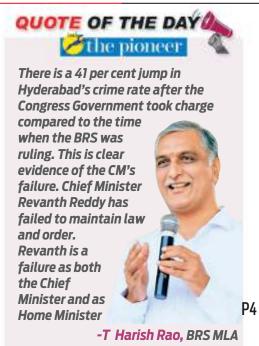
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Rahul Ramakrishna takes back his statement in

ALLUARJUN CASE



Dy CM inspects road works

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj K. Pawan Kalyan inspected the ongoing road reconstruction and drinking water project works in the district on Monday, ensuring quality standards were met. Accompanied by Minister for Excise Kollu Ravindra, MLAs Bode Prasad, Mandali Buddha Prasad, and Varla Kumar Raja, Pawan Kalyan visited Godavarru village, where roadworks worth Rs 3.75 crore are underway. The Deputy Chief Minister was briefed by Panchayat Raj Commissioner Krishna Teja and engineers on the ...

Bangla asks India to extradite Hasina

Bangladesh's interim government on Monday said it has sent a diplomatic note to New Delhi requesting for extradition of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who has been living in India since fleeing Bangladesh in August. Bangladesh's de facto foreign minister Touhid Hossain said Dhaka wants Hasina back to face the judicial process. "We have sent a note verbale to the Indian government saying that Bangladesh wants her back here for the judicial process," Hossain told reporters in ... -PAGE: 5

Claims ratio of non-life insurers dips

Net incurred claims to net earned premium (claims ratio) of non-life insurance industry stood at 82.52 per cent during 2023-24 as against 82.95 per cent in the preceding fiscal year, as per the Irdai's annual report. According to the Annual Report 2023-24 of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai), during 2023-24, the non-life insurance industry underwrote a total direct premium of Rs 2.90 lakh crore in India registering a growth of 12.76 per cent from previous year. The contribution of public ..

-PAGE: 8

'Shami not fully fit yet'

India pacer Mohammed Shami has been ruled out of the last two Tests against Australia as he is yet to regain full fitness, the BCCI said on Monday. Shami, who last played for India in the ODI World Cup final in November. 2023. made a comeback from his right heel surgery during Bengal's Ranji Trophy match against Madhya Pradesh last month. With calls for his selection growing, Shami played all nine games for Bengal in the subsequent Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy. He is also part of Bengal's squad for ...

Patch up attempt

Tollywood representatives plan to meet Telangana CM to mend fences

PNS HYDERABAD

With the arrest of actor Allu Arjun for the death of a woman in a stampede at Sandhya Theatre during the premier show of 'Pushpa 2: The Rule' and subsequent developments causing a strain in relations with the Telangana government, representatives of the Telugu film industry are planning to meet Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy.

Producer Naga Vamsi said on Monday that a decision on meeting the Chief Minister will be taken after Telangana Film Development

Allu Ariun to appear before Chikkadpally PS for questioning

The Chikkadpally Police summoned actor Allu Arjun, asking him to appear before the police in regard to the ongoing investigation into the alleged stampede at Sandhya theatre where a woman had died.

The actor has been asked to appear before the Police at 11 am on Tuesday at Chikkadpally police station. The police had cited Allu Arjun as accused no 11

Continued on Page 2

Producers donate Rs 50 lakh to kin of stampede victim

The producers of actor Allu Arjun tim's eight-year-old son is understarrer Pushpa-2 on Monday extended a financial assistance of Rs 50 lakh to the family of the woman who died in a stampede during the screening of the film on December 4.

Naveen Yerneni, the producer, visited the hospital where the vic-

Corporation chairman Dil Raju's return. A leading producer, Dil Raju, who was recently appointed chairman of TFDC by the State government, is currently in the United States. Terming the incident at Sandhya Theatre as unfortunate, Naga Vamsi said no hero or producer would want such incidents.

The producer also denied that the Telugu film industry would shift to neighbouring Andhra Pradesh. He said film shoots are happening in both the states and the government in Andhra Pradesh is also extending cooperation to the industry. In another move to reach out to the Telangana government, the State Film Chamber of Commerce on Monday appealed to its members to donate money for the family of Revathi, who died in the December 4 incident at Sandhya Theatre while her son Sri Tej was injured. Film Chamber also held a meeting to discuss the situation arising out of

woman's husband as they wanted to support the family.

a cheque to the family.

recent developments. In another development, filmmaker R Narayana Murthy visited KIMS Hospital on Monday and called on the family of eight-yearold Sri Tej who was critically injured in the stampede while his mother

The police on Monday said a

fresh notice would be served

on veteran Telugu actor

Mohan Babu, who was

earlier exempted by the

Telangana High Court

from appearing before the

police for probable breach of

Rachakonda Commissioner of

reporters that they would deal with

Police G Sudheer Babu told to bind them over.

peace, till December 24.

going treatment and handed over

Condoling the death of the

woman, he told reporters that the

cheque was handed over to the

Police to issue notice to actor Mohan Babu

Stop speaking about 'Pushpa'

Revanth Reddy directs party leaders

CV Anand on Monday apologised

for his remarks about national media

over its coverage of the Sandhya

Commissioner said he lost his cool

when faced with provoking questions

on ongoing investigations. Anand

had remarked that the national

media has been bought over. His

remarks evoked a strong reaction

from the national media. "I apologise

for losing my cool when asked con-

tinuous provoking questions on

stampede.

Hyd police chief apologises for remarks on national media

Hyderabad Commissioner of police ongoing investigations and making

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

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy directed Congress leaders to stop speaking about 'Pushpa-2' fame



the issue with firmness and as

per law. He was responding

to a query on the plan of

action with regard to the

process which is laid down.

This issue will be dealt with

firmness. Notices were issued

to them under Section 126 BNSS

"We will follow the

Continued on Page 2

Mohan Babu case.

hero Allu Arjun from Tuesday

onwards.

It is learnt that the Chief Minister told this to Congress leaders through Bhongir MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy on Monday. It is learnt that the Chief Minister

said that the Congress is in power and that it is the responsibility of Congress leaders to maintain restraint and stop speaking about the Allu Arjun issue from now onwards.

It is learnt that the CM directed Congress leaders that if they speak about the Allu Arjun issue then they have to say that the Congress is not against 'Pushpa-2' hero Allu Arjun and the Telugu film industry.

Congress leaders have to stress the fact that the party was the main force behind shifting the Telugu film is trying to gain politically from it.

questions about the December 4 incident at Sandhya Theatre during the premier show of 'Pushpa 2:
Continued on Page 2

unnecessary general remarks about

national media," Anand said in a post

on 'X' "I feel bad that I got provoked

and it was wrong and should have

kept calm. I withdraw my remarks wholeheartedly," said the Commissioner. The IPS officer lost

his cool when some reporters of tel-

evision channels continued their

industry from Chennai to Hyderabad, it is learnt the CM said. Congress governments encouraged the Telugu film industry in a big way by giving land and subsidies

to people in the cinema industry. It is learnt that the reason for the CM taking this decision is that Congress leaders were speaking as they liked without taking a unified stand giving scope for the opposition, particularly the BJP, to criticise

the government. However, rumours spread in Congress circles that the high command had directed Telangana Congress leaders to stop speaking about Allu Arjun's Sandhya Theatre incident, which has become a national issue now, and that the BJP

SC SUB-CLASSIFICATION

AP govt appoints one-man panel

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government on Monday appointed retired IAS officer Rajiv Ranjan sion to look into the sub-categorisation within Scheduled Castes (SC) in the State following the Supreme Court ruling in favour of it.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has appointed Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, IAS (retired) as One Man Commission to enquire into the sub-classification within Scheduled Castes in the light of the judgment of the Supreme Court dated August 1, 2024," said an official press

Continued on Page 2

NOMINATED POSTS

34% quota for BCs in AP

All existing welfare schemes to be extended to BCs, says CM Naidu

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has announced plans to extend all existing welfare schemes to Backward Classes (BCs) and launch special initiatives for the welfare of the community.

Chairing a review meeting on Monday to assess the progress of promises made to the BCs during the election campaign, the Chief Minister directed officials to ensure that there are no legal or technical issues with the proposed special legislation for the safety and security of BCs. As promised during the Assembly elections, the govern-



ment will enact a special law for the

protection of the community. A committee of Cabinet Ministers was formed to study the feasibility of the legislation, and the panel recently submitted its preliminary report. During the review meeting, officials briefed the Chief Minister on the

report, after which he instructed vent any potential legal issues when the law is enacted.

The Chief Minister also reiterated the TDP-led NDA government's commitment to implementing a 34% reservation for BCs in nominated posts, as promised during the election. He assured that this will be given legal backing, with a decision on the law's enactment to be made soon. Naidu highlighted that the previous government had reduced the BC reservation from 34% to 24% in local bodies, resulting in the loss of 16,500 posts for BCs.

TIDCO houses.

1.18 L TIDCO houses by June: Narayana

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has approved Rs 102 crore for the completion of pending TIDCO 2025, for their construction. Additionally, Rs 2,723 crore has been allocated for the development of roads in

Amaravati's Zones 7 and 10. State Municipal and Urban Development Minister P Narayana announced on Monday that 1.18 lakh TIDCO houses would be completed and inaugurated by June 12, 2025. Speaking to the media at the state secretariat, Narayana said that the 44th meeting of the CRDA, chaired by CM Naidu, had made key decisions regarding the development of Amaravati and the construction of

Continued on Page 2

No permission needed for bldgs up to 5 floors

ΡΝς - ΜΙΙΔΥΔΙΜΑΠΑ

Municipal Administration Minister Narayana has announced that buildings up to five floors no longer require permission, with an online application being sufficient for approval. He further clarified that for layouts and buildings, the municipality would grant all necessary

payment of applicable Continued on Page 2

Parallel cinema pioneer Shyam Benegal dead

Shyam Benegal, who heralded a new era in Hindi cinema with the 'parallel movement' in the 1970s and 1980s with classics such as "Ankur", "Mandi" and "Manthan", died on Monday after battling chronic kidney disease. He was 90.

The filmmaker, a star in the pantheon of Indian cinema's great auteurs, died at Mumbai's Wockhardt Hospital where he was

admitted in the Intensive Care Unit

"He passed away at 6.38 pm at Wockhardt Hospital Mumbai Central. He had been suffering from chronic kidney disease for several years but it had gotten very bad. That's the reason for his death," his daughter Pia Benegal said.

He is survived by his daughter and wife Nira Benegal.

Just nine days ago, on his 90th birthday, actors who had worked



with him through the decades gathered to wish him on the landmark day, almost as a last sayonara to the filmmaker who had given them perhaps the best roles of their

Among those who had gathered were Shabana Azmi, who made her debut with the powerful "Ankur" in 1973, Naseeruddin Shah, Rajit Kapoor, Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Divya Dutta and Kunal Kapoor.

Sindhu ties knot with Venkat Datta

approvals

PNS UDAIPUR

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu embarked on a new journey in life as she tied the knot with entrepreneur Venkata Datta Sai in a private ceremony here.

The 29-year-old shuttler from Hyderabad, who won a bronze at the 2016 Rio Olympics and a silver

at the Tokyo Olympics three years ago, married Datta, an executive director at Posidex Technologies, on Sunday in a traditional ceremony attended by close family and friends. Union Minister of Culture and Tourism, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, shared the first photograph of the wedding on 'X' on Monday.

BY B KRISHNA PRASAD

t has become increasingly evident that Telugu film producers are being pushed towards creating only 'feel-good' films, where the hero performs virtuous deeds and the villain's misdeeds are kept minimal. The ongoing controversy surrounding Allu Arjun's Pushpa and the state of Telangana has evolved into an indirect form of moral policing within Tollywood. Ministers have questioned how a character portraying a red sandalwood smuggler could be awarded the National Film demanded explanations for the government's liberal ticket price hikes and show-timing concessions for a film that depicts the rise of a smuggler.

film industry might be com-

Creativity... a lifeline of cinema

of 'good boy Ramu' films, with directors, story writers, and screenplay writers losing their creative freedom. Stories must now ensure that 'good triumphs over evil', even if it deviates from reality. Producers may also face expectations to portray lead characters, whether heroes or heroines, as paragons of virtue, devoid of bad habits such as smoking, drinking, or adultery, under the Award, while CPI leaders have notion that their actions could mislead audiences.

The intrusion has reached such extremes that in the future, moral policing could demand that heroes refrain from roles requiring them As a result, it seems the Telugu to follow different religious beliefs. For those who have forgotten,



For those who have forgotten, Bollywood legend Dev Anand played a smuggler in Jaal, an absconding gang member in Dushman, and a black marketeer in Kala Bazar. Does this diminish his status as a hero or his eligibility for awards? Similarly, Amitabh Bachchan's iconic role in Don was that of a criminal mastermind. Looking at Hollywood

Bollywood legend Dev Anand in Kala Bazar. Does this dimin- in Don was that of a criminal

played a smuggler in Jaal, an ish his status as a hero or his eli-absconding gang member in gibility for awards? Similarly, Dushman, and a black marketeer Amitabh Bachchan's iconic role mastermind. Looking at that transport audiences to a Hollywood, Marlon Brando's dream world, where larger-than-portrayal of Don Vito Corleone life events, such as a hero defeat-

Academy Award in 1972. Where was the outrage over Brando receiving an Oscar for such a role? In Tollywood, the legendary NTR was celebrated for playing negative roles, such as Ravanasura, Duryodhana, and Karna, which mesmerised audiences without inviting criticism.

It is unfortunate that some political leaders and sections of society fail to differentiate acting from real life. Appreciation for an actor's performance is recognition of their skill, not an endorsement of the character they portray. Films are imaginative creations

ing dozens of opponents, unfold. Expecting films to align with reallife values reflects a misplaced sense of moral policing.

If this trend continues, further restrictions may be imposed on language, dialogue delivery, and even the actors' style. A surprising aspect of the current controversy is the opposition to the recognition of a Telugu film and actor, with some Telugu leaders now advocating for the Tamil film Jai Bhim. While Jai Bhim carries a powerful message, it is perplexing to see Telugu leaders objecting to the success of a Telugu hero and film gaining national acclaim. The issue appears rooted in resentment over Telugu cinema's rising

popularity.
The film industry must remain a space for creative freedom, where art is appreciated for its craft rather than subjected to

Our govt is committed to welfare of Minorities: CM

Takes part in Semi-Christmas celebrations in V'wada



PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has said that Christmas, celebrated globally, is the world's largest festival, marking the birth of Jesus Christ, the saviour of the world. The CM wished for His compassion to be upon all. Speaking at the Semi-Chief Minister attended a special prayer led by pastors, cut a cake, and shared it with the

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister acknowledged the State's financial difficulties, attributing them to the legacy of debts and missteps from the previous government. He reaffirmed his commitment to overcoming these challenges, stating, "I

announced plans to establish a Properties Development Board to provide financial assistance for the construction and renovation of churches.

The Chief Minister reiterated his dedication to the welfare of the poor and emphasised his commitment to eradicating poverty. He shared the vision of a poverty-free society as part of the "Swarna Andhra Vision 2047," which aims to address economic disparities and promote efforts to reduce inequal-

Chandrababu Naidu highlighted that Christianity is a symbol of love, compassion, and service. He spoke of the contributions of Christian missionaries, who, even before India's independence, established educational institutions and healthcare services

you have given me." He also inspired by the teachings of Jesus Christ. He encouraged Christian Missionaries everyone to follow Christ's example of humility and sacrifice for the welfare of others,

promoting peace and love. Recalling his tenure as Chief Minister of united Andhra Pradesh, he mentioned directing the celebration of Christmas and Semi-Christmas events in districts. He reaffirmed his commitment to the welfare and security of minority communities, assuring that the government would always stand by them. The CM also recalled personally investigating a church attack in united Andhra Pradesh to ensure such incidents were prevented.

The CM emphasized that his government prioritised the welfare of the Christian community, offering financial assis-

He mentioned that up to Rs 10 lakh was granted to each service organisation, and 2 acres of land and Rs 10 crore were allocated for a Christian building in Guntur. However, the project stalled due to subsequent governmental negligence. He also noted that Rs 1.5

crore was provided for the CSI Saint Basilica Church in

Vijayawada, with funds allocat-

ed for Christian cemeteries as

Furthermore, the CM highlighted the government's provision of pre-matric and postmatric scholarships for Christian students, along with tuition fee reimbursements. He also recalled how former CM NT Rama Rao had studied at Guntur's AC College, emphasising that God always supports the poor and those who remain steadfast in their

34% quota...

Continued from Page 1

He criticised the negligence of the previous gov-ernment, which led to the suffering of BCs, and assured that all necessary measures would be taken to ensure the legal validity of the 34% quota. He instructed officials to conduct a detailed study of related court judgments before proceeding.

The Chief Minister also directed that urgent repairs be carried out at girls' hostels and that pending diet bills be cleared. He mentioned that Rs 110.52 crore in diet bills had been pending under the previous government, but the TDP-led NDA government had cleared Rs 76.38 crore. He instructed officials to clear the remaining dues promptly.

Chandrababu further emphasised the swift completion of the three BC buildings under construction and urged officials to acquire land in other districts for similar projects. He approved the release of Rs 5.4 crore for constructing four Kapu Bhavans.

Two hurt in gas leak at pharma unit

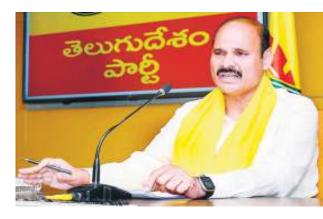
PNS ANAKAPALLI

A suspected gas leak at Rakshitha Drugs Private Limited in Jawaharlal Nehru Pharma City, Parawada, on Monday morning left two workers hospitalised. The victims, identified as Dev Bagh (38) and Ugres Gowda (26), both hailing from Odisha, are undergoing treatment at KIMS Hospital. While one worker is critical, the other is reportedly stable, according to hospital

District Superintendent of Police Tuhin Sinha stated that the workers fell unconscious after inhaling gases emitted during a chemical transfer into a scrubber. "We are investigating the possibility of criminal negliadded. Meanwhile, District Collector Vijaya Krishnan directed officials to ensure the injured workers receive the best medical care and ordered a thorough probe into the incident.

Minister for Labour and Factories, Vasamsetti Subhash, expressed concern over recurring industrial mishaps in Parawada and assured strict action against the company if lapses are

Cash for procured paddy within 48 hrs: I&PR Min



PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Housing and Information & Public Relations, Kolusu Parthasarathy, reaffirmed the coalition government's commitment to farmers' welfare under the leadership of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. On the occasion of National Farmers' Day, the Minister extended his best wishes to the farming community in the state.

