

DON'T MISS...

AP Waqf Board reconstituted

The TDP-led NDA government has reconstituted the Andhra Pradesh State Waqf Board under the Waqf Act of 1995, as amended in 2013 (Act 27 of 2013). A Government Order (GO MS No 77) to this effect was issued on Friday by Kati Harshavardhan, Secretary to the Minorities Welfare Department. The Government Order states that a total of eight members have been appointed to the Board, exercising powers under Sub-Section (9) of Section 14 and Section 21 of the Waqf Act, 1995, as amended. Under the Elected Members Category...



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Protesting farmers on Friday suspended for the day their foot march to Delhi to press for various demands, including a legal guarantee for MSP, after some of them suffered injuries due to tear gas shells at the Punjab-Haryana border. Earlier in the day, a 'jatha' of 101 farmers began to march towards the national capital from their protest site at the Shambhu border but was stopped a few metres away by multilayered barricading erected by Haryana security personnel. As the group reached the... -PAGE: 5

RBI keeps interest rates unchanged

The Reserve Bank of India on Friday kept its key interest rate unchanged citing inflation risks, but cut the Cash Reserve Batio that banks are required to park with the central bank, boosting slowing economy. With India's GDP seeing a sharper-thananticipated dip in the July-September period to 5.4 per cent - its slowest pace in seven quarters, inflation on the uptick and rupee under pressure, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had few choices to make .. -PAGE: 8

SIT formed to probe PDS rice smuggling

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The State government has formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the illegal export of PDS rice in Andhra Pradesh.

Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad issued Government Order (GO) Rt No 2103 on Friday to investigate cases registered in Kakinada district and other related offences. The Chief Secretary informed the DGP about the growing concern over illegal PDS rice exports in the State, stressing the need for a focused investigation to take strict legal action against the culprits. The DGP was directed to form an SIT to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the matter.

The investigation follows numerous complaints from beneficiaries, civil society groups, and public representatives regarding the organised smuggling of PDS rice to foreign countries. The government has observed that the smuggling network operates efficiently, exploiting the very systems meant to ensure food security for vulnerable populations. The SIT will be authorised to call for information and assistance from any government department during the investigation. All departments are required to cooperate with the



The SIT will be authorised to call for information and assistance from any government department during the investigation. All departments are required to cooperate with the SIT and provide any relevant information or technical support. The SIT will have full investigative powers under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) 2023

SIT and provide any relevant information or technical support. The SIT will have full investigative powers under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) 2023, including search, seizure, and examination of witnesses and docu-

ments, along with the power to arrest and detain accused persons as per applicable laws.

The SIT will submit progress reports every fortnight to the government, and the DGP will take necessary action based on these reports.

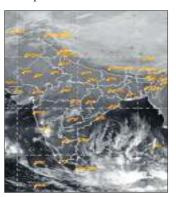
Another low pressure area likely over Bay

PNS GUNTUR

A cyclonic circulation over the Equatorial Indian Ocean and adjoining southeast Bay of Bengal, extending up to 3.1 km above mean sea level, is likely to develop into a low-pressure area, according to the Meteorological Centre.

The low pressure area is expected to form over the central parts of the southern Bay of Bengal around December 7. The system is likely to move west-northwestwards and may reach the southwest Bay of Bengal, off the Sri Lanka-Tamil Nadu coasts, by December 12.

Light to moderate rainfall is likely at one or two places in Coastal Ándhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema over the next seven days. Isolated rainfall was also reported in these regions during the past 24 hours, the report added.



IT job scams dog Vizag fresh grads

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

Fresh engineering graduates in Visakhapatnam are increasingly falling victim to fraudulent IT companies that exploit their desperation for jobs, leading to emotional and financial distress. These scammers prey on young professionals eager to start their careers, often leaving them devastated.

In a recent case, several victims were forced to pay Rs 1.5 lakh each just to resign from fake jobs. A parent of one such victim shared, "It's heartbreaking to see our children, full of hope and ambition, fall prey to such deceit."

The downturn in the global IT sector has worsened the situation, with fewer job opportunities avail-able. Every year, thousands of engineering graduates from the Uttarandhra region enter the job market, making them prime targets for fraudsters. These fake companies use various tactics to deceive job seekers. "They promised us great jobs but demanded a deposit of Rs 2 lakh. After giving us fake offer letters,

they disappeared," recalled one victim. In another shocking incident near Green Park Hotel, around 40 ob seekers were defrauded of Rs 70 lakh. The company rented office space for just one day, conducted interviews, and vanished without a



trace. Earlier this year, another company recruited 30 graduates, promising annual salaries of Rs 1.8 lakh. However, these recruits were forced to pay advance cheques of Rs 3 lakh to Rs 6 lakh.

Despite promises of training and salary increases, most were never assigned any work or given the training they were promised. "I asked about my work assign-

ment, and they mocked me, saying I wasn't capable," shared one frustrated employee. Those who chose to resign were further harassed, with their certificates and cheques held back. The company demanded an additional Rs 3 lakh to release these documents. "We felt helpless. We had no choice but to pay up to get our children's documents back,' said one distressed parent.

As a result, many parents turned to the police and a local MLA for help. Although the MLA intervened, the company still insisted on the Rs 1.5 lakh payment to return the certificates



SC issues notice to Bhaskar Reddy



Dy CM targets 'pseudo secularists'

Questions silence on oppression of Hindus in Bangladesh

PNS MANGALAGIRI

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister





Shammi takes over ACC chief role

Sri Lanka's Shammi Silva has taken over as the president of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC), succeeding India's Jay Shah, who recently became the chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC). Shah had vacated the position after three terms as ACC President. It won't be Silva's maiden role with the ACC, having previously functioned as the chairman of the organisation's Finance & Marketing Committee "It is a great honour to lead the Asian Cricket Council. Cricket is the heartbeat of Asia.. -SPORTS Energy Department Special Chief Secretary K Vijayanand on Friday inspecting the arrangements for the launch of the 'Urjaveer Programme' by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at Poranki in Krishna district on Saturday

Naidu to launched 'Urjaveer Programme' today

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh State Government, in collaboration with Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture under PSUs of the Government of India, is set to launch the 'Urjaveer Programme' on Saturday at Poranki in Krishna district. The initiative aims to empower people by promoting energy-efficient appliances, con-tributing to environmental conservation and economic development.

The launch event will witness the participation of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu as the Chief Guest, with Union Minister for Power Manohar Lal Khattar attending as the Special Guest. The occasion will also mark the introduction

of the National Efficient Cooking Programme and the PMAY Housing Programme.

Special Chief Secretary (Energy) Vijayanand, who reviewed the arrangements at the venue along with senior officials, emphasised the need for meticulous preparations. The officials present included APGENCO MD KVN Chakradhar Babu, JMD APTRANSCO Kirthi Chekuri, DISCOM CMDs Pattansetti Ravi and I Prudhvi Tej, District Collector D K Balaji, District SP K Santosha Rao, and EESL State Head Pavan, among others. Mr Vijayanand highlighted that

the Urjaveer Programme is a unique initiative focused on environmental sustainability and socio-economic upliftment. **Continued on Page 2**

criticised leaders for their silence on the oppression of Hindus and the injustice faced by leaders of Hindu outfits in Bangladesh.

On social media platform 'X', Pawan Kalyan questioned, "Where is your voice? Where is your outrage? Why does justice have a different face in different lands? India showed the world what true justice looks like, even for a terrorist."

He targeted the pseudo-secularists, the self-proclaimed champions of human rights, and global leaders who advocate justice as their guiding principle, accusing them of remaining silent on the turmoil in



Bangladesh. Pawan Kalyan called on the global community to rise above selective activism and speak up for individuals like Chinmoy Krishna Prabhu, who are being denied their fundamental rights.

"Justice is not justice if it is selective. The world should act, for the soul of humanity depends on it," he asserted.

He drew attention to the case of noted. Ajmal Kasab, a terrorist sent by

Lashkar-e-Taiba to unleash terror in India. Kasab caught red-handed and later confessing to his crimes, faced criminal charges, but India upheld its commitment to justice and humanity.

"During the nine months of court proceedings, Kasab was provided with legal counsel to ensure a robust defence," Pawan Kalyan

Continued on Page 2

In response to a petition filed by Vivekananda Reddy's daughter, YS Sunita, seeking the cancellation of bail granted to Bhaskar Reddy, the Supreme Court on Friday issued a notice to YS Bhaskar Reddy..

The Supreme Court heard the petition and related arguments before issuing the notice. The case, which has drawn considerable public attention, continues to unfold with this latest legal action.

Make use of 'Revenue Sadassulu' to resolve land rows: Anagani



PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Revenue, Registration and Stamps Anagani Satya Prasad criticised the previous YSRCP government for cre-ating unprecedented land issues in the State and announced the launch of 'Revenue Sadassulu' to address these problems. Speaking

at a revenue convention in Peteru village under Repalle Rural mandal, the minister stated that these conventions are aimed at resolving land disputes and safeguard-ing the rights of landowners affected by the policies of former Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy.

The minister emphasised that

the conferences are being conducted as a 'sacred initiative' under the direction of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu to ensure justice for those affected by alleged mismanagement and irregularities in land administration during the YSRCP regime.

Continued on Page 2

VIZAG PORT DRUGS ROW

CBI confirms shipment was dry yeast

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

The controversy surrounding the alleged drug shipment at Vizag Port has been resolved, with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) confirming that the container held dry yeast, not drugs.

Customs Principal Commissioner N. Sridhar stated that the CBI's investigation, which had drawn political and public attention, found no evidence of drugs in the 25,000-ton ship-ment. "The CBI informed the court that the container ship carried dry yeast. Following this, the ship, which was under scrutiny, has been released," he said.

The shipment, which arrived at Visakhapatnam Port from Brazil and Germany in March, sparked a political storm after unverified reports alleged it contained drugs. These speculation and political discord.



claims were heavily debated by political parties, especially with elections approaching, leading to accusations of

corruption and negligence. Commissioner Sridhar added, "The CBI's findings have put an end to baseless allegations and political controversies. The court has cleared the container for use, bringing closure to

the issue. With the investigation complete, the Vizag Port Drugs case has been decisively settled, silencing months of

CM vows to turn AP into global knowledge hub

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has reiterated his vision of transforming the State into a global knowledge hub, driven by advancements in IT, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and DeepTech.

Addressing the DeepTech/ GovTech Innovation Conclave 2024, Naidu credited the Telugu community for their pivotal role in the global IT sector. "Over 30% of India's IT profes-

sionals abroad are Telugu, and one in four IT experts globally is Indian," Naidu noted, emphasising the state's immense potential in the knowledge economy. He urged stakeholders to collaborate and leverage emerging technolo-gies to propel Andhra Pradesh towards becoming a "Swarnandhra" by 2047.

Lauds Telugu community for its key role in IT sector in world

The Chief Minister unveiled the Swarna Andhra Vision-2047, a comprehensive roadmap aiming for zero poverty, a 15% annual growth rate, and enhanced employment opportunities through DeepTech initiatives. The vision incorporates a Public-Private-People-Partnership (P4)

model to drive sustainable development.

Highlighting the importance of integrating AI and smart technologies across sectors like agriculture, healthcare, and logistics, Naidu advocated for innovations such as precision agriculture and zero-budget natural farming. "DeepTech will shape the future and provide employment for our youth," he stated.

Naidu also launched two key publications, Forging the Blueprint for Swarna Andhra & Transforming India to Viksit Bharat and AI For Everyone. He reaffirmed his commitment to fostering entrepreneurship with the slogan, "One family, one entrepreneur," and stressed the need for globally recognised educational institutions to upskill the state's youth.

- SWARNA ANDHRA VISION-2047: Naidu announces a roadmap focusing on zero poverty, 15% annual growth, and job creation through DeepTech and a Public-Private-People-Partnership (P4) model.
- AI AND DEEPTECH: The role of advanced technologies in boosting productivity in sectors like agriculture, healthcare, and logistics stressed.
- ENTREPRENEURSHIP PUSH: CM promotes the slogan "One family, one entrepreneur" to nurture entrepreneurial spirit
- PUBLICATIONS LAUNCHED: 2 publications Forging the Blueprint for Swarna Andhra and Al For Everyone launched.

TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN GROWTH: CM reiterates the need for skilled youth and globally recognised institutions to drive innovation and sustainable growth.

in Viveka case

PNS VIJAYAWADA

vijayawada 02



One year of Congress or one more of BRS?

¬oday marks the first anniversary of Revanth Reddy's swearing-in as the second Chief Minister of Telangana. He and his Congress party came to power promising change. Change from the Kalvakuntla Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) headed two-term Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) rule, which the voters concluded had become autocratic, corrupt, deceitful, apathetic, and antithetical to the aspirations that fuelled the separate Telangana statehood movement.

A year into its rule, voters have become disillusioned with the Congress's ability to bring change. Except for taking down the barricades in front of Pragati Bhavan and renaming it Praja Bhavan, in every aspect of governance, from style to substance, the Congress rule is indistinguishable from the earlier BRS rule.

On occasion, it has even outdone the BRS, shocking voters who believed they had already seen the worst and believed any change could only be for the better.

Two days into Congress' rule, state farmers received a warning shot. Before the elections, Revanth Reddy had promised to waive off farm loans up to rupees two lakhs on Sonia Gandhi's birthday, which falls on December 9th. Voters believed no Congress leader would have the nerve to renege on a promise made in the name of the party's first family, no less Sonia Gandhi, its matriarch. Yet, Revanth Reddy ignored the promise for months, only to announce a new date, August 15th, fearing

a drubbing from the farmers

in the Lok Sabha elections.

Finally, only a few days ago,

Congress washed its hands off

the loan waiver promise after

waiving less than half the

BRS and Congress are so identical that neither party can recognise their MLAs from the other party. Even MIM sees no difference between the two. No wonder voters see no difference in the Congress's politics, governance, and even its Chief

pending loans in value, burdening the rest with additional interest and penalties.

If delayed, partial delivery is the fate of a promise made in the name of Sonia Gandhi, wouldn't it be insulting to Sonia Gandhi if a Congress state government dares to fulfil pledges made in the names of non-family, state-level leaders, which its "Six Guarantees" signed by Revanth Reddy and Bhatti Vikramarka are? Can any Congress state-level leader dare to insult Sonia? Except for token promises like free

Minister's language from those of the BRS. bus rides for women, Congress, as expected, reneged on all the substantial guarantees that it had promised to fulfil within 100

days of coming to power. As a result, no farmer or tenant farmer gets Rythu Bharosa -Rs 15,000 per acre per year, no farm labourer receives Rs 12,000 per annum, no senior, widow or other promised beneficiary gets Rs 4,000 monthly pension, no student got a rupees five lakh Vidya Bharosa card or an international school in their Mandal to attend, no



woman receives Rs 2,500 per month nor does any unemployed youth receive monthly dole as guaranteed.

Promising the moon to win and reneging on those promises after the elections was the hallmark of KCR and his BRS government. Within a year, voters have realised Congress is even better at this deceptive game. The Congress's guaran-tees proved to be only as good as KCR's Dalit Bandhu. Unfortunately, breaking promises is not the only aspect in which Revanth Reddy's rule is a continuation of KCR's rule.

Take the case of education in the state. KCR reduced the allocation for education in the budget from around 11% to 6.5%. Congress made no improvements. Consequently, frequent reports of food poisoning, mass hospitalisation, and, on occasion, student deaths from sub-standard food served in government schools continue to this day. Similar is the case with healthcare. A cursory look at government hospitals across the state, particularly Osmania Hospital, is enough to show that no 'Change' has reached poor patients.

Similarly, the Congress had taken no serious steps against any bigwig of the earlier BRS

regime. Though Congress, like the Bharatiya Janata Party, has accused the BRS leaders of massive corruption through Kaleswaram, Bhagiratha, sheep distribution, and egg and poultry feed procurements, to name a few, it hasn't filed a single case against any of them even a year after coming to power, giving rise to a widespread perception

that Congress leaders are shielding BRS leaders for a price. Congress leaders never tire congress leaders level the of saying their rule is "People's Rule" (Praja Palana). Yet, the Revanth Reddy government outdid even the BRS government in curbing citizens' fundamental rights. Just a few days before Diwali, it imposed section 163 of BNSS (earlier section 144 of CrPC) for an extended period of 32 days across the twin cities, curbing the fundamental rights of more than 1.2 crore citizens

who call Hyderabad-Secunderabad their home in one fell swoop, reminding twin city dwellers of Indiramma Palana and her Emergency days.

Finally, the Congress claims it appointed Arekapudi Gandhi, a BRS MLA, as the Public Accounts Committee Chairman. But BRS claims he is a Congress MLA. Gandhi won as MLA from Serilingampally constituency on the BRS symbol. BRS and Congress are so identical that neither party can recognise their MLAs from the other party. Even MIM sees no difference between the two earlier, it was a friendly party of BRS; today, it is a friendly party of the Congress. No wonder the Congress's politics, governance, and even its Chief Minister's language are iden-

tical to those of the BRS. (The author is BJP TS spokesperson.)

Octopus police conduct mock drill at Polavaram project

PNS VIJAYAWADA POLAVARAM

The Andhra Pradesh Octopus Police conducted a mock drill at the Polavaram Multipurpose Project on Friday to test their preparedness for potential terrorist attacks or the emergence of anti-social elements. The exercise, supervised by senior Octopus officers, was conducted in collaboration with local police, Special Protection Force (SPF) personnel responsible for the project's security, and representatives of MEIL, the project construction company. During the drill, the

Octopus Police showcased strategies to effectively counter



attacks targeting critical infrastructure like the Polavaram project, using their advanced capabilities and weaponry. The exercise demonstrated a coor-

for the project's safety. Speaking on the occasion, Octopus Division DSP Tirupati stated that the drill was con-ducted to evaluate the readiness of the Octopus Police to handle untoward incidents. He emphasised that such exercises will be conducted regularly to enhance preparedness and ensure faster responses to emergencies.

Before the drill, a planning meeting was held with the Polavaram Police, SPF personnel, and MEIL officials to discuss security protocols. Polavaram Sub-Inspector SSS Pawan Kumar, SPF Circle Inspector Vijaya Kumar, and other officials participated in the meeting.

'Naidu resorting to blackmail politics'

PNS VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP spokesperson Ambati Rambabu accused Chandrababu Naidu of resorting to blackmail politics and misusing the police for political gains. He clarified that the Kakinada Port deal was carried out in accordance wi



had once claimed KV Rao was Naidu's benami, but now his stance had changed.

The mock drill also involved

local police, project security

staff, and other personnel,

and strategic action.

On the PDS rice issue, Rambabu alleged that TDP MLAs were involved in smuggling PDS rice, along with other scams like land, liquor, and mining.

Youth tortured under guise of **Army training**

PNS SRIKAKULAM

has gone viral, sparking

widespread outrage.

A disturbing video showing a youth being tortured under

PNS VIJAYAWADA/TIRUPATI

Minister for Labour, Industries, Boilers, and ESI Health Services, Vasamsetti Subhash, reiterated the commitment of the coalition government to prioritising work-er safety. Speaking at a review welfare, safety, and health in alignment with the Chief Minister's vision of "Ease of Doing Business" and "Speed of Doing Business."

Addressing the meeting along-side District Collector Dr S Venkateshwar, Minister Subhash stated that industries and workers are like the two eyes of the government. He urged industrial management to act with integrity to ensure safety measures are in place and highlighted the government's focus on worker welfare. He noted that since assuming office six months ago, he has conducted district-level reviews to assess departmental performance and improve services.

