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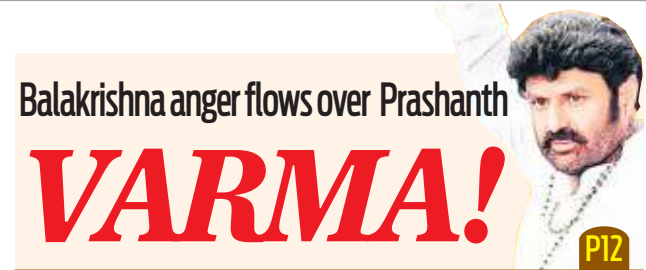
**Bid to reduce minorities to 'second-grade' citizens: Akhilesh**



**CYCLING OUT HIS WAY TOWARDS A GREENER HYDERABAD**



**Balakrishna anger flows over Prashanth VARMA!**



**QUOTE OF THE DAY**

**The pioneer**

Gandhis celebrate Bathukamma for optics but stay silent as their Chief Minister Revanth Reddy erases it from the Telangana Thalli statue. Congress leaders like Indira Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi had once celebrated Bathukamma with Telangana women, while Priyanka Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi extended greetings during elections. After elections, they question: 'Why Bathukamma belongs to Telangana Thalli? Congress leaders are showing their true colours with such statements'

**- Kavitha, BRS MLC**



**DON'T MISS...**

**'Revenue meets' to solve land disputes**

West Godavari District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani announced that the Revenue Sadassulu programme, being held from December 13 to January 8, 2025, aims to resolve land disputes effectively. In a statement on Friday, the Collector urged the public to utilise this opportunity to address their land-related issues. The Revenue Sadassulu will be conducted across 318 revenue villages in the district. On the first day, the programme was organised in 24 villages, receiving 1,658 petitions on land disputes...

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**Delhi schools receive bomb threats**

Around 30 schools in Delhi received bomb threats over e-mail in the early hours of Friday, triggering a multi-agency search of their premises, officials said. Nothing suspicious was found in any of the schools after the searches, they added. The latest threats come close on the heels of at least 44 schools receiving similar e-mails on December 9. Police had declared those threats as hoaxes. The Special Cell of the Delhi Police has registered a case of criminal intimidation and conspiracy but...

**-PAGE: 5**

**Plans to bring EPFO at par with banking**

Subscribers of the retirement fund body EPFO may soon be able to get services at par with banking system and use ATMs to withdraw their claim amount, a top official said on Friday. Union Labour Secretary Sumita Dawra told PTI that focus right now in EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) is to improve the IT infrastructure. "While improvements are being seen in last few months, in January 2025 we will see more improvement coming in as a result of hardware upgradation," she said...

**-PAGE: 8**

**'Bumrah combination of legendary pacers'**

Jasprit Bumrah embodies the qualities of pace legends such as Dennis Lillee, Andy Roberts and Richard Hadlee but at the same time is forging his own legacy, one that is set to inspire future generations of pacemen, feels former India coach Greg Chappell. He also said that Bumrah is the only player standing between Australia and the Border Gavaskar Trophy. "What sets Bumrah apart is his combination of skills: (Malcolm) Marshall's adaptability, Lillee's aggression, Richard Hadlee's control, Roberts' strategy, Wasim (Akram)..."

**-SPORTS**

## Law applies to all, no exemption for film stars: TG CM Revanth

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy addressed the controversy surrounding actor Allu Arjun's arrest, emphasising that the law applies equally to everyone whether they are film stars or political figures.

Drawing parallels with past incidents involving Salman Khan and Sanjay Dutt, the CM said that the law functions as per the Constitution authored by Dr BR Ambedkar.

**"Did Allu Arjun fight on the India-Pakistan border? He invested money in films, earned profits and entertained audiences, but that doesn't exempt him from legal scrutiny," the CM said**



Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy speaks at India Today and Aaj Tak interview at New Delhi on Friday where he dismissed any personal grudge towards Allu Arjun but clarified law applies to all equally.

"The police arrested Allu Arjun in connection with a tragic incident in which a woman lost her life, and her son is still battling for survival. A criminal case was registered after the incident. The law cannot be changed for film or political personalities," he asserted in an interview with Aaj Tak. "Did Allu Arjun fight on the India-Pakistan border? He invested money in films, earned profits and entertained audiences, but that doesn't exempt him from legal scrutiny," the CM said.

Detailing the sequence of events,

Revanth said that the police visited Allu Arjun's residence 10 days after the case was registered. He explained that the chaos ensued when the actor stepped out of his car during a public function leading to an uncontrollable rush.

"Had he stayed in his car and left quietly after watching the movie, the situation could have been avoided. But the unnecessary fanfare caused a stampede, resulting in the unfortunate loss of life," the CM said.

The Chief Minister clarified that Allu Arjun has been named as Accused No. 11 (A11) in the case and asked, "Who is responsible for the woman's death? Shouldn't a case be filed even if lives are lost?"

Addressing his personal connection to the actor, Revanth acknowledged that he had known Allu Arjun since childhood and that their families are related.

**Continued on Page 2**



Film star Allu Arjun moved to Chikkadapally Police Station after the arrest on Friday. He was presented before the court after health tests in Gandhi Hospital.

## Allu Arjun arrested, sent to jail

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Telugu superstar Allu Arjun was arrested on Friday, sent to 14-day judicial custody by a local court here in connection with the death of a woman in a stampede during the premiere of his blockbuster "Pushpa 2: The Rule" and granted interim bail by the Telangana High Court --- all in less than five hours in a dramatic turn of events.

The actor, it seemed, may have to spend the night in jail despite the HC relief, as the prison authorities

had not received a copy of the bail till late on Friday, the jail sources said.

Even if it is received, the bail copy has to be scrutinized and the release may not be feasible on Friday, the sources said, indicating that he is likely to be walk out on Saturday morning.

The high-profile arrest also triggered a political slugfest with the BJP and BRS lashing out at the ruling Congress in Telangana, questioning the treatment meted out to the star and TPCC President Mahesh Kumar

- HC grants interim bail, but Pushpa star still held over in Chanchalguda Jail.
- Chances of release today.
- Strong reactions from industry, political circles

Goud hitting back, saying the law is equal for everyone and it will take its course.

Some drama ensued when police descended at the residence of the national award-winning actor as visuals showed him purportedly arguing with a cop and objecting to them for coming up to his bedroom. "It is definitely not a good thing," he was heard saying.

**Continued on Page 2**

## CM unveils Swarna Andhra - 2047 vision document

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu unveiled the Swarnandhra-2047 vision document on Friday, stating that it aims to usher in a new era for Andhra Pradesh, with the goal of elevating the Telugu society to global prominence. Speaking at a large public gathering at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium in Vijayawada, the Chief Minister highlighted the ambitious objectives outlined in the document, which include eradicating poverty, boosting employment, and promoting sustain-



able development. Chandrababu Naidu emphasised that the vision document reflects his government's proactive approach, having been conceptualised within six months of assuming office. He

expressed gratitude to those supporting this initiative, terming it a historic moment.

Drawing parallels with the Central Government's Vikasitha Bharat-2047 initiative, the Chief Minister said the Swarnandhra vision aligns with India's centenary goals of becoming a global leader. The document outlines 10 growth objectives, including water conservation, agricultural modernisation, development of skilled human resources, and comprehensive cleanliness through the Swachandhra mission.

Accompanied by Deputy Chief

Minister Pawan Kalyan, Chandrababu interacted with women and students, discussing empowerment strategies before jointly launching the vision document with public representatives and officials.

The Chief Minister also set an ambitious target of increasing the state's per capita income from less than \$3,000 to \$42,000 by 2047. Recalling his contributions to Hyderabad's development, he cited his role in transforming the Hi-Tech City area, which he envisioned as "one Singapore, one Dubai, and one New York."

## Naidu speaks to Allu Aravind

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu spoke to Allu Aravind over the phone on Friday, according to reliable sources. The sources said Naidu had enquired about the arrest of Allu Arjun and reassured Aravind not to worry about his son's arrest. Allu Aravind is learnt to have briefed Naidu about the sequence of events leading to Arjun's arrest. Naidu is said to have assured Aravind that Arjun would be released soon. Aravind thanked the Chief Minister for his concern for his son, the sources said.

## Immigrant worker from Kuwait arrested for murder of relative

**PNS ■ KADAPA**

The police has arrested a 35-year-old immigrant worker who had travelled from Kuwait to allegedly kill a man accused of molesting his minor daughter, an official said on Friday.

Annamayya district's Rajampet sub-divisional police officer, N Sudhakar, said Anjaneya Prasad was arrested on Thursday night along with his wife Chandrakala, who allegedly instigated him to murder, and accomplice Simhadri. "We arrested three individuals-

-Anjaneya Prasad, his wife and alleged instigator Chandrakala, and Simhadri, who supported them. The arrests were made at around 9.45 pm on Thursday," Sudhakar said.

The police produced the trio before a local magistrate on Friday, who remanded them to 14 days of judicial custody. They were subsequently shifted to Kadapa Central Jail, Sudhakar said.

Authorities seized three cell phones, a two-wheeler, and the rod allegedly used in the crime.

**Continued on Page 2**

## MP Avinash Reddy under house arrest

**PNS ■ KADAPA**

YSRCP Kadapa MP YS Avinash Reddy was detained at his residence by the police on Friday. A large number of TDP and YSRCP workers had gathered at Vemula mandal headquarters due to the upcoming elections for the water bodies association.

Upon learning that Avinash Reddy was headed to the Tahsil's office in Vemula, TDP cadres and leaders rushed to the location. When media personnel of a vernacular channel arrived to cover the event, they were allegedly attacked by TDP workers.

## 'Strong systems must for Viksit Bharat'

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Deputy Chief Minister and Panchayat Raj Minister Pawan Kalyan has stressed the need for strengthening all systems and ensuring coordinated efforts to position Andhra Pradesh as a leader in achieving the vision of 'Viksit Bharat'.

At a programme held on Friday to unveil the Swarnandhra@2047 Vision Document, Pawan Kalyan urged IAS and IPS officers to perform their duties diligently without succumbing to undue pressures. "There is no need to fear anyone. Discharge your responsibilities sincerely and in the interest of the public. The Government will support



you if your actions benefit the people," he assured.

Recalling the scepticism faced by former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu when he introduced Vision 2020 in 1994, Pawan

Kalyan noted that the development of Hyderabad subsequently proved its value, benefiting many. "Similarly, the Swarnandhra@2047 Vision Document aims to transform the State by 2047," he stated.

Expressing concern over inadequate facilities in tribal areas, Pawan Kalyan highlighted that 2,854 villages still lack proper roads and medical services. "It requires Rs 3,000 crore to build roads and provide healthcare in these villages," he pointed out.

Criticising the previous YSRCP regime, he alleged that Rs 500 crore was wasted on constructing a palace on Rushikonda Hill in Visakhapatnam and Rs 1,200 crore on survey stones.

## TDP wins two seats, BJP one in RS by-polls from AP

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Three candidates for the Rajya Sabha bye-elections from Andhra Pradesh—S Satish Babu and B Mastan Rao Yadav from TDP, and R Krishnaiah from BJP—were elected unopposed on Friday.

The press release from the office of the Chief Electoral Officer stated, "The 2024 Rajya Sabha bye-elections to fill three casual vacancies from Andhra Pradesh are uncontested, and the following candidates have been declared elected," listing the names of Babu, Yadav, and Krishnaiah.

As only three NDA candidates filed nominations, their election to the Rajya Sabha was expected to be a foregone conclusion after the scrutiny of nominations and other formalities.

These candidates secured victory in the by-election one week ahead of the scheduled election date of December 20, as there were no opponents.

The TDP-led NDA alliance holds a dominant majority of 164 seats in the southern state's Assembly, with TDP, BJP, and Janasena forming the ruling alliance.

**Continued on Page 2**

## JAGAN'S RS 100 CR DEFAMATION SUIT Delhi High Court seeks reply of media houses

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Delhi High Court has sought the response of various media houses on a Rs 100 crore defamation suit by former Andhra Pradesh chief minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy over alleged derogatory news reports linking him to the indictment proceedings against Adani Group in the US.

Justice Subramonium Prasad issued summons to the media houses and their editors and search engine Google while asking them to file written statements in response to the suit. "Let the plaintiff be registered as a suit. Issue summons," the court said in its December 9 order. The judge also issued notice on Reddy's application seeking an interim relief and made it clear that any publication made after December 9

would be after being put to notice by court and have its own consequences. The court posted the matter on December 16.

Reddy sought the court's direction to the media houses to take down the publications mentioned by him in the suit. Reddy, the president of YSR

Congress Party, also sought damages of Rs 100 crore from the defendant media houses for the alleged defamation caused to him due to the publica-

tion of the news reports. It was the plaintiff's case that the statements in the articles or tweets were primarily based on and only referred to proceedings purportedly initiated in the US and he had not received any notice on it. He said neither was he indicted in the proceedings nor made a party in any of the proceedings.

"... therefore the publications against the plaintiff are without any basis and have been made by the defendants recklessly without ascertaining the truth and having scant regard to the truth," said the suit. It said false, derogatory, scandalous, illegal, malicious and defamatory statements were made by the media houses against him in the publications and Google was used for spreading and intensifying the alleged defamatory content.

**SC defers hearing on plea seeking cancellation of Jagan's bail to Jan 10**

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

The Supreme Court, in a hearing on Friday led by Justice Abhay Oka, considered a petition seeking the cancellation of bail granted to YSR Congress president and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy in a disproportionate assets case. After hearing arguments from both sides, the court adjourned the matter for further hearing on January 10.

The petition, filed by former MP and current MLA K Raghurama Krishnam Raju, alleged that Jagan had been influencing witnesses and violating bail conditions. The petitioner urged the court to revoke Jagan's bail to ensure a fair trial.

The CBI and ED submitted affidavits to the Supreme Court explaining the delays in Jagan's cases. The CBI



# India must gear up to trump Donald's investor lure

While the world was bracing for a tariff war under a Trump Presidency, Trump's recent post foretells a global race to attract investments. A couple of days back, the former American President and President-elect posted on Truth Social, a Social Media platform, stating, "Any person or company investing ONE BILLION DOLLARS, OR MORE, in the United States of America, will receive fully expedited approvals and permits, including, but in no way limited to, all environmental approvals. GET READY TO ROCK!!!"

Trump's post highlights that even the largest consumer market in the world, which ranks sixth in the last available Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) rankings, must cut red tape and adopt aggressive, proactive measures to attract investors. Given that India's consumer market is just one-tenth the size of America's and ranks 63rd in

EoDB, one cannot overstate the urgent need for India to act swiftly to stay in the competition for investments, especially Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

India offers many inherent advantages to investors. Most important among them is its demographic dividend - a massive workforce with labour costs a fraction of those in America and many other Western countries. Its Union government has opened up forbidden sectors like defence and space for private investments while aggressively pursuing statutory reforms like repealing obsolete, redundant laws, de-criminalising minor economic offences and streamlining regulations to reduce compliance burdens. The recent Jan Vishwas Bill is a case in point. The central government has also been vigorously pushing to make India a manufacturing hub by providing financial incentives to compa-

**The Ministries of Industry, Information Technology, Labour, and bodies for Skill Development, Entrepreneurship, etc., should be fused into a single Employment Generation Ministry. This Ministry's only goal and benchmark should be the speed at which it attracts and transforms investment intents into additional formal and qualitative employment opportunities in the state.**

panies that set up new manufacturing plants in India through its Production Linked Incentive Scheme. The loss of trust in China post-COVID and the global business community's shift to a "China plus One" strategy to decrease its dependency on China and build redundancies into global supply chains is another factor favouring India. These efforts and advantages made the Indian economy the fastest-growing large economy globally.

India aims to become a developed country by 2047. To

achieve the Viksit Bharat goal, it needs a sustained growth trajectory for its GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in the high single digits or even low double digits. Geopolitical uncertainties aside, President-elect Trump's intention to aggressively pursue investments makes it necessary for India to step up its investment attraction game to the next level.

Ultimately, when an investor, either domestic or foreign, comes forth to invest in India, the investment can only materialise in one of the Indian states. Whether land, labour,



KISHORE POREDDY

construction, environmental clearances, or amenities like internal roads, transport, electricity, water, and sewerage connections; significant challenges for translating investments into production capabilities are in the states' purview. While the central government has been pushing economic reforms since 1991, the states have been laggards on this score.

Unemployment is a major electoral issue today. Most states' financial situation does not afford them the luxury of addressing unemployment solely through government efforts. Hence, there is a lucrative incentive for those in power to pursue private investments. While significant infrastructure rollouts cost money, which the states may not have, they can focus on many low-hanging fruits that cost little.

Firstly, every state should launch a permanent commission similar to the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) proposed by the upcoming Trump administration. The department should comprehensively examine state-level laws, regulations, and processes relating to economic activity such as labour laws, and push for reforms - and/or repeals, changes, simplifications, and even overhauls - where necessary. Additionally, it should simplify and speed up

government interface through technology where feasible.

Secondly, states should try innovative approaches to solve the challenge of acquiring land for industry. The current strategy focuses solely on compensation - a lump sum for the owner's land, without providing an alternate sustainable income for those whose primary sustenance comes from land, like farmers. Land pooling like the one pursued by Andhra Pradesh for its capital city, wherein owners whose land is acquired get a parcel of developed land, coupled with schemes to provide loans to build economic assets that can translate into regular income, could be pursued among other innovative methods.

Finally, the state governments should turn their industrial policies on their heads. Instead of investors pursuing the state governments for land, facilities, clearances, and permits, the state governments

should take responsibility for translating investors' Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) into reality, with independent regulatory bodies to monitor irregularities. To do this, the Ministries of Industry, Information Technology, Labour, and bodies for Skill Development, Entrepreneurship, etc., should be fused into a single Employment Generation Ministry. This ministry's only goal and benchmark should be the speed at which it attracts and transforms investment intents into additional formal and qualitative employment opportunities in the state.

The timing is ripe, and given the competition for investments, it has become necessary to launch economic reforms at the state level. Telangana should lead the way.

*(The author is BJP TS spokesperson.)*

## SWARNA ANDHRA VISION @2047

# A blueprint for AP's bright future: Payyavula Keshav

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav on Friday unveiled the 'Swarna Andhra Vision 2047' document, aimed at ensuring a brighter future for the people of Andhra Pradesh. Speaking at a public meeting held at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation Stadium in Vijayawada, he praised Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for his pivotal role in conceptualising and drafting the vision document.

Drawing a parallel with Hyderabad's transformation into a cosmopolitan hub under Vision 2020, Keshav noted that the benefits of those ear-



**Drawing a parallel with Hyderabad's transformation into a cosmopolitan hub under Vision 2020, Keshav noted that the benefits of those earlier efforts are visible today. He commended CM Naidu for paving the way for 'Swarna Andhra Vision 2047' on a national scale and emphasised its potential to propel the state towards inclusive development.**

lier efforts are visible today. He commended CM Naidu for paving the way for 'Swarna Andhra Vision 2047' on a national scale and emphasised its potential to propel the state

towards inclusive development. The minister highlighted that governance should focus on constructive leadership rather than displacing industrialists or demolishing public

platforms. He lauded CM Naidu's initiatives, including IT development and drip irrigation, which have positively impacted many lives over the past three decades.

Keshav described Naidu as a visionary leader who prioritises the welfare of future generations over immediate electoral gains. He pointed out that the 'Swarna Andhra Vision 2047' is built on ten key principles and is dedicated to the people of Andhra Pradesh and the larger Andhra community.

The document, he stated, is a comprehensive plan to catalyse the state's growth and ensure a prosperous future for all its citizens.

## HM Anitha Praises CM Naidu as a visionary leader

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha thanked Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu for allowing her to be part of the launch of the Swarnandhra Vision 2047, which aims to shape the future of Andhra Pradesh. She recalled being a 10th-grade student when Vision 2020 was announced and looking forward to the changes it promised for the state.

