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Assembly, Council sessions to resume today



OLD SCHOOL: KARATE GIRLS PACK A PUNCH



Veteran actor Rajendra Prasad steals the show in

HARIKATHA

QUOTE OF THE DAY the pioneer As Revanth suffered imprisonment after being caught red-handed with a bag of cash, he seems to want everyone else to experience the same. Which Chief Minister, in his right mind, would openly threaten the CXO of a reputed company like L&T with jail simply for airing an opinion about a government scheme that had impacted his organisation? What

message is Revanth

sending to business

with such statements?

Land acquisition to begin by month-end

The land acquisition process for the Old City Metro Rail Project is progressing rapidly, with compensation awards for 200 affected properties expected to be finalised by the end of this month. Following this, compensation will be disbursed immediately paving the way for demolition and subsequent construction work on the 7.5 km-long MGBS-Chandrayangutta route. Hyderabad Airport ...

Konda Murali meets CM, sparks rumours

Former MLC Konda Murali, the husband of Minister Konda Surekha, met Chief Minister Revanth Reddy sparking curiosity about the meeting Murali's appearance has fuelled speculation ahead of the muchanticipated Cabinet expansion. On Sunday, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy along with Murali and Surekha and Ministers Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and the CM's Advisor. Vem Narender Reddy, paid ...

India excels in mental math skills

India has emerged as the top performer at the Universal . Concept of Mental Arithmetic System (UCMAS) Inter national Competition 2024, securing the highest number of awards in hoth individual and team categories across various age groups of 6-13 years. According to a statement issued by UCMAS India, the two-day event organised by it concluded in Delhi on Sunday in which 6,000 students ..

Money isn't the reason I play chess

The "multi-millionaire" tag does "mean a lot" to new world champion D Gukesh but he doesn't play the game for material gains but for that unbridled joy, which he has been able to retain since the time a chess board used to be the "coolest tov" for him. Gukesh the 18-year-old from Chennai, is now richer by Rs 11 45 crore which he will receive from FIDE as prize money for beating Ding Liren of China in the final. Gukesh's father Rainikanth gave up his career as an ENT ..

Govt to introduce key Bills

PNS HYDERABAD

Γhe winter session of the Telangana Assembly and Council will resume on December 16, that is, from Monday onwards. It may be recalled that the Assembly and Council were adjourned on December 9 after the on

ue and Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's

A meeting of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) will be held on Monday before the commencement of the House. After the House meets, the government will introduce two bills, that is, the Young India Physical Education and Sports University of Telangana Bill-2024 and the Telangana Universities (Amendment) Bill-2024.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy will

Assembly will take up a short discussion on Telangana State Tourism Policy. Before that, the House will pay condolences to former members who passed away. They Komireddi Jyothi Devi who represented Metpally, former Yellandu MLA Vooke Abbaiah and former Dommat MLA D. Ramachandra Reddy.

The Legislative Council will also take up short discussion on Telangana State Tourism Policy. The House will also pay condolences to MLC S. Indrasain Reddy who passed away.

'Govt will provide cold storage facilities in all market yards'

PNS HYDERABAD

The government will provide cold storage facilities in all market yards so that crops do not get spoiled, Agriculture and Marketing Minister Tummala Nageshwara Rao said.

He said the government is getting ready to build a market at Koheda for selling crops at wholesale rates. Participating in a market committee oath-

taking ceremony on Sunday, Tummala said that land prices will increase after the construction of the RRR and that in future one

may be able to purchase gold but not land. He asked farmers that they should not sell their lands under any circumstance. He said that Vikarabad is suitable for the cultivation of fruits, flowers, and horticultural crops and suggested that farmers cultivate them. The Minister advised farmers to cultivate crops that need only less investment and provide huge

The government will take the responsibility of providing support prices for all crops, he said. He appealed to the farmers to cultivate fine paddy as the government is festival.

giving a bonus of Rs 500 per quintal for that. He also asked farmers to cultivate oil palms.

Tummala said that subsidies will be given to buy agriculture equipment and women farmers will be provided loans. He said that two high-quality sarees will be given to women during the $c\ o\ m\ i\ \bar{n}\ g$



KTR slams CM for threatening to jail **Hyd Metro CEO**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA KTR launched a sharp attack on Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on X, criticising his alleged remarks about ordering the arrest of Hyderabad Metro Rail CEO in connection with the Metro's losses.

The remarks, made during an interview with 'India Today,' have drawn widespread criticism, with KTR questioning Revanth's leadership and the impact of such statements on Telangana's invest-

Revanth's remarks, made in response to a question about Hyderabad Metro's losses, cited the free bus Continued on Page 2

Tabla maestro Zakir Hussain has

been admitted to the ICU of a San

Francisco hospital with heart relat-

ed problems, his friend and flautist

PNS NEW DELHI

Kavitha defies Govt, lays foundation for Telangana Talli statue in Jagital



PNS HYDERABAD

Tabla maestro Zakir Hussain

in ICU with heart problems

BRS MLC Kavitha, known for her staunch commitment Telangana's cultural heritage, defied

Rakesh Chaurasia said on Sunday.

cian, who has taken the tabla to the

global stage, had been having blood

pressure issues, added Hussain's

pital in San Francisco for a heart

related problem for the last two

ICU right now. We all are worried

about the situation," Chaurasia told

The eldest son of legendary tabla

olayer Allah Rakha, Hussain has fol-

owed in the footsteps of his father,

becoming a marquee name in India

and across the world. Hussain has

received five Grammy Awards in his

career, including **Continued on Page 2**

'He has been admitted to a hos-

"He is unwell and admitted in the

manager Nirmala Bachani.

weeks," Bachani said.

The 73-year-old US-based musi-

laid the foundation stone for a grand Telangana Talli statue in agital town.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

sity as a big challenge.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on

Sunday asked states to work towards

providing an environment where

harassment of citizens and take obe-

return to Jagital after nine months. witnessed an overwhelming turnout with thousands welcoming her and joining her in solidarity. Speaking on the occasion, Kavitha

said, "No matter how many GOs or gazettes the government issues, the original Telangana Talli will stand tall. She has inspired us through the Telangana Movement, and we will continue to preserve her legacy." She added that Bathukamma, the

iconic floral festival of Telangana, will be celebrated with gusto under the patronage of Telangana Talli.

Kavitha criticised the Congress overnment and overnment orders on Sunday and undermining Telangana's identity and cultural traditions.

'The Congress version of Telangana Talli is nothing but eras-The event, which marked her ing our heritage. Continued on Page 2

PM TO STATES

Provide right environment for start-ups

encourages citizen participation, according to an official statement. Modi said it is important to focus on reform, perform, and transform, and that it is also important to inform people about various initiatives of the government.

In the health sector, he urged the start-ups can flourish, simplify the participants that obesity should be taken as a big challenge in the councompliances that often lead to try. Only a fit and healthy India can be a 'Viksit Bharat', he added.

Addressing the fourth national The prime minister said India can be made tuberculosis-free by the end conference of chief secretaries here, of 2025, and that ASHA and Anganwadi Continued on Page 2 he said states should reform governance model in such a way that Anganwadi

Centre defers *jamili* polls Bill LS to take up financial business first PNS NEW DELHI The revised list of business, issued by the Lok Sabha secretari-The government has deferred the at, does not have the two bills on

introduction of bills related to 'one nation one election' in the Lok Sabha till after the completion of financial business, sources said. Earlier, the two bills -- The

Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill and The Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill) -- "were listed for introduction in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

The sources in the government said the the bills could be brought later this week after the House passes the first batch of supplementary demands for grants listed for Monday.

the agenda for Monday.

However, the government can always bring in legislative agenda to Parliament at the last minute through 'Supplementary List of Business' with the permission of the Lok Sabha Speaker. The two bills related to imple-

mentation of the simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and state assemblies have been circulated among members last week as per the rules of procedure.

The Winter session of Parliament is scheduled to conclude on December 20.



'I am not in the race' Bandi on state party chief post

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, said that he is not in the race for the Telangana State BJP President post. He said the party had entrusted a huge responsibility to him and that he has been trying to do it effectively. Addressing the media on Sunday

at Karimnagar, Sanjay said that there is speculation that he will be handed over the reins of the party in TG. He said that some people are spreading such lies to harm the party.

Sanjay said the high command has not yet decided on the TG party President. The nominee for the post will be announced only after a collective decision is taken. Everyone should abide by the decision of the high command, he said.

"I would like to appeal to the media that it should cooperate in this," he said.

However, BJP WhatsApp groups in rural areas are claiming that 'Sanjay Anna' is coming back. It may be recalled that Sanjay was the Telangana BJP President from March 11, 2020, to July 4, 2023.

546 artistes perform together, set **Guinness World Record**

'Will meet the family soon'

Allu Arjun says he is deeply concerned about boy

PNS NEW DELHI

Telugu star Allu Arjun on Sunday said he is "deeply concerned" about the young boy who was injured in a stampede at a cinema hall in Hyderabad during the premiere of his film "Pushpa 2: The Rule" and is undergoing treatment at a hospital.

The actor's statement came a day after he was released from jail following his arrest in connection with the death of the boy's mother in the December 4 stampede at the Sandhya Theatre.

While the 35-year-old woman died, her eight-year-old son was seriously injured as fans thronged the theatre to catch a glimpse of

"I remain deeply concerned about young Sri Tej, who is under constant medical care after the unfortunate

incident," Arjun said in an Instagram post on Sunday.

The actor, who is currently out on interim bail, said he has been advised not to visit the boy and his family "due to the ongoing legal proceedings".

"My prayers remain with them and I remain committed to taking responsibility for addressing the medical and family needs. I wish him a speedy recovery, and I look forward to meeting him and his family at the earliest," Arjun said.

Boy injured during 'Pushpa 2 continues in PICU

No thaw in Manchu family feud

Manoj alleges sabotage, threats from brother Vishnu

PNS HYDERABAD

The tension in the Manchu family touched new heights on Sunday after Manchu Manoj accused his brother, Vishnu Manchu, of a dangerous act that could have jeopardised the safety of his entire

The controversy began with an attack on a journalist working for a regional language media outlet, which led to Mohan Babu visiting the journalist in hospital, to offer his well-wish-

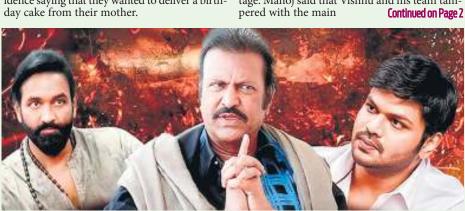
es and to apologise to him on Sunday.

However, the underlying family conflict took
a disturbing turn. Manchu Manoj recounted a harrowing experience on December 14.

He said that while he was on a shoot and his wife was at their son's school event, Vishnu and his associates, including Raj Konduru, Kiran (previously accused of theft), Vijay Reddy and

a group of bouncers, entered Manju Manoj's residence saying that they wanted to deliver a birthday cake from their mother.

What followed was an act of deliberate sabotage. Manoj said that Vishnu and his team tam-



Mohan Babu meets journalist, offers apology

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Veteran Telugu actor Mohan Babu, who was booked on the charges of attempt to murder for allegedly assaulting a journalist here, met the latter on Sunday, who is undergoing treatment at a hospital and offered an apology.

The former Rajya Sabha

member along with his elder son Manchu Vishnu termed the incident as unfortunate, said the injured TV journalist M Ranjith Kumar.

"He (Mohan Babu) offered an apology to me, my family and the entire journalist fraternity," he said.

Monday Mirchi

The regime changes in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh have brought a new dynamic to how bureaucrats of the Telugu states interact while dealing with unresolved bifurcation issues. There appears to an unintended role reversal now. With N Chandrababu Naidu and Revanth Reddy now at the helm in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana respectively, no doubt efforts to resolve pending bifurcation issues have been redoubled. However, when asked about the attitude of their Andhra Pradesh counterparts in the new dispensation, a senior Telangana bureaucrat quipped, "Previously we used to be unreasonable, now they are". The candid remark reflects the growing perception among Telangana officials about the changing approach of Andhra Pradesh babus under Chandrababu's leadership. Seasoned politician that Chandrababu is, it seems his influence has rubbed off on his bureaucrats, making them more assertive. But Telangana's babus are taking it in their stride, perhaps with a hint of nostalgia for the days when the shoe was on the other foot!

TOP COPS NO LONGER THE FACE **OF HIGH-PROFILE CASES**

In an unusual turn of events, high-profile cases that unfolded recently in Telangana are no longer turning the spotlight on top police officers helming them. Be it the Allu Arjun Sandhya theatre stampede case, case relating to Mohan Babu's attack on scribe or the ones relating to Janwada raids involving former minister KT Rama Rao's brother-in-law, not a single police officer has become the face of these cases. This reflects a striking departure from the previous norm of making senior officers the focus of attention with regard to taking the cases to their logical conclusion. This being so, all the attention concerning recent cases, for good or bad, has been on Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, who holds the home affairs portfolio. It is also possible that cops are doing their job silently because CM himself is leading the pack, unlike in the previous regime. Interestingly, amidst all this, the only cop who has grabbed headlines of late is IPS officer Ranganath, thanks to his association with HYDRAA operations. Whether this is a conscious shift in policing strategy or just a coincidence remains to be seen. In any case, signifying a refreshing change in approach, cops are letting their cases-and not their names—do the talking.

IS RAMAKRISHNA RAO HERE FOR THE LONG HAUL?

In the course of a chat among Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka and Minister Komatireddy Venkatreddy, an intriguing remark concerning Finance Secretary Ramakrishna Rao turned heads. Those within earshot, and who overheard it, aver that Ramakrishna Rao, set to retire in

2025, might stick around till 2029. Although his role on the long haul remains undefined—say as the Chief Secretary or an advisor-it is evident that Rao's financial acumen has made him indispensable. Known as a 'man of numbers', Rao's tenure has been marked by his deft handling of the state's precarious financial position, earning him the trust of the government despite regime change. If the contemplated extension of his tenure materializes, it would only cement his reputation as the go-to man for fiscal matters. Looks like retirement plans might take a back seat for this numbers wizard! He will only re-tyre.

MAHESH BHAGWAT'S SHADOW STILL **LOOMS OVER RACHAKONDA**

Mahesh Bhagwat might have moved on from the role of Rachakonda Commissioner of Police. But his legacy in the Commissionerate remains undiminished to this day. Although a couple of Commissioners have since occupied the CP chair, his name is still on the top of the mind of many people. The most recent example of this surfaced during the Manchu family fiasco, when Manchu Manoj reached out to none other than Mahesh Bhagwat, apparently under the impression that he is still at the helm. While Bhagwat promptly redirected Manoj to the current CP, this slip speaks volumes about the lasting impression the top cop had made. Known for his no-nonsense approach and people-centric initiatives, Mahesh Bhagwat's long tenure in Rachakonda has become synonymous with smooth policing in public memory. Turns out, leaving the post doesn't necessarily mean leaving the spotlight as well!

MOTIVATING 'HANUMANS' AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

If not much is happening at the district level, don't label collectors collectively as incompetent, insensitive or lethargic. Maybe they have untapped potential that just needs the right spark for them to play a transformative role. At a recent Collectors' Conference, Special Chief Secretary (Revenue) RP Sisodia drove home this point religiously. He made insightful remarks to motivate District Collectors and Superintendents of Police. He compared each of them to Lord Hanuman, suggesting that they often fail to recognize their own strengths and need someone like Jambhavan to remind them of their power. Sisodia emphasized that while district officials hold significant authority, they must be motivated to use it effectively for the welfare of people. Adverting to increasing instances of elder abuse, he called for stringent action against youth who usurp their parents' property and abandon them on the streets. Keen admin observers say Sisodia's gyanopadesh is with an eye on the Chief Secretary position, which will fall vacant in a few weeks and for which he is a frontrunner. Is CBN listening?

--Yours truly

Provide right ...

Continued from page 1

workers can play a big role in delivering this goal. Asserting that old manuscripts were India's treasure, he said states should take steps to use technology to digitize it.

He said a great benefit of the conference was that "Team India" had come together for discussion with an open mind and work together for a 'Viksit Bharat'. Pro-People Pro-active Good Governance (P2G2) is at the core of their work through which they can together achieve the vision of a Viksit Bharat, he added.

The conference included discussions around the overarching theme of 'Promoting Entrepreneurship, Employment and Skilling --" Leveraging the Demographic Dividend'.

Lauding the advent of start-ups, especially in tier-2 and 3 cities, the prime minister asked states to encourage such innovations and work towards providing an environment where start-ups can flourish.

"He urged states to identify locations suitable for entrepreneurs in smaller cities and take initiative to connect them with the banking system, provide logistics and facilitate them," the statement said. Modi asked states to explore concepts of Viability Gap Funding for recycling

Tabla maestro ...

Continued from page 1

three at the 66th Grammy Awards earlier this year. In his career spanning six decades, renowned international and Indian artistes, but it was his 1973 musical project with English guitarist John McLaughlin, violinist L Shankar, and percussionist TH 'Vikku' Vinayakram that brought together Indian classical and elements of jazz in a fusion hitherto unknown.

As concern mounted over Hussain's health, senior broadcast journalist Pervaiz Alam also took to X to share the news, citing the musician's brother-in-law Ayub Aulia. "Ustad Zakir Hussain, Tabla player, percussionist, composer, former actor and the son of legendary Tabla player, Ustad Allah Rakha is not well. He's being treated for serious ailments in a San Francisco hospital, USA, informed his brother in law, Ayub Aulia in a phone call with me. Aulia sahab, based in London, has requested Zakir's followers to pray for his speedy recovery," he wrote in a post.

The percussionist, one of India's most celebrated classical muscians, received the Padma Shri in 1988, the Padma Bhushan in 2002, and the Padma Vibhushan in 2023

BRS govt's projects were riddled with graft: Mahesh waived loans up to Rs 2 lakh

All projects launched by the BRS Government and the Dharani Portal were mired in corruption and led to the grabbing of lands belonging to the poor, TPCC chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud.

Detailing these facts Mahesh sent an open letter to former Minister Chandrasekhar Rao on Sunday. In his letter, he said that KCR's accusation of financial mismanagement by the Congress admin sounds hollow when the it left lakhs of corruption and irresponsibility during BRS rule is taken into

Telangana, which began as a state with a budget surplus of Rs 16,000 crore was left with a staggering debt of Rs 7 lakh crore after your 10-year rule, he

ly repayments of Rs 6,500 crore to service the debts you contracted burdening future generations," he added.

Mahesh said the Congress government fulfilled all the promises in the 'Warangal Declaration, unveiled by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi

During KCR's tenure, loan waiver was a farce and farmers

for farmers.

disbursing Rs 21,000 crore benefitting 25 lakh farmers. We introduced crop insurance and compensated around 94,000 farmers who suffered losses due to untimely rains. These initiatives stand in stark contrast to the neglect that

defined your administra-tion," Mahesh said in his letter. "Your disregard for Telangana's culture and traditions is evident in your failure to install the

Telangana Thalli statue. The

Congress Government 'corrected' this by unveiling a culturally reflective statue, but

its significance. Your removal of 'Telangana' from your party's name reflects your 'indifference' to the state's identity," the TPCC chief said.

He said that women were also 'neglected' under KCR's rule as demonstrated by the absence of even a single woman minister in your first cabinet. But the Congress Government implemented the 'Mahalakshmi' scheme, offering free travel facility in TGSRTC buses for women, subsidised electricity and LPG benefitting 50 lakh families, Mahesh added.

"We also expanded health insurance cover to Rs 10 lakh per family. Your government failed to address the challenges faced by women," he said.

Boy injured during 'Pushpa 2' continues in PICU

PNS HYDERABAD

The 8-year-old boy who was brought to the emergency ward after getting injured in the chaos at the 'Pushpa-2' premiere screening at the Sandhya Theatre continues to be in the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) on mechanical ventilation, KIMS' doctors said in a statement.