The Minister announced the formation of a ten-member committee, chaired by the District Collector, to address industrial safety concerns. Hazardous industries, including pharma, petrochemical, fertiliser, pesticide, and steel sectors, were identified as areas requiring strict safety protocols due to th



about their benefits.

Training for contract work-

ers, who face higher risks, was

emphasised to ensure their

safety. Minister Subhash also

stated that industries must

implement robust alarm sys-

tems and foster awareness

about chemical hazards and

preventive measures.

Worker safety is govt's priority: Labour Min

15 lakh workers are employed across various industries in the state, and ensuring their safety and well-being is a priority for the government.

Minister Subhash criticised the previous government for its negligence in securing Rs 610 crore in central funds for ESI hospitals. He mentioned that the current administration is determined to rectify past oversights by strengthening industrial safety and welfare measures. The government also plans to train unemployed youth through skill development programmes to meet the manpower demands of industries and create employ-

ment opportunities. tion, the Minister stated that The Minister urged industrischemes for construction workal management to uphold legal obligations and ensure the welers' welfare were unjustly suspended. Furthermore, irregufare and safety of their workers. larities in the YSR insurance He stressed the importance of programme were reported, with providing workers with proteconly Rs 47 crore disbursed out of the Rs 178 crore due to elig h as helme ficant risks involved. Approximately and masks, and educating them beneficiaries.

The Minister assured that the district administration would explore the feasibility of establishing an ESI hospital in Tirupati. ing an ESI hospital in Tirupati. Additionally, he committed to providing skill development training aligned with local indus-trial needs to improve employ-ment opportunities for youth. The government aims to create 20 lakh jobs, as promised by the Chief Minister with 75% of Chief Minister, with 75% of these reserved for locals.

The District Collector highlighted safety initiatives, revealing that 18 chemical factories and 12 hazardous industries operate in the district. Over the past five years, 22 fatal accidents have occurred, mainly in hazardous industries. He pressed the need for management to raise awareness about safety measures and organise bi-monthly training sessions for workers.

The Minister praised Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu Representatives from indusfor forming a high-level committries expressed gratitude to the govtee led by retired IAS officer Vasudha Mishra to assess indusernment for the review meeting and called for the establishment of trial safety in districts like an ESI hospital.

Visakhapatnam and Tirupati. Joint Labour Commissioner Addressing the challenges from the previous administra-Balu Naik, Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories Ramakrishna Reddy, Inspector of Factories Siva Shankar Reddy, Deputy Commissioner of Labour Omkar, Assistant Commissioner of Labour Chinna Lalappa, Boiler Inspector Varaprasad, ESI officials, and members of various industrial organisations present.

Naidu to...

Under this scheme, 1,12,000

private registered electricians

across the state will be trained

and transformed into 'Urjaveers'.

These individuals will promote

six types of energy-efficient

appliances, including LED

bulbs, LED tube lights, BLDC

ceiling fans, 5-star-rated air

conditioners, induction stoves,

In addition to selling these

appliances, the Urjaveers will

educate the public about energy conservation and its benefits, thereby fostering greater aware-

and LED inverter bulbs.

Continued from Page 1

meeting held at the Collectorate on Friday, the Minister empha-sised the importance of worker

law, contrary to claims made by vested interests.

Speaking to the media on Friday, Rambabu explained that takeovers are common in the corporate sector, and the Aurobindo Group had purchased shares through a normal process. He alleged that Naidu was using blackmail politics by filing false cases against YSRCP leaders to gain political mileage.

Rambabu also accused Naidu of using his friendly media outlets to spread false narratives about the Kakinada Port deal, while the agreement between KV Rao and the Aurobindo Group had been made mutually. He claimed that the names of auditors and others were dragged into the case as part of an effort to

TODAY

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Dhanishta:	Dec 06 05:18 PM
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Shatabhisha:	Dec 07 04:50 PM
	to Dec 08 04:03 PM
Rahukalam:	9:22 AM to 10:45 AM
Yamagandam:	1:30 PM to 2:52 PM
Varjyam:	11:48 PM to 01:21 AM
Gulika:	6:37 AM to 8:00 AM
Amritakalam:	06:38 AM to 08:12 AM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	: 11:45 AM to 12:29 PM



Forecast: Mostly Cloudy Temp: 33°° Humidity: 71% Sunrise: 6:23 AM Sunset: 5:34 PM

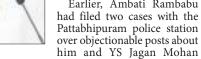
Updated: December 6, 2024 5:00 PM



pointed out that it was that had broken the law, with a

He further criticised the police for registering cases against anyone named by the coalition government, while ignoring complaints from the opposition. "This shows how the department is functioning,"

he said, adding, "The days of such practices will not last." Rambabu also accused Chandrababu Naidu of using Pawan Kalyan to stir controversy, citing the PDS rice issue which later shifted to the Kakinada Port matter. He blackmail industrialists. He recalled that Pawan Kalyan



Margadarsi, not Aurobindo, case still pending in court.

used on the JailTDP account. He also claimed that a person named Seemaraju, who was using abusive language against them while wearing party colours, was a puppet of Nara Lokesh.

Rambabu urged the police to take action on the two cases and added that they had filed complaints with various police stations last month but had yet to receive a response. "If no action is taken within the stipulated time, we will file a private complaint," he warned.

The incident took place in Srikakulam, where Reddy made through the offi-Venkataramana, claiming to cial TDP Twitter handle. He be a retired army officer, stated that morphed photos of runs an Indian Army the YSRCP chief had been recruitment organisation, reportedly charging up to Rs 5 lakh for training. The video shows the victim being brutally beaten with a live wire by the organisation's director, Ramana. Minister Nara Lokesh condemned the assault, calling it "inhumane" and ordering immediate action by the Srikakulam police. Authorities are investigating the operation and ensuring justice for the

victim's family.

Make use of 'Revenue... Vamsi's PA among 12 held for attack on **Continued from Page 1**

Minister Satya Prasad revealed that the government had repealed the controversial Land Titling Act, which had

posed obstacles for landowners. A new law to prevent land

encroachments is being introduced to protect citizens from

land grabs. Revenue conventions will be held across all

villages in the state for 33 days, beginning Friday. The aim

is to bring governance closer to the people and address

land-related grievances efficiently. The minister assured

that citizens would no longer need to visit government

offices for land-related issues, as these conventions will

areas affected by the previous government's re-survey ini-

tiative had revealed around 2,60,000 grievances. He

The minister disclosed that public meetings held in

aim to resolve matters on-site wherever possible.

ing receipts to track their applications.

TDP office PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Crime Investigation Department (CID) has arrested 12 individuals in connection with the attack on the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) office in Gannavaram. The incident, which occurred on February 20 of last year, involved a group of YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) activists, along with supporters of former Gannavaram MLA Dr Vallabhaneni Vamsi, who targeted the TDP office.

Among those arrested are Dr Vamsi's Personal Assistant Raja, Kolusu Kiran, Tirumalasetti Rajesh, Maddala Ajay, Arnepalli Ravi Varma, George, Gandikota Nagaraju, Matta Anil, Ganji Kantha Rao, Songu Narendra, Kadavakollu Rammohan, and Daruvemula Pavan Kumar.

PNS VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP president and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy paid floral tributes to Dr BR Ámbedkar on his 69th death anniversary. The event, held in Vijayawada, was attended by former ministers Merugu Nagarjuna and Adimulapu Suresh, MLC Mondithoka Arun Kumar, YSRCP State General Secretary Jupudi Prabhakar Rao, and other party leaders.

Taking to social media plat-form X, YS Jagan described Dr Ambedkar as a social revolutionary and the architect of the Indian Constitution. He highlighted the installation of the world's tallest statue of Dr Ambedkar at Swaraj Maidan in Vijayawada, calling it a tribute to Ambedkar's vision of social justice

At the YSRCP central office

Jagan pays tributes to Ambedkar

in Tadepalli, leaders also paid homage to Dr Ambedkar. Former Minister Adimulapu Suresh accused the coalition government led by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu of fostering divisions among Dalits and ignoring rising atrocities against marginalised

communities. He criticised the government for filing false cases against activists raising their Ambedkar's Constitution.



voices against injustice. YSRCP State General Secretary Jupudi Prabhakar Rao praised Dr Ambedkar's legacy of equality and justice, asserting that the YSRCP, under YS Jagan's leadership, upheld these values during its governance.

He accused the current government of undermining the principles enshrined in

ness. They will also earn success fees for every appliance sold through the eeslmart.in portal. "The Urjaveer initiative is a step in promoting energy efficiency at the grassroots level. It aligns with India's energy-saving goals while empowering citizens to adopt sustainable prac-

tices and achieve economic benefits," said Vijayanand.

Dy CM targets 'pseudo secularists'...

lighted that Kasab received interpreters to bridge language barriers, medical care despite his crimes, and toptier security, safeguarding his right to life. When his death sentence was upheld by the Bombay High Court, he appealed to the Supreme Court, which carefully reviewed the evidence.

file a mercy petition to the President of India.

India's handling of Kasab's case stands as a testament to its unwavering belief in human rights, social tolerance, fair trials, and secularism-values that remain the bedrock of its identity, even in the face of unparalleled provocation," Pawan Kalyan observed.

Referring to the tragic silence surrounding Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna

Prabhu in Bangladesh, innocence, no legal assis-Pawan Kalyan condemned tance, representation in the arrest of the monk, who had raised his voice for Hindu minorities being oppressed by the interim government of Bangladesh, led by 2006 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammed Yunus. He pointed out that Chinmoy Krishna Prabhu was charged with sedition

for his stance. "Despite pleading his

court, or access to a free and fair trial has been provided to Chinmoy Krishna Prabhu in Bangladesh. The cries for justice have been silenced by fear, apathy, and prejudice. The very idea of a fair trial—a universal human right—is being denied to him," Pawan Kalyan criticised, tagging an image of ISKCON leader Krishna Prabhu.

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alleged that the re-survey was carried out randomly, often without adequate notification or consultation with landowners. To address these issues, the government is

conducting Grama Sabhas to resolve concerns arising from the re-survey. Upon resolution of disputes, farmers and landowners will be given free passbooks with the state government's official seal. The minister warned that any official found negligent or corrupt during the revenue conferences would face suspension. Additionally, grievances not resolved on-site will be referred to the relevant departments for further action, with citizens receiv-

Kasab was also allowed to

Continued from Page 1 Pawan Kalyan also high-



vijayawada 03

Record 27,415.9 MTs of paddy procured in NTR dist

An increase of 23,303.08 MTs from previous season

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The NTR District Civil Supplies Department has procured a record 27,415.920 metric tonnes (MT) of paddy grains from farmers during the Kharif season this year. The paddy procurement dur ing the previous Kharif sea-son was only 4,112.840 MT.

This year, paddy was cultivated in 35,416 hectares (88,540 acres) across the district. The Agriculture Department estimated about 2,36,803 MTs of paddy production in the Kharif season, and the Civil Supplies Department set a target of

procuring 1 lakh MTs of paddy produce from the farmers. The department has established as many as 157 Paddy Procurement Centres (PPC) at all Rythu Seva Kendras (RSK) in the dis-

trict. According to Civil Supplies NTR District Manager TV Satish, as of now, the department pro-cured 27,415.920 MTs of paddy grains from 3,907 farmers. Following the guidelines from NTR District Joint Collector Dr Nidhi Meena, the paddy procurement was started in the Tiruvuru division on

November 1. Procurement began in Nandigama and Vijayawada Revenue Divisions on December 5, he said.

> He added that the purchase of paddy is progressing at a brisk pace in the district. The total procurement value so far is Rs.61.10 crore, of which the Civil Supplies Department has paid Rs.58.76 crore to the farmers and another Rs.2.34 crore is to be paid. There is no shortage of gunny bags in the dis-trict. As per the Minimum Support Price (MSP), Rs.2,320 is being paid to Grade-A per quintal and

Rs.2,300 to common variety, he said.

He said paddy from a maximum of 25 acres will be procured from a farmer in a crop season. Also, he said the government is procuring the produce of MTU 1262, and MTU 1282 paddy varieties. He told the farmers that they should sell their produce at the PPCs and not to private traders. In case of any doubts regarding the paddy procurement, farmers may contact the control room mobile number 7702203571 at the District Civil Supplies Manager's Office, he explained.

State government and Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, Revenue Conferences commenced on Friday. Special Chief Secretary of Revenue Department, RP Sisodia inaugurated the conventions at Takkellapadu ventions at Takkenapadu Village Secretariat in Jaggayyapeta mandal, accom-panied by MLA Sriram Rajagopal and District Collector Dr G Lakshmisha. The initiative, titled "Mee Bhoomi - Mee Hakku" (Your

The conventions will run until January 8. During the inauguration,

State-wide 'Revenue Sadassus' launched

Govt stresses commitment to safeguarding land rights by introducing Land Grabbing (Prohibition) Act-2024

PNS VIJAYAWADA

As per the directives of the stressing the government's commitment to safeguarding citizens' land rights by introducing the Land Grabbing (Prohibition) Act-2024 as a step to protect people's prop-erties. He criticised the pre-vious administration for causing widespread land dis-putes through poor imple-mentation of land records management and re-survey processes.

Land, Your Right) aims to provide assurance of land rights and address longstanding land-related disputes.

RP Sisodia read out a mesprovided for issues that can sage from the Chief Minister, be addressed on the spot, while more complex cases will be addressed systematically. Special counters are set up to issue certificates and verify land records. Officials will notify petitioners about field visits for grievance resolution. Sisodia noted that annual

Revenue Conventions were previously held until 2017, but they were discontinued. The current government has 'Our goal is to ensure that revived these conventions to address pressing land issues. Approximately 60 per cent of

the government approaches citizens to resolve land disputes rather than forcing the population relies on agripeople to visit government culture, and nearly 40 per offices," the Chief Minister's cent are indirectly connected message stated. to land resources, highlight-

The key features of the ing the importance of resolving land disputes. Sisodia revealed that land-Revenue Conferences are immediate resolutions will be

related grievances constitute 40 per cent of petitions received by the Public Grievance Redressal System (PGRS). These conventions are aimed at addressing such issues comprehensively.

Dr Lakshmisha stressed the potential of resolving land disputes. He stated that even minor unresolved issues could escalate into significant social problems. He urged citizens to actively participate in the conventions to make their villages dispute-free.

The programme was attended by local officials, including Nandigama RDO K Balakrishna, Special Officer K Srinivasa Rao, Mandal Special Officer G Umamaheswara Rao, and village Sarpanch K Srinivasa



Minister donates blood on Ambedkar's death anniversary

Says TDP is committed to implementing ideals of Dr BR Ambedkar

PNS VIJAYAWADA

On the occasion of Dr BR Ambedkar's death anniversary, Andhra Pradesh Water Resources Minister Nimmala Rama Naidu paid floral tributes to Ambedkar's portrait at his camp office in Vijayawada. The Minister also donated blood for the 24th time, a tradition he has maintained for the past 18 years.

Every year on Ambedkar's blood eath rsarv

Government Hospital and donated blood. He also inspected the hospital, interacted with patients, and enquired about their well-

being. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Rama Naidu stressed that the Telugu Desam Party remains steadfast in implementing the ideals of Dr BR Ambedkar in the State. He highlighted the TDP's history of empowering marginmuniti ing that the party made GMC Balayogi the first-ever Dalit Speaker of the Lok Sabha and Pratibha Bharathi, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. He also recalled that under Chandrababu Naidu's leadership, Kaki Madhava Rao, a Dalit, was appointed Chief Secretary of the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, and the SC Commission was established

with Justice Punnaiah as its head, reflecting Ambedkar's principles. The Minister also pointed

out that during NT Rama Rao's tenure as National Front Chairman, Dr Ambedkar was posthumously awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour. Criticising the current YSR

Congress Party government, the Minister alleged that SC Sub-Plan funds were diverted under th He claimed that former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy abolished 27 welfare schemes for Dalits under the pretext of "My SC, My BC, My ST" initiatives. He also accused the YSRCP government of betraying Dalits, citing an incident where a Dalit driver was killed by MLC and the body was door-delivered.



NTR District Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhara Babu attending the 62nd Home Guards Raising Day in Vijayawada on Friday Photo: Ch. Vijaya Bhaskar

Commissioner lauds services of home guards

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The 62nd Home Guards Raising Day was observed at Armed Reserved Grounds in Vijayawada on Friday. NTR District Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhar Babu received the guard of honour from home guards. Later, a parade was led by Parade Commander N Sai Kumar (HG 116). The Commissioner felicitated several Home Guards who retired from service.

During the gathering, Rajasekhar Babu commended the efforts of the 998 home guards who serve in 10 different departments in the city. "In addition to their roles as police officers, the home guards have provided essential services to the public during emergencies such as floods, fires, and epidemics. They not onl their duties during these critical situations but also assist with security arrangements during major like Dasara events

Sarannavaratrulu, Gunadala Tirunallu, and other festivals," he added.

He praised the home guards for successfully performing their duties during the Tamil Nadu General Elections. Additionally, he said home guards sincerely provided their services to the people affected by the floods in the city recently. He lauded their selfless services to the Police Department and mentioned that they are the backbone of the city police. On par with the police personnel, home guards are performing their duties in Law & Order, Crime, Traffic, Command Control, BD Team, Clues Team, Dog Squad, Police Band, Hospital and other

wings, he said. DCPs Gowthamisali, ABTS Udaya Rani, Krishna Murthy Naidu, SVD Prasad, Home Guards Commandant 7 Anand Babu, ADCP G Ramakrishna, Home Guards DSP KVSN Parameswara Rao, RI Sudhakar Reddy and others were present.

Parabola9 Incubation Centre opened at RGUKT campus

Centre will provide opportunities for rural students by offering specialised training programmes: Minister

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Minister for Housing, Information and Public Relations, Kolusu Partha Sarathy, inaugurated the Parabola9 Incubation Centre in India at the Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies (RGUKT) in Eluru district on Friday. Parabola 9 is a US-based Artificial Intelligence company that has established its Incubation Centre at RGUKT, also known as the Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) Nuzvid

campus. Addressing the gathering, the Minister highlighted the significant role of the RĞUKT-Nuzvid campus in educating talented rural students from across Andhra Pradesh. He emphasised that the AI Incubation Centre will provide an invaluable opportunity for rural students by offering specialised training programmes that introduce them to key concepts and applications in AI. He said these programmes are designe equip students with the skills required in today's technology-driven job market, significantly improving their career prospects. The Minister further explained that the AI incubation centres encourage students to work on real-world projects, offering them handson experience in developing AI solutions. This is particularly important for rural students who may not have had access to such practical experiences in their schools or local communities. Through these programmes, students can gain expertise in areas like data analysis, predictive modelling, and automation, which



are essential skills in the rapidly evolving tech landscape, he added.