Minister Anitha acknowledged the significant role of CM Naidu in transforming Andhra Pradesh, particularly through technological advancements that have driven the state's development.

She referred to the Swarnandhra Vision 2047 as a key plan for the state's future, recognising CM Naidu's leadership in guiding the state towards progress.

Anitha also highlighted CM Naidu's successful efforts in defending Amaravati as the capital against opposition forces.

# Nara Lokesh resolves public grievances at Praja Darbar

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister Nara Lokesh, during the 51st day of the Praja Darbar grievance redressal programme at his residence in Undavalli on Friday, listened to an array of public concerns, ranging from personal grievances to community welfare issues. The minister promised justice and solutions, affirming his commitment to addressing long-standing problems faced by citizens.

The programme saw people from diverse backgrounds presenting their appeals, including requests for social security pensions, medical assistance, and measures to protect their lands from encroachers. Employment opportunities and infrastructure needs were also prominent issues raised by the attendees.

A heart-wrenching plea came from Bulamma, a resident of Bukkapatnam in Sri Sathya Sai district. She sought justice for her son, Mekala Gautam, who allegedly ended his life due to harassment by



YSRC leader Eedarapalli Ram Mohan. Despite filing a police complaint, she claimed to face threats and pressure to withdraw the case. Minister Lokesh assured her that the matter would be thoroughly investigated and justice delivered.

Members of the Munnuru Kapu community, who migrated from Telangana to Andhra Pradesh, voiced their struggles in obtaining BC-D caste certificates, which has obstructed their access to government benefits and employment opportunities. Lokesh pledged to address this bureaucratic

hurdle and ensure their rightful entitlements.

Another troubling case came from Jagadeesh Kumar of Gopalapuram, who alleged fraud by a man named K. Prasad. Kumar had paid Rs 5 lakh, borrowed through a loan, for a promised government job that never materialised. Lokesh assured him of a detailed investigation and action against the accused.

In Visakhapatnam, T. Ramu highlighted the plight of over 80 backlog positions for persons with disabilities at Andhra University, which have remained vacant for 15 years.

## Jagan says Allu Arjun must not be held responsible for stampede

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has expressed his grief over the tragic stampede at Sandhya Theatre in Hyderabad, which claimed the life of a woman during the screening of a film starring actor Allu Arjun.

The incident has triggered widespread public concern about safety measures at public venues.

In a statement on social media platform X, Jagan condemned attempts to hold Allu Arjun accountable for the incident. The actor had expressed regret over the tragedy and offered support to the victim's family, promising to assist in any way possible.

Despite this, criminal charges and discussions about potential arrest have been directed at him, sparking controversy.

# Jagan expresses solidarity with agitating farmers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Farmers across the State staged a protest on Friday, raising their voices against corruption and alleged injustices in the agricultural sector. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy took to X (formerly Twitter) to express solidarity with the farmers, stating that the movement marked a significant step in the fight for their rights.

The protests, supported by YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leaders, highlighted the alleged failures of the Chandrababu Naidu-led government. Farmers accused the ruling party of neglecting agricultural issues, dismantling welfare schemes, and facilitating



exploitative practices.

Jagan Mohan Reddy criticised the government for abandoning initiatives such as the "Super Six," which promised an annual investment assistance of Rs 20,000 for farmers. He condemned the dismantling of Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs), the discontinuation of the e-crop system, and the introduction of middleman-driven procurement processes that have caused financial losses for farmers.

The Chief Minister lambasted the opposition for scrapping the free crop insurance scheme and accused them of blocking farmers from submitting their demands to district collectors. He also decried the arrests of YSRCP leaders, house arrests of farmers, and alleged manipulation of water users' association elections. Reddy expressed outrage over attacks on journalists who exposed these issues and criticised the elections as a sham favouring select individuals. The YSRCP has decided to boycott the elections, reaffirming its commitment to democracy and justice.

# Lakshmi Parvathi calls Naidu's policies 'anti-farmer'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Chairperson of the Andhra Pradesh Telugu Academy, Nandamuri Lakshmi Parvathi, launched a scathing attack on Chief Minister and TDP leader N. Chandrababu Naidu over what she termed as anti-farmer policies. Addressing the media on Friday, she accused the government of neglecting the welfare of farmers and implementing measures that have harmed the agricultural sector over the past six months.

Lakshmi Parvathi highlighted several pressing issues, including the failure to ensure a Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops, inadequate



procurement systems for paddy, and the insufficient supply of critical farming inputs like seeds and fertilizers. She argued that these lapses have pushed the farming community into distress, leading to widespread protests.

"Under the YSRCP government, farmers were supported

at every stage, from sowing to selling their produce. We ensured MSP and implemented policies to safeguard their livelihoods. In stark contrast, the current government has abandoned farmers, leaving them to struggle," she remarked.

She also accused Naidu of a history of unfulfilled promises, particularly citing his alleged failure to deliver on loan waivers. "Chandrababu Naidu's promises to farmers have always been empty. He has betrayed them time and again, and his failure to honour commitments like loan waivers has left farmers in dire straits," she stated.

Lakshmi Parvathi criticised Naidu for diverting attention

from critical issues with initiatives like the Vision 2047 plan, which she dismissed as mere eyewash. She also raised questions about his accountability in past incidents, including the 2015 Godavari Pushkaram stampede, alleging that he has consistently evaded responsibility for such tragedies.

Demanding immediate action to address farmers' grievances, she reaffirmed the YSRCP's commitment to standing by the farming community. "We will continue to fight for farmers' rights and ensure that their struggles are addressed. The government cannot ignore its promises, and this failure will not be forgotten," she concluded.

## TODAY ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Sukla Paksha
Tithi:	Chaturdash:
Purnima:	Dec 13 07:40 PM to Dec 14 04:58 PM
Nakshatram:	Rohini:
Mrigashirsha:	Dec 15 03:54 AM to Dec 16 02:20 AM
Rahukalam:	9:26 AM to 10:48 AM
Yamagandam:	1:33 PM to 2:55 PM
Varjyam:	09:08 AM to 10:38 AM
Gulika:	6:41 AM to 8:04 AM
Amritakalam:	12:57 AM to 02:26 AM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	11:48 AM to 12:32 PM

**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**  
Forecast: Partly Cloudy  
Temp: 32°C  
Humidity: 58%  
Sunrise: 6:27 AM  
Sunset: 5:37 PM  
Updated: December 13, 2024 5:00 PM

# Allu Arjun arrested, sent to...

Continued from Page 1

The national award-winning actor was taken to the Chikkadpally police station in a police vehicle, in a sudden development that shocked his fans and surprised others.

He was produced before the Nampally court, which remanded him to a 14-day judicial custody. He was shifted to jail under heavy security.

A 35-year-old woman died and her eight-year-old son was hospitalised on December 4 during a stampede-like situation at the Sandhya Theatre in Hyderabad when thousands of fans jostled to have a glimpse of the actor at the premiere of the blockbuster movie.

Following the incident, the city police registered a case against Allu Arjun, his security team, and the theatre management under different sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at the Chikkadpally police station based on the complaint lodged by the deceased woman's family. Allu Arjun on December 11 approached the Telangana

High Court seeking to quash the FIR registered against him.

Shortly after Arjun was remanded to judicial custody by the local court on Friday, the high court granted him a four-week interim bail and posted the case to January 21, 2025, for further hearing.

Reacting to the arrest, BJP leader and Union Minister of State for Home, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, said the actor deserved better treatment, while BRS Working President K T Rama Rao slammed the government for treating the star like a "common criminal". Responding to the criticism, Goud told PTI: "Whether it is a common man or a celebrity, the law applies to all. Law is equal for all. Arjun should not have come without proper intimation to the police. It has claimed one precious life. The law will take its course".

Adding a twist to the case, the husband of the deceased said he doesn't find fault with Allu Arjun for the tragedy. He said he is ready to withdraw his case over the incident. While hiring a Lunch

Motion moved by the actor, high court judge Justice J Sridevi directed him to submit a surety of Rs 50,000 to jail authorities and that he should cooperate in the investigation.

Arjun's legal teams argued that the theatre management informed the police well in advance about the actors' programme and sought security and traffic management.

Senior Advocate S Niranjan Reddy appearing for the actor argued that just because there is a death by stampede, a popular person cannot be accused of a crime unless there is a deliberate and direct negligence or omission. He also argued that culpable homicide not amounting to murder will not be applicable against the actor in this case.

After the formal arrest, Allu Arjun was taken to the state-run Gandhi Hospital for medical tests. His father-in-law Chandrasekhara Reddy came to the police station while Arjun's father Aravind was present at the hospital when the actor was brought for medical tests.

## Law applies...

Continued from Page 1

"Allu Arjun's uncle, Chiranjeevi, is a Congress leader, and another relative, Chandrasekhara Reddy, is also part of the Congress. His wife is connected to my family as well," he said.

However, he reiterated that these personal ties have no bearing on the case, as the Home Department, which he handles, is committed to impartiality.

Revanth also highlighted the condition of the deceased woman's son, who is in a coma and emphasised the need for accountability.

"Actors earn money but haven't done anything special for the country. My favourite actor was Krishna, and he is no more. I see myself as a star with my own fans," he said.

## Immigrant worker from...

Continued from Page 1

Prasad had flown in specifically from Kuwait to allegedly kill his relative, P Anjaneyulu, accusing him of sexually abusing his daughter in Obulavariipalli. The murder occurred last week while Anjaneyulu was sleeping outside his home. Anjaneyulu (59), a differently abled man is the father-in-law of Prasad's wife, Chandrakala's sister, Lakshmi Devi. Following the alleged murder, Sudhakar said Prasad returned to Kuwait and released a video message, claiming he was forced to murder because the police allegedly did not act on his daughter's sexual abuse complaint. However, Sudhakar clarified that neither Prasad nor his wife had ever filed a formal complaint with the police regarding the abuse. Instead, they had approached authorities solely to resolve family disputes between Chandrakala and her sister Devi's families.

## TDP wins two seats...

Continued from Page 1

TDP has 135 Assembly seats, followed by Janasena with 21 and BJP with 8. For the first time in nearly 40 years, TDP had no representation in the Council of States for almost a year, as it refrained from contesting the Rajya Sabha elections earlier in 2024 due to a lack of sufficient MLAs. This situation has now changed.

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## Janardhan promises pothole-free roads by Sankranti 2025

Rs 861-crore road repair works underway in State

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Roads & Buildings (R&B) and Investments, BC Janardhan Reddy, has announced that despite financial constraints, road repair works across Andhra Pradesh is underway with a budget of ₹861 crore. The State aims to be pothole-free by Sankranti 2025, with repair works set to be completed in the next few months.

Speaking during an inspection of road repair works on Konapalli Road in Kothapalli village, Prakasam district, Reddy emphasised the government's commitment to improving infrastructure, stating that the repairs will cover nearly 25,000 km of roads in three phases. In Prakasam district alone, 1,313 km of roads are being repaired



at an estimated cost of ₹21 crore. Reddy, accompanied by Giddalur MLA M Ashok Reddy and local officials, highlighted that the repairs are critical to

boosting economic activity and public welfare. He noted that the previous administration's neglect of infrastructure had burdened the State with an additional

₹15,000 crore in road expenses. The Minister also pointed out that the government is focused on ensuring effective governance, guided by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's vision for development.

Despite challenges posed by weather delays, Reddy assured that the goal of pothole-free roads will be achieved by January. He also stated that the State has secured ₹75,000 crore in funding for national highway projects in collaboration with the Central government, which will further support economic growth and infrastructure development.

Minister Reddy reaffirmed the government's resolve to restore industrial growth in the State and pledged to repay the trust of the people.

## Botsa seeks urgent probe into 'mismanagement of Kakinada SEZ'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Botsa Satyanarayana, the Leader of Opposition in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council, penned a letter to Piyush Goyal, the Minister of Commerce and Industry on Friday, calling for an urgent inquiry into the allegations of mismanagement and misuse of land in the Kakinada Special Economic Zone (SEZ). The letter highlights serious concerns regarding the land acquisition process, ecological violations, and alleged financial misconduct surrounding the project.

The Kakinada SEZ, part of the Government of India's initiative to develop economic zones, was established in the early 2000s to encourage private investment. The Andhra Pradesh government acquired approximately 10,000 acres of land from local farmers to facilitate its development. However, significant changes in the promoters involved and the opaque land acquisition process have raised red flags.

"The land was acquired from farmers at a much lower price, and later, a large portion of it was sold to new promoters, raising questions about the

There are allegations of land misuse, ecological violations, and financial misconduct



**"The land was acquired from farmers at a much lower price, and later, a large portion of it was sold to new promoters, raising questions about the integrity of the transactions," Botsa stated. "This situation is reminiscent of the agitations in Singur and Nandigram, where public outcry led to land being returned to farmers."**

integrity of the transactions," Botsa stated. "This situation is reminiscent of the agitations in Singur and Nandigram, where public outcry led to land being returned to farmers."

In response to growing unrest, the Andhra Pradesh government, under Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, decided to return 2,180 acres to the farmers. However, recent events have reignited the controversy. On December 6, Yanamala Rama Krishnu, a former Finance Minister and current member of the Legislative Council from the Telugu Desam Party (TDP),

sent a letter to the Chief Minister accusing the project's original promoter, KV Rao, of defrauding significant amounts by selling the acquired land to new promoters. Krishnu's letter also highlighted serious deviations and violations of ecological norms, claiming that the SEZ was developed without proper compliance with environmental regulations.

Botsa emphasised the need for a thorough investigation in his communication to Piyush Goyal, stressing the importance of transparency in such large-scale projects. "As a

member of the public from the coastal area of Andhra Pradesh and in my capacity as Leader of Opposition, it is my responsibility to bring these issues to light and seek scrutiny from the Government of India, which oversees SEZs across the country," he said.

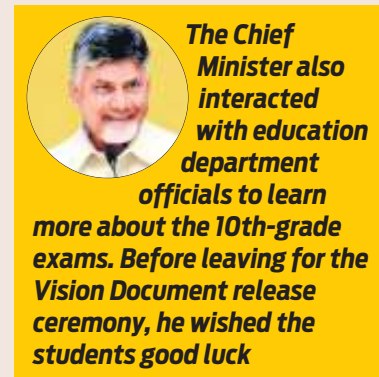
Satyanarayana urged the Minister of Commerce and Industry to instruct the relevant agencies to investigate the allegations and take immediate action. "This matter requires urgent attention to ensure accountability and protect the rights of farmers and the environment," he said.

## CM wishes students best of luck for exams

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan visited Nanna ZP High School students and wished them the best for their upcoming exams. A special exhibition titled "Ten Principles, One Vision," marking the release of the "Swarna Andhra @ 2047" Vision Document, was held at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation Stadium in Vijayawada on Friday. CM Naidu, DCM Pawan, and Principal Secretary Nirab Kumar Prasad, among others, visited the stalls showcasing themes such as skill development and human resource enhancement.

During the visit, the Chief Minister



spoke to 10th-grade students Gajula Sandhya, Gnana Prasuna, and P.

Bhavyashree. When asked about their studies and the upcoming exams starting on March 17 next year, the students mentioned that they were preparing well with the help of their teachers.

When CM Naidu asked if they were afraid of the exams, the students confidently said they were not, which pleased him.

The Chief Minister also interacted with education department officials to learn more about the 10th-grade exams. Before leaving for the Vision Document release ceremony, he wished the students good luck.

The students were excited to meet CM Naidu and Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan in person for the first time and thanked them for the interaction.

## Predatory loan apps continue to exploit vulnerable individuals

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a heartrending tragedy that has shocked the Dandubazar community, a 21-year-old fisherman, who got married only on October 20, took his life on December 7 after falling victim to the relentless harassment of fraudulent loan app operators. The young man had borrowed just Rs 2,000, repaying it promptly, but the harassment didn't end. Operators demanded additional interest and escalated their abuse by morphing photos of him and his family and sharing them with his relatives via WhatsApp. Unable to bear the humiliation, he tragically ended his life.

On December 12, the grieving family lodged a complaint with Commissioner of Police Shankhabrata Bagchi, bringing the issue of loan apps back into focus and igniting public outrage. This tragedy mirrors a similar case from two years ago in Gajuwaka, where a young woman also committed suicide after facing harassment from loan app operators. In response, police identified 204 fraudulent apps and made multiple arrests. Yet, these predatory platforms continue

Harassment and humiliation over Rs 2,000 loan pushes newlywed to suicide



to exploit vulnerable individuals despite ongoing efforts to curb their activities.

Loan app operators often entice victims with unsolicited messages offering instant loans. By clicking the provided link, users unwittingly grant access to their phone contacts and photo gallery, permissions buried in the apps' terms and conditions. Harassment begins almost immediately, with threats to morph photos or contact the victim's network to extort money.

In a recent incident, a woman from Yendada Panorama Hills received a

message offering a Rs 30,000 loan. Out of curiosity, she clicked the link and was shocked to find Rs 1,240 credited to her account. She soon faced demands for Rs 20,000, and when she resisted, the operators morphed her photos and shared them with her contacts. Despite eventually paying, she reported the incident to the police.

Cybercrime officials, under Shankhabrata Bagchi, are stepping up efforts to tackle this menace. "Loan apps are deceptive traps that can cause life-long issues," cautioned Cybercrime Circle Inspector K. Bhavani Prasad. "Avoid responding to unsolicited messages or links offering loans. We are conducting awareness programmes to educate the public and prevent further tragedies."

Apps like Shuttle Loan, Easy Loan, Crazy Bee, Cash Neem, and Rupee Tiger have been flagged as fraudulent. Citizens are urged to steer clear of these platforms and report harassment to the police immediately.

## Karthika Deepotsavam at Tirumala tomorrow

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The holy hills of Tirumala will observe the Karthika Deepotsavam in the temple on December 15. As part of the fete, the hill shrine will shine under the illumination of mud lamps on Sunday evening. A galaxy of over 100 mud lamps will be lit in different places starting from Garbha Griha.

The lamps will be lit in front of Akhandam of Sanctum Sanctorum, Kulasekhara Padi, Ramulavari Meda, Garudalwar, Dwarapalakas, Vakulamata Shrine, Varadaraja Swamy Shrine,

Yoga Narasimha, Viswakshenulavari Sannidhi, Sabha Ara, Chandana Ara, Kshetrapalakula Sannidhi, Bangaru Vakili, Vendi Vakili, Dhawaja Stambham, B a l i p e e t h a m , Kshetrapalakula Sannidhi, Tirumalaraya Mandapam, Poolabaavi, Tirumala R a y a m a n d a p a m , Ranganayakula Mandapam and Mahadwaram.

Outside the temple, Sri Varahaswamy Temple, Bedi Anjaneya Swamy temple and Swamy Pushkarini. TTD has cancelled Sahasra Deepalankara Seva and monthly Pournami Garuda Seva in view of the festival.

## 5 major Tirumala reservoirs brimming with water

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Following incessant rainfall, the five main reservoirs serving Tirumala are 'brimming with water', officials said on Friday.

TTD is supported by five reservoirs—Papavinasanam Dam, Gogarbhama Dam, Akashaganga Dam,

Kumaradhara Dam, and Pasupudhara Dam. "Due to continuous rains, all five major reservoirs in Tirumala are full and overflowing. The gates of Papavinasanam and Gogarbhama Dams have been lifted, and water has been released," a press release from Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams stated.

## Minister Kolusu inaugurates CC road in Meerjapuram



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Minister for Housing and Information and Public Relations, Kolusu Parthasarathy, inaugurated a CC road between Meerjapuram and Bellanapalli in Nuzvid Mandal. The road, built with an investment of Rs 90 lakh, was constructed by the private

company Charoen Pokphand Group. The company's MD and COO, Piya Porn, attended the inauguration along with the minister.

