

'Cyber crimes, climate change new threats to human rights'

EXPLORING WORLD OF GHAZALS

Pooja Hegde's next with Dulquer SALMAAN

QUOTE OF THE DAY
 The Congress Government has been continuing the corrupt bureaucrats and extortionist contractors who played key roles during BRS rule. The people will teach the Congress a lesson if elections are held now. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is sabotaging Hyderabad and the real estate business using HYDRAA. The CM should reveal which place he wants to develop by sabotaging Hyderabad. What is the conspiracy behind it?
 - Dharmapuri Arvind, BJP MP

DON'T MISS...
Hyd to become a global hub for AI
 Highlighting that with a powerful infrastructure and a rich pool of skilled human resources, Hyderabad has the potential to become a global destination for Global Capability Centers (GCCs) and the Artificial Intelligence (AI) sector, IT Minister D. Sridhar Babu signed a bilateral trade partnership agreement between the US-India Business Council (USIBC) and Telangana, on Tuesday. On this occasion ...

Former external affairs minister S M Krishna no more

PNS ■ BENGALURU
 Former External Affairs Minister and Karnataka Chief Minister S M Krishna died at his residence early Tuesday morning. A family source said that the 92-year-old veteran politician had been ailing for quite some time. "S M Krishna is no more. He breathed his last at 2:45 am at his residence. Mortal remains are likely to be taken to Maddur today," the source said. Somanahalli Mallaiah Krishna is survived by wife Prema and two daughters. The Karnataka government has announced state mourning for three days as a mark of respect to the veteran leader. His last rites will be performed with full state honours at his native in Mandya district on Wednesday. The three-day state mourning is from December 10 to 12, official notification said. Born in Somanahalli in Mandya district on May 1, 1932, Somanahalli Mallaiah Krishna began his career in electoral politics in 1962 by winning the Maddur assembly seat as an independent. He was then associated with the Praja Socialist Party before joining the Congress. Later, he joined the BJP in March 2017, ending his nearly 50-year-long association with the Congress.

Clash over Soros, Adani issues

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
 Seeking to corner the Congress, the BJP on Tuesday again raised in Parliament the issue of alleged links of Congress leaders with George Soros backed outfits involved in "anti-India" activities, triggering vociferous protests from the opposition which accused the government of stalling proceedings to divert attention from the Adani issue. As both Houses were adjourned without transacting any major business amid noisy scenes, the Congress blamed the government for the ongoing impasse in Parliament. It alleged that the BJP was "hiding behind" billionaire investor Soros and levelling "silly" allegations to save business tycoon Gautam Adani. Agitated opposition members who have been accusing Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar of partisan conduct on Tuesday submitted a notice for moving a motion to remove him as Vice President. As soon as the Rajya Sabha met at noon after the first adjournment, Leader of the House J P Nadda raised the issue of alleged links between the Congress leadership and Soros, claiming that they were conniving to destabilise the country. This led to an uproar in the House, with opposition members raising slogans against the BJP and the treasury benches demanding answers from the Congress. This is the first time that the BJP raised the issue in Rajya Sabha in the presence of Congress leader Sonia Gandhi. The Congress' Deputy Leader of the House Pramod Tiwari rejected Nadda's allegations and raised the Adani issue. As stated by a US attorney, the Adani Group paid Rs 23,000 crore as bribes, he alleged, demanding a discussion on the issue. In the Lok Sabha, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju accused the Congress and its leadership of colluding with US billionaire Soros and anti-India forces, triggering noisy protests and plunging the Lok Sabha into



Actor Mohan Babu attacks journalist

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 A dispute in the Manchu family took a dramatic turn on Tuesday when veteran actor Manchu Mohan Babu attacked a journalist belonging to the regional media. The incident occurred as his son, Manchu Manoj, visited his father's residence to pick up his daughter. Manoj, accompanied by security guards and the regional media, reportedly forced open the gates after they were refused entry by the house security. Tensions escalated as security personnel allegedly pushed media representatives and damaged their equipment. When a journalist asked Mohan Babu about the family feud, he hit the journalist. The Rachakonda Police have reportedly asked the Manchu family to surrender their licensed firearms immediately amid concerns over the escalating situation. Meanwhile, all journalist associations have condemned the attacks on the media and said that they will file a complaint with the police against Manchu Mohan Babu. The attacked journalist and a cameraman were injured and are undergoing treatment. LASHES OUT AT 'FAKE NEWS REPORTS' A heated family dispute involving veteran actor Manchu Mohan Babu and his son, Manchu Manoj, has surfaced, with an emotional audio clip by Mohan Babu going viral.

'Don't react to remarks by allies'
 Congress leader Rahul Gandhi told party's Lok Sabha MPs Tuesday not to react to comments of "middle- and low-rung" leaders of INDIA bloc parties and asserted that the Congress as the largest party in the opposition grouping is capable of addressing issues, sources said. The advice by Gandhi comes amid various leaders of the INDIA bloc weighing in on the leadership issue and TMC leaders aggressively pitching for ...

Finmin-RBI ties the best in my stint
 Outgoing Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Tuesday said he gave his best to the institution, and asserted that ties between Mint Road and the finance ministry were "the best" in his six-year stint. Speaking to reporters on the last day of his term, Das said the "perspectives" of the central bank and the finance ministry can be different on many issues and the phenomenon is seen the world over. "...in my tenure, I think we have been ..."

ICC bans Dhillon for 'attempt' to fix matches
 Sunny Dhillon, a former assistant coach of an Abu Dhabi T10 League franchise, was on Tuesday banned from all forms of cricket for six years by the sport's governing body for "attempting" to fix matches. Dhillon was charged last year. The ban has been back dated to September 13, 2023, the date Dhillon was provisionally suspended. "Sunny Dhillon has been found to have breached the Emirates Cricket Board (ECB) Anti-Corruption Code ..."

'Replacing Telangana Thalli statue insult to 4 cr people'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha has strongly criticised the Congress Government for replacing the Telangana Thalli statue, calling it a direct attack on public sentiments and the legacy of the Telangana Movement. Addressing the media, Kavitha declared, "The Telangana Thalli statue is not just a symbol; it is the soul of our struggle, sacrifices, and identity. The Congress's decision to replace it is an insult to the four crore people of Telangana." As a mark of protest, Kavitha performed symbolic Palaabhishekam and Panchamrutam Abhishekam at the original Telangana Thalli statue site at the Telangana Bhavan. She accused Chief Minister Revanth Reddy of attempting to rewrite history to impress his high command and said, "If Revanth



wants to impress the Gandhis, there are countless ways to do so. Sacrificing Telangana's identity is not one of them."

Orientation programme for MLAs, MLCs from today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasada Kumar said that all MLAs and MLCs should attend the orientation programme being held on December 11 and 12 at the Jubilee Hills MCRHRD. Speaker Gaddam Prasada Kumar and Council Chairman Gutha Sukhender Reddy examined the arrangements on Tuesday. Both the Speaker and the Council Chairman made several suggestions to officials.

Women Commission takes cognizance of attack on ASHA workers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 Telangana State Commission for Women has taken cognizance of the reported misbehavior by police with ASHA workers. Chairperson Sharada Nerella has called for an explanation from the police officials concerned. ASHA workers protesting peacefully for fair wages were subjected to alleged brutal treatment by the police at the Commission, Medical and Health Office in Koti, Hyderabad. The protest, organised on December 9, was aimed at urging the Telangana Congress government to fulfill its promise of increasing their salaries to Rs 18,000 per month, a commitment made during the election campaign by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. The protest turned violent when ACP Shankar and CI Srinivas Chari, along with a team of male and female police personnel, reportedly used excessive force to disperse the crowd. Female ASHA workers were allegedly dragged,

Harish criticises CM for ignoring students' safety

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 BRS MLA Harish Rao launched a scathing attack on Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, questioning his focus on installing statues while neglecting the interests of students. Harish's remarks came in the context of consecutive food poisoning incidents in government schools and hostels, causing widespread concern. "Is the focus on statues or on the future of our students? The Chief Minister is more concerned with pleasing his Delhi leaders than addressing the pressing issues faced by students," he stated. Highlighting recent incidents, he pointed out that government schools and gurukuls, even in the Chief Minister's district, have been plagued by negligence. "When back-to-back food

GST collections up in TG
 Growth rates of Central & State shares differ

NAVEENA GHANATE
 naveena.ghanate@gmail.com ■ HYDERABAD
 GST collections in Telangana have shown an upward trend, however, a significant disparity has been noted between the growth rate of the Central share and the state's share of GST revenue. Official sources said that while the Centre reported growth in its GST collections from Telangana, the state's component has not witnessed a corresponding rise. Preliminary estimates suggest this gap stands at around 4%. The Centre every month reveals figures is releasing the money which Officials said, "We are growing around 8-9%. There is a difference of around 3-4% growth," he said. Officials pointed out that there is a gap in the growth rate of central and state components of GST collections. The state government has taken note of the issue and is currently conducting a detailed study to identify the reasons behind the discrepancy, sources said. Officials said, "When the money going to the Centre has increased, the money due to the state should increase."

Gachibowli records 86% jump in housing prices

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
 In a striking development, Hyderabad's Gachibowli has recorded an extraordinary 86% jump in housing prices in the last six years, making it one of the top-performing prime areas in the country, according to a recent ANAROCK research report. Average residential prices in Gachibowli have risen from Rs 4,775 per sq. ft. in 2019 to Rs 8,900 per sq. ft. by Q3 2024, proving the area's potential as a prime residential hub. Hyderabad's Kondapur mirrored Gachibowli's success, by recording an 86% increase, with prices surging from Rs 4,620 per sq. ft. to Rs 8,600 per sq. ft. in the same period. These figures highlight the dominance of prime areas in Hyderabad, which outpaced peripheral locations like Kompalli and Tellapur which registered jumps of 49% and 37% respectively. Santhosh Kumar, the Vice Chairman of the ANAROCK Group, said, "Hyderabad's prime localities like 69%, outperforming the prime Thanisandra Main Road, which recorded a 62% rise. Similarly, in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), peripheral Panvel registered a 58% appreciation, surpassing Worli's 37% growth. Improved connectivity, affordability and the availability of larger spaces have driven buyers towards peripheral areas in cities like Bengaluru, Pune and Mumbai. However, Hyderabad's trend stresses how prime areas continue to dominate due to location advantages and extensive development. "Post-pandemic, buyers have increasingly sought spacious homes with modern amenities, often available only in the periphery. Yet, Hyderabad's Gachibowli and Kondapur stand out for their balance of location, infrastructure and luxury," added Kumar. As cities adapt to shifting buyer preferences, Hyderabad's unique trajectory highlights the potential of its real estate market to offer both growth and stability, attracting significant interest from builders and homebuyers alike.