Later, he assured that he would work to produce thousands of software engineers from the Nuzvid area. He promised to develop Nuzvid as the best Software Hub in the State as well as the coun-

Meanwhile, Parabola9 Surendra Director Bellamkonda spoke to the gathering about the company's passion for nurturing accelerating th

month. Based on the performance of these students during their internship period, they will have the opportunity to secure permanent posi-tions with Parabola9, he explained. Later, RGUKT Nuzvid Campus Registrar and Director Prof S Amarendra

receive a stipend of Rs.12,000

per month. Besides, eight stu-

dents from the E-2 and E-3

batches were selected through

a Hackathon and will join as

part-time interns, earning a

stipend of Rs.6,000 per

donation camps are organised through the Dharmarao Foundation in Palakollu, where Minister Rama Naidu has consistently donated blood. Continuing this tradition, the 101st blood donation camp was held at the Ambedkar Bhavan in Palakollu on Friday. As part of this initiative, the Minister visited the Vijayawada



promising startups that leverage cutting-edge technologies such as AI, Machine Learning (ML), and Data Science. He emphasised that Parabola9's mission is to bring Information Technology (IT) solutions to rural communities, ensuring that these solutions have a global perspective and can drive impactful

change. During the event, he shared that 15 students from the E-4 CSE (Computer Science Engineering) department were selected as full-time interns after successfully clearing an aptitude test and interview. These students will

Kumar expressed his gratitude to the government for trusting and selecting RGUKT Nuzvid and its students for the establishment of this innovative Incubation Centre. He thanked the government for recognising the potential of the institution and its students.

Paraabola9 representative and young entrepreneur Kolusu Nitin Krishna, Programme Coordinator Dr Nagarjuna, Central Dean D Sravani, Administrative Officer Dr B Lakshmana Rao, Dean of Academics Ratnakar and others participated in the programme.

AP Waqf Board reconstituted

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The TDP-led NDA government has reconstituted the Andhra Pradesh State Waqf Board under the Waof Act of 1995, as amended in 2013 (Act 27 of 2013). A Government Order (GO MS No 77) to this effect was issued on Friday by Kati Harshavardhan, Secretary to the Minorities Welfare Department.

The Government Order states that a total of eight members have been appointed to the Board, exercising powers under Sub-Section (9) of Section 14 and Section 21 of the Waqf Act, 1995, as amended.

Under the Elected Members Category, Md. Ruhullah, a Member of the Legislative Council (MLC) and a Muslim Member of the State Legislature has been appointed under Section 14(1)(b)(ii) of the Waqf Act. Shaik Khaja, Mutawalli, has also been appointed under Section 14(1)(b)(iv) of the Act, though this appointment is subject to the outcome of Writ Petitions No. 23228 of 2023, 23343 of 2023, and 23373 of 2023.

The nominated members include Abdul Aziz, Haji Mukarram Hussain as a Shia Scholar, Mohammad Ismail Baig as a Sunni Scholar, Mohamed Naseer, MLA, Syed Dawood Basha Baqavi, and Shaik Akram.

Chirala lifter wins bronze at major inter-varsity tourney

place.

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Devarakonda Prem Sagar from Chirala, Bapatla district, has brought laurels to Andhra Pradesh by clinching a bronze medal at the South-West Zone Inter-University Men and Women Weightlifting Championship 2024-25. The event, held at Acharya Nagarjuna University in Guntur, witnessed participation from 125 universities across 13 states.

Prem Sagar, a student at Yogi Vemana University, YSR Kadapa, competed in the 81 kg category. Demonstrating exceptional skill, he lifted 134 kg in the snatch and 163 kg in the clean and jerk, achieving a total of 297 kg to secure third

Expressing his joy, Prem Sagar shared that his parents' dream of seeing him excel in weightlifting motivates him to pursue the sport passionately. He also extended his gratitude to Chittoor MP Daggumalla Prasad Rao and his son, Daggumalla Radhe, Managing Director of Radhe Group, for sponsoring his training and supporting his journey. Pradesh Andhra

Weightlifting Association Secretary and Coach Dinababu, Vice President Badeti Venkata Ramayya, and Yogi Vemana University Sports Board Head Dr Kovvuru Ramasubba Reddy lauded Prem Sagar's achievement, highlighting it as a moment of pride for the State.



AP bags four national panchayat awards

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh has clinched four prestigious national panchayat awards for 2024 under the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar (DDUPSVP) category, securing the top position in each award. These awards, recognising excellence in distinct themes, will be presented to the Sarpanches of the winning Gram Panchayats by President Draupadi Murmu at a ceremony in Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, on December 11. Each award includes a memento, a certificate, and a cash prize of Rs 1 crore.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been recognising the best-performing Panchayats through the National Panchayat Awards, which were revamped in 2022 to align with nine localised Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), encompassing 17 global SDGs. The awards aim to assess panchayat's performance in achieving SDGs, encourage healthy competition, and drive localisation of the goals through Panchayati Raj Institutions, tar-

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been recognising the bestperforming Panchayats through the National Panchayat Awards, which were revamped in 2022 to align with nine localised Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), encompassing 17 global SDGs. The awards aim to assess panchayat's performance in achieving SDGs, encourage healthy competition, and drive localisation of the goals through Panchayati Raj Institutions, targeting 2030 for completion.

geting 2030 for completion. Commissioner of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Krishna Teja announced on Friday that the four award-win-

ning Gram Panchayats are Bommasamudram in Irala Mandal of Chittoor district, recognised under the theme of Health Panchayat; Nyayampudi in Nakkapalle Mandal of Anakapalli district, awarded for the Water Sufficient Panchayat theme; Tagarampudi in Anakapalli Mandal of Anakapalli district, honoured as a Clean and Green Panchayat; and Muppalla in Chandrapadu Mandal of NTR district, acknowledged for being a Socially Just and Socially Secured Panchayat.

Krishna Teja congratulated the Sarpanches, ward members, nance.

and residents of these Gram Panchayats for their efforts. He also commended Mandal, district, and state-level officials for their support in securing this recognition.

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development K Pawan Kalyan also extended his congratulations to the Sarpanches, Secretaries, and officials involved in this achievement. Sharing his sentiments on social media platform X, he highlighted that Andhra Pradesh, for the first time, has won four National Panchayat Awards under the DDUPSVP category, demonstrating the state's commitment to achieving localised SDGs and strengthening grassroots gover-

Employees present 16 demands before govt

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Public Transport Department (APPTD) employees, represented by the APJAC Amaravati, submitted a memorandum with 16 pending issues to the government on Friday. APJAC Amaravati

chairman Bopparaju Venkateswarlu and associate chairman TV Phani Perraju led the delegation, which met Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister, Muddada Ravi Chandra, at the Secretariat's CMO office. APPTD Employees' Union State president and APJAC Amaravati State general secretary Palishetti Damodara Rao stated in a press release that the Principal Secretary assured the delegation of prompt action and issued instructions to relevant officials to address the employees' grievances.

The key demands include: payment of pending Night Halt Allowances and Daily & Traveling Allowances for conductors and drivers, along with attention.



outstanding overtime (OT) allowances for 46 days; promotions as pre norms and permission to fill critical vacancies including drivers, conductors, garage staff, clerical and supervisory staff, paramedical staff and officers; exemption of RTC employees from the general transfer policy and allowing transfers as per departmental requirements; alternate employment under pre-existing policies for medical unfit employees; and introduction of additional monetary benefits for employees. Principal Secretary Ravi Chandra assured the delegation that the issues would be addressed promptly. He also stated that, if necessary, the concerns of RTC employees will be brought to the Chief Minister's





DC: Mega Parents Day to be celebrated in 1,788 schools

PNS ELURU

Eluru District Collector K Vetri Selvi announced that the Mega Parents Day programme will be held on December 7 in 1,788 government schools across the district. She instructed officials to ensure that all arrangements were completed for the event.

Addressing the media on Friday, the Collector said the initiative aims to facilitate discussions on improving education standards in govern-

ment schools. "The Mega Parents Day programme will focus on identifying steps to enhance educational standards in government institutions. It will provide a platform for parents and teachers to share their ideas and suggestions," the Collector stated

The event will be held in primary schools, high schools, residential schools, and tribal schools in the district,



beginning at 9 a.m. Discussions will include students' academic progress, teachers' performance, and the availability of basic amenities in schools.

Highlighting the students' involvement, the Collector

"The Mega Parents Day programme will focus on identifying steps to enhance educational standards in government institutions. It will provide a platform for parents and teachers to share their ideas and suggestions," the

noted that they had personaldesigned and distributed invitation cards to their parents. She urged parents to participate actively and contribute their ideas during the

organised in a festive spirit.



Elaborate arrangements for 'Annaprasadam' distribution PNS TIRUPATI

Devotees have expressed their happiness that TTD Annaprasadam Department provided special and extended services during this year's Panchami Theertham fete at Tiruchanoor on the occasion of Sri Padmavati Ammavari Karthika annual

Brahmotsavam. Four holding zones were set up in Tiruchanoor for devotees from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, and for united Chittoor, Kadapa and Nellore districts to participate in the holy dip event. More than a hundred

Annaprasadam centres were set up at the holding points of Navajeevan Hospital, Pudi, SV High School and Tholappa Gardens.

Annaprasadam, drinking water, badam milk, coffee, kadamba sadam, checkera pongali, daddojanam, biscuits and vegetable upma were distributed to the devotees waiting at the holding points from the night of December 5.

1.63 lakh MT of paddy procured, says Manohar

PNS GUNTUR

Minister for Civil Supplies, Nadendla Manohar, announced that paddy procurement in Andhra Pradesh is progressing swiftly, with payments being credited to farmers' accounts within 48

hours. In a statement issued on Friday, the Minister reported that 11.63 lakh metric tonnes of paddy, valued at Rs 2,678.63 crore, had been purchased implemented to ensure hasslefrom 1,67,299 farmers across free paddy procurement. "The the state during the ongoing kharif season. He assured that government is committed to purchasing the farmers' produce without delays and ensurthe procurement process was

The Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla emphasised that measures have been implemented to ensure hassle-free paddy procurement. "The government is committed to purchasing the farmers' produce without delays and ensuring payments are credited to their accounts within 48 hours," he stated

being conducted smoothly, ing payments are credited to ensuring farmers received their dues promptly. Nadendla Manohar empha-

their accounts within 48 hours," he stated. The Minister reaffirmed the sised that measures have been

government's dedication to supporting farmers by streamlining procurement operations and eliminating potential obstacles during the kharif season.



Civil Defence Flag Rising Day celebrated with fervour

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

The 62nd Civil Defence Flag Rising Day was commemorated with great enthusiasm at the Zonal Civil Defence Training Centre in Visakhapatnam. The event was graced by the presence of distinguished dignitaries, including Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Manoj Kumar Sahoo, ADRM (Infra) E. Santharam, Senior Divisional Safety Officer and Civil Defence Officer Siddharth Pradhan, and other esteemed officials.

The Waltair Division's Civil Defence organisation has been instrumental in numerous emergency rescue operations and public awareness initiatives. Their tireless efforts encompass a wide range of

activities, such as crowd control, safety awareness cam-paigns, and relief operations. By actively supporting the Railway Administration, they play a crucial role in safe guarding public safety and

preparedness. A major highlight of the event was a captivating mock drill that showcased the organisation's proficiency in disaster management and rescue techniques. The drill included simulations of station attacks, firefighting exercises, and CPR demonstrations. Under the expert guidance of Senior Divisional Safety Officer Siddharth Pradhan, the Civil Defence personnel exhibited

exceptional readiness to

respond effectively to crisis sit-

Traditional saree from Tirumala temple offered to Goddess Padmavathi

PNS TIRUMALA

A traditional saree from the Tirumala Srivari Temple was ceremoniously offered to Sri Padmavathi Devi as part of the Panchami Thirtham festival. As per age-old tradition,

the saree is taken from Tirumala to Tiruchanoor for the Panchami Thirtham festivities every year. Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Chairman B.R. Naidu,

der, saffron, and other spices, at 2.30 AM in the Srivari tem-**City Division** observes 68th Mahaparinirvan

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Diwas

Vijavawada Division, South Central Railway, observed the 68th Mahaparinirvan Diwas of Bharat Ratna Dr BR Ambedkar, Friday at Divisional Headquarters' Vijayawada Division. Narendra A Patil, Divisional

floral tributes to Baba Saheb Ambedkar to mark his death

anniversary. Srinivasa Rao Konda, ADRM (Operations)

and PE Edwin, ADRM

(Infrastructure) along with

other officers also paid flo-ral tributes to Dr BR

Addressing the gathering, DRM Narendra A Patil hailed

Dr Ambedkar as one of the

greatest souls and sterling

statesmen ever in the histo-

ry of our nation. He said that

Baba Saheb Ambedkar had a

magnanimous impact on the

country, and was a symbol of

hope and guiding light for millions of people languish-

millions of people languish-ing in abject poverty and sans dignity. Narendra Patil said that Baba Saheb's life story is the greatest source of inspi-ration and motivation, who

by virtue of intelligence, hard

work and passion, and with-

out any support, rose on to become the founding fathers

of Indian Constitution. Branch Officers, Staff, All India SC&ST Railway

Employees Association,

Vijayawada members, Trade

tributes to Dr Ambedkar.

Railway

Ambedkar.

Executive Officer J. Syamala Rao, and Additional Executive Officer Ch. Venkaiah Chowdary participated in the saree procession programme held at the Srivari Temple. bosom of Srivaru.

Later, a grand procession carrying saffron, prasadam, tulsi garlands, silk garments, The day began with a procession of aromatic ingredients, including a mixture of 'namakopuri', 'sri churnam', and ornaments commenced from the Srivari Temple at 4.30 musk turmeric, 'pachhaku,' AM. The procession passed camphor, sandalwood powthrough the four 'mada' streets of the temple before reaching Alipiri in Tirupati.



AP High Court Judge Justice Manmadha Rao and NTR District Collector Dr Lakshmisha flagging off the Women's Equality 1KM Walk at the IGMC Stadium



Two youths killed as bike crashes into road divider

PNS 📕 KADAPA

Two youths were killed and another critically injured when the motorcycle which they were raiding rammed the road divider on Kadiri road at Amma Cheruvu Godown on the outskirts of Madanapalle town in Annamayya district on Friday.

The One Town police regis-Police said that the deceased Naresh Kumar Reddy (25) Damodhar Reddy (20) and the tered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH for postinjured Mahendra Reddy went mortem.



to Angalla town. When they

was said to be very critical.

Police said that the deceased woman Varalakshmi (50) was cooking rice on an electric cooker in the morning. When she tried to open the lid, she was electrocuted and collapsed. She was taken to the Government hospital in Tadipatri where she was declared brought dead. The police registered a case.

PNS ANANTAPUR

In a freak incident, a woman

was electrocuted when she

was cooking rice on an electric

rice cooker at Ayyavaripalli

ple. This was followed by the Ekantha Tirumanjanam ritual performed for Goddess Lakshmi, residing in the



BRS's Telangana Talli statue reflects 'doras,' says Mahesh

uations.

PNS HYDERABAD

The Telangana Talli statue installed by the BRS Government reflects 'doras,' but the Congress Government's Telangana Talli statue reflects Telangana, Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud said.

Addressing the media on Friday at the Gandhi Bhavan here, Mahesh said the KCR family looted a lot during its

rule in Telangana. He said that due to the BRS's policies, only the father and son would remain in it. The lan-guage used by BRS MLA Kaushik Reddy was shocking, Mahesh added.

The TPCC President said that BRS Working President KT Rama Rao's arrogance had not come down even after the BRS lost power and that KTR should stop daydreaming of coming back to power at least

He said that 'lakhs of crores were looted' during BRS rule and that it is clear that the BRS will never come back to power

Mahesh said the TG Government had decided to celebrate Sonia Gandhi's birthday on a grand note across Telangana as there would have been no Telangana but for her. He said the number of posts filled in TG government service by the Congress admin jobs in a year is equal to the number of jobs given by the BRS Government in the last 10

vears He said the Congress Government is inviting former Chief Minister KCR for its anniversary celebrations. It is a state festival and everyone should participate in it, he added.

Terming Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy as Kismath Reddy, he said that Kishan should reveal what he has done for Telangana.

BJP leaders are speaking about Sabarmati River but they do not say anything about cleaning the Musi River, he said. BJP leaders have no right to speak about the poor as they did not give houses to those who lost their houses due to the Sabarmati Project in Gujarat, he added.

Manager, Vijayawada Division, South Central Railway paid rich

Walk for women's equality Respond to violence against children: HC Judge

women

PNS VIJAYAWADA

On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and Human Rights Day, the SAFE organisation conducted the 'Women's Equality 1 KM Walk' on the MG Road in Vijayawada. Andhra Pradesh High Court Judge K Manmadha Rao, along with NTR District Collector Dr with NTR District Collector Dr G Lakshmisha, flagged off the walk at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation Stadium on Friday. On the occasion, college students per-formed cultural programmes. Addressing the gathering, Justice Manmadhara stated that the State government is that the State government is working towards eliminating crimes against women in various forms. He advised the women to use several Acts

which are incorporated into the Constitution to get their rights. Union Members, All India Especially, he asked the peo-OBC Railway Employees ple to respond to the violence Association Members paid against children, which is their social responsibility.

Rs 3.5 cr worth of red sanders logs seized, 2 held

PNS GUNTUR

Additionally, he mentioned that many strong Acts were prepared in the new Bharatiya Nyay Sikshasmrithi (BNS) to prevent violence against ported to Guwahati.

Dr Lakshmisha said that for women's safety, his district administration is working effectively. By coordinating with various departments, the district administration is conducting awareness pro-grammes for students at schools and colleges regarding women's safety, he said. Further, he said even the

Police Department is conduct-ing meetings in all rural vil-lages. Besides, to increase women's representation in every sector, the State government is providing employment and job opportunities for women, he added.

Senior Advocate Sunkara Rajendra Prasad, SAFE representatives G Vani, Katragadda Swarupa Rani, A Kumari, Sunkara Aneesha, Chunnupati Usha Rani and others were preThe Mangalagiri police have seized 49 red sander logs, worth Rs 3.5 crore in the international market, while they were being illegally trans-

Addressing a press conference in Mangalagiri on Friday, Superintendent of Police Satish Kumar stated that the 49 red sander logs, weighing 1,201 kg, were being transported in a truck. The logs were con-cealed under bundles of A4 quality paper. A police team, led by Circle Inspector Y. Srinivasa Rao and Sub-Inspector C.H. Venkat, had been conducting vehicle checks at the Kaja toll plaza a couple of days ago.

During the checks, they discovered the truck, which was carrying the logs from Chennai to Guwahati. The police seized the red sander logs and arrested the truck driver Sarathi Kannan and Joya Pravin, the SP said. The logs, weighing 1,201 kg, are valued at Rs 1.5 crore in the local market and Rs 3.5 crore in the

international market

A detailed investigation is underway to determine where the logs were loaded and to identify those behind the red sander smuggling operation. The police have intensified security checks and surveil-

lance to curb red sander smug gling, the SP added. Additional Superintendent of Police Ravi Kumar, Deputy Superintendent of Police Bhargavi, and North DSP Murali Krishna were also pre-

Home guards provide vital services to Police dept: SP

PNS ONGOLE

Prakasam district SP AR Damodhar lauded the home guards for providing vital services to the police department.

A programme was organized here on Friday to mark the 62nd Raising Day of Home Guards.

Speaking on the occasion, SP Damodhar said the role of home guards is crucial in many types of duties, such as maintaining peace and security, controlling crime, regulat-

ing traffic, operating and com puters.

The SP stated that a total of 774 Home Guards are on duty in Prakasam district, of which 691 are men and 83 are women. He praised the Home Guards as an integral part of the police department, stand-ing as the backbone and pro-viding excellent services in the performance of their duties. "The home guards and

'The home guards work hard along with the constables in maintaining law and order, security, crime control, disaster management, and traffic



control, which has greatly increased the performance of the police department. The women Home Guards are working in various police stations, Dial 112, women's police stations, and technical departments," he extolled.