Criticising the previous YSR Congress government as "antifarmer," Parthasarathy said that farmers faced immense difficulties during its five-year tenure due to inadequate subsidies, fertiliser shortages, and limited access to modern farming techniques. He highlighted that the current coalition government swiftly addressed these issues by

issuing guidelines for microfarming initiatives, ensuring subsidised agricultural supplies, and providing seamless access to fertilisers through cooperative societies. He emphasised that cash for paddy is now deposited directly into farmers' accounts within 48 hours of procurement, an unprecedented step in ensuring financial support.

The Minister also detailed several reforms, including soil testing and report issuance, investment subsidies, digital farming through the e-crop and Krishi apps, pest and disease monitoring, and the intro-duction of drone groups for precision farming. Additionally, tenant farmers are being issued rights documents under the new Andhra Pradesh Tenancy

Criticising the previous YSR Congress government as "anti-farmer," Parthasarathy said that farmers faced immense difficulties during its fiveyear tenure due to inadequate subsidies, fertiliser shortages, and limited access to modern farming techniques. He highlighted that the current coalition government swiftly addressed these issues by issuing guidelines for micro-farming initiatives, ensuring subsidised agricultural supplies, and providing seamless access to fertilisers through cooperative societies

Parthasarathy reiterated the government's unwavering dedication to the welfare of farmers and its resolve to make agriculture sustainable and prosperous under the visionary leadership of CM Chandrababu Naidu.

SC, ST, BC welfare govt's priority: Savitha

The welfare and development of SC, ST, and BC communities has always been a priority under the leadership of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, stated State BC Welfare Minister S. Savitha. She expressed her gratitude to Minister Dola Bala Veeranjaneyaswamy for approving Rs 11.56 crore for the renovation of SC hostels in the united Anantapur district.

On Monday, Minister Savitha met Minister Dola Bala Veeranjaneyaswamy at his office in the State Secretariat in Velagapudi, where she thanked



him for the funds allocated by the state government for renovating social welfare department hostels in the united Anantapur district. Recently, tioned Rs 11.56 crore for the renovation of these hostels. Minister Savitha criticised

the Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddyled government for neglecting the maintenance of hostels for SC, ST, and BC students. She remarked that the previous government did not prioritise the welfare of backward communities and treated them as vote banks. She further mentioned that the Y.S. Jagan government failed to fund even minor repairs in these hostels and neglected to pay the diet and cosmetic bills for students.

However, after the N. Chandrababu Naidu-led NDA government came into power, it promptly allocated funds for hostel repairs and cleared the pending diet and cosmetic bills for students, Minister Savitha pointed out. She emphasised that the Chandrababu Naidu government has always given high priority to the education and development of SC, ST, and BC children.

Minister Savitha also thanked Minister Dola Bala Veeranjaneyaswamy for approving funds for the renovation of social welfare department hostels in the united Anantapur district. The event was attended by several TDP leaders and workers.

ing Benegal with his actors

public. In his prolific almost

seven-decade career, Benegal

straddled diverse worlds,

diverse mediums and diverse

issues, right from rural distress

and feminist concerns to sharp

His oeuvre encompassed

documentaries, films and

epic television shows,

including "Bharat Ek Khoj"

an adaptation of Jawaharlal

Nehru's "Discovery of India",

and "Samvidhaan", a 10-

part show on the making of

And he wasn't calling it

"I'm working on two to

three projects; they are all

different from one another.

It's difficult to say which one

I will make. They are all for

the big screen," Benegal told

PTI just last week on the occasion of his 90th birth-

satires and biopics.

the Constitution.

quits anytime soon.

Continued from Page 1 issues. In total, 7,01,481 housfrom the state government. es were approved, of which per-

1.18 L TIDCO houses...

The Minister revealed that the Chief Minister had approved the allocation of Rs 102 crore to complete the TIDCO houses, which had remained Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) due to delays. etween 2014 and 2019 by the been delayed due to various government and the remainder June 12 next year.

missions for 5 lakh were granted, and 4,54,706 houses were struction of 3,13,832 houses had

Rs 3 90 lakh for each unit with

However, the previous government created confusion, and out of the 4,54,706 houses, grounded. By 2019, the con-only 2,61,640 houses were initiated, with the rest being cancelled. The current govern-Narayana also explained that ment has taken steps to comthe central and state govern- plete approximately 77,000 These houses were sanctioned ments had decided to allocate unfinished houses. Rs 102 crore will be spent to resolv central government but had Rs 1.90 lakh from the central and complete these houses by

No permission needed for...

Additionally, the minister directed officials to prepare Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) within 15 days for various urban development issues, including roads, drinking water, street lighting, stormwater management, and solid waste management across towns in the state.

Speaking at a state-level workshop held at Acharya Nagarjuna University on Monday, which was attended by 123 municipal commissioners, the minister highlighted the government's efforts to address waste management in towns such as Nellore, Kakinada, and Rajahmundry, where permission for solid waste management systems had already been granted. He mentioned that these actions were significantly improving waste man-

Minister Narayana also noted that the Municipal Administration Department had performed admirably from 2014 to 2019, with municipal taxes remaining unchanged. However, he criticised the subsequent YSR Congress (YCP) government for allegedly diverting municipal funds, adding that contractors were now reluctant to take on municipal projects due to financial difficulties. Despite this, he assured that the government would allocate funds directly to municipalities, regardless of the Centre's Financial Assistance for Municipalities (CFMA) scheme.

The minister set a target to provide drinking water to 123 municipalities across the state and revealed plans to set up a plant for generating electricity from waste in Visakhapatnam.

Expedite Bhogapuram Intl Airport works: CS

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad has instructed the concerned departments and agencies to expedite the construction of Bhogapuram International Airport and complete it within the stipulated timeframe. He chaired the first coordination committee meeting on the airport project at the State Secretariat on Monday.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary underscored the importance of fast-tracking the construction of this prestigious project to ensure its timely completion. He also reviewed the preparations to be undertaken by various central government organisations and agencies at the airport, including customs, the Bureau of Immigration, CISF security, health services, and other relevant

CS Neerabh Kumar Prasad also discussed measures to improve connectivity between Visakhapatnam city and the Bhogapuram airport

with officials from the concerned departments. The meeting was attended by Secretary Dr N Uvaraj, AP Maritime Board CEÓ Praveen Aditya, and officials from the airport construction agencies. Representatives from the Civil Aviation Ministry participated virtually.

Claims on security expenses baseless: **MLC** Appireddy

PNS VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) MLC Lella Appireddy has dismissed as baseless and misleading the reports alleging that Rs 90 crore was spent annually on security for Chief Minister

Addressing the media on Monday, Appireddy clarified that only 196 personnel were deployed for Jagan's security, as per police committee decisions based on protocol and threat assessments. In comparison, he pointed out, over 2,000 security personnel were engaged during Chandrababu Naidu's tenure, covering his family and multiple residences.

administration.

He accused certain sections of using deflectiatives of the YSRCP government.

Parallel cinema ... Continued from Page 1 That photograph of a smil-

ÝS Jagan Mohan Reddy during his tenure.

The MLC criticised the media for ignoring these facts and attempting to portray Naidu as frugal while spreading falsehoods about Jagan's

tion tactics to divert attention from the opposition's failures and undermine the welfare ini-

TODAY **ALMANAC** Krishna Paksha Dec 23 05:08 PM to Dec 24 07:52 PM Dashami Dec 24 07:52 PM to Dec 25 10:29 PM Nakshatram: Dec 23 09:09 AM Hasta: to Dec 24 12:17 PM Chitra: Dec 24 12:17 PM to Dec 25 03:22 PM 3:00 PM to 4:22 PM Rahukalam 9:31 AM to 10:53 AM Yamagandam 09:18 PM to 11:07 PM Varjyam: 12:15 PM to 1:38 PM Gulika: Amritakalam: None Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:53 AM to 12:37 PM VIJAYAWADA WEATHER Forecast: Partly Cloudy **Temp:** 24°° **Humidity: 84%** Sunrise: 6:33 AM Sunset: 5:42 PM **Updated:** December 23, 2024 5:00 PM

Patch up ...

Continued from Page 1

This comes after Chief Minister Revanth Reddy targeted both actor Allu Arjun and other film personalities for not meeting the family of the deceased and helping

While speaking in Assembly on December 21, Revanth Reddy had come down heavily on Allu Arjun for visiting the theatre without police permission, conducting 'roadshow' even after the stampede claimed the life of a woman and critically injured her son, and lacking sensitivity. The actor also came under flak for not meeting the bereaved family or visiting the injured child in the hospital.

The Chief Minister also found fault with the film per-

sonalities who had made a beeline to Allu Arjun's house to meet him after his release from jail. The Congress government also did not like the actor addressing a press conference a few hours after the Chief Minister's statement in the Assembly to say that allegations against him are false and that they are aimed at his character assassination. The next day police released minute-to-minute video footage of the incidents at

Allu Arjun's claims. Cinematography Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy had also announced in the Assembly that the government will not allow benefit shows of movies before their release and will also not permit an increase in cinema tickets.

Sandhya Theatre to dispute

Allu Arjun to...

Continued from Page 1

The Chikkadpally Police had earlier arrested the actor and he had to spend a night in Chanchalguda jail. The High Court had granted the actor interim bail in the case for four weeks.

Hyd police chief apologises ...

Continued from Page 1

The Rule' and the case booked against actor Allu Arjun.

know national media how it shame. Bought over, I am injured.

relief, deferring the appearance

The police on Sunday released minute-to-minute CCTV footage of the incident at Sandhya Theatre, which

Police to issue notice to ...

Continued from Page 1

process. He has got time till December 24, Tuesday. Again, notice will be issued. We will do as per the legal way," he said. The family of Mohan Babu

appear before the Rachakonda also registered against the veter-Commissioner of Police on an actor for allegedly assaulting They sought time. There is a December 11 for a probable breach of peace. Accordingly, Manoj had appeared before the

was recently in the news over alleged disputes in the family. Mohan Babu and his two sons, Vishnu and Manoj, were served notices earlier this month

telling you this," Anand told the reporters.

"Still you are supporting...I has behaved. All bought over. left a woman dead and her Totally bought over. No eight-year-old son critically

ing a video journalist.

a video journalist who was covering the dispute between the actor and his younger son Manoj. Meanwhile, in a related Commissioner. Mohan Babu development, the Telangana HC and Vishnu approached the dismissed a petition filed by Telangana High Court seeking Mohan Babu seeking anticipato stay the notices issued to tory bail in a case registered them. The court granted them against him for allegedly assault-

under Section 126 BNSS to until December 24. A case was

Continued from Page 1

The commission will visit the undivided districts of Eluru, Krishna and Guntur from December 27 to 30 to conduct meetings and receive representations from individuals or institutions familiar with the subject

sentations can also be submitted in person or through registered post at the commission's office until January 9, 2025. In August, the top court held that states are constitutionally empowered to make sub-classifications within the scheduled castes, which form a socially heterogeneous class, for granting reservation for the uplift of castes that are socially and educationally more backward among them.

AP govt ...

Memoranda and repre-

day. He also spoke of his frequent visits to the hospital and that he was on dialysis.

"We all grow old. I don't do anything great (on my birthday). It may be a special day but I don't celebrate it specifically. I cut a cake at the office with my team."

His films include "Bhumika", "Junoon", "Mandi", "Suraj Ka Satvaan Ghoda", "Mammo", "Sardari Begum" and "Zubeidaa", most counted as classics in Hindi cinema.

His biopics include "The Making of the Mahatma" and "Netaji Subhas Chandra

Bose: The Forgotten Hero". The director's most recent work was the 2023 biographical "Mujib: The Making of a Nation". He was also keen to bring to life the story of Noor Inayat Khan, the secret WW II agent. That dream will sadly remain unfulfilled.

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NTR CP oversees security for 'Bhavani Deeksha Viramana'

As part of the inspection. Commissioner Rajasekhar Babu, accompanied by senior officers, visited several locations such as Durga Ghat, Kummaripalem, Sitara Talkies Centre, Milk Project Centre, Chittinagar, Srinivas Mahal Centre, Brahma Veedhi, and Ratham Centre. He supervised the arrangements and emphasised providing a hassle-free experience for devotees while preventing any untoward incidents.

City Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhar Babu personally supervised security arrangements for the relinquishment ceremony of Bhavani devotees on December 23. The Commissioner visited the Command Control Room at the Model Guest House near Durga Ghat, monitoring the crowd at key locations through CCTV cameras. He issued directives to officers and staff across various sectors to ensure robust security.

The Commissioner reviewed live drone footage of vital locations, including the Vinayaka Temple, Seethamma Padalu, Bus Station, and Railway Station. Traffic management was closely monitored via the Astra App, with instructions provided to traffic officers to ensure smooth vehicular flow and vigilance.

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The Commissioner also inspected holding areas near Seethamma Padalu, reviewing the facilities arranged for devotees. He suggested extending the holding area to accommodate the large influx of participants and directed the

setup of barricades to ensure smooth movement. The inspection was conducted with the participation of DCP Gautami Shali, ADC P Ramakrishna, ACPs, Inspectors, and other

NTR DC: Nodal officiers should focus on grievance resolution

NTR District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmisha has instructed nodal officers to prioritise the quality of grievance resolution through the Public Grievance Redressal System (PGRS) introduced by the state government. He emphasised that once grievances are addressed, they should not be reopened.

On Monday, Dr. Lakshmisha, along with other officials, participated in the PGRS programme held at the Collectorate Meeting Hall. He first inspected the reception, information counters, registration desk, help desk, and Aadhaar centres related to the programme. Later, the Collector, along with District Revenue Officer M. Lakshminarasimham, DRDA PD K. Srinivas Rao, Special Officer for Village and Ward Secretariats P. Jyothi, and other officials, received grievances from the public.

A total of 85 grievances were submitted during the programme, including 42 related to revenue, 8 to municipal and urban development, and 7 to the police department. Other grievances were submitted for departments such as APCPDCL, DRDA,

and the cooperative sector (four each), Panchayat Raj, education, and registration and stamps (two each), along with other departments like social welfare, BC welfare, civil supplies, skill development, health, housing, roads, and rural water supply (one each). The Collector instructed officials to thoroughly examine each grievance and ensure that the issues are resolved to the applicants' satisfaction.

Dr. Lakshmisha also visited the Vermi Compost sale centre set up by the district Panchayat Office in connection with the PGRS programme. He observed the sales of vermicompost produced at the Waste-to-Wealth Centre in Gunturpalli village panchayat, Ibrahimpatnam mandal. The compost, priced at Rs 20 per kilogram, is available in packet sizes of 500g, 1kg, and 2kg.

The Collector praised the vermicompost for its significant benefits in promoting fast and healthy plant growth. He highlighted that the district is focusing on solid and liquid waste management, with the waste-towealth centres operating successfully. The programme also saw the participation of DPO P. Lavanya Kumari and other officials.



Dy CM inspects quality of road works

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj K. Pawan Kalyan inspected the ongoing road reconstruction and drinking water project works in the district on Monday, ensuring quality standards were met.

Kollu Ravindra, MLAs Bode Prasad, Mandali Buddha Prasad, and Varla Kumar Raja, Pawan Kalyan visited Godavarru village, where roadworks worth Rs 3.75 crore are underway. The Deputy Chief Minister was briefed by Panchayat Raj Commissioner Krishna Teja and engineers on the progress and quality of the work.

Pawan Kalyan also reviewed the Kankipadu-Godavarru-Royyuru road reconstruction, a project initiated after

the road's poor condition was highlighted during the Palle Panduga programme. The five-kilometre stretch was rebuilt with SDRF funds and serves over 21,000 people. The remaining works are expected to be completed by Sankranti. During his inspection, Pawan Kalyan personally checked the quality a half-metre deep section to examine the mix of gravel and bitumen. He emphasized that public money should be spent efficiently and without com-

promise on quality.

The Deputy Chief Minister also inspected drinking water projects at Mallayapalem village, where repairs are ongoing in 44 villages. Responding to concerns raised by Gudivada MLA Venigandla Ramu, Pawan Kalyan sanctioned Rs 3.80 crore for urgent repairs.



Union Minister distributes job letters to 630 persons

Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu highlights youth empowerment, developmental projects and progress on key initiatives in Uttarandhra region

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu has praised Prime Minister empowering youth and fostering employment opportunities. On Monday, the Minister distributed job appointment letters to 630 individuals during a programme held at the Port Sagarmala Convention Hall in Visakhapatnam.

Highlighting the government's commitment to youth empowerment, Minister Ram Mohan stated that both the Central and State governments are working to uplift the younger generation. He expressed confidence that the appointments would bring happiness and fulfilment to the recipients and emphasised the importance of engaging with newly employed individuals to understand their journeys and challenges.

The Minister commended the resilience and dedication of Uttarandhra's youth, who he said are willing to work anywhere in service to the nation. He also highlighted the success of the Rozgar Melas, noting that 13 such events have provided employment to 7.79 lakh peo-

Speaking on developmental projects, Naidu discussed the progress made on the



long-pending South Coast Railway zone under the NDA government. He criticised the previous YSRCP administration for failing to allocate sufficient land for the project and noted that significant strides have been made under the "double engine" government. The Minister also identified Bhogapuram Airport as a key initiative that will drive growth in the Uttarandhra region.
Ram Mohan Naidu assured the public

that the State government is prioritising the completion of stalled projects and called for industrial investments to further the region's development. He credited AP HRD and IT Minister Nara Lokesh for efforts in bringing companies like TCS and Lulu back to the State. On the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, the Minister reaffirmed the Central government's commitment to retaining it in the public sector, putting to rest concerns about its privatisation.

The event concluded with the distribution of appointment letters to unemployed youth who secured jobs in various government sectors. Visakhapatnam MP M Sribharat, Visakhapatnam North MLA Vishnu Kumar Raju, and senior CISF officials were present.

Minister Lokesh's gesture TTD to issue darshan quota to ailing TDP worker tokens on Jan 5

PNS TIRUMALA

As per the decision taken in the last meeting of the TTD board, the locals will be given darshan of Srivaru on the first Tuesday of every month. For darshan on January 7 (Tuesday), tokens will be issued at the counters in Tirupati Mahathi Auditorium and Tirumala Balaji Nagar Community Hall on January 5 (Sunday). The residents of Tirupati Urban, Rural, Chandragiri, Renigunta mandals as well as Tirumala must show their original Aadhaar cards to get these tokens.



PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Education, Electronics, RTGS, and IT, Nara Lokesh, has extended his support to Telugu Desam Party (TDP) activist Mallikarjun Reddy and a student facing critical health issues, demonstrating his commitment to public welfare.