Women's The Commission visited the child and offered help from

the state government.
"A woman named Revathi died in the stampede at the Sandhya Theatre during the premiere of the movie Pushpa-2 and her son is serious and is undergoing treatment at the KIMS Hospital," said Women's Commission Chairman Nerella Sarada. The government will support the child and his family, she added.

The statement from KIMS Cuddles Mother & Child Centre in Secunderabad said the boy continues to remain in PIĆU needing mechanical ventilation with minimal

support.
"The boy's vital parameters are stable and he is tolerating feeds well, but has intermittent fever spikes. His sensorium continues to be altered with frequent dystonic movements. We are closely monitoring his neurological status," doctors said.

'LARGEST HINDUSTANI CLASSICAL BAND'

546 artistes perform together, set Guinness World Record

PNS GWALIOR

PNS NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S

Jaishankar on Sunday said there must be "a foreign pol-

underlined that changes in

amid a changing landscape.

In his address at the launch

of 'India's World' magazine

here, he also said "when we

speak about changing foreign

policy, if there is talk of a post-

Nehruvian construct, it should

not be treated as a political

Raja Mohan chairs the edito-

rial board of the magazine.

Foreign policy expert C

The external affairs minis-

ter said there are "four big

factors" which should cause

people in India to actually ask

themselves as to "what are the

changes which are necessary

coincidence, to speak about

it yesterday, for many, many

years, we had what someone

else very pithily summed up the EAM said.

"One, and I happened, by

in a foreign policy".

A Guinness World Record for the "largest Hindustani classical band" was set on Sunday at Gwalior Fort in Madhva Pradesh when 546 artistes performed various ragas on nine instruments, an official said.

Samaroh that pays tribute to the legendary 16th century singer believed to have brought down the rains with his rendition of Megh Malhar.

The 546 artistes comprised 347 males and 189 females and the performance was based on Malhar, Miyan ki Todi and The performance was part of the 100th International Tansen composed by Tansen, the offi-

as the 'Nehru development

model'. That was book

released yesterday by Dr Arvind Panagariya," he said.

a 'Nehru foreign policy' and

abroad", just as efforts being

made to "reform" the conse-

quences of the model at

home, Jaishankar said on

Saturday, in his virtual

address at the launch of the

In his address at the

Sunday's event, he reiterated

that a 'Nehru development

model' produced a 'Nehru

And, it wasn't just what was

happening in our country,

there was an international

landscape in the 1940s,

1950s, 1960s and the 1970s

which was bipolar. Then

there was a unipolar land-

scape. And, both those land-

scapes have also changed,"

"I mean, it was obvious.

book 'The

foreign policy'.

Development Model'.

A 'Nehru development

"The performance was organized by renowned flute player Pandit Ronu Majumdar. The collective performance included singing along with musical instruments. A Guinness World Record was created for playing instruments continuously for nine min-utes," the official informed.

Yadav, who received the certificate from an official of the Guinness World Records, hailed the musicians for the

Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and assembly speaker Narendra Singh Tomar were among those who attended

'Stop whining about EVMs, accept poll results'

Omar Abdullah tells Congress

PNS NEW DELHI

Opening another point of friction with an important ally, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has dismissed the Congress party's vehement objection to Electronic Voting Machines, and echoed the BJP's defence -- you can't accept election results when you win, and blame EVMs when you lose.

"When you get a hundred plus members of Parliament using the same EVMs, and you celebrate that as sort of a vic-

these EVMs because now the election results aren't going the way we would like them to," Abdullah said in an interview.

Told that he sounded suspiciously like a BJP spokesman, Abdullah reacted with "God forbid!" He then added: "No, it's just that... what's right is He said he speaks based on

principles rather than with partisan loyalty and cited his support for infrastructure proiects like the Central Vista as an example of his independent thinking.

around and say... we don't like what's happening with this EVMs.

Central Vista project in Delhi is a damn good thing. I believe constructing a new Parliament building was an excellent idea. We needed a new Parliament building. The old one had outlived its utility," he said.

He said parties should not contest elections if they do not trust the voting mechanism.
"If you have problems with

the EVMs, then you should be consistent in those problems," he said while replying to a question about whether he thinks that the opposition in general and the Congress, in particular, is barking up the then a few months later turn body else believes, I think that wrong tree by focusing on

Hindi played important role in India's development: Om Birla

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Sunday said that Hindi was India's soul and identity and along with other languages has played a significant role in the development of society and the nation.

Addressing the 30th Annual Convention of the Etawah Hindi Seva Nidhi, Birla said that Hindi has woven the country's cultural diversity into a single thread and empowered it.

He said that Hindi was not only a common language of communication but has adapted according to the changing technical landscape. "Today, with the use of

Artificial Intelligence (AI), the rich legacy of Hindi literature and poetry is available across the globe," he said, adding that Hindi has also been increasingly used in the fields of justice, administration and internet technology. Birla said that during the making of India's Constitution, the visionary leaders from various states, speaking different languages and dialects, recognized the importance of languages as symbols of unity and acknowledged Hindi's inherent potential to unite the

TODAY **ALMANAC** Dec 15 02:31 PM to Dec 16 12:27 PM Pratipada Dwitiya: to Dec 17 10:56 AM Nakshatram: to Dec 17 01:13 AM Dec 17 01:13 AM Punarvasu to Dec 18 12:44 AM 8:05 AM to 9:27 AM Rahukalam Yamagandam: 10:49 AM to 12:11 PM 12:58 PM to 02:32 PM 1:34 PM to 2:56 PM Gulika: Amritakalam: 03:41 PM to 05:12 PM Abhiiit Muhurtham: 11:49 AM to 12:33 PM HYDERABAD WEATHER Forecast: Mostly Sunny **Temp:** 28[∞]

Updated: December 15, 2024 5:00 PM

Humidity: 40% Sunrise: 6:39 AM

Sunset: 5:45 PM

Kavitha defies ...

Continued from page 1

We will fight back vilwill be installed in all cor- action. ners of the state," she asserted.

During her visit, Kavitha also interacted with students and teachers of the Kasturba Girls concern over the inadequate facilities, she demanded that the government should hike the diet allowance in Kasturba schools and ensure nutritious food for all residential students.

Kavitha also reminded the Congress Government of its election promise to regularise contract teach-

ers.
"The Congress claimed tions.

it would prioritise teachers' welfare, but it has failed to deliver. This lage by village, and the cannot continue," she original Telangana Talli said, urging immediate

The day's events culminated in a vibrant Bathukamma celebration, where Kavitha was joined by thousands of women. The celebration was seen Residential School in as a symbolic protest Sarangapur. Expressing against the Congress Government's exclusion of Bathukamma from its version of the Telangana

The decision to install the Telangana Talli statue in Jagital is expected to reignite the debate about preserving Telangana culture, with Kavitha reaffirming her dedication to protecting the state's identity, heritage and tradi-

Mohan Babu meets ...

'Changes in foreign policy needed

amid changing landscape'

icy for Viksit Bharat" as he model', inevitably produced

"we seek

Continued from page 1

The actor also told the journalist that he would visit his house once he recovers and is discharged from the hospital.

Mohan Babu, in a letter addressed to the management of the TV channel, offered his side of the version of the inci-

"I sincerely apologise for my actions, which have caused pain and distress, and I extend my heartfelt wishes for a speedy recovery. I deeply regret that my response in the charged moment has led to anguish for your esteemed organisation and for Mr Ranjith's family," he said in a post on 'X' on December 13.

In his complaint, the journalist had stated that when he visited Mohan Babu's Jalpally residence on December 10 to cover the ongoing dispute between the actor and his younger son Manoj, the senior actor confronted him and other journalists aggressively. He allegedly grabbed the microphone,

used "abusive and foul language," and "attacked" him with it, causing a head

injury, the complainant stated. Based on the complaint, a case under

section 109 (attempt to murder) of BNS was earlier registered against the actor at the Pahadishareef police station.

The "differences" within Mohan Babu's family became public on December 9 after he lodged a police complaint, alleging that Manoj and his wife had "orchestrated" a plan to take possession of his Jalpally home through intimidation and force. However, Manoj had said that his fight was not for a "share of the properbut for "self-respect and the safety of his wife and children.'

Earlier, the police had booked Manoj and others based on Mohan Babu's complaint.

Mohan Babu had also requested police protection to ensure his safety and allow him access to his house without fear.

Additionally, a case was registered based on Manoj's complaint, alleging that 10 unidentified individuals had entered the home on December 8. Manoj claimed he was injured during a scuffle when he tried to catch them.

No thaw ...

Continued from page 1

generators in his house by pouring a mixture of diesel and sugar into them. This act was intended to make the generators malfunction, which they did later that night causing dangerous electrical fluctuations. The safety of everyone in the house — including Manoj's elderly

entire nation. mother, his young daughter and other relatives — was put at risk.

As the intruders left, they not only caused destruction but escalated tension by forcibly removing the last remaining loyal staff member from the house. They also threatened Manoj's Dangal coach, warning him not to intervene or report the incident. With a call for swift action from the police, Manoj urged Pahadi Shareef to ensure justice in the matter.

KTR slams CM ...

Continued from page 1

travel scheme for women as a contributing factor. The CM suggested that he may order the police to arrest the L&T ĆEO and jail him.

"As Revanth suffered imprisonment after being caught red-handed with a bag of cash, he seems to want everyone else to experience it," KTR said, referring to some past controversies involving the CM.

behind targeting a reputed company like L&T, which operates the investments,@RahulGandhi Ji?"

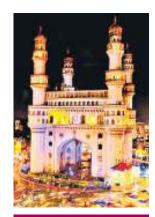
Hyderabad Metro, for voicing concerns about the free bus travel scheme impacting its finances.

"Which Chief Minister, in his right mind, would openly threaten the CXO of a reputed company like L&T with jail simply for voicing his opinion about a government scheme?' KTR wrote, highlighting the damaging message this sends to industry.

What message is Revanth send ing to the business fraternity with KTR questioned the rationale such frivolous statements? Is this

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Ek Bharat Shresht

Bharat

Central Bureau of Communication is organising a photo exhibition on _*Ek Bharat Shresht Bharat*_ an initiative by the Govt of India, wherein states are paired together and a structured effort is made to understand the culture, language, cuisine, etc. of each other. Our state, Telangana is paired with Haryana. Governor of Telangana Jishnu Dev Varma and Governor of Haryana Bandaru Dattatreya will inaugurate the exhibition

Ground floor, Temporary exhibition hall, Eastern Block, Salarjung Museum, December 16, 10.45 am

Arangetram

of Meghana by Sri Nitya

Venue

Ravindra Bharathi, December 16, from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Masterclass

Writing skills for films

Novotel, Hyderabad Convention Convention Centre December 16, 10:00 am

Christmas Bazaar

Exhibition-cum-Sale

Venue

Lulu mall Till December 31, daily at 10:00 am

NYU CARNIVAL

With singer KARTHIK

Venue Boulder Hills, Hyderabad December 31

Weekend kids cooking camp

Master cooking and baking in 09 fun weekends

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

TGCSB restores Rs 155.22 cr to cyber fraud victims

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Cyber Security Bureau (TGCSB) reached a step in refunding Rs 33.27 crore to 4,893 Cyber fraud victims during the Mega National Lok Adalat.

Cyber Security Bureau released a statement that the refund figures surpass TGCSBs previous Lok Adalat refund figures of Rs 27.2 crore. The total of Rs 155.22 crore refunded to 17,210 victims to date. The top performing units in the recent Lok Adalat were Cyberabad: Refunded Rs 12,77,49,117 in 2,136 cases followed by Hyderabad: Refunded Rs 8,84,17,621 in 268 cases, Rachakonda: Refunded Rs 4,53,06,114 in 592 cases, TGCSB: Refunded Rs1,06,49,044 in 60 cases, Sangareddy: Refunded Rs 98,63,438 to 188 victims.

The success of this operation is the result of seamless coordination between TGCSB officers, the Telangana State Legal Services Authority (TGLSA), District Judges, Magistrates, DLSAs, CPs and District SPs, said Shikha Goel, Director, Telangana State Cyber Security Bureau (TGCSB) on

City Pioneer



OLD CITY METRO

Land acquisition to begin by month-end

PNS HYDERABAD

The land acquisition process for the Old City Metro Rail Project is progressing rapidly, with compensation awards for 200 affected properties expected to be finalised by the end of this month. Following this, compensation will be disbursed immediately, paving the way for demolition and subsequent construction work on the 7.5 km-long MGBS-Chandrayangutta route.

Hyderabad Airport Metro Limited (HAML) MD NVS Reddy, in a recent update, stated that requisitions for 900 of the identified 1,100 properties have already been submitted to the District Collector under the Land Acquisition Act. Preliminary notifications have been issued for 800 properties, while preliminary declarations for 400 properties have been completed.

Reddy further revealed that negotiations with property owners are being held simultaneously to expedite the process.



"Special care is being taken to protect religious and historical structures along the route through innovative engineering solutions," he clarified, addressing concerns about her-

itage conservation. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy is closely monitoring the project, which he views as a transformative step for the Old City. "This Metro route will bring immense development, create employment opportunities and reduce pollution, making the area highly attractive," emphasised Reddy.

Hyderabad Collector Anudeep Durisetty is actively collaborating with NVS Reddy to ensure smooth progress. The duo is continuously reviewing the land acquisition process and keeping the

Chief Minister apprised of developments.

The Old City Metro Rail Project is being prioritised by the State government to bring infrastructure development and economic growth to the region. With land acquisition gaining momentum, the longawaited Metro project appears to be moving steadily toward

CMD TRANSCO receives LDC **Excellence Award**

PNS HYDERABAD

Telangana Power Utilities have added another feather to their cap as CMD D

Krishna Bhaskar of TGTRANSCO received the prestigious 'LDC Excellence Award' at the National Power System Conference held at IIT Indore, Madhya Pradesh on December 14. The award was presented by Ghan Shyam Prasad, Chairperson of the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), and Narsimhan, CMD of Grid India (National Load Dispatch Centre).

The Telangana State Load Dispatch Centre (SLDC), part of TGTRANSCO, was adjudged the best in its category among large SLDCs, beating strong contenders like Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Maharashtra. The recognition highlights the state's exemplary performance in ensuring grid safety, security and discipline.

Sandeep Kumar Sultania, Principal Secretary of the Energy Department, lauded the collective efforts of TGTRANSCO, TGGENCO, TGSPDCL, and TGNPDCL in achieving this milestone. He emphasised the importance of efficient power system operations and how this honor reflects the state's commitment to excellence in energy management.

This national recognition underscores Telangana's leading position in the power sector, cementing its reputation for innovation and grid efficiency.



TG govt reaffirms support for Christians

PNS HYDERABAD

Telangana Minister for Revenue, Housing and Information Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, assured the Christian community of the state's unwavering support and security during his address at the Semi-Christmas celebrations held at Marthoma Church in Secunderabad on Sunday evening. Representing Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, the Minister conveyed the government's commitment to ensuring safety and fostering inclusivity for Christians across the

"Christians around the world have made significant contributions, particularly in education and healthcare, serving society selflessly. Their dedication to providing affordable education and medical care to the underprivileged is commendable," said Srinivas

He also expressed gratitude for the community's consistent support to initiatives aimed at helping the poor, recalling the backing he received from Christians during his tenure as Khammam MP.

Highlighting the leadership of Congress senior leader Rahul Gandhi, Ponguleti lauded his 4,500-kilometer-long Bharat Jodo Yatra and urged the Christian community to pray for his elevation to greater positions of power

The legacy of Indiramma Rajyam, which always stood for the welfare of the poor, aligns closely with the values upheld by the Christian community," he noted.

Ponguleti also reflected on the 150-year history of the Marthoma Church, calling it an unforgettable honour to be invited and recognised at such an esteemed institution. This Christmas, let us bid farewell to 2024 with gratitude and welcome the New Year with renewed hope and purpose," he said, encouraging everyone to take a resolution for a meaningful task in the coming year.

Emphasising the spiritual significance of Christmas, he remarked, "The birth of Jesus is a day of immense joy for Christians, reminding us all that we are children of God. Jesus, who bore the sins of others and offered them peace, is the true savior."

Water Board MD inspects repairs to damaged pipeline

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) Managing Director Ashok Reddy conducted a surprise inspection on Sunday at Red Hills, where emergency repairs were underway for the damaged 825 mm dia PSC gravity main pipeline. The MD reviewed the progress of the repair work with officials and instructed them to clear the damaged pipes from the site promptly.
Ashok Reddy

cials to ensure road repairs are carried out immediately after completing pipeline restoration and strengthening the newly installed pipeline with appropriate measures. He also emphasised the need to document pipeline details for water supply and sewerage networks using GIS systems for better



project management. Commending the team for their swift action, Ashok Reddy lauded the officials and staff for completing the repair work on time and restoring water supply efficiently.

The damaged pipeline, which disrupted water supply

from Asif Nagar filter beds to Red Hills reservoir, was repaired on a war-footing. The restoration work, completed by 4 pm on Sunday, ensured that water supply resumed seamlessly to all areas under the Red Hills reservoir's jurisdic-

Devotees from TG to participate in Maha Kumbh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP president G Kishan Reddy said that the Centre is making special arrangements for the devotees.

Ganga River during Kumbh Mela to be held from January

T-SAT to air agricultural programmes daily

PNS HYDERABAD

T-SAT, the educational and skill development announced that it will broadcast dedicated agricultural programmes every day from 7 to 8 am on its Vidya channel, starting Monday. In a statement released on Sunday, T-SAT CEO Bodanapalli Venugopal Reddy detailed the network's plans to enhance content for farmers alongside its existing focus on education, employment, and

ming, live agricultural programmes will air on Nipuna channel every Monday and Saturday from 4 to 5 pm. These sessions will be rebroadcast the next morning on the Vidya channel from 7 to 8 am. Additionally, horticulture programmes aired on Nipuna every Tuesday will also be repeated the

competitive exams.

following morning during the same time slot on Vidya. Farmers can participate in

these live sessions to get their queries answered by experts. that the programmes will feature insights from agricultural scientists, horticulture experts and experienced farmers, in collaboration with Professor Jayashankar Agricultural University and the Telangana Agriculture and Horticulture departments. The goal is to equip farmers with knowledge

to enhance their crop yields. The CEO encouraged farm-

ers to leverage these interactive programmes to address their concerns and receive practical live sessions, farmers can call 040-23540326/726 or use the toll-free number 1800-425-4039. Venugopal Reddy expressed

optimism that these initiatives would significantly benefit farmers, offering timely advice and expert guidance on agricultural practices through T-SAT's accessible platform.

Group-II exams record attendance below 50%

PNS HYDERABAD

The Telangana Public Service Commission (TSPSC) has successfully conducted the Group-ÍI Services Recruitment Examinations for General Studies and General Abilities (Paper-I) and History, Polity, and Society (Paper-II)

on December 15 across vari-

ous centres in 33 districts of

According to TSPSC, out of 5,51,855 candidates who applied 74.96 per cent downloaded their hall tickets. However, actual attendance during the e x a m s remained sig-

the state.

nificantly low. For Paper-I held in the forenoon session, 2,57,981 candidates appeared, marking an attendance rate of

46.75 per cent. Similarly, for Paper-II conducted in the afternoon session, 2,55,490 candidates attended, registering a slightly lower attendance rate of 46.30 per cent.

all examination centers and are subject to minor variations.