The SP highlighted that various schemes are being imple-mented for the welfare of the Home Guards, including a Cooperative Credit Society, a digital identity card, a police canteen card, and two days of paid leave per month. A voluntary compensation

of Rs 5 lakh, along with one day's salary, would be extended to the families of Home Guards who retire or also those who die in the line of duty. Moreover, medical camps would be organized for them and their family members as part of their welfare, the SP

revealed. The SP presented appreciation letters to 14 home guards on the occasion. ASP Ashok Babu, DSP R Srinivasa Rao, K Srinivasa Rao and other officials were among those who took part in the programme.

Cleaner killed, 1 student hurt as school bus overturns

PNS PARVATIPURAM

A private school bus overturned at Bagodara village in Parvathipuram mandal, resulting in the death of the bus cleaner and injuries to one student.

According to the police, the bus was transporting around 20 students from the school to their homes when it veered off the road and flipped over. The bus cleaner was killed on the spot, while one student sustained

injuries. Fortunately, the remaining 19 students, who were in classes from first to fifth, escaped without harm. Passersby quickly responded and rescued the students from the over-turned vehicle.

Local MLA Bonela Vijaya Chandra visited the site and sought details from the rural SI regarding the accident. The MLA instructed officials to ensure better medical treatment for the injured student



Nation 05

ACROSS THE STATES



Manipur students protest for ST scholarships

t least 200 tribal students of different colleges in Manipur staged a protest near the Raj Bhavan here Ademanding immediate release of Scheduled Tribe scholarship for 2023-24, police said. Holding placards and raising slogans, the students, under the aegis of All College Tribal Students Union (ACTSU), gathered in front of GP Women's College near Raj Bhavan to make their demand. They were, however, prevented from taking out a rally by security forces deployed at the location, leading to a brief confrontation. Police fired a few teargas shells to disperse the agitating students. "Few students complained of breathing difficulties, but no serious injuries have been reported," police added. Later, G Panmei, a student representative, told reporters, "Our ST scholarships for 2023-24 have not been released yet. We will meet officials of the tribal affairs department later to discuss the situation, and further course of action will be decided after that."



Govts use climate change as excuse

ctivist and photographer Eklavya Prasad has a sharp take on climate change -- it has become the perfect Accuse for politicians and bureaucrats to dodge responsibility. Prasad's latest photo exhibition, inaugurated responsibility. Prasad's latest photo exhibition, inaugurated here on Thursday, captures the reality of floods in north Bihar -- stories of survival, despair, and resilience. Leading the Megh Pyne Abhiyan (Cloud Water Campaign) since 2005, he has been working to provide safe drinking water to flood-affected communities. But he is unimpressed with the government's quick-fix approach. "All they do is build embankments. One washes away, and they build another. What's the point? Why not invest in flood-resilient habitats instead of natchwork solution?" he posed. Asked if climateinstead of patchwork solutions?" he posed. Asked if climateimpacted communities are being ignored, Prasad was blunt in his reply. "Governments use climate change as an excuse.

VIJAYAWADA | SATURDAY | DECEMBER 7, 2024

'JATHA' STOPPED AT SHAMBHU BORDER **Farmers suspend march for a day** after cops fire tear gas shells

PNS SHAMBHU

Protesting farmers on Friday suspended for the day their foot march to Delhi to press for var-ious demands, including a legal guarantee for MSP, after some of them suffered injuries due to tear gas shells at the Punjab-Haryana border.

Earlier in the day, a 'jatha' of 101 farmers began to march towards the national capital from their protest site at the Shambhu border but was stopped a few metres away by multilayered barricading erected by Haryana security personnel.

As the group reached the barricades, security personnel lobbed multiple tear gas shells to disperse the protesting farmers and force them to retreat to their protest site.

Covering their eyes and mouths, several protesting farmers rushed to cover the tear gas shells with wet jute bags to counter the smoke. Many of them were seen uprooting iron nails and barbed wire installed on the road to deter their march.

Chanting 'Satnam Waheguru' and holding their union flags,



several farmers of the 'jatha' crossed the initial layer of barricades easily but could not proceed further.

A few of them were seen pushing an iron mesh put up by security personnel down the bridge constructed over the Ghaggar River. One of the protesters climbed the roof of a tin shade where security forces had been stationed. He was forced to

climb down. Water cannon vehicles have also been deployed at the Shambhu border point.

The Haryana Police asked the farmers not to proceed further, citing a prohibitory order clamped by the Ambala district administration under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) that

A farmer leader claimed that five to six farmers were injured due to the tear gas shelling. Sarwan Singh Pandher later announced the suspension of the

march for the day and said the hospital. prohibits the assembly of five or

injured farmers were taken to a "We have called back the 'jatha' for today in view of the

injuries suffered by a few farmers," Pandher said here.



Opposition MPs protest in Parl over Adani issue

PNS NEW DELHI

Wearing black masks with "Modi, Adani bhai-bhai" print-ed on them and holding a copy of the Constitution, several Opposition MPs led by the Congress held a protest march inside the Parliament complex on the Adani issue on Friday.

The protest saw several leaders from some of the INDIA bloc parties marching and raising slogans against the Adani group, its owner Gautam Adani and the government.

MPs from the Rashtriya Janta Dal, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and the Left parties joined the protest. The Trinamool Congress

and the Samajwadi Party, which have so far stayed away from any denunciation of

Adani, stayed away from Friday's protest as well. The decision has been seen by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as a "division" in the opposition bloc. Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and

his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, the newly elected MP from Wayanad, were among those who led the agitation.

Priyanka Gandhi later alleged that the government was scared of holding a discussion on the Adani issue and

wondered why it was so. "They don't have the courage to discuss the Adani issue (in Parliament). Why is there a problem in discussion ... discussion happens in democracy

only, they are afraid of it as well," she said.

Two held with Rs 1 crore worth of drugs in Delhi

PNS NEW DELHI

Based on a tip off --Laxman (32) and Pankaj (18) -- were nabbed on Delhi Police has arrested November 28, the police officer said. He said that the two drug peddlers and seized 30 kilograms of Alprazolam duo was transporting large boxes containing 27 kilotablets valued at Rs one crore in the international market, grams of Alprazolam tablets, an official said on Friday. equivalent to 2 lakh pills.

According to the police, they have dismantled a drug cartel supplying psychotropic substances in the capital The accused were identified as Laxman (32) and Pankaj (18), a police officer said.

Nine persons booked for cheating job aspirants PNS THANE

Nine persons, including four

Pvt hospital under lens for botched angioplasty 112 died in 3 years after free treatment

PNS AHMEDABAD

more people.

As many as 112 people have died in the last three years after or during treatment under government healthcare schemes at a private hospital here which is under the lens for the death of two PMJAY beneficiaries fol-Further investigation revealed additional stocklowing botched angioplasty,

investigations days after the Ahmedabad crime branch arrested Dr Sanjay Patolia, a

bariatric surgeon and one of the Police Bharat Patel. directors of city-based Khyati Multispeciality Hospital, which received free treatment under hit headlines last month after government schemes such as PMJAY. Our probe has revealed that of these 3,842 beneficiaries, 112 lost their two "patients" registered under PMJÅY (Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana) died following unnecessary angioplasty procelives during or after treatment in these three years. Medical dure.

Between September 2021 and October 2024, nearly 8,500 experts will be roped in to investigate these deaths," he patients received treatment or told reporters. The investigations have also revealed that the hospital manunderwent different surgeries at the private hospital, said Assistant Commissioner of agement, including those who

"Of these, 3,842 persons

are under arrest in the angioplasty death case, divided revenue under different heads in the account books and eventually showed a loss of Rs 1.5 crore in the last financial report, informed the police officer.

So far, the crime branch has arrested seven persons, including Khyati Multispeciality CEO Rahul Jain and director (marketing) Chirag Rajput, in connection with the death of two PMJAY beneficiaries following botched angioplasty.

police said on Friday. The revelation came during

Students demand removal of mosque from campus

PNS VARANASI

A large number of students on Friday staged a protest at Udai Pratap College in Varanasi demanding removal of a mosque located on the institute's campus. 500 students carrying

piles of 2.4 kilograms of

Alprazolam tablets from a

godown in Loni in Uttar Pradesh, the officer said.

Chalisa near the mosque when 'namaaz' was being offered there, prompting the police to detain seven persons for a brief period. Former student union leader Vivekanand Singh contented that since the land for the tomb

Amid tension in the college, police on Thursday restricted outsiders' entry to the campus, allowing only students with valid identity cards. In a related development, students of the college have formed a 'student court' and ent an 11-point letter to th



Maha cabinet expansion likely on Dec 11 or 12

abinet expansion of the Devendra Fadnavis-led Maharashtra government is likely to take place on December 11 or 12, sources said on Friday. In all likelihood, the Ajit Pawar-led NCP will retain Finance and the BJP the Home department as in the previous Eknath Shindeled government, sources told PTI. The Shinde-led Shiv Sena will retain Urban Development and may also get Revenue, if Sena sources are to be believed. A cabinet in Maharashtra can have a maximum of 43 ministers including the chief minister. The BJP, the biggest constituent of the Mahayuti alliance, is expected to get 21-22 ministerial posts. The Shiv Sena could get 11 to 12 ministerial berths and NCP nine to 10 berths, the sources said. The final decision on the number of ministers who would take oath will be taken in a day or two, said a senior BJP leader. The newly-elected MLAs will be administered oath by pro-tem Speaker Kalidas Kolambkar at a three-day special session of the assembly that starts from Saturday.

members of a family, were booked in Kalyan in Thane district for allegedly cheating job aspirants of Rs 74.40 lakh, a police official said on Friday. The other five accused are

believed to be railway personnel, among them a medical officer, the MFC police station official said. Senior Inspector Dyaneshwar Sable identified one of the accused as Kalyanresident Anant Ballal, who promised the complainant a

railway job. "As per the complainant,

Ballal, along with his wife and two children, took money from him between January and May this year but the promised job never materialised. Ballal also got the complainant to meet several persons, who the former claimed were railway officials helping to expedite the process," the official said.

"He even provided the complainant a fake appointment letter and showed him fabricated emails. We believe the accused have taken Rs 74.4 lakh from the complainant and other job seekers in Roha in Raigad and other places. We are probing if those the complainant met are indeed railway officials or imposters," the official said.

saffron flags and raising 'Jai Shri Ram' slogans assembled at the

college gate on Friday. However, a large police force already present there prevented them from entering the college, officials said.

The development came days after tension gripped the college when a section of students on Tuesday recited Hanuman

does not belong to the Waaf Board, it should be removed from the campus. "The students and alumni of

the college together staged a protest demanding removal of the tomb from the campus. But the police did not allow us to enter the college. If 'namaaz' can be offered at the tomb, students should also be allowed to recite

Hanuman Chalisa there," Singh



Assistant Commissioner of Police (Cantt), Vidush Saxena, said, "Adequate police force was deployed at the college gate. A

group of students came to express their views, with some of them turning a little aggressive. But police calmed them down.'

Uttar Pradesh Waqf Board, demanding a response within 15 days on the status of the mosque and its ownership. Separately, Mohammad Yaseen, Joint Secretary of the

Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee, said he wrote to the Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Waqf Board on Tuesday itself to check the status of the mosque.

Govt lists steps taken under National TB Elimination Programme in LS

PNS NEW DELHI

The interventions under the Tuberculosis National Elimination Programme (NTEP) have been re-strategised to reduce tuberculosis cases and mortality through targeted interventions, free services, private sector engagement, enhanced diagnostics, and comprehensive support for vulnerable populations, the Lok Sabha was informed on Friday. The World Health Organization's (WHO) Global TB Report 2024 shows India

accounted for 26 per cent of global TB cases and deaths in 2023, Minister of State for Health, Anupriya Patel, said in a written reply in the Lower House. The Union Health Ministry through the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) conducted a National TB Prevalence Survey in 20 states and group of states to assess the burden of TB at subnational levels, Patel said. The prevalence of all forms of TB cases for all ages was reported at 312 per lakh population in the country, she said.

"Based on the prevalence survey, NTEP interventions have been re-strategised to focus on vulnerable populations to reduce TB incidence and mortality," the minister said. The interventions/steps that have been taken under the programme include targeted interventions in high TB burden areas through state and district specific strategic plans, provision of free drugs and diagnostics to TB patients, and active TB case-finding through campaigns in key vulnerable and comorbid populations, among others, she said.

Parliament passes Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak, replacing 90-year-old Aircraft Act

PNS NEW DELHI

Parliament on Thursday passed a bill to replace the 90vear-old Aircraft Act to further improve the ease of doing business in the fast-growing aviation sector.

The Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak 2024 was passed in the Rajya Sabha by a voice vote. It was earlier cleared by the Lok Sabha on August 9.

The bill seeks to remove redundancies and replace the Aircraft Act, 1934, which has been amended 21 times.

Replying to the debate on the bill in the Upper House, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu said the change in title of the bill from English to Hindi, to which many members raised objections, was done to "showcase the India's heritage and culture", and "there was no vio-

lation of Constitutional rule". It will be difficult to pronounce the name of the bill in Hindi initially but one will get used to it, he added.

The bill focuses on enhancing safety, regulatory oversight, and consumer protection while aligning with inter-national standards. The bill also promotes self-reliance in aircraft manufacturing, encourages investment, and establishes robust governance structures for civil aviation authorities.

Responding to concerns of some MPs over skyrocketing airfare, the minister said the government has worked on improving accessibility to a certain extent through Udan scheme and is committed to making it affordable for passengers.

"Through Udan scheme, we have kind of addressed the accessibility. We are now addressing the affordability factor," he said.

Naidu further said the air ticket pricing mechanism is deregulated and it remains a "win-win situation for everyone"

He also stressed on the need to develop local airports to accommodate more passen-

He explained that the airfares are deregulated globally and in India since 1994. However, the ministry monitors the airfares and airlines have liability to inform it before they decide a fare for a particular route.

The civil aviation ministry monitors the ticket pricing and a meeting was held with airlines on the issue of airfares in August.

Airfares were lower during the two days before Diwali this year compared to the same period last year, Naidu said, adding that in major sectors, ticket prices came down by 2 to 42 per cent.

Delhi court acquits tuition teacher in minor student's rape case

'CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIP'

PNS NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has acquitted a man in an alleged case of rape of his minor pupil in 2019 and observed the complainant was in a consensual relationship with him.

Additional sessions judge Ajay Nagar was hearing the case against a tuition teacher against whom the girl, a class 12 student at that time, got a complaint registered alleging she had been repeatedly raped between 2015 and 2018, besides being threatened and forced to watch porn



The court, however, underpassed on December 5, the lined material contradictions court considered the evidence in the girl's statements. and held, "Accused is acquitted In a 45-page judgement of all charges...

Elaborating on the reasons behind its verdict, the court said the prosecution could not prove the complainant was a minor at the time of the alleged offence and therefore the provision for aggravated penetrative sexual assault under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offence Act could not be invoked. It noted the complainant's testimony of having looked at a "vulgar picture inadvertently" and resiling from her statement that the accused showed her porno-

graphic videos. Moreover, the explanation given by the survivor for not dis-

closing such facts of sexual abuse to her family members or police is not plausible," the court said, "after the alleged rape, the girl did not raise an alarm and instead, she accompanied the accused, who dropped her home". Noting her testimony about being "attracted" towards the accused and writing him "love letters", the court held the girl was having "a consensual and romantic relationship" with the accused. It took note of submissions

of defence counsels Nivesh Sharma and Ritu Singh about the complainant wanting to

marry the accused, but getting a false rape case registered as he married another woman.

"It is clear from the record that the accused got married to some other woman somewhere in the year 2018 but before the registration of FIR in the present case. No plausible explanation has been given for not making the complaint against the accused for more than three years which clearly shows that it was the case of a consensual and romantic relationship between the accused and the survivor," said the court.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-----

Plunging into instability

France's political instability and economic crisis deepens as Prime Minister Michel Barnier ousted in a rare no-confidence vote

n a dramatic turn of events. French Prime Minister Michel Barnier was ousted in a no-confidence vote on December 5, 2024, marking a rare political upheaval in France's post-war history. The motion, which garnered 331 votes, united far-right and left-wing lawmakers against Barnier's government, plunging France into political instability at a critical juncture. At the core of the crisis lies the contentious 2025 budget. Facing a massive budget deficit, Barnier's government proposed a budget aimed at saving Euro 60 billion. The proposal included austerity measures that sparked widespread discontent across the political spectrum. Barnier's decision to bypass parliamentary approval for parts of the budget using special constitutional powers was a key trigger for his removal. Interestingly, both the Left and the Right united to oppose the budget. By forcing the noconfidence vote, opposition lawmakers saw an opportunity to challenge a government struggling to unite a fragmented parliament. The ouster is a significant blow to President



Emmanuel Macron, who now faces daunting challenges in appointing a successor capable of navigating a polarised parliament.

Macron's leadership has been weakened, and his coalition has failed to maintain a majority, leaving his administration vulnerable to opposition maneuvers. France's political landscape is now marked by deep uncertainty. The immediate challenge is ensuring fiscal continuity, as the lack of an approved 2025 budget could further erode investor confidence. Right now Macron has limited options. Macron may try to quickly install a new leader, aiming for stability before symbolic events like the reopening of the Notre-Dame Cathedral.

However, finding someone who can secure cross-party support is a tall order. If the situation gets worse Macron could rely on emergency measures to extend the 2024 budget provisions or pass the 2025 budget by decree. However, such actions would carry significant political costs and might deepen the crisis. The turmoil comes at a precarious time for France and the European Union. With Germany grappling with its coalition government's collapse and the return of Donald Trump to the US presidency, Europe's political stability is increasingly in question. France, as the EU's second-largest economy, plays a critical role in the bloc's cohesion. Domestically, the crisis is a test of resilience for Marine Le Pen, whose National Rally party supported the no-confidence motion. While Le Pen seeks to position her party as a stable alternative to Macron's government, prolonged instability could expose vulnerabilities in her leadership. France faces a soaring budget deficit, high inflation, and growing public dissatisfaction over austerity measures. The fragmented parliament reflects a divided electorate, complicating governance and increasing the likelihood of legislative deadlock. The road ahead requires deft political maneuvering to restore stability and address the systemic challenges that threaten France's economic and social fabric.



India's maritime legacy: Lessons from history



pinion 06

ANOOP SHARMA

Revisiting India's maritime legacy can drive advancements in naval strength, trade security and regional cooperation, paving the way for a strong maritime future

ndia has a rich maritime history dating back to the Indus' Valley civilisation. People of ancient Indian empires such as Mauryas and Cholas were active seafarers who undertook long and arduous voyages for trade, cultural, religious and political causes. Various regional powers and rulers such as Marathas, Marakkars and even Mughals tried to contest the ascendancy of European naval supremacy in Indian waters. The esent-day Indian Navy was born out of the Royal Indian Navy in 1947, with already meagre assets divided between India and Pakistan. As a result, the Indian Navy was initially a coastal force responsible for coastal defence and protection of maritime trade. The Indian Navy proved its met-tle during the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971.

The decisive and bold actions by the Navy in the 1971 war made the nation realise the potential of the silent, yet dynamic and effecve element of the comprehensive national power. Commencing with the international humanitarian and disaster relief operations in the aftermath of the 2004 Tsunami, the Indian Navy has significantly stepped up its operational tempo.