Hyderabad's Kondapur mirrored Gachibowli's success, by recording an 86% increase, with prices surging from Rs 4,620 per sq. ft. to Rs 8,600 per sq. ft. in the same period

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- Nalgonda
- Khammam
- Medak
- Mahabubnagar
- Nizamabad
- Adilabad

ACROSS THE STATES



Abhay Kumar to be India's new envoy to Georgia

Senior diplomat Abhay Kumar has been appointed India's new ambassador to Georgia. Kumar, a joint secretary at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), is currently serving as deputy director general of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. He is expected to take up the assignment shortly, according to the MEA.



'Move civil court to decide land ownership row'

The Kerala High Court on Tuesday said it cannot decide the land ownership row between the Waqf Board and the residents of Munambam village in Ernakulam district and asked those facing eviction notices to move a civil court instead.



RS bypoll: BJP nominee set to be elected unopposed

Former National Commission for Women chief and BJP nominee Rekha Sharma filed her nomination for the Rajya Sabha bypoll from Haryana here on Tuesday. Being the lone candidate in the fray, she is set to get elected unopposed.

Par panel calls for review of PM-KUSUM scheme

A Parliamentary panel has called for review of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) scheme as it found various gaps in it. The scheme was launched in March 2019 to provide financial support to farmers for installation of standalone solar pumps, solarization of existing grid-connected agriculture pumps, a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Energy said in its report tabled in Parliament on Tuesday.

'Cyber crimes, climate change new threats to human rights'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The human rights discourse so far has been centred on the "human agency" as the violator is assumed to be a human, but with artificial intelligence entering our lives, the "culprit could be a non-human" but an intelligent agent, President Droupadi Murmu said on Tuesday.



"Authoritarianism is on the march while civic space is shrinking. Hateful rhetoric is fuelling discrimination, division, and outright violence. And women's rights continue to be rolled back in law and practice. This year's theme reminds us that human rights are about building the future right now," the message said

Addressing an event hosted by the NHRC here to mark Human Rights Day, the president also underlined cyber crimes and climate change as "new threats" to human rights. Human Rights Day is observed on December 10 every year to commemorate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948.

Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator in India, read out the message of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on the occasion.

"On Human Rights Day, we face a harsh truth. Human rights are under assault. Tens of millions of people are mired in poverty, hunger, poor health and education systems that have not yet fully recovered from the Covid-19 pandemic. Global inequalities are running rampant. Conflicts are intensifying. International law is wilfully ignored," Guterres said in his message, which was also displayed on a screen.

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sion, and outright violence. And women's rights continue to be rolled back in law and practice. This year's theme reminds us that human rights are about building the future -- right now," the message said.

The UDHR serves as a global benchmark for the protection and promotion of human rights. "It is a day to remember the institutions that strive to protect and promote the rights of the most vulnerable sections of society. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the State Human Rights Commissions, various other bodies, the judiciary, and other key stakeholders have worked tirelessly to be the voice of the voiceless. I compliment them for their steadfast commitment and untiring work

towards ensuring human rights for all," Murmu said in her address. "Today, as one reflects on the ideals enshrined in the UDHR adopted on this day in 1948, we reaffirm our collective resolve to contribute to building a world where justice and human dignity are the bedrock of society," she said. India today stands as a "shining example" where "great initiatives are being taken by the government" for poverty alleviation, eradication of hunger by providing free food to the underprivileged, and offering equal opportunities to the youth to realise their dreams, the president said.

"India, with its civilisational heritage spanning over 5,000 years, has long upheld values of empathy, compassion, and the

inter-connectedness of individuals within a harmonious community," she added. The president also said that India had an elderly population of around 150 million by 2022, and is projected to reach 350 million by 2050. "So we must formulate policies and take measures that preserve their dignity and ensure their well-being, empowering them to live full lives as valuable members of our society," Murmu said. She also underlined that in recent years, mental health has become a critical issue, especially for children and the youth. "As we progress into the future, we are confronted with emerging challenges. Cyber crimes and climate change are new threats to human rights," she said.



'TN will take up Mullaiperiyar dam upkeep issue with Kerala govt'

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin will take up with his Kerala counterpart Pinarayi Vijayan the problems being faced by the state Public Works Department (PWD) officials in taking up the maintenance of the Mullaiperiyar dam located in the neighbouring state, Water Resources Minister Duraimurugan said on Tuesday.

The chief minister would hold consultations with Vijayan during his visit to Kerala this week and work for an amicable solution, Duraimurugan said, responding to the 'call attention motion' moved by Leader of the Opposition AIADMK Edappadi K Palaniswami in the Assembly

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On the second day of the two-day Assembly session. He urged the chief minister to take up the issue of frequent problems being faced by TN PWD in transporting construction material when he visits Kerala on December 12 and facilitate the smooth maintenance of the dam.

On the inauguration in many villages alluded due to the opening of the Sathanur dam in Thiruvannamalai district when Cyclone Fengal crossed the TN-Karaikal coast, the chief minister replied that water from the reservoir was released after the PWD issued five flood alerts.

'Don't react to remarks by INDIA bloc allies'

- Rahul Gandhi asks party MPs
■ Says Cong capable of dealing with issues

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi told party's Lok Sabha MPs Tuesday not to react to comments of 'middle- and low-rung' leaders of INDIA bloc parties and asserted that the Congress as the largest party in the opposition grouping is capable of addressing issues, sources said.

The advice by Gandhi comes amid various leaders of the INDIA bloc weighing in on the leadership issue and TMC leaders aggressive-

ly pitching for West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to head the opposition alliance. The sources said that Gandhi, who chaired a meeting of the party's Lok Sabha MPs at Parliament Annex here this morning, also told the MPs to ensure that all of them are present for party's protest ahead of the Parliament sittings, especially when Congress president is participating.

They said Gandhi urged leaders not to react to comments of other opposition parties' "middle- and low-rung



leaders and stressed that the Congress as the largest party in the opposition grouping is capable of addressing issues.

Gandhi said the protests by opposition on the Adani issue

was making the government jittery and they must continue to raise people's issues. The leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha stressed that he wanted the House to function

so that opposition voice is heard, party sources said.

Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is understood to have urged MPs to come up with innovative ideas of protest as had been seen in the past few days. Soon after the meeting, several opposition MPs demonstrated over the Adani issue in Parliament premises, carrying black 'jholas' (bags) with caricatures of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and billionaire Gautam Adani printed on it and 'Modi Adani Bhai Bhai' written on the obverse side.

This is the latest in the series of unusual protests led by the Congress daily ahead of the sitting of Parliament in the morning.

Delhi's air quality again turns 'poor' Likely to remain same for next 2 days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after recording 'moderate' AQI, Delhi's air quality slipped into 'poor' category on Tuesday, with forecast suggesting it will remain the same for the next couple of days.

The 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) of the city was recorded at 234 at 4 pm on Tuesday, marking a drop from Monday's 'moderate' reading of 186. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) classifies AQI between 0 and 50 as 'good', between 51 and 100 as 'satisfactory', between 101 and 200 as 'moderate', between 201 and 300 as 'poor', between 301 and 400 as 'very poor', and above 400 as 'severe'.

Of the 38 air quality monitoring stations in the capital, two reported AQI in 'very



poor' category on Tuesday.

While 27 stations recorded 'poor' AQI, the rest were in the 'moderate' category, according to the Sameer app which provides hourly data. The primary pollutant on Tuesday was PM2.5, which was recorded at 87.9 ug/m³ at 3 pm. These fine particles pose significant health risks as they can penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream.

Meanwhile, the Decision Support System (DSS), a tool used to assess and estimate sources of pollution in Delhi which had not been updated since November 29, was restarted on Monday.

According to the DSS, the daily mean of local and non-local fractional contributions to PM2.5 in Delhi on Tuesday was estimated at 20.2 per cent, while Wednesday's forecast predicts it to contribute 15.6 per cent to Delhi's pollution.

No mismatch in votes polled, VVPAT count in Maha: ECI

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Tuesday said no mismatch was found between the votes polled and corresponding tally of Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail slips in random counting in the last month's Maharashtra assembly elections.

The mandatory counting of VVPAT slips from five randomly selected polling stations in each assembly constituency was completed successfully, the ECI said in a statement. Opposition parties in the state had questioned the integrity of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) after the ruling BJP-led Mahayuti coalition won a landslide victory in the November 20 elections.

The counting of VVPAT slips aims to verify the tally of votes recorded EVMs against



the corresponding VVPAT slips, the ECI said, adding that representatives of candidates were present throughout the process. In Maharashtra's 288 assembly constituencies, officials verified a total of 1,440 VVPAT machines. Representatives of candidates and EC observers randomly selected polling stations, the statement said.

"There was no discrepancy found between the candidate-wise vote counts recorded in EVMs and the corresponding counts from the VVPAT slips," the EC stated.

Regions worldwide could see warming of 3 degrees Celsius

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Most of the world could experience regional warming of 3 degrees Celsius by 2060 -- sooner than previously estimated, according to a new study. The study, published in the journal Environmental Research Letters, highlights the uncertainty of regional climate change.

"The challenge is that regional climate change can be more uncertain, both because the climate system is inherently more noisy at smaller spatial scales and because processes in the atmosphere, ocean and land surface create uncertainty about exactly how a given region will respond to global-scale warming," co-author



Noah Diffenbaugh, a professor at Stanford University, said. The Paris Agreement of 2015

aims to limit climate change by restricting the global temperature rise this century to well

below 2 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels, with ongoing efforts to limit the

rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The study projects that several land regions -- including South Asia, the Mediterranean, Central Europe, and parts of sub-Saharan Africa -- are on track to exceed the 3 degrees Celsius threshold by 2060.

The researchers noted that this is sooner than earlier studies had anticipated, compounding risks for vulnerable ecosystems and communities. These land regions have been defined by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a United Nations body that provides scientific information to help governments develop climate policies. For the study, the researchers

analysed results from the IPCC's climate models to predict temperature increases.

They found that 34 regions are likely to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming by 2040, with 31 regions expected to see 2 degrees of warming by 2040, and 26 regions likely to surpass 3 degrees of warming by 2060.

"It is important to focus not only on global temperature increases but also on specific changes occurring in local and regional areas. By narrowing down when regional warming thresholds will be reached, we can more clearly anticipate the timing of specific impacts on society and ecosystems," Diffenbaugh said.



ISRO carries out 'well deck' recovery trial of Gaganyaan

PNS ■ BENGALURU ISRO on Tuesday said it carried out 'well deck' recovery trials of the Gaganyaan with the Indian Navy on December 6.

The trials were carried out at Eastern Naval Command using a well deck ship off the coast of Vishakhapatnam, ISRO said in a statement.

The space agency said the well deck in a ship can be flooded with water so that boats, landing crafts, recovered spacecraft can be taken inside to dock within the ship. Once the Crew Module touches down in the sea at the end of the mission, crew have to be recovered in the minimum possible time and with the least discomfort, it said.

One of the preferred options is to tow the Crew Module along with the crew inside the well deck of the ship where the crew can come out comfortably, ISRO explained. It said that the trials for well deck recovery were carried out using a mass and shape simulated Crew Module Mock-up.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

It is getting hot!