Secretary of TSPSC, stated

that the examinations were

The figures, as per TSPSC, were collected on the go from Dr E Naveen Nicolas,

conducted smoothly without any major disruptions. TSPSC has urged candidates to stay updated on official notifications for further stages in the recruitment process. However, the examination

malpractice at one of the cen-A candidate assigned to the exam centre was found

was marred by an instance of

behaving suspiciously during

Upon investigation by the C h i e f Superintendent of the centre, a foldable mobile phone was discovered hidden in the candidate's undergarments. Following the detection, the individual was immediately

barred from continuing the examination.

TSPSC officials handed over the candidate to the police for further inquiry. A case of Malpractice Case Act 25/97, appropriate legal action has been initiated against the individual.

Dr E Naveen Nicolas, Secretary of TSPSC, confirmed that the incident has been dealt with in strict adherence to due procedure to ensure the sanctity of the examination process.

Stating that a huge number of devotees will go to Prayagraj to participate in the Maha Kumbh Mela, Union Minister of Coal and Mines and

Kishan Reddy on Sunday said that about 30 crore devotees will take a holy dip in

13 to February 26. He said that been taking place for years. He said that the Hindu devotees will participate in the Mela and have a holy dip in the Ganga River. The Union Minister said

that he is also participating in the Maha Kumbh Mela following the invitation of Uttar Pradesh government.

Ghatkesar farmers yet to see loan waivers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA KP Vivekanand lambasted the Congress government during a press meet at Telangana Bhavan, criticising its failure to implement loan waivers and fulfill electoral promises. Citing Ghatkesar as a glaring example, he pointed out that no farmer in the primary cooperative society there has received the promised loan waivers.

Of the 5,189 farmers, 3,786 didn't get loan waiver which is 73% in Medchal"Congress promised loan waivers but

has delivered nothing. Farmers in Ghatkesar are still waiting while the Congress leadership wastes time on superficial measures. Instead of writing letters to KCR, PCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud should focus on fixing Revanth Reddy's blunders," Vivekanand said. He accused the Congress government of hypocrisy and inaction. "What happened to the six guarantees? Why haven't the Mahalakshmi scheme pay-

ments of Rs 2,500 per month for women started? Congress owes Telangana answers," he charged.

Balka Suman, in a scathing attack, questioned Mahesh Kumar Goud's role as PCC president. "He is nothing more than a puppet. Past PCC leaders spoke fearlessly about CM missteps, but Mahesh avoids criticising Revanth's evident failures. Even basic promises like loan waivers and infrastructure development have been ignored," he said.

Highlighting the Congress govern-

ment's failures, Suman accused Revanth Reddy of prioritising demolitions over development. "In a year, Revanth has only brought HYDRAA into action to demolish houses. What has he built? Not a single house or project has been completed," he said. The BRS leaders also alleged that Congress is neglecting Telangana's culture and identity, with Suman stating, "Revanth Reddy is erasing Telangana traditions like Bathukamma from the Telangana Talli narrative. Does Congress even understand Telangana's culture?"

Konda Surekha attends Brahmotsavam of Padamati Anjaneya Swamy temple

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Minister for Environment, Forest, and Endowments Konda Surekha attended the Brahmotsavam celebrations of Padamati Anjaneya Swamy temple in constituency, Narayanpet district, on Sunday. The event witnessed a grand reception, with Makthal MLA Vakiti Srihari Mudiraj, District Collector Sikta Patnaik, and SP Yogesh Gautam welcoming the Minister with traditional hon-

Before attending the

Brahmotsavam, Surekha visit-

ed the Nallajanamma temple

and later participated in special

rituals at Padamati Anjaneya

Swamy temple. The temple

management honoured the

Minister with temple accolades and offered her theertha prasadam. Surekha offered silk robes to the deity and took part in the special pujas conducted amidst Vedic chants.

Speaking on the occasion, Surekha expressed gratitude for being part of the celebrations of the 500-year-old temple. She highlighted the temple's unique history, noting its distinction as one of the rare temples in South India where the deity faces west. She remarked on the architectural peculiarities of the temple, such as the absence of a gopuram and the deity's posture, which symbolize its significance and uniqueness.

Surekha assured that committees would be set up to oversee temples in the con-



stituency, as suggested by MLA Srihari. She promised comprehensive measures for temple development, including the implementation of the Dhoopa Deepa Naivedyam scheme for prominent temples and bringing more temples under the purview of the Endowments department.

The Minister also announced plans to elevate the grandeur of upcoming Krishna Pushkaralu celebrations, leveraging the Krishna River that flows through the region. She pledged to discuss the preparations with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to ensure the festival's success.

Surekha reaffirmed the government's commitment to protecting temple lands, noting plans to establish solar plants on temple lands managed by women's groups where feasible. In areas unsuitable for solar installations, palm oil plantations would be considered. She also mentioned ongoing efforts to safeguard temple lands in Andhra Pradesh belonging to Telangana tem-

Surekha added that the temple's vimana gopuram would be gold-plated, and funds from gold and silver reserves would be used for temple beautification. She assured that prasadam preparation processes are being given utmost importance to maintain high standards.



Harish Rao slams Revanth Reddy's 'Hit wicket' politics

PNS HYDERABAD

Former Minister Harish Rao, while inaugurating a BRS party office in Ilapur, Ameenpur municipal limits of Sangareddy district, launched a sharp critique of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, labeling his governance as a series of 'hit wickets'. Rao's comments came during an event where he also presented awards to the winners of the KCR Cricket

Taking aim at Revanth, Harish Rao remarked, "Revanth Reddy has been hitting his own wicket repeatedly. From arresting Allu Arjun to breaking promises sworn on deities, he has failed on all fronts.

Farmers in Lagacharla were jailed under his watch, and he can't even secure an appointment with Rahul Gandhi. As Chief Minister, his term is already over."

Rao accused Revanth of halting crucial welfare schemes like Rythu Bandhu and the sheep distribution programme for Yadavs. "He brought HYDRAA to demolish houses but hasn't built a single one in a year. What has he accomplished apart

from demolitions?" he ques-

Highlighting BRS achieve ments, Harish Rao said, 'Under KCR's leadership, Telangana households now have drinking water through Mission Bhagiratha, eliminating the need for people to carry pots. Roads and municipal infrastructure have been revolutionized under BRS governance."

Rao also took a dig at the Congress's failure to implement its promises. "What happened to the two lakh jobs promised?

Where is the loan waiver that was supposed to be completed by August 15, Congress owes Rs. 24,000 to every family, and people will soon question where their money went," he said.

Accusing Revanth of undermining Telangana's identity, Rao said, "Revanth is trying to turn Telangana into a chaos-ridden State. But the people know KCR is the only leader who can protect Telangana's future.'

Rao ended his address by reaffirming BRS's commitment to the people and calling out the Congress government's failures in fulfilling their guarantees.



Where is the loan waiver that was supposed to be completed by August 15, Congress owes Rs. 24,000 to every family, and people will soon question where their money went," he said

Harish Rao praises Gaddar's legacy at people's meet in Hyd

PNS HYDERABAD

Former Minister and MLA Harish Rao, speaking at the launch of the book Prajayuddha Nauka: Gaddaranna Sahityam, under the aegis of the Gaddar Foundation, paid rich tributes to the late revolutionary poet and activist Gaddar. The event, held as part of the people's conference, celebrated Gaddar's unparalleled contribution to revolutionary literature and social movements over five decades. Harish Rao, reflecting on Gaddar's lifelong

fight for justice, remarked, "Gaddaranna stood as a beacon in every movement - be it revolutionary struggles, the Telangana agitation, or Dalit rights. He never sought positions of power but instead dedicated his life to passing on his father's legacy of struggle and inspiring future generations." Rao recalled the impact of Gaddar's iconic songs, which resonated with the masses. "Each of his songs captured the essence of a hundred speeches, simple in words but profound in meaning

stirring the hearts of the people and awakening them to action. Even though Gaddaranna is no longer with us physically, his songs ensure his eternal presence among us," he said. Highlighting Gaddar's role during the Telangana movement, Rao recounted a pivotal moment in 2008 when Gaddar advocated for unified action. "When TRS MLAs and MPs resigned for Telangana's cause, Gaddar insisted that candidates be fielded under the Telangana Joint Action Committee banner.



Konda Murali meets CM, sparks rumours

PNS HYDERABAD

Former MLC Konda Murali, the husband of Minister Konda Surekha, met Chief Minister Revanth Reddy sparking curiosity about the meeting. Murali's appearance has fuelled speculation ahead of the much-anticipated Cabinet expansion.

On Sunday, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy along with Murali and Surekha and Ministers Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and the CM's Advisor, Vem Narender Reddy, paid homage to Sardar Vallabhbhai

Patel on his death anniversary at the CM's Jubilee Hills res-The gathering intensified

discussions about power dynamics and strategic alliances in the state's political corridors especially regarding Warangal. With Kadiyam Srihari also expecting an elevation in the next Cabinet expansion, the meeting continues to gain signif-

While some view the interaction as a bid for an MLC post for Murali, it could also indicate hopes for a bigger

Sanjay criticised the

state government for

not releasing grants

matching the funds

released by the

implementing

Centre for

role for the couple. Sources hinted that he was offered the MLC post but Murali is reportedly not interested in it. However, the sources also said that Murali and Revanth meet often and that today he happened to be visible.

Political analysts are debating whether the meeting indicates a push for dual elevation, that is, an MLC post for Murali and strengthening of Surekha's cabinet post, or whether it is a broader strategy to consolidate the Congress vote bank in

MPs Chamala, Aruna to be members of Bibinagar AIIMS body

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Mahabubnagar MP DK Aruna and Bhongir MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy have been appointed as governing council members of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). The Centre has appointed 24 MPs unanimously as governing council members of the 12 AIIMSs located across the nation.

Kiran Kumar Reddy has been appointed as governing body member of the Bibinagar AIIMS, located in Telangana along with Mahabubnagar MP Aruna. The Lok Sabha Secretariat released an official bulletin on Saturday night in this regard..

HCL CYCLOTHON



First edition of the HCL Cyclothon Hyderabad successfully concludes with over 1,500 cyclists participating

'TG govt diverting Central funds meant for Samaghra Shiksha Abhiyan'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring his support for striking Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan employees, the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, said the Congress Government has been diverting Central funds and expressed unhappiness over the state government claiming that it has not got its share of funds.

Addressing the media here on Sunday, Sanjay criticised the state government for not releasing grants matching the funds released by the Centre for implementing programmes like the Samaghra Shiksha Abhiyan. He said that apart from this the funds released by the Centre are being diverted.

Thousands of people who are contract employees for

Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan are now on an indefinite strike across the state.

District leaders of Samaghra Shiksha Abhiyan employees met Sanjay and handed over a petition at the Karimnagar district centre. The around 19,600 employees across the state have complained that

programmes like the Samaghra Shiksha Abhiyan minimum wages are not being paid to them and that they

contract for nearly 20 years. The employees said that they have not got health cards and if the employees die their families do not get any finan-cial assistance. They said that

have been working for

Samaghra Shiksha Abhiyan on

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy who was TPCC President before the Assembly elections had promised to regularise their jobs and solve their problems if the Congress came to power but nothing was done.

Later, Sanjay announced his support for the stir launched by employees of the Samaghra Shiksha Abhiyan.

He said that he would pressure the state government until it implements the promises given to Samaghra Shiksha Abhiyan employees during the last Assembly elections. Protests regarding this will be held after Sankranti, he added. He said the Centre is provid-

ing 60 per cent of the funds needed for implementing Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programmes, but the state is not releasing its

అమరటీఐ

Hyd witnessed 6 to 8 degrees drop in minimum temperature

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HYDERABAD

Hyderabad's minimum temperature registered a six to eight-degree Celsius drop during the last five days. These drops are recorded between 8:30 pm and 8.30 am the next morning.

The areas of Rajendra Nagar and Patancheru were noticed reaching between 12 degrees Celsius to 10 degrees Celsius.

The weather forecast desk at the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on December 15 told 'The Pioneer,' "There has been a drop in minimum temperatures but no chance to go below 10 Degrees Celsius. The temperatures are also seen rising in the next couple of days."

The India Meteorological

Sunday, "The average minimum temperature is 15.8 degrees Celsius and the Lowest Minimum Temperature is 1.8 degrees Celsius recorded at Sirpur (U). Kumaram died on

December 28," Pak Intelligence

On December 10, it was 19.9 degrees Celsius, 11- 17.7 degrees Celsius, 12- 14 1 degrees Celsius, 13-17 .9 degrees Celsius, and December 15 is 14.6 degrees Celsius. There is a chance to come to

desk added. In districts, the Lowest Minimum Temperature of Ullocks 6.3 degrees Celsius was recorded at Arli (T)

Palayam until 13.6 degrees

Celsius on December 16, the

(Adilabad). In GHMC areas, the lowest minimum temperature of 9.6

Minister Savita announces

Department (IMD) said on degrees Celsius was recorded at the BHEL Factory (Sangareddy).

The University of Hyderabad, Serilingampally, Rangareddy district recorded a minimum temperature of 9.7 degrees Celsius.

The Moula Ali region of Medchal-Malkajgiri and Shankarpalli in Rangareddy district recorded the lowest minimum temperature of 11.3 degrees Celsius. An intense cold wave gripped the city's outskirts with Islampur in Tupran mandal and Medak district recording a minimum temperature of 11.4 degrees Celsius.

At Shadnagar in Medak district, the minimum temperature recorded was 12 degrees Celsius while at Kapra municipality the temperatures fell to 12.8 degrees Celsius.

NEWS FROM ANDHRA PRADESH

Naidu assures stable governance

SAYS TELUGU UNIVERSITY NAMED AFTER POTTI SRIRAMULU TO BE SET UP IN AP SOON

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu announced on Sunday the establishment of a new Telugu University in the state, which will be named after the legendary freedom fighter and self-sacrifice icon, Potti Sriramulu. The announcement was made during a programme

Tummalapalli Kalakshetram Vijayawada, marking the anniversary of Sriramulu's sacrifice that led to the creation of Andhra Pradesh. Paying tribute to the

valiant freedom fighter, the Chief Minister highlighted that the spirit of Potti Sriramulu's selflessness and dedication were fundamental to the vision of good governance in the The formation of Andhra Pradesh owes its existence to the sacrifices of Potti Sriramulu, whose 58day hunger strike eventually led to the creation of linguistic states in India. His contribution to the Telugu people will always be remembered in our history," Naidu stated. Along with Deputy

Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, the CM paid homage to the statue of Potti Sriramulu and a portrait of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on their respective death anniversaries. The Chief Minister also announced that the state will celebrate the 125th birth anniversary of Potti Sriramulu on a grand scale,

with the development of memorials both at his birthplace and in

emphasized that continuous welfare and development of the state could only be achieved with a stable government and reaffirmed his commitment to laying the foundation for effective administration. "The TDP government is focused on progress and created the has 'Swarnandhra-2047' vision document, inspired by leaders like Potti Sriramulu.

This vision focuses on

inclusive development for every person and family in

the state," he added. The Chief Minister also took a moment to reflect on the challenges faced under previous leadership, particularly criticizing the disruption of key development projects. "In the name of three capitals, the previous government resorted to political vendetta against Amaravati, and Polavaram was also derailed, pushing us into reverse gear. However, for the past six months, we have been striving hard to set the state on a progres-

sive path. The spirit of such

legendary figures continues

to inspire us to take the

state forward on the devel-

opmental path," he said. Naidu also praised the successful organisation of Grama Sabhas across the state, crediting Pawan Kalyan for his leadership in ensuring their success.

 The announcement was made at Tummalanalli Kalakshetram in Vijayawada on Sriramulu's 'Atmarpana Dinotsavam', the

 CM paid tribute to Sriramulu, highlighting his role in the formation of

Sunday.

The State will celebrate Sriramulu's 125th birth anniversary with grand memorials in his birthplace and Amaravati.

death anniversary of

Andhra Pradesh.





vision document and his commitment to the development of the State. CM criticised the previous government's

disruption of development projects, particularly the three capitals issue and Polavaram.

 Naidu credits Pawan Kalyan for the successful organisation of Grama Sabhas.

 He reiterates the TDP-led NDA government's commitment to good governance and State

Amarajeevi made supreme sacrifice: Dy CM

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister and Panchayat Raj Minister K Pawan Kalyan paid rich tributes to freedom fighter Potti for Andhra Pradesh's for-Sriramulu, recalling his supreme sacrifice for the said. creation of a separate Andhra Pradesh state. Speaking at an event lion economy would be alongside Chief Minister the real tribute to Potti N Chandrababu Naidu Sriramulu. Strengthening

leader who transcended caste and creed, embodying the spirit of unity and selflessness.

Sriramulu's historic fast unto death paved the way

He further said, "Achieving a Rs 2.2 trilon Sunday, Pawan Kalyan Andhra Pradesh's finanlauded Sriramulu as a cial system is a fitting way

Pawan Kalyan and Chandrababu Naidu jointly released a book commemorating Potti Sriramulu. Reflecting on his contribution, Pawan Kalyan noted that Sriramulu's greatness was truly realised after the state's formation. "He lived and died for the society, and his sacrifice gave Telugu people a distinct identity," he said.

to honour his legacy."

On the occasion,



visit to the BC Girls Hostel in Tirupati, she announced plans to install CCTV cameras and inverters in all BC hostels and Gurukula schools to provide a secure and uninterrupted learning environment.

The Andhra Pradesh govern-

ment is set to improve safety and

the quality of education in BC (Backward Classes) hostels,

according to BC Welfare Minister S. Savita. During her

PNS TIRUPATI

Minister Savita emphasized the government's commitment to BC welfare, pointing out a record ?39,000 crore allocation for the development of backward communities in the recent state budget, with ?25 crore specifically earmarked for the



renovation of BC hostels. "We are ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students with the same trust that parents place in us," she stated. The Minister also revealed

plans to construct BC buildings in all 26 districts of the state, with an emphasis on completing unfinished projects from the previous previous government. Criticizing the neglect of BC hostels under the current administration, she called for better infrastructure and timely support for BC students.

key initiatives for BC hostels In addition, Minister Savita spoke about self-employment initiatives aimed at creating one entrepreneur per household through BC Corporations.
Earlier, the Minister paid

tribute to freedom fighter Potti Sriramulu on his death anniversary, urging students to draw inspiration from his struggle for the rights of the Telugu people. Savita concluded her speech by calling on everyone to con-tribute towards realizing Potti

Sriramulu's dreams. During the event, TDP District President N. Narasimha Yadav, Nayi Brahmin Corporation Chairman Rudrakoti Sadashiv, BC Cell President and General Secretary Chandrashekhar, Krishna Yadav, were present.

Amaravati. Chandrababu Naidu



ACROSS THE STATES



AIADMK picks arrogance pitch to target CM

n its executive committee and general council meeting here, the AIADMK on Sunday accused Chief Minister M K Stalin of being arrogant and said the ruling party-led government's days are numbered. AIADMK leader and former minister B Valarmathi accused Chief Minister Stalin of being at the 'peak of arrogance' and mocking at opposition parties. She claimed that the DMK government's 'days are numbered,' and added that the chief minister's chair has become ready for Edappadi K Palaniswami, her party chief. Recently, Tamizhaga Vetri Kazhagam chief and actor Vijay had accused the DMK of being arrogant by claiming to win 200 seats and had also said that people will 'minus' the 'selfish alliance calculations' of the ruling party. Valarmathi used the same Tamil word (Irumappu) used by Vijay to level her allegation of arrogance against Stalin. ADMK's Villupuram strongman C Ve Shanmugam said the frequently asked question of forging alliance with parties will happen at the right time and recalled that the AIADMK won Assembly polls hands down in the years.