The recent successes of the Indian Navy in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden protecting mariners of various nationalities, including Pakistanis, have been internationally appreciated. Indian Navy ships have evacuated personnel of the Indian diaspora and citizens of friendly foreign countries from conflict areas such as Lebanon (2006) and Yemen (2015).

Ancient Indian Maritime Culture As India strives for its rightful position on the global stage, we need to revive and study the historical and indigenous Indian maritime strategic thought. Our scriptures, treatises and literature reference the rich ndian maritime strategic culture. Other powers that arose in the Maratha Admiral Kanhoji Indian sub-continent such as Satavahanas, Pallavas, Pandyas, Cholas and many others continued the rich maritime traditions of the Indian civilisation well past the decline of the mighty

Mauryan empire. The adoption of a new naval ensign inspired by the spirit of Shivaji's maritime endeavours is a step in this direction that needs to be ingrained in the ethos of all maritime and naval endeavours of the nation.

Maritime Shivaji's Endeavours: The Marathas were the only Indian power between the 17th to early 19th centuries who successfully challenged the growing European influence in Indian waters.

Shivaji, his son Sambhaji Maharaj and their able Admirals such as Mayank Bhandari, Dautat Khan, Sidhoji Gujar and legendary Kanhoji Angre raised and maintained a strong Navy of over 5000 personnel compris-ing over 300 vessels at its peak. Noted historian Jadunath Sarkar acknowledges that "Nothing proves Shivaji's genius as a born statesman more clearly than his creation of a navy and naval bases". The Maratha naval prowess was further consolidated under

deep draught British ships with shallow water crafts, utilising the shelter of shallow natural harbour and fortress with mounted heavy guns were akin to typical sea denial and littoral warfare operations practised by modern navies. Such was the Maratha naval supremacy that even a combined Anglo-Portuguese assault on Kolaba island of Mumbai in 1772 failed to dislodge the Marathas. Strategic Maritime Culture of Cholas The earliest mention of Chola's naval prowess dating back to Roman records of the 1st century AD highlights the presence of a flourishing port at Kaveripatnam and the King's fleet escorting merchant ships into the harbour. The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea mentions the voyage of the early Chola ship 'Colandia' from Kaveripatnam to islands

WELL PAST THE 9th and 10th centuries during DECLINE OF THE which the Cholas developed a **MIGHTY MAURYAN** strong Navy with Blue Water

currents. They were conversant with the use of a 32-point Arab-Tamil wind compass and as many as 56 stars in the Northern Hemisphere for navigation. Despite the lack of a rudder and magnetic compass, the Cholas seafarers could traverse the distance between India and Southeast Asia in twelve to fifteen days, indicative of their Blue Water capability. The maritime endeavours of c Cholas provide valuable insights for stakeholders of the contemporary Indian maritime strategy. The Indian maritime outlook for the in the Pacific Ocean. The

Indian Ocean Region that has evolved from the 'Look East' to 'Act East' and the Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) can draw inspiration from India's maritime legacy. Initiatives like anti-piracy missions in the Gulf of Aden, HADR missions, Sagarmala and Port Led Development, SAGAR, Atma Nirbharta and Make in India etc. have common threads with the maritime practices of

OTHER POWERS THAT AROSE IN THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT SUCH AS SATAVAHANAS, PALLAVAS, PANDYAS, CHOLAS AND MANY OTHERS CONTINUED THE RICH MARITIME TRADITIONS OF THE INDIAN CIVILISATION maritime power of Cholas reached its peak between the

Angre from 1699 onwards. He effectively challenged the British maritime power on the West coast from his base at Vijaydurg in Ratnagiri. His tactics of attacking the EMPIRE

capabilities and established robust trade links with China and South East Asia. The seafarers of the Chola empire had exceptional navigational skills and, an understanding of the seas, monsoons, winds and

Chola (The views expressed are solely those of the author and do not reflect the position of the Indian Navy or the Pioneer. The writer is currently serving as Directing Staff at Defence Services Staff College, Wellington)

Tourists on an elephant safari at the Kaziranga National Park, in Golaghat

From chaos to comfort: Reflecting on Delhi's transit transformation



Once reliant on rickety DTC buses plagued by poor service, Delhi now boasts a state-ofthe-art metro network, revolutionising travel and making commuting a breeze

and disorderly.

an you drop me at the Dhaula Kuan Metro Station in your car? I must catch the 1800 hrs train from there!, requested my colleague, Madhu Jasrai, as we were leaving the office in the Bhikaji Cama Place complex. "Sure, why not !!" I replied nonchalantly. "I have some work on the other side of town, and it is prudent to travel by the metro, instead of taking risks, and getting grid-locked in the peak traffic" she explained. I could not have agreed more.

After she got off at Dhaula Kuan, I resumed my journey towards Dwarka, and instinctively, my mind, always in a mad rush, raced back in time, to the days when Delhi didn't have a mass transit system. When we, the people of Delhi, had to depend entirely on the rickety, black smoke-spewing Yellow-Green DTC buses which operated at the base level of punctuality, hygiene, customer service and safety. So much so, that the monster red buses earned the welldeserved sobriquet of being a 'killer line', due to the number of fatal accidents in which they were involved. Mercifully, for a long time, my



exposure to this horrible service was limited, as I had the privilege of travelling on the school bus. Although the situation

changed when I moved to role of the crew was unpredictable. Sometimes they precollege, and then university, there remained a saving grace, ferred to be mute spectatorsthe University Special, which, watching over the fracas with with a monthly all-route stuthe serenity of a smiling Buddha. At other times, they dent pass for a measly Rs 12.50 was the lifeline of stuwere grumpy, with a short dents. But, despite these safefuse, and embroiled in heatguards, it was difficult to ed arguments with harassed remain isolated from the commuters, with hard-toscary DTC, where the drivers imagine ferocity Nevertheless, behaved as if they owned once the confusion sorted, as Delhi roads as if it were a if by divine intervention, and grand prix track. And the less there was no space for more said about the frequency & passengers- as every nook and punctuality of the service, cranny, including the winthe better it is, as quite often, dows, footrests and the rickone had to wait for hours on ety bars at the rear of the bus end before an overcrowded had been gobbled- the driver bus appeared on the horizon, pressed the accelerator, to bring the bus into painful heaving like a fatigued tortoise. Expectedly, even before motion. Hereon, the law of it came to a halt, a virtual the jungle took over, as rules

stampede ensued. In the were flouted with impunity, without fear of the law- seats melee, there was an exchange of choicest Punjabi abuses, reserved for women, the fisticuffs, an occasional physelderly and the physically challenged, hardly, if ever, went to those for whom these ical altercation, lucrative business for pickpockets and chain snatchers, and worst of had been earmarked. Signs of all, a field day for eve-teasers. 'no smoking', 'no tobacco', It was while travelling on 'no litter' and 'no spitting' these buses that Delhi were ignored callously, withdenizens earned most of their out an iota of deterrence. characteristics- of being Hygiene, well what is that? brawny, insensitive to women At the end of this mayhem, those who missed boarding During this hullabaloo, the

the bus had to wait, patiently, for their next attempt. And the wheel started moving in the same pattern, once more. This long reverie concluded when I reached home and parked the car in its slot. As I walked towards my house, I thanked the stars (not any politician or bureaucrat) for the winds of change that have blown across the face of my city, transforming it in three decades, heralding the era when state-of-the-art Metro crisscrossed Delhi like an octopus spreading its tentacles, when radio cabs whizz around, when CNG & electric buses is a common sight. Delhi's public transport system has indeed come of age. (*The author is a freelance* writer; views are personal) SOUTH KOREA REJECTS MARTIAL LAW Madam - South Korea escaped the martial law imposed by President Yoon Suk Yeol on Tuesday night, within just 6 hours, for the first time since 1980, then I will not give the credit for this to the people who had gathered outside the Parliament building late at night, nor to the 190 MPs who overturned the President's crazy decision in just a few hours. The entire credit goes only to the South Korean army, who quietly watched this spectacle from a distance and did not interfere in any way. If the army wanted, it could have followed the President's orders and fired on the crowd of common people and also arrested the MPs who had reached the Parliament building. South Korea is one of the most developed and industrialised

countries in the world. South Korea's economy is the 12th largest in the world and the fourth largest in Asia. No one is able to understand this decision of the President despite there being no unrest of any kind. Experts are even saying that President Yoon Suk Yeol and his wife Kim Kyeon-hee must have taken such a step due to corruption charges against them. Now they will have to step down from their post themselves, or else they will be removed by bringing an impeachment motion against them in the Parliament. Just removing them will not work, but they should be put in jail. Since the founding of South Korea in 1948, several presidents have declared a military emergency. The most recent-and perhaps the most infamous-occurred in 1979 after the assassination of President Park Chung-hee, a former general who had occasionally used martial law to crack down on political protests and opposition since seizing power in 1961.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

LAX VIP SECURITY IN PUNJAB

Madam- The recent brazen assassination attempt on former Punjab CM Sukhbir Singh Badal at the Golden Temple underscores a disturbing breach in security that raises serious concerns about the state's law

LETT **RS** | (•)



t is sad but true that the workplace can become a problem for young working women. Though most places are safe, there are a few exceptions. India has seen over 400 cases of sexual harassment at work every year since 2018, with an average of 445 cases being reported annually, according to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data. Over 419 cases,

and order. This incident, involving a former terrorist armed with a sophisticated weapon, highlights glaring inadequacies in security protocols at one of India's most revered religious sites. While CM Bhagwant Mann has commended the police for averting a tragedy, it is evident that more robust measures are required to prevent such incidents.

The fact that the attacker, Narain Singh Chaura, was allowed to enter the premises with a weapon exposes lapses in intelligence and ground-level vigilance. Although frisking at religious sites is a sensitive issue, safeguarding lives and ensuring the sanctity of such locations must be paramount. The opposition's call for Chief Minister Mann's resignation reflects widespread frustration over the perceived deterioration in law and order. This incident should compel the Punjab government to take immediate steps to review and strengthen security arrangements, especially at religious and public places. Failure to act decisively risks not only public safety but also the reputation of the state. Vishal Mayur | Tumakuru

Workplace woes for women

or about 35 per month, were reported in the country in 2023. There could be more unreported ones. That year, Himachal Pradesh recorded the highest number of sexual harassment cases at the workplace (97), followed by Kerala (83), Maharashtra (46), and Karnataka (43)

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013 (PoSH Act), was enacted to safeguard women and provide mechanisms for addressing sexual harassment. In 2023, companies reported 1.160 sexual harassment complaints. the highest number in the past decade. However, only slightly more than half of these cases were resolved, according to data from the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis, Ashoka University. On average, 49 sexual harassment cases were reported every day in 2022.

Jayanthy Subramaniam | Mumbai

CURBING CUSTODIAL CRIMES

Madam — Two recent judgements-one from the Delhi High Court and the other from a special court in Bengaluruconvicting policemen for custodial torture and death of the accused have sent a strong message on putting in place a robust mechanism to end the scourge once and for all. 687 persons died in police custody between April 1, 2018, and March 31, 2023, a damning indictment of the police.

Generally, custodial deaths go unreported but for vigilante organisations and proactive families that have a keen nose for suspecting foul play. The Supreme Court guidelines in all cases of arrest or detention are clear-cut. During custodial detentions, mandatory documentation and presence of legal counsel are compulsory. Additionally, every police station should have CCTV cameras installed in strategic points.

Ganapathi Bhat |Akola

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com VIJAYAWADA | SATURDAY | DECEMBER 7, 2024

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FIRSTCOLUMN SURVIVING THE TECH-DRIVEN ERA

Amid rapid technological obsolescence, the need for reinvention has never been more critical



RAVI VALLURI

t would be worthwhile to examine how organisations are structured and articulated. In the long haul organisations blessed with individuals willing to experiment, innovate and embrace technology will be the ones that survive. At the pace that technology with its variants is fashioning itself, numerous applications unravelling virtually by the minute, and the level of obsolescence and attrition of equipment is becoming extraordinarily high. In such a scenario, humans and organisations will be subsumed by various products and their variants. The human mind can no longer remain in the typewriter mode. The garden of Organisational Theory and Behaviour is dotted with eminent scholars. Three pioneers, Adam Smith, Charles Babbage and Robert Owen provided the ballast and the basic groundwork.

Adam Smith advanced the argument that countries and organisations would profit by adopting the tenets of division of labour, what is now termed as specialisation. Charles Babbage in his seminal work postulated: Through the division of labour, the time required for learning a job or skill gets drastically reduced. Right at the stage of infancy wastage of material gets minimised and diminishes. The mind is propelled to take up serious tasks upon attaining superior skills. Way back in 1789, Robert Owen at 18 went on to acquire a factory. He was a utopian, way ahead of his times. In 1825, he promulgated regulated working hours, child labour laws, public education and business involvement in various community projects - a precursor to CSR.



In today's wired world, individuals work from their dwellings. Places with the latest technology and gizmos at their disposal. Over the last decade, the entire paradigm of organisational behaviour has metamorphosed. Technology stares at organisations with peering eyes, the complexity and dynamics of structures having undergone a complete metamorphosis. Let us look at the Indian Railways. There was a time when the operating and manufacturing departments held sway in the decision-making process. Today, it is the technical departments that are the game changers. The concept of fixed work hours is history. The workforce must be alert 24x7. Thus, employees need to brush up on their skill sets to brace for the challenges of the virtual world.Let us examine the model of direct teaching through online classes- one-onone, between the teacher and the tutee. The very paradigm may affect teaching techniques in schools and universities. Similarly, qualified doctors instruct their colleagues through Skype or other means during complex surgeries. In such a scenario, scores of organisational structures, government or those in the private sector must adapt radically in order to survive. The workforce must continuously upgrade their skill set or face extinction. Perhaps emotions of warmth may be lost in the maze of technological evolution. The philosophy of an organisation, its goals and objectives and the behavioural pattern between the structure and the workforce have been stranded in a traffic jam of the kind one encounters in major cities of India like Gurugram. Stephen Hawking has in a rather depressing prognosis, predicted that life would be extinct on this planet on four grounds - nukes, global warming, man-made viruses or robots. Thus, the human mind should re-invent itself and current organisational behaviour and theories or prepare a blueprint to discover a sister planet to inhabit. Aeons ago, Aristotle wrote, "We are what we repeatedly do." This paradigm will have to change for organisations to survive. (The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

South Korea faces its gravest political crisis



07

analysis

Yoon's actions threaten the democratic foundations painstakingly built over decades, echoing a legacy of authoritarianism that South Korea has fought to overcome



resident Yoon Suk-yeol has plunged South Korea into a political crisis that risks echoing the darkest chapters of the nation's history. As his administration teeters on the edge of a dramatic shift, Yoon has turned to martial law, invoking emergency powers in a desperate gambit to silence political opposition and maintain control.

The implications of his actions are profound, not just for his presidency, but for South Korea's ongoing struggle with its totalitarian past, its relationship with foreign powers, and its own identity as a modern democracy. South Koreans fought so hard to build a democratic system. Under South Korea's Constitution, the president has the authority to declare martial law in the face of military threats or a national emergency. However, the reasons Yoon provided for his declaration-opposition-driven impeachment efforts, budgetary clashes, and an increasingly fractured political spectrum-hardly constitute a national crisis of the magnitude that would justify such a drastic measure. The events surrounding Yoon's attempt to invoke emergency powers are not isolated; they represent the continuation of a deeply ingrained political pattern, where martial law is not only a tool of governance but a reminder of a nation's struggle between democracy and repression. The debate surrounding Yoon's leadership has drawn comparisons to previous impeachments in South Korea, particularly those of Roh Moo-hyun and Park Geun-hye. Roh, in 2004, faced impeachment over election law violations, though the Constitutional Court reinstated him. Less than a decade later, Park was ousted through impeachment over a corruption scandal. Yoon, while not yet facing the same fate, is set to have his impeachment voted on today following his controversial declaration of martial law, which lasted only six hours and was rejected by lawmakers and the public. Whether or not he survives, South Korea remains trapped in a cycle of political crises, where democratic ideals clash with despotic impulses, reflecting a historical legacy that has shaped the nation for over a century. To understand the scope of South

Korea's political turmoil, one must look at the country's history with martial law-a tool that has long been used by political elites to stifle dissent and assert control.

THE South Korea's 20th century is defined by foreign intervention, IMPLICATIONS division, and military rule. Following Japan's brutal annexa-OF HIS ACTIONS tion of Korea in 1910, martial law ARE PROFOUND. became a key instrument of colonial repression, aimed at quelling NOT JUST any resistance to Japanese imperial rule. The atrocities of this FOR HIS period, from forced labour to the PRESIDENCY, sexual enslavement of women, left deep scars on the Korean psy-BUT FOR che. SOUTH KOREA'S It was a time when the very concept of Korean autonomy seemed ONGOING impossible, as external powers sought to mould the country to STRUGGLE WITH fit their interests. The end of Japanese rule in 1945, after World ITS TOTALITARIAN War II, did not herald peace for PAST, ITS the Korean Peninsula. Instead, Korea was divided into two zones RELATIONSHIP of occupation: the Soviet-controlled North and the American-WITH FOREIGN

came at a cost. The U.S., though a key ally, often dictated the direction of South Korean politics, using its military presence to enforce stability while limiting the country's true political autonomy. By 1953, when the armistice was signed, the U.S. had established a major military presence in South Korea, which would grow over the coming

decades. This military dominance, coupled with South Korea's internal political instability, created fertile ground for martial law to flourish as a means of maintaining control.One of the most infamous instances of martial law came in 1961 when General Park Chunghee seized power in a military coup. Park's regime, which lasted for over a decade, was charac-

South Korea's political structure. It is also a reflection of the country's broader struggle with its geopolitical position. As the U.S. continues to view South Korea as a critical ally in its efforts to counter China's rise, the country's internal divisions risk undermining its role as a stable partner in the region. The growing U.S. military presence over the decades, with South Korea becoming home to the largest U.S. military base in a foreign country-Camp Humphreys-has been a key feature of this relationship. The presence of 28,500 U.S. troops, the THAAD missile defence system, and the constant military drills aimed at countering the threat from North Korea and China, have turned South Korea into a crucial outpost for American interests in East Asia. In this context, the political instability surrounding President Yoon and his administration is more than just an internal affair—it is a matter of global significance. The U.S. cannot afford to let South Korea's internal divisions spiral out of control, especially as tensions with North Korea and China continue to escalate. If South Korea cannot reconcile its internal political fractures, it risks becoming an unreliable ally in the eyes of its most important partner. This would have significant consequences, not just for South Korea, but for the broader geopolitical ramifications of NATO's eastward expansion and the "Pivot to Asia" strategy coined by former President Barack Obama, which continues to haunt Asian countries. (The writer is a journalist and author. Views expressed are personal)

controlled South. POWERS, The subsequent Korean War (1950–1953) left the country in

AND ITS OWN ruins, its political and social fab-IDENTITY ric torn apart by the conflict. In

the aftermath, South Korea was AS A MODERN deeply reliant on American military protection, a dependency DEMOCRACY that would come to define the country's geopolitical position during the Cold War.But South

terised by authoritarian rule, but also rapid industrialisation, transforming South Korea into one of Asia's economic powerhouses. His government used martial law to suppress political opposition and silence dissent, paving the way for further military interventions in South Korea's political life.