Minister Parthasarathy praised the collaboration between the government and private sector, emphasising that such partnerships are crucial for economic development. He expressed gratitude

towards Charoen Pokphand Group for contributing to the village's infrastructure and for their role in regional development, including job creation.

The minister also assured the public that despite the previous government's financial mismanagement, all promises made to the people would be honoured.

## Experts stress emerging role of biomarkers in tumour detection

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Biomarkers, particularly glutamine, are emerging as crucial tools in the early detection and monitoring of tumour progression, experts shared at the recent Faculty Development Programme (FDP) hosted by GITAM Deemed to be University. The programme, titled 'NMR of Small Molecules for Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Applications', was held at the University's Faculty Development Centre on Friday.

Dr Jithender Reddy, Senior Scientist at the Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT), highlighted the growing importance of biomarkers in cancer research. "Biomarkers like glutamine are becoming critical in the early diagnosis and monitoring the progression

of tumours," Dr Reddy noted. "Our team's research is pioneering the identification and development of these biomarkers to improve patients' condition." He also discussed how Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) techniques are revolutionising molecular research by enabling detailed structural analysis of small molecules and complex compounds. "NMR plays a vital role in understanding the intricacies of molecular structures, advancing both pharmaceutical and biomedical applications," he added.

The FDP brought together leading experts in the field of NMR. Prof. Neeraj Sinha from the Centre for Biomedical Research (CBMR) introduced the fundamentals of NMR spectroscopy, including its 2D and solid-state techniques. He



also showcased CBMR's research innovations, such as studying bone microstructures, analysing serum profiling in gallbladders for cancer progression, and identifying bio-

markers for acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). "NMR's ability to study and quantify metabolites in body fluids provides invaluable insights into disease mecha-

nisms," Prof. Sinha explained. Prof. Dinesh Kumar, also from CBMR, further discussed cutting-edge NMR methods for structural and functional studies of proteins. "These

advancements in NMR techniques hold great promise for accelerating biomedical research and enhancing diagnostic capabilities," he said.

Dr AVSS Sharma and Dr Chandrasekar from Bruker presented the latest technological innovations in NMR instrumentation. Their work is poised to revolutionise molecular and biomedical research, improving the precision and speed of NMR analyses. GITAM's In-Charge Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Y Gowtham Rao encouraged participants to apply the knowledge gained from the FDP in their research. "This knowledge should serve as a stepping stone for significant contributions to the scientific community through impactful publications," Prof. Rao emphasised.

## Fake currency notes worth Rs 57 lakh seized

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

The police have uncovered a fake currency note racket by arresting six individuals and seizing counterfeit notes with a face value of Rs 57.25 lakh at Meliaputti village in Pathapatnam mandal.

Tekkali DSP VSV Murthy

informed the media in Tekkali on Friday that a police team had arrested members of a six-person gang involved in circulating fake currency. The arrested individuals had been operating in Srikakulam district for the past few months, distributing counterfeit notes.





# SP asks students to play key role in combating cybercrimes

PNS ■ ELURU

Superintendent of Police K Pratap Shivakishore has called upon students to play a proactive role in preventing cybercrimes by creating awareness among the public while safeguarding themselves.

The district police, in coordination with Gramdeep Trust, organised the Student Ambassador Public Safety Training Workshop here on Friday.

Addressing the gathering, SP Shivakishore noted that technological advancements have led to an increase in cybercrimes. He emphasised the importance of students being responsible for educating the public about ways to protect themselves from online scams and fraudulent activities.

The SP highlighted that 80% of cybercrimes are committed through mobile phones. He cautioned students to remain vigilant against suspicious calls, messages, and email links. He



Addressing the gathering, SP Shivakishore noted that technological advancements have led to an increase in cybercrimes. He emphasised the importance of students being responsible for educating the public about ways to protect themselves from online scams and fraudulent activities

advised against sharing personal information or OTPs with unknown individuals and warned against clicking on unsolicited app or message links. Victims of cybercrimes were urged to report incidents promptly at cybercrime.gov.in

or by dialling 1930.

The SP encouraged students to become ambassadors for cybercrime awareness, focusing on personal, financial, and security-related issues. He also stressed the need to prevent atrocities against women and

child marriages, warning of strict action against those supporting such practices.

Additionally, SP Shivakishore advised wearing helmets while riding two-wheelers and installing household surveillance cameras to curb crimes.

Gramdeep Trust convener Dr. Manohari, Bhumika agency legal advisor G. Anupama, social services representative Santharam, DSP D. Shrivani Kumar, police officers, and students from various institutions attended the workshop.



# YSRCP stages statewide 'Rythu Poru' protests

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) organised statewide 'Rythu Poru' protests, reaffirming its commitment to addressing farmers' issues. Demonstrations were held in all districts, with rallies culminating in the submission of memorandums to district authorities, demanding immediate action on key agricultural challenges.

In Srikakulam, the rally, led by Piryra Vijay and Minister Dr Seediri Appalaraju, began at Jyotirao Phule Park and concluded at the Collectorate, where a memorandum was handed over to Joint Collector Ahmed Khan. Around 400 people participated.

In Parvathipuram Manyam, YSRCP leaders Pushpa Srivani and Palavalasa Vikrant led a rally to the Collectorate, submitting their demands to Joint Collector Shobhak.

In Vizianagaram, district

president Majji Srinivasarao, along with leaders Botsa Appalarasayya and Kolagatla Veerabhadra Swami, spearheaded a rally from Cantonment to the Collectorate. The event drew a massive crowd of 2,000.

In Visakhapatnam, Gudivada Amarnath and Vasupalli Ganesh Kumar led 700 participants in a rally from ZP Junction Krishna Mandiram to the Collectorate.

In East Godavari, Margani Bharat and Jakkampudi Raja led a rally from Bomuru party office to the Collectorate, with over 700 participants showing their support.

In West Godavari, more than 1,000 participants joined a rally from VISTA Koduru Road to the Collectorate, highlighting the district's robust support for farmers.

In Guntur, a rally led by former Minister Ambati Rambabu, along with MLC Murugudu Hanumantha Rao and Modugula Venugopala

Reddy, marched from Dharna Chowk to the Collectorate, bringing farmers' concerns to the fore.

In Krishna district, leaders like Simhadri Ramesh (Avanigadda) and Devabhaktuni Chakravarti (Penamaluru) led a rally in Machilipatnam, drawing over 500 participants.

In Kurnool, former MLA SV Mohan Reddy and MLA Bala Nagireddy led a significant rally from Dharna Chowk to the Collectorate, with strong participation from farmers.

In Nellore, former Minister Kakani Govardhan Reddy, along with former MLA Ramireddy Pratap Kumar Reddy and MLC Parvata Reddy Chandrasekhar Reddy, led a rally from VRC Centre. The event witnessed enthusiastic support from the farming community.

The protests underscored YSRCP's solidarity with farmers and their resolve to address agricultural issues.



DRM Manoj Kumar Sahoo presenting certificates and LED bulbs to students

# Waltair Division champions energy conservation, saves Rs 60 lakh

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Waltair Division of East Coast Railway successfully concluded a week-long celebration of National Energy Conservation Week, reaffirming its dedication to sustainability and energy efficiency. Through a series of awareness initiatives and demonstrations of cutting-edge energy-saving technologies, the division highlighted its commitment to reducing energy consumption and promoting environmental responsibility.

"Exploring natural energy sources like solar and wind power can greatly reduce operational costs and environmental impact," said DRM Manoj Kumar Sahoo during a seminar held at the DRM's office. "This year, Waltair Division has achieved savings of approximately Rs 60 lakhs up to November by utilising solar power and Head on Generation (HOG) technology."

The division's efforts to promote energy conservation

were marked by extensive campaigns across railway stations and prominent locations. With banners, posters, stickers, and rallies, the division sought to engage employees and the public alike in fostering a culture of responsible energy use.

A key highlight of the week was an exhibition held on Friday, showcasing the division's advancements in energy-saving technologies. The exhibition featured a range of innovations, including automated lighting systems for offices and residences, solar-powered streetlights, energy-efficient BLDC fans, remote sensing lighting systems, LED lighting solutions, and inverter-type air conditioning systems.

MSN Murthy, Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (General), delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation covering various aspects of renewable and non-renewable energy sources, cost efficiency, and environmentally friendly measures.

# Fishermen return home after six-month ordeal in SL prison

Dasari Venkaiah and Ganagalla Korlayah reunite with families after diplomatic efforts led by Union Minister Rammohan Naidu and MLA Gondu Shankar



PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

After a harrowing six-month ordeal in a Sri Lankan prison, two fishermen from Srikakulam district have finally returned home. Dasari Venkaiah (35) and Ganagalla Korlayah (33) were arrested by the Sri Lankan Coast Guard on June 25 for inadvertently crossing the maritime boundary.

The Indian Embassy in Sri Lanka informed Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu about their release on Friday. The news brought immense relief to their families and the local community. The fishermen, residents of Peda Ganagallavanipet, had migrated to Chennai in

search of work. They embarked on a fishing trip with six others, unaware that they were venturing into Sri Lankan waters. Their boat collided with another, leading to their arrest.

Local leaders, including Srikakulam MLA Gondu Shankar, intervened and brought the matter to the attention of Rammohan Naidu. The Minister, in collaboration with the MLA, provided immediate support to the families and advocated for the fishermen's release with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.

"The safety and well-being of our citizens are paramount," said Rammohan Naidu. "We worked tirelessly with the Ministry of External

Affairs to secure their return." MLA Gondu Shankar expressed his relief, stating, "This incident highlights the vulnerabilities faced by our fishermen. We are grateful they are back with their families." The Indian Embassy facilitated the fishermen's release after extensive negotiations with Sri Lankan authorities. They were transported to Colombo and subsequently flown back to India.

Their return was met with jubilation in Peda Ganagallavanipet. Families and local leaders expressed gratitude to the officials who made their return possible. "We are forever grateful to Rammohan Naidu and S. Jaishankar for their efforts," said a family member.

# YSRCP stages dharna demanding resolution of farmers' issues



PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

YSRCP leaders staged a dharna in front of the Collector's office here on Friday, demanding that the government take immediate steps to resolve the issues faced by farmers.

Holding placards and flex banners, the protesters raised slogans condemning the government's apathy towards addressing farmers' problems.

Speaking at the gathering, YSRCP district president

Mudunuru Prasad Raju accused the coalition government of failing to address farmers' concerns even after six months in power. He criticised leaders of the TDP, JSP, and BJP for making promises to farmers before the elections, which they had not honoured.

Prasad Raju pointed out that the TDP leaders had promised Rs 20,000 as input subsidy under the Annadata Sukhibhava scheme, but the amount had not been dis-

bursed. He also lamented that farmers were being paid only Rs 1300 per bag of paddy, instead of the MSP of Rs 1725.

The YSRCP leader also lashed out at the government for revoking the free crop insurance scheme.

Former Ministers Kottu Satyanarayana, Karumuri Nageswara Rao, and MLCs Kavuru Srinivas and Vanka Ravindranath also spoke at the protest.

# 810 kg of ganja seized, 3 peddlers arrested

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

Police seized 810 kg of ganja at the Kottakki check-post in Ramabhadrapuram mandal while it was being transported in a lorry and two SUVs. Three drug peddlers were arrested in connection with the seizure.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) P Srinivasa Rao informed the media in Bobbili on Friday that, acting on a tip-off, a police team led by Circle Inspector K Narayana Rao and Sub-Inspector V Prasada Rao conducted a vehicle check at the Kottakki check-post. During the search, they discovered 810 kgs of ganja hid-

den in 27 bags being transported in a lorry and two Bolero vehicles. The police seized the vehicles and the ganja, worth Rs 40.50 lakh, along with four mobile phones and Rs 7,405 in cash.

The ganja was being transported from Odisha to Madhya Pradesh, under the cover of a coal load. The arrested peddlers have been identified as Hukum Solanki (A1), Anil Solanki (A2), and Jyothi Bhushan Behara (A3). They had purchased the ganja in Odisha and were transporting it to Madhya Pradesh.

DSP Srinivasa Rao commended the police team for their efforts in seizing the large quantity of ganja.



# 'Revenue Sadassulu' to solve land disputes in WG



PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani announced that the Revenue Sadassulu programme, being held from December 13 to January 8, 2025, aims to resolve land disputes effectively.

In a statement on Friday, the Collector urged the public to utilise this opportunity to address their land-related issues. The Revenue Sadassulu will be conducted across 318 revenue villages in the district. On the first day, the programme was organised in 24 villages, receiving 1,658 petitions on land disputes.

"The election code has been in force since December 6 due to the upcoming MLC Teachers' constituency elections. Despite this, the State government is committed to resolving public grievances through Revenue Sadassulu," she stated.

The Collector highlighted that 50% of grievances received during the Praja Parishaka Veda programme were related to land disputes. With this in mind, the State government has launched these conferences in villages to address such issues on a priority basis.

She emphasised that the Revenue Sadassulu is a dedicated platform for resolving land and revenue-related matters. Officials have been directed to focus solely on revenue and survey issues during these meetings to ensure swift resolutions.

Collector Chadalavada Nagarani encouraged all residents to participate in the Revenue Sadassulu in their villages to resolve their land issues effectively.

# Kavitha to defy govt orders, instal Telangana Thalli statues

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha launched a scathing attack on Congress leaders and Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for allegedly insulting Telangana's cultural symbol, Bathukamma. Addressing the media on Friday, she questioned the inaction against Congress leaders who made derogatory remarks about the festival. She demanded accountability from the Chief Minister, accusing him of allowing ministers and Congress leaders to demean Telangana women and their pride.

She said that irrespective of the orders, through BRS and Telangana Jagruthi, Telangana Thalli of agitation will be installed in every village.

Kavitha criticised Congress leaders for exploiting Bathukamma during elections and neglecting it otherwise. She pointed out that leaders like Indira Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi had once celebrated Bathukamma with Telangana women, while Priyanka Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi extended greetings during elections. "After elections, they question why Bathukamma belongs to Telangana mothers. Congress leaders are showing their true colors with such statements," she said, urging them to speak responsibly.

She highlighted how the BRS government, under KCR's leadership, elevated Bathukamma to the status of a state festival, making it a global phenomenon. Kavitha accused the Congress government of pushing it into obscurity. "We tried to make Bathukamma an international celebration, but Congress is attempting to erase its significance," she alleged.

Kavitha condemned the Congress government's decision to issue a GO restricting the representation of Telangana Thalli. "How can they change the image of Telangana Thalli? Statues across the country, including those of Mahatma Gandhi, Ambedkar, and Bharata Mata, are symbols of honor and respect, not enforced by GOs. But here, they are imposing restrictions and threatening cases," she remarked, calling it a grave injustice.

She criticised the secrecy surrounding the new Telangana Thalli statue and compared the



government's actions to feudal and Nazi regimes. "Is this a democracy or a dictatorship?" she questioned. Kavitha vowed to continue unveiling Telangana Thalli statues across villages under the aegis of Telangana Jagruthi and BRS.

Kavitha also lashed out at the Congress government for neglecting Telangana's folk culture in official events. "Why are Telangana songs missing from state celebrations? Despite having numerous folk artists, none were given a chance to perform. This cultural destruction is unacceptable," she said, adding that the state anthem and symbols, including Charaminar and Kakatiya Toranam, were under threat under the Congress regime. Kavitha further criticised the appointment of Adityanath Das, a former Andhra Pradesh official involved in controversial irrigation projects, as an advisor to Telangana's irrigation department. "This raises serious questions about the government's priorities."

Gandhis celebrate Bathukamma for optics but stay silent as their Chief Minister Revanth Reddy erases it from the Telangana Thalli statue. Congress leaders like Indira Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi had once celebrated Bathukamma with Telangana women, while Priyanka Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi extended greetings during elections.

After elections, they question: "Why Bathukamma belongs to Telangana Thalli? Congress leaders are showing their true colors with such statements, Kavitha said."

Kavitha announced a round table discussion on Saturday at the Somajiguda Press Club to address Congress's alleged cultural destruction, attempts to alter Telangana Thalli's image, and the promotion of non-Telangana practices. The event will feature poets, artists, intellectuals, and academicians.



ACROSS THE STATES



**Ex-cop Mondal, RG Kar ex-principal Ghosh get bail**

The Sealdah court on Friday granted bail to former officer-in-charge of Tala police station Abhijit Mondal and R G Kar Medical College and Hospital ex-principal Sandip Ghosh in the rape and murder case of an on-duty doctor. While Mondal was accused of alleged delay in filing of FIR in the rape and murder of the on-duty doctor at R G Kar Hospital on August 9, Ghosh was accused of tampering of evidence in the case. The two were arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is investigating the rape-murder case on an order of the Calcutta High Court. The additional chief judicial magistrate (ACJM), Sealdah court, granted bail to the two accused persons as chargesheet against them was not filed within the mandatory 90-day period, a lawyer representing Ghosh said. Mondal's lawyer told reporters outside the court that he will walk out of the correctional home where he is incarcerated on judicial remand.



**Teacher caught taking Rs 5,000 bribe from faculty**

A government schoolteacher was caught while allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 5,000 from a guest teacher in Madhya Pradesh's Alirajpur district on Friday, said an official of the Lokayukta police. Manish Bhavsar (45), a secondary schoolteacher posted at the Jan Shiksha Kendra, was trapped when he was allegedly accepting the bribe amount from a primary school guest faculty, Kheema Aznar (43), at a government office. Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Anirudh Wadhia said. Bhavsar had inspected the primary school on November 26, he said, quoting Aznar's complaint. "During the inspection, the attendance of students in the school was found to be low following which Bhavsar had threatened Aznar and demanded an annual bribe of Rs 10,000. Bhavsar had said if the bribe was not paid, he would get Aznar sacked from job," the Lokayukta DSP said, citing the complaint.



**Assam govt carries out eviction drive in Goalpara**

More than 40 families were evicted in an anti-encroachment drive in Assam's Goalpara district on Friday, an official said. They were served eviction notices in advance, he said. The eviction drive was carried out with the help of excavators since morning in the Pancharatna area, under the Balijan revenue circle of the district. Security forces were also deployed for the operation, which faced resistance from the encroachers. Many of those evicted claimed they had been living there for at least three generations and attempted to prevent the administration from carrying out the operation. "I was born in this house, and now my grandchildren are here. We cannot be asked to leave just like that," a woman claimed. Another senior resident said that the administration failed to make any alternative arrangements for them. "Where will the people live now?" he asked. Some women tried to prevent the excavators, but police moved them away and cleared the way.

**Uddhav takes jibe at BJP's 'Ek hai' slogan, says temples not safe in India, Bangladesh**

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Friday sought to corner the BJP over Hindutva and said the party-led central government should inform Parliament what steps it is taking to protect Hindus in Bangladesh, where minorities have faced violent attacks. Addressing a news conference in Mumbai, Thackeray slammed the BJP, saying its Hindutva is only for votes. The former CM referred to a notice issued by the Railways to demolish a Hanuman temple outside Dadar station and said a "fatwa" (edict) has been issued to bring down the 80-year-old shrine built by leaders. Taking a dig at the BJP over its "Ek hai toh safe hai" (united, we are safe) slogan, widely used during campaigning for the last month's assembly polls, he said even temples are not safe under the regime of the national party.



**Bid to reduce minorities to 'second-grade' citizens: Akhilesh**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav alleged Friday that efforts are underway to reduce the country's minorities, particularly Muslims, to "second-grade" citizens, and claimed their rights and properties are being systematically eroded.

Speaking in Lok Sabha during a debate on the 'Glorious Journey of 75 Years of the Constitution of India', Yadav charged the government with fostering inequality and failing to uphold the constitutional rights of marginalised communities. "This Constitution is our armour, our security. It provides us strength whenever needed. The Constitution is the true guardian of the rights of the oppressed, neglected, suppressed, and deprived. For people like us and the weak in the country, especially for PDA (Pichdde, Dalit and Alpsankhyak), saving the Constitution is a matter of life and death," he said.