Delhi's minimum temp drops; air quality 'poor'

he minimum temperature dropped to 4.9 degrees Celsius in Delhi on Sunday, though cold wave conditions did not prevail, according to the weather department. No cold wave conditions prevailed, as per the data, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. The minimum temperature in Delhi dropped to 4.9 degrees Celsius on Sunday, 3.1 notches below the normal nighttime temperature. Earlier on Saturday, the minimum temperature was recorded at 8 degrees Celsius. Delhi recorded a maximum temperature of 23.2 degrees Celsius on Sunday, 0.2 notches below normal, the IMD said, adding that humidity levels ranged between 91 per cent and 45 per cent. The IMD has forecast moderate fog for Monday, with the maximum and minimum temperatures expected to remain at 23 degrees Celsius and 5 degrees Celsius, respectively.

Meanwhile, Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) was in the 'poor' category, with a reading of 294 at 4 pm.



Over 22 lakh devotees in 29 days at Sabarimala

ver 22 lakh Ayyappa devotees visited Sabarimala in 29 days till December 14, an increase of 4.51 lakh pilgrims from the corresponding period last year, Travancore Devaswom Board president P S Prashanth said on Sunday. Addressing reporters at Sannidhanam, he said the total revenue at the temple had increased by Rs 22.76 crore from the same period last year. A total of 22,67,956 Ayyappa devotees visited Sabarimala in 29 days till December 14, he said. The total revenue received in the period amounted to Rs 163.89 crore. Of this, the revenue from Aravana (prasadam) sales was Rs 82.67 crore, while income from the offering box was Rs 52.27 crore. The income from Aravana sales increased by Rs 17.41 crore from the Rs 65.26 crore received last year, he said, while the collection from the offering box brought in Rs 8.35 crore more than the amount received during the same period last year, he said. He said all facilities have been arranged for the pilgrims to have a smooth darshan at the temple this year and thanked all the departments, including the police who cooperated with the Devaswom Board.

Sambhal temple represents truth of our history: UP CM

PNS LUCKNOW

As authorities reopened a temple in Sambhal locked since 1978 following communal riots, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said the temple did not reappear overnight and represents "our enduring heritage and the truth of our history".

Speaking at a private event on Kumbh, the chief minister highlighted the tragic incidents that took place 46 years ago in Sambhal where innocent people lost their lives to "barbaric violence", and questioned, "Why have perpetra-



tors of the massacre not been brought to justice even after decades?"

He criticised those who seek to "suppress the truth and tarnish cultural events" like the Kumbh, asserting that voices of truth often face threats and efforts to silence them.

AMIT SHAH TO NAXALS

Give up arms or face strong action

PNS JAGDALPUR (CHHATTISGARH)

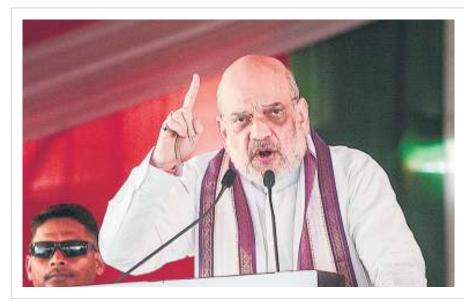
Jagdalpur (Chhattisgarh), Dec 15 (PTI) Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday appealed to Naxals to give up arms and join the mainstream, or else they will have to face the strong action of security forces.

He said the rehabilitation of the surrendered Naxals is the responsibility of the government. Addressing a sporting event 'Bastar Olympics' in Chhattisgarh's Jagdalpur, Shah also said the country would be

free of Maoists by March 2026. "I appeal to Naxals, please forward. Give up arms, surrender and join the mainstream. Your rehabilitation is our responsibility," he said. He said if the Maoists do not listen to the appeal of surrender, they will be crushed by the security forces. "Chhattisgarh Police is committed to fulfilling Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resolve to make India Naxalfree by March 31, 2026," he said. The Union home minister said the Chhattisgarh government's rehabilitation policy

is the best in the country.

"If you surrender and join the mainstream, you will contribute for the development of



"CHHATTISGARH POLICE IS COMMITTED TO FULFILLING PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI'S RESOLVE TO MAKE INDIA NAXAL-FREE BY MARCH 31, 2026," HE SAID. THE UNION HOME MINISTER SAID THE CHHATTISGARH GOVERNMENT'S REHABILITATION POLICY IS THE BEST IN THE COUNTRY

said. Shah said when the was in power in Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh and India," he before the BJP assumed charge a year ago, the action against "But after our government came to power in Chhattisgarh, action against the extremists speeded up resulting in killings of 287 Naxals in last one year, arrest of 992 Naxals and surrender of 836 others," he said.

Shah said since the Modi government assumed charge, there has been a 73 per cent reduction in the casualties in security forces and 70 per cent decline in civilians' deaths.

"If Naxalism ends in Bastar (Chhattisgarh), it will attract more tourists than Kashmir due to its natural beauty," he said. He further said those who know the process of change taking place within the society also know that it is not limited to only 1.5 lakh people participating in the Bastar Olympics. "Everyone is saying that Bastar is changing. I assure you that when I will come to the 2026 Bastar Olympics, I will say that Bastar has changed," he said, adding that this change has been initiated by the Bastar

Olympics.
The Union home minister said this event will write a new saga of development of Bastar in the coming days and will become a strong basis for the complete eradication of Naxalism. He also said many development works are being done, through which Naxalism is being defeated.



BJP has 'no CM face', no vision for Delhi: Kejriwal

AAP releases final candidates' list

PNS NEW DELHI

After AAP released its final list of candidates for the upcoming Assembly polls in Delhi, party supremo Arvind Kejriwal, who will contest from the New Delhi constituency, took a swipe at the BJP, alleging that the saffron party has no chief ministerial face.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday released its final list of 38 candidates for the Assembly polls due in February, fielding Kejriwal from New Delhi besides repeating Chief Minister Atishi from Kalkaji.

In a post on X in Hindi, Kejriwal said, "The party is contesting the elections with full confidence and full preparation. BJP is missing. They have no CM face, no team, no planning, and no vision for Delhi.

Maha ministry expanded, 39 ministers take oath

PNS NAGPUR

The 10-day-old BJP-led Mahayuti alliance ministry in Maharashtra was expanded at Nagpur on Sunday, with 39 ministers being sworn in, taking its strength to 42.

In the expansion, BJP got 19 ministerial berths, followed by 11 to Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and 9 for Ajit Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party.

While 33 legislators were sworn in as cabinet ministers, six took oath as ministers of state. Governor P C Radhakrishnan administered the oath to the new ministers at the ceremony held on the eve of the state legislature's winter session being held in Nagpur from December 16 to 21. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and deputy CMs Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar,

December 5, were present. The new cabinet includes BIP Chandrashekhar Bawankule



and Mumbai BJP president Ashish Shelar. Results of the state assembly elections, held on November 20, were declared on November 23.

THOSE LEFT OUT TO GET **CHANCE LATER: AJIT**

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Sunday said the ruling Mahayuti will also give a chance to other legislators, who have not found a place in the current ministry, during this government's

tenure. "We will give an opportunity to others also for twoand-a-half years," NCP leader Pawar said addressing a gathering of his party workers in Nagpur before the cabinet expansion. Everybody wants to become a minister and deserves an opportunity, but the ministerial berths are limited, he pointed out.

ers left out of the ministry include NCP's Chhagan Bhujbal and Dilip Walse Patil and BJP's Sudhir Mungantiwar.

Modi invokes Nehru to distract attention from his 'failures': Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday, alleging that defamation of Jawaharlal Nehru and minimum democratic governance was his model.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said PM Modi has an "obsession" with Nehru as he invokes the country's first prime minister to distract the nation's attention from his "own failures" and current challenges on which he maintains a "complete silence".

The Congress attack on the prime minister came a day after Modi attacked the party during the debate on the 'Glorious 75-year journey of India's Constitution'.

"It was the famous French philosopher Voltaire who had first said that if God did not invent Him. For our selfanointed divinity -- if Nehru had not existed -- it would have been necessary to invent him,



Ramesh said. The Congress leader asked what would the prime minister do without Nehru, for whom he has a pathological obsession. "Nehru is necessary to distract the nation's attention from his own failures. Nehru is necessary to divert the nation's attention from current chala complete silence," Ramesh said. He also said that Nehru was necessary to deny the nation's many achievements before May

2014. In another post on X, Ramesh said, "In his rant in the Lok Sabha yesterday, the PM attacked Nehru on the First Amendment to the Constitution of India -- which was carried out with effect from June 18th, 1951." Explaining why this amendment was brought, the Congress leader said, it was carried out for three reasons.

"One, to deal with communal propaganda at a most sensitive time. Two, to protect Zamindari abolition laws that were being struck down by the courts. Three, to protect reservations in education and employment for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and OBCs that had been rejected by the courts" he said.

A select committee, in which Nehru, Rajagopalchari, and Ambedkar were among the members, examined the Bill in detail Ramesh said ing that even after the panel tabled its report, Nehru listened to his critics and modified his stance.

Maywati urges parties to support ONOE bills

PNS LUCKNOW

BSP chief Mayawati on Sunday attacked the Congress and the Samajwadi Party, saying they should not speak on reservations as they colluded in opposing legislation giving quota in promotions to Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) when the Congressled UPA was in power.

Addressing a press conference, she also backed the Centre's bills on 'one nationone election', stressing it will reduce expenses and ensure



parties to also support the measure. Mayawati demanded that reservations for SC, ST and OBC be included in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution to prevent any tampering. Central and state laws listed in the Ninth public welfare works continue Schedule are exempt from the time of the Congress party's due to which they are in runinterrupted. She urged other judicial review. During the government at the Centre and mood to get the bill passed.

Slams SP, Cong on reservation issue

discussion on the Constitution in Lok Sabha, the ruling side and the opposition, especially the Congress and the Samajwadi Party, to woo Dalit and OBC voters, have said a lot of "baseless" things about reservation issue in which there is "not even an iota of truth", she told reporters. "And it would have been better if these two parties (Congress, SP) had remained silent on this issue in Parliament, because during with the connivance of this party, SP had strongly opposed the Constitutional Amend ment Bill related to reservations in promotion of SC and ST communities. "This bill was torn and thrown away by SP in the Parliament itself and ... is still pending in the Parliament," she lamented.

The BSP chief also targeted the ruling BJP and said, "The anti-reservation mentality of the BJP is also clearly visible, due to which they are in no

No room for factional politics in party: K'taka BJP chief

PNS BENGALURU

Karnataka BJP president B Y Vijayendra on Sunday said there is no room for factional politics in the party, and organising meetings was unacceptable.

He urged party leaders holding any such meetings and conferences to immediately stop their activities. Pointing out at the media reports about preparations for a show of strength event being organised by a section of party leaders in his favour, Vijayendra said, "There are no factions in the



BJP and everyone in the organisation is a staunch party worker." "I urge all our former legislators and party leaders who have gathered in Davangere that already our conducts have created a lot of confusion among party workers and supporters in

India excels in mental math skills

SECURES MAXIMUM AWARDS AT UCMAS

PNS NEW DELHI

India has emerged as the top performer at the Universal Concept of Mental Arithmetic System (UCMAS) International Competition 2024, securing the highest number of awards in both individual and team categories across various age groups of 6-13 years.

According to a statement issued by UCMAS India, the two-day event organised by it concluded in Delhi on Sunday in which 6,000 students from 30 countries took part with Indian participants winning over 1,250 trophies in recognition of their exceptional skills. The event witnessed over 15,000 visitors, including parents and supportabroad, the statement said.

Speaking at the event, Alexan Wong, CEO of UC International Corporation, said, "The UCMAS competition has grown to be the largest and most impactful of its kind. It is inspiring to see students from around the world showcasing their creativity, visual memory, and focus -- skills that are critical for their future success."

Stating that UCMAS combines the traditional abacus with modern teaching methodologies to create an innovative educational experience, Wong said, "More than three million children worldwide have benefited from the UCMAS curnext generation of leaders

ers from across India and riculum, which emphasises creativity, visualisation and focus while developing strong arithmetic abilities

The competition format required students to solve 200 arithmetic problems in just eight minutes, a process designed by UCMAS to test not only mathematical skills, but also visual memory, concentration, and overall academic performance, the statement said. Snehal Karia, CEO and President of UCMAS India, expressed pride in hosting the event in Delhi, marking 25 years of UCMAS operations in Índia. "This platform highlights the extraordinary talent

of our students and inspires the

added that the organisation is committed to build a strong foundation in mathematics for



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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Modi's mantra

PM Modi's resolutions give roadmap for progress but its realisation requires collaborative efforts from the government and civil society

uring the Constitution debate in the Lok Sabha on December 13, Prime Minister Narendra Modi articulated 11 resolutions to guide India's future development. These resolutions, inspired by the spirit of the Constitution, aim to address critical aspects of governance, societal values and national development. PM Modi emphasised the need for citizens and government officials to uphold their duties. This aligns with the Constitution's emphasis on Fundamental Duties, but its implementation requires widespread public awareness and institutional accountability. The Prime Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to inclusive development through his vision of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas." While significant progress has been made in sectors like infrastructure and digital access, challenges like regional disparities and social inequality persist. Addressing these requires targeted policy interventions and efficient resource allocation. Corruption, which undermines public trust and economic



efficiency, was also highlighted by PM Modi, who called for societal rejection of corruption. His stance complements ongoing measures like digital transparency and anti-corruption legislation. However, robust enforcement mechanisms and judicial efficiency are essential for achieving this goal. Fostering respect for laws and traditions was another critical resolution aimed at strengthening social cohesion. This requires not only stricter enforcement of laws but also cultural campaigns to educate citizens about the value of India's legal and cultural heritage.

In a similar vein, PM Modi's call to instill pride in India's heritage seeks to dismantle colonial-era mind-

sets. This involves promoting indigenous knowledge systems, decolonising education curricula and celebrating India's achievements globally. Modi also stressed the importance of respecting the Constitution and avoiding its exploitation for political gains. This underscores the need for political integrity and constructive discourse in legislative processes. Another pivotal resolution was the preservation of reservations without introducing religion-based quotas. PM Modi's emphasised the importance of maintaining the status quo while opposing religion-based reservations. Balancing social justice with meritocracy remains a contentious issue, necessitating careful policy considerations to address evolving societal needs. The mantra of "development of the country through the development of states" underscores the importance of cooperative federalism. Strengthening state capacities and ensuring equitable resource distribution are critical for this resolution's success. The feasibility of these resolutions hinges on several factors such as upholding duties and require active citizen engagement. Effective implementation of these resolutions largely depends on robust institutions and governance mechanisms and efficient use of resources by the government itself along with a civil society which is alert and aware.



A woman protects her child from cold during a foggy winter morning, in Nadia

A forgotten crisis amid global turmoil SUDHIR HINDWAN



In a world dominated by geopolitical rivalries, economic uncertainties and environmental degradation, food security concerns are relegated to background

myriad of challenges, including cyber fraud, widespread corruption, transnational terrorism, and the relentless use of weapons of mass destruction in regional conflicts such as the West Asian crises and the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war. These issues are compounded by a refugee crisis of enormous proportions, environmental degradation, and the growing frequency of natural disasters. Among these pressing concerns, food security remains a critical yet often overlooked challenge that affects nations worldwide.

Food security, as defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations at the 1996 Rome World Food Summit, exists when "all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." This definition underscores the importance of not only physical availability but also economic access to food, emphasising both quantity and utritional quality. According to the FAO's Food

Insecurity Scale, over half of the population in low-income countries lives under food-insecure conditions, with about one-third facing severe crises. Globally, approximately 789 million people lack adequate food, and this number rises to an alarming 2.4 billion when micronutrient deficiencies are considered. Food security issues can be categorised into two broad areas: quantity and quality. These challenges encompass five key dimensions: food availability, price volatility, inclusive access, proper utilisation, and stability. Price volatility, particularly in low-income countries, exacerbates food insecurity as most people lack the resources to access nutrient-rich food. also saw the launch of the 'Zero ecognising the severity of global food insecurity, the United Nations included food security among its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the 2015 '2030 Agenda'. The second SDG aims to "end hunger, achieve food security and able," encompassing clean



policies with these goals to

ensure their populations

receive adequate, nutritious

food in a sustainable manner.

Food insecurity leads to

numerous problems at both

household and societal levels.

Household food insecurity,

Ban Ki-moon, aiming to elim-

inate hunger and malnutrition globally by 2030. A corner-

stone of the ZHC is the goal to

make "all food systems sustain-

for instance, has been linked to suboptimal sleep patterns and reduced immunity against dis-To address these issues, the United Nations reaffirmed its commitment to safe and nutritious food access during the 2012 UN Conference on ABOUT ONE-THIRD Sustainable Development. This commitment was encapsulated in the 'Future We Want' document. The conference Hunger Challenge' (ZHC) by then-UN Secretary-General

responsible food consumption and production, and climate action—achievable through national policies and international cooperation. The 1987 Brundtland Report, titled Our Common Future, defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." India, since its independence in 1947, has made significant strides in building food security by establishing agricultural institutions such as the Indian

water, sustainable energy,

Agricultural Research Institute

under the guidance of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). Advancements in genetic engineering and biotechnology hold promise for addressing agricultural challenges, **INSECURE** improving food quality, and increasing global food availability. However, concerns persist about biosafety risks posed by genetically modified organ-FACING SEVERE isms (GMOs). Proper handling, transfer, and disposal of **CRISES**

> ical to ensuring safety. The world is currently mired in geopolitical rivalries, with nations prioritising dominance over addressing pressing issues such as hunger, poverty, envi-ronmental degradation and

unemployment. Biotechnology, if harnessed effectively, can address these challenges by creating opportunities for producing higherquality food, reducing pollution, generating jobs, and fos-tering economic growth. This, in turn, could promote international cooperation and reduce global tensions, paving the way for peace. Investments in research and development can yield innovative solutions to hunger, malnutrition and food adulteration, transforming biotechnology into a force

for global good.

However, two major apprehensions regarding biotechnology persist. First, it may deepen the divide between developed and developing nations. Second, globalisation could threaten the survival of indigenous food industries. Despite these concerns, the potential benefits of biotechnology in transforming global food and energy systems into a philanthropic movement cannot be overlooked. Food security initiatives must rise above geopolitical rivalries, embracing incluthese organisms, as recom- sivity and shared responsibilmended by global institutions ities. India, with its emphasis like the World Bank, are crit- on inclusive diplomacy, has the potential to play a pivotal role

in this endeavor. (The author, a recipient of the Bharat Gaurav Award, is a professor, HOD, and an expert on strategic affairs. Views expressed are personal)



ACCORDING TO THE FAO'S FOOD INSECURITY SCALE, OVER HALF OF THE POPULATION IN LOW-INCOME **COUNTRIES LIVES** UNDER FOOD-CONDITIONS, WITH

EDITOR



ASHA IYER KUMAR

Social media is a tool to make life more connected and interesting, it is not a measure to judge worth and success of family and friends

¬ver since social media sneaked into our lives, we have made it a shelf to display our lives' wares. We paint our digital walls with milestones, memories, smiles, and sorrows. It's a vibrant collage of life's varied hues, yet what we post is often a curated version of reality. The smiles are brighter, the love is deeper, the vacations are grander, and the heartbreaks are more dramatic. But behind this veneer of filtered perfection, the raw and unfiltered truth often lurks quietly, hidden from the world's

For a month, I posted pictures from my holiday—pristine landscapes, cheerful meals, and stylish getups—giving the impression that I was the happiest and luckiest person on earth. From the outside, it looked like life was a seamless tapestry of joy and contentment. But behind each post was a personal battle being waged in silence. While my timeline radiated unbridled joy, I was working on myself to remedy a tough health challenge. Why did I choose to post happy pictures when my reality was tumultuous? Was I pretending? Was I

Beyond the screen: The hidden

truths of our social media lives

seeking validation? No. I was trying to reassure myself. I was reminding myself that happiness exists, that moments of beauty and joy still punctuate my life. Those posts were not deceit; they were lifelines. Glimpses of joy that I clung to as I navigated the storm within. And in sharing those moments, I was also hoping to pass on slivers of hope to others who might be fighting unseen battles. This is the duality of

social media. The laughter we see might be tears in disguise. The grand celebrations could be cloaked in anxiety. The tears shed publicly may be crafted for effect. What appears authentic can be artifice; what looks carefree can be layered with burdens. This is why we should not judge others based on what we see on their profiles. Why do people disguise their struggles and preto mislead others.