Mallikarjun Reddy, a TDP activist from Nellore, has been struggling with severe health challenges due to diabetes and recurrent strokes. A long-time member of the TDP and known for his charitable work through the Nara Lokesh Seva Committee, Reddy suffered a stroke over a year ago, which significantly affected his health. Despite treatment, he suffered another stroke a month ago, leading to severe complications. Recently, an infection required surgery at Narayana Hospital, resulting in the amputation of one of his legs. He is now

unable to walk due to the complications. The situation came to Minister Lokesh's attention through social media posts by con-



cerned TDP leaders. Responding swiftly, Lokesh expressed his hopes for Reddy's recovery and assured full support from the party. Following Lokesh's intervention, Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development, P Narayana, reached out via video call to inquire about Reddy's con-

dition and promised a personal visit to offer his support. Mallikarjun Reddy expressed his heartfelt gratitude for Lokesh's prompt and empathetic response during this difficult time.

In another instance, Minister Lokesh's quick intervention helped first-year engineering student Anusha Murapala from Srikakulam, who suffered a sudden brain stroke. She was rushed to a nearby hospital in critical condition. Concerned individuals appealed for assistance on the social media platform X, prompting Lokesh to act quickly. Through his team, he ensured that Anusha received the necessity of the process of the control of t he ensured that Anusha received the necessary medical care and financial assistance to stabilise her condition.

IIA Visakhapatnam delegation for amendment to **building by-laws**

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

A delegation from the Indian Institute

Centre has met with B. Sreenivasulu,

of Architects (IIA) Visakhapatnam

Additional Director at the Directorate of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) Mangalagiri. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss proposed amendments to building by-laws in Andhra Pradesh and advocate for policies that prioritise sustainability and safety in development projects. Speaking about the initiative, Ar. Rajesh Nagula, Chairman of the IIA Visakhapatnam Centre, said, "Architects play a pivotal role in shaping the urban landscape. It is essential to involve their expertise in planning and execution to ensure that cities are sustainable, safe, and well-designed." Prominent architects from across Andhra Pradesh participated in the discussions, presenting their observations on the draft Government Order related to building by-laws. They emphasised the importance of incorporating architectural expertise to enhance design quality and achieve compliance with safety and environmental standards. One of the delegation's primary recommendations was to mandate the involvement of architects in large-scale horizontal developments, such as group housing, industrial complexes, hospitals, and tourism projects exceeding a specific site extent. "These are projects that significantly impact urban growth and infrastructure. Architects must be part of the approval process to ensure they align with design and safety norms," said a member of the delegation. The architects also proposed extending the scope of existing building by-laws to require architectural oversight for projects above 500 sq.m. Besides, they suggested empowering architects to report deviations from approved plans "Granting this authority to architects will ensure greater accountability and adherence to approved designs," explained another delegate. Another notable proposal was the creation of a unified, single-login registration system for architects, linked to their Council of Architecture (COA) credentials. This system will streamline approval processes across Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and Urban Development Authorities (UDAs) in Andhra Pradesh. "A unified system will not only simplify procedures, but also ensure uniform standards across the State," added Ar. Nagula.







Collector urges people to adopt organic farming

It is heartening that an organic farm produce sales outlet has been inaugurated on the Collector's office premises to mark National Farmers' Dav. Every Monday, visitors submitting grievances at the office will have the opportunity to purchase fresh organic vegetables," the Collector noted.

PNS BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani has urged the public to adopt organic farming for better health.

On Monday, the Collector, accompanied by Joint Collector T. Rahul Kumar Reddy, inaugurated an exclusive sales outlet for organic farming products on the premises of the Collector's office. The outlet features produce cultivated using natural farming methods, brought in by 14 farmers for direct sale.

The Collector and Joint Collector purchased organic vegetables from the stall to encourage the initiative. Speaking on the occasion, Nagarani emphasised the importance of incorporating organic produce into daily diets for improved well-being. She also highlighted the connection

between a farmer's prosperity and the nation's progress and extended her wishes to farmers on the occasion of National Farmers' Day.

"It is heartening that an organic farm produce sales outlet has been inaugurated on the Collector's office premises to mark National Farmers' Day. Every Monday, visitors submitting grievances at the office will have the opportunity to purchase fresh organic vegetaoles," the Collector noted.

She directed officials to promote the cultivation, sale, and consumption of organically grown produce. Among those present at the event were DRO M. Venkateswarulu, District Officer Z. Agriculture Venkateswara Rao, District Organic Agriculture Produce Project Manager Y. Nukaraju, and Coordinator M. Aruna Kumar.

Chaos prevails at Kadapa Municipal Corporation council meeting

Chaos prevailed in the Kadapa Municipal Corporation council meeting held on Monday when a chair was not provided to MLA Madhavi Reddy on the podium.

As the Council meeting commenced, TDP Kadapa MLA Madhavi Reddy arrived at the meeting hall but found that no chair had been arranged for her on the dais. Furious over the omission, the MLA questioned why she, as the elected representative of the constituency, was not given a chair on the podi-um. Mayor Suresh Babu, a YSRCP leader, was present at the meeting.

MLA Madhavi Reddy engaged in a heated argument with the Mayor, accusing him of humiliating a



woman MLA. She also criticised the YSRCP government for halting the development of Kadapa city. The TDP MLA was seen arguing

with the Mayor while standing in

front of his podium, and soon, TDP corporators joined her in protest, leading to chaos in the council meeting. Both TDP and YSRCP corporators raised slogans, further

intensifying the uproar. At one point, YSRCP and TDP corporators jostled each other. The YSRCP corporators then squatted on the floor, demanding an apology from the TDP MLA and corporators to the Mayor.

In an interesting turn of events, Mayor Suresh Babu suspended seven corporators for obstructing the proceedings. All seven suspended corporators had recently joined the TDP from the YSRCP. Amid the disruption, Mayor Suresh Babu adjourned the Council meeting, though the YSRCP-led Mayor managed to pass the meeting agenda. Later, MLA Madhavi Reddy and her supporters staged a protest in front of the municipal corporation office, raising slogans against the Mayor for not providing her a chair on the dais.

Ex-DGP's memoir on school days released

PNS RENTACHINTALA

Rentachintala witnessed a nostalgic evening on Monday as the muchawaited memoir 'Golden Days of Growing Up' by B. Maria Kumar, former Director General of Police (DGP) of Madhya Pradesh, was launched at his alma mater, St. Joseph's High School. The book, a heartfelt chronicle of Kumar's school days and rural life, was unveiled by the school's Correspondent, Fr. Peter Papaiah, who was the chief guest. A proud alumnus of the school and a native of Rentachintala, Maria Kumar takes readers down memory lane, capturing unique moments from his formative years. The book vividly portrays the cultural essence of rural life and timeless education-

al values, offering a glimpse into a bygone era. The launch turned into a heartwarming reunion as several of Kumar's classmates and friends, including Thumma Lourdu Reddy, Kondasani Anjaneya Reddy, and others, attended to celebrate the milestone. Adding to the book's charm is a foreword by the author's classmate, Fr. Putty Śundar Raju, now Rector in Guntur. As part of St. Joseph's 75th-anniversary celebrations, Kumar's work resonates with a deep sense of gratitude and reflection.

Fr. Papaiah lauded the memoir as an inspiring tribute to the power of education and the enduring values it instils, urging young minds to strive for excellence with curiosity and kindness.



Former DGP of Madhya Pradesh, B Maria Kumar, addressing a function on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of his alma mater St. Joseph's High School at Rentachintala in Palnadu district on Monday

Speaker inaugurates ₹4.53-crore development projects

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

State Legislative Assembly Speaker, Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu, inaugurated development projects worth Rs 4.53 crore on Monday. The foundation stone was also laid for projects totalling Rs 1.10 crore, including roadworks in Kasimkota, Gopalapuram, and Sampathi Puram.

During the event, Speaker Patrudu sharply criticised the governance of the past five years, labelling it as "catastrophic" and accusing the pre-vious administration of leaving Andhra Pradesh in a debt-trap due to financial mismanagement. He lamented being constrained in voicing his concerns earlier despite being appointed as Speaker by then-Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. "I am a public leader first and foremost. to speak the truth," Patrudu remarked.



He praised the efforts of former minister Konatĥala Ramakrishna, who secured Rs 65 crore for the constituency in just six months. Patrudu emphasised the importance of these projects amidst ongoing efforts to repay debts while icised the previous administration for neglect- Chairman Malla Surendra.

ing basic infrastructure, highlighting the current government's allocation of Rs 850 crore for pothole repairs and Rs 860 crore for the Sujala Sravanti irrigation project.

Calling for unity, the Speaker urged leaders with shared ideologies to work together and discouraged accepting Opposition leaders who had previously criticised or filed cases against the coalition. "We have no shortage of capable leaders within our alliance," he asserted.

The event witnessed the participation of notable political figures, including former ministers and legislators Konathala Ramakrishna, MP CM Ramesh, TDP Anakapalli in-charge and former legislator Pila Govinda Satvanaravana, BJP district president Dwarapureddy Parameswara Rao, former MLC Buddha Naga Jagadish, and State Urban Corporation

Police identify body delivered in parcel to family

PNS YENDAGANDI

The police on Monday said that the decomposed body received by a family in a box in West Godavari district was of B Paralayya, hailing from Gandhi

On December 19, the corpse of the 45-year-old man was delivered to Mudunuri Rangaraju's home at Yendagandi village in the district in a wooden box, with a ransom letter demanding over Rs one crore.

"He (Parlayya) used to con-

and they had been living separately since 15 years," West Godavari Superintendent of Police Adnan Nayeem Asmi said, adding that later Parlayya lived like a tramp on the roadside and at temples.

Based on the clothing found on the deceased person's body, relatives and neighbours identified him while police are also proceeding with a DNA test to further solidify the established identity with documentary evidence.

According to police, Parlayya

and weeds. The victim worked at Varma's field on December 17.

He was last seen with Varma, who reportedly took him on his Varma has been missing since

Parlayya's body arrived in a box at Raju's home.

Meanwhile, police have identi-fied as Lakshmi the person who handed over the body to an auto driver for delivery at Raju's home.

Moreover, the SP said Raju's family was not cooperating with the probe. Investigation is on,

Minister, DC take part in Christmas celebrations

Minister for Social Welfare Dola Bala Veeranjaneya Swamy and Prakasam District Collector A Thameem Ansariya participated in the Christmas celebrations held at the Collectorate here on Monday. Along with the Minister, Collector, Joint Collector R Gopal Krishna, and Mayor Gangada Sujata, they cut the cake during the event.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Bala Veeranjaneya Swamy remarked that the teachings of Christ are practical and that Jesus, the merciful God, shed His blood for humanity. He added that Jesus represents love, affection, tolerance, and compassion. "The government headed by Naidu from 2014-19 constructed churches, and the current government remains committed to safeguarding the rights of

minorities," he noted. Collector Thameem Ansariya stated that the government had ordered the cel-

ebration of Christmas as part of a programme organised by the Minorities Department. The Collector extended his wishes to all Christians on the occasion. Mayor Gangada Sujata and Joint Collector R Gopal Krishna also spoke at the event. Later, prayers were offered by



PRSI Tirupati Chapter bags two National Awards

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Tirupati chapter of the Public Relations Society of India (PRSI) has won two prestigious national awards for its exemplary contributions to public relations. At the 46th National Public Relations Festival held in Raipur on Monday, the Tirupati chapter was

conducting the best programmes to disseminate public relations. PRSI Tirupati Chapter Chairman Srinivasa Rao and Secretary D. Chandra Mohan received the award from Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao. In addition, Srinivasa Rao was conferred the Outstanding Contribution Award for his exceptional services in the field of public relations.

Harish attributes increased crime rate to Revanth's failure

PNS MEDAK

Former minister T Harish Rao alleged a sharp rise in the crime rate during the Congress government's rule, citing a 41% increase in Hyderabad city alone. Speaking at the BRS party office in Medak, Harish Rao criticised Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for failing to maintain law and order, calling him a "failure as both Chief Minister and Home Minister."

"Under Revanth's one-year administration, Hyderabad saw an increase of 10,000 cases, with crimes like murders, rapes, chain snatching, robberies, and land disputes surging. From 25,000 cases in a year during BRS rule, the city now reports 35,000 cases annually. This is clear evidence of his failure," Harish Rao stated, referencing a report recently issued by the Hyderabad Police Commissioner.

He also pointed out that communal clashes in the State have risen, with nine such incidents reported in the last year alone. "There is no peace or safety under this administration. Citizens are living in fear, organize statewide protests if while Revanth's government the government continues to is busy suppressing opposition neglect its responsibilities.

and filing false cases against critics," he remarked.

Harish Rao accused the

Congress government of breaking promises, including those made to farmers, self-help groups, and students. "This government failed to deliver on loan waivers, delayed Rythu Bandhu payments, and canceled welfare programs like Dalit Bandhu Bathukamma sarees. Farmers and citizens feel betrayed," he

He further challenged Revanth Reddy's claims about loan waivers. "Revanth talks about Rs 49,000 crore in waivers but has only released Rs 12,000 crore. Farmers are still burdened with debts, and suicides have increased," Harish Rao alleged, citing recent incidents of farmer suicides in Medak and other districts.

Calling for accountability, Harish Rao demanded immediate resolution of pending issues, including Rythu Bandhu payments, bonus announcements for crops, and completion of farmer loan waivers. He warned that the BRS would

3 kg of ganja seized, 4 held in Guntakal

PNS TIRUPATI

The police seized three kilograms of cannabis and arrested four drug peddlers in Guntakal.

CI Manohar informed the media on Monday that, acting on the directions of SDOP A Srinivas, a police team led by Guntakal 1 Town CI conducted a raid at the railway station and arrested the four individuals for illegally transporting the cannabis in a car.

The arrested peddlers were identified as Ganga Ramu, Rachakonda Venkata Sai, Chetragudi Ramakrishna, and Shikari



Durgesh. The accused had brought the ganja from Bhubaneswar by train and were transporting it to Bellary in Karnataka. The police seized the cannabis and the car

3 red sanders logs seized, one smuggler arrested

PNS TIRUPATI

The Red Sanders Anti Smuggling Task Force personnel seized three red sander logs and arrested one smuggler at Balapalli village in Annamayya district. DSP G Balaireddy told the media here on Monday that a task force team led by Railway Koduru sub-control RI Krupanand and RSI K Allibasha conducted combing in the forest area. They noticed the accused moving suspiciously in the forest area. When he was questioned, he confessed to the crime. The task force team seized 3 red sander logs concealed there in the buses and arrested the smuggler.



Police raid cockfight den, 5 held, 8 roosters seized



PNS ■ NELLORE

The police conducted a raid at a cockfight gambling den at Battepadu village in Atmakur mandal on Monday. CI Ganghadhar said that

on a tip-off, a police team conducted a raid at the cockfight gambling den and arrested five cockfight gambling organisers. The police also seized 8 roosters and 19 motorcycles. Many punters fled the scene after

notifying the police. Meanwhile, a few weeks before the Sankranthi festival, cockfight gambling began in the district. The gamblers organize the bloody gam-bling at the remote villages for which hundreds throng to

stake on cockfight gambling. The police warned of stringent action against the cockfight gambling organizers if cockfights and poker gambling are organized in the

Notorious burglars arrested, ₹15 lakh booty recovered

PNS PUTTAPARTHI

The police arrested three notorious burglars, including a woman, at a crossroads in Hindupur and recovered gold jewellery worth Rs 15.20 lakh. Informing the media on Monday, SP V Ratna said that the arrested burglars-S. Allabakshi, Sayyad Nurullah, and T. Bhuvaneswari—had committed several offences. The police recovered 197 grams of gold jewellery, valued at Rs 15.20 lakh.

The accused were involved in multiple burglaries in the Hindupur 1 Town and 2 Town Rural police station limits. Their modus operandi involved observing locked houses during the day and breaking into them at night. Three other members of the gang are absconding, and a search is underway to arrest them, the SP added. The arrested burglars, who had become addicted to vices and liquor, resorted to thefts, burglaries, and other crimes to make quick money, the SP said. A special team led by Inspectors G. Abdullah Karim and Anjaneyulu was formed to nab the culprits. The team arrested the burglars at Auto Nagar crossroads in Hindupur and recovered the stolen jewellery.

ACROSS THE STATES

the pioneer



22 Bangla infiltrators held in Assam, pushed back

venty two Bangladeshis, including five children have been apprehended by Assam Police in two different operations for entering Indian territory illegally, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Monday. Sixteen Bangladeshis were apprehended in inter-state movement after arriving at Guwahati railway station from Bengaluru, they were moving towards South Salamar district, he said The nationality of the apprehended was established to be Bangladeshis on investigation, he added. The apprehended include seven male, four female and five children and these people are being pushed back across the border, he said. 'Inter-state movement of infiltrators busted; 16 Bangladeshis nabbed. In an excellent op carried out by @SSalmaraPolice, 16 illegal Bangladeshis who travelled from Bengaluru to Guwahati Railway Station and moved towards South Salmara Mankachar dist were apprehended and upon investigation their nationality as Bangladeshis were confirmed.



'Process to recruit 2,061 'Van Mitras' completed'

he process to recruit 2,061 'Van Mitras' in the forest department on merit basis has been completed, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu announced on Monday. The goal of the Van Mitra scheme is to strengthen the local communities' involvement in the protection, conservation, and development of forest areas. Van Mitras (friends of forest) receive incentives for maintaining and protecting plantations. The newly-recruited Van Mitras will streamline the functioning of the forest department, besides helping to curb illicit felling of trees in the forest areas, an official statement quoted Sukhu as saying. Reviewing the schemes of the forest department, the chief minister said the state government is strengthening it to ensure better functioning, while the process to recruit 200 assistant forest guards is also in the pipeline



11-year-old rape victim dies in Vadodara hospital

n 11-vear-old girl, who was abducted and raped in an

industrial area in Guiarat's Bharuch district leaving her Ainjured, died at a government hospital here on Monday evening after battling for life for a week, officials said. The girl had sustained serious internal injuries in the sexual assault and was referred to SSG Hospital in Vadodara after undergoing primary treatment at the civil hospital in Ankleshwar, an industrial town in Bharuch district, hospital authorities said. "The girl suffered from a cardiac arrest at around 2 pm, after which her condition deteriorated. The patient was stabilised after treatment, but at around 5:15 pm, she suffered another cardiac arrest. Doctors provided her with immediate treatment, but she was declared dead at 6:15 pm," said Resident Medical Officer (RMO), SSG Hospital, Dr Hitendra Chauhan. The minor girl's condition deteriorated as sepsis (a life-threatening response to infection or injury) spread to her entire body, leading to organ failure and causing cardiac arrests, he explained. On last Monday (December 16), an industrial worker abducted the girl when she was playing near her hut.