Even after Park's assassination in 1979, his successors continued to rely on dictatorial measures to control the populace, with the 1980 Gwangju Uprising standing as a stark reminder of the brutality of military rule. It was only after the uprisings of 1987, following widespread protests, that South Korea began its transition to a more democratic systemthough martial law remained an ever-present force in the background, a reminder of the fragility of its democratic institutions. The current political crisis, however, is not just about Yoon's lead-Korea's reliance on foreign power ership or the fractured state of

Hybrid model secures ICC Champions Trophy hosting rights Pakistan's government approves a hybrid hosting model proposed by India, ensuring its role in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025

pragmatic and groundbreaking decision has emerged from Pakistan's government corridors, approving its cricket board's acceptance of India's proposed hybrid model for hosting ICC events. This strategic approach, which includes matches at neutral venues such as the UAE, is a lifeline for Pakistan cricket. It ensures the preservation of Pakistan's hosting rights for the prestigious ICC Champions Trophy, scheduled from February 19 to March 9, 2025. Ultimately, cricket itself emerges as the ultimate winner.

Millions of cricket enthusiasts across India and Pakistan are celebrating the International cessful mediation. This reso- of patriotism and fervour.



K S TOMAR

lution underscores the power of sports to bridge divides. The ICC had earlier warned of revoking Pakistan's hosting rights if it rejected the hybrid model. The enduring passion of fans-united by their love for cricket-remains unfazed by territorial boundaries. Matches between India and Pakistan, steeped in rivalry and emotion, transcend Cricket Council's (ICC) suc- sports and become spectacles

Shah has been elected as the new ICC chief, marking a pivotal moment in global cricket governance. Shah's leadership promises transformative opportunities for the ICC, leveraging his vast experience as chairman of the Board of Control for Cricket

in India (BCCI), the world's wealthiest cricket body. His election sets the stage for significant milestones, particularly in organising high-profile tournaments like the Champions Trophy.

For the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), this decision was a calculated move to avert potential isolation. Rejecting India's terms could have deprived Pakistan of the opportunity to showcase its hosting capabilities, partic-

In a parallel development, Jay ularly given India's security concerns. The hybrid model, which splits matches between Pakistan and the UAE, provides a balanced solution. Pakistan retains its hosting rights while addressing India's apprehensions, thus averting reputational and financial losses.

Accepting the hybrid model aligns with Pakistan's longterm vision for cricket. It ensures that Pakistan remains a credible host for international events and preserves the opportunity to solidify its reputation. Additionally, the agreement likely includes financial assurances from the ICC, compensating for any perceived compromises. Successful implementation could enhance Pakistan's image as a reliable cricketing This arrangement allows local



hub, following well-received tours by Australia and England.

The hybrid model offers a win-win outcome, balancing security concerns with hosting ambitions. While India's matches will take place at neutral venues, Pakistan retains the opportunity to host other games on its soil.

fans to experience international cricket firsthand. Furthermore, the PCB's insistence on reciprocity for events in India until 2031 demonstrates strategic foresight, paving the way for equitable

future agreements. Boycotting the Champions Trophy would have been a catastrophic misstep for Pakistan. Such a decision could have alienated the PCB from the ICC and key stakeholders, given India's significant influence in global cricket. The financial and reputational damage, cou-pled with diminished fan morale and strained sponsor relations, would have left lasting scars. By prioritizing long-term gains, the PCB has ensured its continued relevance on the international

cricket stage. Shah aims to introduce cricket to new markets such as the USA, China, and Africa, diversifying the audience and making the game truly global. His expertise in revenue generation could lead to record-breaking media deals, benefiting smaller boards through equitable revenue sharing. By integrating advanced technologies and data-driven strategies, Shah could modernize ICC tournaments, appealing to younger

audiences and enhancing the game's global appeal. As an Indian, Shah might face allegations of favoring BCCI interests. Ensuring inclusivity and addressing member concerns will be crucial. Balancing the dominance of cricketing giants like India,

England, and Australia with the development of smaller nations will be a key test of Shah's leadership.

The ICC Champions Trophy 2025 holds immense promise under Jay Shah's leadership, with the potential to set benchmarks in competitiveness, innovation, and fan engagement. Pakistan's pragmatic decision to embrace the hybrid model ensures its pivotal role in this journey, preserving its cricketing ambitions while fostering international collaboration. Together, these developments signify a new era for the sport, uniting fans and nations under the banner of cricket.

(Writer is strategic affairs columnist and senior politi*cal analyst* ; *views* are personal)





Money 08

IN BRIEF



Sebi revamps investor charter to boost transparency

apital markets regulator Sebi on Friday unveiled an updated investor charter aimed to enhance investor protection, market transparency, and trust and confidence among investors. The updated charter has emphasised on ensuring confidentiality of investor information and providing the right to exit at fair and reasonable terms from the securities market related products or services. "Further, Sebi has strengthened the grievance redressal mechanism and alternative dispute resolution mechanism with the launch of SCORES 2.0 and SMART Online Dispute Resolution," the regulator said in a statement. In SCORES 2.0, investor complaints are taken up directly with Sebi registered intermediaries/regulated entities and the designated bodies for first level review, with the markets watchdog taking up all complaints at the stage of Second Level Review. SMART ODR portal facilitates online conciliation and online arbitration for resolution of disputes arising in the Indian securities market. The revamped charter aims to enable investors to better understand the risks associated with market investments while ensuring their fair treatment in a timely and efficient manner.

FM says Q3 to compensate for moderation in GDP slowdown

VIJAYAWADA | SATURDAY | DECEMBER 7, 2024

PNS NEW DELHI

The GDP slowdown in September quarter was not "systemic" and the economic activity in third quarter, with better public expenditure, is likely to compensate for the moderation, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Friday

India: India recorded a 7-quarter low GDP growth of 5.4 per cent in July-September FY25. In the first quarter, the growth was 6.7 per cent.

"It is not a systemic slowdown. It is more of absence of activity on public expenditure, capital expenditure and so on...I expect Q3 to make up for all these," Sitharaman said at an event here.

So, growth number is something which is not necessarily going to get badly affected, she added. ĔΥ25.

"We need to push up on many other factors," she said adding India would continue to be the fastest-growing economy next year and thereafter. Growth momentum was er.



low in the first quarter due to general election and reduction in capital expenditure. This has had a bearing on the second quarter as well.

In the first half, the government spent only 37.3 per cent of its capital expenditure tar-get of Rs 11.11 lakh crore for factors which might have a

The minister's comments came moments after the Reserve Bank of India sharply slashed its growth projection to 6.6 per cent for the current fiscal from 7.2 per cent earli-

Other factors affecting growth include plateauing global demand that affected export growth, Sitharaman said. "Purchasing power of Indians is improving, but within India, you also have concerns of wages saturating. We are quite seized of these

play on India's own consumption," she said. The finance ministry, in its Economic Survey for FY24, had estimated a GDP growth of 6.5-7 per cent for the cur-rent fiscal year.

"We have a Prime Minister who looks at opportunities in each of the challenges. During Covid-19, the challenge was seen as an opportunity for bringing in reforms. Five mini bringing in reforms. Five mini budgets were presented at that time, each of them giving relief, support and handhold-ing on one hand and on the other making sure that small and overlooked pending reforms were taken," she said. Being the voice of the Global South for some time now India will carry forward now, India will carry forward its role that everyone saw during India's Presidency, she added. during G20

Every time Prime Minister Narendra Modi takes up an issue of global importance, he does consult the Global South and takes their concerns forward. Referring to the India-Japan relations, she said the two countries shared strong business ties.

"Between India and Japan, other than just the governments, what needs to be sustained is the people-to-people and business-to-business interest."

RBI keeps interest rates unchanged, cuts CRR as economy slows

PNS MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India on Friday kept its key interest rate unchanged citing inflation risks, but cut the Cash Reserve Ratio that banks are required to park with the central bank, boosting money with lenders to support a slowing economy.

With India's GDP seeing a sharper-than-anticipated dip in the July-September period to 5.4 per cent -- its slowest pace in seven quarters, inflation on the uptick and rupee under pressure, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had few choices to make.

Its monetary policy committee, which consists of three RBI and an equal number of external members, kept the repurchase or reportate unchanged at 6.5 per cent for a record 11th meeting in a row.

Four of the six members of the panel voted for a status quo in rate, while retaining its policy stance at "neutral". External members - Nagesh Kumar and Ram Singh - voted for a quar-ter-point reduction.

Das said the Cash Reserve Ratio -- the proportion of deposits that banks must set aside with the central bank -has been cut by 50 basis points to 4 per cent, effective in two tranches on December 14 and December 28. The cut will infuse Rs 1.16

RBI Governor Shaktikanta

lakh crore into the banking system and will soften short-term interest rates and can reduce the pressure on bank deposit rates.

"At this juncture prudence and practicality demands we remain careful," Das said. A status quo is "appropriate and essential," he said, adding if growth slowdown lingers beyond a point, "it may need policy support"

RBI lowered its growth forecast for the year ending March 2025 to 6.6 per cent, from its earlier projection of 7.2 per cent. This even though Das said GDP slowdown bottomed out in the July-September quarter and has seen a pick-up in subsequent months due to festival spending and strong agriculture output.

PNS BENGALURU



India's forex reserves jump \$1.51 bln to \$658.091 bln

ndia's forex reserves increased by USD 1.51 billion to USD 658.091 billion for the week ended November 29 the RBI said on Friday. The overall reserves had dropped by USD 1.31 billion to USD 656.582 billion in the previous reporting week. The kitty has witnessed a declining trend in the recent past and had dropped by a record USD 17.761 billion in the week prior to the last. The forex reserves had increased to an all-time high of USD 704.885 billion in end-September. For the week ended November 29, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by USD 2.061 billion to USD 568.852 billion, the data released on Friday showed. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves decreased by USD 595 billion to USD 66.979

Ilion during the week, the RBI said

BCIC forms CoA with nine industry bodies

"COA aims to also present

The Bangalore Chamber of Industry and Commerce (BCIC) has announced the formation of a Council of Associations (COA) in collaboration with industry bodies in Karnataka on Friday.

The industry bodies include Bidadi Industries Association (BIA), Electronics City Industries (BIA), Association (ELCIA), Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FKCCI), Karnataka Small Scale Industries Association (KASSIA), Employees Karnataka Association (KEA), Laghu Udyog Bharathi (LUB), Peenya Industries Association (PIA) and Whitefield Area Commerce & Industries Association (WACIA).

With the setting up of COA, we aim to provide a common platform where all issues, concerns and strategies can be freely deliberated upon in the larger interest of industry arnataka

a more cohesive voice before policymakers, regulators, and other stakeholders, ensuring that the industry's interests are effectively represented. COA will also extend its expertise and resources to support the government in further promoting industrial growth in Karnataka," he said

According to Verma, COA plans to have regular meetings and interactions to discuss opportunities for our associations to share best practices, learn from one another, and foster strong

relationships. "Working together will allow us to align our strategic priorities, avoid duplication of efforts, and develop a coordinated approach to address industry-wide issues," added Verma.

Through collaboration, the Council of Associations aims to also pool resources, knowledge, and expertise to undertake large-scale projects, research initiatives, and other activities that would be diffi-

PNS MUMBAI

growth projection for 2024-25 and kept the policy rates unchanged.

After oscillating between highs and lows during the day, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex declined 56.74 points or 0.07 per cent to settle at 81,709.12. Intra-day, it swung 419.72 points, hitting a high of 81,925.91 and a low of 81,506.19.

In the past five trading days, the BSE benchmark jumped 2,722.12 points or 3.44 per cent. The NSE Nifty dipped 30.60 points or 0.12 per cent to settle at 24,677.80.

The Reserve Bank of India on Friday kept its key interest rate unchanged citing inflation risks, but cut the Cash Reserve Ratio that banks are required to park with the central bank, osting money with lenders to



sharper-than-anticipated dip Infosys, UltraTech Cement, in the July-September period to HDFC Bank, Technologies and ICICI Bank 5.4 per cent -- its slowest pace in seven quarters, inflation on were among the laggards. Tata Motors, Axis Bank, Maruti, Larsen & Toubro, ITC

the uptick and rupee under pressure, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had few choices to and Tata Steel were among the make. gainers. RBI Governor Shaktikanta

Its monetary policy commit-tee, which consists of three RBI Das said the Cash Reserve Ratio has been cut by 50 basis and an equal number of external members, kept the repurpoints to 4 per cent, effective in two tranches on December 14 chase or repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent for a record 11th and 28. The cut will infuse Rs 1.16 lakh crore into the bankmeeting in a row.

From the 30-share pack, dani Port, Bharti Airtel, Asian ing system and soften shortWB loan to Maha to stimulate growth

PNS WASHINGTON

The World Bank has approved a USD 188.28-million loan to stimulate economic growth in the Indian state of Maharashtra, especially in the lagging districts,

a media release said. The USD188.28 million Maharashtra Strengthening Institutional Capabilities in districts for enabling growth operation will support district planning and growth strate-gies, the bank said in a statement. Investments under the operation will equip districts with the necessary data, funds, and expertise to max-imize the value of public money employed for driving growth and job creation. It will also enhance private

sector participation by improving e-government ser-vices for businesses in districts especially in the tourism sector, it said.

Accountants Act 1949, as the

In 2024-25 council year till

cases and punishments have

been given in 172 cases, as per

The council year is the one-

year period starting from

data shared by ICAI.

Snapping the five-day winning run, benchmark Sensex dropped by 56 points in a highly volatile trade on Friday after the Reserve Bank cut the



LG Electronics' Indian arm files IPO papers with Sebi

G Electronics India Ltd, the Indian arm of the South Korean company, on Friday filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to float an initial public offering (IPO). The proposed IPO is entirely an offer for sale (OFS) of 10.18 crore equity shares by promoter LG Electronics Inc with no fresh issue component, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP). Its South Korean parent company LG Electronics Inc will sell 10.18.15.859 equity shares of face value of Rs 10 each, according to DHRP. Post-offer, its shareholding will be diluted by 15 per cent to 57.69 crore shares in the company. Since the public issue is completely an OFS, LG Electronics India will not receive any proceeds from the IPO. In its draft papers, LG Electronics India said it expects the listing of the equity shares will enhance its visibility and brand image and provide liquidity and a public market for the shares.

said Vineet Verma, President cult to accomplish individuof BCIC. ally, he said.

support a slowing economy. With India's GDP seeing a

Gold trades flat at Rs 79,150 per 10 gm; silver declines Rs 300

PNS NEW DELHI

Gold prices traded flat at Rs 79,150 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

However, silver declined Rs 300 to Rs 93,500 per kg. The white metal closed higher at Rs 93,800 per kg on Thursday.

Price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity also remained flat at Rs 78,750 per 10 grams on Friday. In futures trade on the Multi

Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for February delivery rose Rs 181, or 0.24 per cent, to trade at Rs 76,657 per 10 grams.

"Gold traded with minor gains on the MCX, as markets await key non-farm payroll and unemployment data later this evening. "These metrics are crucial

for shaping the Fed's policy



outlook. While gold maintains a positive trajectory," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said. Silver contracts for March delivery climbed Rs 426, or 0.46 per cent, to quote at Rs 92,850 per kg.

In the international markets, Comex gold futures rose 0.42 per cent at USD 2,659.60 per ounce. "Stronger-than-expected US macroeconomic data might push the Fed to pause rate cuts this month, which

may negatively impact gold

"On the other hand, lower than expected data could lead to a spike in gold prices," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst

of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. Silver also traded 0.62 per cent higher at USD 31.73 per ounce in the Asian market hours. "Gold continues to trade steady despite weakness in the dollar and ahead of key jobs report due later on Friday," Manav Modi, Analyst, Commodity Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said. Geopolitical unrest continues to increase creating a strong floor for safe haven

assets. France's government collapsed, while calls for the impeachment of South Korean President Yoon Suk-Yeol grew after he unsuccessfully attempted to impose martial law in the country.

Paints, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Finserv, Reliance Industries,

JSW MG Motor

India to hike

prices by up to 3 pc from January

term interest rates. It will reduce the pressure on bank deposit rates

ICAI takes disciplinary action in 172 cases in over 6 months

HCL

PNS NEW DELHI

PNS NEW DELHI

JSW MG Motor India on Friday said it will increase prices of its entire model range by up to 3 per cent from January.

The price increase is a result of continuously rising input costs and other external factors, the automaker said in a statement. "Our dedication to quality, innovation and sustainability remains a priority and drives us to improve our offerings continuously.

In doing so, minor price adjustments are inevitable to offset the rising input costs," JSW MG Motor India Chief Commercial Officer Satinder Bajwa Singh said.

A marginal price increase shields it from inflationary challenges, he added.

case may be," ICAI said. Chartered accountants' apex Among the 2,284 cases in body ICAI has awarded punwhich the hearings have been ishments to its members under concluded, members have been

allegedly held guilty of misconthe disciplinary mechanism in 172 cases in over six months duct in 1,080 cases. starting from February 12. August 31, hearings have been Amid concerns in certain concluded in 200 disciplinary

quarters that ICAI has not been acting fast against erring chartered accountants, the institute's President Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal in a statement said it has a zero-tolerance policy in disciplinary



cases and in some cases, members have been removed from the register for lifetime.

Under the disciplinary mechanism, that came into force in 2007, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has taken up 2,652 cases wherein members were prima facie found to be guilty of misconduct. The cases are for the period from the inception of the mechanism in 2007 till August 31, 2024.

"Out of the 2,652 cases referred to for enquiry, hearing has been concluded in 2,284 cases after giving due opportunity of being heard to the parties to the case by the Board of Discipline u/s 21A and Disciplinary Committee u/s 21B of the Chartered

The punishment varied from removing the name of a chartered accountant from the records for 1 month to 5 years, imposing a fine of Rs 5,000 to Rs⁵ lakh or awarding both debarment and fine.

Agarwal said the institute has implemented comprehensive measures to address disciplinary cases effectively, with initiatives such as e-hearings and online filing of cases significantly helping in the faster resolution of the cases.

The institute, which has more than four lakh members, has three levels in handling cases for possible disciplinary actions -- Director (Discipline), Board of Discipline and Disciplinary Committee

Development of NE neglected by previous govt: PM

PNS NEW DELHI

Asserting that previous governments weighed development to votes, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the progress of the northeast was not given much emphasis earlier due to fewer population and votes in the region.

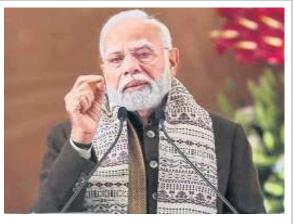
Inaugurating the Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav here to celebrate the vibrancy of the northeast, he said the government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the first to create a dedicated ministry for the region and also earmarked 20 per cent budget of every ministry for its

development. "In the last decade, we have

seen a wonderful journey of the development of the northeast but it was not easy. We have taken every possible step to connect the northeastern states with India's growth story. "For a long time, we have

seen how development was weighed against votes. Northeastern states had less votes and low seats so previous governments did not pay attention to the development of the region," he said.

Modi said he strongly believes that the coming days are of eastern India and the



northeast. Like Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bengaluru, cities of the region such as Guwahati, Shillong, Imphal, Itanagar and Aizawl will be new beacons of growth, the prime minister said.

With its vibrant culture and dynamic people, the northeast holds immense potential to propel India's growth, he said.