Global warming is becoming reality as 2024 set to be the hottest year on record

As global temperatures soar to unprecedented levels, 2024 is shaping up to be the hottest year on record, a grim milestone that underscores the accelerating crisis of climate change. European Union scientists have confirmed that the first eleven months of 2024 have set a new high, making this year the warmest since records began. This will be the first year where the global average temperature surpasses 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, a threshold that world leaders have long warned could trigger catastrophic climate impacts. With this alarming reality, the world faces a rapidly intensifying climate emergency, one that requires immediate and drastic action. The impacts of global warming are already being felt around the world. In 2024, extreme weather events have ravaged communities, causing widespread devastation. Severe droughts have gripped Italy and South America, while fatal floods in Nepal, Sudan and Europe have displaced thousands. Heatwaves in regions like Mexico, Saudi Arabia and Mali have killed thousands of people, while cyclones have torn through the United States and the Philippines. These events are not just random occurrences; scientific studies confirm that they bear the unmistakable fingerprint of human-caused climate change.



The overwhelming cause of global warming is carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels. These emissions trap heat in the atmosphere, causing global temperatures to rise at an alarming rate. The most effective way to curb this warming is by reducing emissions to net-zero levels, a goal that many nations have pledged to achieve in the coming decades. However, despite these green pledges, global CO2 emissions are on track to hit record highs this year. This contradictory trend highlights the gap between political promises and the real, tangible actions needed to mitigate climate change.

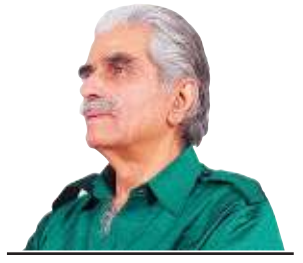
This year's UN climate talks produced a \$300-billion deal aimed at addressing the global climate crisis. However, poorer countries have criticised this deal, arguing that it is insufficient to cover the soaring costs of climate-related disasters. While this deal may have made some progress, it is clear that the global response is not yet enough to prevent further warming. The rise of climate change deniers, particularly within the political sphere, has made it even harder to combat this crisis. US President-elect Donald Trump, in particular, has consistently downplayed the severity of global warming and rolled back numerous environmental regulations during his previous term. Under Trump's leadership, the US withdrew from the Paris Agreement, a global pact aimed at reducing emissions and limiting global temperature rise. Such actions would undoubtedly exacerbate the climate crisis, making it even harder to reduce emissions and avoid the most catastrophic effects of global warming. The time to act is now, and the window for meaningful change is rapidly closing.

PICTALK



Badrinath Dham receives the first snowfall of the season, in Chamoli

Philippines confronts Chinese assertiveness



ASHOK K MEHTA

The South China Sea remains a flashpoint of escalating tensions as China intensifies its aggressive maritime activities, targeting nations like the Philippines

NS Admiral Dinesh Tripathi during his customary briefing of media before Navy Day last week expressed concern about Chinese maritime activities in the South China Sea, all of which China claims. Two countries it especially targets in SCS are Taiwan and the Philippines in whose waters it has indulged in offensive naval actions. It signed a defence agreement with the US in 1951; last month it signed an intelligence and technology agreement facilitating satellite intelligence and access to high-grade US weaponry following President Marcos promulgating Maritime Zone Act and Archipelago Sea Lanes Act that China denounced and summoned its envoy. US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin told his counterpart Gilberto Teodoro: We are more than allies; we're family. The week-long ASEAN summit in Vientiane, Laos from 6 to 12 October witnessed stern exchanges between China, the US and the Philippines especially over the South China Sea at a time when the West is seized with Ukraine and West Asia crises, even as President-elect Trump is issuing multiple threats. While Chinese Premier Li Qiang blamed "external forces" for interfering in regional affairs, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the US is concerned about increasingly dangerous and unlawful activities of China in disputed SCS. Marcos complained to ASEAN leaders that his country continues to be subjected to Chinese bullying and intimidation. Earlier that week PM Narendra Modi attended the 19th India-ASEAN meeting and made a powerful presentation of Delhi's Act East policy and criticised China for its expansionist policy in SCS. The Chinese have been testing the waters in the Philippines EEZ in SCS. Filipinos call the West Philippines Sea with several forays against Filipino boats to check how far the US will go in its support. Filipino vessels in their EEZ have faced intimidation and bullying by Chinese coast guard ships over the dispute Thomas Shoal 2



where Sierra Madera a Philippine vessel has been grounded since 1999 to assert its sovereignty. The Chinese are equally active and defiant against Japan in the East China Sea and recently crossed the First Island chain for the first time with an aircraft carrier and two warships. Taiwan continues to face periodic challenges as China relentlessly violates the 2016 UNCLOS ruling that the Philippines secured over China's illegal claim to the South China Sea under its 9-dash line. During my interaction with Philippines security experts in Manila in June, clashes over the resupply of a marooned vessel in Thomas Shoal 2 had reached the climax; and some suggested it could be a feint for Taiwan. The incident had ruffled feathers in Manila with calls for invoking the US Mutual Defence Agreement which gets triggered only during armed external attack. Clashes have occurred between the two sides and despite talks and a hotline, no compromise was reached. On September 28 Chinese Navy missile boat fired laser beams at a Philippines Cessna Patrol aircraft while Filipino coast guard vessels continued to be chased. Chinese insisted resupply of the marooned ship would happen under their supervision and in a mid-August clash, several Chinese



EARLIER THAT WEEK PM MODI ATTENDED THE 19TH INDIA-ASEAN MEETING AND MADE A POWERFUL PRESENTATION OF DELHI'S ACT EAST POLICY AND CRITICISED CHINA FOR ITS EXPANSIONIST POLICY IN SCS

ships blocked passage of Filipino supplies for the stranded ship. The Chinese have said that the Philippines ship is illegally stranded/marooned at the disputed Thomas Shoal atoll which it owns as part of its claim to SCS. China calls it Xianbin Reef which is 150 km west of the Philippines island of Palawan. As before, it had repeatedly said it would promulgate its maritime laws including the use of firearms and arrest offenders in defence of its sovereignty and national interest. Teodoro said at the end of August that Thomas Shoal is a sovereignty issue of the Philippines. According to South China Morning Post (September 16), Admiral Samuel Paparo, US Indo-Pacific Command accompanied by Gen Romero Brawner, Chief of Philippines armed forces, said there is a range of options as countermeasures for the Chinese grey zone tactics adding the US is ready to escort Philippines ships in SCS in event of a spike in hostilities. Brawner said they would seek help if the Chinese blocked food supplies and soldiers were dying of hunger. In Manila, I was asked whether re-supply by other means like helicopters was feasible and had suggested discussing it with their US allies. Meanwhile, Paparo took a video call with Gen Wu Yanan, PLA Southern Theatre Commander responsible for

SCS and Taiwan. Wu attended an International conference at the Indo-Pacific command in Hawaii in September even as Teodoro took the contingency of escalation to the next level, of the Chinese towing away the grounded Sierra Madera which would constitute an act of war; invoking a defence pact with the US. A code of conduct for ASEAN in SCS has been in the works for two decades but is far from fruition. It is akin to India's LAC/border with China that Beijing has refused to resolve as it would put a stop to grey zone tactics and salami slicing. India has voiced clear support for the Philippines during the June 17 clash with the Chinese coast guard and Foreign Minister Jaishankar has been on a goodwill visit. Delhi has sold Brahmos anti-ship missiles to Manila, the first country to buy them. Former Defence Secretary, Giridhar Aramane was in Manila recently for the fifth joint defence cooperation dialogue. While Taiwan may not be on the cards, Thomas Shoal 2 could end up in Chinese possession as Mischief Reef 24 km north of it did in 2012.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CONTROVERSY AT IIT KHARAGPUR

Madam — I have never heard of any controversy in the teaching campus of IIT Kharagpur. But now it is happening. For the last six months, open differences have started coming to the fore between the director and the teaching staff. The Indian Institute of Technology has issued show-cause notices to 90 faculty members in response to allegations against its director V K Tiwari of bias, "retaliation in faculty selection," and failure to set up the promised hospital on campus. In addition, three department heads have also been replaced. The controversy began in September when the IIT Teachers' Association wrote a letter to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan accusing Tiwari of arbitrary recruitment processes and other irregularities. About 100 faculty members have protested by wearing black bands and participating in silent marches on campus. The faculty is reportedly now considering legal action. On December 2, the administration replaced the heads of the departments of mathematics, artificial intelligence, and biosciences and biotechnology. I want to say that when the education minister was informed about the arbitrary behaviour of director VK Tiwari five months ago, why did he not take any action? Why was the director not removed from his post with immediate effect? This means that the environment of this great educational institution is being deliberately spoiled so that this institution can be defamed. IIT Kharagpur is the first IIT to be established by the Government of India. The institute was formally inaugurated on 18 August 1951 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. IIT was established to provide trained technical personnel for India. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru took the initiative to establish IIT, he believed that science and technology are important for the modernisation of India. Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

Sanjay Malhotra as new RBI Governor



The union governments have appointed Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra as the 26th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, before the six-year term completion of Shaktikanta Das at the post of Governor of RBI. Throughout his career spanning more than 33 years, Sanjay Malhotra has served across diverse sectors, including power, finance, taxation, information technology, and mines. Currently he has been serving as secretary (revenue) in the ministry of finance, he previously held the position of secretary in the department of financial services under the ministry of finance, Government of India. The governor heads the RBI and plays a central role in formulating, implementing and monitoring the monetary policy and banking regulations of India. Every note ever printed carries the signature of the RBI governor. The RBI Governor also monitors and facilitates the flow of credit to rural, agricultural and various MSME sectors. As the newly appointed governor holds good ties with the finance minister, he probably works in the betterment of the country's economy, inflation rate, CRR, SLR, GDP, etc. Dimple Wadhawan | Kanpur Nagar

END OF ASSAD RULE

Madam—The turn of political events in Syria raises fears of a new wave of regional instability, following the ouster of Bashar al-Assad by the militant group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), ending his family's despotic rule for over 13 years. It marks a turning point for Syria, shattered by years of civil war that has turned cities into rubble, killed hundreds of thousands of people, and forced millions to go abroad as refugees. Western governments, which have shunned the Assad-led state for years, must decide how to deal with a new administration in Syria in which HTS looks set to have greater influence. HTS, which spearheaded the rebel advances across western Syria, was formerly an al-Qaeda affiliate. The Syrians, therefore, will obviously remain fearful as this militant group will impose draconian Islamist rule or instigate reprisals. As Syria will go to polls, it would require a smooth transition in a country with complex competing interests. Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

TIKTOK'S NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Madam — Tensions have been escalating in the US over the impact of TikTok. The US Court of Appeals has also cited a notice to China-based ByteDance to sell the social media app by January 19 or face an effective ban in the US. Banning TikTok is not the ultimate solution, as it will hit hard many businessmen for whom TikTok is a source of income generation. They use social media for promotion of their products or of their business, but we cannot forget its negative impact on the minds of children. There is a need to adopt such a solution that will be beneficial for both businessmen and society. Businessmen should create accounts in the name of their business, and e-verification of those accounts should also be done to maintain their originality, and accounts registered under the age of 16 should be banned so the app will be less harmful. Shreyanshi Jain | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Childhood Wounds: The hidden force behind life's struggles

Whether it's self-doubt at work or struggles in relationships, the roots often trace back to unresolved childhood wounds

Have you ever wondered why life keeps pulling you back, no matter how hard you try to move forward? Maybe you find yourself repeating the same mistakes in relationships, doubting your abilities at work, or battling the constant ache of "not being enough."