The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister accused the government of neglecting minorities, and said their rights and properties are being systematically eroded. "More than 20 crore people, especially



Muslims, are being reduced to second-grade citizens. Atrocities against them are increasing daily. Their properties are being looted, homes demolished, and places of worship seized with administrative help," Yadav alleged. The SP chief reiterated his call for a caste survey, stating it is vital for bridging social gaps and achieving justice.

"Whenever we get the opportunity, we will conduct a caste census. It will not deepen caste divisions but reduce them, ensuring rights and

equality for those who have been deprived for long. Reservation was the most significant tool for social justice, but it has been diluted with outsourcing and contract-based jobs," Yadav added.

Yadav also criticised the government for its handling of border issues with neighbouring countries, claiming that India's territorial integrity is under threat. "Protecting the nation's borders is the primary duty of any government. Yet, we see intrusions... In Ladakh, our troops have withdrawn

from our (own) territory, and it won't be long before we are denied access to sacred sites like Kailash Mansarovar," Yadav claimed. On the issue of economic disparities in the country, Yadav highlighted the plight of the underprivileged.

"Out of 140 crore people, 82 crore depend on government rations for survival. While the country boasts of being among the fastest-growing economies, the reality is starkly different. Two-thirds of the nation's wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few families. If the

government has courage, it should reveal the per capita income of those living below the poverty line," he said.

He accused the government of manipulating elections through fear and administrative overreach. "During the Uttar Pradesh elections (recent bypolls to nine assembly seats), many were denied the right to vote. Women were threatened and police officials openly discouraged them with revolvers. Yet, those brave women defied intimidation and cast their votes. Is this the democracy we live in?" Yadav questioned.

He also warned against the erosion of democratic principles, drawing parallels with authoritarian regimes. "This system is rapidly veering towards dictatorship. Even Hitler amended the constitution after being elected to establish tyranny. Our government seems to be treading the same path," he said.

He also said that he will never accept the government's Agnipath scheme for recruitment in the armed forces.

TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee, meanwhile, said every provision of the Constitution must be broadly interpreted and extended to every poor person of India.



RS BYPOLLS

**Ex-NCW chief and BJP nominee Rekha Sharma elected unopposed**

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Former National Commission for Women chairperson and BJP leader Rekha Sharma was declared elected unopposed in the Rajya Sabha bypoll from Haryana after the deadline for withdrawal of nomination ended at 3 pm on Friday. Sharma had filed her nomination for the bypoll from Haryana here on Tuesday. She was the lone candidate in the fray. The BJP had on Monday announced Sharma's name for the Dec 20 Rajya Sabha bypolls. Accompanied by Haryana Minister Mahipal Dhandra and former Haryana Assembly Speaker Gian Chand Gupta, Sharma was given certificate by the Returning Officer after being declared elected unopposed.

**Around 30 Delhi schools receive bomb threats, nothing suspicious found**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Around 30 schools in Delhi received bomb threats over e-mail in the early hours of Friday, triggering a multi-agency search of their premises, officials said.

Nothing suspicious was found in any of the schools after the searches, they added.

The latest threats come close on the heels of at least 44 schools receiving similar e-mails on December 9. Police had declared those threats as hoaxes. The Special Cell of the Delhi Police has registered a case of criminal intimidation and conspiracy but it is yet to get any lead on the culprits.

In May, more than 250 schools, hospitals and other installations had received similar e-mail threats, which are yet to be solved. Reacting to the development, former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal pointed out that it was the second such instance within a week and wondered how these bomb threats would affect the children. A Delhi Fire Services official said, "We received calls (regarding the threat e-mails) from the Bhatnagar International School in Paschim Vihar (4:21 am), Cambridge School in Srinivaspuri (6:23 am) and DPS Amar Colony in East of Kailash (6:35 am)."

"Calls were also received from the South Delhi Public School in Defence Colony (7:57 am), Delhi Police Public School in Safdarjung (8:02 am) and Venkateshwar Global School in Rohini (8:30 am)," he added. The fire department, police and bomb-detection teams, along with dog squads,



**A Delhi Fire Services official said, "We received calls (regarding the threat e-mails) from the Bhatnagar International School in Paschim Vihar (4:21 am), Cambridge School in Srinivaspuri (6:23 am) and DPS Amar Colony in East of Kailash (6:35 am)."**

rushed to the schools and conducted thorough checking, the official said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast) Ravi Singh told PTI Videos that they conducted checking followed by security protocol but nothing suspicious was found and it is suspected to be a hoax.

"Investigations so far have established that the e-mail was sent from abroad but further probe is on. Around 30 schools,

including in our district, have received such e-mails," Singh said. The school authorities sent messages to guardians not to send their wards for classes and to take them back if they had already reached. A police source said the e-mails were received at 12:54 am, with the sender mentioning "parent-teachers meeting" and "sports day" activities in the schools. The sender also mentioned that the "schools will face bomb blasts" on Friday and Saturday, the source said. According to the source, the content of the e-mail reads: "This e-mail is to inform you that there are many explosives in your school premises and I am sure that you all do not check your students' bags frequently when they enter the school premises.

"A secret dark web group is involved in this activity and many red rooms also. The bombs are powerful enough to destroy the buildings and harm people. And from today till December 14, means tomorrow, on both days, there is an expected parent-teacher meeting to be happened.

**'Premeditated': SC censures trial court Quashes proceedings against ex-Haryana IPS officer**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a relief to a former IPS officer, the Supreme Court on Friday quashed the proceedings against her under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act in Haryana, saying the special judge acted in a "premeditated manner".

A bench of Justices B R Gavai, P K Mishra and K V Viswanathan set aside an order, which was dictated and typed on May 30, 2008 by the special judge and was placed in a sealed cover, observing it reflected a "total non-application of mind".

The bench's verdict came on an appeal filed by the officer



who challenged a October 14, 2010, order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

The high court upheld the May 30, 2008 order of the special judge, Kurukshetra, who had placed the typed and dictated order relating to the proceedings initiated against the officer for the offence punish-

able under section 58 of the NDPS Act in a sealed cover to be delivered by the successor special judge.

Section 58 of the Act deals with punishment for vexatious entry, search, seizure or arrest. The apex court noted the special judge had heard the case at a "lightning speed" even after his transfer and dictated the judgement and left the act of pronouncement to his successor judge.

"When we opened the sealed cover on October 24, 2024 and perused the order dated May 30, 2008 passed by the special judge, it became clear to us that the special judge had acted in a predetermined manner," said the bench.

**TN CM Stalin announces Rs 5 crore cash prize for Gukesh**

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday announced a cash prize of Rs 5 crore for D Gukesh in recognition of his remarkable achievement of becoming the youngest World Chess Champion.

Chennai-based Grandmaster Gukesh on Thursday became the youngest world chess champion at 18 years after beating title-holder Ding Liren of China in the 14th and last game of the title showdown in Singapore.

**'Cong govt in Himachal plagued by factionalism, financial mismanagement'**

PNS ■ HAMIRPUR

Himachal Pradesh BJP leader Rajender Rana on Friday said the Congress government in the state is surrounded by factionalism, discontent and financial mismanagement, and it has pushed the state towards stagnation.

Speaking to the media here, the former BJP MLA said that the Himachal Congress is experiencing internal factionalism and is bound to collapse any moment. Rana was among the nine MLAs, including six Congress rebels and three independents, who voted in favour of the BJP nominee Harsh Mahajan in the Rajya Sabha

polls held in February this year. Later, he along with others joined the BJP and contested the by-elections from Sujapur assembly seat but was defeated. He also condemned the two-year celebration of the Congress government held in Bilaspur on Wednesday, calling it a waste of taxpayer's money. The factionalism within the state Congress came out in the open during the Bilaspur rally, where PCC Chief Pratibha Singh was insulted and not allowed to finish her speech on stage, Rana said.

"This incident indicates an attempt by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu to show himself as supreme within the party" he said.

**KERALA HC ON JUDGING WOMEN BASED ON CLOTHES**

**Shows 'misogynistic prejudice'**

PNS ■ KOCHI

The Kerala High Court has held that judging women on the basis of their clothes or expecting them to be sad on getting divorce are indications of a "misogynistic prejudice" and "reinforce a very skewed gender stereotype". The observation by a bench of Justices Devan Ramachandran and M B Snehathala came while setting aside a Family Court order denying custody of the children to a mother for several reasons including that she wore revealing dresses, celebrated her divorce and had an account on a dating app.

Strongly disagreeing with the findings and reasoning of the Family Court, the High Court set it aside by saying that "courts cannot be suspected to be guilty of even borderline misogyny or sexism and our constitutional mandate is



that we decide matters as per its conscience and within its overriding umbrella".

The High Court granted custody of the children to the mother by also taking into account the kids wish that they wanted to stay with her full-time and were open to

meeting their father on holidays. In its recent order setting aside the Family Court decision, the High Court observed that through such cases it has realised "how much rigid gender roles and patriarchy have trickled down into societies and guides our thoughts and

actions". "We unfortunately continue to follow and perpetuate such unconsciously, which surely warrants continuous education and close introspection," It said. The bench further said that in the "heteronormative context, being feminine is construed as synonymous to

being modest and even submissive or that is how this term is more than often interpreted".

It said that consciously or subconsciously, societies impose restrictions on women's autonomy and scrutinize their choices; and they are supposed to adhere to certain standards, including their choice of clothes and appearances.

"Such unwritten norms perpetuate casual sexism and strengthen the glass ceiling for women, with control being considered exclusive to men.

"Unfortunately, through time, unwritten dress codes impact women throughout their lives. The sexualization and policing of women's clothes, even from early school days, become active barriers to self-actualization and a full life," the bench said.

Referring to the Family Court's reasons for granting custody to the father, the High

**The observation by a bench of Justices Devan Ramachandran and M B Snehathala came while setting aside a Family Court order denying custody of the children to a mother for several reasons including that she wore revealing dresses, celebrated her divorce and had an account on a dating app**

Court said that the lower court found the mother to be a person of loose morals as the husband alleged that she wore revealing dresses and had posted her pictures on dating apps.

The High Court said that the Family Court arrived at the conclusion without any basis and without considering the woman's argument that it was her husband who created her account in the dating app and posted her pictures there.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## One Nation One Election

India's democratic system is on the verge of a transformative change with the 'One Nation, One Election' initiative

The concept of 'One Nation, One Election' has been a subject of significant debate in India's political discourse. On December 12, 2024, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved draft legislation to implement simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha, state assemblies, and local bodies within 100 days. This proposal seeks to streamline India's electoral process, reduce the economic and administrative burden of frequent elections and enhance governance. The 'One Nation, One Election' initiative aims to align the election schedules of the Lok Sabha, state assemblies, municipal corporations and panchayats. The proposed legislation is likely to be introduced in Parliament during the ongoing Winter Session, reflecting the government's intention to initiate nationwide consultations on this transformative reform. The draft legislation incorporates 11 recommendations made by a high-level committee led by former President Ram Nath Kovind. These recommendations aim to address the frequent disruptions caused by the current staggered election schedule, which is a drain on economic, social, and political resources. One of the primary suggestions involves synchronising the election dates for the Lok Sabha and state assemblies in the first phase, followed by municipal and panchayat elections within 100 days. To ensure smooth execution, a dedicated implementation group will oversee the reforms. Constitutional amendments, such as the introduction of Articles 324A and 325, are proposed to facilitate simultaneous elections, create unified voter rolls. Elections demand significant financial resources and conducting them simultaneously could reduce costs related to security, logistics and administrative expenses. Frequent elections also result in prolonged enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct, halting developmental activities, which a unified schedule could minimise. However, implementing this ambitious reform involves substantial logistical and constitutional challenges. Synchronising elections requires amendments to several constitutional articles, including Articles 83, 85, 172, 174, and 356, which must be ratified by a majority of state legislatures. Building political consensus among parties with diverse regional interests is another critical requirement. Furthermore, the Election Commission will need to mobilise resources, including additional EVMs and VVPATs and ensure readiness of polling staff and infrastructure nationwide. Besides, simultaneous elections might overshadow local issues due to the dominance of national narratives, potentially affecting regional representation. Coordinating nationwide elections within a short timeframe also poses logistical challenges. Moreover, synchronising subsequent elections in cases of mid-term dissolutions could create governance gaps, leading to policy paralysis. While the proposal promises efficiency and cost-effectiveness, its implementation demands careful consideration of constitutional, logistical, and political complexities.



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do with many variables, most of which may not be under the control of the parties involved. Hence, it could become like fiddling with wires in the dark. The solutions are not difficult if they are systematically put into operation. In early childhood, when a person is being taught words, it would be helpful if the person is also helped to choose the better word to communicate his ideas. Proper pronunciation should also be taught. If the circumstances permit by linguicism or multi-linguicism can be practiced. This would help adjustment to different levels of people; people of different ages and from different contexts. The solutions are known just as much as the problems are known. But there is little systematic attempt to put it in a frame and help better communication. It is obvious that communication can be between two people of equal age, between somebody who is older and somebody younger, people of the same gender, people of the opposite gender, people with prior antecedents of relationships, and people with no prior antecedents of relationships.

## Unraveling the delicate threads of human interaction



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Communication is the lifeblood of human connection, yet it remains one of the most intricate and fragile aspects of our existence

Conversation is a delicate business. It is made even more fragile by being central to all human interaction. The more knowledgeable individuals feel that communication is only partially through words. It can also be through eyes, through touch, through gestures, and even through silence. The list can go on. This makes communication not only complicated but also a sensitive matter. Communication can be with oneself. It can be between two persons, or in groups. It can be a short distance or a long distance. The possibilities are immense. The pitch of the voice could matter. The eye's movement can be an intervening variable, and sometimes the more well-versed practice cross-communication. It means giving one message through one medium and another through another. In other words, it can be one message through words and another message through the eyes. If technology intervenes, it becomes even more complex. The technological interventions can be through a medium such as a handset, a telephone, or, in some parts, a piece of paper. In the past, pigeons have been known to serve a useful purpose. The permutations and combinations are immense, and each has a value, just as each medium has a context. Like in the case of many essentials in life, there is no primer available and there is no one author who has covered comprehensively all aspects of communication. Hence, much of this is on learning by practice. Much of this is also learning by grief because in the absence of a proper 'Guru' one can only learn by trial and error. Many relationships get under strain or break because one meaning is intended, but another meaning gets conveyed. This can sometimes be incomplete or even distorted. Put simply, coding and decoding a message is a complex process and has to



THE USUAL RESPONSE WHEN THERE IS A LACK OF CLARITY ON WHERE TO BEGIN, ONE SHOULD BEGIN JUST SOMEWHERE AND HOPE THAT IT RUNS ON SATISFACTORILY. IF IT IS NOT ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY, IT CAN BE CORRECTED AS ONE GOES ALONG

The contexts are huge and almost impossible to exhaustively list. This is not to say that the problem is not solvable or cannot be handled. The usual response when there is a lack of clarity on where to begin, one should begin just somewhere and hope that it runs on satisfactorily. If it is not entirely satisfactory, it can be corrected as one goes along. Being inundated by problems and not beginning at all cannot be the answer. Sometimes a simple problem can be so elusive that it becomes difficult to structure it for a solution. Effective communication is one such problem. Any discussion touching on communication will be incomplete without the realisation, as already noted, that communication is not always with words. There is an oft-repeated quote to the effect of 'if you cannot understand my silence, you will not understand my words'. Interestingly, silence also communicates, and there are different types of silence. Often, body language takes over, but that is another matter. Unfortunately, communication through silence also needs deep insights and research. Communication can be between people where one of the limbs that is centrally used in communication, loses its function or becomes unusable. For example, if someone has a problem with listening through one ear, the best course of action would be to help the person concerned restore their hearing through the other ear. However, this may not always work. So options and support systems have to be generated. Like in many things, psychological factors become very heavily involved, and unfortunately, those who are not capable of deep thought fumble more. There is a case for serious research on all aspects of the communication enumerated above and more research on communication per se, in a scholastic mode, would help. Till then, one can only hope that the general conversation on communication will alleviate the confusion that sometimes arises on communication points. One also hopes that research will help good communication all around. (The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

### PICTALK



A vendor displays miniatures of Santa Claus ahead of Christmas celebrations, in Nadia

PTI

## Why simplicity and equality must redefine weddings



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

There is a pressing need to rethink our approach to weddings; advocating for a shift towards simplicity, equality and genuine joy rather than crass display of wealth

Weddings have long been a grand celebration where two people unite, signifying not just the union of two souls, but also the joining of two families. These joyous occasions are infused with rituals, traditions, and celebrations designed to enhance the richness and pride of cultural heritage. Within the shimmering lights, the grand feast, and the spirited festivities, there exists a frequently ignored reality: the rising expenses these celebrations impose on families, especially those in the middle and lower-middle classes. Dowry, once regarded as a remnant of outdated and oppressive traditions, has taken on a contemporary guise. The concept of 'dowry' may no longer be prevalent in everyday language, yet its core remains hidden beneath the polished surface of what we now refer to as 'gifts.' What was once viewed with disdain has now been embraced, illuminated by a fresh perspective that aligns with contemporary feelings. What's the final takeaway? Families, particularly the bride's, face immense



financial strain due to these "gift" expectations, which frequently manifest as expensive items, vehicles, and cash contributions. In many cases, what are presented as gifts are actually disguised demands. Middle-class families, determined to avoid the label of being stingy, frequently push themselves to the limit to maintain their standing. The expectation to host lavish weddings adds an extra weight, as in many cultures, these ceremonies are seen as a reflection of the family's standing in the community. In severe situations, for struggling families, this can be devastating; for individuals find themselves compelled to deplete their life savings or other assets, while others are

drawn into loan schemes. This debt, incurred at the expense of societal expectations, is repaid over years—and even decades—creating a relentless cycle of instability. The most concerning aspect of this situation is its ongoing nature and the way it sustains economic and gender disparities. When a groom traditionally requests gifts for the bride, it often creates an unfair financial burden on the bride's family, even if the demand is subtle. It merely reinforces the outdated notion that a family must "pay" to marry off their daughter. This approach truly detracts from the principle of equality in relationships and adds unnecessary stress to what should be a welcoming event. (The author is a freelance writer and a motivator; views are personal)

Now is the moment for society to reevaluate its values and confront these detrimental customs. Marriage ought to be a celebration of love and togetherness, rather than a cause for financial distress or societal expectations. A shift away from materialism is essential, emphasising the importance of mutual respect, understanding, and equality. Families and communities should collaborate to foster an atmosphere that values simplicity and authenticity over extravagance and false displays of wealth. Both governments and social organisations can play a vital role in addressing this issue by implementing laws against all forms of dowry and raising awareness about its psychological and financial consequences. A debt-free, joyful beginning to married life is the greatest blessing any couple could hope for. The true essence of celebration is not found in the extravagance of the occasion, but rather in the commitment to a shared future rooted in love and respect. (The author is a freelance writer and a motivator; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### FAMILY FIRST POLITICS

Madam — Family first is not only for Biden. It is rather a human tendency to attend to the needs and aspirations of the family first before thinking and acting for the cause of the society. Biden's act of granting a pardon to his son is seen as a great sin because the US is projecting itself as the promoter and protector of democracy and democratic values all over. Though it is expected of any leader to rise above all petty thinking and prioritise the benefit of the general mass and the country, many a time we do observe some people at the helm of affairs succumbing to simple human instincts, keeping the disciplines and decorum related to the position held at bay. No doubt, such acts not only demolish the image of the person that has been built for decades but also bring shame to the nation and the society he is attached to. We have seen the way the entire country of Sri Lanka was brought under the grip of one family that led to unprecedented levels of corruption, amassing wealth by the family, unleashing some sort of dictatorship, and plunging the common people into sufferings of all sorts. But people are watching, which all the leaders should keep in mind. Biden lost in the US, and the family is out in Sri Lanka. India is not an exception. The leaders of the ruling dispensation, pointing at the Opposition for promoting the culture of family, assuming the leadership of the party, are simultaneously focusing on bringing their siblings to the limelight of political careers. In most of the states, the regional parties are almost converted into family organs, and they firmly believe in the dictum of 'the king and his family can do no wrong,' meaning that their family is above all the laws of the land and none of them can be questioned or punished. In India it is almost an accepted norm to bear with all the mistakes or misdeeds of the members of the family in power. A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