Sometimes, it's a way of keeping hope alive. When life's jecting happiness can feel like a self-fulfilling prophecy. By sharing joy, even when it feels out of reach, we try to that happiness is not an illusion—it's around the corner and within our grasp. We also do it for others. Social media can be a dark and overwhelming place filled with negativity, comparison, and distressing news. By sharing moments of beauty, love and humour, we offer small doses of positivity to those who might need them. But herein lies the trap. When we view others' lives through the glossy lens of social media, we risk falling into the pit of comparison. We measure our own lives against the seemingly perfect lives of others wrong.

We feel envious, resentful, or inadequate. But this comparison is unfair—because it's based on incomplete information. What you see on social media is a highlight

sent happy pictures? It's not necessarily deceit or a desire compare your behind-thescenes reality to someone else's carefully chosen highlights is to set yourself up for challenges weigh heavily, pro-needless suffering. So, how should we approach social media with clarity and kindness? First, partake in others' happiness without envy. manifest it. We tell ourselves Celebrate their joys as you would want them to celebrate

Let their happiness be a reminder that good things are possible, even if they haven't yet arrived in your life. Second, lend support in difficult times without judgment. If someone shares their struggles, resist the urge to undermine or dismiss them. Behind their words could be a pain far deeper than what they've expressed. Offer empathy, not assumptions. Be the steady presence that reminds them they're not alone. Finally, take social media for what it is—a tool to and wonder where we went make life more connected, more interesting and occasionally more fun. It's not a measure of worth, success, or appiness.

(The author is a columnist and writing coach based in Dubai. Views are personal)

ONE NATION ONE ELECTION Madam — It will be the most precious

gift to the nation amidst political anarchy and election extravaganza. The people will be stupendously relieved by single elec-tions for multiple reasons. The Model Code of Conduct stalls development projects and decision-making of the governments. The alleged sale of party tickets, defections by politicians, experimenting with the disruptive agendas, noisy debates on TV channels, spoiling harmony in the country, poll violence, foreign interference, the game of opinion and exit polls losing credibility, betting on elections, saving billions of rupees for the government on election machinery including deployment staff and police forces, huge resource mobilisation by the political parties, and people's contribution for multiple elections, etc., are a few to quote in favour of one nation, one election. The former President, Ram Nath Kovind's recommendation of holding municipal elections along with the Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections should also be considered by the Union Government in the next phase.

It may also be contemplated by the government that those candidates who lose elections in parliamentary or Assembly elections and are rejected by the people should not get entry in the Rajya Sabha and legislative councils where only elected representatives are allowed to vote. In fact, the state assemblies don't need legislative councils. The number of Lok Sabha and state assembly seats should be optimally increased so that there is wider and appropriate representation of people. There should be a dedicated cadre of the Civil Services for elections. It will facilitate the continuity of updating electoral rolls, EVM maintenance, election reforms as and when required, create a data bank and an archive on elections, training, delimitation, dedicated teamwork to contest election-related litigation, and work on a constitutional framework for elec-

tions-related issues Vinod Johri | Delhi reforms introduce fixed time limits for

SC says no survey of worship places putes, courts cannot pass any effective or



y halting the surveys of places of worship, the Supreme Court's recent Border bars all courts nationwide from registering fresh suits or issuing any interim or final orders, including those permitting surveys in ongoing cases concerning existing structures, until the validity of the Places of Worship Act 1991 is decided. SC's order means that in pending suits such as those pertaining to the Kashi Vishwanath-Gyanvapi mosque and Krishna Janmabhoomi-Idgah dis-

REFORMING INDIAN JUDICIAL SYSTEM

Madam— The Indian judicial system has long struggled with the issue of delayed justice, raising concerns about its credibility and effectiveness. The principle that "delayed justice is equivalent to injustice" emphasises the importance of timely and accessible justice. The backlog of cases, complex procedures, and delays in decision-making have caused significant mental, social, and moral harm to victims and society at large. Currently, around 44 million cases are pending in district courts, 6.1 million in high courts, and over 82,000 in the Supreme Court.

This backlog has led to questions about the system's efficiency, impacting not just the legal system but also the democratic fabric of the country. The Nirbhaya case highlights the detrimental effects of delayed justice, eroding public trust in the system. To address these issues, the central government has introduced judicial reforms, including three new criminal laws aimed at improving timeliness, transparency, and efficiency. These

final orders. The order is timely and a welcome move. The 1991 Act was enacted to prevent conflicts that may arise from disputes with historical ties and to protect the equality of faiths, a constitutional value. The Act also prohibits converting a

place of worship to a different denomination or section and mandates that history and its wrongs should not be used to oppress the present and future. But recently many petitioners have approached lower courts as well as the Supreme Court against the 1991 Act, alleging that the law has created an arbitrary and irrational retrospective cut-off date of August 15, 1947, for maintaining the character of the places of worship. P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

resolving cases and create a framework for expediting the disposal of long-pending cases, offering relief to victims and ensuring justice.

R K Jain | Barwani

GUKESH DEFEATS DING LIREN

Madam — Carrying on chess dominance, hitting Gukesh displayed a high level and proved that he is not second in the FIDE World Championship 2024 in style. India's D Gukesh achieved the landmark in a crucial game and in a cliffhanger manner, beating titleholder China's Ding Liren in the 14th and last game of the FIDE World Chess Championship 2024 in a clinical way.

India's D Gukesh masters moves and makes them in a calculative way. He played to a plan to eat humble pie. The 18-year-old had Gukesh play a great game of chess. Three cheers for golden boy

C K Subramaniam | Mumbai

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FIRST COLUMN

BRIDGING DIVIDES IN THE WORKPLACE

This growing divide can hinder teamwork, erode trust and undermine organisational effectiveness



SAKSHI SETHI

Ith the advent of the 21st generation, the division of people into sharply opposing groups has increasingly infiltrated workplaces, reflecting the broader societal divides in politics, culture and values. In professional settings, it is often referred to as polarisation and can hinder collaboration, damage relationships, and undermine organisational effectiveness. Addressing workplace polarisation requires proactive leadership, open communication, and an emphasis on shared goals. Polarisation often stems from various sources such as divergent personal values where the employees bring their political, cultural and social identities into the workplace.

Differences in beliefs particularly on sensitive issues such as gender, race and political ideologies lead to conflicts. On the other hand, media coverage, political campaigns, or social movements heighten tensions among employees with differing viewpoints. A lack of open dialogue within teams fosters echo chambers, where employees interact only with like-minded individuals, reinforcing biases and misunderstandings. Also, differences in work styles, priorities and values between generations can create friction. Younger employees may prioritise social activism, while older colleagues might value traditional workplace norms.

The impact of this kind of polarisation on organisational health and employee wellbeing can be significant. It can hamper teamwork, as employees will become less willing to cooperate with those holding opposing views which will stifle innovation and productivity. Disagreements on personal or political issues can also lead to distrust among colleagues, creating a toxic work environment. Employees who feel alienated or marginalised due to their beliefs may seek opportunities elsewhere, result-



ing in talent loss. Workplace conflicts rooted in polarisation can lead to stress, burnout and decreased job satisfaction.

By encouraging respectful conversations that allow employees to express their perspectives without fear of judgment; by implementing structured initiatives, such as facilitated discussions or conflict resolution workshops; by emphasising organisational objectives that unite employees and by highlighting common ground, such as shared values or team missions. can be a few measures that can reduce the focus on divisive issues and can help bridge divides. Last but not least that play a crucial role in setting the tone for workplace interactions is that of the leader. There is no denying that inclusive leaders model respectful behaviour, encourage diverse viewpoints, and mediate conflicts effectively. Developing guidelines that outline acceptable workplace behaviour, particularly concerning discussions on sensitive topics; making policies that promote mutual respect while preserving freedom of expression or taking initiatives such as team-building exercises, mentorship programs, or cross-department projects can help reduce silos and foster connections between employees with differing viewpoints. Undoubtedly an organisation's culture significantly influences how polarisation manifests and is addressed. A culture that values respect, inclusivity, and open-mindedness can mitigate the effects of polarization.

Conversely, a culture that tolerates favouritism or discrimination can exacerbate divisions. Leaders must prioritise cultivating a culture where employees feel valued and heard, regardless of their beliefs or backgrounds. Workplace polarisation reflects the broader societal divides but has unique challenges and opportunities within professional settings. While it risks collaboration, trust, and productivity, it can also catalyse growth if managed effectively. By fostering a culture of respect, promoting open dialogue, and emphasising shared goals, organisations can navigate polar-

isation and create environments where diverse perspectives thrive. (The writer is an educator; views expressed are personal)

Syria's collapse: Foreign meddling and economic ruin



As allies like Iran pressured Assad for reforms, and Western nations explored conditional sanctions relief, Syria became a battleground of competing geopolitical manoeuvring



y the end of November, the situation in Syria was dire. Government forces were on the brink of exhaustion, stretched thin by an economic crisis that spiralled out of control. Soldiers earned a paltry \$7 a month, with even high-ranking officers receiving only \$40. This was in blunt contrast to militia fighters funded by external powers, who earned up to \$2,000 monthly. This glaring disparity revealed not just economic fault lines but the extent of foreign intervention sustaining these militias. Meanwhile, protests erupted across Suwayda province, historically a stronghold of Assad support, highlighting widespread famine, collapsing services, and the devaluation of the Syrian pound. Discontent was palpable, threatening to upend the regime's fragile grasp on power.

Iran, Syria's long-time ally, reportedly pressured Assad to address these challenges. Tehran's warnings accentuated the erosion of public trust and a crumbling economy, urging decisive action. Yet Assad seemed increasingly aloof, allegedly seeking new alliances with Gulf nations, hoping these relationships would secure his future.

By December, reports emerged that the United States and the United Arab Emirates were considering lifting sanctions on Assad—but only if he severed ties with Iran and halted arms transfers to Hezbollah. This diplomatic manoeuvre was a calculated strategy to weaken Assad's regime further. Relief from Caesar sanctions was an unlikely prospect given Washington's decade-long effort to dismantle the Assad family rule. The outcome was preordained: Assad was isolated, and the geopolitical chessboard advanced. The trajectory of Assad's downfall mirrors a broader pattern in Western foreign policy. Leaders once celebrated as reformers-from Saddam Hussein to Muammar Gaddafi—are vilified when their geopolitical utility wanes. Assad, who was once lauded for fostering coexistence among Syria's religious and ethnic groups, became the

In 2010, Syria was a stable nation, ranked seventh on *The New York Times*'"31 best places to visit." Assad met with Queen Elizabeth, hosted Nancy Pelosi, and welcomed Pope John Paul II. Yet the West's affection was



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ASSAD—BUT ONLY IF HE SEVERED TIES WITH IRAN AND HALTED ARMS TRANSFERS TO HEZBOLLAH. THIS **DIPLOMATIC** MANOEUVRE WAS A CALCULATED

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short-lived. As geopolitical calculations shifted, Assad's regime was recast as the antithesis of democracy, paving the way for intervention. The Syrian conflict was never just a civil war. It was a proxy war fueled by external actors. Over 100,000 jihadists were funnelled into Syria, backed by a coalition of nations. The United Śtates, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar allegedly provided finan-

cial and logistical support. Turkey and Jordan facilitated arms shipments and fighter transport. Western media amplified anti-Assad narratives, while the UKbacked White Helmets shaped public perceptions. Each player pursued its agenda, yet all converged on a singular goal: regime change. The motivations driving this coalition were diverse. The United States and Israel sought regional hegemony, neutralising perceived threats while advancing the Greater Israel project. Qatar's pipeline ambitions clashed with Assad's preference for an Iranian alternative, further entrenching divisions.

These dynamics turned Syria into a battleground for competing interests, with devastating consequences for its people.By late 2013, the influx of foreign fighters intensified. Western nations grappled with their citizens joining extremist groups in Syria. The UK reported approximately 600 fighters, while France contributed around 1,200. Belgium, the Netherlands, and Sweden also faced significant outflows. However, the greatest contributions came from West Asia and North Africa, with Tunisia leading at 3,000 fighters, followed by Saudi Arabia at 2,500.

Russia's involvement, particularly from regions like Chechnya, underscored the conflict's global reach. The arms supply chain further exacerbated the war. Gulf states like Qatar and Saudi Arabia allegedly supplied weapons, supported by over 160 military cargo flights. These arms, transported through Turkey and Jordan, sustained rebel factions. European nations, such as Croatia, indirectly contributed by routing surplus weapons through Jordan. This complex web of arms smuggling empowered extremist groups, further destabilising Syria. Western hypocrisy was stark.

While denouncing Assad's regime, the United States supported "moderate rebels" aligned with Al Qaeda and ISIS. Declassified documents revealed this duplicity. In 2012, General Michael Flynn's memo to the Pentagon warned that the opposition included jihadist factions. Similarly, Hillary Clinton's advisor, Jake Sullivan, acknowledged in an email that "Al Qaeda is on our side in Syria." The West's support for these groups undercut its claims of promoting democracy, revealing a strategy rooted in destabilisation. Atrocity propaganda became a central tool in the anti-Assad narrative. Staged chemical attacks, amplified by the White Helmets, justified military intervention.

Western media perpetuated these fabrications, obscuring the reality on the ground. Idlib province, under "rebel" control, became a dystopian preview of Syria's potential future: public executions, forced veiling of women, and sectarian slogans. This grim reality highlighted the consequences of regime change. Operation Timber Sycamore, the CIA's covert programme, exemplified Western duplicity. Billions of dollars in weapons were funnelled to extremist factions, prolonging the

The irony was stark: the West, claiming to combat terrorism, empowered the very groups destabilising the region. Syria's devastation became a witness to the destructive nature of interventionist policies. Syria's collapse parallels other Western interventions. Iraq's 2003 invasion, justified by the false pretext of weapons of mass destruc-

tion, left the nation in tatters. Libya, once Africa's wealthiest country, descended into anarchy following Gaddafi's overthrow—these interventions, framed as humanitarian missions, unleashed chaos, empowering extremist factions and creating power vacuums. The broader motivations behind these actions lie in geopolitics.

Syria's strategic location, its role as a buffer between Iran and Israel, and its proximity to oil-rich regions made it a prime target. The West's desire to reshape the region's political structure has driven decades of intervention, often with catastrophic consequences. Meanwhile, allies like Saudi Arabia and Turkey, despite their human rights abuses, remain central to Western strategy, exposing the moral bankruptcy of interventionist policies. Syria's tragedy is a miniature of a global pattern. The collapse of nations like Irag, Libya, and Syria reflects a broader system where sovereignty is sacrificed for strategic interests. Foreign interventions, far from promoting democracy or stability, have left legacies of destruction, displacement, and despair.
The narrative of "humanitarian

intervention" serves as a veneer, masking the true motives of power and greed. As the 50th anniversary of Iran's 1979 revolution approaches in 2029, the stakes are higher than ever. Iran's defiance of Western hegemony remains a critical factor in the region's future. The forces shaping West Asia—Israel, Turkey, and Western powers—are poised to challenge Iran's resilience.

Syria's collapse serves as both a warning and a call to scrutinise the ethics of intervention. The legacy of these actions is clear: a world shaped by greed, ambition, and the devastating cost of unchecked

(The writer is a senior journalist and a policy analyst; views expressed are personal)

Can INDIA bloc resolve its leadership disputes and put to rest its internal strife

With Mamata vying for the leadership of the INDIA bloc supported by a number constituents, chances of the bloc succumbing to internal disputes are high

he INDIA bloc, a coalition of 26 ideologically diverse parties, was created to counter the BJP's electoral dominance. In the 2024 general elections, the bloc achieved a significant milestone, reducing the BJP's tally to below 240 seats. However, this success has been tempered by internal discord, which now threatens the alliance's fragile unity.

A key figure in this unfolding drama is Mamata Banerjee, the dynamic leader of the Trinamool Congress (TMC). Her aspirations for leadership within the coalition have both galvanised and fractured its members. Mamata Banerjee's National Ambitions Mamata



KS TOMAR influence beyond West Bengal and play a decisive role in shaping national politics. Her assertive style has invigorated some allies but has alienated others, exposing the persistent challenge of reconciling regional ambitions with a unified national strategy. Earlier, Banerjee proposed Congress Baneriee's bid for prominence President Mallikarjun Kharge within the INDIA bloc stems as the bloc's chairperson, a

the influence of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, one of the coalition's key architects. This proposal, supported by leaders like Akhilesh Yadav and Arvind Kejriwal, showcased Banerjee's ability to consolidate support. However, her growing clout has sparked unease among other leaders. For instance, Lalu Prasad Yadav, a staunch Congress ally, appears to be rethinking his loyalties. Such dynamics highlight the alliance's precarious balance and the potential

for further fractures. Lessons from the Past: UPA2 The INDIA bloc's current challenges echo the struggles faced by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA2) during its tenure. In 2012, Mamata Banerjee's dramatic exit from from her desire to extend her strategic move to diminish the UPA over policy disagree-

ments underscored the inherent instability of coalition politics. Scandals and policy paralysis plagued UPA2, eroding its credibility and paving the way for Narendra Modi's rise.

As Banerjee's ambitions take center stage, the INDIA bloc risks repeating history. If it fails to address its internal contradictions, it could suffer the same fate as UPA2, jeopardising its ability to present a united front against the BJP. BJP's Advantage Amid Opposition Discord The BJP stands to benefit from the INDIA bloc's internal strife. While Banerjee wields considerable influence in West Bengal, Congress retains a broader national presence. A fragmented opposition could split anti-BJP votes, a sce-nario that would play into the



saffron party's hands. Recent BJP gains in Maharashtra and Haryana underscore the bloc's challenges, particularly for Congress, which has struggled to maintain dominance in key states. Seat-sharing disputes within the bloc further illustrate its lack of strategic coher-

For instance, the Aam Aadmi Party's unilateral candidate announcements in Delhi and Haryana have fueled tensions,

revealing the alliance's inability to present a united strate-Mamata vs Congress:

ambitions pose a paradox for

Congress. Her energy and charisma could revitalise the bloc, but her assertiveness overshadowing Congress's central role. This tension is particularly pronounced in states like West Bengal and Kerala, where Congress directly competes with the TMC and the Left. Seat-sharing negotiations in overlapping constituencies could exacerbate divisions, straining the alliance further. For Congress, retaining relevance within the INDIA bloc will require a delicate balanc-

Banerjee's influence without

compromising its identity. Key Challenges for the INDIA Bloc The alliance faces several hurdles that could determine Mamata Banerjee's leadership its survival:

Leadership Struggles: The lack of consensus on a prime ministerial candidate risks deepening divisions.

Unified Campaign Narrative: A focus on governance, economic policies, and social justice can resonate with voters more effectively than person-

al rivalries. Effective Coordination: Mechanisms for conflict resolution and decision-making must be strengthened. Balancing Regional and National Goals: Respecting regional aspirations while pursuing a cohesive national agenda is critical. ing act: accommodating

A Test of Political Maturity:

based in Shimla; views are

coalition politics. While her leadership could energise the INDIA bloc, it also risks deepening divisions. Navigating this intricate web of regional and national aspirations will test the bloc's political maturi-The upcoming state elections and the 2029 general elections will be pivotal in determining

Mamata Banerjee's ambitions

underscore her political acu-

men and the complexities of

whether the INDIA bloc can overcome its internal strife and emerge as a credible alternative to the BJP. Resolving leadership disputes, crafting a compelling narrative, and presenting a unified front are critical to its success.