It's easy to blame bad luck or personal failure. But often, these struggles run deeper—in unresolved childhood wounds. Childhood is when we learn how to love, trust and value ourselves. But not all childhoods are built on safety and support. Even seemingly small moments can leave deep scars. A parent saying, "Stop crying, you're embarrassing me," or a teacher comparing you to someone else may seem insignificant at the time but can shape how we see ourselves for years to come. Take Radhika, for example. At 35, she thrived in her career but couldn't maintain a relationship. Every time someone got close, she would pull away, convinced they would leave her eventually. Therapy

revealed that her fear of abandonment stemmed from her father leaving when she was six. Her emotional walls weren't about keeping others out; they were about protecting herself from feeling that pain again. Then there's Arjun, 28, who struggled to hold a job. His pattern was predictable: procrastinate, miss deadlines and eventually lose the role. He believed he lacked discipline, but therapy uncovered a deeper truth. He had grown up under relentless criticism—nothing he did was ever good enough. That

internalised voice followed him into adulthood, leading him to self-sabotage before anyone else could judge him. These aren't isolated stories. Many of us carry invisible wounds from our childhood. A parent's absence, constant comparisons, or even a single harsh word can create emotional patterns—fear of intimacy, perfectionism, or shrinking ourselves to avoid rejection. Over time, these patterns create setbacks that seem external but are deeply internal. Therapy is where this cycle ends. It's not about

blaming our parents or reliving the past. It's about understanding why we feel stuck and learning how to let go of the pain. Imagine carrying a heavy bag for years, thinking it's just part of life—then discovering you can put it down. That's what healing feels like. One client described the process beautifully: "For the first time, I understand myself. I'm not broken. I've just been carrying pain I didn't know was there." Your setbacks aren't failures; they're signals that something inside you needs attention. Healing childhood wounds allows you to stop reacting from a place of fear and start living from a place of freedom. It's not an easy journey, but it's one worth taking. The truth is, you deserved love and safety as a child, and you still do now. Healing isn't about erasing the past—it's about reclaiming your future. If this resonates, consider giving yourself the gift of therapy. You're not broken—you're healing. (The writer is a Life Coach; views are personal)



KAVITA KABIRA



FIRST COLUMN TRANSFORMING ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOR

As technology reshapes the world at breakneck speed, organisations must evolve to stay relevant



RAVI VALLURI

It would be worthwhile to examine how organisations are structured and articulated. In the long haul organisations blessed with individuals willing to experiment, innovate and embrace technology will be the ones that survive. At the pace that technology with its variants is fashioning itself, numerous applications are unravelling virtually by the minute, and the level of obsolescence and attrition of equipment is becoming extraordinarily high. In such a scenario, humans and organisations will be subsumed by various products and their variants. The human mind can no longer remain in the typewriter mode. The garden of Organisational Theory and Behaviour is dotted with eminent scholars. Three pioneers, Adam Smith, Charles Babbage and Robert Owen provided the ballast and the basic groundwork. Adam Smith advanced the argument that countries and organisations would profit by adopting the tenets of division of labour, what is now termed as specialisation. Charles Babbage in his seminal work postulated: Through the division of labour, the time required for learning a job or skill gets drastically reduced. Right at the stage of infancy wastage of material gets minimised and diminishes. The mind is propelled to take up serious tasks upon attaining superior skills. Way back in 1789, Robert Owen at 18 went on to acquire a factory. He was a utopian, way ahead of his times. In 1825, he promulgated regulated working



hours, child labour laws, public education and business involvement in various community projects – a precursor to CSR. In today's wired world, individuals work from their dwellings. Places with the latest technology and gizmos at their disposal. Over the last decade, the entire paradigm of organisational behaviour has metamorphosed. Technology stares at organisations with peering eyes, the complexity and dynamics of structures having undergone a complete metamorphosis. Let us look at the Indian Railways. There was a time when the operating and manufacturing departments held sway in the decision-making process. Today, it is the technical departments that are the game changers. The concept of fixed work hours is history.

The workforce must be alert 24x7. Thus, employees need to brush up on their skill sets to brace for the challenges of the virtual world. Let us examine the model of direct teaching through online classes – one-on-one, between the teacher and the tutee. The very paradigm may affect teaching techniques in schools and universities. Similarly, qualified doctors instruct their colleagues through Skype or other means during complex surgeries. Be it surgical strikes or wars, instructions are being disseminated to the foot soldiers through the latest technology, like the usage of GPS coordinates and Real-Time Imagery.

In such a scenario, scores of organisational structures, government or those in the private sector must adapt radically in order to survive. The workforce must continuously upgrade their skill set or face extinction. Perhaps emotions of warmth may be lost in the maze of technological evolution. The philosophy of an organisation, its goals and objectives and the behavioural pattern between the structure and the workforce have been stranded in a traffic jam of the kind one encounters in major cities of India like Gurugram. Stephen Hawking has in a rather depressing prognosis, predicted that life would be extinct on this planet on four grounds – nukes, global warming, man-made viruses or robots. Thus, the human mind should reinvent itself and current organisational behaviour and theories or prepare a blueprint to discover a sister planet to inhabit. Aristotle wrote, "We are what we repeatedly do." This paradigm will have to change for organisations to survive.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

A roadmap for modernising India's security framework



SUDHIR HINDWAN

A comprehensive approach to urban mobility, affordability and infrastructure is the need of the hour to reclaim Delhi's air and ensure a healthier, sustainable future



The recent 2 days 59th All India Conference of Director Generals of Police in Bhubaneswar augurs very well for drawing a future roadmap of policing in India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for a SMART way of policing has once again brought forward the need for modernisation of Indian Police and Security Agencies which can help India move on the path of high-powered police technology with the most efficient and latest technologies. Recent challenges to the security of India bring to light an important fact that India needs to diversify its strategies to counter the challenges it faces lately from digital frauds, artificial intelligence misuse and cyber crimes. Prime Minister emphasised the need to come together and closely cooperate in fighting the latest threats by developing strategies for the establishment of an extremely capable intelligence system to ensure such threats can be encountered at early stages.

SMART POLICING appears to be the only solution for protection against the multiple threats from diverse and very intense new waves of terror, cyber criminals, drug traffickers, economic offenders, smugglers, criminals, naxals, arms dealers and insurgents. It would provide a platform for multi-layered security cooperation that would deal with various issues related to terrorism – right from the funding of terrorist activities, policing cooperation, dealing with cyber threats, secrecy through enhancing technological innovations and tightening the border to maritime security information-gathering exercise.

Cooperation and coordination in communication capabilities and management of security arrangements to deal with any kind of threat are the main objectives of his call. Besides, a modernisation of the Police is also imperative given the possible threats from religiously motivated bands of distraught minds. The Prime Minister has called for a smart way of policing and usage of interoperable and transferable technologies such as drones that would open a new gateway to meet complex security chal-



THE POLICE NEED TO DIVERSIFY ITS ACTIVITIES BY BRINGING TOGETHER TECHNICAL AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE BASED ON MANY DECADES OF EXPERIENCE IN MAINTAINING INTERNAL SECURITY. IT IS HIGH TIME WE REALISED THAT POLICE ALONE CANNOT STOP THE CRIME, THE ENTIRE SOCIETY SHOULD MAKE SUBSTANTIAL EFFORTS

lenges. Over the years a great deal of literature has appeared on India's police and the need for reforms. Policies are being made to enable the force to adapt to the challenging environment and efficiently implement recommendations suggested by the panels on reforms. As the threats today are more severe and enemies more organised than ever before, new concepts of safety and security need to be followed. Whereas globalisation has provided a concept of a global village deeply interwoven in a comprehensive view of society, market, freedom, choice, empowerment, peace, opportunities, linkages and politics, its impact has created a socio-political quagmire, particularly in developing societies. In this context, there is a growing global consensus on addressing critical issues in policing by focusing on the following key areas:

Bridging Theory and Practice: Linking traditional policing theories to the evolving challenges faced by law enforcement today.

Analyzing Pressures: Developing fresh insights into the various areas of concern and the mounting pressures on police forces.

Role of Police in Market Dynamics: Defining the role of police in navigating market forces while maintaining impartiality and fairness.

Implementing Reforms: Demonstrating how the reform models proposed by various commissions can be effectively applied in real-world scenarios, in alignment with democratic principles, environmental considerations, globalization, and governance.

Driving Change: Exploring innovative policing methods to foster change and build public trust and confidence.

Global Knowledge Integration: Leveraging the latest global research and advancements in the field of policing to modernise and upgrade

law enforcement practices. Police being a State subject under Article 246, at times the force becomes a matter of battle of wits. Apart from undertaking counter-terrorist operations, police also have to play a crucial role as protector of the day-to-day law and order.

This has increased pressure on them to get quick results. Besides, the prevailing level of dissatisfaction among the subordinate level, police officers have adversely affected the attitude of police towards problems. Police are often asked to fight a low-cost war where the enemy is their countrymen. Calling the police to put down civil disturbances is a tedious job. Many scientific methods and modern changes have been introduced in policing in India ever since the police commission report was drafted many years ago. Police are an extremely vital source of security for the community.

But this alone will not benefit unless people are sensitised about the achievements of positive policing. Some experts on policing are of the view that the values, attitudes, methods, aspirations commitment, etc. of these services need overhauling. Some are of the view that the quality and efficiency of the security forces largely depend on their service conditions, cooperation, training, practice, level of interaction with the general masses and strict methods of appointment. It is, therefore, in the interest of the Government to recruit and attract personnel of high integrity and great calibre.

For successful training of personnel of paramilitary and police forces, certain parameters of pre-recruitment education, experience, proportion of insiders and outsiders, methods of recruitment, postings, and length of service must be reviewed. There is also a need for more productive relation-

ships among paramilitary forces, Intelligence agencies, local police, the Army, and the local population. The Government has made all efforts towards sensitisation of police by inculcating a humane approach in policing and introducing the study of human rights legislation in training. Certain suggestions can go a long way in driving better results for policing: (a) There should be initiative in implementing development plans in consultation with experts from various other branches; (b) Development of capability to anticipate foreboding and security needs; (c) This is possible by conducting specialised courses for monitoring security situations. Globalisation and its negative implications are putting forward a challenging environment for policing.

Therefore, the police need to diversify its activities by bringing together technical and professional expertise based on many decades of experience in maintaining internal security. It is high time we realised that police alone cannot stop the crime, the entire society should make substantial efforts towards ensuring the safety and security of fellow citizens.