### Gukesh youngest world chess champion



India's young Grandmaster D Gukesh defeated China's World Champion Ding Liren in the 14th and final round, claiming the title of the youngest world chess champion. At just 18 years old, Dommaraju Gukesh has demonstrated that conquering the world is possible at a young age. Thursday was a historic day for Indian chess, thanks to Gukesh's remarkable achievement. Gukesh broke the 14-year-old record held by Russia's Garry Kasparov, who became the youngest world champion at the age of 22 years, 6 months, and 27 days. Gukesh's victory marks a new chapter in the history of chess. After Viswanathan Anand, Gukesh is the second Indian chess player to earn the title of world champion. In a 14th-round match that lasted nearly four hours, Gukesh defeated Ding Liren in 58 moves, becoming the 18th world champion in chess history. In October 2022, Gukesh had already captured everyone's attention by defeating then-world champion Magnus Carlsen in a rapid chess tournament. In 2024, Gukesh first triumphed in the Candidates Tournament. Later, he played a pivotal role in helping the Indian men's team win the gold medal in the Chess Olympiad. Now, by claiming the world championship title, he has added another feather to India's cap. Dattaprasad Shirodkar | Mumbai

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### HC JUDGE FACES FLAK

Madam— The Allahabad High Court judge made insensitive comments about the Muslim community and its practices and used offensive language against them, which was not warranted from someone who is looked up to by thousands of common men seeking justice at the high court. It cannot be construed as a slip of the tongue, as he spoke for more than 30 minutes, and it is not the first time he has garnered attention for his controversial words; earlier too, his oral remarks in the court made headlines, and he has also said that cows exhale oxygen. Such poor statements have the potential to undermine public trust in the judiciary and raise a question mark over judicial integrity. It is welcome that the apex court of the country has taken note of this and sought details of the speech. Some may argue about freedom of speech, but the fact that a judge's impartial conduct in office and public events should be above reproach. The Supreme Court's action in this matter should set the house in order for other

judges in district and high courts. Bal Govind | Noida

### RS CHAIRMAN FACES NO CONFIDENCE

Madam — It is unfortunate that the ruling BJP and the opposition parties in our country do not look at each other as ideological opponents but as real-time enemies. The present move by sixty members of the opposition expressing 'no confidence' against the RS chairman may not reach the extent of voting, and even if it does, it will get defeated as the opposition does not have the sufficient strength for the motion's success. However, such a move by the opposition expressing lack of confidence in the chair is a black mark in the world's largest democracy. This has led to the situation that they do not engage themselves with each other and ensure a fair and useful debate in both the Houses of Parliament, trying to score one over the other. Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com





## FIRST COLUMN HARMONISING WITH CHANGE

While change is often seen as a source of progress, its relentless pace can leave many mentally drained



RRAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Whether we like it or not, we have to constantly adapt to the changing time, changing thoughts, and changing future. Today, change has become so rapid that some people, especially professionals, have to keep a constant watch on the emerging trends and must be perpetually prepared to gear up in order to keep pace with change. As a consequence of keeping themselves in high gear constantly over a long period of time, many feel that rapid changes shake up their nerves and are physically and mentally so exhausting and taxing that life has become more of a problem than a pleasure. However, we must not have the impression that every change is an anathema. No! On the contrary to common belief, change is generally a welcome feature of life, and stagnancy is always considered boring. It is the rapidity and high frequency of change, or the enormity of change, that forces responsible people to miss the necessary physical and mental rest, keeping them always on the move and causing them worry. But the question that arises is, what has led to this condition of rapid and ever-growing change? Observation and analysis tell us that it is science and technology that are responsible for this predicament, as they compel individuals to lead an increasingly faster life in a highly competitive world. They force people to move like machines, which, too, are moving faster day by day and are changing enormously in design and functions. But if we go deeper into the problem, then we would find that science and technology are, in fact, at the service of mankind; therefore, it is man



who decides what kind of gadgets and goods he requires and at what pace—not vice versa. The evolution of science is based on man's needs, desires, mindset, motives, emotions, set of values, conscience, and external influences, including exposure to media and to society's approval, appreciation, or criticism of his acts. Hence, these factors are the major driving forces that lead to new inventions or new forms and designs. It is these factors that determine the purpose and use to which science and technology should be put. It is these which set new trends. It is these that lead to the rejection of the old and the change to the new.

Therefore, the rapidity of change depends, to a great degree, on the rapidity of rejection of the old system, old set of values, prevalent fashions and customs, and existing norms and beliefs. This, in turn, depends on how rapidly a person is dissatisfied or discontented with the present goods, facilities, services, practices, norms, status-symbols, and security needs. This dissatisfaction or discontentment may, in some cases, be justified and may, in most cases, be due to a lack of man's inner stability and inner happiness stemming from a wrong set of values and wrong attitudes. A thorough analysis of the present situation would lead us to the conclusion that the current situation, which is leading us either to tension or depression or short-lived pleasure, is due to our own consumerist attitude, which is geared mainly to cater to man's indulgence in sensual pleasure or comforts.

In order to bring a change to this callous attitude and wrong lifestyle, we need to reform our mind by adopting a spiritual attitude through a spiritual set of values, or what is called 'spiritualism,' which is a turnaround of thoughts and a way of living. Today, those people who are trying to cope with change without bringing change to their mindset, value system, and lifestyle through spirituality have really missed the message of the wise. Therefore, it's high time that we as a society realised that simplicity of lifestyle, by embracing spiritual values, alone would be the remedy to the present precarious situation that would empower us to manage rapid change with vigor and enthusiasm.

*(The writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist; views are personal)*

# Bangladesh's secular fabric under siege



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

The suppression of dissent, coupled with the growing boldness of extremist ideologies, risks steering the nation towards a fundamentalist Islamist state



It is increasingly clear that fundamentalist Islamist organisations, which are pathologically hostile to India as well as to all secular and democratic persons and organisations in Bangladesh, are increasingly calling the shots in that country under the rule of its interim government. An indication of this is the relentless persecution of Shahriar Kabir, an internationally acclaimed author, journalist, champion of human rights, democracy and secularism, and a tireless campaigner to bring to justice the perpetrators of war crimes during Bangladesh's liberation war in 1971. He continues to languish in Kashimpur jail under terrible conditions. Despite being designated as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International, a magistrate's order giving him Division One status, which would give him a separate room and other facilities remains to be carried out. This is because the deputy commissioner of Ghazipur district, where Kashimpur prison, where he is lodged, is located, has not signed the order, which will be effective only after his signature is affixed to it. Nor, according to reports, does he seem inclined to sign it soon. As a result, Kabir, who is 74-years-old has to live among common prisoners and sleep on the floor during a cold winter as his health continues to deteriorate. Earlier, during a remand hearing at Dhaka's Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on 20 October, Kabir had complained that he was not receiving adequate medical treatment in jail. On November 2, he was taken to Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Medical College Hospital for a check-up. According to its deputy-director, he suffered from various old age-related ailments but these were not critical.

Kabir has high blood pressure and diabetes and a large accumulation of stones in his kidney. Blood is coming out with his stool. Given the role of the deputy commissioner, who presumably has nothing personal against him, it is difficult not to feel that it is the interim government, led by Nobel laureate Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus, that wants to deny him Division One status. That it continues to do so despite considerable international demand for his release is clearly the result of pressure from



A SPIRITUAL LEADER, PHILOSOPHER, MYSTIC POET AND SOCIAL REFORMER, LALON ARTICULATED A WELTANSCHAUUNG WHICH ENCOMPASSED THE ESSENCE OF THE BHAKTI CULT AND SUFISM, REJECTED ALL DISTINCTIONS OF CASTE, CLASS AND CREED, OPPOSED THEOLOGICAL CONFLICTS AND RACISM

organisations like the Hefazat-e-Islam (Hefazat) and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (Jamaat).

Hefazat's hand in Kabir's persecution is clear from the fact that one of the several charges on which he has been jailed was filed with Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal on August 20, 2024, by Mufti Harun Izhar Chowdhury, Hefazat's joint secretary. It showed him, along with Sheikh Hasina, as one of the 23 accused, charged with crimes against humanity and mass killing in connection with the violent clashes between Hefazat's supporters and members of security forces and Awami League activists during its rally in Dhaka, on May 5, 2013, to press its 13-point charter of demands. The latter included demand for a stricter dress code as ordained by Islam, a ban on statues, candlelight vigils and public mixing of men and women, besides the scrapping of the Awami League government's women's development policy. Also, it demanded the designation of Ahmadiyas as "non-Muslims."

The charter underlined the fundamentalist ideology of Hefazat which was formed in 2010 to oppose the Awami League government's women's development policy promising women equal rights to property. Comprising mainly of Sunni clerics heading a network of 19,199 Quami madrasahs and its students in Bangladesh, it has considerable power to mobilise in the streets. Its intensely anti-India orientation was reflected in its violent protests against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Dhaka on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence on March 26, 2021. Thirteen 13 persons were killed and scores injured in clashes between its supporters and members of the security forces and Awami League's supporters. While the Hefazat is not calling all the shots in the interim government,

it certainly has a wide measure of influence and has its way wherever it wants, however small or big the event or the demand is. The "Mahati Sadhusanga and Lalon Mela" (great gathering of sadhus and Lalon fair) hosted by Muktidham Ashram and Lalon Academy in Madya Narsingpur, Kashipur Union Parishad in Narayanganj, was scheduled to begin on November 22, 2024. There was to be singing, dancing, festivities and food. Baul singers and devotee from all over Bangladesh were coming over for the occasion. The district administration, however, ordered its cancellation. A report in The Daily Star (November 23, 2024) quoted Fakir Shah Jalal, founder of the ashram and academy, said, "All arrangements had been made, but the administration did not permit the event, citing warning from some members of the "Muslim" community. Even when we requested to hold the event indoors, without loudspeakers, it was denied."

A spiritual leader, philosopher, mystic poet and social reformer, Lalon articulated a weltanschauung, which encompassed the essence of the Bhakti cult and Sufism, rejected all distinctions of caste, class and creed, opposed theological conflicts and racism. It is not surprising that such a person would be anathema to fundamentalist Islamists. The report in The Daily Star, cited above, had stated that Hefazat-e-Islam leader Maulana Abdul Auwal had warned the administration in a speech to stop the event or face intervention by protestors.

Other Islamist organisations are also flexing their muscles. Speaking at a grand convention of the District Quami Madrasa Council in Dhaka on November 25, Mamunul Haque, the secretary general of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, described the August 5 revolution as a significant step towards an Islamic revolution in

Bangladesh, adding that the country was destined to undergo an Islamist transformation.

Not surprisingly, Ahmadiyas and Sufis have come under attack. Several of the former's mosques were attacked on August 6. A violent mob destroyed Baba Pagla Ali's Sufi shrine at Sherpur district on August 29; another such mob vandalised and looted Ismail Pagla's shrine in Sirajganj district on September 3.

Meanwhile two Islamist terrorist outfits—Ansar al-Islam (erstwhile Ansarullah Bangla Team) and Hijbut Tahrir (Tahrir) are increasingly active. Despite the ban on Tahrir, its supporters organised, on August 9, a rally in Dhaka city and demanded the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate in Bangladesh. Also, the statues of two police officers who died fighting the terrorists at the Holey Artisan Bakery in July 2016, have been destroyed and a Hijbut Tahrir poster has been found at the site. Despite the arrest of its media coordinator in Dhaka in early October, its activities continue, albeit clandestinely, in many parts of Bangladesh.

This is because the interim government is pursuing a much softer line against both Ansar al-Islam and Tahrir than Sheikh Hasina's government. An example is the release of the 'chief' of Ansar al-Islam on bail on August 26. As a consequence, while the Hefazat and Jamaat are riding high and terrorist bodies are quietly active, champions of secularism like Shahriar Kabir are imprisoned and organisations opposing communalism are apprehensive and defensive. In a situation like this, one can hardly rule out Bangladesh slowly sliding towards becoming a fundamentalist Islamist country and even an exporter of terrorism.

*(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)*

# The rise of preventative fillers: A new era in beauty standards

## India's Millennials and Gen Z are embracing early cosmetic treatments like fillers as part of their self-care routines

In recent years, a noticeable trend has emerged among India's Millennials and Gen Z, the increasing popularity of early cosmetic treatments like fillers. This shift highlights evolving beauty standards influenced heavily by social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, where idealised images of flawless skin abound. These platforms perpetuate an image-driven culture, encouraging young people to consider cosmetic enhancements as a means to maintain a youthful appearance and meet contemporary beauty ideals. Recent data from Deloitte underscores this trend, revealing that 65 per cent of Millennials and 58 per cent of Gen Z in India



HEMA PANT

have a positive outlook on using technology and aesthetic treatments to improve their lives. This optimism is coupled with a heightened focus on self-care and personal enhancement, which has led to the rising popularity of preventative fillers. Often referred to as 'Baby Botox,' these treatments involve minimal amounts of Botox or dermal fillers used before

the onset of wrinkles, appealing to those who wish to stave off the visible signs of ageing before they even begin. A significant demographic shift is evident in data from NASSCOM, which indicates that Millennials and Gen Z comprise 52 per cent of India's population. This figure highlights the growing influence of these younger generations who are increasingly well-versed in cosmetic procedures and less stigmatised by them. The normalisation of such treatments owes much to open discussions on social media, where people share their experiences and results, contributing to a growing acceptance. The American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

reports that 64 per cent of practitioners have noted a rise in patients under 30 seeking cosmetic procedures, reflecting this broader cultural acceptance. The allure of preventative fillers lies not only in the desire to maintain a youthful appearance but also in the empowerment that comes from taking control of one's aesthetic journey. Young individuals today are more informed and proactive about their beauty routines, often seeking expert advice to make informed decisions. This proactive approach to beauty and self-care represents a significant cultural shift toward embracing enhancements as a normal part of life in a digital era. However, while the



appeal of preventative fillers is undeniable, young people must approach these treatments with caution. Overuse can result in "filler fatigue," a condition where excessive treatments lead to skin stretching and the need for more frequent interventions.

A balanced approach that integrates overall skin health with aesthetic goals is essential to ensure that beauty enhancements do not compromise one's natural appearance. Education plays a vital role in this process. Young individ-

uals are encouraged to seek guidance from reputable professionals who prioritise safety and use high-quality products. By doing so, they can make informed choices that align with their personal beauty goals without succumbing to the pressures of fleeting trends. This emphasis on education and safety empowers them to navigate their beauty journeys with confidence, fostering a sense of self-assuredness in their natural selves.

The rise of early cosmetic treatments among India's youth illustrates a significant cultural shift towards embracing self-care and beauty enhancements in a digital era. As these generations navigate their identities in a visually oriented world,

they increasingly turn to options like fillers to maintain their youthful allure. By prioritising education and safety, young individuals are empowered to make informed decisions about their beauty routines, fostering confidence in their natural selves.

As this trend continues to evolve, it will be intriguing to observe how it shapes the ongoing conversation around beauty in modern society. The future of beauty is likely to be shaped by these young, informed consumers who value both innovation and authenticity, setting new standards for generations to come.

*(The writer is Medical Director, Sculpt Clinics; views are personal)*



## IN BRIEF



### NHAI to introduce advanced RPVs to boost safety

State-owned NHAI is planning to introduce advanced 'rajmarg saathi' route patrolling vehicles (RPVs) to enhance highway safety, an official statement said on Friday. RPVs conduct inspection of stretches on the national highways to monitor and respond to emergency situations. According to the statement, additional advanced feature new RPV shall be equipped with 'AI video analytics' to capture and identify cracks and potholes as well as other elements, including vehicles, pedestrians, road signs, and other infrastructure assets.



### 'Nestlé's added sugar per serving meets regulations'

Added sugar per serving was found to be in compliance with the provisions under Food Safety and Standards (Foods for Infant Nutrition) Regulations, 2020 in baby product of Nestlé, Union Health Minister J P Nadra told Lok Sabha on Friday. The Food Safety and Standards (Foods for Infant Nutrition) Regulations 2020 prescribes the standards for different categories of infant food and formulae, Nadra said responding to a question. The limits specified for sugars in infant food products in the Regulations is at par with the global standards, namely Codex Alimentarius Commission, which takes into account the recommendation of World Health Organization (WHO) while setting food standards. On the basis of media report, suo moto cognisance was taken by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) about a report by the Swiss NGO regarding added sugar in wheat-based baby product. Inspections were conducted on April 29 and 30 at manufacturing sites engaged in production of the infant food product in the country.



### Indus Towers to acquire 26% stake in JSW Green Energy Eight

Telecom infrastructure company Indus Towers on Friday said it will acquire a 26 per cent stake in JSW Green Energy Eight for Rs 38.03 crore to procure renewable energy from a solar PV plant. Indus Towers will receive 130 MW of renewable energy from a solar photovoltaic (PV) power plant, according to a regulatory filing. "...the Company, on December 12, 2024, has entered into a Power Purchase Agreement with JSW Green Energy Eight Limited, a special purpose vehicle (SPV), for the procurement of renewable energy from Solar PV plant, under Captive mode. "In connection with this, the Company will also enter into an agreement for a proposed investment of approximately Rs 38.03 crore, through the subscription to equity shares of the SPV..." it said. JSW Green Energy Eight was incorporated in October 2024 to build, develop, own, generate, supply, accumulate, transmit, distribute, store, purchase, and sell electrical power or any other energy by using conventional and/or non-conventional methods.

## Plans afoot to bring EPFO service at par with banking, says top official

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Subscribers of the retirement fund body EPFO may soon be able to get services at par with banking system and use ATMs to withdraw their claim amount, a top official said on Friday.

Union Labour Secretary Sumita Dawra told PTI that focus right now in EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) is to improve the IT infrastructure.

While improvements are being seen in last few months, in January 2025 we will see more improvement coming in as a result of hardware upgradation," she said.

The secretary said that the efforts are being made to bring systemic reforms that make processes easier and efficient. "As part of this modernisation drive, we also aim to compare EPFO systems with the banking systems in

India that are in place and are working well. For ease of living, bringing more transparency and ease of claims is also part of the plan," she said.

Under the new system, claimants, beneficiaries or insured individuals will be able to access their claim amounts through ATMs.

A maximum of Rs 7 lakh is provided under the Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance (EDLI) scheme run by the EPFO to the heirs of deceased subscribers. In the new system, the heir of the deceased EPFO subscriber may also be able to use ATMs to withdraw the money after claim settlement.

The new systems is expected to be rolled out after completion of a hardware upgrade by the EPFO.

The body is also likely to issue dedicated cards for use by EPFO subscribers to withdraw claim amounts through ATMs.

## SpiceJet says cleared Rs 160 cr worth pending employee PF

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

SpiceJet on Friday said it has cleared all employee provident fund dues worth Rs 160.07 crore that were pending for over two years.

The low-cost carrier, which has been facing multiple headwinds, recently raised Rs 3,000 crore, following which it has been clearing statutory, GST (Goods and Services Tax) and other dues.

Employee provident fund dues amounting to Rs 160.07 crore, spanning over two years, have been cleared, the airline said in a release.

According to the release, since October, SpiceJet has been utilising its internal cash flows to meet its statutory obligations, including provident fund and TDS (Tax Deduction at Source) payments, the release said.

The airline has also resolved various disputes with aircraft lessors and other creditors.

## 'Ayushman Bharat helps millions get health cover'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A government study carried out in some states observed that the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme since its implementation has been instrumental in increasing access to health care and in reducing out-of-pocket expenditures among beneficiaries, the Lok Sabha was told on Friday.