(The writer is a policy analyst

HYDERABAD | MONDAY | DECEMBER 16, 2024

IN BRIEF



CIL's CSR expenditure crosses Rs 5,570 cr

oal India Ltd (CIL) has spent Rs 5,570 crore in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives over the past decade, a top official said on Sunday. Coal India Chairman P M Prasad said the PSU has been focusing on education, healthcare, skill development, sports, and women empowerment. Inaugurating the 3rd CIL CSR Conclave 2024 on Sunday, West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose underscored the transformative power of CSR initiatives in improving the lives of communities, particularly in tribal belts of coal-bearing areas. He lauded CIL's contributions, including its efforts to support cancer patients, stating that such initiatives contribute to the holistic development of the nation. "CSR initiatives are a powerful tool to transform lives, especially in vulnerable regions," Bose said. "Coal India spent Rs 5,570 crore in Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives over the past 10 years," Prasad said.



Country's coal imports rose by 4 pc at 162 MT

he country's coal import rose by 4.2 per cent to 162.45 million tonnes (MT) in the April-October period of the current financial year compared to 155.87 MT in the year-ago period. Coal imports in October dropped by 14.4 per cent to 21.84 MT compared to 25.54 MT in the corresponding month of the previous fiscal, according to data compiled by mjunction services, a B2B e-commerce platform. Of the total imports in October, non-coking coal imports stood at 13.49 MT against 18.82 MT imported in October last fiscal. Coking coal imports stood at 4.45 MT, against 4.31 MT imported in October last financial year. In September, noncoking coal imports were 13.24 MT and coking coal at 3.39 MT. "There was a modest increase (month-on-month) in noncoking coal volumes in October as buyers took fresh positions during the festive month, and ahead of the winter season. Going forward, demand is likely to be moderate due to the anticipated growth in domestic supply during the fourth quarter (Q4)," mjunction MD & CEO Vinaya Varma said.



Aurobindo Pharma, Glenmark recall products in US

rug makers Aurobindo Pharma, Glenmark and Zydus are recalling products in the US market due to manufacturing issues, according to the US health regulator. As per the latest Enforcement Report of US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), Aurobindo Pharma USA Inc, a subsidiary of Hyderabad-based drug maker, is recalling over 1 lakh bottles of Cinacalcet tablets in multiple strengths. The New Jersey-based firm is recalling the product due to "GMP Deviations: Presence of N-nitroso Cinacalcet impurity above FDA recommended interim limit," the US health regulator said. The company initiated the Class II recall on November 7 this year. Cinacalcet tablets are used to treat hyperparathyroidism. Similarly, a USbased subsidiary of Glenmark Pharmaceuticals is recalling around 90.000 bottles of Diltiazem Hydrochloride extended release capsules (multiple strengths) in the US market. New Jersey-based Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Inc, USA is recalling the affected lot of Diltiazem Hydrochloride extendedrelease capsules due to "cGMP Deviations: Presence of Nnitroso-Desmethyl-Diltiazem impurity above FDA recommended interim limit", the US health regulator stated.

HIGH SEAS FISHING

India seeks strong WTO subsidy rules

PNS NEW DELHI

India has pitched at the WTO for stricter regulations on subsidies granted by countries engaged in high-seas fishing activities, an official said.

Highlighting the stark disparity, an Indian doc-ument submitted at the Trade Organization (WTO) has noted that it provides a modest USD 35 per fisher annually, compared to subsidies as high as USD 76,000 per fisher per year in some European nations.

India also suggested that historical subsidisers should seek permission of the Committee on Fisheries Subsidies for grant of subsidies in future. The country has made these remarks in the meetings of the Negotiating Group on Rules (Fisheries subsidies), which are going on in Geneva. "India has pitched for strong disciplines for historical fisheries subsidisers which are engaged in distant water fishing (200 nautical

miles from sea shore) and has asked for a moratorium on subsidies at the present level for 25 years," the official said.

On these demands, India was supported by countries like Indonesia and other devel-

oping countries, the official

"Blaming India for stalling the decision at the GC (General Council) is merely an excuse and a tactic to push for weak disciplines, allowing business as usual to continue, the official said adding WTO members engaged in distant water fishing should stop providing any kind of subsidies for 25 years as they provide significantly higher support measures and are indiscriminately exploiting the fisheries

Move to boost cargo movement via waterways

Govt unveils 'Jalvahak' incentive scheme

PNS KOLKATA

The Union government on Sunday launched the 'Jalvahak' scheme to incentivise cargo movement via inland waterways, marking a major step towards promoting sustain-able and cost-effective transportation across National Waterways 1 (Ganga), 2 (Brahmaputra), and 16 (Barak

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal flagged off three cargo ships and inaugurated the fixed scheduled service of vessels.

He said the scheme aims to unlock the trade potential of inland waterways while reducing logistics costs and decongesting road and rail networks.

Under the scheme, cargo owners transporting goods over distances exceeding 300 km via waterways will receive

up to 35 per cent reimbursement on operating costs.

The scheme will remain valid for three years and is designed to optimise supply chains for major shipping companies, freight forwarders, and trade bodies.

The scheme is jointly implemented by the Inland Waterways Áuthority of India (IWAI) and Inland & Coastal Shipping Ltd (ICSL), a subsidiary of the Shipping Corporation of India.

The cargo promotion scheme is projected to facilitate a modal shift of 800 million tonne-kilometres with an estimated investment of Rs 95.4 crore by 2027, a statement

The fixed-schedule sailing service will ply vessels between

Kolkata-Patna-Varanasi and Kolkata-Pandu (Guwahati) routes, demonstrating the readiness of waterways for efficient and eco-friendly cargo transportation.

"The Jalvahak scheme incentivises long-haul cargo transport and ensures timely delivery through regular freight services.

This initiative provides a positive economic value proposition to trade while advancing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of transformation via transportation,

Sonowal said. Sonowal flagged off three vessels - MV Trishul carrying 1,500 tonnes of cement to Guwahati via the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route, MV Aai with 1,000 tonnes of gypsum to Patna for a cement company and MV Homi Bhaba transporting 200 tonnes

Mkts to be guided by WPI inflation, global trends

PNS NEW DELHI

The US Fed interest rate decision, inflation data and FIIs are the key factors that are expected to drive stock markets this week, analysts

Also, global trends will also be tracked by investors for further cues, they added.

"The Indian stock market's future trajectory will be influenced by a blend of global and domestic factors. Global trends, particularly the performance of US markets and the Fed's monetary policy decision, will play a significant role.

Additionally, domestic economic indicators like inflation, will shape the market sentiment," Pravesh Gour, Senior Technical Analyst, Swastika Investmart Ltd, said.

The flow of foreign and domestic institutional investalso be a key dri ver, he said. Gour further said the rupee's exchange rate and crude oil prices will be critical determinants of market direction.

From the domestic macroeconomic data announcement, WPI inflation will be in focus on Monday.

Bihar sees surge in big ticket investments



PNS PATNA

Bihar, once seen as less industry-friendly, has seen a surge in big ticket investments from the likes of Adani Group to Coca-Cola as it packages its vast resources with progressive policy to lure investors.

Its industries and tourism minister Nitish Mishra, with his CEO-style approach to governance, is pivoting Bihar into a state that could be a gateway for investors to eastern India.

Mishra says the perception bias regarding Bihar's indusbeing overcome.

In recent months, Adani Group has announced investment of Rs 8,700 crore in the state, Ambuja Cements is setting up a Rs 1,200-crore unit, and Coca-Cola is expanding its bottling capacity. Bihar Business Connect-2023 -- the

state's investor meet -- last year saw memoranda of understanding (MoUs) worth over Rs 50,000 crore being signed with 300 companies. And the second edition this week is expected to rake in

Bihar's industrial potential is limitless, he says. "Bihar has been a victim of perception. But that is changing now."

The state offers investors

fiscal incentives ranging from interest subvention to reimbursement of state GST, stamp duty waiver, export subsidy and concessions for trans-Plus, it offers a single window clearance not just at the time of approval but also in disbursal of incentives. Combine that with its resource endowment, inexpensive labour and vast market, Bihar has a potent mixture for industrial

India Inc raises record Rs 1.21 lakh crore via QIPs

PNS NEW DELHI

Fundraising through qualified institutional placements (QIPs) reached an all-time high in 2024, surpassing the Rs 1 lakh crore-mark for the first time ever in a calendar year, fuelled by strong stock market conditions and higher valuations.

Indian companies have raised Rs 1,21,321 crore through QIPs till November, according to data compiled by Prime Database.

This represents a more than two-fold increase compared to the Rs 52,350 crore mobilised in the previous calendar year.

The sharp increase showed market resilience has been a key factor driving this growth as companies will continue to garner capital through Qualified Institutional Placements (QIPs), analysts

According to the data, 82 companies have tapped capital markets with QIP issues till with just 35 that raised Rs 38,220 crore during the same period last year.

QIP is one of the quickest products to raise funds from institutional investors. It is designed for listed firms and investment trusts, which allow them to mobilise funds quick-



ly from institutional investors without the need to submit any pre-issue filings to market regulators.

Major contributors to the record-breaking year such as diversified conglomerate Vedanta group and food delivery major Zomato raised as much as Rs 8,500 crore each via QIPs.

They were followed by Adani Energy Solutions and Varun Beverages, which raised Rs 8,373 crore and Rs 7,500

Other significant QIP transactions during CY24 include Samvardhana Motherson International at Rs 6,438 crore and Godrej Properties at Rs 6,000 crore and KEI Industries at Rs 2,000 crore.

In addition, state-owned lender Punjab National Bank, Projects, were also among companies that raised capital through the QIP route to bolster their financial reserves.

As per Prime Database, financial services company JM Financial emerged as the top lead manager for the QIP transactions, as it handled 16

"In 2024, promoters have taken advantage of strong market conditions, leveraging higher valuations and upward ends in the second: ket to raise funds. Our performance reflects our superior distribution capabilities and our ability to handle complex transactions and achieve results for our clients," JM Financial Ltd Managing Director Chirag Negandhi

Hindujas hope to take over RCAP by Jan-end

PNS NEW DELHI

Hinduja Group company IIHL is expecting to complete the acquisition of debt-ridden Reliance Capital (RCAP) by next month and aims to ramp up banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI) business more than three-fold to USD 50 billion in the next five

years.
"Most of the approvals and procedures related to the resolution process of Reliance Capital are complete. Couple of the procedures at the end of the administrator and CoC are to be completed. We hope that all these will be over in the next 4-6 weeks and RCAP should come into the fold of Hinduja Group by the end of January," IIHL Chairman



Ashok P Hinduja said.

With the acquisition of RCAP, he said IndusInd International Holdings Ltd (IIHL) is targeting a valuation of USD 50 billion by 2030 as against the current valuation of USD 15 billion (as on

September 30, 2024).

Mauritius-based IIHL

emerged as the successful suit-

or with a bid of Rs 9,650 crore

for the resolution of RCAP.

Later, the company paid Rs

200 crore to bolster RCAP sol-

vency, which was over and

Law Tribunal (NCLT), Mumbai, on February 27, 2024, approved IIHL's resolution plan and subsequently extended the deadline for completion of the transaction to January 31, 2025.
As soon as delisting of

above the bid amount. The National Company

shares is over, money will be handed over to RCAP debtors, he said, adding that delisting usually takes 4-6 weeks. Other procedures include creation of trust for transfer of

excluded assets, capital reduction, release of all charges on assets of RCAP, etc.

Of the total amount, Rs 2,750 crore is the equity portion while the rest is debt and all these are fully committed,

Turkey (11 per cent), South

Korea (10 per cent), and

Taiwan (5 per cent) round off

All fossil fuels taken togeth-

er, "India dropped to third in

the list of largest buyers of

Russian fossil fuels in

the top five buyers list,'

according to CREA.

Federal Reserve. This revival follows significant outflows in the preceding

Rs 22,766 cr

FPIs return to Indian

equities; infuse

PNS NEW DELHI

Foreign investors have made a strong comeback to Indian equities with a net investment of Rs 22.766 crore in the first two weeks of December driven by expectations of rate cut by the US

months, with Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) pulling out a net Rs 21,612 crore in November and a massive Rs 94,017 crore in October the worst monthly outflow on record.

Interestingly, September had marked a ninemonth high for FPI inflows, with a net investment of Rs 57,724 crore, highlighting the volatility in foreign investment trends. With the latest inflow, FPI investment has reached at Rs 7,747 crore in 2024 so far, data

with the depositories showed. Looking ahead, the flow of foreign investments into Indian equity markets will hinge on several key factors. These include the policies implemented under Donald Trump's presidency, the prevailing inflation and interest rate environment, and the evolving geopolitical landscape, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director, Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said.

Additionally, the third-quarter earnings performance of İndian companies and the country's progress on the economic growth front will play a crucial role in shaping investor sentiment and influencing foreign inflows, he



depositories, made a net investment of month (till December

According

13). This was driven by expectations of a US Federal Reserve rate cut. A shift toward monetary easing has improved global liquidity, drawing capital into emerg-ing markets like India. These inflows reflect sustained interest in India as a growth market, Karthick Jonagadla, smallcase Manager and Founder of

Also, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) enhanced liquidity by lowering the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) that boosted investors' sentiment, Vipul Bhowar, Senior Director - Listed Investments at Waterfield Advisors, said.

Quantace Research, said.

India's import of Russian oil drops on shrinking discounts exports - India (17 per cent),

PNS NEW DELHI

India's import of Russian crude oil dropped in November to its lowest level since June 2022 but the Kremlin continues to be the biggest source of oil for India, according to a monthly tracker report of a European think tank.

India became the second biggest buyer of Russian crude oil since Moscow invaded Ukraine in February 2022, with purchases rising from less than one per cent of the total oil imported to almost 40 per cent of the country's total

oil purchases. The rise was primarily because the Russian crude oil was available at a discount to other internationally traded oil due to the price cap and the European nations shunning purchases from Moscow

"India's imports of Russian crude oil dropped by a massive 55 per cent in November - the lowest figure since June 2022," the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air

(CREA) said its latest report. Russia remained India's top oil supplier, followed by Iraq and Saudi Arabia.



"China has bought 47 per cent of Russia's crude exports, followed by India (37 per cent), the EU (6 per cent), and Turkey (6 per cent)," CREA said without giving absolute

numbers. In November, there was a 17 per cent month-on-month increase in the discount on Russia's Urals grade crude oil to an average of USD 6.01 per barrel compared to Brent crude oil. The discount on the ESPO grade narrowed by a massive 15 per cent and was traded at an average discount of USD 3.88 per barrel while that on the Sokol blend narrowed by 2 per cent to USD 6.65 per barrel, it said. Russia predominantly sells ESPO and Sokol grades of

crude oil to India. Besides crude oil, India bought smaller quantities of coal from Russia

"From December 5, 2022 until the end of November 2024, China purchased 46 per cent of all Russia's coal

November, contributing 17 per cent (EUR 2.1 billion) to Russia's monthly export earnings from its top five importers. There was a significant 22 per cent drop in Russian revenues from crude oil exports to India in November," it said.

Hyderabad Contrabation Herein The pioneer by the

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Monday December 16, 2024

Destination 'I do' Redefining the wedding experience

As the destination wedding industry flourishes worldwide, India emerges as a key player, with its segment poised for a remarkable growth rate of 23.1% CAGR. *The Pioneer* delves into this evolving trend with insights from leading industry experts



n a sun-dappled courtyard of a restored Rajasthani palace, a bride twirls in a lehenga embroidered with her love story, as a band plays a medley of folk tunes and chart-toppers. Hundreds of miles away, another couple exchanges vows on a secluded Greek island, their families watching on a live stream while sipping cocktails named after their favourite moments together.

Welcome to the world of modern weddings,

Welcome to the world of modern weddings, where grandiosity and personalisation converge. Destination weddings and bespoke trousseaux are no longer niche indulgences; they have become defining trends, reshaping the \$300 billion global wedding industry. Couples today aren't just walking down the aisle—they are curating a deeply personal experience that tells their unique story.

The allure of destination weddings

From the beaches of Bali to the vineyards of Tuscany, destination weddings have become the preferred choice for millennial and Gen Z couples looking to break away from traditional hometown ceremonies. According to a latest survey by The Knot, nearly one in four weddings now takes place in a destination outside the couple's home city.

"Destination weddings allow couples to combine the intimacy of a vacation with their nuptials," says wedding planner Gunjan Bansal of L'amore Weddings whose clientele includes global entrepreneurs and Bollywood celebrities. "It's a way to escape the cookiecutter mold and immerse guests in an unforgettable experience."

"As a destination wedding planner, I see Indian weddings as a symphony of tradition, culture and unmatched grandeur. Each celebration is a journey, weaving timeless rituals with the charm of breathtaking destinations—from the majestic palaces of Rajasthan to serene beaches in Europe. Every detail is curated to reflect the heritage while embracing the uniqueness of the locale," adds Bansal.

The pandemic may have momentarily paused globe-trotting weddings, but it also amplified their appeal. "Couples now want to make up for lost time with extraordinary, one-of-a-kind experiences," explains Upendra Bahadur Srivastava of United Hoteliers Of Udaipur Society. And they're willing to splurge—the average destination wedding costs 20-30% more than a local ceremony, with planners, stylists and concierge services adding personalised touches.

Over the years, weddings have also become either minimalist or extravagant. The idea of



luxury while subjective has evolved over the time. Jumeirah Carlton Tower, London is the epitome of luxury and personalisation for destination weddings and bespoke trousseau experiences. Situated in the heart of Knightsbridge, the hotel offers stunning venues, including a grand ballroom and picturesque views of Cadogan Gardens, creating an elegant setting for intimate celebrations. "With tailored services, the hotel brings every couple's vision to life, from personalised decor and gourmet catering to seamless accommodations for guests. It excels in hosting multicultural weddings, blending diverse traditions with a sophisticated London charm. Beyond weddings, Jumeirah Carlton Tower enhances the bridal journey with exclusive trousseau experiences. Its proximity to iconic boutiques like Harrods and Sloane Street provides access to world-class designers for crafting unique wedding attire," shares Andrew Booth, Hotel Manager, Jumeirah Carlton Tower, London.

Brides also enjoy pre-wedding rituals, including private fittings, beauty consultations, and indulgent spa treatments at their award-winning Peak Fitness Club & Spa.

Personalisation of the trousseau

While the venues have expanded across continents, the trousseau—the collection of clothing, accessories and memorabilia assembled for the bride—has undergone a quiet revolution. Once a showcase of family heirlooms and fine silks, today's trousseaux are deeply personal, blending tradition with modernity.

Indonesia offers a captivating setting for Indian destination weddings, blending its natural beauty with rich cultural experiences.

From Bali's tranquil beaches to Yogyakarta's historic temples, these locations provide a stunning backdrop for a traditional yet exotic celebration. Couples are incorporating Indian wedding rituals, such as a Hindu ceremony with Balinese blessings, creating a seamless fusion of cultures.

For personalised trousseaus, Indonesia's artisanal heritage plays a pivotal role. The intricate patterns of batik and ikat textiles can be woven into bridal outfits, adding a unique, cultural flair. Brides can select saris or lehengas crafted from Indonesian fabrics, or choose contemporary designs inspired by the region's craftsmanship. Handcrafted accessories such as silver jewelry from Bali or pearl jewelry from Lombok can complement the bridal attire, making it even more special.

Eco-friendly, handcrafted packaging made

Eco-friendly, handcrafted packaging made from bamboo or rattan enhances the trousseau experience, reflecting Indonesia's commitment to sustainability. By blending the beauty of Indonesian landscapes with Indian wedding traditions, couples can enjoy a wedding that is as memorable as it is unique, creating a perfect harmony of cultures, elegance, and timeless memories," says Erny Wahyuni, social and cultural affairs at the Indonesian Embassy.