The police also need to play an important role as crime preventers and in this regard, developing qualities such as a high level of diligence, intelligence, dedication, determination and the ability to grasp complex situations is a must. It is high time we realised that the police alone cannot stop crime; the entire society should make substantial efforts towards it. The SMART Police and modernised ways of policing hold the key to the future of the security and safety of every individual.

(The writer is recipient of the Bharat Gaurav Award, Professor, Head of Department and Expert on Strategic Affairs; views are personal)

India's sovereignty in the crosshairs: Navigating global challenges

Modi's administration combines diplomacy with strength to safeguard national independence and challenge Western-centric ideologies

As India rises as a global power, it faces a barrage of challenges and accusations of foreign interference, echoing the complexities of a world where sovereignty is contested. The ruling BJP has identified actors like the "American deep state," billionaire George Soros, and organisations such as the Rockefeller Foundation as orchestrators of campaigns aimed at destabilising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government.



SANTHOSH MATHEW

Modi's approach combines diplomacy with firm resolve to safeguard India's sovereignty, particularly against those attempting to influence domestic politics. The BJP asserts that international networks target India for challenging the dominance of Western-centric ideologies

through policies like Atmanirbhar Bharat and calls for a multipolar world. The "American deep state," a nexus of the Pentagon, CIA, and corporate elites, according to the BJP, exemplifies hidden forces working to maintain global hegemony. Allegations against prominent business figures and reports from groups like the OCCRP are seen as attempts to tarnish India's image and weaken Modi's leadership. Critics of these claims argue that they serve as distractions from domestic challenges, but the BJP cites historical precedents of covert interventions by such networks to justify its position.

George Soros, often labelled a "dangerous" figure by Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, symbolises an ideological assault on national sovereignty. His public criticism of Modi's policies and financial involvement in liberal causes worldwide add fuel to the BJP's assertion that foreign-funded campaigns aim to destabilise India's democratic fabric. Similarly, the Rockefeller Foundation is accused of furthering a neoliberal agenda at odds with India's self-reliance and policy independence. This dynamic reflects the larger struggle of emerging powers like India to navigate a world influenced by philanthropic and corporate entities wielding soft power. Modi's resistance to their influence positions his administration as a bulwark against globalist impositions, a stance that resonates with his nationalist electorate.

interests and erratic decision-making created tensions. Described by Noam Chomsky as "the most dangerous man in the world," Yet, his strategic deals, such as his outreach to India, underscored his unconventional but calculated foreign policy. Trump's presidency also invoked the Bush Doctrine's rhetoric of "You are either with us or against us," highlighting the stark divisions in global alliances. While Modi's government has maintained a deft balance, the BJP sees this dichotomy as emblematic of the pressures India faces from global powers demanding allegiance to specific blocs. India's geopolitical strategy involves rejecting the narrative of dependency that organisations like the Rockefeller



Foundation propagate. Blood may be thicker than water, but India's external relationships prioritise sovereignty over sentimentality. The BJP's framing of its sovereignty struggle as a broader battle for multipolarity reflects a vision of India not just as a rising power but as a protector of global balance. While domestic critics downplay the likelihood of coordinated foreign efforts against India, the BJP argues that history tells a different story. Examples abound of covert interventions justified under the banner of democracy or human rights. Modi's government, embodies the Rooseveltian ethos of combining tact with strength, ensuring that India's voice remains firm in the shifting

balance of global power. The allegations against figures like Soros, the American deep state, and philanthropic organisations symbolise the challenges India faces as it redefines its place on the world stage. Whether these claims represent genuine threats or political posturing, they underscore the complexities of a world where the boundaries of influence, power, and sovereignty remain contested. India's ascent highlights a fundamental truth: the struggle for sovereignty in a globalised world demands not only resilience but also an unwavering belief in one's capacity to walk softly while wielding the proverbial big stick.

(The writer is an associate professor; views are personal)

Exploring world of ghazals

ACCLAIMED GHAZAL MAESTRO SUDEEP BANERJEE REVEALS THE SOUL OF HIS MUSIC IN A HEART-TO-HEART CONVERSATION WITH THE PIONEER

TEJAL SINHA
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As the silken threads of Urdu poetry weave a tapestry of emotions, the ghazal—an ancient and revered form of Indian classical music—continues to enthrall audiences with its haunting beauty. In a world where musical trends ebb and flow, the ghazal remains an enduring testament to the power of art to transcend time and touch the human soul.

In this exclusive conversation, we delve into the world of ghazals with Sudeep Banerjee, a masterful exponent of this classical genre, as he shares his insights, inspirations and the timeless allure of the ghazal.

It was a privilege to have the distinguished ghazal singer onboard with *The Pioneer* as he shares his experiences and insights with us. Fresh from his latest performance, Banerjee spoke about his musical journey, inspirations and the importance of promoting good literature and poetry.

Born in Allahabad, his musical journey began in Delhi, where he received his basic music education from Shrimati Shanti Hirananda ji, a senior disciple of the legendary Begum Akhtar. Trained in Khayal and Dadra, Banerjee performed extensively in Delhi before moving to Mumbai to pursue his dreams. In Mumbai, he not only established himself as a singer but also as a music composer, working on numerous music albums, feature films and ad films.

Banerjee's journey has been marked by collaborations with legendary singers. He reflected, "I have done recordings with Jagjit Singh, Ustad Rashid Khan, Bhupinder Singh, Hariharanji, Anup Jalota, Pankaj Udhass and Shreya Ghoshal, among others." These experiences have not only honed his craft but also exposed him to different styles and approaches to music.

When it comes to ghazal singing, he draws inspiration from two legends: Begum Akhtar and Mehdi Hassan. He confessed, "Mehdi Hassan has been a huge inspiration for me. Whatever he has sung, his style of singing has inspired me a lot." He also acknowledged the influence of Jagjit Singh, with whom he worked closely for several years. "After Mehdi Hassan, Jagjit Singh has been a very important person in my life because I worked with him for 5-6 years, so I knew him. I knew how he was working. There was so much to learn from him," he added.

In a musical landscape that is increasingly dominated by commercial and popular genres, his commitment to ghazal



singing and his passion for promoting good literature and poetry are truly commendable. As he continues to enthrall audiences with his soulful renditions, his contributions to the world of Indian classical music and ghazal singing remain invaluable. The singer reflected on their early life and influences, mentioning their work with various artists, including Jagadish Singh and Pankaj Udhass. "I have learned from my dear son, but I have also learned from Jagadish Singh sir and Pankaj Udhass ji. I have been personally working with Pankaj Udhass and unfortunately, we lost him this year."

When asked about the current state of the ghazal industry, the singer noted that despite the loss of legends like Pankaj Udhass and Jagadish Singh, the genre is experiencing a resurgence. "In fact, ghazal is now going back to its big form because a lot of singers are coming into ghazal singing and a lot of youngsters are coming into ghazal singing."

The singer attributed this growth to events which have been a part of for the past 12 years. "We always include new singers every year, and we do a talent hunt called *Khazana Talent Hunt* for the best ghazal singers." They noted that the event receives numerous entries, primarily from young singers, indicating a strong interest in ghazal singing.

However, the singer also highlighted the challenges faced by the new generation of ghazal singers. "Ghazal is not just music; it's poetry; it's Urdu. You have to know the language; you have to learn Urdu; you have to learn about poets." They emphasised the importance of understanding the literary context and the lives of poets like Mirza Ghalib, Jigar Moradabadi and Faiz Ahmed Faiz. The singer noted that the new generation's desire for instant

success and fame can be a hindrance to truly mastering the art of ghazal singing. "They want everything instant. They want instant success. They want to get fame very fast, but they forget that this is a long process."

The singer concluded by discussing their upcoming projects, including a concert series based on the poetry of Begum Akhtar, which they will be performing with Rekha Bhardwaj. "Rekha Bhardwaj and I are old friends from college. We did that show and we are taking that show to other cities also."

They also mentioned a new project that explores the history of Urdu poetry over the past 350 years, featuring the works of 15 prominent poets. "I've compiled around 15 of the greatest poets, and we do concerts on those 15 poets. We will also do an album and concert."

As he travels across the country, performing in various cities, he was asked which city intrigued him the most. He revealed that Delhi holds a special place in his heart. "Because Delhi has a culture of Urdu poetry, and all big poets love Delhi. So Delhi is always one of my favorite cities." However, he also shared a recent memorable experience in Kolkata, where he performed a tribute show for Pankaj. "I was surprised to see a packed audience and people were enjoying the puzzles. So every city has its own benefits and every city has its own fan following, but I still think North India, especially Delhi, Punjab and Gujarat, again has a very good audience for ghazals."

When asked about his advice to upcoming singers who want to make a career in ghazal singing, he emphasised the importance of clarity and perseverance. "It's very tough to be a singer in the first place, even if you want to be a film singer. It's very difficult. Any kind of art form is difficult, whether it's for a painter, writer, or singer." He stressed that focus, clear goals and a willingness to put in years of hard work are essential.

For those interested in pursuing ghazal singing specifically, he highlighted the importance of learning the language and understanding the poets. "They must know not just the ghazal but about the poet also. Unless they don't know about the poet, they won't be able to give that expression in their ghazals." He shared his own experience of learning Urdu literature and poetry, which took several years.

"I learned several years ago. I learned Urdu literature. I can really write Urdu poetry in the language also. When I went to my guru, Shanti ji, the first thing she told me was that I should go and learn Urdu—not just speaking, but also reading and writing. So I have read and written in Urdu. I learned it from the Urdu Academy. I took a 2-year course, and then I could read it in Urdu, and it was hard work, but that is all paying me now."

Groundbreaking study debunks single-serum solution for hair loss

Traya announced revolutionary results from a first-of-its-kind study on the efficacy of hair loss treatment over Minoxidil in hair loss management. Conducted over six months with 135 male participants aged 18 to 45, the study revealed a landmark finding for hair density: customised hair regimen proved to be thrice as effective as the single use of the world's most efficacious molecule, Minoxidil, in reducing male pattern hair loss. This study marks an astounding revelation in the field of hair loss solutions, challenging a widely marketed belief that a single serum can successfully treat hair loss.

With a strong emphasis on research-driven, customer-centric solutions, the brand initiated the study in association with MS Clinical Research Pvt Ltd to conduct this study. They boldly challenged market myths that promise rapid hair loss reversal through the application of single products like oils, shampoos & serums. Participants were divided into three groups: Group A, which used customised hair regimen; Group B, which used a 5% minoxidil topical solution and Group C, which used a placebo (distilled water).

The research employed advanced assessment techniques such as Trichoscan imaging, comb testing, dermatological evaluations and self-assessments to ensure the highest reliability in measuring efficacy. Trichoscan Imaging, recognised as the gold standard for clinically determining results in hair loss studies, played a pivotal role in this trial. (Group A) emerged as a clear leader, reducing hair fall thrice as effectively as Minoxidil alone (Group B). While they have relied on comb tests, which often mislead consumers by measuring temporary hair breakage instead of actual follicular hair loss, this six-month clinical trial focused

on real hair fall reduction, setting a new industry standard.