A baseline study was commissioned by the government in 2019-2020 to understand the impact of Ayushman Bharat — Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) across the states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Kerala, Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

The study covered a sample of 72,636 individuals, Minister of State for Health Pratap Rao Jadhav said in a written reply.

It revealed that beneficiaries were satisfied with the quality of medical services received under AB-PMJAY, Rao said.

The study also recommended strategies to increase aware-



ness of the scheme, addressing barriers in accessing health-care, replicating experiences from other settings like dedicated staff to guide beneficiaries, and establishing communication channels to allow people to voice their concerns.

The beneficiary base of the scheme has been continuously progressing from 10.74 crore Socio-economic caste census/Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana families to 12 crore poor and vulnerable families in January 2022, the study said.

This base has been further expanded with the inclusion of 37 lakh Accredited Social Health Activist/Anganwadi Workers/Anganwadi Helpers and their families in February 2024.

Additionally, approximately 6 crore senior citizens aged 70 and above (corresponding to approximately 4.5 crore families) were brought under the ambit of the scheme in October 2024, Rao said.

Beneficiary Identification System (BIS 2.0) allows self-assisted verification and eliminates unnecessary intermediaries.

## Switzerland scraps MFN status to India, dividend income to face higher tax

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Switzerland has withdrawn the MFN status granted to India following an adverse court ruling against Nestlé, a move that will result in adverse tax implications for Indian entities operating in the European nation.

With this, from January 1, 2025, Indian companies will be subject to a higher withholding tax on income generated in Switzerland.

In a statement, Switzerland announced suspension of the most favoured nation (MFN) clause of the protocol to the agreement between the Swiss Confederation and the Republic of India for the avoidance of double taxation with respect to taxes on income.

Switzerland cited a ruling by Indian Supreme Court in a case relating to Vevey-headquartered Nestlé for its decision to withdraw the MFN. This means that Switzerland will tax dividends that Indian entities will earn in that country at 10 per cent from January 1, 2025.



## Welspun Corp starts Little Rock facility expansion at USD 100-mn investment



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Welspun Corp on Monday said the company has kicked off a USD 100-million expansion plan to double the capacity of its Little Rock facility in the US to 3.5 lakh tonnes.

The unit's present manufacturing capacity is 1.75 lakh tonnes and the expansion project is expected to be executed by March 2026, the company said.

Its step-down subsidiary Welspun Tubular LLC on Friday conducted the groundbreaking ceremony for the expansion of its high-frequency induction welding (HFIW) pipe manufacturing facility in Little Rock, Arkansas, US, Welspun Corp said.

The expansion represents a USD 100-million investment to expand and upgrade the

company's line pipe portfolio in the US and expected to add an additional 175 jobs at the Little Rock plant.

Welspun World Chairman B K Goenka said, "We are glad to be in Little Rock to announce the expansion of our plant here which we set up back in 2007, and have successfully maintained a relationship with Arkansas region and its people."

"The Port of Little Rock is quickly becoming the centre of economic development for our region, and today's groundbreaking is only going to continue that," Arkansas Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders said.

Part of Welspun World, Welspun Corp Ltd is one of top-three manufacturers of large diameter line pipes globally.

## Rupee recovers 10 paise to end at 84.78 against US dollar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee rebounded from its all-time low level and settled with a gain of 10 paise at 84.78 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, buoyed by a strong recovery in domestic equity markets and easing inflation data.

However, a strengthening American currency overseas and foreign fund outflows restricted the positive bias in the local unit, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.87 and touched the intraday high of 84.77 against the greenback. The unit finally ended the session at 84.78 (provisional) against the dollar, logging a gain of 10 paise from its previous closing level.

On Thursday, the rupee fell 5 paise to settle at the lowest-ever level of 84.88 against the US dollar. The previous record low closing level was recorded on December 9, when the unit settled 20 paise lower at 84.86 against the dollar.

The latest official data released on Thursday showed India's retail inflation eased in November to 5.48 per cent and came within the Reserve Bank's comfort zone mainly due to lower food prices, creating headroom for a rate cut



crude oil prices. FII outflows may also pressure the rupee. However, positive domestic equities and better-than-expected macroeconomic data may support the rupee at lower levels. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 84.65 to Rs 85.05," Choudhary said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading higher by 0.06 per cent at 106.70.

Analysts said that the dollar has been strengthening after the US inflation numbers came on expected lines, raising hopes for an interest rate cut by the Federal Reserve in the upcoming policy review next week.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, climbed 0.54 per cent to USD 73.81 per barrel in futures trade.

On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share benchmark index Sensex closed sharply higher by 843.16 points or 1.04 per cent at 82,133.12 points. The Nifty jumped 219.60 points, or 0.89 per cent, to 24,768.30 points.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Thursday, as they offloaded shares worth Rs 3,560.01 crore, according to exchange data.

## Sensex, Nifty stage strong comeback

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended sharply higher on Friday amid heavy buying in telecommunication stocks and encouraging domestic inflation data.

After falling 1,207.14 points in morning trade, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex recovered all the lost ground later and jumped 843.16 points or 1.04 per cent to settle at 82,133.12. During the day, it surged 923.96 points or 1.13 per cent to 82,213.92.

The NSE Nifty climbed 219.60 points or 0.89 per cent to settle at 24,768.30 after falling 367.9 points in intraday trade.

Among the 30-share Sensex blue-chip pack, Bharti Airtel,



ITC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Titan, UltraTech Cement, HCL Technologies, and Power Grid, were the biggest gainers.

Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank, JSW Steel and Bajaj Finserv were the laggards.

Retail inflation declined in November to 5.48 per cent and came within the Reserve

Bank's comfort zone mainly due to easing food prices, creating headroom for a rate cut at the central bank's rate-setting panel meeting under new Governor Sanjay Malhotra in February.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based headline inflation was at 6.21 per cent in October and 5.55 per cent in November 2023.

India's industrial production (IIP) growth slowed to 3.5 per cent year-on-year in October 2024, mainly due to poor performance of mining, power and manufacturing, as per official data released on Thursday.

"The domestic market smartly recovered from the day's low and moved out of the consolidation path led by index heavyweights. A gradual easing in food inflation and a price hike by FMCG companies, along with a recent correction in valuation, supported the sector to outperform. Currently, the market is anticipating a revival in consumer spending, driven by the festive season and year-end holidays, adding to the sentiments.

## Delhi-Dehradun expressway to be ready in 3 months

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Friday said that the Delhi-Dehradun expressway, which is expected to reduce travel time between the two cities to two hours, will be completed within the next three months.

Currently, the travel time between the two cities is five to six hours.

Addressing "Times Network India Economic Conclave 2024", Gadkari further said that construction of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway is expected to be completed within two months.

The travel time between the two metropolitan cities is expected to reduce to 12 hours with the completion of the expressway from the present 24 hours.

The road transport and highways minister said Delhi-Dehradun highway project has two packages.

"A Rs 10,000 crore project has been approved for Delhi's Kalindi Kunj, extending to Faridabad. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate the project within the next 15-20 days," Gadkari said.

Gadkari also said that the Modi government is working to reduce air pollution, lower the import of fossil fuel and enhance farm income.

"The transport ministry is responsible for 40 per cent of the air pollution... While a huge part of pollution is due to stubble burning in neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana, road construction and fossil fuels also add to the annual problem," he said.

The minister also pointed out that the problem of stubble



burning will be solved in two years as the government is working on 400 projects that will convert 200 lakh tonnes of rice straw every year to alternate fuels.

Gadkari said that his ministry is working on 36 green express highways, which will help reduce the logistics costs in the country.

## ONUS ON 'FIELD UMPIRE'

# Sebi must ensure people don't approach 3<sup>rd</sup> umpire SAT: ED

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Sebi should write regulations in such a way that people do not disagree and end up challenging decisions in the Securities Appellate Tribunal, a senior official said on Friday.

Speaking at the World Hindu Economic Forum, V Sundaresan, an Executive Director associated with the market watchdog for over three decades, said facilitating capital formation and ensuring investor trust is the Sebi's primary responsibility.

"As a field umpire, we need to ensure that people do not disagree with the field umpire and go to the third umpire that I call as SAT," he noted.

The 'game' will be played properly only if the umpire is 'impartial' and this will lead to trust among the investors, he said, while speaking in a different context of growth in the mutual fund industry.

The remarks came at a time when concerns are being expressed in several quarters

over a majority of the orders by Sebi, resulting in stays or reverses at the SAT. Sundaresan said stability is



very important, and the pursuit of market development should not be done like the roads of Mumbai, where a newly laid road is dug up within six months for some pipe laying.

One needs to balance several factors like inflation, taxation, and duties, among others, to ensure that the market development goal is achieved.

Sebi has adopted a consultative way in the ease of doing business agenda, he said, adding that 250 of 400 propos-

als have already been implemented and the rest are on the way.

The number of public issuances by companies has grown 7x to 209 per year in the last three years, he said, adding that India is now the biggest by number of such issuances globally and fifth biggest from a capital-raised perspective.

There is a need to convert the savers in the economy into investors, Sundaresan said, pitching for strategies like sachetisation of invest-





## WHEN PC WAS TOLD NON-ENGLISH FILMS DON'T TRAVEL

Actor Priyanka Chopra shared her experience of being advised that "movies with subtitles or non-English films don't reach audiences" while she was "looking for opportunities internationally." While addressing the audience at the Red Sea Film Festival, Priyanka expressed gratitude towards her family, recalled her deceased father, Ashok Chopra and commended her husband, singer Nick Jonas.

Priyanka received an honorary award during the event conducted in Jeddah. The accolade was given to Priyanka by actress Sarah Jessica Parker. She referred to it as a "genuine privilege" to acknowledge Priyanka's accomplishments. Priyanka was escorted to the stage by Nick. After receiving the award, in her acceptance speech, Priyanka said, "Thank you so much Sarah Jessica, you are such an icon to so many of us. To take the time to say those kind words about me and my work over the years, just meant a lot to me."

Reflecting on her career, she shared how, early in her journey, she was told that non-English films wouldn't be able to "travel" internationally. "When I started working, I was 18 years old. I remember I was told that, I come from an industry that spoke Hindi and Telugu, non-English films. I remember when I was seeking work across borders, I was told that films with subtitles or films that are non-English don't travel. Yet, here we are today," she said.

"You have been able to create a safe, incredible space for filmmakers and storytellers around the world to come together without the thought of nationality, language and borders. We know as people who work and I might be biased, but in one of the best, most incredible industries in the world, we get to play for a living, we get to tell stories for a living... you have been able to bring people together outside of borders, languages to just celebrate this incredible medium of cinema," added Priyanka.

# what's brewing?

## Grammy nominee Loire Cotler to score music for *Fateh*

When real-life hero Sonu Sood promised his directorial debut *Fateh* would hit all the notes of cinematic brilliance, he wasn't just speaking metaphorically. His upcoming cybercrime-based action saga, *Fateh*, ropes in Grammy-nominated Loire Cotler, the internationally acclaimed voice of *Dune*. Now, she lends her vocal alchemy to *Fateh* with a track she has composed, titled *Call to Life*—and it's nothing short of a symphonic adrenaline rush.

Grammy-nominated composer and rhythm vocalist Loire Cotler, a member of Hans Zimmer's band and famed for her unique vocal style that fuses an exotic blend of world rhythms with operatic grace, is all set to elevate the frequency of *Fateh's* action-packed narrative. One pulse-pounding sequence in the film is backdropped to her composition and ethereal vocals, transforming a heart-thumping scene into an almost transcendental experience.

Speaking about the collaboration, Loire Cotler shared, "Music is a higher form of communication above everything we've invented, and so the language of *Fateh* was immaterial to composing a track for it. When Sonu walked me through the story of the film, his passion was electric. Through *Call to Life*, I wanted to channel that energy and bring light, rhythm, and intensity to the film's action sequence. It was an incredible experience to see my music and vocals breathe life into the scene." Marking a daring leap into direction, Sonu is pulling out all the stops for *Fateh*. His vision is to offer a film that doesn't just sound powerful but feels powerful. And he's not holding back.

He says, "It is my pride and joy to collaborate with the Grammy-nominated Loire Cotler, whose work has echoed on the global stage. What I find amazing is that it didn't matter that Hindi was unfamiliar to her because music is the ultimate universal language. Her evocative composition in *Fateh* conveys everything we need and more, bringing a mystical energy to its action sequence. Having her on board was not just a choice, it was a necessity to hit the right



note and offer the audience nothing but the best." The teaser of *Fateh* has already struck a chord with fans, teasing a thrilling ride of high-octane stunts, razor-sharp visuals and a narrative that decodes the dark labyrinth of cybercrime. With Jacqueline Fernandez, Vijay Raaz and the legendary Naseeruddin Shah joining Sonu on screen, the film promises to be a symphony of action, intrigue, and suspense.

Produced by Sonali Sood and Umesh KR Bansal, *Fateh*, a gripping tale of courage, resilience and the fight against cybercrime, is slated to release on January 10, 2025.

## Varun Dhawan champions women safety ahead of *Baby John's* release



Varun Dhawan is all set to bring his mega family entertainer *Baby John* this Christmas. The actor was in Jaipur on Friday for the promotions of his upcoming movie and shared his perspective on women safety.

Varun said, "It is upto all the men, all the boys who should take responsibility for women safety. It is going to be our responsibility at the end of the day to ensure women around us are safe. Every girl is someone's sister, mother, wife, friend, daughter so at the end of the day it is us men who has to be responsible. I hope all the men in the audience takes this topic seriously."

Produced by Murad Khetani, Priya Atlee and Jyoti Deshpande, the film stars Varun Dhawan, Jackie Shroff, Wamiqa Gabbi. *Baby John* marks the highly anticipated Hindi debut of Keerthy Suresh. Presented by Jio Studios in association with Atlee and Cine1 Studios, *Baby John* is produced by A for Apple Studios and Cine1 Studios, releasing on December 25, 2024.

## Doctors to bring a dose of drama & emotions

What happens when ambition, redemption and relationships collide under pressure? JioCinema is all set to bring *Doctors*, a thrilling new medical drama series, premiering on December 27. The streaming platform launched the teaser on Friday, offering a gripping glimpse into the high-stakes world of the Elizabeth Blackwell Medical Centre, where personal and professional lives intersect in unexpected ways. With a stellar cast including Sharad Kelkar, Harleen Sethi, Aamir Ali, Viraf Patell and Vivaan Shah, *Doctors* promises to be an unmissable year-end treat for viewers.

The show's tagline, "They don't believe in miracles. They make miracles happen," sets the tone for a narrative driven by high stakes and human resilience.

Directed by Sahir Raza and produced by Jyoti Deshpande (Jio Studios) alongside Siddharth P. Malhotra and Sapna Malhotra (Alchemy Films Pvt Ltd), *Doctors* delves deep into the complexities of the medical profession, blending drama, emotion and suspense, to promise an engaging binge-watch experience for the holiday season.



## Rani Mukherji's *Mardaani 3* to be more 'dark and deadly'

Yash Raj Films' *Mardaani* is the largest solo female-led franchise in Hindi cinema and has received affection and praise for over 10 years. Marking the anniversary of *Mardaani 2's* release, YRF officially revealed on Friday that it is producing *Mardaani 3* featuring Rani Mukherji. The actress will be returning to her role as the fearless officer Shivani Shivaji Roy.

Discussing the same, Rani expressed, "I'm excited to share that we will begin filming *Mardaani 3* in April 2025! Wearing the police uniform and portraying a character that has only brought me affection is always a unique experience. I'm excited to portray the role of this spirited officer once more in *Mardaani 3* as a homage to all the unrecognised, courageous,

selfless officers who labour diligently every day to ensure our safety." Rani also reveals that *Mardaani 3* will take the adrenaline rush several notches higher than the previous films.

She said, "When we set out to make *Mardaani 3*, we were hoping that we find a script that would take the experience of watching a *Mardaani* franchise film higher. I am really excited about what we have at hand and I'm only hoping that the audience too feels the same after watching *Mardaani 3* in theatres!"

Rani added, "*Mardaani* is an extremely loved franchise, and we have a certain responsibility to deliver to the expectation that people have. We will do our best to live up to this. *Mardaani 3* is dark, deadly and brutal. So, I'm intrigued to find out the response of the people towards our film. I hope they shower this film with the same amount of love that they have always given."

### FUN

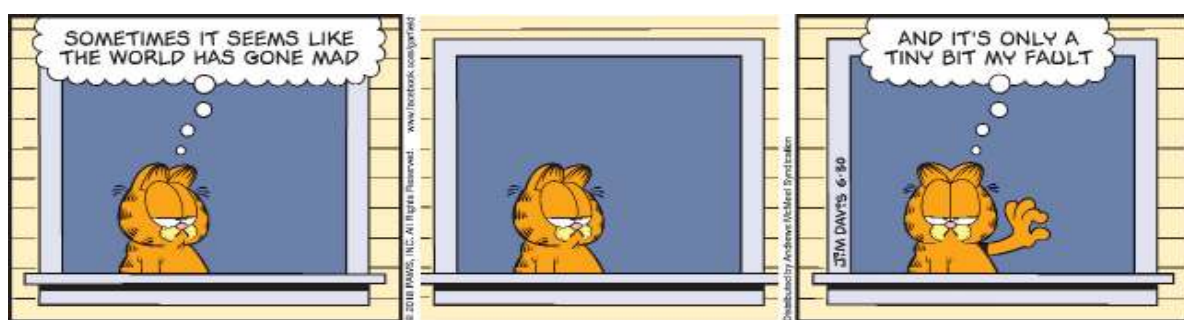
#### ARCHIE



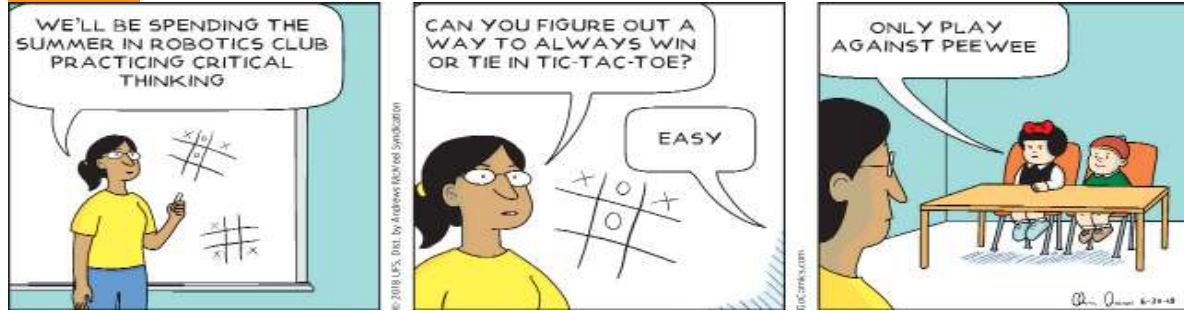
#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### GARFIELD



#### NANCY



#### GINGER MEGGS



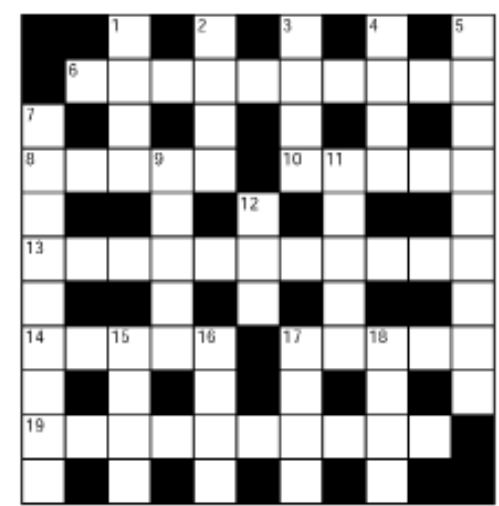
#### REALITY CHECK



#### SPEED BUMP



#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU

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

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

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

#### ACROSS

- A tower that warns ships of danger
- Carrying a weapon
- A black and white animal that lives in China
- A green jumping insect
- A long gun held against the shoulder
- Start
- Below

#### DOWN

- Use this in a camera
- A garden building for tools
- Large boat
- Destroy with fire
- Mending
- Likely to kill or harm you

- A support for an artist's painting
- A type of fruit
- Bashful
- Lose colour
- Rest your glasses on these
- Meat from a cow
- A kind of door in a fence





# Vijayawada

## CYCLING OUT HIS WAY TOWARDS A GREENER HYDERABAD

AFTER YEARS OF LIVING AND WORKING IN LONDON AND DUBAI, RAVI SAMBARI, A SEASONED CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONAL AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE HYDERABAD CYCLING REVOLUTION, RETURNED TO HYDERABAD, DRAWN BY ITS PERFECT BALANCE OF TRADITION, COMMUNITY AND MODERN GROWTH. IN AN EXCLUSIVE CHAT WITH THE PIONEER, HE OPENS UP ABOUT HIS DEEP-ROOTED CONNECTION TO THE CITY OF HYDERABAD, HIS PASSION FOR MAKING HYDERABAD A GREENER CITY AND MORE

TEJAL SINHA  
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

Hyderabad holds a special place in the hearts of its people and visitors alike. Known for its rich history, vibrant culture and stunning architecture, the city captures the imagination of everyone who steps foot in it. From the iconic Charminar to the majestic Golconda Fort, Hyderabad's landmarks are a testament to its glorious past. The warmth and hospitality of the locals further enhance the city's charm, making it a beloved destination. People also rave about the city's food, especially its famous biryani, which has gained global recognition. And one such is Ravi Sambari, a seasoned construction professional, who is not anything else but in love with the city for more than one reason.

