energy, leading 9-6 midway through the first half, courtesy Menika and Bhawana Sharma's consistent scoring. At the other end, captain Diksha Kumari and goalkeeper Nina Shil, who made key saves including a penalty, kept Singapore



at bay. The hosts maintained their overall dominance on the other side of the interval to secure a comprehensive win. "Our team has shown incredible spirit and resilience throughout this tournament, whether against Hong

Kong, Singapore, Iran, and even Japan. Every match has been a learning experience for us and we have pushed ourselves to compete with some of the best teams in Asia at our home," Diksha said. "Scoring consistently and staying strong defensively has been our focus, and we're proud of how we've come together as a unit. This journey inspires us to aim higher." Earlier in the day, China ensured their place opposite India in the 5th/6th place playoff by beating Hong Kong with a resounding 38-14 scoreline. In the top bracket, South Korea booked their berth in the final by outclassing Iran 33-20. South Korea will play the winner of the match between Japan and Kazakhstan for the title on Tuesday.

England beats New Zealand by 323 runs in 2nd test to take 2-0 lead in three-match series

AP ■ WELLINGTON

England conquered the Wellington gale Sunday to seal a 323 run win over New Zealand on the third day of the second test and to take a 2-0 lead in the three-match series. Joe Root completed his 36th century as England batted for less than 30 minutes in the morning before declaring with a lead of 582 runs and New Zealand crumbled under the weight of the deficit and was all out for 259 in its second innings. England's win followed its comprehensive eight wicket win in the first test at Christchurch, capping its first series victory in New Zealand since 2008 ahead of the final test in Hamilton which begins on Saturday. The third day differed from the first two in Wellington which were warm and sunny. It was cool, gloomy and windy but otherwise England's thorough command of the series continued. Root resumed on 73 with England already 533 ahead. He sped to his century from 127 balls with 10

boundaries and then was out for 106 at which point Ben Stokes declared England's second innings at 427-6. Stokes left himself high and dry at 49 not out, just short of his 49th half century. Chris Woakes had the job at first of bowling into the Wellington wind and he was rewarded with the wickets of Devon Conway (0) and Kane Williamson (4) as New Zealand slumped to 59-4 by lunch. Brydon Carse removed captain Tom Latham (24) and Rachin Ravindra (6) before the break to lift his tally of wickets for the series to 16 at an average of 12.8. New Zealand showed more resistance in the afternoon and evening as wicketkeeper Tom Blundell, under pressure to hold his place, compiled his fifth test century from 96 balls. Blundell put on 94-run partnership with Nathan Smith which saw England having to chase leather for the first extended period in the series. He was out for 115 which included 13 fours and five sixes and Smith followed for a career-bet 42 just before the end.



Carse and Harry Brook have been in the engine room for England throughout the series. Brook's 171 at Hagley Oval in the first test and Carse's 10-106 — his 4-64 in the first innings and 6-42 in the second — propelled England to its emphatic win. Brook then scored 123 from only 115 balls in the first innings at Wellington to lead England's recovery from 43-4 to 280. "It's amazing to be stood here winning the series and particularly after being 40-4 on day one and I think looking back to the start of this game I think that's a huge reason why we have (won)," Stokes said. "Harry Brook and Ollie Pope were just amazing on day one to play like that. That wicket in cricket terms was what we call a snake pit. Especially on day one it was doing plenty and providing a lot of assistance for the bowlers." "To have the bravery and the backing of your own ability and to also have the skill to go out and play like that was just absolutely phenomenal." Carse took 4-46 and Gus Atkinson

took 4-31 including a hat-trick as New Zealand was bowled out for 125, giving England a lead of 155. Atkinson took the last three New Zealand wickets to become the first England bowler since Moeen Ali in 2017 to compete a test hat-trick. England's second innings of 427-6 in the second innings included contributions of 96 by Jacob Bethell — out just short of a maiden century — 92 by Ben Duckett, 55 by Brook and then Root's 106. Brook has scored 349 runs in the series so far at an average of 116 and now has three centuries and three half centuries in four tests against New Zealand. After a stunning 3-0 series win away in India last month, New Zealand has slumped in this series, particularly with the bat and changes may be considered before the final test. "We're obviously hurting," Latham said. "It's disappointing to lose in that fashion. "I think after the first innings, putting them under pressure, Harry Brook played a fantastic innings there. Obviously when you only score 125 in the first innings you're on the back foot."