Indonesian Embassy.

Sustainability, too, is shaping this trend.

Conscious brides are increasingly opting for repurposed vintage fabrics, renting luxury pieces, or commissioning outfits that can be worn beyond the wedding day. "My trousseau is about creating memories, not waste," says entrepreneur Megha Sharma, who wore a saree stitched from her grandmother's wedding lebenga for her reception.

ding lehenga for her reception. Grooms, often overlooked in traditional trousseau planning, are also stepping into the spotlight. Personalised sherwanis, embroidered pocket squares and monogrammed cufflinks have found a place in contemporary trousseaux, reflecting the groom's personality.

Social media: A silent architect

Behind this shift lies the invisible hand of social media. Pinterest boards, Instagram reels and TikTok trends have turned wedding planning into a spectator sport, pushing couples to raise the bar.

Over 80% of wedding planning now happens online, with couples leveraging apps, websites, and hashtags to organise and personalize their ceremonies. This trend is reshaping the industry by enhancing visibility and access to diverse venues.

ity and access to diverse venues.

"Couples want their weddings to be Instagrammable," but not in a generic way," says luxury wedding photographer Vivek Saparia who shot Ambani's functions in the recent past. "They're seeking moments that look stunning but also feel authentic—like a barefoot beach ceremony or a cake inspired by their favourite travel destination."

This digital-first approach also extends to trousseaux. Brides are documenting the unboxing of their personalised wardrobe with as much care as the actual ceremony, often collaborating with influencers and stylists for pre-wedding shoots.

"At Narain Niwas, we understand that weddings today are not just personal milestones but moments shared widely, thanks to social media. The way people celebrate, document and share their big day has redefined modern weddings. We have observed that people are attracted to the royal charm of heritage properties creating picturesque backdrops that resonate with couples seeking both timeless elegance and shareable memories," says, Thakur Prithvi Singh Kanota, managing director, Narain Niwas Palace in Jaipur.

Despite these modern flourishes, tradition remains at the heart of these celebrations. Destination weddings and personalised trousseaux are often vehicles for reviving heritage innovatively.

For instance, couples marrying in heritage venues often incorporate local customs into their ceremonies. A South Indian couple tying the knot in Udaipur included Rajasthani folk dances, blending their family's and the locale traditions. Similarly, trousseaux now frequently include regional crafts, from Pashmina shawls to Banarasi sarees, customised with the bride's initials or wedding date.

Kickin' it old school:

Karate Girls packs a punch

TEJAL SINHA tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

PLOT:

In the vibrant city of Nashik, a tale of rivalry and self-discovery unfolds. At its core are two vastly different individuals: Komal (played by Ashlesha Thakur), a rough-around-the-edges firecracker and Abha (played by Celesti Bairagey), an accomplished social media influencer. Their worlds collide when Komal reluctantly joins Navodaya, a prestigious karate academy run by Abha's father, Ajay Kadam (played by Manav Gohil). As the Nashik Karate Federation Tournament looms, the team faces unexpected challenges, including a heated rivalry between Navodaya and the opposing dojo, Firebolt, led by the enigmatic JD (played by Meiyang Chang). As tensions rise, Komal and Abha must navigate their differences and learn to work together, both on and off the mat.

HIGHLIGHTS

The storylineof *Karate Girls* is undeniably captivating, thanks in large part to the authentic performances of its young leads. The camaraderie between Abha, Komal and Vicky is genuinely heartwarming, with their playful banter and immature rivalries evoking a sense of nostalgia for carefree school days. As their friendship blossoms, it's impossible not to smile along with them. Meanwhile, the adult characters, particularly Ajay, grapple with more serious concerns, such as saving the dojo and confronting past disappointments. These storylines add a poignant layer of depth, making the characters' struggles feel relatable and intensely personal.

DRAWBACKS

While *Karate Girls* shines with its engaging narrative and endearing characters, the series' implicity and predictability hold it back from reaching its full potential. The storyline unfolds with ease, lacking complex conflicts or unexpected twists, relying instead on familiar tropes. Nevertheless, the show's execution is commendable and its concise runtime ensures a breezy, entertaining watch that keeps you invested in the characters' journeys.

breezy, entertaining watch that keeps you invested in the characters' journeys.

Karate Girls presents a compelling package for young audiences, boasting uplifting themes and relatable characters that resonate deeply. While it excels in its dramatic and interpersonal storytelling, the series stops short of attaining the

Regrettably, the martial arts aspect, which initially sparks interest, gradually takes a backseat to the dramatic narrative and character relationships, leaving viewers craving more intense action and karate-centric storytelling.

PERFORMANCES

The cast of *Karate Girls* delivers impressive performances, elevating the series to new heights. Manav Gohil shines as Ajay, bringing depth and nuance to the complex character. Meiyang Chang's portrayal of the cunning JD adds an intriguing layer to the narrative. Ashlesha Thakur impresses as Komal, showcasing her range as a courageous and determined young karateka. Celesti Bairagey's Abha is a relatable and endearing character, perfectly capturing the essence of a Gen Z influencer-turned karate enthusiast. The romantic subplots, featuring Rohan Joshi and Chirag Katrecha, add a charming touch to the story.

iconic stature of revered martial arts classics. TECHNICAL ASPECTS

The production values are decent, with good cinematography and editing. The background score and music, composed by Udayan Dharmadhikari, beautifully complement the drama. While the training sequences led by Sensei Ajay offer valuable insights, they may feel overly lengthy for viewers seeking high-octane action.

VERDICT

Karate Girls is a heartwarming and engaging series that shines with its uplifting themes, relatable characters and commendable performances. Although it falls short of achieving iconic status due to its simplicity and predictability, the show's concise runtime and breezy narrative make for an entertaining watch. With its positive portrayal of female empowerment, friendship and perseverance, Karate Girls is a delightful addition to the world of Indian web series.



Nose troubles? How a deviated septum

Nose troubles? How a deviated septum can wreak havoc on your health

Por some, a deviated septum is something they're born with, while for others, it might be the result of an injury during birth or from trauma over the years. Some childhood accidents like falls and hitting your nose might appear trivial but, taken together, these tiny incidents could result in nasal cartilage shifting over time. Thus, this may cause one of your nostrils to be narrower than the other because the septum – the wall that divides them – bends toward it.

the wall that divides them – bends toward it.

In several ways, having a deviated septum can greatly impair your life. One finds breathing more difficult which usually makes him/her resort to mouth breathing which is less efficient and comes with its own problems like dry mouth and sore throat. It also interferes with sleep at night causing snoring or even sleep apnea resulting in daytime fatigue and inability to concentrate properly. Additionally, clogged air flow can lead to frequent sinus infections culminating in headaches as well as facial pain thus reducing your comfort levels and productivity. You may also experience decreased sense of smell that would take away enjoyment from food and other sensual experiences you normally relish in life. Besides, voice sound nasal due to nasal obstruction hence making you uncomfortable

Physical activities can become more challenging due to breathing difficulties, potentially leading to a more sedentary lifestyle. Over time, the constant discomfort and health issues can contribute to stress and anxiety effecting your overall mental well being.

fort and health issues can contribute to stress and anxiety, affecting your overall mental well-being.

How can you tell if you have a deviated septum? Typically, it shows up when you struggle to breathe well through one nostril while the other seems fine. Everyone experiences natural breathing cycles where one nostril might be more open than the other for a short time before it switches. However, with a deviated septum, one side is consistently more difficult to breathe through. A visit to the doctor often reveals this condition during a simple nasal examination.

Why consider surgery?

If you find it tough to breathe through one side of your nose, surgery could make a significant difference. The procedure, called a septoplasty, realigns the septum to the center, giving you more even airflow. But there's more to it. Inside your nose, you have structures called turbinates, which help warm and humidify the air you breathe. If these turbinates are swollen—due to allergies or living in a place with poor air quality—they can further block your nasal passages. During septoplasty, it's common to also reduce the size of these turbinates to maximise the breathing improvement.

How bad does it need to be for surgery?

The decision to have surgery depends on how much the deviated septum impacts your life. Some people notice a big improvement with just a small adjustment, while others with a more severe deviation might only feel partial relief. It's also possible that issues like a narrow internal nasal valve—the area where bone meets cartilage—could be contributing to your breathing difficulties. This can be corrected during surgery by grafting cartilage from another part of your nose.

Ing cartilage from

In most cases, septoplasty is worthwhile. While it may not completely solve nasal obstruction, it should greatly improve it. Breathing through your nose is more efficient than breathing through your mouth and many patients report better sleep and easier exercise after surgery. Overall, if you have trouble breathing through one side of your nose and a deviated septum is the cause, the surgery is likely to make a positive difference in your life.

(The author, Dr. Jyotirmay S Hegde, is the HOD & Lead Consultant ENT, at Aster Whitefield Hospital, in Bengaluru.)

what's brewing?

















Dr. Padmaja Reddy, a renowned Padma Shri awardee and Indian Kuchipudi exponent, inaugurated a 9-day exhibition showcasing exquisite D Sons Patola art at Labels Pop-up space in Banjara Hills, Hyderabad. The exhibition, located opposite Taj Krishna on Road No. 1, offers a diverse range of traditional Indian textiles providing a unique opportunity for art enthusiasts and textile connoisseurs to appreciate these intricate crafts.





The JITO Ladies Wing Hyderabad organised a unique initiative on Sunday, promoting health and wellness through a yoga meet at Sanjeevaiah park. The event, which saw over 400 participants, aimed to raise awareness about the importance of exercise for a happy and healthy body. Sudhaa Kimtee, Chairperson of JITO Hyderabad Ladies Wing, along with Rohit Kothari, Chairman of JITO Hyderabad and Lalith Chopra, Chief Secretary, among the other dignitaries had attended the event.

The Hakku Initiative, led by Director Kota Neelima, organised a consultation programme, "Demolitions in Hyderabad," at the Filmnagar Cultural Centre, where social activists, lawyers, academics and environmentalists engaged in a panel discussion, offering valuable insights and suggestions. The discussions led to the drafting of resolutions focusing on the rejuvenation of the Musi River and conservation of lakes and ponds,

which will be submitted to the

government soon.



ARCHIE



GARFIELD









Nancy debuted in the comic stop Fritzi Ritz by Ernie Bushmiller in 1933. Fritzi adopted her orphaned niece, who soor secame the star. The strip's name changed to Nancy in 1938. We're ringing in the New Year with the history of Nancy!



ARE WE STILL SAYING

THAT?

GINGER MEGGS

NEW YEAR, GINGER





WELL, HOW LONG DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD BE SAYING HAPPY NEW YEAR FOR?



CALVIN AND HOBBES



CHOCOLATE AND A PILE OF COMIC BOOKS.



AS SOON AS BUS WOULD COME. MY **STAUGASD** I'M GOING TO HOT CHOCOLATE WILL GET COLD SPEND EVERY WINTER THAT WAY.

SPEED BUMP



SUDOKU

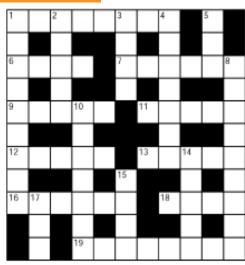
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ACROSS

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- 7 Ride on these animals
- 9 Opposite of best
- 11 Not as many
- 12 Circular in shape
- 13 Below

19 Gave jobs to

DOWN

16 A story in episodes

Entertaining explosives

3 Sound coming back again

watched at night 2 Change

- 18 A planet
- 17 A long type of fish

10 A day's beginning

14 A book written in daily

15 Strike with an open

8 Startled

hand

4 A person who does

operations in hospital

5 Stuff for colouring cloth



the pioneer

Veteran actor Rajendra Prasad steals the show in *Harikatha*

SURESH KAVIRAYANI sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

enior actor Rajendra Prasad acted in a enior actor Rajendra Prasad acted in a web series titled *Harikatha*, streaming on Disney + Hotstar. Maggi directed this web series, while popular producer TG Vishwaprasad produced it. Sriram, Divi Vadthya, Pujitha Ponnada, who are doing regular films, also acted in this web series. Suresh Bobbili is the music director. The web series has a mythological touch, and here is the story and how it fares.

STORY

The story takes place in a village near Araku between the 1980s and 90s. A lower-caste boy, Dasu (Suman Jha), was arrested in a murder case and sent to a juvenile home. Rangachari (Rajendra Prasad) is a theater artist who, along with his troupe, stages mythological plays, espewith his troupe, stages mythological plays, especially those featuring Lord Vishnu's avatars, in the village. Whenever he plays an avatar, a murder takes place in the village, in the same manner as Rangachari narrated in his Harikatha. The villagers strongly believe that God has come down to punish the bad men in different avatars. A police officer, Virat (Sriram), came to the village to find the killer of his friend (Arjun Ambati), also a police officer. Virat suspects Rangachari, but when the murder took place, he was performing Harikatha. Actually, who is behind these murders? Why are these people eliminated one after another? What is the story



behind these people? If you want to know the answers, watch *Harikatha* on Disney + Hotstar.

In olden days, people used to watch *Harikatha* in villages. They narrated mythological stories, top leaders' life histories and many good stories to give a good message to the village people. In this *Harikatha* web series, the director mixed Harikatha and a murder, which is quite interesting. Whenever Rangachari plays an avatar of Lord Vishnu, a murder happens in the same manner in that village. When he narrates the Varaha avatar, many varahas kill a person; when he narrates the Narasimha avatar, another man is killed by the Narasimha avatar. The director keeps the suspense till the last episode about

these murder mysteries, like who is doing it.

Credit goes to director Maggi for coming out with this nice idea, but if he could concentrate more on some characters and the story, it would be more interesting. The director's focus was mainly on Rajendra Prasad, so he didn't write strong characterisations for others. For example, the lower-caste mother and child episodes ple, the lower-caste mother and child episodes are like overacting, and there is no emotion in it. Similarly, Dasu's narration of a story lacks strong emotion. Moreover, the director is banking more on violence and gore, which can definitely be reduced. Pujitha Ponnada plays a journalist, but her character is not written properly. Ditto with Sriram and his friend, played by Arjun Ambat's characters, which are under-

The director narrated those mythological stories interestingly and the way the murders took place was also shown in a way that gives curiosity. The atmosphere and ambiance are good, but the web series ends with a typical revenge drama without proper emotion.

PERFORMANCE

When it comes to performance, Rajendra Prasad steals the show with his performance. He is a senior artist and carried it in a very natural way. He is good, especially when he plays mythological characters, where he showcases his experience and those scenes come out well. He is the backbone of this web series. Sriram plays another lead and plays his part well, but his character should be strong and more intense. Divi Vadthya is there as a tribal girl. Pujitha Ponnada plays a video journalist. The actress who played Rajendra Prasad's granddaughter performed well, and also the actor who played Dasu. There are many other actors who supported well. The music by Suresh Bobbili is good. The cinematography by Vijay Ulaganath captured beautiful locations and also the mythological plays.

Finally, the Harikatha web series is a blend of mythological touch in a revenge drama. The way the murders took place in a *Dasavathara* narrative is interesting, but at the same time, it has more violence and gore. Though there are flaws, the *Dasavathara* plays give goosebumps and still, you can watch this.

Srikanth opens up about his power-packed role in *Game Changer*

Srikanth, who plays a significant role in the highly anticipated film *Game Changer*, directed by Shankar and starring Ram Charan, has opened up about his experience working on the project. The film, set to release on January 10, 2025, has generated immense buzz, and Srikanth's role is one of the most talked-about aspects.
"Working with director Shankar is a dream for many actors, and I consider myself fortunate to have such a significant role in his film," said Srikanth. For his role, the team used prosthetics, and for the first time in his career, Srikanth

pletely different in this film. "When they first narrated the first half, I questioned why they thought of me for this role and whether I could pull it off," Srikanth recalled. "However, after hearing the second half. I kne I had to take on the role no matter what. Once the prosthetics were done and I got into the look, I felt confident that I could do iustice to the role."

looks com-

Srikanth revealed that he plays the role of the chief minister in the film. "There is

a positive and negative side to my character. These shades come out as per the situa-tion," he said. He added that he has scenes with many of the actors, including Charan, SJ Suryah, Jayaram and Samuthirakani. "SJ Suryah's performance is outstanding," Srikanth praised. "Working with such versatile actors has been an amazing experience." Talking more about his character, Srikanth shared that the team created his look after seeing his father's pic-ture, who had passed away. "With that getup, I went straight home and my mother was shocked to see me like that," he said. "To add to her surprise, I called her 'Baby' just to tease her. I never imagined I would resemble my father so much until I put on that getup. Srikanth has worked with Ram Charan previously, and he shared his thoughts on the actor's growth. "When we did Govindudu Andarivadele, it was a kind of young character," he said. "He is now doing matured characters, and he became a global star too, so the characters

Vishnu Manchu joins Hollywood superstar Will Smith to join as a key part-

forces with Will Smith The Manchu family has been in the spotlight recently due to differences among family animation, gaming, blockchain and advanced technologies like AR, VR and AI. Additionally, it seeks to supmembers. However, there is some positive news emerging from the family, particularly from Vishnu Manchu. The actor has port mergers, acquisitions, and growth opportunities in the ever-evolving entertainment landscape. Apart from Vishnu Manchu and announced that his company, Taranga Ventures, a media and entertainment tech fund,

> The \$50 million fund, with a potential extension of another \$50 million, aims to drive innovation in the media and entertainment sector. The fund plans to invest in game-changing tech-nologies and industries such as OTT platforms,

is in advanced talks with

Will Smith, other key personalities involved with Taranga Ventures include Addishree, a finance expert; Pradyuman Jhala, a Canadian investor in real estate; Vinay Maheshwari, a senior executive in the Indian media industry; and Devesh Chawla and Satish Kataria, specialists in investor relations and fund operations.

"This fund is a significant step toward reshaping the future of media and entertainment," said Vishnu Manchu, emphasising the importance of combining creativity with technology to drive innovation.

Lavanya Tripathi returns to cinemas with Sathi Leelavathi

Star Nani.

new film, Sathi Leelavathi, marking her ✓ return to the silver screen. The actress, who married actor Varun Konidela, had not signed any films offlate, leading many to assume that she was no longer interested in acting. However, as Varun had mentioned earlier, Lavanya was waiting for the right project and Sathi Leelavathi has fit the bill.

On the occasion of her birthday, Lavanya revealed her new film, which will be directed by Tatineni Satya. The movie is jointly produced by Nagamohan Babu M and Rajesh T. Tatineni

ayanya Tripathi has finally announced her Satva is known for his diverse filmography. including Bheemili Kabaddi Jattu and S.M.S (Shiva Manasulo Shruthi), both starring Natural

> With Sathi Leelavathi, Lavanya Tripathi is set to impress audiences once again by taking on a different role in an exciting storyline. The shooting of this film is slated to begin soon, and the makers will reveal more details about the

> project in the coming days.
>
> The music for *Sathi Leelavathi* will be composed by Mickey J. Meyer, while Binendra Menon will handle the cinematography.



Mega family feud seems to end; Allu Arjun meets Chiru

The Telugu Film Industry has been in the news for the past few days. The industry was left stunned after Allu Arjun was arrested in connection with the Sandhya Theater stampede, which resulted in the death of a woman. Although he was granted bail on the same day, the Chanchalguda Jail authorities did not receive the bail papers in time, leading to his overnight stay in jail. The next morning, he was released, and the entire Tollywood fraternity rallied around him, offering their support.