GURDASPUR GRENADE ATTACK

3 KZF members gunned down in Pilibhit encounter

PNS PILIBHIT/CHANDIGARH

Three suspected Khalistani terrorists allegedly involved in the grenade attack in Gurdaspur were killed in an encounter with police in Pilibhit early Monday, with Punjab's Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav terming it as a major breakthrough against a Pakistan-sponsored terror module.

The success comes after three blasts which took place in different districts of Puniab this month.

The gunfight between members of the Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZF) and a joint team of Uttar Pradesh Police and Punjab Police took place in Puranpur area of Pilibhit after three module members opened fire at the police

party.

DGP Yadav said the three have been identified as Varinder Singh alias Ravi (23), Gurvinder Singh (25) and Jashanpreet Singh alias Partap Singh

They are residents of Kalanaur police station and are accused of hurling a hand grenade at the Bakshiwala police post in Kalanaur in Punjab's Gurdaspur district on December 18, a Punjab police statement said on Monday. No one was injured in the Bakshiwala incident.

Terrorist organisation KZF had later used social media platform to claim the responsibility for this act of terror.

Amitabh Yash, Additional Director General (Law and Order), Uttar Pradesh Police said the trio was involved in the grenade attack on a police checkpoint

in Gurdaspur. The three sustained serious injuries in the encounter and were immediate-

ly rushed to CHC Puranpur for treatment," he said.

The ADG told PTI that the three suspects later succumbed to their injuries. Two AK-47 rifles, two Glock pistols and a huge cache of ammunition were seized from them, he said.



In a major breakthrough against Pakistan ISI-sponsored KZF terror module, a joint operation of Punjab Police and Uttar Pradesh Police led to an encounter with three module members involved in grenade attack at Police establishment in Gurdaspur, said DGP

According to a Punjab police statement, the DGP said said preliminary investigation has revealed that this terror module is controlled by Pak-based Ranjeet Singh Nita, the chief of KZF, and operated by Greece-based Jaswinder Singh Mannu, a native of village Agwan village in Kalanaur.

Accused Varinder alias Ravi, who was leading the module, also belongs to Agwan village. He was being further controlled and masterminded by UKbased Jagjeet Singh and was using assumed identity of Fateh Singh Baghi to also claim the responsibility of the grenade attack, the DGP said, according to the statement.

Record govt jobs provided under 'mission mode': PM

PNS NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday that his government has provided nearly 10 lakh permanent government jobs to youths in the last one or one and a half years which, he asserted, is a record.

Addressing recruits at a Rozgar Mela through a virtual event, where over 71,000 people were given appointment letters, he said never before in the tenure of any previous government jobs were provided in such a "mission mode".

The young population is at the centre of his government's policies and programmes, he said, adding honesty and transparency have driven the recruitment process.

Noting that a large number of recruits are women, Modi said it is the endeavour of his



government that they become self-dependent in every field.

The government's decision to grant 26-week maternity leave to women has helped them a lot in their career, he said, noting that women are the majority owners of the house constructed under the 'PM Awas Yojana'

Women-led development is taking place in the country, he

Modi said making maximum use of the Indian youths' abilities and talent is a priority of his government, noting that they are at the centre of a host of schemes, be it start up India, digital India or reforms in space and defence sectors.

The National Education Policy has taken steps for the development of youngsters, he

said, highlighting its emphasis on the use of mother tongues.

His government has ensured that language is not a barrier by ensuring that youngsters can take recruitment exams in 13

Indian languages, he added.

Noting that former prime minister Charan Singh, whose birth anniversary fell on Monday, stood for the development of rural India and for the country's progress, Modi said his government has followed this by creating job and self-employment opportunities in villages.

Speaking at the event, Union minister Jitendra Singh said over 29 per cent of the 71,000 recruited came from the OBC

The backward classes recruitment has seen a 27 per cent rise under the Modi government compared to the UPA's, he said.

Bangla requests India to extradite Sheikh Hasina

Bangladesh's interim government on Monday said it has sent a diplomatic note to New Delhi requesting for extradition of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, who has been living in India since fleeing Bangladesh in August.

Bangladesh's de facto foreign minister Touhid Hossain said Dhaka wants Hasina back to face the judicial process.

'We have sent a note verbale to the Indian government saying that Bangladesh wants her back here for the judicial process," Hossain told reporters in Dhaka.

It is learnt that the diplomatic note or note verbale was handed over to India's external affairs ministry by the Bangladeshi high commission in New Delhi.

Indian government sources confirmed receiving the note

BJP promises jobs, housing

"We confirm that we have received a note verbale from



the Bangladesh high commission today in connection with an extradition request. At this time, we have no comment to offer on this matter," said a source.

There was no comment from the ministry.
Hasina, 77, has been living

in India since August 5 when she fled the country following a massive student-led protest that toppled her 16-year regime.

B a n g l a d e s h - b a s e d International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) has issued arrest warrants for Hasina and several former Cabinet ministers, advisers, and military and civil officials for "crimes against humanity and genocide".

Kharge to Modi: Fulfil promises to farmers



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday urged the Modi government to not do "further injustice" to farmers through its "anti-farmer" policies and fulfil its old promises.

Kharge paid tributes to former prime minister Charan Singh on his birth anniversary, which is marked as Kisan

"Farmers make India, they are the pride of the country. Warm wishes to all farmer sisters and brothers and farm labourers on Kisan Diwas. Respectful tributes to former Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh ji, who fought for the farmers of the country, on his birth anniversary, Kharge said in a post in Hindi on X.

"It is hoped that the Modi government will not do further injustice to our farmers through its stubbornness and anti-farmer policies and will implement its old promises," the Congress president said.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi also greeted farmers on Kisan

Charan Singh dedicated life for welfare of farmers: Adityanath

PNS LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday paid tributes to former prime minister Charan Singh on his birth anniversary.

Born in 1902 to a Jat family

in western Uttar Pradesh, Singh went on to become a prominent leader, especially in north India, and an axis of anti-Congress polne quit the He also served as the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh.

"Humble tributes to former prime minister 'Bharat Ratna' Chaudhary Charan Singh ji on his birth anniversary. He dedicated his life to the upliftment of villages, poor and deprived and farmer welfare! Heartiest greetings of 'Farmers' Day' to the people of the state and the farmers who provide food!" Adityanath posted on X.



The Narendra Modi government bestowed the Bharat Ratna ing his contribution to public life.

His grandson Jayant Singh is a Union minister in the BIP-led NDA government.

The chief minister also attended a programme marking the 122nd birth anniversary of the former prime minister. "Chaudhary Charan Singh's birth anniversary has been observed as 'Kisan Samman Diwas' in Uttar Pradesh since 2002," he said.

for Delhi's slumdwellers PNS NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday organised

a youth employment fair aimed at providing job opportunities to slumdwellers in Delhi. Around 4,000 youngsters reg-

istered for jobs, the BJP said in a statement. Those who

today will receive their appointment letters in the next seven to 10 days. Around 1,445 youngsters will be provided jobs soon, the BJP's Delhi unit secretary Vishnu Mittal said.

Addressing the youngsters at the job fair, the BJP's Delhi chief Virendra Sachdeva said, 'Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative, 71,000 youngsters across the country were provided employ-



ment." "In Delhi, the BJP has ment issues in slum clusters for the past 26 weeks, visiting slums every Sunday," he added.

Sachdeva laid stress on the importance of the Centre's internship programme that aims to provide opportunities for youngsters in major companies

He also hit out at the AAP government, accusing it of failing to deliver on promises made to slumdwellers during the past

decade. "The Arvind Kejriwal government has only deceived and scared slumdwellers," the statement quoted him as saying. Next week, 1,600 flats will be

handed over to slumdwellers in Jailerwala Bagh, with additional flats ready in Kathputli Colony, under a central government

The BJP's South Delhi MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri contrasted the AAP government's performance with that of the Madan Lal Khurana-led BJP administration. He claimed that while thethen BJP dispensation had provided essential services such as ration cards, mobile toilets, electricity and parks to slumdwellers, the Kejriwal government failed even to provide clean drinking water.

UPSC CHEATING CASE

Delhi HC denies anticipatory bail to Puja Khedkar

The Delhi High Court on Monday refused to grant anticipatory bail to former IAS probationer Puja Khedkar who has been accused of cheating and wrongly availing of OBC and disability quota benefits in the civil services examination.

Ruling that a strong prima facie case was made out against Khedkar, Justice Chandra Dhari Singh said investigation was

required to unearth the "larger conspiracy" to manipulate the system, which would be adversely impacted if the accused was granted pre-arrest bail.

"Anticipatory bail plea is dismissed. Interim protection from arrest is vacated," Justice Singh said while ruling on Khedkar's anticipatory bail plea.

The civil services examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), the judge said, was the most prestigious test and this case was a classic instance of fraud committed on a constitutional body as well as society.

"In the instant case, it is prima facie established that the conduct of the petitioner has been solely driven with the motive to dupe the complainant UPSC and all the documents allegedly forged by her were done in order to reap benefits out of schemes introduced for the disadvantageous groups in the society.

'No lapse' on our part during scuffle among MPs in Parl: CISF



PNS NEW DELHI

The CISF on Monday said there was "no lapse" on its part when asked about the scuffle that took place among MPs in Parliament complex during the recently concluded Winter Session and added it will choose to "keep quiet" when allegations are levelled by lawmakers.

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) is tasked to guard the Parliament House Complex. "There was no lapse (on part of the force)...by lapse if you mean some weapons were allowed inside, then I can tell you that no weapon was allowed...," CISF Deputy Inspector General (operations) Shrikant Kishore told the press

during a conference here. He said the force will choose to "keep quiet when the honourable members (MPs) make allegations." The officer was asked about the counter-allegations made by the parliamentar-

He added the CISF was not conducting any inquiry into the incident that took place at the 'Makar Dwar' of the

December 19.

Parliament House Complex on

ians on who pushed whom.

BJP MPs Pratap Chandra Sarangi and Mukesh Rajput had got injured during scuffle between the opposition and ruling BJP MPs on the premises of Parliament. Delhi Police had filed an FIR against Leader of the Opposition (LoP) and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi fol-

Kishore said MPs who enter Parliament "are not screened" (frisked) as per protocol. Asked about complaints

lowing BJP's complaint against

against the force since it took charge of Parliament security in June this year, the officer said the MPs, employees working in the complex and visitors are "very satisfied and happy" with their

Experts claim latest govt data on India's forests 'inflated'

PNS NEW DELHI

Several experts have claimed that the latest government data on India's forests is "inflated" as it includes bamboo plantations, coconut groves, and orchards among others as part of the for-

est cover. The 'India State of Forests Report 2023' released on Saturday, after a delay of almost a year, said India's total forest and tree cover has increased by 1,445 sq km since 2021, reaching 25.17 per cent of the total geographical area in 2023.

However, the forest cover grew by just 156 sq km and most of the gain (149 sq km) occurred out-

side the Recorded Forest Area (RFA), which refers to areas designated as forests in govern-

ment records. The overall results could have been stronger, especially since the government included bamboo and smaller trees (5-10 cm diameter at breast height) in the tree cover estimates for ISFR 2023. The assessment also expanded to 751 districts, up from 636 in

Experts including Kerala's former principal chief conservator of forests Prakriti Srivastava, conservationist researcher Krithika Sampath and former National Board for Wildlife member Prerna Singh Bindra



The overall results could have been stronger, especially since the government included bamboo and smaller trees (5-10 cm diameter at breast height) in the tree cover estimates for ISFR 2023. The assessment also expanded to 751 districts, up from 636 in 2021

claimed that the government counted bamboo plantations, coconut groves, and orchards among others as part of the forest cover and produced "another faulty report with inflated

They argued that such areas do not offer any ecological value for biodiversity and wildlife conser-

The increase in tree cover (1,289 sq km) is also mainly due to plantations of rubber, eucalyptus, acacia and mango, coconut, areca nut and shade trees in tea and coffee plantations.

Forest cover refers to all land that has a tree canopy density of more than 10 per cent and spans over an area of one hectare or more, regardless of the type of ownership or legal status. It includes natural forests as well as man-made plantations, orchards and tree patches in urban and rural areas that meet the size and canopy density criteria.

Tree cover is defined as patches of trees and isolated trees outside RFA that are less than one "Mango contributes to 13.25

per cent of the tree cover," they pointed out. They said according to government data, 1,488 sq km of unclassed forests have been lost between 2021 and 2023 but "there is no explanation for it" in the ISFR 2023.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-----

Attack and aftermath

Christmas market attack in Germany reigniting polarising debates about immigration and national security

recent attack on a Christmas market in Magdeburg, Germany, has reignited contentious debates about immigration and national security, with far-right groups seizing the moment to push for mass deportation of immigrants. The tragedy, which claimed the lives of five individuals and left dozens injured, has sent shockwaves across Germany, leading to both solemn remembrances and polarising political rhetoric. On the evening of December 20, a car driven by Taleb al-Abdulmohsen, a 50-year-old psychiatrist originally from Saudi Arabia, careened into a crowded Christmas market. The attack lasted three harrowing minutes, during which over 200 people were struck, leaving 40 with critical injuries. Authorities arrested al-Abdulmohsen at the scene, and he now faces multiple charges of murder, attempted murder, and grievous bodily harm. Despite living in Germany for nearly two decades, the suspect's motives remain unclear. Investigators have yet to establish any ideological or

political motivations. In the wake of the tragedy, far-right groups have amplified their calls for stricter immigration controls and mass deportations. On December 21, approximately 2,100 demonstrators gathered in Magdeburg to voice their outrage. Protesters, some wearing black balaclavas, carried banners with slogans like 'Reimigration Now" and "migration kills." The term 'reimigration" has become a rallying cry for far-right factions advocating the forced removal of immigrants and individuals deemed non-ethnically German. Chants such as "Anyone who doesn't love Germany should leave" and "We must take back our cities,

our villages, and our homeland" echoed through the streets. The incident has deepened divisions within Germany over immigration and integration policies. Critics argue that far-right groups are exploiting the tragedy to stoke xenophobia and advance their anti-immigrant agenda. Meanwhile, local communities have sought to counter the rhetoric of hate with acts of solidarity. A silent vigil was held at Magdeburg's Cathedral Square on the same evening as the protest, with participants lighting candles in memory of the victims. German authorities have called for calm and emphasised the need for a thorough investigation. Chancellor Olaf Scholz expressed condolences to the victims' families and condemned both the attack and the use of such tragedies to spread divisive ideologies. The attack has reignited debates over Germany's approach to immigration and the balance between openness and security. While far-right voices call for stringent measures, advocates for multiculturalism warn against the dangers of collective punishment. This incident underscores the fragility of Europe's social cohesion in times of crisis. As Germany mourns, the challenge lies in addressing security concerns without succumbing to fear-driven policies that erode the values of inclusivity and tolerance that underpin the nation's democratic fabric.



People dressed as Santa Claus during Christmas celebration, in Chennai

Macau: The glittering gem in Xi Jinping's China



For the Chinese Communist Party, Macau is a beacon of controlled capitalism, showcasing the potential of the "One Country, Two Systems" framework

hen Chinese President Xi Jinping landed in Macau, the world's gambling capital, the air was thick with anticipation. Macau, often dubbed the "Las Vegas of the East," is much more than a beacon of wealth and opulence. For Xi and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), it is a sparkling gem in the palm of China's vast and complex economic system—a model of the "One Country, Two Systems" framework that allows capitalist practices to thrive under the watchful eye of a socialist regime. Xi's visit underscored the stark contrasts between theory and practice in the CCP's governance and the lessons it offers not only for China's neighbours but for the world at large.

Macau's significance lies in its unique identity. A former Portuguese colony, it returned to Chinese sovereignty in 1999 under the promise of autonomy. Today, its glitzy casinos, luxury hotels, and sprawling Special Economic Zone (SEZ) generate billions annually, contributing substantially to China's GDP. But while the dice roll and fortunes are made on Macau's gaming tables, the CCP's control remains unyielding.

The irony is palpable. The CCP, a party built on anti-capitalist ideology, oversees the largest SEZ in the world in Shanghai, nurtures capitalism in Hong Kong, and allows gambling—once condemned as a moral vice—to flourish in Macau. This duality reflects the pragmatic philosophy first espoused by Deng Xiaoping: "It doesn't matter if a cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice." This approach has been pivotal in transforming China into the world's second-largest economy. Yet it also lays bare the contradictions at the heart of CCP

Xi Jinping's Macau visit was not merely ceremonial. It was a reafadapt and wield capitalist tools while maintaining a tight grip on power. In Macau, Xi emphasised stability and loyalty to the central government. This aligns with his broader strategy of tightening control over regions that might



A vibrant hub of multinational corporations (MNCs) and transnational corporations (TNCs), it has been at the forefront of economic globalisation. However, its recent struggles with political dissent and Beijing's heavy-handed responses reveal the limits of the "Two Systems" promise. The CCP's crackdown on prodemocracy movements in Hong Kong has sent a clear message: economic freedom does not translate to political autonomy. Macau, in contrast, has largely avoided such conflicts, partly due to its economic dependence on Beijing and the absence of a robust prodemocracy movement. Yet, this does not make Macau immune to the inherent tensions of "One Country, Two Systems."

Ás Xi extolled Macau's success, he also warned against complacency and stressed the need or "long-term stability euphemism for unwavering allegiance to the CCP.For the CCP, Macau and Hong Kong are not just economic engines; they are experiments in controlled capitalism. The success of these regions bolsters the



MACAU'S

SIGNIFICANCE

LIES IN ITS

UNIQUE

IDENTITY.

A FORMER

COLONY, IT

PORTUGUESE

For Maoists, Naxalites, and urban Naxals in India, as well as other ideologues clinging to rigid dogmas, Macau stands as a testament to the power of adaptation. The CCP's ability to evolve, to reconcile its the demands of a modern, globalised economy, has been rise. This is a far cry from the

RETURNED TO **CHINESE** SOVEREIGNTY **IN 1999 UNDER** THE PROMISE OF AUTONOMY

party's narrative that socialism with Chinese characteristics can coexist with, and even benefit from capitalist mech-

The underlying contradictions are hard to ignore. The CCP's insistence on ideological purity clashes with its pragmatic embrace of market-driven policies. This duality is reflected in Xi's leadership, which combines Maoist centralisa-tion with Dengist pragma-

Marxist-Leninist roots with the cornerstone of China's ideological purism that often paralyzes leftist movements elsewhere.