The study, conducted on 135 participants in line with CTRI (Clinical Trial Registry India) and ethics committee guidelines, provided highly reliable insights. Participants were equally divided into groups based on common underlying issues like indigestion, acidity, low energy, constipation, bloating, stress and sleep deprivation, which tend to serve as key root causes of hair loss, ensuring the research addressed a wide range of concerns. The customised hair regimen combines Ayurveda with dermatology & a curated diet plan to address specific root causes that lead to hair loss. Serum and that showed exceptional results, outperforming the minoxidil serum alone in essential parameters like hair regrowth, hair density, hair fall reduction, smoothness and shine.

Saloni Anand, co-founder of Traya, shared, "I understand that hair loss is deeply personal and can significantly impact one's confidence and well-being. In fact, for years, doctor-prescribed minoxidil has been seen as the go-to solution, which provides superficial relief but falls short in fully tackling the root causes of hair loss. We aimed to challenge the belief that 5% minoxidil alone can solve the problem by offering a more result-driven approach. We invested 6 months in this research to test hair loss treatment efficacy against minoxidil alone."

The beauty of this test was that we added a consumer group with a placebo to negate any biases. The study proved that the Traya 3X approach to hair loss is effective in reversing genetic hair loss and it goes beyond surface-level remedies, addressing the root causes of hair loss through a mix of Ayurveda and modern science."



BRUSHING NEW HORIZONS

Birla Opus Paints expands rapidly in Hyderabad with new franchise stores, aiming to revolutionise the Indian paint market through innovative customer engagement and a trusted legacy.

In the bustling and ever-evolving paint industry, Birla Opus Paints stands out with a bold expansion strategy. Part of the Aditya Birla Group's flagship firm, Grasim Industries, the rapid growth trajectory is reshaping India's decorative paints market. It's latest milestone: the inauguration of two new franchisee stores in Hyderabad, Telangana, further solidifying its footprint in one of the country's most vibrant and fast-growing markets. These stores are not merely retail points but pivotal hubs for customer engagement.

In an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, Rakshit Hargave, CEO of Birla Opus Paints, shared his vision for growth, its innovative franchisee model and why Hyderabad remains a critical market in their expansive journey across India.

"The vision for Birla Opus, as we have declared when we launched in Panipat in February this year, was that, firstly, we want to get Pan-India distribution. We put some markers for that and those markers were like we want to enter into 6,000 towns by end of this year. We want to cover nearly 50,000 outlets. We also said that we want to be having a market share, which is like high single digits by the time we exit the year in March," explain Hargave.

Revolutionising paint industry

Birla Opus Paints' franchisee model is a strategic innovation aimed at improving the customer experience, setting it apart from traditional paint retailing. By focusing on creating an engaging, consultative environment, it aims to build lasting relationships with its customers. Hargave explains that the paint industry, until now, had seen a lack of consumer engagement and sophisticated retail experiences.

"Our franchisee stores are a breath of fresh air for the paint industry. They offer a full range of products, expert consultations and an immersive shopping experience, something that has been largely missing in the market," he states.

The franchise model has been met with considerable success. With over 200 franchisee stores already in operation, the model is delivering impressive results in terms of footfall, consumer engagement and revenue generation. The stores, equipped with shade decks and texture displays, offer consumers the opportunity to explore an extensive range, ensuring they find the perfect match for their needs.

"The success of the franchise model is evident in the rising number of customers visiting these stores. They bring their families, spend time selecting products and engage in deep consultations. This allows them to develop a strong connection," he says.

Hyderabad, with its flourishing real estate market and growing construction activities, has proven to be an ideal city for the expansion. The new stores in Hyderabad—Sri

Mahalaxmi Agencies at Cross Road and Choudhary Birla Opus Paint Studio in Medchal Malkajgiri—are strategically located to cater to the diverse needs of the city's consumers. "We have divided the whole city into clusters so that each cluster can have one franchisee that is self-sufficient and that can cater to the neighboring market. So this outlet, this franchisee, obviously is a part of that plan where this will cater to its neighborhood and will be a destination for architects and designers who want to come here, see the whole range," he accentuates.

Riding on trust factor

One of the significant differentiators is the trusted legacy of the Birla name. Consumers and dealers in the building materials sector are already familiar with Birla's long-standing reputation in cement, white cement and other building materials. This reputation has facilitated a smoother market entry, as Hargave points out. "The trust has been invaluable for us. We entered the market with an already established name in construction and building materials, which helped us gain the confidence of our dealers and contractors. Our product quality, backed by research and development in India, further reinforced this trust."

It has also set itself apart by focusing on high-quality, locally developed products. From emulsions to enamel paints, the products have garnered praise for their superior performance. The company's commitment to quality is further evident in its state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities, with six plants spread across India, ensuring both efficiency and a steady supply of products.

"We have invested heavily in manufacturing infrastructure. With six factories already operational and more planned in the coming years, we are setting the stage for long-term success."

The rapid growth is particularly evident in its strong foothold in Hyderabad and Telangana, where Birla Opus Paints is now the second-largest player. But the company's ambitions extend beyond market share—they aim to be an iconic name synonymous with quality and reliability.

"Our team tells me that we're already the second-largest player in Hyderabad and that's something we're incredibly proud of," the leader notes. "But it's not just about growth—it's about becoming what's deeply desired. We're hearing that customers are coming into stores asking for products by name. That's the kind of pull we're building, and it's growing every day."

Contractors, too, are taking notice. The superior product quality has made it a favorite among professionals who are seeing increased profitability thanks to the paint's exceptional coverage and hiding capabilities. As more contractors benefit from offerings, the momentum continues to build.

"Our expectation is to keep gaining market share, month on month, quarter on quarter," the leader says confidently. "And the feedback we're getting from both contractors and customers tells us we're already on the right path."



BOOK LAUNCHES

NALANDA: HOW IT CHANGED THE WORLD

— Abhay K

Much about Nalanda remains a mystery. When was it founded? Who founded it? Who studied and taught there? What subjects were taught? How many students and teachers were there? Was Nalanda a university in the modern sense? And what led to Nalanda's downfall? *Nalanda: How It Changed the World* by Abhay K. seeks to unveil these mysteries and more.

MONEY, MYTHS AND MANTRAS: THE ULTIMATE INVESTMENT GUIDE

— Devina Mehra

Money, Myths and Mantras by Devina Mehra

is the ultimate guide for retail investors looking to demystify the complex world of finance. Written with clarity and expertise, the book dispels common myths surrounding investing and offers a balanced perspective on various asset classes.

MASALAMANDI

— Sadaf Hussain

The curry leaf speaks of Kerala's monsoons. The Kashmiri chili remembers mountain winds. The Bengal mustard oil carries the breath of paddy fields. In the mustard-slicked kitchens of Bengal, where every wooden spoon drips with golden memories, and the coconut-drenched shores of Kerala, where curry leaves dance like emerald whispers, a story simmers. This is *Masalamandi*. From the cardamom-perfumed valleys of Kashmir to the tamarind-stained coastlines of Tamil Nadu, *Masalamandi* is a pilgrimage — a journey that transcends mere cooking. Each page is a kitchen, laden, drenched and infused with the essence of India and its people, where every dish holds a secret, every spice carries a memory and every meal tells a story.



The Infusion Nursing Society (INS) hosted its 12th Annual Conference at Yashoda Hospital in Hyderabad, bringing together healthcare professionals and experts to explore the latest advancements in infusion therapy and nursing care. Themed "Unleashing the Power of Infusion Nursing for Sustainable Healthcare," the event featured a keynote address by renowned healthcare expert Dr. Dilipkumar, who emphasised the critical role of infusion nurses in ensuring patient safety and improving clinical outcomes.



Media Day Marketing (MDM), a renowned expos organiser based in Hyderabad, is set to host three prominent expos simultaneously at the Hitec Exhibition Centre in Madhapur, Hyderabad, from December 12 to 14. The events include the 4th Edition of the Dairy & Food Expo, the 6th Edition of India Green Energy Expo and the 4th Edition of the Green Vehicle Expo.



BOSS Burger by SOCIAL is unveiling crave-worthy new additions to its menu that are bold, indulgent and designed to satisfy every craving. The new menu combines high-quality ingredients, innovative flavours and indulgent fillings, bringing a premium burger experience to your doorstep. Whether ordering at home or hosting a gathering, it is set to elevate your burger moments like never before.

BOLD TAKE ON BURGERS!

The new menu is a bold celebration of flavours and indulgence, introducing a lineup of drool-worthy burgers crafted to satisfy every craving. Leading the charge are the indulgent Smash Burgers, where the juicy Tenderloin Smash Burger, the rich Lamb Smash Burger and the succulent Chicken Smash Burger take center stage, each available in double-patty variants for those seeking an extra bite of decadence. For spice enthusiasts, the fiery Peri-Peri Grilled Chicken Burger delivers a kick of heat, perfectly balanced with creamy guacamole and crunchy veggies. Meanwhile, the Korean Fried Chicken Burger adds an exciting Asian twist with its

saucy glaze and bold flavours, promising a taste adventure like no other. And for those craving something truly unique, the Shams' Signature Steak Burger brings together succulent steak bits, a sunny-side-up egg and hot mayo for a savoury masterpiece.

Vegetarian options shine just as bright, starting with the chatpata Samosalicious Smash Burger, which combines a spicy aloo patty with classic chutneys for a desi delight. The Paneer Cheese Bomb Burger offers a mouthwatering bite of panko-crumbed paneer, mozzarella and crunchy veggies that's hard to resist. With every burger crafted using premium ingredients and served on toasted brioche buns, it's new introductions ensure there's something for everyone to indulge in, from cheesy to spicy to indulgently meaty.

Each burger is thoughtfully crafted to bring out bold flavours, premium ingredients, and an irresistible combination of textures. Whether it's the juicy smashed patties, the melty cheese, or the perfectly balanced sauces, every bite is designed to crush your cravings.

PARTY

Telangana Vidya Samiti is gearing up to host a 2K run on December 21 at Necklace Road in Hyderabad and the event's poster was recently unveiled by BC Welfare & Transport Minister Ponnampalapati Prabhakar Goud. Notably, the event garnered significant support, with prominent figures from the organisation like Tarak Goud, Kethuri Venkat and Shyam Reddy participating in the program.



Celebrate essence of Mongolian-inspired interactive dining

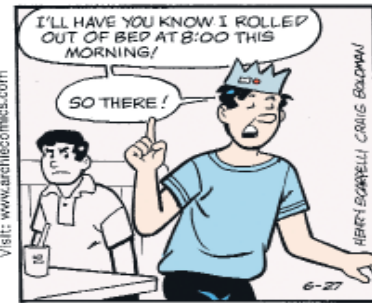
Hyatt Hyderabad Gachibowli's TG's – The Oriental Grill unveils its first-ever Mongolian-themed lunch buffet in Hyderabad. The freshest buffet offers an immersive Teppanyaki-style dining experience that combines the essence of communal cooking with a modern flair. This new offering transforms dining into a vibrant, interactive celebration of bold flavours, fresh ingredients and the artistry of live and choicest cooking. Embracing the concept of "Eat What You See," diners can select fresh ingredients and watch expert chefs craft their meals live, creating a unique connection between preparation and indulgence. Mongolian cuisine is renowned for its hearty mix of freshly hunted meat, vegetables, rice, noodles, and flavourful sauces cooked together to create a nourishing meal. By pairing selections with signature Japanese and Thai sauces, diners will enjoy a distinctive and unforgettable Teppanyaki dining journey.