Several actors, including Venkatesh, Vijay Deverakonda, Rana Daggubati, Naga Chaitanya and Sudigali Sudheer, visited Allu Arjun's house to express their solidarity. Many producers and directors also paid him a visit. However, Chiranjeevi, who had visited Allu Arjun's house when he was at the police station, did not visit after his release. Notably, other Mega actors and cousins of Allu Arjun, such as Ram Charan, Varun Tej, Sai Durgha Tej and Vaishnav Tei. also did not visit his house, sparking speculation about the reasons behind their absence. In a surprising move, Allu Arjun, accompanied by his wife Sneha Reddy, visited Chiranjeevi's

house and met with him. This gesture has raised eyebrows, given the reported differences between Allu Arjun and the Mega family, particularly after his visit to Nandhyal. However, it appears that Allu Arjun has chosen to extend an olive branch to

Interestingly, there are reports suggesting that Chiranjeevi was instrumental in responding to Allu Arjun's arrest and ensuring his bail. Apparently, Chiranjeevi entrusted Niranjan Reddy, a lawyer and producer of his earlier film Acharya, to argue Allu Arjun's case and secure his release. Notably, Niranjan Reddy is also a close friend of Ram Charan and has represented the legal team for former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

The outcome of Allu Arjun's visit to Chiranjeevi's house remains to be seen. Will they patch up their differences, or was this simply a courtesy call? Did Allu Arjun apologise to Chiranjeevi for his visit to Nandhyal, despite being advised against it? Only time will tell. The fans are eagerly waiting to see how this development unfolds and whether they will ultimately patch up their differences.

THE RAGE OF DAAKU **MAHARAAJ** BEGINS!

will be of that level. Playing the

movie is a challenging one, and

for such characters, one needs a

completely." Overall, Srikanth's

experience working on Game

one and he is eager for audi-

ences to see the film.

Changer has been a memorable

lot of experience. He aced it

Appanna character in this

andamuri Balakrishna is poised to continue his success streak with his andamuri Balakrishna is poised to continue his success of his last upcoming film, *Daaku Maharaaj*. Following the super success of his last three films, Akhanda, Veerasimha Reddy and Bhagavanth Kesari, the actor has begun promoting Daaku Maharaaj aggressively. The teaser, released a few days ago, hints at an action-packed movie, with Balakrishna once again

Now, the lyrical video of "The Rage of Daaku" from the film has been unveiled, delivering the thunderous energy fans have been eagerly awaiting. The song serves as a powerful introduction to the film's intense action and drama, perfectly setting the stage for its grand release in January 2025. Composed by Thaman S, with lyrics penned by Anantha Sriram, the track is poised to become a chartbuster anthem, amplifying the excitement for the film among Balakrishna's fans and beyond.

The song features the graceful presence of Pragya Jaiswal, adding emotional



Ghaati is coming! Anushka Shetty & director Krish unite for a thrilling ride



t's been over a year since actress Anushka Shetty's last film, Miss Shetty Mr Polishetty, was released in September 2023 to great success. Now, the actress has reunited with director Krish Jagarlamudi for a new project titled *Ghaati*. The makers have announced the film's release date as April 18, 2025. After catching a glimpse of *Ghaati*, many were left stunned by Anushka Shetty's portrayal of a fiercely violent character in this highly anticipated film. Rajeev Reddy and Sai Babu Jagarlamudi are producing the film. Following the excitement generated by the film's initial

glimpse, the makers have revealed the release date as April 18th, perfectly timed for a summer release. This announcement was made through a fun video featuring Krish, Anushka, and the producers.

According to the makers, Ghaati promises an unconventional narrative that delves into humanity, survival, and redemption. The film is set to be an intense, gripping exploration of the grey areas between right and wrong, where true legends are forged. Ghaati will be released in multiple languages, including Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi, ensuring a wide reach and appeal.

Sreeleela makes her way into Tamil cinema with Sivakarthikeyan's next

reeleela, the sensational South Indian actress and gracious dancer, is making Owaves in the entertainment industry with her recent projects and upcoming ventures. Known for her captivating performances, versatile acting skills and graceful dance moves, Sreeleela has quickly become a favorite among audiences and filmmakers alike. In a significant move, Sreeleela is set to star in Sivakarthikeyan's 25th film, directed by Sudha Kongara and produced by Aakash Bhaskaran under Dawn Pictures. This collaboration has generated a lot of excitement among fans, as Sivakarthikeyan is a well-established actor with a strong fan base. The official pooja for the movie was held on December 14, adding to the anticipation. The official pooja for the movie

saw notable personalities like Jayam Ravi, Atharva Murali, Dr. Swarna (SreeLeela's mother), GV Prakash, and Ravi K Chandran in attendance, highlighting the project's highprofile nature

As SreeLeela continues to expand her horizons, her involvement in Tamil cinema is a testament to her growing influence and talent. With each new project, she is proving that she is a force to be reckoned with in the South Indian film industry. Fans eagerly await the release of Sivakarthikeyan's 25th film, and SreeLeela's performance is sure to be a highlight. As she makes her mark in Tamil cinema, Sreeleela's star is only set to rise, and we can expect many more exciting projects from this talented actress in the future.



Head dominates Indian attack for back-to-back centuries

PTI ■ BRISBANE

ndia's nemesis Travis Head smashed his second hundred in as many games to help Australia gain a distinct advantage in the third Test here on Sunday. Australia, who were put under pressure by India in the

morning session, gathered 130 runs in the afternoon without the loss of a wicket. Head (103 batting off 118) made the difference in

Adelaide and his successive hundred took the hosts to 234 for three at tea on day two. Returning to form, Steve Smith (65 batting off 149) stood solid at the other end as the duo shared an unbeaten 159-run stand for the fourth

The southpaw, who made a match-winning 140 in the previous Test, once again

lorded over the Indian bowlers who ran out of ideas against him. Even the field placements were questionable with the visitors having a deep point and deep square leg early in Head's innings, allowing the explosive batter

pace his innings.
The short balls were attempted when Head was well set and he duly put them away with disdain. His unconquered comprised 13 fours.

Akash Deep bowled well, especially to Smith, but could not get a breakthrough.

Struggling for runs, Smith reverted to his trademark exaggerated shuffle, to keep the Indians at bay. He found it tough to get going initially before gaining the confidence to go for horizontal bat shots. Earlier, India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah extended his



Australian openers before Nitish Reddy got into the act to leave the visitors at 104 for three at lunch.

Despite the pressure exerted by the Indian pacer, Australia were able to muster 76 runs in the session.

With the majority of day one

lost due to rain, play started half an hour earlier than scheduled time and it did not take long for Bumrah what he has done thus far in the series. Resuming at 28 for no loss, Australia lost Usman Khawaja (21 off 54) in the Khawaja (21 off 54) in the fourth over of the day when Bumrah had him caught behind with a ball that straightened slightly to take a faint outside edge. It was the third time Bumrah had got rid of the left-handed opener rid of the left-handed opener in the series.

In the following over, Bumrah

sent back Nathan McSweeney (9 off 49) for the fourth time in three Tests, drawing a thick outside edge from an angle that travelled fast to Virat

Kohli at second slip.
India were able to maintain pressure after the early breakthroughs with under pressure Smith and Marnus Labuschagne (12 off 55) looking to occupy the crease. Smith, batting with a different stance for the third time in as many games, was tested by the Indian pacers repeatedly as they tried to target his stumps.

Akash Deep and Mohammed Siraj did a pose a few questions to both Smith and

Labuschagne but could not get the desired results.
Reddy, who got the ball to swing, ended Labuschagne's vigil in the 34th over of the innings. The India all-

number three to drive off a full ball and Labuschagne took the bait only to be caught by Kohli at second slip, leaving Australia at 75 for three.

Two overs later, there was a major scare in the Indian camp as Siraj walked off the field after feeling discomfort in his left leg in the middle of his over. He was seen holding his left knee but returned to the field much to India's relief.

The injury scare came after Siraj and Labuschagne shared a light moment as the Indian pacer walked towards the batter to swap the bails only for them to be swapped back. Runs started flowing with inform Head joining Smith in the middle. His cover drive off Bumrah was easily the shot of the morning.



New Zealand leads England by 340 runs in the 3rd test

third test against England on the second day Sunday. Matt Henry and Will O'Rourke shared seven wickets as New Zealand bowled out England for 143 in a session and a half to take a 205-run first innings lead. O'Rourke then had to bat for the second time in the day as nightwatchman when Will Young was out for 60 within 20 minutes of the close. He couldn't last to stumps at which New Zealand was 136- boundary in international 3, having increased its lead to

Kane Williamson completed his 38th half century just before the close and was 50 not and Rachin Ravindra was

Henry and O'Rourke likely will become New Zealand's new ball attack when Tim Southee retires at the end of this, his 107th test. They previewed that partnership Sunday as Henry took 4-48 and O'Rourke took 3-33 in an outstanding New Zealand

bowling performance. Left-armer spinner Mitchell Santner took 3-7 including the wickets of Ollie Pope and Ben Stokes after leading a defiant last wicket stand with O'Rourke which occupied the first hour of the day until New Zealand's last wicket fell

O'Rourke, a classic No. 11 with only 13 runs in nine Phillips in the gully.

Santner reached his fourth half century with a six from the last ball of the first day. He carried on, taking the majority of the strike, before being bowled by Matthew Potts with the first ball after the morning drinks break.
O'Rourke faced 30 deliveries

and was five not out, having taken 25 balls to get off the mark and having hit his first cricket, a leg glance from the howling of Gus Atkinson

partnership between Santner and O'Rourke was enough to cause England discomfort as it lifted New Zealand from 303-9 to 315-9 at stumps

O'Rourke went on to play a key role as New Zealand dismantled England's first innings in 35.5 overs. He bowled at pace and found disconcerting bounce on a drying second day wicket at Seddon Park.

O'Rourke took the wickets of Jacob Bethell (12) and Harry Brook (0) with consecutive deliveries, then removed Joe Root (32) in his next over. He first worked over Bethell with a series of short balls then offered him a full ball

tests at a strike rate of eight, New Zealand showed off its presumptive new ball attack as it took control of the included in a partnership with frustrated England for 77 minutes at the end of the first day and the start of the

duration of the The Saturday and on to 347.

wide of off stump which Bethell sliced to Glenn

Money isn't the reason I play chess: Gukesh on being 'new multi-millionaire'

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

The "multi-millionaire" tag does "mean a lot" to new world champion D Gukesh but he doesn't play the game for material gains but for that unbridled joy, which he has been able to retain since the time a chess board used to be the "coolest toy" for him. Gukesh, the 18-year-old from

Chennai, is now richer by Rs 11.45 crore which he will receive from FIDE as prize money for beating Ding Liren of China in the final of China in the final. Gukesh's father Rajnikanth

gave up his career as an ENT surgeon to accompany his son on the circuit while mother Padmakumari, who is a microbiologist, became the sole earner of the family.

Asked what exactly does being a multi-millionaire

mean to him, Gukesh said, "It means a lot. When I got into chess, we (as a family) had to make some hard decisions. My parents had gone through financial and emotional hardships. Now, we are more comfortable and parents don't need to think about those



things," Gukesh told FIDE in an interview.

"Personally, money isn't the reason I play chess," he said. He always tries to remember why he started playing the game when he got his first chess board.

"I am still the kid who loves chess. It used to be the coolest toy," the reticent world champion explained.

For him, his parents mean the world. Gukesh's dad doubles up as his manager by taking care of all the off-board activities and allowing him to concentrate on the game, while his mother is the emotional and spiritual pillar of strength.

"She (mother) still says, I will be happy to know that you are a great chess player but I would be happier to hear that you are a greater person," Gukesh said.

Still in his teens, Gukesh feels that as a student of the game, the more he learns about chess, the more aware he will become of how little he

knows. "Even the greatest of players make a lot of mistakes. Even though technology is so advanced, there is still a lot to learn about chess. I strongly

believe that the more you learn something, more you realise that you don't know that thing. Whenever I am on the chess

board, I feel I learn something new. It's a process of unlimited beauty." Journey and Destination both

are "important"

The process of the journey is very important but for Gukesh, it is even more important to be clear about the destination the destination.

"For example, I played a beautiful game and lost, I will feel sad. And if I win despite not playing a great game, I will be happy. I tend to look at the result," he said.

Desire to win is more than the

fear of losing
The quality of games in the
final was found to be pretty drab by experts but Gukesh doesn't believe that his desire to win is trumped by fear of

losing.
"My desire to win is stronger than the fear of losing," he said, while expressing a bit of surprise as to how Liren easily agreed to a draw in the second

India needs to get better with old ball between overs 50-80, accepts bowling coach Morkel

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Bowling coach Morne Morkel on Sunday Sunday accepted that Indian bowlers failed to execute plans against Australian century-maker Travis Head and exhorted them to tidy up their act with the old ball between overs 50 and 80.

Head and fellow centurion Steve Smith helped the hosts to clobber 171 runs in 31 overs in the third session on the second day of the third Test here, adding to a wicketless post-lunch segment. Australia closed the day at a highly satisfying 405 for seven.

"First of all (Head) in pretty good form. But I think for us with the ball, if you look at it from overs 50 to 80, even in the last game, is where we fall short, leaking (runs) a little bit. So, that's one area I think we need to get better at," Morkel said in the post-day press conference.

Morkel said the Indian bowlers could not sustain the momentum after taking three wickets in the morning session.

"First up with the ball this morning, we were pretty good, at 3 for 70, but took nothing away from two worldclass players, Smith we know, he's a guy who also can bat long and score runs. They (Smith and Head) put a partnership there and put us under pressure with a softer ball. "It's definitely an area that we need to focus on, maybe

deeper in the innings. Yes, we've got the game plans, but are we executing those game plans with a softer ball from both ends? That's something we need to get better at, getting added.

The former South African quick explained the pre-set plan against Head, though it eventually fell flat on its back. "Our plan going into this game was to bowl a little bit more over the wicket, a straighter line. We felt he played it quite nicely in Adelaide when we came around (the wicket). The margins to him are just so small and like I said, once he's in, what is the best way for the team and for you (is) to maybe slow down the scoring rate because you know he's going to be aggressive.

"The best way (of controlling Head) is bringing a little bit of control into the game and like I said, from over 50 with that softer ball, that's where we're leaking (runs). When Head comes on straight, the pitch kind of feels to (be favourable) a side," he added.

"I'm not taking anything away from that, but it is a venue where getting used to bowling the right length and trusting that, it does take a bit of time. Pacer Jasprit Bumrah singlehandedly shepherded India's bowling with a fifer and Morkel did not read too much into the rather underwhelming efforts of other seamers Mohammed Siraj and luck-less Akash

Siraj is getting stick from 'saints' of Australian cricket, writes sarcastic Sunil Gavaskar

PTI BRISBANE

 $I^{
m ndian}$ legend Sunil Gavaskar has called out the double standards of the Australian cricket pundits for their criticism of Mohammed Siraj's aggressive send-off to Travis Head in the Day/Night Test in Adelaide.

Siraj and Head were at loggerheads after the Indian pacer got the Australian centurion bowled and gave him a send-off. While Head said that Siraj's reaction was uncalled for, the Indian pacer on his part countered that the southpaw never said "well bowled" which he claimed to have told the media. ICC warned Head and Siraj was fined

20 percent of his match fee but what has irked Gavaskar is the holier than thou attitude of some former Australian

players.
"Siraj is getting the stick from all the "saints" in Australian cricket who, of course, were known for their



impeccable behaviour on the field. It may have incensed Australian fans that Siraj's fiery send-off was directed at Head, who scored a magnificent century and was also the local boy," Gavaskar wrote in his column for

Sydney Morning Herald. Gavaskar took a dig at the double standards about how the same people support boorish behaviour from their

"But the same people will cheer if an Aussie quick gives a similar send-off to an English batter during next summer's Ashes."

"There were some suggestions in the media that the Australians should get back to being the mongrels they once were. So, do mongrels simply purr, or do they bark, too?"

He was however surprised at Siraj's

outburst considering that IPL had lessened the animosity among players. "Siraj's outburst was surprising because if the Indian Premier League has done one thing, apart from making Aussie cricketers and coaches millionaires, it has also taken away to a huge extent the animosity that previously existed in the

India to host maiden World Athletics Continental Tour event on August 10 next year

India will host its maiden World Athletics Continental Tour event - a bronze level global meet - in Bhubaneswar on August 10 next year, the national federation said on Sunday.

The announcement was made by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) while releasing the competition calendar for 2025.

The Continental Tour is an annual series of track and field competitions held under the aegis of World Athletics and it forms the second tier of international one-day meetings after the prestigious Diamond League.

'The Continental Tour will be a good opportunity for the Indian team to showcase their potential on home ground before the World Championships in September," AFI President Adille Sumariwalla said. The meet will be a chance for Indian athletes to earn world ranking points (category C) in home conditions for the 2025 World Championships to be held in Tokyo from September 13-21.

The bronze level Tour meet is below the gold and silver levels. This will be the first global athletics meet to be hosted by India after the Athletics-certified.

international permit meets, held in the country in the late 1980s and early 1990s. India has also hosted World Half

Marathon Championships in 2004

in New Delhi. "This will be the first time and most prestigious global athletics event after the permit meets in the 80s and 90s and the World Half Marathon in 2004. This is a big achievement and will help athletics

He said that India is also likely to host a "big" global level javelin meet next year.

grow in the country," an AFI official

"We are trying for a big global javelin event and hoping to get it," he added.

Riding on Olympic gold and silver medallist Neeraj Chopra's success, India is emerging as a global javelin powerhouse in the world. Currently, the country has more than half a dozen javelin throwers who can throw more than 80m.

A World Athletics Continental Tour Bronze Level Meet can only be held in a facility which has a minimum sitting capacity of 3000 with a minimum class 2 certified track with six lanes. The equipment to be used will have to be World



There will have to be fully automatic timing obtained from a Photo Finish System, two clocks, two electronic infield boards and minimum one video screen. The warm up area will have to be adequate for all disciplines.

Sebastian Coe. The Kalinga Stadium in To host a Continental Bronze Level be conducted at the event and Bhubaneswar is one of the best Meet, the organisers shall provide samples shall be collected in strict

facilities in the country and it has hosted several national championships and the Asian Championships in 2017 during which it had earned praise from the current World Athletics President hotel.

adequate medical and emergency services on site, including ambulance service, and minor stitching; physiotherapy facilities at the stadium and at the Athletes'

A minimum of five dope tests must

accordance with World Athletics Anti-Doping Regulations using qualified doping control personnel. Samples shall be shipped to and analysed by a WADA-accredited laboratory.

laboratory.

The organisers must stage a minimum of 12 events, with minimum five per gender including at least one jumping and one throwing event. They shall make every effort to stage the main programme within two and a half consecutive hours. consecutive hours.

The participating athletes will have to be kept at a minimum three-star hotel and a total prize money purse of USD 25,000 must be offered for

the meeting. Regarding the 2025 calendar, the season will start with the National Cross Country championships on

January 12. The national race walking competition will be organised on April 19 in Chandigarh. The Senior National Federation Cup is scheduled for April 21-24 in Panchkula, Haryana, and will act as a qualification event for the Asian Athletic Championships to be held from May 27 to May 31 in Korea. The National Inter-State Senior

the National Open Championships will be organised either in Pune or Bengaluru from September 27 to

The AFI president said elite Indian race walkers will not compete in the Asian Race Walking competition in Nomi, Japan in March as the main focus will be the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo.

The core group of Indian race walkers clocked a good time in March but aren't able to repeat the performance later in the season," Sumariwalla explained.

"Since the main focus in 2025 is the global competition in September, we have decided not to send the

elite team to Japan in March." The national team will also compete in international events to prepare for the World Athletics World Championships from September 13-21, the AFI president

"The AFI has also introduced

regional competition from next year to give more exposure to athletes on the fringes. The regional competitions will commence from

The AFI's flagship event –National Inter-District Athletics Meet Championships will be held from August 20 to 24 in Chennai, while (NIDJAM) - will take place in February.