For our special segment of the Hyderabad Bond, he shares his journey and deep connection to Hyderabad. After living and working in London and Dubai, the Warangal-born returned to Hyderabad, seeking a city that could balance community, family and professional growth.



"Hyderabad felt like home—a place with strong roots, vibrant culture and immense potential for growth," he reflects.

He appreciates the city's community-driven environment, which fosters connections and collaboration. For Ravi, community living in



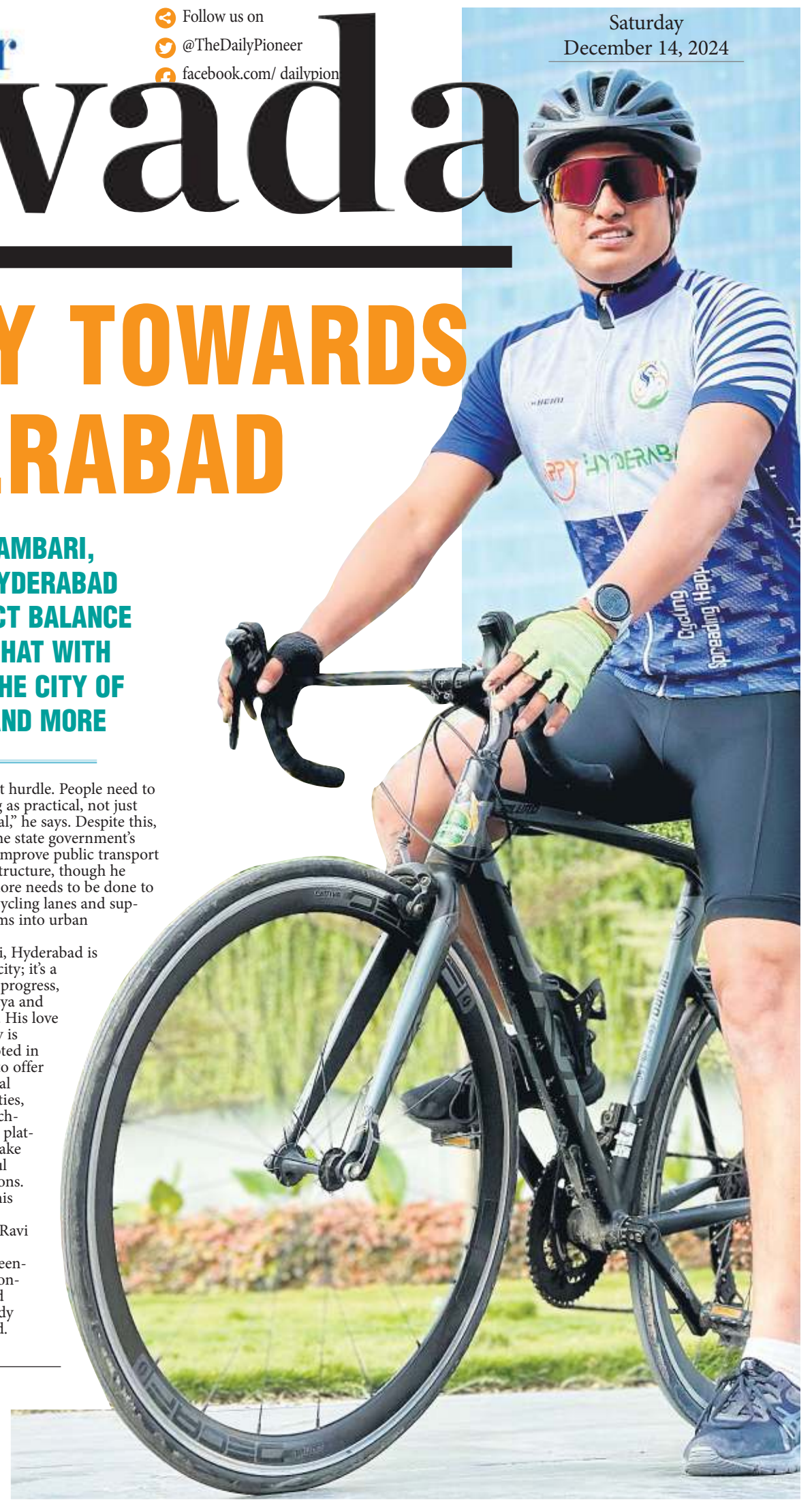
Hyderabad goes beyond proximity; it creates bonds that offer mutual support. "In communities, people share resources, knowledge and empathy. For instance, a cycling companion who happens to be a doctor may step in during an emergency without hesitation. That sense of unity isn't easily found elsewhere," he explains.

Professionally, Hyderabad has impressed Ravi with its cosmopolitan atmosphere and opportunities for growth. "The city is a mix of tradition and modernity. Its rich cultural heritage, combined with global exposure, makes it a dynamic place to work and innovate," he says. The city's infrastructure developments and strategic urban planning have also contributed to its appeal for professionals and families alike.

However, he notes the challenges of promoting cycling in a car-dominated culture. "Changing mindsets is

our biggest hurdle. People need to see cycling as practical, not just recreational," he says. Despite this, he lauds the state government's efforts to improve public transport and infrastructure, though he believes more needs to be done to integrate cycling lanes and support systems into urban planning.

For Ravi, Hyderabad is not just a city; it's a symbol of progress, community and possibility. His love for the city is deeply rooted in its ability to offer professional opportunities, cultural richness and a platform to make meaningful contributions. Through his work and advocacy, Ravi is helping shape a greener, more connected and future-ready Hyderabad.



### Bandish Bandits Season 2

## Symphony of emotions, but struggles to keep beat

PNS| HYDERABAD

#### PLOT

*Bandish Bandits Season 2* picks up from the melodious journey of Radhe (Ritwik Bhowmik) and Tamanna (Shreya Chaudhry), navigating the complexities of love, tradition and ambition in the world of classical music. Radhe, torn between his musical heritage and modern aspirations, faces mounting pressures, while Tamanna confronts the challenges of balancing her dreams and her family's expectations. This season continues to focus on the intense emotional and musical battle between classical and contemporary genres.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

The latest series boasts an engaging storyline crafted by Atmika Didwania, Karan Singh Tyagi, Digant Patil and Anand Tiwari, which introduces new challenges and characters, adding to the entertainment value. The screenplay expertly blends music and drama, although the pacing may feel slow for some viewers. The dialogues are sharp and simple, with standout one-liners delivered by Kunaal Roy Kapur. Anand Tiwari's direction shines, maintaining the show's unique aspect and focusing on the central theme of music. The series features several memorable scenes, including dramatic confrontations, surprising revelations and heartfelt moments, making it a compelling watch. Anand Tiwari's masterful direction brings this unique show to life, seamlessly weaving music, drama and confrontation throughout the narrative. The series expertly explores the complexities of character relationships, with dynamics shifting in intriguing ways. Memorable moments abound, including a poignant confession, dramatic entrances, and intense face-offs.

#### DRAWBACKS:

While the emotional depth and music remain compelling, the season suffers from slow pacing. Certain plot points feel drawn out,



leaving the narrative dragging in places. The integration of new characters is uneven, sometimes disrupting the flow of the story. Additionally, the length of the episodes feels excessive, with some moments failing to make an impact due to the drawn-out execution. While it introduces intriguing new characters and layers, it sometimes lingers too long on melodrama, sacrificing pace for emotion. The series thrives on the fusion of classical Indian

music with a contemporary narrative, but the execution falters in certain emotional beats. The lack of urgency in the plot progression occasionally weakens the show's overall momentum.

#### PERFORMANCES

Ritwik Bhowmik delivers a captivating performance, leveraging his endearing on-screen presence and impressive acting skills. Shreya Chaudhry dazzles with her stunning screen presence,

#### VERDICT

*Bandish Bandits Season 2* offers engaging music, strong performances and emotional depth but suffers from pacing issues and at times, a convoluted narrative. It will appeal to fans of the first

season and those who appreciate classical music, though a more succinct approach could have made it even more impactful. Still, a worthy watch for its performances and musical moments.

#### REVIEW

Directed by: Anand Tiwari

Produced by: Amritpal Singh Bindra

Cast: Ritwik Bhowmik, Shreya Chaudhry, Sheeba Chaddha, Atul Kulkarni, Rajesh Tailang, Kunaal Roy Kapur, Divya Dutta, Rohan Gurbaxani, Yashaswini Dayama, Aaliyah Qureshi and Saurabh Nayyar

Streaming on: Prime Video

Rating: 3/5

showcasing significant growth in her performance since Season 1. Rajesh Tailang as Rajendra and Sheeba Chaddha as Mohini consistently demonstrate their reliability as talented actors. Divya Dutta as Nandini steals the spotlight with her outstanding performance and well-crafted character. Kunaal Roy Kapur as Arghya leaves a lasting impression with his comedic timing, while Rohan Gurbaxani as Ayaan, Samadh Khan as Vishal, Yashaswini Dayama as Saumya, Saurabh Nayyar and Aaliyah Qureshi deliver notable performances in their respective roles.

#### TECHNICAL ASPECTS

The show's musical offerings are undoubtedly its crowning jewel, with standout tracks like *Araj*, *Garaj Garaj Rock*, *Saavan Mohe Tarasaaye*, *Nirmohiya*, *Sakhi Mori* and *Ghar Aa Maahi* (I'm Waiting for You) leaving a lasting impression. Soumil Shringarpure's background score perfectly complements the show's musical theme. The technical aspects are also noteworthy, with Anubhav Bansal's exceptional cinematography, particularly in the music performance scenes, and Hazel Paul's appealing yet realistic costume design. Manini Mishra's production design adds a touch of elegance, while Tanupriya Sharma's editing, although somewhat dragging, rounds out the overall visual experience.

## Charting career path after earning your US CMA in 2025

The current job market is tough and cracking a reputed job role can be a complex process. Jobs that came with a tag of security a decade back aren't immune to this development, including varied roles in accounts and finance. In such a scenario, there are some certifications that you can pursue that will help you to "stand out" amongst the pool of candidates, applicable to freshers and experienced professionals equally.

One such certification in accounting and finance is CMA (Certified Management Accountant), a US certification by the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) that can open a plethora of opportunities in the job market in India and abroad. Unlike traditional accounting roles that emphasise recording and compliance, CMAs are trained to interpret financial data, forecast trends and drive business decisions. This unique blend of skills aligns perfectly with the needs of multinational corporations, which focus on growth strategies, sustainability and global operations. One can earn the certification through the two-part exam. Part I includes financial planning, performance and analytics. Part II includes strategic financial management and covers cost management, financial budgeting, risk management and investment analysis.

#### VERSATILITY ACROSS INDUSTRIES

US CMAs are celebrated for their versatility. From manufacturing giants to tech startups, they find relevance across industries thanks to their proficiency in cost management, budgeting and performance evaluation. As companies seek to optimise resources and improve profitability, the demand for professionals who can offer actionable insights continues to grow. For instance, in the manufacturing sector, CMAs play a pivotal role in managing cost structures and improving operational efficiency. Meanwhile, in the technology industry, they drive financial strategies to support innovation and scalability. This adaptability ensures CMAs remain indispensable, regardless of economic fluctuations.



#### STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING

Modern businesses need more than just number crunchers. They need strategic advisors. US CMAs excel in bridging the gap between financial data and corporate strategy. With their expertise in areas like risk management, performance metrics and capital investment decisions, they empower organisations to make informed choices that foster long-term growth. The increasing adoption of data analytics and artificial intelligence in finance further amplifies the importance of CMAs. Their training equips them to interpret complex datasets and leverage technology to refine business strategies, making them invaluable assets in the era of digital transformation.

#### CAREER GROWTH BACKED BY INCREASED EARNING POTENTIAL

The prestige of the US CMA certification is reflected in the robust career growth and compensation packages it unlocks. According to the IMA's Global Salary Survey, CMAs earn significantly more than their non-certified peers. CMAs tend to earn 20% to 40% higher than non-CMAs. This earning potential, combined with opportunities for leadership roles, makes the certification highly attractive to ambitious professionals. Moreover, CMAs often find themselves on the fast track to senior management positions. Their ability to contribute to high-stakes decision-making ensures they are viewed as

integral to the leadership pipeline, further cementing their demand across organisations.

As businesses continue to expand their global footprints and adapt to technological advancements, the role of US CMAs will only grow in prominence. Their skill set aligns seamlessly with the priorities of modern enterprises, such as sustainability, agility and innovation. Whether it's driving mergers and acquisitions or navigating complex regulatory environments, CMAs will remain pivotal to shaping the future of corporate finance. One important thing to note here is that earning this certification requires a lot of commitment, especially if you are working. However, by successfully completing the US CMA exam and earning the certification, professionals unlock substantial returns on their investment. This achievement translates into a wealth of career opportunities. For employers, hiring a CMA is an investment in excellence, ensuring their financial strategies are grounded in expertise and foresight. In a world where businesses strive to do more with less, the US CMA stands as a symbol of value creation, adaptability and strategic brilliance. This is why they are and will continue to be, in demand across the corporate sector.

(The author, Pratham Barot, is the CEO and CoFounder, of Zell Education.)



# Bumrah is a combination of legendary pacers, says Chappell

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Jasprit Bumrah embodies the qualities of pace legends such as Dennis Lillee, Andy Roberts and Richard Hadlee but at the same time is forging his own legacy, one that is set to inspire future generations of pacemen, feels former India coach Greg Chappell. He also said that Bumrah is the only player standing between Australia and the Border Gavaskar Trophy. "What sets Bumrah apart is his combination of skills: (Malcolm) Marshall's adaptability, Lillee's aggression, Richard Hadlee's control, Roberts' strategy, Wasim (Akram) and Waqar's (Younis) reverse swing, (Glenn) McGrath's precision, (Dale) Steyn's explosiveness, and (Kagiso) Rabada's modern versatility." "As Nasser Hussain aptly observed, 'He's the complete bowler. As he has had back

surgery already, it is not certain he will have a long career, but if he does, his name will be mentioned in the same breath as the champions above," Chappell wrote in the 'Sydney Morning Herald'. An all-format bowler, Bumrah has reinforced his status as the best bowler in the world several times including when he led India to a 295-run win in the Perth Test recently. "While the legends of yesteryear established the foundations, Bumrah is carving his own legacy – one that promises to inspire future generations of pacemen." The former Australia captain said Bumrah's lethal yorkers and unsettling bounce evoked memories of Lillee's raw aggression on the field. "Lillee was a warrior, combining raw aggression with psychological prowess. I opposed him many times in domestic cricket and watched him from close quarters



against the best batsmen of his era. "His ability to make it hard for

batsmen to score runs with his probing line and length, allied to his guile and

determination, made him the champion that less was Bumrah, though less overtly

combative, channels Lillee's ability to unsettle batsmen. His deadly yorkers and disconcerting bounce – especially with his unorthodox release point and trajectory – echo Lillee's capacity to dictate terms. "Bumrah's quiet intensity and precision make him a nightmare, much like Lillee's unrelenting aggression." Another great of the game was Roberts, who combined pace with strategic brilliance. Chappell felt Bumrah's 2018 performance at the MCG where he used variations to get the better of the batters was reminiscent of the way Roberts operated. "Bumrah shares Roberts' cerebral approach. Both bowlers use subtle variations to outfox batsmen, relying on strategy rather than brute force. Bumrah's spell in the 2018 Boxing Day Test against Australia – culminating in 6-33 – was a modern echo of Roberts' game-changing

bursts." "Roberts had a loping and relaxed run-up and a very strong shoulder action like Bumrah, and skidded onto you quite quickly, so it was important to be focused on the ball leaving the hand. "The danger of a bowler who zeroes in on the stumps, as Roberts did and Bumrah does, is that if you relax for a moment and try to hit across their deliveries, you become even more vulnerable to LBWs and bowled. I would use the same approach against Bumrah," Chappell added. The 31-year-old has consistently churned out stellar performances and is the go to bowler when the Indian team is in need of wickets. "With 151 wickets at an average of 21.03 in just 30 Tests, his ability to excel in diverse conditions recalls Marshall's dominance. Bumrah's reverse swing on abrasive surfaces and his

ability to seam and swing the ball under cloudy skies have been pivotal, evoking the same uncertainty that batsmen faced against Marshall. "As Ian Botham famously remarked of Marshall, 'He gave you no respite.' Today, batsmen echo similar sentiments about Bumrah," Chappell wrote. Drawing comparison to Hadlee, Chappell said "Bumrah's meticulousness draws comparisons to Hadlee. His mastery of English conditions, where he averages 22.02, and his ability to exploit even the slightest movement resemble Hadlee's clinical dismantling of batting orders. "Like Hadlee, Bumrah's focus on perfecting every delivery has made him indispensable in critical moments. He is also carrying the Indian pace attack at present as Hadlee did for New Zealand in his era," he added.



## Dismissals during first innings did affect his flow, admits Gill

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Shubman Gill admitted that the fall of wickets at the other end affected his game in the Adelaide Test but expressed confidence that the Indian batting group would deliver a stronger first-innings effort in what is now effectively a three-match series. Gill didn't play the first Test due to a finger injury but looked good in his brief innings of 31 and 28 during the pink ball Test at Adelaide which India lost by 10 wickets. "As a batting group, we are looking to post a big total first up. That's been the key discussion and every batter has his own game plan," Gill said in the pre-match press conference after the team scored 150 and 180 in the first innings at Perth and Adelaide respectively. Gill believes that he wouldn't curb his natural game although he did get edgy seeing wickets tumble at the other end. "I still have the freedom as a batter. One of the challenges is whether you can play the game you want to play, irrespective of what's happening at the other end and irrespective of scorecard. "I faltered in the first innings because of what happened at the other end and I take that upon myself." There was a four-over period

in which Gill faced just one ball and that affected his concentration. "And there was a period when I didn't face much – may be one ball in four overs and then when I faced a delivery I missed a completely fuller ball. These are challenges you face. You might not face a ball for four overs or you might end up facing 18 balls on the trot," Gill explained. India have had at least six scores of 150 or less in recent times and Gill admitted that the piece of stat isn't lost upon the batting group. He said it is now a three-match series for his side. "Adelaide Test, we didn't do well but the series is still 1-1. We will treat it as a three-match Test series and if we win this one, we will have advantage going into Melbourne and Sydney." Gill was nostalgic as he walked into the Gabba for the first time since the 2021 Test where he was the top-scorer in the run-chase with a fine 91 that catapulted him into stardom. "Walking into the stadium after 2021 with the team, definitely it felt very nostalgic." Skipper Rohit Sharma didn't attend the optional training session and when asked about his absence, Gill replied: "This was an optional session and he has already practised a lot."