Accelerating success with a brand new season

As the FIA Formula E World Championship gears up for a thrilling new season, VT Markets announced its continued partnership with Maserati MSG Racing. Building on the success of Season 10, Season 11 promises to be an exciting chapter in the partnership, with the arrival of new drivers Stoffel Vandoorne and Jake Hughes. The team will face a critical season ahead, with the debut of the Gen3 Evo car and 17 action-packed races on the calendar. VT Markets will be proudly featured across the Maserati MSG Racing Gen3 Evo cars, driver suits, and team gear, reinforcing the shared values of precision, performance, and opportunity. As Dandelyn Koh, Global Brand and PR Lead at VT Markets, notes, "Season 11 marks a pivotal moment in our partnership with Maserati MSG Racing. We're thrilled to continue our journey together, driven by our shared values of excellence and innovation."

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



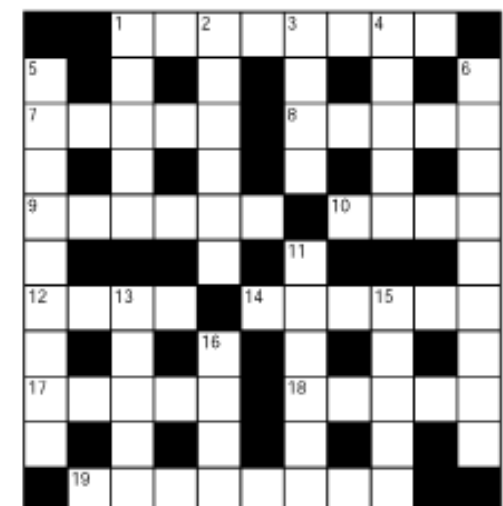
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

- A three-sided figure
- Following
- Tiny
- Assistant
- Finest
- Moist
- A glass container
- Have a quarrel
- Living
- Cut paper with these

DOWN

- Add up numbers to get this
- Jerusalem is in this country
- The organ of smell
- Depart
- A big important church
- Squashed right down
- A vegetable that grows underground
- A witch's power
- Small tree branches
- Tame animals



GINGER MEGGS





PEDARAYUDU'S REAL-LIFE VERDICT AWAITS!

The real life and reel life are completely different when it comes to Mohan Babu. Throughout his film career, he has played many roles and *Pedarayudu* holds a special place. In this film, he delivers just verdicts and no one dares to challenge his judgment. Now, many are eagerly waiting to see how he will judge the ongoing family dispute in real life.

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

The Manchu family has been the talk of the town lately. Mohan Babu, the versatile actor, is known for being one of the most disciplined persons not only in the Telugu film industry but also in real life. He is renowned for his roles like *Pedarayudu*, where he portrays a disciplined man who maintains order not only in his family but also in the entire village. In the film, he sits on the ancestral throne to dispense justice and his judgment is final. He metes out punishments for wrongdoings.

In real life, Mohan Babu is equally disciplined, but he is currently facing a difficult situation. He has filed a police complaint against his son, stating, "I fear for my safety, my valuables and my property." Mohan Babu's complaint is against his younger son, Manoj and daughter-in-law, Monica. Given Mohan Babu's reputation as a nice person who avoids conflict, the fact that

he has filed a complaint suggests that something serious must have transpired between him and his son.

The contrast between Mohan Babu's real life and reel life is striking and people are eagerly awaiting his next move in addressing this ongoing family problem. Will he act as *Pedarayudu* and deliver his judgment, or will he leave the decision to his sons? Everyone is watching with bated breath.

Manchu Manoj, on the other hand, claims that he is not fighting for properties or money but for self-respect. After Mohan Babu filed his complaint, Manoj also filed a counter-complaint, stating that the allegations made by his father are untrue. "The claims made against me and my wife are completely fabricated. We are self-employed, independent and have always lived with dignity," he stated in his complaint. Manoj also alleged that CCTV footage had gone missing and that the drive had been taken by Vishnu's associates, Vijay Reddy and Kiran.

Interestingly, Mohan Babu has helped others set-

tle their family disputes in the past. He has always shown utmost respect to his guru, Dasari Narayana Rao and treated him like a father. After Dasari's demise, his sons fought over properties and money and there were reports that Mohan Babu had intervened to resolve the issue. However, when it comes to his own family, he seems unable to do the same, as his two sons are openly fighting.

Meanwhile, Vishnu, Mohan Babu's elder son, has returned to Hyderabad and gone straight to his father's house. There are rumours that Mohan Babu and Vishnu have taken one side, while Manoj is on the other. Mohan Babu's daughter, Lakshmi, seems to have distanced herself from the issue, leaving Hyderabad for Mumbai. She announced her departure on her Instagram page, saying, "Bye, Hyderabad."

Even people from the film industry are hesitant to get involved in Mohan Babu's family issue. Some want to reach out to him, but they dare not, unsure of how he will react.



Love blooms on-screen with *Pranayagadari*

The Allu Arjun-starrer *Pushpa 2* made history with its record-breaking first-day collections after its release on December 5. Now, it's time for smaller films to hit the screens, and one such film, *Pranayagadari*, is set to release on December 13. The film features Sadan and Priyanka Prasad as the lead pair, with Sai Kumar playing an important role. PL Vignesh has directed and produced the film.

The pre-release event was recently held and it was attended by prominent guests, including MLC Teenmaar Mallanna, producer Raj Kandukuri and actor Sohail. On this occasion, director and producer Vignesh revealed that

he had sold all his assets to make this film. "I worked hard to produce this film. I sold all my assets and took loans to make it. I did this film for my brother Markandeya, who composed the music for this film. Although I finished the film, I struggled to release it and took more loans for it," said Vignesh.

He added that making a film and releasing it is not an easy task, which he realised after working on this film. The film's lead actress, Priyanka Prasad, thanked the director for giving her the opportunity. "I thank the director and producer for believing in me and giving me this opportunity," she said.



POOJA HEGDE'S NEXT WITH DULQUER SALMAAN

After a dull period in the South Indian film industry, Pooja Hegde is now securing big projects and is once again busy with a multitude of films. The actress is currently shooting a film with Suriya and has also signed another film with Vijay, which will be his last project before he ventures into full-time politics.

In addition to her South Indian projects, Pooja Hegde is also working on a Hindi film opposite Varun Dhawan, which was officially announced a few days ago. Now, according to a source, Pooja Hegde has signed another Telugu film, this time opposite Malayalam superstar Dulquer Salmaan. In recent times, Dulquer Salmaan has been focusing more on Telugu films and has signed another project with a newcomer as director. Cherukuri Sudhakar is producing the film and Naga Shaurya is also on board as another lead. The source added that the makers have roped in Pooja Hegde to play the female lead and her role is crucial to the plot.

The film's shooting is scheduled to take place next year. With this new project, Pooja Hegde is back to her busy schedule in the South Indian film industry and also in Hindi. Interestingly, the actress didn't sign any films in the last two years as she took a break from Telugu cinema. She was initially supposed to work on *Guntur Kaaram* opposite Mahesh Babu, but she left the project due to delays. Sreeleela eventually replaced her and the film released during this year's Sankranti, receiving mixed reviews and underperforming financially.

There are also reports that Pooja Hegde may reunite with Allu Arjun in his upcoming film, directed by Trivikram Srinivas.



Finally, Pawan Kalyan completes *Hari Hara Veera Mallu*

Pawan Kalyan, the actor-turned-politician, is juggling his busy schedule as the Deputy CM of Andhra Pradesh while also completing his pending film projects. He had signed three films—*Hari Hara Veera Mallu*, *OG* and *Ustaad Bhagath Singh*—which were delayed due to his political commitments.

When Chandrababu was in jail, Pawan Kalyan supported him and at that time only he openly announced his alignment with the Telugu Desam Party. From then

on, he is busy in politics and keeps these films at bay. Now, the elections are over and Pawan Kalyan became Deputy CM of Andhra Pradesh. Then he is busy with government affairs. Now, after a long time, he gave some time to complete the films he accepted and gave dates for *Hari Hara Veera Mallu*. AM Ratnam is the producer and his son, Jyothi Krishna, is the director.

The makers released a photo of Pawan Kalyan, where he is preparing for the shoot. They also said that it is the final

schedule of the film and with this Pawan Kalyan is going to complete this film. They already announced the release date of this film on March 28, 2025. Now, with Pawan completing the film, the makers are happy that they can release the film on time.

Now, the focus is on the other two films and the makers of those films are also looking for Pawan Kalyan dates. He assured them that he will complete those films too. *OG* needs only a few days for him to complete and he will focus on it, says a source.

Siddharth sparks debate with comments on *Pushpa 2's* promotional hype

The promotional campaign for *Pushpa 2: The Rule* was a massive success, culminating in a record-breaking opening on December 5. However, actor Siddharth has expressed skepticism about the film's reach, attributing its success to clever marketing.

In a recent podcast, Siddharth stated, "It's all about marketing. In India, it's not difficult to gather crowds. People will assemble to watch anything, even construction work." He downplayed the significance of the large turnout at the film's promotional event in Patna, Bihar, suggesting that it was merely a result of organized efforts.

Siddharth drew an analogy between the crowds at

political rallies and those at film promotional events. "Just because a political party can muster a large crowd doesn't mean they'll win the election," he said. He implied that many attendees at such events are motivated by incentives, such as food and drink. The actor's comments have sparked a heated debate on social media, with many fans of *Pushpa 2* taking exception to his views. Siddharth's remarks have been perceived as dismissive of the film's genuine popularity and the enthusiasm of its fans.



STANDALONE

The anticipation for *Bachhala Malli* is building up! Recently, the film's team organised a thrilling bike rally from Srinivasa Theatre in Tuni, which was attended by the film's lead actor, Allari Naresh. With the film's worldwide release just around the corner on December 20, the excitement is palpable.

Indian batters start preparations for Brisbane Test

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Reeling from their humiliating 10-wicket defeat in the pink-ball Test, the under-fire Indian batters, led by Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, turned their attention to red-ball preparations with an intensive net session here on Tuesday, aiming to bounce back in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

While Australia moved to Brisbane for the third Test from Saturday, the Indian team chose to stay back, focusing on honing their red-ball skills, particularly their defensive techniques and judgment in leaving deliveries.

"It's time to look ahead. Preparations for the Brisbane Test starts right here in Adelaide," the BCCI posted on X, sharing a video of Team India's practice.