The prime minister said during the last decade his government tried to reduce the feeling among people about the gap of Delhi and 'Dil' with the northeast. Union ministers made 700

visits to the northeast in the

last decade and his government was connecting the region with the trinity of emotion, economy and ecology, he said.

The first-ever Ashtalakshmi Mahotsav is being be celebrated from December 6 to 8 at the Bharat Mandapam here.

This festival aims to showcase the beauty, diversity, and promise of the eight states of northeastern states -- Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura, and Sikkim.

Together they are known as the 'Ashtalakshmi'.



what's brewing?



Oppenheimer star Emma Dumont embraces true self, comes out as non-binary

important personal revelation, identifying as non-binary. As Instagram when the Oppenheimer part of this journey, Emma has also

ppenheimer actress Emma revealed that they have adopted a Dumont has shared an new name.

The update was shared on actor modified their name and pronouns in their bio. It is now stat-

ed that Emma's new name is Nick, indicating they prefer "they/them" pronouns rather than "she/her." TMZ reached out to the actor's representative about the same, who confirmed the news. "They identify as a trans masculine non-binary person. Their work name is still going to be Emma Dumont, but they will go by Nick with friends and family," said the publicist.Regarding social media, Emma, who is now Nick, has shared numerous posts in the past few weeks. They posted selfies and other images across multiple posts. Nonetheless, they never truly discussed their recent revelation. Emma has never pub-

licly shared her sexual-

ity either.

'Tuning in & smelling right': Shweta Tripathi's unique approach to character prep

A her compelling performances in films and web series like *Masaan*, Haraamkhor and Mirzapur, has opened up about her unconventional approach to preparing for her characters. In a candid revelation, Shweta shared how her playlist and a carefully selected perfume play pivotal roles in helping her understand and embody her roles.

Talking about her creative process, Shweta

ctress Shweta Tripathi, celebrated for her compelling performances in films said, "Two things really help me to prep my character. One is my playlist, which is full of embody their spirit on a deeper level. It's fassongs that evoke longing and love. I am a sucker for love stories, and this is one genre I would love to explore more. The music helps me tap into the emotions and psyche of the character, it's like an emotional trampoline. Because I tune my emotions as per the mood of the music. The other is perfume. I always choose a scent that resonates with the essence of my character. Every character has

cinating how a whiff of the right fragrance can immediately transport you into a character's world."

Known for her nuanced performances, Shweta continues to inspire with her ability to dive deeply into the soul of her characters. Her approach reflects her passion for storytelling and her commitment to delivering authentic and layered portrayals.

appearance

Aishwarya, Abhishek **Bachchan silence split** rumors with party

also posted photos featuring Abhishek and Aishwarya. She mid rumours of their separation, actors Aishwarya Rai and appeared stunning in a tradi-Abhishek Bachchan made an tional black ensemble, while uncommon public appear-ance at a celebrity-filled party Abhishek opted for a sophisticated tailored black suit. The on Thursday. The duo partic-ipated in a glamorous, celebripair matched in black. ty-filled wedding celebration and took pictures side by side. posts, sharing their heartfelt wishes for Aishwarya Rai and Actress Ayesha Jhulka was in Abhishek Bachchan. attendance at the party as likewise took photos with

well. likewise took photos with Film producer Anu Ranjan Aishwarya's mom, Brinda Rai.

Nana Patekar: The story of Vanvaas is the story of every home

F Gadar 2, director Anil Sharma seems ready to explore yet another emotionally charged and thought-provok-ing narrative with his film, *Vanvaas*. With Nana Patekar and Utkarsh Sharma as the lead, the film promises to offer a fresh and modern interpretation of the Ramavana. Given Anil Sharma's knack for blending strong storytelling with emotion and drama, Vanvaas could very well be anoth-

er blockbuster in the making. The trailer for Vanvaas was recently released, sparking significant excitement among audiences. Known for films like Gadar: Ek Prem Katha, Sharma directs, writes, and produces this heartfelt drama set to explore themes of family, sacrifice, and the bonds that transcend blood ties.

In an interview, Nana Patekar who plays the lead in the film, talked about the movie Vanvaas. The legendary actor said, "Whenever I go to watch a film,

feels personal. It feels like the story belongs to us. This is the kind of film Vanvaas is."

He added, "The identification will be so strong that it feels like the story of every home. When I first heard the story, it resonated with me deeply. As a normal per-son, it pleased me. I loved it. There's nothing extraordinary, just the need to remem-



ber our own past experiences and bring them to life."

Followers responded to the

Aishwarya and Abhishek

Director Anil Sharma has asserted that Vanvaas is a deeply personal project for him, as it delves into themes of love, sacrifice and the complexities of family relationships. In interviews, he emphasised that the film's exploration of these emotions was central

to his storytelling approach. The director said, "This film reflects emo-tions that we often keep buried deep inside ourselves. It's not just a story but a journey to understanding the essence of family, honour and belonging. Nana Patekar, Utkarsh, Simrat and Rajpal Yadav have

brought unmatched depth and authenticity to their roles. I'm excited for the audience to witness their performances on the big screen."

Written, produced, and directed by Anil Sharma, Vanvaas will be released in theaters on December 20, 2024. A Zee Studios Worldwide Release starring Nana Patekar, Utkarsh Sharm and Simratt Kaur in the lead.

Ariana Grande on prioritising well-being in the face of criticism

riana Grande, seated alongside Cynthia Erivo and directed by A Gynthia Erivo and directed by French creator Crazy Sally, grew emotional while contemplating the pressure to seem flawless in public.

"I've been doing this in front of the public and been a specimen in a Petri dish really since I was 16 or 17," the 31vear-old Wicked star shared after pausing to compose herself. "I have heard it all. I've heard every version of it. You're young and you're hearing all kinds of

things." "It's something that is uncomfortable no matter what scale you're experienc-ing it on, even if you go to Thanksgiving dinner and someone's granny says 'Oh my god you look skin-nier, what happened?' or 'you look heavier, what happened?''' she said.

The actress and singer criticised society's ease in expressing uninvited opin-ions regarding others' looks, deeming it "hazardous for everyone concerned."

"I'm really lucky to have the support system that I have and to just know and trust that I'm beautiful. But I do know what the pressure of that noise feels like," she said.

"It's been a resident in my life since I was 17. I just don't invite it in anymore. I have work to do. I have a life to live, I have friends to love on. I have so much love. It's not invited, so I don't leave space for it anymore."

Grande also encouraged others to prioritise their well-

being. "You keep yourself safe because no one has the right to say s**t," Swindle star added.

ARCHIE







CALVIN AND HOBBES

FUN

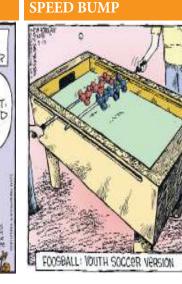






GARFIELD

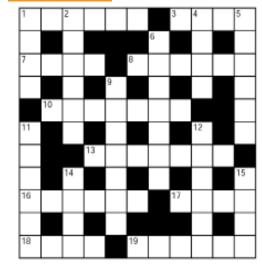




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CROSSWORD



ACROSS

flowers

- 1 A precious metal 6 The room you spend 3 A game played with clubs
 - most time in 9 Picture in your mind

5 Airborne

- 11 People invited to dinner
- 12 Using needle and thread 14 This metal goes rusty

SOLUTION

- 8 Just about 10 Where Danes live 15 Stuff used by potters
- 13 Took no notice of 16 A season
- 17 Young woman

7 A holder for picked

- 18 Make music with the voice
- 19 Wanting food

DOWN

- 1 Rescue
- Use your ears
- 4 Yours and mine



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Saturday December 7, 2024

SHRIRAM ALLURI

With a voice that weaves together the threads of East and West, Shriram Alluri is redefining the sound of indie rock. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, the Hyderabad-born musician opens up about his journey, his inspirations, and the city that shaped him

AARTI SREENATH aarti.sreenath9@gmail.com

hriram Alluri is not just an indie rock musician and songwriter; he's a force redefining crosscultural music. Hailing from Hyderabad, his journey is proof of the universality of music. Growing up immersed in India's classical melodies, Bollywood hits and Tollywood tunes, his first encounter with rock music as a teenager ignited his creative spark. Picking up a guitar set him on a path that led to recording his debut album, Man of *Truth*, at Brighton Electric Studios in 2015.

'HYD IS MY PLACE OF BIRTH,

TIGALLY CHAINED TO MY

With Evari Kosam, a Telugu-language single produced by Grammy-winner Tommaso Colliva, he seamlessly blended Western rock with his roots. This groundbreaking track marked a turning point, allowing him to share a piece of his heritage with global audiences. Well, after spending over a decade in the UK, Finland and various parts of India, his return to Hyderabad has been a tale of nostalgia, discovery and reckoning with change. "Hyderabad has been treating me with tough love. I was born here, went away for a while, and returned a couple of years ago. It seems the city

1 to

hasn't taken kindly to my hiatus. I'm still trying to get my claws into its ground." The return, while emotionally grounding, came with its own set of apprehensions. "I needed to be home. Being part of the global indie music space had tested my limits, and I felt like I was floating in space along with my high-flying dreams. Coming back gave me firmer soil to stand on. But some of my apprehensions have proven to be right. The city isn't as accommodating to my profession as I'd hoped." For him, Hyderabad is both familiar and foreign. Having lived in the city from the time of his birth until 10th standard, "Returning feels like being both at home and a stranger in the city all at once. The Hyderabad of my childhood was vastly different. It's all built up now, but there's nowhere to go. What hasn't changed, though, is the essence of home-family and food. The food here, whether home-cooked or from the city's eateries, is a unique blend of cultures and cuisines. But it's a gut health hazard," he adds with a laugh. Among his fondest memories is a latenight escapade that speaks volumes about his family's love and the city's vibrant culinary culture. "When I was nine, I woke my parents up at 10:30

pm, demanding chicken. They were flummoxed but indulged me, taking me to the country club for a late-night feast. It's a memory I cherish deeply," he recalls. Professionally, Hyderabad poses significant challenges for an independent musician like him. "The city isn't built for my profession. There aren't enough live venues for indie music. It's up to the artists here to create that scene. However, the obstacles haven't deterred me. I pursue my work, keeping in mind the Buddhist saying, 'One isn't entitled to the fruits of one's labour.' The struggle fuels my art," he says. He also feels the city could do more to foster intellectual and creative exchange. "I dislike the lack of stimulating conversations and the exchange of ideas between independent minds. Maybe I need to explore more spaces in the city to find those connections," he reflects. Despite the challenges, His bond with Hyderabad remains unshaken. "It's my land of birth romantically chained to my heart," he says. "But my mind seeks beyond its defining and confining shores." For him, Hyderabad is both an anchor and a launchpad, a city that grounds him while pushing him to dream beyond its limits.

Shahana Goswami on 'Beyond takes, discovering deeper truths' in Despatch

TEJAL SINHA tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

YDERA

n a world where drama often takes center stage, Shahana Goswami's understated yet powerful performances have become a bea-con of nuanced storytelling. With a career spanning over a decade, Goswami has solidified her position as one of India's most versa-tile and sought-after actresses. From her breakout role in Naseeruddin Shah's critically acclaimed *Firaaq* to her captivating performances in *Rock On!!* and *Viceroy's House*, Goswami has consistently proven her ability to bring complexity and depth to her characters. With her latest role in Kanu Behl's Despatch, she once again showcases her remarkable range and talent, delivering a nuanced and emotion-ally charged performance that leaves a lasting impact. In a gripping series like *Despatch*, she delivers a nuanced performance, navigating the intricate web of relationships and moral dilemmas. We had the opportunity to sit down with her and discuss her approach to her role. When asked about her character's role within the layered narrative of Despatch, The Honeymoon Travels Ltd fame shared, "To start with, Shweta's character, though she is a journalist, she's a financial journalist, and it's never really explored in the film because you see her only with respect to being Joy's wife. So the dynamic that you see between them is purely a husband-wife relationship, and the journalistic aspect is never, it never plays out between them. There was nothing specific in terms of the layering of the realities of the journalistic world that came into play. It was more the layering of the emotional realities of that." According to Shahana, the portrayal of women in male-dominated industries like journalism is often secondary or unexplored. However, she believes that Despatch offers a refreshing take on this trope. "I think it's best to watch the series and form your own opinion. But I can say that Despatch features several strong female characters, and the storytelling does a great job of explaining what makes someone brave and the power that can be hidden behind someone who's perceived as brave," the Rock On fame shared.

In an intimate conversation with The Pioneer. the versatile and accomplished actress Shahana

ving till the point that we find something new, till we find something unexpected, till we discover a chance upon a reality that may not come obviously to you, but in that moment, playing it out again and again, you end up exploring or coming across or stumbling upon a dif ferent reality or different way of expressing and reacting and responding." When asked about how *Despatch* challenged or expanded her creative boundaries, Goswami credited director Kanu Behl's method of working. "It's to do with Kanu's method of working and how he works," she explained. "Starting from the workshop process, we really went down to the bare bones of the character, the histories, the shared histories... it was a really very, very interesting process." However, when asked about her character's relationship with the themes of power and truth within the media world, the *Ra.One* star noted that this aspect of the series did not apply to her character. The dynamics between their characters is emotionally and psychologically complex and she shared her insights on what makes this relationship so compelling. She noted that this dynamic was carefully crafted through extensive discussions and workshops with her co-star Manoj Bajpayee and director Kanu Behl. "We would keep finding the right kind of choreography through those emotions and things while doing the scenes," she said. When asked about her character's role in reflecting the moral decay of the central protagonist, the *Break Ke Baad* fame clarified that her character's dynamic with the protagonist doesn't necessarily serve as a mirror to his moral decay. "I don't think that there is any specific moral decay that this dynamic shows in his character, except for just a failed marriage and a possi-ble aspect of philandering," she explained. "But that's never real-ly expressed to be the case. He's already kind of sepa-rated from his wife... so him having a relation-ship with somebody else is possibly something that happened after the separation." Despite having limited screen time in Despatch, her performance leaves a lasting impact on the audience. When asked about her approach to ensuring her character's impact, she humbly attributed it to her enjoyment of the process. "I didn't do anything to make sure. I only played the part and enjoyed playing the part, and I liked the character, the draft, and the journey, and the process." Goswami also appreciated the opportunity to do multiple takes with a specific focus on discov-ering deeper truths. "It's not just doing take after take for the sake of it, but with very specific motivations towards going deeper, finding more truth," she said. "Allowing yourself to fatigue to a point where you then discover something new ... it felt very natural and very safe."



Navigating the fascinating

She credits her nuanced performance to the direction of Kanu Behl. Known for his exacting and meticulous approach, Behl's process can be demanding, but Goswami found it to be a collaborative and rewarding experience.

⁴Kanu is definitely somebody who is exacting, but the beauty with him is that his exacting is not with him knowing what he wants," the Firaaq star explained. "It's to discover, and he wants to discover it with you. So, the great thing is that his desire is only to keep dri-

Goswami pulls back the curtain on her creative process, sharing insightful reflections on her latest role in Kanu **Behl's gripping series Despatch**

world of Clinical Psychology

also increasing, the demand for mental health professionals, including clinical psy-chology, also increases, but there is a huge shortage of Clinical Psychologist in India, so those who are studying Psychology or plan to make a career in psychology; a right time to choose psychology for their future. Psychology not only helps aspirant to make their server but also allows make their careers but also allows them to help others deal with their problem.

Major depressive disorder and anx-iety disorders, along with substance use disorder or personality disorders, constitute the major burden. One in seven Indians is suffering from mental illness, while about 7.3% of the teenagers falling under the age group of 13–17 are facing emotional and behavioural issues in a fast-paced society. More than 1.64 Lakh people died by suicide in 2021 according to NCRB and drastically suicides is one of the significant causes of death among the working aged group of 15-29 years. However, the ideas people have about mental health are still not positive and people delay or avoid getting the help they need. People with mental health issues remain untreated due to a lack of mental health professionals and their scarcity of mental health care services.

Clinical Psychology played an important role in treating Mental Illness for many centuries, but a formal journey of Clinical psychology began in the late nineteenth century when psychological science became very prominent in treating mental health issues systematically and formally.

Clinical psychology is very broad, so some schools of thought provide quite different views or approaches to practice. Psychodynamic approach, which employs ideas proposed by Sigmund Freud; the first fundamen-tal tenet is held that the unconscious mind or past experiences more specifically experiences in childhood dictate behaviour and mental illnesses.The behaviourist approach of learning can be traced from Ivan Pavlov and John B. Watson as well as BF Skinner.

s mental health issues increase dramatically along with awareness is ders, including phobia, anxiety disor-ders, and addiction, require. The cognitive approach emphasis-es how thinking determines people's

feelings and actions developed by Aaron Beck and Albert Ellis. Cognitive therapy seeks to modify negative and distorted cognition by changing how a person interprets a situation or thought. When linked with the behavioural Approach in CBT, it forms a robust, evidence-based model that focuses on cognition and behaviour to deal with mental issues.

Humanistic approach focuses on free will and individual potential and their relationship to the environ-ment. The social approach relates mental health issues to social events, while the biological approach tries to understand behaviour and illnesses based on biological things like genes, brain or hormones.

Many therapists are interested in integrative models, where therapy is based on various theories to meet the client's requirements. When therapists use CBT to treat disorders, they are

use CB1 to treat disorders, they are using a combination of Behavioural and Cognitive perspectives. Altogether, all these methods describe the variety and prospect of clinical psychology, which provides a set of methods fitting the versatile and complex nature of mental health problems. By creating valuable theoretical and practical knowledge, clin-ical psychologists deliver efficient individual treatment to enhance clients' health.

Ways of becoming a Clinical Psychologist in India To be a Clinical Psychologist, after class XII, a person has to study for 7 years: 3 years graduation + 2 years master's and then 2 years M.Phil in Clinical Psychology. According to the new regulation, it is now 6 years. As per the new National Education Policy 2020, the Rehabilitation Council of India has set up new cours-es for highly intensive training.

(The author, Dr. Arvind Otta, is a Senior Psychologist & Mental Health Activist.)

sports 11



Australia 86-1 in reply to India's 180 at stumps on day one of pink ball Test

PTI ADELAIDE

ustralia reached 86 for 1 in their first innings after dismissing India for 180 at the end of the opening day of the pink-ball Test here on Friday.

Nathan McSweeney and Marnus Labuschagne were at the crease on 38 and 20 respectively when the stumps were drawn after 33 overs of play in Australia's first innings. The home side trail by 94 runs.

Opener Usman Khawaja was the lone Australia batter out for 13 off the bowling of Jasprit Bumrah.

Earlier, India were all out for 180 at dinner after playing 44.12 overs as the visitors lost four and six wickets in the first and second sessions of the day respectively after opting to bat.

Nitish Reddy top-scored for India with 42 off 54 balls, while KL Rahul and Shubman



Gill contributed 37 and 31

respectively. Yashasvi Jaiswal (0), Virat Kohli (7) and captain Rohit Sharma (3) fell cheaply while Rishabh Pant and Ravichandran Ashwin contributed 21 and 22

In 200th ISL game, Kerala respectively. Pacer Mitchell Starc was the wrecker-in-chief for Australia as he took six Indian wickets

for 48 runs. India made three changes with captain Rohit, Gill and Ashwin returning to the playing XI after missing the first Test which India won by 295 runs. Devdutt Padikkaĺ, Dhruv Jurel and Washington Sundar made way for them. Brief Scores:

India: 180 all out in 44.1 overs (Nitish Reddy 42, KL Rahul 37, Shubman Gill 31; Mitchell Starc 6/48).