India, too, can draw inspiration from Macau. As the world's largest democracy grapples with its development challenges, it must consider the role of SEZs, MNC headquarters, and even industries like gambling in driving economgambling remains taboo in much of India, the success of Macau shows how regulated gaming can become a major revenue

Similarly, expanding SEZs and creating hubs for MNCs can

E EDITO

transform India into a global economic powerhouse. At the heart of this debate is the question of whether ideology should dictate policy. The CCP's approach—that opinion is not an iron rod—offers a compelling case for pragmatism. Yet, the party's intolerance for dissent, as seen in its suppression of Mao's "Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom" campaign, highlights the dangers of unchecked authority. The CCP's success in economic management is undeniable, but its human rights record and stifling of democratic aspirations serve as stark reminders of the cost of its

iron-fisted rule.

As Xi Jinping departed Macau, the world was left pondering the paradoxes of modern China. Under his leadership, the CCP has doubled down on centralisation, curbing dissent while championing economic liberalisation. Macau's glittering casinos and towering skyscrapers are symbols of this duality, where capitalism thrives under the shadow of socialism. For Xi, Macau is more than a gem in China's palm; it is a symbol of the CCP's ability to adapt and endure. Whether in the neonlit streets of Macau or the cor ridors of power in Beijing, the CCP's experiment in controlled capitalism continues to shape the future of China and the world.

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

Navigating the intersection of technology, law and human rights



In a world increasingly shaped by digital technologies, the concept of 'digital arrest' has emerged as a controversial tool in cyberspace

he term 'Digital Arrest' often referred to as the restriction, monitoring, or apprehension of individuals through online mechanisms extends beyond the confines of traditional legal systems to encompass actions in cyberspace, such as freezing digital assets, blocking online accounts, or limiting access to certain platforms or limiting individual freedom in a virtual or online environment.

As technology permeates every aspect of life, the implications of digital arrest have grown even more significantly, offering both opportunities and challenges in governance, security, and individual rights in dismantling operations such as ransomware groups, hacking collectives, and online marketplaces for illegal activities. For instance, international efforts have led to the closure of dark web platforms such as Silk Road and the apprehension of their oper-

Cryptocurrencies and digital financial assets have brought about new forms of digital arrest, where govern-

ments or agencies freeze digital wallets associated with criminal activities thereby preventing the illicit flow of funds and supporting global financial regula-

While the concept is still evolving, digital arrest encompasses aspects of cybersecurity, legal frameworks, and the social consequences of living in a highly digitised world.

At its core, this kind of arrest involves leveraging technology to enforce restrictions or punish actions taken in the digital sphere. Various government agencies, corporations, and even individual users can ital rights and responsibili-

participate in acts akin to

digital arrest, raising ques-

tions about authority, power

dynamics, and accountability in cyberspace. To balance security and individual rights in the digital era, taking measures such as establishing transparent and enforceable regulations that define the scope of digital arrest; overseeing the use of digital arrest mechanisms to ensure accountability and prevent misuse; developing universal guidelines for promoting fairness and consistency across jurisdictions and most importantly raising public awareness about digties can equip individuals with the knowledge and tools needed to engage effectively and securely in the digital world.

As the digital world continues to evolve, so too will the methods of enforcement and resistance. New technologies, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, may influence how digital arrests are carried out and challenged.

Transparency in enforcement, the right to appeal, and global cooperation on ethical standards are essential steps in creating a just digital society. There is no denying that digital arrest represents the intersection of technology, law, and human rights in the digital age. While it offers tools for enforcing order and combating crime, it also poses risks

to freedom and privacy. As society becomes increasingly reliant on digital infrastructure, the concept of digital arrest will likely continue to evolve, demanding thoughtful and ethical approaches to its implementation.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

CONTROVERSY OVER AMBEDKAR

Madam —The row over the insult to Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar is neither factual nor logical since the home minister never insulted Dr Ambedkar in his speech by words or intention; rather, the fact is that no leader from the BJP has ever insulted Dr BR Ambedkar publicly or in Parliament or state assemblies, whereas Congress has a documented history of opposition to Ambedkar. It is no secret that the first PM, JL Nehru, was never on good terms with Dr Ambedkar, and MK Gandhi too had an uncomfortable equation with Ambedkar, while it may be argued that the twin Congress leaders (Gandhi and Nehru) were right when it comes to national interest and the movement of Indian independence

to oppose Dr Ambedkar. Unfortunately, the national politics has reached the spot where Dr BR Ambedkar has been established as a godly figure, though he never participated in any struggle for Indian independence for which the Congress claims sole credit and abuses Bharatiya JanaSangh and BJP for their nonparticipation, never mentioning Ambedkar for his nonparticipation because that would be politically incorrect. Neither making Ambedkar the god nor considering the Constitution a heavenly document would be democratically or even consti-

tutionally correct. Jai Prakash Gupta | Ambala Cantt

APATHY AT ITS WORSE

Madam—This is our modern India. When a Jaipur gas tanker explosion left motor mechanic Radheyshyam Choudhary with 85 per cent burns. He bravely walked 600 meters while engulfed in flames, even calling his brother before succumbing to his injuries at SMS Hospital. Shockingly, by mid-morning, videos of the aftermath of the gas tanker explosion on the national highway were circulating online, with more than one showing a burning man struggling to stay on his feet as he scampered for help amid

Indian diaspora remits \$129 billion

n 2024 Indian expatriates achieved a historic milestone by sending \$129 billion in remittances. This amount not only surpasses India's vast defence budget and foreign direct investment but also exceeds the combined budgets of Pakistan and Bangladesh. This flow of funds symbolises not just economic support but also the hard work, dedication, and unwaver-

the cacophony unleashed by the accident, but bystanders just filmed his suffering rather than offering aid. Pathetic. People believe in publicity rather than providing succour and relief. No wonder, actually; these days people do anything for a short time of fame. They will upload such videos to garner views and likes, maybe monetise. They keep refreshing their page to see like and comment sta-

tus anxiously. It's more horrible that in the quest for social media, people have forgotten to be human! Shame on us. People want to know that this is the reality of our Sanskar. We have read many cases like these where precious lives could have been saved by the onlookers instead of taking useless videos. It's high time that YouTube and Instagram stop paying people for videos. Moreover, big vehicles like tankers and buses should be given a separate lane. It's there in all developed countries. It's important to react with improvements so that such foolish

mishaps don't happen. Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

ing love of Indians for their homeland Remittances have unlocked new avenues for development in rural and urban areas, fostering investment in education, healthcare, and infrastructure. It has provided stability to rural economies while empowering small and medi-

Indians living abroad establish their identity on foreign soil through resilience and courage. By dedicating a significant portion of their income to the development of their families and nation, they exemplify cultural values and familial commitment. This inflow strengthens India's foreign exchange reserves and energises local businesses. With strong policy measures, the government can further enhance this success. Remittances are not merely economic contributions: they represent the collective effort and national pride of Indians across the globe. RK Jain | Barwani

ACTION AGAINST MINING MAFIA Madam — The operation of the mining mafia is a well-known fact for a long time to both the governments of Rajasthan and Haryana, including the efforts put forth by the general public in complaining against such acts with no stoppage of the bringing down of the Aravalli hills. However, a common man hesitates to lodge an FIR, as he is aware of the consequences he will face with negligible police protection for a limited time and the creation of animosity with the mafia, resulting in a threat to his life and discouraging him from fighting with such a large force. Sending inspecting teams to the blasted site from both the government is purely an eyewash in the eyes of the public until concrete action is taken at a national level involving the NIA. A strategic policy with amendments to the existing mining rules is required to be pondered upon to make it pragmatic and not theoretical to be effective.

R S Narula | Patiala

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SUCCESS THROUGH WORKPLACE INTELLIGENCE

It is the ability to adapt to the work environment through emotional and cognitive intelligence



SAKSHI SETHI

In today's dynamic work environment, workplace intelligence has become a cornerstone for achieving personal growth, team cohesion, and organisational excellence. Workplace intelligence refers to the ability of individuals and organisations to navigate, adapt, and thrive in the professional environment through effective understanding, communication and decision-making. It encompasses emotional intelligence, social intelligence, and cognitive intelligence blended together with technological advancements thereby creating a comprehensive approach towards addressing the root causes of toxicity and fostering a positive workplace culture. There is no denying that such intelligence not only plays a pivotal role in creating a healthy, harmonious and productive professional environment but also equips individuals and organisations with the tools to identify, mitigate and prevent toxic behaviours that can undermine morale, collaboration and overall success.

It is often believed that employees with high workplace intelligence can manage their tasks efficiently and adapt to new challenges with minimal disruption. By leveraging cognitive and emotional intelligence, they can prioritize effectively and maintain focus, leading to improved productivity. Also, social and emotional intelligence enables them to work harmoniously with others, promoting effective communication and minimizing conflicts. Strong teamwork followed by leaders with workplace intelligence inspires trust, and motivation and navigate through complex challenges with clarity and empathy. It even enhances creativity, innovation and the achievement of their collective goals and even reduces stress, boosts morale, and contributes to overall job satisfaction. In an era of rapid technological advancements and shifting market dynam-



ics, workplace intelligence equips employees and organisations with the resilience and adaptability needed to stay competitive. By fostering emotional and social intelligence, workplace intelligence helps identify and mitigate toxic behaviours, thereby ensuring a positive and respectful work

By promoting training and development, organisations can invest in training programmes that focus on emotional intelligence, communication skills and technological proticiency. Upen and constructive feedback mechanisms help the employee grow and refine their workplace intelligence over time. Emphasising diversity and inclusion helps individuals develop social intelligence by interacting with people from different backgrounds and perspectives. Encouraging continuous learning and adaptability ensures that employees remain agile and open to new ideas and methods. Remember, a workforce with high workplace intelligence is more likely to generate creative solutions and drive innovation. Employees are more likely to stay in organisations where they feel valued, supported, and empowered. Today, companies such as Heineken, Cooley, Cruise Automation, Urban Company, Amazon, Chipotle and many more are known for fostering workplace intelligence to attract top talent and build trust with stakeholders.

By investing in the development of workplace intelligence, organisations can create environments that promote collaboration, innovation, and sustainable success, ensuring they remain agile and competitive in an everevolving world. As organisations continue to navigate the complexities of globalisation and digital transformation, the importance of workplace intelligence will only grow. Artificial intelligence, remote work and diverse teams are shaping new paradigms that demand a more nuanced understanding of interpersonal and technological dynamics but organisations that invest in fostering workplace intelligence will gain a competitive edge, as their employees will be better equipped to adapt, innovate, and lead in an ever-changing world.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

A roadmap for financial sustainability of India Post



India Post is at a crossroads. As private courier services continue to expand their market share with speed and convenience, it must adapt to stay competitive



ndia Post, a vital lifeline in connecting citizens across the country, needs to undergo a comprehensive review of its services. This reform should focus on introducing innovation, ensuring greater revenue generation for the Department of Posts (DoP), and maintaining affordability for the public. As private courier services continue to gain traction due to their convenience and efficiency, India Post must adapt to remain competitive and relevant in a rapidly changing environment.

Rationalising Postal Tariffs and

Eliminating GST on Select Services The current structure of postal services includes highly subsidised offerings, such as postcards priced as low as 50 paise. While such subsidies aim to make communication accessible, they are often exploited. For instance, during Lok Sabha elections in 2019, political parties used postcards extensively, resulting in significant costs to the public exchequer. Similarly, postcards are frequently misused for commercial purposes, such as reminders by chit-fund These subsidised services, rarely used by the common man, burden taxpayers without corresponding benefits.

To address this, printed or rubber-stamped postcards should be discontinued unless they are sponsored. The introduction of sponsored Meghdoot postcards priced at Re1 and printed postcards priced at Rs10 could ensure a sustainable revenue model. Similarly, the tariff for registered newspapers could be rationalised to Rs1, reflecting the increased cost of inputs for small news-

paper production. Additionally, while normal postal services are exempt from GST, applying GST on premium services like Speed Post is counterproductive. It results in a redundant transfer of funds between government departments. Rationalising tariffs for Speed Post to Rs 20 or Rs 30 per 50gram weight slabs and aligning other domestic and international postal tariffs in multiples of Rs 10 would streamline the system and reduce inefficiencies. International postal rates could follow a consistent structure, with uniform tariff increases per weight slab for air and sur-



THE 'MY-STAMP' INITIATIVE, WHICH ALLOWS INDIVIDUALS TO PRINT PERSONAL IMAGES ON **POSTAGE** STAMPS, HAS BEEN MISUSED. **REPORTS**

INDICATE INSTANCES OF NOTORIOUS INDIVIDUALS OBTAINING STAMPS WITH THEIR PHOTOS, TARNISHING THE

PROGRAM'S

CREDIBILITY

Generating Revenue Through Sponsored Postal Stamps To boost revenue, the DoP should

introduce sponsored postal stamps. These stamps, carrying advertisements or approved messages, could be issued in bulk to sponsors at a fixed charge per printed stamp. This initiative could attract businesses, encouraging them to utilise postal services over private courier companies.

Additionally, a new series of definitive postal stamps and stationery could be launched annually on the first day of the financial year. These stamps should maintain consistent color schemes for specific denominations while showcasing new designs based on a selected theme. Commemorative stamps, previously issued in arbitrary denominations like Rs 12 and Rs 41, should be standardised to denominations in multiples of Rs 10. Furthermore, the practice of printing stamps of different denominations on the same sheet, except for miniature sheets, should be discontinued as it complicates

Miniature sheets, being collectible items, should be priced higher than the face value of the stamps they contain. Such measures could not only enhance revenue through philately but also rekindle public

interest in postal services.

Replacing "My-Stamp" with
Sponsored Stamps
The "My-Stamp" initiative, which allows individuals to print personal images on postage stamps, has been misused. Reports indicate instances of notorious individuals obtaining stamps with their photos, tarnishing the program's credibility. Since no robust mechanism exists to screen applicants' backgrounds, the programme is susceptible to abuse. Discontinuing the "My-Stamp" concept in favor of sponsored stamps could address this issue. Sponsored stamps would

not only ensure better regulation but also offer a significant revenue stream.

Enhancing Consumer Convenience with Sticker Receipts

Currently, receipts issued by the Postal Department include a sticker only on the portion retained by the Department, leaving the consumer without one. Adding stickers to consumer receipts would eliminate the need for gum to paste them onto dispatch registers or documents. This small change could save public resources and improve the user experience, espe-cially for organisations that rely heavily on postal services.

Introducing RTI Stamps and **Rationalising Postal Orders**

Postal orders in low denominations such as Rs 1, Rs 2, Rs 5, and Rs 7 were discontinued due to high handling costs. For example, the handling cost of a postal order in 2011–12 was Rs 37.45, far exceeding its value. To minimise losses, higher denominations like Rs 100, Rs 200, and Rs 500 could be introduced. Furthermore, RTI-specific stamps in denominations of Rs 2, Rs 10, and Rs 50 could replace postal orders for fees under the RTI Act, streamlining the payment process. This approach aligns with recommendations from the Central Information Commission and addresses the issue of unfeasible copying charges below Rs10 due to the absence of lowerdenomination postal orders.

Managing Inoperative and

Matured Accounts Unclaimed deposits in post office accounts often remain unnoticed due to deceased account holders failing to inform legal heirs. This creates a risk of fraud, as unscrupulous individuals may attempt to claim such funds in collusion with postal employees. To mitigate this risk, the Postal Department should send registered letters to account holders who have not operated

their accounts or claimed matured deposits for over three years. If no response is received within three months, the funds should be frozen in fixed accounts and made accessible only after rigorous verification. Publishing details of such accounts could help legal heirs claim their rightful amounts, subject to stringent scrutiny. The introduction of successive nominations, as practiced by LIC of India. would further safeguard deposits and simplify inheritance process-

Expanding Postal Services Through Bank Counters

The closure of post offices in key commercial areas, such as Chandni Chowk in Old Delhi, has caused inconvenience for businesses that rely on Registered and Speed Post services. With banks increasingly adopting government savings schemes, their branches could be utilised for booking postal services. Offering banks a nominal commis sion for hosting these services would not only enhance accessibility but also integrate postal and banking ecosystems more effective-

Revamping the Postal Ecosystem for Sustainability

India Post's transformation should emphasise efficiency, innovation, customer-centricity. Rationalising tariffs, eliminating wasteful subsidies, and leveraging sponsored services are crucial steps toward financial sustainability. Additionally, addressing operational inefficiencies and improving service delivery will help India Post reclaim its position as a trusted and competitive communication medium.

By embracing these changes, India Post can not only secure its financial future but also continue serving as a cornerstone of India's communication network.

(The writer is a Guinness World Record holder and RTI Consultant; views are personal)

India's math geniuses shine bright in international math competition 2024

India, a nation with a rich legacy of mathematical brilliance, added another feather to its cap by triumphing at the UCMAS International Competition 2024

ndia has long been a land of great mathematicians, from Aryabhata to Ramanujan to Bhaskara, each leaving an indelible mark on the world with their mathematical ingenuity. Today, India continues to excel in the field, as evidenced by its stellar performance at the Universal Concept of Mental Arithmetic System

(UCMAS) 2024 in New Delhi, where the country bagged both the highest individual and team tro-

The competition, the world's largest event for Abacus and Mental Arithmetic, brought together over 6,000 students from nearly 30 countries. Participants faced the challenge of solving 200 arithmetic questions in just eight min



SARIKA JHA

International Competition utes, relying solely on the Abacus or mental math techniques—a feat that truly felt like magic. For the second time, the World's Largest Abacus & Mental Arithmetic Event- UCMAS International Competition 2024 was held in India at the Delhi University Multipurpose Hall.

Students from across the world competed with each

tal prowess in solving a very large number of mathematics problems in the quickest possible time to win the awards. This landmark event reaffirms its global significance in nurturing young minds in mathematics.

The competition aimed at promoting brain development, enhancing cognitive skills, and demonstrating the incredible abilities students can achieve through Abacus and Mental Arithmetic. Presenting the trophies to top performers, former Union Minister Meenakshi Lekhi rightly said, "Smart brain produces smart solutions for every problem and prosperity is moving forward only when we have smart brains." Commending the efforts of the young parother showcasing their men-ticipants, Lekhi emphasised In some heartbreaking cases,

the importance of such initiatives and said, "UCMAS is enhancing cognitive skills and academic excellence." The blend of the ancient tool of the Abacus with modern teaching methodologies creates a unique educational experience.