Struggling with poor form, having scored just 142 runs with only one fifty (52) in his last 12 innings, the Indian skipper, who rejoined the team after the birth of his son, aimed to quickly regain



his rhythm as he faced both Indian spinners and pacers. Dropped himself to No 6, Rohit capped scores of three and six in Adelaide; first, he

was adjudged LBW to a fuller delivery that nipped back, while in the second essay he was cleaned up a by length ball from his Aussie

counterpart Pat Cummins that held its line and clipped the off stump. Kohli, who ended his 16-month century drought with

a hundred in Perth, fell victim to edging two deliveries – first to second slip and then to wicketkeeper in the pink ball

Test. The star Indian batter looked full of intent as had a watchful start to his net session before slowly finding his flow.

KL Rahul looked more subdued, focusing more on his defence, while Rishabh Pant played a few pick up shots.

Young opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, who starred with a 161 in India's massive 295-run win in the opening Test, was the aggressor among the all, displaying his cheeky shots and even stepped out to the Indian bowlers.

The bowling unit consisted the likes of Harshit Rana, Akash Deep, Yash Dayal and the spin trio of Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin and Washington Sundar, while there were a few throwdown specialists as well.

The key Indian pace duo of Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj along with seam-bowling allrounder Nitish Kumar Reddy looked to have a lean day. India are scheduled to reach Brisbane on Wednesday.



Mark Taylor urges senior India teammates to address Siraj's premature celebrations

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Former Australian captain Mark Taylor believes Mohammed Siraj has a tendency of celebrating wickets prematurely without waiting for the umpire's decision and his senior India teammates should have a word with the pacer to address this as it is giving him a "bad look".

Taylor said Siraj charges down the wicket towards his teammates, without checking the umpire's decision when he thinks that he has got a batter out.

"I think with Mohammed Siraj, I'd like to see some of the Indian players have a chat with him, not so much what happened with Travis Head but how when he thinks he's got a batter out he doesn't turn around and actually acknowledge the umpire whether he's given it out or not," Taylor told Nine News.

"I think that's the bad look for him and the game."

"I love his exuberance, I love his competitive nature, I love the fact we've got a really good series going on but there is also the respect of the game that needs to be upheld. I think a little word from one of the senior players would go a long way," Siraj has become a topic of discussion after his brief showdown with Travis Head on day two of the Adelaide Test, which Australia won by 10 wickets to level the series 1-1.

Head had struck a splendid 141-ball knock of 140 before being castled by Siraj, who went on to give him an aggressive send-off following an exchange of words. The Indian endured boos from the Adelaide crowd following the confrontation.

Both players were handed one demerit point each on their disciplinary records with Siraj also receiving a fine of 20 per cent of his match fee.

"I love the combative nature of Head and Siraj, but it has to be kept in check because the last thing we want to see in this game is that developing into a batsman maybe whacking a bowler."

"They get close together in that sort of situation and you don't want to see that. So the administrators need to keep a check on that, and so do the two captains," Taylor added.

Former Australia batter Simon Katich felt Siraj had a "brain fade" moment, which the Indian regretted later.

"It's a shame that Siraj had a bit of a brain fade... There's no need for that in the game," Katich said SEN Radio.

"He would regret that Siraj... It was all spur of the moment and when he got Mitchell Starc out not long after that he was pretty sheepish.

"You don't know what head space some of the players are in at times... he was probably disappointed with his performance and something like this can happen," he added.



Sunny Dhillon banned by ICC for 'attempt' to fix matches

PTI ■ DUBAI

Sunny Dhillon, a former Assistant coach of an Abu Dhabi T10 League franchise, was on Tuesday banned from all forms of cricket for six years by the sport's governing body for "attempting" to fix matches.

Dhillon was charged last year. The ban has been back dated to September 13, 2023, the date Dhillon was provisionally suspended.

"Sunny Dhillon has been found to have breached the Emirates Cricket Board (ECB) Anti-Corruption Code and has been banned from all cricket for a period of six years," said the ICC in a statement.

Dhillon, a former assistant coach of a franchise team, was one of eight individuals charged last year for breaching the Anti-Corruption Code. The charges are related to the 2021 Abu Dhabi T10 Cricket League and alleged attempts to influence the outcome of matches during the tournament.

"These efforts were disrupted by the ICC and the Designated Anti-Corruption Official (DACO)

for the purposes of the ECB's Code for the tournament," the ICC said.

Two other individuals Parag Sanghvi and Krishan Kumar Chaudhary were among the eight individuals charged by the ICC on different counts of corruption during the 2021 edition of Emirates T10 League.

After a full hearing and presentation of written as well as oral argument, the Tribunal found Dhillon guilty.

Dhillon was banned under the following provisions: "Article 2.1.1 - Being party to an attempt to fix, contrive or influence improperly matches or aspects of matches in the Abu Dhabi T10 2021."

"Article 2.4.4 - Failing to disclose to the DACO full details of any approaches or invitations received to engage in Corrupt Conduct under the Code."

"Article 2.4.6 - Failing or refusing, without compelling justification, to cooperate with any investigation carried out by the DACO in relation to possible Corrupt Conduct under the Code," the statement added.

Gilchrist says Australia were 'stung' by criticism post Perth loss, praises 'aggressive' Cummins

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Legendary wicketkeeper-batter Adam Gilchrist believes Australia were "stung" by the criticism following their loss in Perth, but have returned to their best, driven by captain Pat Cummins' controlled aggression.

Australia, who had drawn a lot of flak for the 295-run loss in the opening Perth Test, bounced back by registering an emphatic 10-wicket win in the second game to level the five match series 1-1.

"You could see just through his (Cummins) celebrations that... every wicket that he took he was more aggressive in his celebration," Gilchrist said on Fox Cricket.

"Not in that lose control



extent but you could just see that clearly they'd been stung by a bit of criticism around after their performance (in Perth) and they internally would have been so disappointed with the way they played in Perth.

"So it (Adelaide celebrations) showed you what it meant to them and they knew that they were back at the level they want to play their cricket," Gilchrist added.

The former wicketkeeper-batter said it felt the captain

had "a grease and oil change" after the lacklustre performance at Perth.

"Cummins was outstanding, he looked like if there needed a bit of a grease and oil change after Perth and a tune up, he was purring by the end of it, so that was terrific to watch."

In the pink ball Test, the pace trioka of Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Scott Boland took all 20 Indian wickets with spinner Nathan Lyon bowling just one over.

"They were just a unit, the three bowlers, Nathan Lyon only had one over (in the match) and Mitch Marsh four, but other than that the big three, Starc, Boland, Cummins hunted as a pack and bowled as a unit and that was really fun to watch," Gilchrist added.

Tickets for day one of Boxing Day Test between India and Australia sold out

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Tickets for the opening day of the fourth Test of the between India and Australia at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground have sold out, highlighting the public's strong interest in the prestigious Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

The strong demand for tickets comes a couple of days after hosts Australia made a stunning comeback, handing India a 10-wicket defeat in Adelaide to level the five-match series 1-1.

The two rivals will head to the MCG for the Boxing Day Test, starting December 26 after the third Test in Brisbane starting Saturday.

"All available public tickets for Day 1 of the NRMA Insurance Boxing Day Test have been sold," Cricket Australia posted on their 'X' account on Tuesday.

"There will be a possible final release of a small number of public tickets on December 24 for non-members to get their seats," CA added.

The pink ball Test in Adelaide drew a crowd of 135,012 across three days, setting a record turnout during a five-day game featuring the two sides.

As many as 36,225 fans went to the Adelaide Oval on the first day of the second India-



Australia Test, exceeding the previous record of 113,009 for a Test against India, which was set over five days in 2014-15.

The single-day attendance record for a Test against India in Adelaide was also shattered on the opening two days with over 50,000 fans attending the game.

Fans had also turned up in record numbers at the Optus Stadium in Perth for the first Test, which the visitors won by 295 runs for their biggest victory on Australian soil.

Voll added to Australia squad for New Zealand series

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Fresh from a splendid start to her career, 21-year-old Georgia Voll was on Tuesday selected in the Australia women's squad for their upcoming

The top-order batter made her debut in the ongoing ODI series against India with a 46 not out in the first match.

She went on to score century (101) in her second appearance, helping Australia take an unassailable 2-0 lead in three-match ODI series with a massive 122-run win.

Cricket Australia also confirmed Gavan Twining, the current head coach of the New South Wales Breakers, as the full-time assistant coach for fielding and



wicketkeeping with the women's team for the next two years, in a newly created role.

Twining joins fellow assistant coaches Scott Prestwidge and Dan Marsh.

The third and final ODI of

the series is slated at the WACA here on Wednesday. Australia and New Zealand will battle it out for the coveted Rose Bowl Trophy, with Australia looking to retain the trophy they held since 2000.

India aim to avoid clean sweep against Australia ahead of World Cup at home

PTI ■ PERTH

Battered and bruised India will look to avoid a clean sweep and address some glaring issues ahead of next year's 50-over World Cup at home when they face Australia in the third and final women's ODI here on Wednesday.

The three-match series against the seven-time defending world champions has served as a harsh reality check for India, who have faltered in batting, bowling and fielding, with each area contributing to their struggles.

A record 122-run defeat in the second ODI highlighted India's vulnerability. Even though the batters shone in patches, they never truly looked to chase down Australia's 371/8.

In batting, the biggest disappointment has come from India's two big stars – skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and her deputy Smriti

Mandhana. Mandhana has capped scores of 8 and 9 in Australia following her century in India's 2-1 home series win over New Zealand in October.

The flamboyant opener had been in fine form earlier this year, scoring 450-plus runs at a 70-plus average and she would look to regain her form.

Harmanpreet, on the other hand, failed to convert her starts with 57 runs from two matches as her captaincy and batting both have come under scrutiny following India's early exit from the T20 World Cup earlier this year.

In absence of out-of-form opener Shafali Verma, India tried out some different combination and the bright spot has been the promising return of Richa Ghosh, who slammed a spirited fifty at the top in the last ODI.

Richa's 54 has been the highest score by an Indian batter in the series, in stark



contrast to the two centuries and two fifties scored by Australian batters,

highlighting the batting struggles. Amol

In the opening ODI, only four Indian batters could reach double digits.

The bowlers have also been off the mark, conceding eight runs in wides in the second

partnership with veteran Ellyse Perry as the duo dismantled India's struggling bowling attack.

For India, rookie leg-spinner Priya Mishra has been a bright spot in an otherwise challenging series. The 20-year-old has shown promise, picking up two wickets while defending a small total.

Squads

India: Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana (vc), Priya Punia, Jemimah Rodrigues, Harleen Deol, Uma Chetty, Richa Ghosh (wk), Tejal Hasabnis, Deepti Sharma, Minnu Mani, Priya Mishra, Radha Yadav, Titas Sadhu, Arundhati Reddy, Renuka Singh Thakur and Saima Thakor.

Australia: Tahlia McGrath (c), Ashleigh Gardner (vc), Darcie Brown, Kim Garth, Alana King, Phoebe Litchfield, Sophie Molineux, Beth Mooney, Ellyse Perry, Megan Schutt, Annabel Sutherland, Georgia Voll and Georgia Wareham.