Australia: 86 for 1 in 33 overs (Nathan McSweeney 38 not out, Marnus Labuschagne 20 not out; Jasprit Bumrah 1/13).

score for the first time this season. The last time they went goalless in back-to-back matches was in February-

FC Bengaluru have dominated the rivalry, with 10 wins in 16 matches, compared to Kerala Blasters

At home, Bengaluru FC are unbeaten against the Kochibased team, winning five of six matches and scoring eight goals while conceding only two.

Chhetri touched upon his team's rivalry against Kerala Blasters FC by hailing it as one of the most remarkable

Assistant coach Renedy Singh addressed the team's form post the international break in addition to their preparation for the clash against Kerala Blasters FC.

same tomorrow," Chhetri

tactical setup and stressed on

"From technical perspective I think we are on the right track. We have to focus on the team performance. We should defend together as a side and focus on doing the small things right," Stahre said.

Messi and Inter Miami to open Club World Cup against Egyptian club AI Ahly



host to the 2026 World Cup

Real Madrid, Bayern Munich,

final.

AP MIAMI

Porto

Among the powerhouse clubs in the field: Manchester City, Lionel Messi and Inter Miami now know their path for next year's Club World Cup. The host team — invited by PSG, Chelsea, Borussia FIFA to compete despite criticism from many in the soccer world — will play the tournament's first match on Dortmund and Inter Milan. There's also the four highestranked teams from South

MLS Cup winner needs to be in the Club World Cup," MLS America: Flamengo, Palmeiras, June 15 against Egyptian club Al River Plate and Fluminense. Commissioner Don Garber Ahly, as part of a group that will And Messi's team, as a said. "I have no interest in anything representative of the host World Chess Championship: Gukesh, Liren also feature Palmeiras and nation, gets the distinction of other than what I think is playing the first match. It'll going to be best for the happen at Hard Rock Stadium showcase, best for our league. I eye breakthrough after series of draws am supportive of the decision in Miami Gardens, Florida. "It's about inclusivity, it's about that FIFA made and I'm excited to put Miami and Seattle in a global media deal bringing clubs from all over the world, the 32 best clubs and and be shown around the PTI SINGAPORE best players from all over the world together," FIFA President world." Mas said Inter Miami getting Gianni Infantino said. the privilege of playing the Some would argue it's not the opening match of the 32 "best" clubs. Inter Miami's selection was widely panned by tournament at home is "a testament to our community, critics, the volume of that only rising after the team that won the soccer culture that's here." "Who would have told us five the Supporters Shield as the years ago, with no club, that Championship here on Saturday. best MLS team in the regular season — with a record-setting we'd be here today at a draw point total - lost in Round 1 of with the best teams in the the MLS Cup playoffs. world," Mas said. "That's what we aspire to. That's what we "There's no controversy," Inter Miami managing owner Jorge dream of." million prize money championship, the 18-year-old would look to break Group A: Palmeiras, Porto, Al Mas said. Major League Soccer got two teams: Seattle and Inter Miami. Ahly, Inter Miami. the deadlock and hope to take a Group B: Paris Saint-Germain, Atletico Madrid, Botafogo, decisive lead after a day's rest on The Sounders qualified for the field, and Inter Miami was Seattle. Friday. Group C: Bayern Munich, Auckland City, Boca Juniors, The draw on Thursday, which was the placed into it as the host seventh of the match and sixth on the nation's representative. trot, has left both players on an The club competition uses the Benfica. identical score of 4.5 points each, still traditional 32-team format Group D: Flamengo, ES Tunis, used by the World Cup from Chelsea, Leon. three shy of the championshipwinning tally. The 32-year-old Liren had won the 1998 to 2022. Eight round-Group E: River Plate, Urawa, Monterrey, Inter Milan. robin groups of four teams each opening game while Gukesh had were drawn Thursday, with the Group F: Fluminense, Borussia top two from each group advancing to a knockout bracket of 16. emerged victorious in the third All Dortmund, Ulsan, Mamelodi Sundowns. other games have ended in draws. If Group G: Manchester City, Wydad, Al Ain, Juventus. history is anything to go by, the reigning champion wins the match if Europe got 12 spots and South

one spot.

Shammi Silva takes over ACC presidency role from Jay Shah

PTI 📕 DUBAI

Cri Lanka's Shammi Silva has Staken over as the president of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC), succeeding India's Jay Shah, who recently became the chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC).

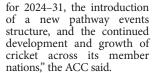
Shah had vacated the position after three terms as ACC President. It won't be Silva's maiden role with the ACC, having previously functioned as the chairman of the organisation's Finance & Marketing Committee.

"It is a great honour to lead the America six to lead the field, while Africa, Asia and North Asian Cricket Council. Cricket America all got four - with is the heartbeat of Asia, and I look forward to working Inter Miami essentially a fifth from North America since it closely with all member nations has host status. Oceania got to elevate the game, provide opportunities for emerging talent, and strengthen the There is no rule that said the bonds that unite us through this beautiful sport," said Silva



ACC, Silva also extended heartfelt gratitude to Shah for his exemplary leadership and significant contributions during his tenure.

"Under Mr Shah's stewardship, the ACC achieved remarkable milestones, including the successfully achieving highest value for its commercial rights of ACC Asia Cup tournaments



equalling 12 games with another defensive lapse. Their tally of 40 away losses Silva's tenure begins at a pivotal time, with the ACC focusing is the joint-most in ISL history alongside NorthEast on the upcoming Asia Cup and United FC. striving to strengthen Asia's The team is also coming off a 0-1 loss to FC Goa, failing to position as a powerhouse in global cricket.

Blasters eye victory against Bengaluru FC PTI BENGALURU Appearing in their 200th ISL game, Kerala Blasters will have their task cut out as they look to mark the March 2023.

and victory on Saturday would take their tally to 16 points, their best-ever after

after six home games in ISL

to leverage this record to secure another crucial win in

scoring seven goals, the most

by any player in this fixture.

The Kerala Blasters FC have

conceded in their last 11

away matches, a streak that could extend to a record-

history.

occasion with victory against formidable hosts Bengaluru

FC here on Saturday. The Blues are presently placed in the second spot in the league table, with 20 points from 10 engagements, after six victories and a FC's 4 wins and 2 draws. after six victories and a couple of draws. As for the Kochi-based Tuskers, they will want to move up the table from the current 10th place, having managed 11 points. Bengaluru have secured 13 points from their first five home matches this season, and victory on Saturday

fixtures in the competition.

The first time we played in Bengaluru FC have never failed to score against Kerala Blasters FC in the ISL, netting 27 goals in 16 meetings. The Blues will look Kerala, I didn't expect it (the fixture) to grow as much as it has. It's one of the best games to watch, whether it's played in Kochi or Bengaluru. People put a check list on their calendar for this match the upcoming match. Sunil Chhetri has been a talisman in this fixture, and I'm sure it will be the

said. Kerala Blasters FC head coach Mikael Stahre is confident of his team's defending collectively in the coming match.

Other opening matches include Paris Saint-Germain vs. Atletico Madrid and Brazilian club Botafogo playing at Major League Soccer's Seattle Soccer's Sounders in Group B; Monterrey against Inter Milan in Group E; and Real Madrid facing the Saudi club Al-Hilal potentially a showdown pitting superstars Kylian Mbappé for Real Madrid and Neymar for Al-Hilal if the Brazilian great remains with that club.

"Anytime that you have certain things where soccer is big and vou bring it to the U.S., it's going to be a great atmosphere and to be a great atmosphere and entertaining," said baseball great Ken Griffey Jr., part of the Sounders' ownership group. His club will get the chance to

play one of the world's storied teams in PSG during group play. "I'm going to leave that one alone," Griffey said, smiling. The draw was held Thursday in Miami, with the 32 teams finally finding out their first

three opponents in the newly expanded event. The tournament will be held in the U.S. From June 15 to July 13, using 12 stadiums in 11

different cities. The final will be at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, the same stadium that will play



the scores are tied 4-4 after eight games which was the case here too. The Chennai-born Indian knows that he will have to punch hard against his gritty Chinese opponent, who has a habit of coming up with well-disguised tricks when the chips are down.

World number one and five-times world champion Magnus Carlsen minced no words while doing a recap of the ninth game and said that the time was running out for Gukesh.

"I think we have finally arrived at a moment when Gukesh is not a

favourite in this match anymore, it's as pure a 50-50 match as it comes," said Carlsen.

If the deadlock is not broken after 14 rounds, Gukesh could well surrender the initiative to his Chinese opponent when the games are played under the faster time control to determine the winner. Liren is said to have an

advantage in short games. Gukesh, one of the architects of India's maiden Chess Olympiad title triumph recently, said after the draw in the ninth game on Thursday that he would like to improve his performance in critical moments. ...Hopefully, at some point when I do

the right things, I believe that the results will come," he had said. The youngest-ever challenger to the

crown was guilty of letting go a very promising position to settle for a draw in the marathon seventh game, something which would have rattled him.

But he didn't allow the morale to sag in the eighth game. He declined a draw initially through repetition which would have ended the game earlier, thus showing his intent to win at all cost.

In the ninth game, the Indian got an opportunity to exert some pressure on his 20th turn but Liren surprised him. Gukesh could be slightly disadvantaged in the remaining five games as Liren will have white thrice, but the Indian said there was not much difference having black or white pieces. "Nowadays there is not much difference between white and black, because of the computers .. All the lines that were considered dubious, the computers make them work. Now it's an equal game with both colours, so I wouldn't say it's a huge advantage," Gukesh had said on Thursday.

Grid penalty for Charles Leclerc deals a blow to Ferrari's hopes in F1 constructors' title race

AP 📕 ABU DHABI

A grid penalty for Charles Leclerc threatens to end Ferrari's hopes of beating McLaren to the Formula 1 constructors' title.

Ferrari said Friday the team had to change the battery pack on Leclerc's car in the first practice session in Abu Dhabi. Ferrari said the team expects a 10-place penalty on the grid for Sunday's race.

Leclerc was fastest in the first practice session by .221 of a second from McLaren's Lando Norris, with Lewis Hamilton third fastest for Mercedes.

Leclerc's brother Arthur took

over Carlos Sainz Jr.'s car and was 18th. Teams have to give two practice sessions per season to younger and less experienced drivers.

McLaren goes into the race

Thursday that he expected that either he or Leclerc would have to win the race in Abu Dhabi, with the other car also finishing on the podium, to have a chance of the title "unless something very disastrous happened" to

McLaren. Either McLaren or Ferrari will end a long wait for an F1 Mercedes.

constructors title Sunday. McLaren hasn't won the lucrative prize for teams since 1998 and Ferrari's last win was in 2008.

Tension in the paddockTwo McLaren goes into the race with a 21-point lead over Ferrari in the constructors' standings. Leclerc's teammate Sainz said emotional farewell to It's all Mercedes. overshadowed the

constructors' title fight. Despite Max Verstappen wrapping up his fourth driver title in Las Vegas two weeks ago, the Red Bull star is still the center of attention for a feud with George Russell of



Russell branded Verstappen "a bully" and accused him of threatening behaviour following a dispute between the two in qualifying at the Qatar Grand Prix last week. Verstappen was pushed off pole position in Qatar in favor of Russell, and has said his rival lied to get him a penalty.

Verstappen is aiming for his 10th race win of the season in Abu Dhabi. That's an impressive feat by most drivers' standards but not for Verstappen, who won 15 races in 2022 and topped it with 19 last year.

The whole weekend in Abu Dhabi will be a long goodbye marred his race in Qatar.

for Hamilton as he leaves Doohan leads new wave of Mercedes, where he won six of his seven titles, and joins Ferrari for 2025.

Hamilton is driving in Abu Dhabi with the names of 150 fans on his car as part of a "Thank you, L campaign by Mercedes. Lewis" The move to Ferrari was announced before the season began and Hamilton admitted Thursday the prolonged farewell has been much more of a strain on his emotions than he expected. Hamilton is out of form and pessimistic about was finishing on a high after penalties and a puncture

rookiesHamilton's move to Ferrari shocked F1 when it was announced in February, and it set off a chain reaction of driver moves elsewhere. Next year F1 will have its largest influx of young drivers in years as established names switch teams or leave the grid. One of the new faces is on the

grid in Abu Dhabi after Alpine opted to give Jack Doohan an early taste of F1. He replaces Esteban Ocon for the last race of the season. Doohan, a 21-year-old Australian, is the son of motorcycle racing great Mick Doohan.



tollywood **PUSHPA 2: THE RULE MIRED IN CONTROVERSIES**

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llu Arjun and director Sukumar's much-anticipated film, Pushpa 2: The Rule, released on Thursday. With inflated ticket prices, the makers anticipated huge boxoffice numbers on the first day. However, to everyone's surprise, the film found itself embroiled in controversies. Many fans criticised the high ticket prices, especially since Allu Arjun had often claimed his fans are his greatest strength. This hike led to lower audience turnout in several top centers. From the second day onward, bookings began to drop significantly in major cities, delivering an unexpected shock to the makers.

One of the major controversies is a tragic incident at Sandhya Theatre, RTC Cross Roads in Hyderabad, where a stampede occurred during a screening of the film attended by Allu Arjun and some team members. A woman lost her life and her son being hospitalised. Initially, neither Allu Arjun nor the filmmakers issued a statement regarding the incident. However, after mounting criticism, they released an official statement. Meanwhile, a case has been filed against Allu Arjun, the movie's makers and the theatre management.

The makers had planned to hold a press conference on Friday but cancelled it at the last moment without providing an explana-

WHILE THE FILM MADE **RECORD COLLECTIONS IN SOME AREAS ON ITS OPENING DAY WITH HIKED TICKET PRICES, IT HAS BEEN MAKING HEADLINES MORE FOR ITS CONTROVERSIES** THAN ITS **SUCCESS**

tion. It is speculated that they are avoiding media interactions amidst the ongoing controversies.

Another controversy arose even before the film's release when reports surfaced that music director Devi Sri Prasad was unable to deliver the background score on time. Consequently, the team brought in Sam CS, Ajaneesh and SS Thaman for the background score. Despite their contributions, only Sam CS was credited in the title cards, while Ajaneesh's name appeared in the thank-you cards. Thaman's name was omitted entirely, sparking criticism online for the lack of acknowledgment.

Additionally, certain dialogues in the film have caused a stir on social media. A specific line, reportedly aimed at industry veteran Chiranjeevi-often referred to as "Boss"-has drawn significant backlash. The dialogue, "Evadra Boss? Evadikira Boss? Aadi ki aadi kodukku, aadi tammudu ki, kooda nene Boss' ("Who is the Boss, and for whom? I am the Boss for him, his son, and his brother"), is being widely discussed and criticised for its implications.

Meanwhile, Allu Arjun's visit to Nandyal has also sparked controversy. Despite defending the visit on multiple occasions, many Mega Fans (Chiranjeevi's fanbase) have turned against him, with reports suggesting they are actively campaigning against the film. With high ticket prices, average reviews and fan backlash, the burning question is whether the film can recover and turn a profit, or if it will face losses like the first installment. Only time will reveal how audiences will respond in the coming davs.

Ram Pothineni's new film shoot begins

am Pothineni is gearing up for a fresh start with his upcoming film, tenta-tively titled *RAPO22*. Directed by P Mahesh Babu, the movie began shooting on Friday, following the release of an intriguing poster. The actor, who is coming off a string of box-office failures with *The Warrior*, Skanda and Double Ismart, appears ready to reinvent himself by exploring a new genre. Known for his action-packed roles, Ram is now venturing into something distinct and

engaging. The latest unveiled poster introduces his character, Sagar, with the tagline "Suparichithudu" (a known man), hinting at a role deeply



and nostalgia. The poster's vibrant yet vin-tage vibe showcases Ram in a completely new avatar, creating anticipation among fans. The film stars Bhagyashree Borse as the female lead and is produced by Naveen Yerneni and Y Ravi Shankar under the Mythri Movie Makers banner. Vivek-Mervin is composing the music. With this fresh approach, RAPO22 aims to mark an exciting new chapter in Ram Pothineni's career.



CLARIFIES SON'S DEBUT

Gopichand Mallineni's *Jatt* brings a mass feast

ollywood actor Sunny Deol is teaming up for the first time vith Telugu director Gopichand Malineni for an actionpacked film titled Jaat. Produced by Naveen Yerneni and Y Ravi Shankar this high-budget film has already created a massive buzz with its intriguing title and first look. Adding to the excitement, the makers have now unveiled the film's teaser. Several moments in the teaser highlight Sunny Deol's commanding screen presence and intense character, including a dramatic fight sequence where he uses a massiv fan as a weapon. The teaser concludes on an electrifying note, introducing Randeep Hooda as the main antagonist. As suggested by the glimpses, the fierce showdown between Sunny Deol and Randeep Hooda is set to be one of the film's major highlights. Director Gopichand Malineni showcases his expertise in crafting a mass-appealing action entertainer complemented by S Thaman's gripping background score. The film also features Vineet Kumar Singh, Saiyami Kher and Regena Cassandra in pivotal roles. Jaat is scheduled for release in April 2025



FILM POSTPONEMENT

Nature of the structure of the second second

clarified the situation. Speaking during a brand promotion event in Kakinada alongside actress Samyuktha, he revealed, "The film was supposed to start, but he (Mokshagnya) is not well, so it got canceled. Everything is good for us." However, Balakrishna did not provide any details about a new launch date or the current status of the project.

While Balakrishna reassured fans, it appears that Mokshagnya's debut may take more time before it officially materialises.

KEERTHY **SURESH** & BEAU JET OFF TO

ctress Keerthy Suresh and her longtime partner, Dubaihattil, have headed to Goa ahead of Thattil, have headed to Goa ahead of their intimate wedding scheduled for December 12. The couple, accompa-nied by friends, was spotted board-ing a flight from Chennai, as revealed in a shared Instagram story featuring their flight tickets and the hashtag #KAwedding. A leaked wedding invitation from Keerthy's parents. G Suresh from Keerthy's parents, G Suresh Kumar and Menaka Suresh Kumar, confirmed the date, requesting blessings for the couple's new journey. Keerthy and Antony, who have been together for 15 years, first shared a glimpse of their relationship publicly during Diwali.

Akhil Akkineni's next with Krithi Shetty

fter the failure of *Agent*, Akhil Akkineni has not signed any new films and has remained inactive throughout 2024. He had a few days back, announced his engagement to girlfriend Zainab Ravdjee. Now on the professional front, according to sources, director Murali Kishor Abburu is set to direct Akhil in his upcoming film. Abburu previously directed Vinaro Bhagyamu Vishnu Katha

with Kiran Abbavaram. Reports suggest that the new film will begin shooting on December 17.

The makers have roped in Krithi Shetty as the female lead for this project. Despite her suc-cessful debut in *Uppena*, Krithi has struggled to achieve consis-tent box-office success. Her most recent film, ARM, opposite Tovino Thomas, released in multiple languages but failed to perform well commercially. Paired opposite Akhil Akkineni for the first time, Krithi is reportedly looking forward to this collaboration. "Director Kishor Abburu has crafted a strong script that offers significant roles for both Akhil and Krithi," said a source. The film will be produced by Annapurna Studios, Akhil's family production house. Fans eagerly await this pairing and the new chapter in Akhil's career.