## Ignore the criticism, it comes with the territory: Anand to Gukesh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Legendary chess player Vishwanathan Anand on Friday asked D. Gukesh to ignore those questioning the standard of the World Championship title showdown with China's Ding Liren, saying criticism always comes with success. Indian Grandmaster Gukesh made history on Thursday, becoming the youngest-ever to win the world title defeating Liren in the 14th and final game of the championship in Singapore. Former world champion Vladimir Kramnik was not impressed with the quality of chess on display during the match, calling it the "end of chess as we know it." Kramnik expressed his frustration over the game's quality, calling a critical blunder by Ding Liren "childish". In his reaction, Kramnik wrote on 'X', "No comment. Sad. End of chess as we know it." In another tweet, he said,



"Never yet has a WC title been decided by such a childish one-move blunder." Five-time world champion, Norway's Magnus Carlsen too has been critical of the quality on display in earlier rounds, saying, "This does not look like a game between two World Championship contenders. It just looks like maybe the second round or third round of an open tournament." However, Anand, the five-time world champion and Gukesh's mentor, said he saw "history being made by

Gukesh". "I feel very happy. I was literally watching history being made yesterday," Anand told PTI Videos. "It (criticism) comes with every match. To be honest, I think it just comes with the territory. You ignore it and that's all. You know Gukesh's achievement, the whole qualification, everything and his concomitant rise. I mean if you look at the Olympiad, he showed that he's actually become a much stronger player. "He won the Candidates this

year, so many good results in Toronto and he's here. So this stuff (criticism) just comes with it. You cannot expect to become world champion and not face some random criticism," added Anand. The championship match seemed destined for a draw. However, Liren faltered under pressure and committed a blunder. "Most of us had written the game off (as a draw) by this point. If Ding had brought his bishop back, Gukesh would have had a long task to make any progress. But then, suddenly, the game turned, and he won. It was fantastic," he added. Anand praised the psychological depth of the young champion's approach. "Gukesh was not playing aggressive or anything. He had an extra pawn and was circling around, trying to find a way through," Anand said. The tactic of wearing down the opponent, even when it looked as good as a stalemate, proved crucial.



## Hazlewood replaces Boland in Australia XI for third Test against India

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Australian captain Pat Cummins on Friday announced that pacer Josh Hazlewood will replace Scott Boland in his playing XI for the third Test against India after having recovered from a side strain. The injury had forced Hazlewood to sit out of the Pink Ball Test in Adelaide last week. Cummins exuded confidence that Hazlewood would pull through the match without any "hiccups". "He had a really good bowl yesterday, he had another bowl in Adelaide a couple of days previously. Him and the medical team are really confident," he said on the eve of the game at the Gabba. Cummins said he had to take the ball away from Hazlewood at Perth to prevent his injury getting worse. "We've seen it a few times where Josh has pushed through to get through a Test match and a little bit of soreness turns into a month or two of injury. "So, we made the call then that it probably wasn't worth the risk of keeping him bowling. I think he bowled an extra two overs leading into tea break and he said it felt ok, but I just kind of thought from there, 'that's enough,'" said Cummins. The Australian captain was sympathetic for Boland after the veteran pacer made a stirring return to Test cricket at Adelaide after last year's Ashes. Boland had a match-haul of five wickets that included the prized scalp of star India batter Virat Kohli in the second innings. "It's tough. He was fantastic in Adelaide. Unfortunately, he's spent quite a bit of time on the bench over the last 18 months and whenever he plays he's fantastic. "It's a shame for Scotty, but still a fair bit to play out this series. I'd be surprised if he didn't play again in this series," said the New South Wales player. Green is fading at Gabba The green tinge on the Brisbane deck was significantly reduced on the match eve. Once a fortress of the Aussies, India had breached the 'Gabba' barrier during the 2020-21 series to end the hosts' winning run dating back to 1988. After that the West Indies too beat Australia here, riding on the back of pacer Shamar Joseph's heroics. "I looked at it yesterday – it looked like a good wicket, like it has been the last few years," said Cummins. "A bit of sun baking it the last couple of days (means) I don't think it's as green and leafy as it was against South Africa," he said. Cummins was referring to the Test against South Africa here in 2022 which ended inside two days.

## Treesa-Gayatri bow out of BWF World Tour Finals

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Indian women's doubles pair Iof Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand missed out on a semifinal spot at the BWF World Tour Finals after losing to Japan's Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida in straight games in their third and final group A match here on Friday. Treesa and Gayatri, who won their maiden BWF Super 300 title at Syed Modi International in Lucknow recently, lost 17-21 13-21 to their world number 4 opponents in 49 minutes. It was the fourth defeat for the Indian pair against the Paris Olympics bronze medalists Japanese rivals in five meetings. World number 13 Treesa and Gayatri, the only Indians to have qualified for the



prestigious season-ending tournament, needed a win to secure a spot in the knockout stage of the tournament. On Wednesday, the Indians had narrowly lost to world No.1 pair Liu Sheng Shu and Tan Ning of China in their

opening group match before stunning the Malaysian duo of Pearly Tan and Thinaah Muralitharan in their second match to keep their hopes alive. But the Japanese pair proved too hot to handle for the

Indian duo, who stayed level with Matsuyama and Shida till 5-5. Thereafter, the Japanese pair zoomed ahead and a six-point burst took them to 18-10. Treesa and Gayatri narrowed down the deficit to 17-19 but Matsuyama and Shida prevailed. After the change of sides, Treesa and Gayatri had a slender 4-2 lead but Matsuyama and Shida turned the tables quickly and entered the break with a four-point advantage. The Japanese pair kept a firm grip on the rallies and slowly and steadily kept moving ahead to eventually shut the door on the Indians. Matsuyama and Shida joined the Chinese pair of Sheng Shu and Ning in the semifinal stage of the tournament.

## Hojlund scores twice for Manchester United to beat Viktoria Plzen 2-1 in Europa League

AP ■ LONDON

Rasmus Hojlund scored twice after coming off the bench and Manchester United rallied to beat Viktoria Plzen 2-1 in the Europa League. The Denmark striker netted in the 88th minute after collecting Bruno Fernandes' pass off a free kick to seal the victory and put United into the top eight of the standings. Hojlund replaced Marcus Rashford in the 56th and scored an equalizer six minutes later after Amad Diallo's shot was deflected by goalkeeper Martin Jedlicka into his path for an easy finish. The 21-year-old Hojlund also scored twice in the previous round, when United beat Norwegian team Bodo/Glimt 3-2, and has five goals in his six appearances in the second-tier competition. "It feels good to have scored

two goals but I am more happy with the win," Hojlund said. "My instructions? Go out there and score two goals! Just to use my qualities, run the channels and be assertive in front of goal." United had come off two straight losses in the English Premier League, 2-0 away to Arsenal, and 3-2 at Old Trafford to Nottingham Forest that left the club 13th and eight points adrift of the top four as progress looked slow under new coach Ruben Amorim. Matej Vydra, who previously played for Burnley and Watford, opened the scoring three minutes into the second half. United has 12 points from six games after three wins and three draws in Europa League play – good enough for seventh place. The top eight qualify directly to the Round of 16. The

teams placed No. 9 to No. 24 go into a two-legged playoff. Tottenham continued to show inconsistent form in a 1-1 draw at Rangers, leaving the north London team in ninth place. The Scottish side is eighth. Substitute Dejan Kulusevski was fed by fellow substitute Dominic Solanke to score 15 minutes before time and salvage a point at Ibrox Stadium. Spurs were held 2-2 at home by Roma in the previous round and lost 3-2 to Galatasaray before. The draw came after losing 4-3 to Chelsea in the Premier League on Sunday. Hamza Igamane netted for Rangers at the start of the second half off a cross from James Tavernier in what was a return to Glasgow for Spurs coach Ange Postecoglou, who led Celtic for two seasons. Fisayo Dele-Bashiru and



veteran Pedro Rodriguez scored one each for Lazio in the second half to defeat Ajax 3-1 in Amsterdam and move

to the top of the standings with 16 points from six games. Bilbao is level on points but in second on goal

difference. Anderlecht beat Slavia 2-1 in Prague to move into third place. Lyon jumped to fourth

by beating Eintracht Frankfurt 3-2. The German team is fifth. Among other results, substitute Sergio Peña equalized in stoppage time for Malmö to hold unbeaten Galatasaray 2-2. The Turkish club is sixth in the standings. PAOK routed Ferencváros 5-0. Roma showed signs of improvement by beating Braga 3-0 for a second straight victory that came after the struggling club earned its first win under new coach Claudio Ranieri, 4-1 over visiting Lecce in Serie A. Braga goalkeeper Matheus received a red card in the 68th with the score 2-0. Conference LeagueA youthful Chelsea lineup made the most of a long trip to Kazakhstan by beating Astana 3-1 to stay perfect in the UEFA Conference League. Marc Guiu struck twice within five minutes

early in the first half. The 18-year-old forward opened the scoring on a solo effort in the 14th and added his second after meeting a cross from Pedro Neto from the right in freezing conditions in the city of Almaty. Guiu, who joined Chelsea from Barcelona this summer, has scored three in the competition. Renato Veiga, who is 21, headed home the third before Marin Tomasov scored for the hosts late in the first half. Neto was the only player to remain from the squad that beat Tottenham 4-3 on Sunday to move to second in the Premier League. Chelsea has 15 points atop the standings of third-tier competition with one more game to play in the league phase. Fiorentina crushed LASK 7-0 and Legia Warsaw lost 2-1 at home to Lugano.



# Allu Arjun's arrest leaves tollywood stunned

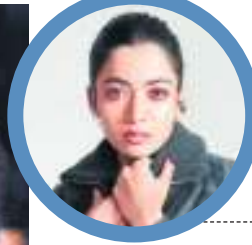
Mega Star Chiranjeevi and his family had reportedly distanced themselves from Allu Arjun due to personal differences. However, at this critical juncture, Chiranjeevi put aside all conflicts and rushed to Allu Arjun's residence to show his support.

The Tollywood industry is in shock following the news of Allu Arjun's arrest over the Sandhya Theatre stampede incident. The stampede led to the death of a woman, Revathi, and left a boy hospitalized. The police had filed a case against the actor days earlier, and he returned to Hyderabad on Friday morning after attending the *Pushpa 2* success meet in Delhi on Thursday evening.

Over the past few months, a division has emerged in the Mega family, with Allu Arjun on one side and Megastar Chiranjeevi's family on the other. This rift reportedly began after Allu Arjun supported his friend, YSRCP leader Shilpa Ravichandra Reddy, in Nandyal. The feud has also affected fans, with many Pawan Kalyan supporters boycotting *Pushpa 2*, which has performed well in the Hindi-speaking belt but struggled in Telugu states.

Despite their differences, Chiranjeevi and his wife rushed to Allu Arjun's house to console his mother after the arrest news broke, accompanied by Nagababu. Prominent figures, including producer Dil Raju, director Trivikram Srinivas and producer Naga Vamsi, were seen at the Chikkadpally Police Station and Nampally Court to support Allu Arjun. Fans also gathered at the police station, Gandhi Hospital and the court.

Allu Arjun reportedly expressed frustration with the manner of his arrest, as he was not given time to change his clothes. The actor was drinking coffee when the police arrived and left with them after reassuring his distressed wife, Sneha. Before departing, he kissed her on the cheek, displaying calmness despite the situation. Many politicians and Tollywood celebrities have taken to social media to support him.



I can't believe what I am seeing right now...The incident that happened was unfortunate and deeply saddening incident. However, it's disheartening to see everything being blamed on a single individual. This situation is both unbelievable and heartbreaking.

— Rashmika Mandanna

It's heartbreaking to witness such tragedies. I believe we must reflect on how to prevent them in future. This isn't about finding fault but about learning, growing and taking collective responsibility to ensure a safer and better tomorrow.

— Nithin



I wish the kind of enthusiasm government authorities and media show in anything related to people from cinema was also there for the regular citizens. We would have lived in a better society. That was an unfortunate incident and it was heart breaking. We should all learn from the disaster and be lot more careful here after and introduce measures to make sure this doesn't happen again. We are all at fault here. One person is not responsible for this.

— Nani

## Fear: Frighteningly good film deserves watch



REVIEW

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After the big film *Pushpa 2*, smaller films are now hitting the screens and *Fear* is one of them, which is releasing today. Haritha Gogineni, a woman director, is making her debut with this horror genre film. Vedhika plays the lead actress, while Anup Rubens is the music director.

### Story

Sindhu and Indu (played by Vedhika) are twins. Sindhu, the younger sister, deeply admires Indu but suffers from constant fear, believing someone is after her. Indu, irritated by Sindhu's fears, often grows angry with her. Sindhu falls in love with Sampath (played by Aravind Krishna), her childhood classmate and becomes possessive, even resenting his interactions with Indu. Her fears escalate, and she tells her parents someone wants to kill her. They admit her to a mental asylum, where she resists treatment. The doctor (played by Anish Kuruvilla) tries one last approach to help her. Meanwhile, Sampath goes missing, and Sindhu worries about his fate. What happens to Sampath, Sindhu, and Indu forms the crux of the story.

### Analysis

Haritha Gogineni debuts as a director and has bravely chosen the horror genre, which demands a nuanced approach. The film is heavily reliant on its screenplay, with Haritha weaving together past and present scenes in a nonlinear narrative. From the outset,

she maintains control over her storytelling, delivering an engaging narrative with a surprising twist at the climax. Unlike many debut directors who opt for entertainment or family dramas, Haritha ventured into the challenging horror genre and managed to handle it effectively. Despite minor flaws, her effort is commendable. The film also carries a strong message: fear is harmful and parents should be attentive to their children's concerns, addressing them promptly instead of dismissing them as trivial.

### Performances

Vedhika shines in her performance, embodying her role perfectly. Pavitra Lokesh and Jaya Prakash, as her parents, deliver strong performances, while Sayaji Shinde, Satya and Anish Kuruvilla provide solid support. Aravind Krishna, in a cameo role, is effective. Child actors also contribute significantly.

### Technical aspects

For horror films, music is crucial, and Anup Rubens delivers a strong background score. The cinematography enhances the film's mood and despite being a small-budget project, the technical aspects are impressive.

### Conclusion

*Fear* is a film narrated through a nonlinear screenplay. While it has some flaws, it offers an engaging experience and is worth a watch. Tollywood needs more women directors like Haritha Gogineni, making it essential to support such ventures.



## Ram Charan pokes fun at SDT's love life, urges him to marry

Ram Charan attended as the chief guest for Sai Durga Tej's 18th film title launch. Directed by Rohith KP in his debut, the film is produced by Niranjana Reddy and Chaitanya Reddy. At the event, Ram Charan praised his cousin Sai Durga Tej's dedication to his craft and referred to his recovery from a life-threatening accident as his "second birth," crediting fans for their blessings.

The actor release the film's title, *Sambarala Yetigattu*, at an event in Hyderabad, which saw a large

turnout of Mega fans. Speaking highly of Sai Durga Tej, Ram Charan described him as "not only a good actor but also a good human being, a good son, brother and nephew." He also commended director Rohith KP for his exceptional work, saying, "After watching the promotional video, Rohith doesn't seem like a debut director; he comes across as experienced."

In a lighter moment, Ram Charan humorously urged Sai Durga Tej to show affection toward women. "Teju loves only his male

fans, but I want him to express his love to women too. His mother asks him every day to get married, but he shows no interest," Charan joked, eliciting laughter and applause from the audience and Sai Tej's mother.

The event was attended by several prominent figures, including Allu Aravind and directors and producers who have previously collaborated with Sai Durga Tej. Ram Charan concluded by asking fans to ensure the success of *Sambarala Yetigattu*.

### BEHIND THE LENS:

## Rana Daggubati's candid conversations with S S Rajamouli & Ram Gopal Varma

## Balakrishna anger flows over Prashanth Varma!

A few days ago, Balakrishna's son Mokshagna's debut film, to be directed by Prashanth Varma, was scheduled for a grand launch. However, it was cancelled at the last minute, with Balakrishna later stating that Mokshagna's health was the reason. He did not clarify whether the movie was shelved

or if it would be relaunched. Sources reveal that on the night before the launch, Prashanth Varma informed Balakrishna that he could not direct the film but would provide the story instead.

This last-minute revelation reportedly angered Balakrishna, who was upset given the anticipation surrounding

Mokshagna's debut. Determined to take control, Balakrishna announced *Aditya 999 Max*, a sequel to his successful film *Aditya 369*, which he plans to direct himself, making it Mokshagna's debut.

As a result, the Mokshagna-Prashanth Varma project is reportedly shelved, according to insiders.



Rana Daggubati has effortlessly captivated the attention of the audience with *The Rana Daggubati Show* by engaging with some of the biggest names in Indian cinema, and he's certainly scaling it up with every episode. The show has quickly amassed a fan following driven by exciting conversations, playful camaraderie, and a rare chemistry with his guests, unseen in talk shows before it.

In the latest episode, viewers are treated to an in-depth exploration of the creative processes of two legendary filmmakers, S.S. Rajamouli and Ram Gopal Varma, offering an exclusive glimpse into their minds and world. Working in Rajamouli's *Baahubali*, the duo is seen reminiscing about their experiences through the journey of the two-part pan-India magnum opus. Reflecting on its impact, Rana said, "It took a decade of my life—an entire era. We only understood its true value after we finished. We were doing our best work, inspired by the best things we'd ever seen. It hasn't been the same since."

The episode also features legendary director Ram Gopal Varma, with whom he last worked on the critically acclaimed thriller *Department*. Both these directors, with vastly different approaches, ideologies, and filmographies, opened up about their creative callings, making the episode a highly interesting watch.



### Creative approach for building stories and characters

Rajamouli spoke about how his ideas are formed, explaining, "The books you read, the films you watch, the discussions that you are involved in around you—all of it builds up in the form of lava and bursts as an idea at the right moment." Ram Gopal Varma, on the other hand, drew inspiration from real-life experiences and encounters, revealing how a gangster's intense emotional outburst following the death of his brother left a lasting impact on him. "It struck me how, for gangsters, power defines everything—even grief comes out as anger. Taking a real-life trait and making it into a story is an exercise that I truly love."

### True inspiration behind company

Varma left viewers stunned when he revealed that his iconic film *Company* was not inspired by infamous underworld dons but rather his own rift with filmmaker Krishna Vamsi. He stated, "Whether it is the underworld or a film company, the ego wars remain the same."

### Personalities that inspired S.S. Rajamouli: Senior NTR, Kurien Verghese & Lal Bahadur Shastri

With great reverence, Rajamouli spoke about his admiration for revered figures like Sr. NTR, emphasizing, "I hold a high regard for Sr. NTR, not just as an actor but as a director; he is really pathbreaking. His impact as an actor is so profound that, at times, his work as a director feels almost overshadowed." But Rajamouli's inspirations extend beyond the world of cinema. He

also expressed immense respect for personalities like Kurien Verghese and Lal Bahadur Shastri, whose work and contributions leave him feeling insignificant by comparison.

### Family and professionalism

When it comes to working with family, Rajamouli explained that, despite close bonds, professional relationships take precedence. "We completely forget that we are related to each other while working."

Created and hosted by Rana Daggubati, *The Rana Daggubati Show* is an eight-episode unscripted Telugu Original produced by Spirit Media. With a stellar lineup of guests, including Dulquer Salmaan, Naga Chaitanya Akkineni, Sreeleela, Nani, Rajamouli and Ram Gopal Varma, new episodes drop every Saturday.