Over 3 million children across the world have benefited from the Abacus and Mental Arithmetic curriculum, which encourages creativity, visualisation, and focus while developing strong arithmetic abil-

In today's competitive academic environment, maintaining mental wellbeing has become an uphill battle for many children. The relentless pressure to excel often leads to stress, anxiety, and even depression.



it drives students to take ing as a ray of hope, helping

extreme steps, as seen in recent reports from Rajasthan's Kota district—a hub for competitive exam preparations. However, innovative educational programmes like the Abacus and Mental Arithmetic course are emerg-

children manage stress while

fostering mental stability and

self-confidence. According to Dr Snehal Karia, CEO of UCMAS India, the

course is designed to enhance children's mental stability by boosting their concentration, focus, and memory. It equips them with the confidence to understand and embrace their individuality, effectively reducing anxiety and depression.
The Abacus & Mental
Arithmetic program's key lies in its structured approach to building self-assurance through innovative teaching

The encouragement and skills imparted during the training play a pivotal role in shaping a child's bright future. The program comprises eight levels, each lasting three to four months. Children attend weekly classes guided by

trained instructors, working through specially designed books and activities. Unlike conventional education, the course serves as a supplementary learning system to enhance cognitive abilities. There is an urgent need to complement the school's curriculum by focusing on brain development. The course improves memory, sharpness, and alertness.

As a result, students perform better academically and approach challenges with greater confidence. In a world where competition often over-shadows creativity and selfworth, programs like Abacus & Mental Arithmetic provide children with the tools they need to thrive-mentally, emotionally, and academically. Alexan Wong, CEO of

UCMAS International Corporation, said, "The competition not only tests their skills but also serves as a platform to demonstrate their creativity, visual memory, and focus—all of which will shape their future success."The competition itself is a testament to the transformative power of such programs, where students not only test their math skills but also demonstrate the broader cognitive benefits that shape their academic and personal growth. Ultimately, the world needs

such initiatives to nurture well-rounded individuals who are prepared to face the challenges of the future with confidence and creativity.

(The author is a senior journalist. The views expressed

IN BRIEF



Retail inflation for farm, rural workers eases

etail inflation for farm workers and rural labourers dipped to 5.35 per cent and 5.47 per cent in November compared to 5.96 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively, in October this year. The All-India Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL) and Rural Labourers (CPI-RL) registered an increase of 5 points each in November 2024, reaching levels of 1,320 and 1,331, respectively, a labour ministry statement said. The CPI-AL and CPI-RL were 1,315 points and 1,326 points, respectively, in October 2024. "The year-on-year inflation rates based on CPI-AL and CPI-RL for the month of November 2024 were recorded at 5.35 per cent and 5.47 per cent, respectively, compared to 7.37 per cent and 7.13 per cent in November 2023. The corresponding figures for October 2024 were 5.96 per cent for CPI-AL and 6.00 per cent for CPI-



Parle Biscuits profit jumps to Rs 1,607 crore

arle Biscuits has reported a twofold jump in profit at Rs 1,606.95 crore for FY24 while revenue from operations was up 2 per cent to Rs 14,349.4 crore. Total revenue was up 5.31 per cent at Rs 15,085.76 crore in FY24 helped by other income, according to financial data accessed through business intelligence platform Tofler. Parle Biscuits, a subsidiary of Parle Products, had reported a standalone profit of Rs 743.66 crore in FY23 and revenue from sale of products was at Rs 14,068.80 crore. Incorporated in September 1974, Parle Biscuits is a leading manufacturer of biscuits and confectionery. It owns popular brands such as Parle G. Parle Biscuits' advertising promotional expenses in FY24 were up 3.23 per cent to Rs 442.81 crore. This was at Rs 428.93 crore a year ago. Total tax expense of Parle Biscuits was Rs 499.4 crore in



TIL to invest Rs 20,000 cr to develop Vadhvan Port

awaharlal Nehru Port Authority on Monday said Switzerland-based Terminal Investment Limited Sarl (TIL) has proposed to invest an estimated Rs 20,000 crore for the development of the Vadhvan Port and the surrounding ecosystem. The facility, being developed near Dahanu in Palghar district of Maharashtra at an investment of Rs 76,200 crore, is being developed by Vadhvan Port Project Ltd (VPPL). VPPL is a special purpose vehicle, wherein Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) holds a 74 per cent stake and Maharashtra Maritime Board owns the remaining 26 per cent. JNPA said it has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with TIL for this purpose, and the collaboration is a step further in improving port infrastructure in the country and turning Vadhvan Port into a world-class port of the future. According to the initial pact, TIL has proposed to invest an estimated Rs 20,000 crore for the development of the Vadhvan Port and the surrounding ecosystem, JNPA said.

ICAI to finalise int'l networking guidelines for **CA firms**

PNS NEW DELHI

ICAI expects to finalise the international networking guidelines for Indian chartered accountant firms this fiscal, its President Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal said on Monday, as efforts continue to have big domestic CA firms that can compete globally.

Currently, there are no guidelines for international networking of Indian

CA firms.
The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), which has more than four lakh members, is also working on ways as part of larger efforts to make the country a global accounting and auditing hub.

Agarwal said at a briefing in the national capital that the institute is working on the international networking guidelines as the target is to make Indian CA firms bigger and global. With respect to aggregation of CA firms, the institute has charted out some strategies and steps have already been taken in this regard.

For instance, if two CA firms are merging, they were earlier not allowed to demerge after five years of the merger.



New scheme to help farmers transport farm produce: Min

The Centre and state governments are working on a new scheme to help farmers transport the farm produce to other states and markets, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion of the platinum jubilee of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (AERC), Singh said: "...the central government is working on a new scheme to deliver the farmers' products to distant places," according to an official state-

The contribution of the farm sector to the country's

government is working on many areas to further strengthen the sector, the minister said

He stressed the judicious use of natural resources and called for stopping the indiscriminate use of pesticides. The need of the hour is to

move towards natural farming, and we have to take this forward with full potential," he The launch of the river-link-

ing project on December 25 will benefit the farmers, he said and called for the development of a technology to irrigate more with less water.

The minister stated that there is a need to take lab work

GDP is 18 per cent, and the to fields and urged the researchers not to be confined to the lab.

A television programme, 'Modern Krishi Choupal' on the DD Kisan channel, has been launched to bridge the gap. This is a platform where farmers, researchers and scientists sit together and exchange their views on the problems and new opportunities in the agriculture sector, Chouhan

He emphasised that information related to the agriculture sector should not be limited to English language only and should be published in different languages so that the distance between labs to land can be bridged.

SUSTAINABLE INFRA PROJECTS IN INDIA

ADB to provide \$500 mn loan

PNS NEW DELHI

The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed a USD 500 million (about Rs 4,250 crore) loan to support green and sustainable infrastructure projects aligned with the country's climate commitments.

The ADB loan, with a sovereign guarantee, will be extend-

ed to the India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd (IIFCL), the finance ministry said in a statement on Monday.

The signatories to the Financing

Environmentally Sustainable Growth in Infrastructure Project were Juhi Mukherjee, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, for the Government of India, and Country Director Mio Oka for ADB.

"ADB financing will help IIFCL provide long-term capital for infrastructure projects focusing on connectivity and energy transition as well as under-resourced sectors like urban projects, education, and health care," said Oka.

To meet its net-zero commitments, the country needs

immense private capital investment that will require innovative financing platforms and risk-mitigation instruments to address inherent sector risks and market asymmetries, it said.

As a strategic development finance institution, IIFCL is well-suited to meet these needs, it said.

ADB has worked closely with IIFCĹ over



evolved, its operations are increasingly geared toward leveraging private sector resources that necessitate the expansion of its product offerings for potential institutional

investors, it said. The project will build the institutional capacity of IIFCL to integrate green and best practices into the infrastructure projects, it said.

Á sustainability unit and an environmental sustainability framework and scoring method to assess the sustainability rating of the projects will also be

Data centre capacity to double on rising digitalisation: Crisil

PNS MUMBAI

India's data centre capacity is set to more than double to 2-2.3 GW by 2026-27, led by increasing digitalisation as organisations increase their investments in cloud storage, Crisil Ratings

on Monday. Further, the report stated that rising penetration of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) will the drive

said in a report

demand over the medium-term. To support the

the incremental capital expenditure would be supported by a higher proportion of debt funding, which will result in a moderate increase in debt lev-

Data centres cater to the computing and storage infrastructure demand as enterprises rapidly shifting their businesses to digital platforms, including cloud, a trend that has accelerated post Covid-19 pandemic, it said.

The other major factor is that increased accessibility of high-speed data has led to a surge in internet usage, including social media, over-the-top (OTT) platforms and digital payments, it added.

Notably, mobile data traffic logged a compound a n n u a l growth rate (CAGR) of 25 per cent over the last five fiscals, standing at 24 GB per month at end-fiscal

expected to rise to 33-35 GB by FY26, the Crisil Ratings report said.

In addition to the ongoing demand, it said that the rapid advancement of GenAI, which requires higher computational power and low latency than traditional cloud computing functions, will also provide tailwind to the data centre

Trai mandates telcos to issue recharge voucher for only voice, SMS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom regulator Trai on Monday amended tariff rules to mandate mobile service providers to issue a separate plan for voice calls and SMS for customers not using data. The regulator removed the

cap of 90 days on special recharge coupons and extended it to up to 365 days. "...the service provider shall offer at least one Special Tariff Voucher exclusively for Voice and SMS with validity period not exceeding three hundred and sixty-five days," the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) said in the Telecom (Twelfth Amendment) Regulations, 2024. The move will help consumers to pay for services which they generally use. During the consultation process, Trai came across various views, including several senior citizens, families having broadband at homes etc may not need recharge plans bundled with data for their mobile

Claims ratio of non-life insurers dips to 82.52 pc: Irdai

PNS NEW DELHI

Net incurred claims to net earned premium (claims ratio) of non-life insurance industry stood at 82.52 per cent during 2023-24 as against 82.95 per cent in the preceding fiscal year, as per the Irdai's annual report.

According to the Annual Report 2023-24 of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai), during 2023-24, the non-life insurance industry underwrote a total direct premium of Rs 2.90 lakh crore in India registering a growth of 12.76 per cent from previous

The contribution of public sector general insurers increased 8.88 per cent from Rs 82,891 crore in 2022-23 to Rs 90,252 crore in 2023-24.

Private sector insurers, including standalone health insurers, have underwritten Rs 1.88 lakh crore as against Rs 1.58 lakh crore in 2022-23.

The aggregate profit of the non-life insurance sector was



loss of Rs 2,566 crore in 2022-

During 2023-24, the aggregate net incurred claims saw a 15.39 per cent increase to Rs crore from Rs 1 lakh crore.

The incurred claims ratio (net incurred claims to net earned premium) of the nonlife insurance industry was 82.52 per cent during 2023-24 as against 82.95 per cent of the

previous year," the report said. The incurred claims ratio for oublic sector insurers was 97.23 per cent for 2023-24 as against the previous year's

Rs 10,119 crore as against a net incurred claims ratio of 99.02 per cent. The incurred claims ratio for

> private sector general insurers, standalone health insurers and specialised insurers were at 49 per cent, 63.63 per ce and 66.58 per cent, respectively, for 2023-24 as compared to the previous year's ratio of 75.13 per cent, 61.44 per cent and 73.71 per cent, respective-

> The report also said that the life insurance industry paid total benefits of Rs 5.77 lakh crore in 2023-24, constituting 70.22 per cent of the net pre-

Gold climbs to Rs 78,700 per 10 gm

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices recovered Rs 570 to Rs 78,700 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid value buying by stockists and investors following a firm global trend, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal ended at Rs 78,130 per 10 grams on

Silver surged Rs 1,850 to reclaim the Rs 90,000 per kgmark on increased offtake by industrial units and coin mak-

The white metal finished at Rs 88,150 per kg in the previous trading session.

The price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity also jumped Rs 570 to Rs 78,300 per 10 grams on Monday. It closed at Rs 77,730 per 10 grams in the previous session on Friday.

Value buying by stockists and jewellers for the ongoing wedding season supported the uptrend in both gold and silver prices, traders said.

In futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) on Monday, gold contracts for February delivery slipped Rs 48, or 0.06 per cent, to Rs 76,372 per 10 grams.

637, or 0.72 per cent, to Rs

89,029 per kg on the com-

modities exchange. However, silver contracts ounce in the overseas markets. for March delivery climbed Rs

Comex gold futures fell USD 6.70 per ounce, or 0.25 per cent, to USD 2,638.40 per

"Gold and silver prices recovered from one-month and three-and-a-half month

sion. The dollar index and the bond yields showed profit taking which supported pre-cious metal," Rahul Kalantri, VP Commodities, Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

However, Comex silver futures in the Asian trading session traded 0.72 per cent higher at USD 30.18 per ounce.

On the macro front, US CB consumer confidence data will be released later on Monday which will provide more impetus on the trajectory of the bullion prices, said HDFC Securities' Senior Analyst of Commodities, Saumil Gandhi.

three levels and a time limit of

seven days. This ensures a

Markets stage sharp recovery; Sensex climbs 500 points

PNS MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded sharply on Monday after five days of steep decline amid value buying at lower levels and a supportive trend in global

markets. Besides, bargain hunting in blue chip stocks like ITC, HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries added to the optimism in the equity market, traders said.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 498.58 points or 0.64 per cent to set-

tle at 78,540.17 During the day, it soared 876.53 points or 1.12 per cent to 78,918.12.

The NSE Nifty surged 165.95 points or 0.70 per cent to

"The Indian market demonstrated optimism following the recent sell-off. The lower-thanexpected US PCE print bolstered investor sentiment in interest rate-sensitive sectors. Broad-based buying was observed, with the metals sector notably benefiting from the anticipated increase in steel import taxes.

Despite the positive market sentiment, the short-term outlook is expected to remain sideways due to a lack of new catalysts and the impact of the festive season and holidays, Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

From the 30 blue-chip stocks, ITC, Tech Mahindra, HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries, IndusInd Bank, Titan, State Bank of India and ICICI Bank were the biggest gainers.



Chhattisgarh receives investment proposals of Rs 15,000 cr Teleperformance COO Ashish

PNS NEW DELHI

Chhattisgarh has attracted investment proposals worth Rs 15,184 crore by top companies in various sectors, including semiconductor, EV and renewable energy, an official state-ment said on Monday. At the investors connect

meet here, key industrialists from both India and abroad engaged in detailed discussion with Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai to explore investment opportuni-

ties in the state. The discussions were focused on exploring potential

investments that will boost the state's industrial growth and create thousands of employment opportunities, the statement from the state government said. Investors from various sec-

tors showed keen interest in setting up business in the state.

The highest investment proposal of Rs 11,500 crore came from Renew Power Limited. Company's Chairman and CEO Sumant Sinha said the proposal was for setting up pump storage and green

hydrogen projects in the state. Other investment proposals include Rs 1,650 crore by TWI



group for setting up manufacturing unit for EV kits for bikes, logistics centre of excellence and bamboo park; Rs

1,134 crore from Polymatech Electronics Limited MD Ishwar Nandan in the semi-

Johri shared an investment plan to set up a BPO centre by investing Rs 300 crore.

Varun Beverages CEO Kamlesh Jain expressed his desire to invest Rs 250 crore in PepsiCo bottling plant, Praveen Gupta of Paramount Communications promised an investment of Rs 250 crore and ensuring about 1,000 jobs and Micromax's Rajesh Agarwal proposed an investment of Rs 100 crore in solar cell manufacturing unit.

The Industry Department has streamlined subsidy issuance with a maximum of

quick and efficient approval system," the chief minister said while highlighting the state's efforts to simplify and expedite the investment process. He assured complete support to investors and also emphasised the state's commitment to providing timely approvals and facilitating ease of doing business. To encourage industrial development, the state government is offering a 30 per cent subsidy for private industrial parks under the 'minimum government' concept.

the pioneer what's brewing?

Bollywood star Tabu, who plays the role of Sister Francesca in the final two episodes of the series Dune: Prophecy, shared that she got her cast members to taste Indian food on the sets.

The actress said that working on *Dune*: Prophecy, which is inspired by Sisterhood of Dune by Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson is set 10,000 years before the events of *Dune*, had many firsts including working with people who I never met before.

The series follows two Harkonnen sisters as they combat forces threatening humankind's future while establishing what will become the Bene Gesserit order, reports Variety. Alison Schapker serves as showrunner and executive producer, with Diane Ademu-John co-developing the series and serving as executive producer.

Anna Foerster executive produced and directed multiple episodes.
"I just got an email one day from my

agents and my managers telling me that Alison and Anna were the showrunners and the directors on the show wanted to cast me for this particular role, whose international credits include Mira Nair's The Namesake, A Suitable Boy and Ang Lee's Life of Pi," said Tabu.

The actress first reviewed two scenes from the script and then got to a Zoom meeting the following day where the creative team detailed her character's involvement in the final two episodes.

"I just loved the character and the potential of this character. I knew that this

is my world and this I would enjoy doing."

Talking about the many firsts with the

project, which has been shot in Budapest, Tabu said: "I think it's the first time ever in my career, or at least in the past 20 years or so, that I was working with people who I never met before, who have never worked with before, (in) a place that I've never been to before." Tabu also brought flavours of India to the set. "I was getting Indian food on set and feeding Josh and everyone. I had this restaurant in Budapest, they would send me lunch, dinner, everything to set. And we would sit outside our trailers, and

eat," Tabu said. "And apart from that, I got myself and when I come, India comes and my home comes and my work in India comes with me. So it's the whole package?

Meanwhile, for Tabu, building the character came with specific considerations.

"I was conscious of the world that Francesca belongs to. I wanted her to feel like she belongs to the world of the Bene Gesserit, but because she has such a strong personality and strong story of her own, which is not connected to the others and the other characters, it was interesting to straddle both these things," Tabu said. "It's a very, very strong premise for me to build a character on, but also, the interesting part was because it was a romantic association that I was supposed to have with the Emperor. It gave this character its own

space and its own potency to explore."

"Also wearing that costume, wearing that veil, just being different and looking different from how I have looked. I have never had this. It is such a distinct look," she





Fateh promises a cybercrime action saga like no other

ith Sonu Sood's *Fateh* explosive action meets the digital battlefield, where he takes the fight to cybercriminals with unrelenting intensity. The trailer for this international action extravaganza has dropped, delivering a pulse-pounding glimpse into a world under siege. Directed by Sonu Sood in his debut behind the camera, this high-octane thriller promises to catapult Bollywood action to international heights. Set against the backdrop of cybercrime, Fateh dives into the shadows of the digital age, where the stakes are as high as the action is relentless. Sonu Sood stars as an ex-special ops officer with a lethal skill set, a dark past and a mission to dismantle a sprawling network of digital terror. The trailer teases a gripping narrative where one missing woman becomes the spark for an all-out war—a battle fought with fists, firepower and unyielding resolve.

With an unmissable swagger and timelike precision, Sood's character is armed and dangerous—ready to debug the corrupt and execute a system wipe of the criminals threatening innocent lives. The stellar cast, featuring Jacqueline Fernandez, Vijay Raaz and Naseeruddin Shah adding layers to this adrenalinefueled extravaganza.

Sonu Sood says, "The excitement for Fateh have been incredibly humbling. This film is more than my directorial debut-it's a reflection of a world we're all connected to but rarely understand. I wanted to bring that pulse-pounding reality to life with raw action that grips you and keeps you on the edge of your seat Fateh is a battle cry for everyone who has faced these invisible threatsand for those who stand up and fight back." Produced by Sonali Sood of Shakti Sagar Productions and Umesh KR Bansal of Zee Studios and co-produced by Ajay Dhama, Fateh a gripping action tale of courage, resilience and the fight against cybercrime is slated to release on January 10, 2025.

JAIDEEP AHLAWAT RETURNS IN PAATAL LOK SEASON 2

¬he crime-thriller series Paatal Lok is set to return with its second season on January 17 on OTT. The series, which stars Jaideep Ahlawat, Ishwak Singh and Gul Panag, delves deep into the underbelly of Indian society.

The new season also

sees the entry of new characters essayed by Tillotama Shome, Nagesh Kukunoor and Jahnu Barua. Sudip Sharma, creator and showrunner of the series, said in a

statement, "I am thrilled to continue our long-standing association with Prime Video and present the much-awaited second season of Paatal Lok, a series which has been highly appreciated by viewers and has truly redefined the entertainment landscape. The overwhelming response to the first season our horizons in terms of visual rep-filled me with immense gratitude resentation. Collaborating with an



and inspired me to craft stories that are raw, relatable, and intense-

ly gripping". He further mentioned, "The streaming service also acted as a perfect medium to bring out unique storytelling to life, offering our team a platform to expose and expand

exceptional team has been a privilege and together we've elevated this drama to new heights, amplifying the themes of crime, mystery and suspense."

The show is directed Avinash Arun Dhaware and the new season plunges lead character of Hathi Ram Chaudhary (played by Jaideep Ahlawat) and his team into an uncharted territory, a perilous 'fresh hell' that will test them like

never before. Created and executive produced by Sudip Sharma, Paatal Lok season 2 is a Clean Slate Filmz Production in association with Eunoia Films LLP. The show is set to drop on Prime Video on



Neena Gupta's *Hindi Vindi* set

Indian grandmother - portrayed by legendary Indian actor/filmmaker Neena Gupta - comes to live with him in Sydney. The film has development support from Screen Australia. The film's music is set to be a defining feature of the movie, blending a mix of contemporary and classical tunes to create a rich auditory experience. Javed-Mohsin and Guy Sebastian himself, have composed soundtracks that reflects the emotions and themes central to

the story. A 24Six Films production Hindi Vindi was shot on location across Sydney, Australia and is directed by Ali Sayed and written by Jay Sharma with Sayed. Deshkar, Jay Sharma, Anil Sharma and Sunny Shah (SEM Films

release through The on February

Sachet and Parampara become parents to a healthy baby boy ingers and music composers

Sachet-Parampara have welcomed their first bundle of joy, a baby boy. The couple posted a reel video featuring a video montage on a collaborative post on Instagram to make the announcement.

The video montage showed their baby's tiny hands and feet. The clip ended with "The heart of Sachet-Parampara has arrived! It's a Boy!" For the background, the couple used their song Maiyya from Do Patti starring Kriti Sanon and

The couple captioned the post: "With the blessings of Mahadev, we are overjoyed to announce the arrival of our precious baby boy . We seek your blessings and good wishes in this beautiful time Namah: Parvati Pataye har har mahadev. Jai Mata Di." Sachet-Parampara are known for their work in Hindi films including Toilet: Ek Prem Katha, Bhoomi, Yamla Pagla Deewana: Phir Se, Batti Gul Meter Chalu, Pal Pal Dil Ke Paas, Kabir Singh, Tanhaji and Jersey. They started their journey together in singing with Subah Ki Train picturised on Akshay Kumar and Bhumi Pednekar from the 2017 film Toilet: Ek Prem Katha, a comedy drama directed by Shree Narayan Singh.

ARCHIE









CALVIN AND HOBBES









GARFIELD









GINGER MEGGS

















SUDOKU

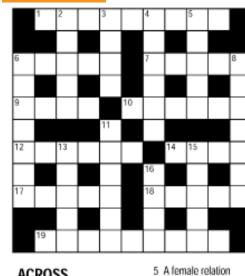
6				9	3			
<u>6</u>	2			5	1			
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7	9	Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.									

- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- A curved wooden thing thrown by an Australian Aborigine
- 6 The steps on a ladder
- 7 Inexpensive
- 9 Manufactured
- 10 Say again
- 12 Thief

2 Possessed 3 A tall pole on a yacht

4 More wealthy

- 14 Ripped 17 The skin on top of the head
- 18 Fortunate
- 19 Family members who lived long ago DOWN



6 Comments

11 Humans

organ

16 Apartment

15 Happen

8 Things made of

kiln-baked clay

13 You remember and

think with this body

Jiayawada

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Tuesday December 24, 2024

'I've always been hungry for good roles and *Kisko Tha Pata* offered just that"

TEJAL SINHA teial.sinha30@gmail.com

shnoor Kaur's journey from a child artist to a leading lady in the entertainment industry is a testament to her immense talent, unwavering dedication, and passion for her craft. Known for her captivating performances and infectious energy, she has become a beloved figure in the hearts of audible country. It shall be constant. ences across the country. In this exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, Kaur opens up about her remarkable rise to fame, the challenges she's overcome and the experiences that have shaped her career. With her latest project, Kisko Tha Pata, set to release this Christmas, we take a closer look at the journey of this rising star whose future in the industry looks brighter than ever.

Reflecting on her career, she describes her journey as "incred-

ible" but acknowledges the ups and downs that have come with it. "There have been so many challenges and experiences that have only made me grow, not just as a performer but also as a person," she says thoughtfully. Growing up on sets, being surrounded by a vibrant and dynamic work environment, has deeply shaped her both professionally and personally. "It's real-

ly impacted the kind of person I am today," she admits.

When asked about her latest project *Kisko Tha Pata*, which she worked on while still in her second year of college, Ashnoor recalls how it came her way during a break from a long-term project. "It was a month-long schedule and I remember getting a call to meet the team," the *Jhansi Ki Rani* fame says. The narrative, centered around the character Shreya, drew her in immediately. Shreya's journey of finding love, facing dilemmas and navigating her career struck a chord with Ashnoor. "I've always been hungry for good roles and this one offered just that—an engaging storyline, a relatable character and the opportunity to showcase different facets of her journey."

Playing Shreya was an enjoyable and fulfilling experience for her. "It was a lovely experience," she shares. The Bade Achhe Lagte Hain actress recalls how she joined the project at the last minute, yet managed to immerse herself deeply in the role, thanks to her close collaboration with Ratnaa Sinha, the director. Shreya, Ashnoor explains, is a bubbly, relatable character—"the girl next Ashnoor explains, is a bubbly, relatable character—"the girl next door" who yearns for true love but faces challenges along the way. She embarks on a journey of self-discovery and career growth, balancing her love life with her passion for bikes and technology. "She develops her own apps, and there's a whole track in the story revolving around that," she explains.

There were plenty of memorable moments from the shoot that Kaur cherishes. "I remember a horse-riding sequence where the borse just wouldn't stay steady! It was quite a challenge"

the horse just wouldn't stay steady! It was quite a challenge," she laughs. There were also serene moments, like when she filmed a drone shot in the forest, capturing the calmness of nature. "We had some downtime there, just spending time on our own, which was very refreshing," the *Patiala Babes* star recalls. The team also shot at Raipur's Marine Drive, where Ashnoor enjoyed a bike ride with her co-star, Akshay, adding a personal touch to the shoot. "We bonded a lot during the outdoor shoots, staying in the same hotel, it felt like a family," she

The camaraderie with her co-stars, Akshay and Aadil, was another highlight for Ashnoor. She describes Akshay as a beautiful human being with great talent, while Aadil took a little time to break the ice with. "Once we did, it was like we were buddies. We

shared a very close bond, and the three of us had a blast shooting together," she shares with a smile.

The Pari Hun Main star describes the project as a perfect family entertainer, ideal for a holiday watch. "It's a full entertainment package, with drama, romance, action—everything," she says. The story is relatable, "especially for today's youth," and Ashnoor believes the audience will connect with the characters and their journeys. The movie is set to release around Christmas, making it an excellent choice for families to enjoy together.

When asked about the project releasing directly on TV, well, she is enthusiastic. "I think it's great because TV has such a wide reach. It's an excellent medium to connect with more people and bring

our work to a larger audience," she says.

One of the most iconic roles Ashnoor has played is in *Saath* Nibhana Saathiya, where she portrayed a young girl called Panna. Offlate, a scene from the show where she runs behind Gopi and Ahem's car shouting 'Gopi Ben...' has been all over on social media. Ashnoor reflects on it with a sense of amusement. "When I first did it, no one knew how big it would get. It's funny to see how people still enjoy it every few months. It's become such a trend," she chuckles.

When it comes to choosing her roles, she is particular about the content. "Content is king today. There's more supply of content than demand, so it's important to choose projects wisely," she explains. She looks for roles that challenge her as an actor, "Something that pushes me to perform, something tricky and enjoyable," she says. Ashnoor is passionate about working with a good team, believing that the environment on set plays a significant role in shaping her craft and her understanding of the project.

Looking ahead, Ashnoor expresses interest in exploring genres she has yet to dive into. "I'd love to do a fantasy action drama, like something with a Disney setting. I think it would be really fun and challenging," she says eagerly.
As for what's next, Ashnoor is busy with multiple projects.

"I'm currently working on a show, and there's another OTT project in the pipeline that will be out next year, possibly in May," she shares. While she can't reveal much about it yet, she is excited for what the future holds. "There's a lot more to come, and I'm looking forward to what's next," she concludes, her enthusiasm for her craft shining through.

Ashnoor Kaur's journey continues to inspire fans and her dedication to her craft promises an exciting future ahead.

Known for her infectious energy and captivating performances. **Ashnoor Kaur is all set** to woo the audience yet again with her upcoming project *Kisko Tha Pata.* In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, she speaks about her remarkable journey in the entertainment industry, her experiences working

on her latest project

and more



Make DEI priority: Just like a compelling vision statement, educational institutions must underscore DEI as one of their strategic guiding principle of operations. The recruitment campaigns, outreach and communication must highlight the University's DEI policy and its intent to hire inclusive leaders from across cultural, ethical and racial backgrounds. This strategy will attract potential candidates from diversified backgrounds and encourage them to apply for leadership positions in institutes that follow DEI as one of the core tenets of their operating philosophy.

Train selection teams: DEI hiring is significantly different from conventional hiring, mandating the need for trained professionals to conduct the selection process. Selection committees formed for hiring DEI leadership must undergo rigorous training to avoid any implicit bias during the selection process. Further, the selection team must be fully aware of DEI hiring priorities and should have representation from across socio-economic, gender, ethnic and racial denominations. Experts suggest that universities should encourage stakeholders such as parents, policymakers and student committee representatives to observe the selection process and share their opinions on how to make the hiring process more effective.

Hire non-traditional candidates: To truly champion DEI. universities can opt to hire leaders from other professional backgrounds or industries. This unconventional approach can help by bringing a completely new perspective to the table. For example, leadership recruitment from the consultancy space can help education institutes reinvigorate their research, innovation and Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs). Universities can also hire former bureaucrats. administrators, or policymakers for leadership positions to strengthen their global accreditation, benchmarking compliance and administrative efficiency while boosting their DEI credentials significantly.

Make data-based decisions: Technology can be a great enabler for effectively implementing DEI policy while hiring for leadership positions in higher education. Especially while filtering candidates in preliminary rounds of selection, insights offered by data can be of immense use. Al and ML can be used to get into the depths of the cultural backgrounds, ethnic orientations, and socio-economic conditions of potential candidates. This information can be shared with the selection committee so that the right candidates representing the true values and ethos of DEI pass through.

Collect and integrate feedback: Not only collecting but also integrating feedback on the hiring process is critically important for improving DEI integration in the leadership selection process. Universities should segment the feedback into different categories and then extract the actionable information to aid the decisionmaking process. It's important to collect the responses from every interviewed candidate as the information can play a crucial role in optimising the selection process in the future. The feedback from the students, employees and other stakeholders should also be integrated to refine DEI goals and make them one of the KPIs of the

(The author, Kalpesh Banker, is a Managing Partner at EduShine Search Partners.)

GROOVING TO THE BEATS OF 2024

2024 HAS BEEN A YEAR FULL OF VIBRANT AND GROOVY TRACKS THAT HAVE SET THE TONE FOR PARTIES, CELEBRATIONS, AND DANCE FLOORS AROUND THE WORLD. FROM INFECTIOUS BEATS TO CATCHY RHYTHMS. THIS YEAR'S MUSIC SCENE HAS DELIVERED A PERFECT BLEND OF HIGH-ENERGY DANCE NUMBERS AND FEEL-GOOD ANTHEMS.



Nain Matakka

Nain Matakka is a vibrant and electrifying dance number that brings together the infectious energy of Varun Dhawan and the elegance of Keerthy Suresh. The song is characterized by its peppy beats, catchy lyrics, and a rhythmic composition that blends traditional Indian sounds with modern musical elements. Its high-octane tempo and foot-tapping rhythm make it a perfect addition to festive playlists, ensuring it resonates with audiences as both a cinematic highlight and a dancefloor favorite.

Aaj Ki Raat

Aaj Ki Raat, featuring Tamannaah Bhatia, is a sizzling and vibrant track



rhythm and modern composition make it a quintessential dance number. perfect for high-energy party scenes. Tamannaah's captivating screen presence and electrifying dance moves add an extra layer of charm and dynamism to the song, making it a visual delight. The track's irresistible vibe ensures it remains a favorite for music lovers and dance enthusiasts alike.

Tauba Tauba



Vicky Kaushal's effortless charm and dynamic dance moves combined with Karan Aujla's composition, brings a vibrant energy to the visuals, making the track an engaging watch. The composition combines modern beats with desi influences, creating a soundscape that is both contemporary and rooted in fun, youthful exuberance. With its lively choreography and infectious rhythm, Tauba Tauba is a track that leaves listeners humming along and tapping their feet, adding an undeniable spark to any playlist.



Aayi Nai from Stree 2's eerie melody, paired with pulsating beats, creates an atmosphere of suspense and intrigue while retaining a quirky, playful undertone that matches the spirit of the Stree franchise. Its lyrics cleverly intertwine humor and fear, reflecting the movie's signature blend of horror and comedy. The haunting visuals and sharp chore-ography add depth to the track, making it both a narrative-driven piece and

that radiates energy and glamour. The song's infectious beats, pulsating as a chilling anthem for the film, leaving audiences captivated and eager to unravel the mystery that it hints at.

Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya



Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uliha Jiya, featuring Kriti Sanon and Shahid Kapoor, is not just a romantic ballad but a track that effortlessly makes us groove with its infectious rhythm and heartfelt charm. The playful yet emotional lyrics capture the complexity of love, and the subtle groove in the music mirrors that emotional tug, creating a magnetic energy. Kriti and Shahid's chemistry adds a layer of warmth to the visuals, as their effortless movements svnc with the track's rhythm, making it visually captivating. It's a perfect combination of romance, rhythm, and energy, making Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uliha Jiya a track that's bound to get stuck in your head and on your feet.

Naina from Crew is a captivating dance number that expertly blends



tory anthem. Naina strikes a unique balance, offering a compelling mix of emotional expression and irresistible energy that makes it a dance number with an emotional twist. What Jhumka What Ihumka from Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani is an exuberant dance number that effortlessly blends traditional Indian sounds with modern

emotional depth with an infectious

rhythm. Despite its introspective lyrics,

the song's music is designed to get peo-

ple on their feet, with a balance of ener-

getic percussion and catchy melodies that make it ideal for dance floors. The

rhythmic energy and fluid dance moves in the visuals add to the track's

dynamic appeal, showcasing its versa-

tility as both a reflective and celebra-

beats, making it a perfect track for the dance floor. The catchy chorus and whimsical lyrics, centered around the



charm of the jhumka, add a fun and cheeky element to the track, while the energetic choreography and vibrant visuals elevate its celebratory mood. With a perfect mix of foot-tapping beats, colorful visuals and spirited dance moves, What Jhumka is designed to get everyone up and dancing, making it the ultimate party anthem. Its fusion of old-world charm with contemporary music gives the song a timeless appeal, ensuring that it will have audiences swaying to its rhythm.

Taras from Munjya, featuring Sharvari, is an exhilarating dance number that effortlessly combines rhythm, energy and emotion. While the song conveys a sense of longing through its lyrics, the upbeat, rhythmic music gives it an energetic and playful twist, making it ideal for a dance floor. Sharvari's dynamic performance and smooth choreography bring the track to life, blending grace with energy, and creating a visually captivating experience. The song's upbeat tempo, catchy hooks, and high-spirited vibe make Taras a standout dance number, one that merges emotional expression with irresistible rhythm, ensuring it becomes a crowd favorite.

Yimmy Yimmy



Yimmy Yimmy's playful and peppy vibe makes it impossible to resist moving to its groove. Jacqueline Fernandez's charismatic presence and impeccable dance moves elevate the track, bringing an added layer of charm and excitement.

Shami not fully fit yet, ruled out of remaining two Tests in Australia

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

▼ndia pacer Mohammed Shami has been ruled out of the last two Tests against Australia as he is yet to regain full fitness, the BCCI said on Monday.

Shami, who last played for India in the ODI World Cup final in November, 2023, made a comeback from his right heel surgery during Bengal's Ranji Trophy match against Madhya Pradesh last month.

With calls for his selection growing, Shami played all nine games for Bengal in the subsequent Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy. He is also part of Bengal's squad for the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy but did not play the opening game on Saturday against Delhi.

His fitness has been a subject intense debate and

India skipper Rohit Sharma had asked the physios at the National Cricket Academy to provide clarity on the matter following the Brisbane Test.

Shami had developed swelling in his knees while playing the SMAT, and the clarification in that regard finally came on Monday. "Based on the current medical

assessment, the BCCI Medical Team has determined that his knee requires more time for controlled exposure to bowling loads. Consequently, he has not been deemed fit for consideration for the remaining two Tests of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy," said the BCCI in a release. "Shami will continue to

undergo targeted strength and conditioning work under the guidance of the medical staff at BCCI's Centre of Excellence



of the longest format of the game. His participation in the Vijay Hazare Trophy will depend on the progress of his knee."

The medical team said the veteran fast bowler has fully recovered from the heel injury that kept him out of action after the ODI World "The BCCI Medical Team at

the Centre of Excellence has been working closely with Indian fast bowler Mohammed Shami on his recovery and rehabilitation after his right heel surgery. Shami has completely recovered from this heel problem.

However, his left knee has exhibited minor swelling due to increased joint loading from his bowling workload.

and build his bowling loads The swelling is on the needed to meet the demands expected lines, owing to the expected lines, owing to the increased bowling after a prolonged period," the BCCI said.

Shami bowled 43 overs in his comeback game in the Ranji

Trophy.
Following that, he played in all nine games of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (SMAT), where he also "engaged in additional bowling sessions on the sidelines to build his bowling volume in order to get ready for the Test matches."

The 34-year-old has taken 229 wickets in 64 Tests, 195 scalps in 101 ODIs and 24 wickets in 23 T20 Internationals.

With India relying heavily on Jasprit Bumrah in Australia, Shami's presence in the bowling attack would have provided a much needed

Indians unhappy

practice pitches

rhe Indian team has

L expressed dissatisfaction

with the practice pitches ahead

of the fourth Test against Australia here, blaming their

variable bounce for the hit that

Rohit Sharma took on his knee

but MCG curator Matt Page

with 'used'

PTI ■ MELBOURNE



Strike rotation and solid defence key to face Bumrah, says Simon Katich

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former cricketer Simon Katich has advised Australian batters concentrate on rotating the the red ball that moves strike and maintaining a solid defence to succeed against the peerless Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah.

Katich noted that since Bumrah rarely bowls loose deliveries, the Australians they go about it. You're not must be strategically good in their approach.

"I know all the talk having more positive intent, and I think that's all well and good and it is certainly something they have to be mindful of. But against someone like Bumrah intent is not about just blazing him for fours, because he doesn't bowl many bad balls," Katich told SEN 1116.

"So a lot of that intent has to be about rotating strike and being able to defend really well, because you're not gonna be able to play with any intent if you aren't there after the tenth over. That's the challenge for all of these

guys," Katich added. To illustrate his point, Katich made a reference to Marsh's inability to bowl the Australia's second innings in expected volume of overs the third Test at Brisbane, where the hosts attempted an aggressive approach but ultimately lost their wickets. 'We saw it in the second innings in Brisbane.

really positive intent, trying to score more quickly and look what happened, 7/80 in no time.

"It's not easy to do against around off the seam in a wearing wicket which the Gabba was starting to become with cracks.

"The top order has to be very careful and mindful of how so good," he added.

For the remaining two Tests, Australia has opted to place their trust in teenage sensation Sam Konstas, replacing opener Nathan McSweeney, who was given a maiden call-up ahead of the

"I know the young kid's (Konstas) got a lot of potential, and a lot of ability, but it'll be a challenge because not many guys around the world have been able to do that to that quality of bowling," Katich said. Marsh should make way for

Webster Katich also felt Mitchell suggests he isn't "100%" fit and should be replaced by uncapped rookie Beau Webster for the Boxing Day

since the white-ball tour of the UK in September. During the Perth Test, he bowled 17 overs in total, taking two wickets on the opening day but later pulled

up sore. In Adelaide, he bowled four overs while in Brisbane he rolled his arm for two overs. "I've been saying for a couple Tests, Mitch Marsh has not been able to bowl the volume going to score many runs if of overs that everyone you're trying to take him on off the length, because he is conditions and given he is a wicket taker," Katich said on 'SEN Breakfast'.

We saw that in Perth, he bowled well on day one. Took some key wickets and then struggled to back up. I mean obviously the Aussie hierarchy know better then we do around where his fitness is at.

"But for him to bowl two overs the other day after Josh Hazlewood went down, that to me indicates something's not 100% right with him." After Marsh had pulled up sore, 30-year-old Tasmania all-rounder Webster was added to Australia's squad.

"At the end of the day, Beau Webster deserves to be in that squad," Katich said. "He's done very well for Tassie in the last few years, he's a genuine all-rounder given what his role is for

Momentum on their side, India eye series win against West Indies

PTI VADODARA

Coming off one of their biggest wins in terms of runs, fancied India will look to guard against complacency when they take on a beleaguered West Indies side with an aim to bag the three-match series in the second Women's ODI here on Tuesday. India will be entering the game

on the back of a massive 211run victory over the visitors in the series opener in which the Harmanpreet Kaur-led team ticked almost all the boxes. Every match the teams play in the coming months will be significant as the ICC World Cup is scheduled to be held in

the country next year. India, who have never won a women's World Cup, are desperate to end their ICC title drought at home and they are aware that a strong build-up is extremely important for them to head into the mega event as one of the contenders alongside the 'usual suspects', Australia and England.

Though India have not begun their preparations for the big tournament in earnest, having suffered a 0-3 whitewash in Australia, they bounced back in style, albeit against a much weaker opposition in the West Indies.

Tumbai off-spinner Tanush Kotian is

Mumbai off-spinner lanush Rouan is set to join the India squad in Australia as a replacement for the

recently retired Ravichandran Ashwin.

It is understood that the 26 year old

Kotian, who was part of India As tour of

Australia, has also been added as a cover

"Kotian has been added as a safety net

and also to keep the squad number intact

for the last two games. He only comes

into the picture if either among Washy or

Jaddu (Ravindra Jadeja) gets injured," a senior BCCI source told PTI on

for Washington Sundar.



Tanush Kotian replaces recently

Melbourne before the start of Boxing

retired Ashwin in India's squad

In between the ongoing ODI series and the one against Australia, India registered a 2-1 victory in a T20I rubber against the team from the Caribbean islands, which was their their first home series win in the shortest format in over five years, but their failure to qualify for the semi-final of the last T20 World Cup has left a lot to be desired.

The team has been on a experimentation spree since the debacle in the UAE and has handed international debuts to as many as seven players, including Titas Sadhu, Priya Mishra and Pratika Rawal.

Playing in her first ever international match, Delhi's Pratika impressed with a 40run knock off 69 balls during a century-plus partnership with vice-captain Smriti Mandhana. The lone worry for India

before the series opener was the fitness of Kaur, who missed the last two T20Is with a knee niggle, but with her clean hitting and running between the wickets, the skipper has laid all concerns to

Mandhana, who led India in Kaur's absence and struck three fifties in a row in the T20Is, was again in her element in the first ODI and made a classy 91 off 102 balls while laying the foundation for an imposing total.
The left-handed opener will be

keen to continue in the same vein in the remaining onedayers as well.

Play of the Match in the first ODI, Renuka Singh will be high on confidence having returned a five-for and she will once again look to inflict maximum damage on the Windies with the new ball. As far as the West Indies are

concerned, they will have to lift their game several notches and the likes of Hayley Matthews, Deandra Dottin, Shemaine Campbelle and Afy Fletcher, the squad's senior players with years of experience, will need to lead from the front.

Teams (from): India: Harmanpreet Kaur (captain), Smriti Mandhana (vice captain), Pratika Rawal, Jemimah Rodrigues, Harleen Deol, Richa Ghosh (WK), Uma Chetry (WK), Tejal Hasabnis, Deepti Sharma, Minnu Mani, Priya Mishra, Tanuja Kanwer, Titas Sadhu, Saima Thakor, Renuka Singh Thakur.

West Indies: Hayley Matthews (captain), Shemaine Campbelle (vice captain), Aaliyah Alleyne, Shamilia Connell, Nerissa Crafton, Deandra Dottin, Afy Fletcher, Shabika Gajnabi, Chinelle Henry, Zaida James, Qiana Joseph, Mandy Mangru, Ashmini Munisar, Karishma Ramharack. Rashada Williams.

has defended the tracks by saying that "standar protocol" has been followed. "standard Rohit developed swelling on his left knee as he tried to play a throwdown from support staff member Dayanand Garani and didn't take further

part in the nets on Sunday.

The side opted not to practice

on Monday. It was learnt the skipper needed icing at night and the team think-tank held the used pitch's uneven bounce responsible for the injury scare.

The Indian team had sent its training schedule two months ago but the MCG curator stuck to the standard operating procedure of giving a new practice track only three days prior to the Test match, which begins on December 26 in this case.

"So for us, three days out, we prepare pitches for here. If teams come and play before that, they get what pitches we've had," Page told reporters about why India didn't get a pitch that would resemble the centre strip.

"So today, we're on fresh pitches. If we needed to play this morning, they would have been on those fresh pitches. Stock standard procedure for us, three days out. We do our pitches that we're going to have for our Test match," Page defended the move.

affirmative.

"Yes, they gave us schedule. There has been correspondence between CA and Indian board and the There extent of those conversations, I don't know," Page informed. Pitch will help fast bowlers The iconic MCG won't have

Kotian has been added to the squad following Ashwin's surprise retirement from international cricket following the draw Test in Brisbane. The 38-year-old

Kotian has fond memories of the Melbourne Cricket Ground where he

scored 44 batting at No. 8 for India A and

He already has 101 wickets to his name

and 1525 runs with two centuries in 33

Originally, Axar Patel was supposed to be summoned to Australia but as per

sources, the left arm spinner had sought

a break after first two matches of Vijay

Hazare Trophy due to a family

looked the part.

first-class games.

commitment.

When asked if he has had the Indian schedule and BCCI had correspondence with Cricket Australia, he responded in

Day Test. The bowling all-rounder picked two the bounce of Perth or the conditions of anonymity. Tassie and he plays that dual role with bat and ball," Kotian, who is currently in Ahmedabad Test against India. wickets and scored an unbeaten 39 for ended his glorious career as the second seam movement of Gabba but Mumbai in their Vijay Hazare Trophy for Vijay Hazare Trophy, is expected to leave Mumbai on Tuesday and will reach Marsh has been dealing with it will still be pace-friendly highest wicket taker for India behind Australians came out with recurring back stiffness Katich added. match against Hyderabad on Monday. with 6mm of grass covering. Anil Kumble.

The ability to take 20 wickets is not that good in Indian team: Cheteshwar Pujara **PTI** ■ MELBOURNE

The Indian team in Australia lacks a bowling attack that is good enough to take 20 wickets in a Test, Cheteshwar Pujara said on Monday and called it the side's biggest concerns heading into the last two matches of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

The five-match series is currently levelled at 1-1 with everything to play for in the Tests in Melbourne

and Sydney. The visitors have been relying heavily on pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah to get them wickets and while he has been a great success with both the red and pink ball, the peerless fast bowler has not received enough support from the other end, something that has plagued India besides their top-

order batting woes. "My biggest question and the reason for a little bit of concern is that the Indian bowling is looking a little weak," Pujara told Star

Sports. "Batting is a little better, like the top five didn't do well, but the

middle order and lower middle order, Ravindra Jadeja, Nitish (Reddy), and even tailenders, Bumrah and Akash contributed with the bat.

"Now, there is a weakness in the bowling, so what will you feed the team? That is the biggest question, because you can't drop Nitish, you can't drop Jadeja, so what will be the team combination?"

Pujara felt that Nitish Reddy and Ravindra Jadeja are not able to do the job of being the side's fourth and fifth bowler.

"Ashwin has taken retirement, so two spinners, I don't think they will play in Melbourne. So, how will you strengthen the bowling? Because the three seamers are very good, but their supporting role, fourth and fifth seamer, Nitesh Kumar is the fourth seamer and Ravindra Jadeia is the fifth bowler. If you add both of them together, the bowling is not that

good.
"We will have to think about that, because if you want to win a Test match, then you have to take 20 wickets, and the ability to take 20



wickets is not that good, the stump. Every ball is hitting on the supporting role of the other good length spot. He is getting bowlers is not good, so we will have to improve that as soon as possible, and how that will be, I don't know, but that is a big question."

With the exception of opener KL Rahul, the top-order batting has also been a big letdown so far in the series, and Pujara said it has got to do a lot with their inability to see off Mitchell Starc's initial

spells with the new ball.
"He has been the best bowler for them in this series. And the way Mitchell Starc has played in the last 1-1.5 years, he has brought a lot of improvement. And he has a

lot of ability.
"If I talk about my personal experience, when he used to play in the last series in 2018 or 2021, I used to feel that if he plays against me, I will get runs.

"And now, it feels like he will take wickets. So what is the difference? The difference is that his line length, his accuracy has increased a lot. He is bowling very less loose deliveries. He is playing on the game well.

swing.

Starc has so far taken 14 wickets in the series, the most by an Australian bowler and only behind Bumrah across two teams. Pujara observed, "The change he has brought in his game has made him a different player. And he is looking more dangerous than Cummins and Hazlewood. So we will have to take care of his game, especially from the new games.

"In the first five overs, his first spell, he has taken the most wickets there. So if there is a good batting in the first five overs, bring him for the second or third spell. Because he gets tired. So the batting of the top order so far, our top order has never played in the third or fourth spell.

'The ones who have played are the lower middle order and the tail enders. And there we saw that when Bumrah and Akash were batting, when Mitchell Starc was bowling, he was not that effective. So they will have to play their new

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tollywood



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shifting to

dhere have been reports over the last few days that the Telugu Film Industry is planning to shift to Andhra Pradesh. With numerous incidents, including a stampede at Sandhya Cinema theatre, a woman's death, an actor's arrest, and the industry's consolation of the actor after his release from jail. Under these circumstances, there are reports that industry representatives plan to meet with AP Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu to

On Monday, producer Naga Vamsi held a media conference regarding his film *Daaku Maharaaj*, starring Nandamuri Balakrishna and directed by Bobby Kolli. When asked whether the industry is shifting to Andhra Pradesh, he clearly said, 'no'. "We have built our houses here with a lot of money, so what can we do if we go to Andhra Pradesh?" asked producer Naga Vamsi. He also added that he has no idea about meeting the AP CM. "I

idea about meeting the AP CM. "I don't have any information regarding a meeting with the Andhra CM," said Naga Vamsi.

The producer stated that the industry is not shifting anywhere. The Telangana Chief Minister and Cinematography Minister have clearly said that in the coming days, there will be no price hike and no there will be no price hike and no benefit shows for any films. When asked about the Telangana

price hike, Naga Vamsi gave a diplomatic answer. "The FDC Chairman Dil Raju's film Game Changer is releasing first, and whatever benefits he receives for his film will automatically apply to my film, which is releasing after-

ward," said Vamsi. The producer later clarified that his intention is not to entirely shift to Andhra Pradesh. "We will give equal importance to both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. We will shoot here and there as well," he said.

Director Bobby Kolli said that he portrayed Balakrishna in a different way in Daaku Maharaaj. When asked whether showing Balakrishna, an elected leader, in a negative light might prompt criticism from the audience, Kolli replied, "We all know that Balakrishna represents Hindupur, and we have shown how he reacts

The producer was reluctant to discuss the incidents that occurred over the last few days. However, he acknowledged that an unfortunate incident happened at Sandhya the-atre. Some fans damaged chairs and screens in several theatres and when asked about his film's release in many theatres during Sankranthi, he said, "We will be more careful." He added, "Generally, such incidents happen in a moment, and it's not possible to prevent them. Since the film is releasing in numerous theaters, we cannot monitor each theater individually."

Now, all eyes are on Dil Raju, the new chairman of the Telangana Film Development Corporation, who returned to Hyderabad last night. A significant task lies ahead for him after taking charge as

TELANGANA EXHIBITORS WELCOME REVANTH REDDY'S DECISION

he Telangana Exhibitors Association on Monday welcomed the decision of Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's decision, where he said that in the near future, there will not be any hike in ticket prices of any film. "This will definitely help single theatres to run for a longer period," said Vijayender Reddy, president, Telangana Exhibitors Association. He added that he welcomes the Chief Minister's decision not to hike ticket prices in the future. "We welcome the decision and will give full support for it," he said. He added that if single theaters also hiked ticket prices, audiences wouldn't come to see the films. There are two different sections of the audience, where one section watches films in multiplexes and the second section watches in single theatres. When single theatres too hiked prices, this section of people stopped coming; now, with the CM's decision, we can run theaters for a longer time," said Vijayender Reddy. Gorantla Srinivasa Rao, EC Member of Andhra Exhibitors Association, said that they are going to give a memorandum to the AP Government to reduce ticket prices. "We are planning to meet AP Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and appeal to them to reduce ticket prices in single theaters," said Srinivasa Rao. He added that single-screen theaters will survive only if ticket prices are normal. "We welcome the Telangana CM's decision and we want to implement the same in Andhra Pradesh," he said. He added that the recent film *Pushpa 2* had hiked ticket prices, and people didn't come to see it. "In the first week, many theaters were vacant because of the high ticket price. The audience didn't come to see it in the first week for this film,

Ram Prasad, President of AP Exhibition Association, said that he has full confidence in Pawan Kalyan, who always supports the development of cinema. "If ticket prices are fixed and normal, there is a chance that the film may run for many days. People will definitely come to theatres to watch films, even in the fourth week," said Ram Prasad.



Rahul Ramakrishna takes back his statement in Allu Arjun case

ctor Allu Arjun's controversy has still been a talk-of-the town. The actor was arrested a few days back, A of-the town. The actor was affected a few sails country in relation to the Sandhya theatre stamped where a woman passed away. However, later he was released on bail. The film industry personalities visited his house to give their support. Actor Rahul Ramakrishna also posted a big note on his social media in support of Allu Arjun and questioned the authorities.

Later, the police commissioner CV Anand in a media conference presented the videos about what happened on the day of the Sandhya theatre stampede, Rahul Ramakrishna changed his opinion. The actor didn't delete the old posts and keep them in his social media, but posted another note that he was terribly uninformed about the entire event that took place.

"I was terribly un-informed about all the events that took place. I take back my statements that I made previously," said Rahul Ramakrishna in his social media.

Will other film personalities change their opinion on Allu Arjun arrest just like Rahul Ramakrishna?

'It was Mega Star Chiranjeevi, who encouraged us'

harma and Aishwarya Sharma will be seen as the lead pair in *Drinker Sai*, which is produced by Basavaraju Laharidhar. Kiran Tirumalasetti is the director and the movie is based on real events. The film is releasing on December 27. Producer Basavaraju Laharidhar talks about his film and the inspiration.

Bayasaraju said that he doesn't have any experience in the film industry, but his father knows Chiranjeevi very well. "My father, Basavaraju Srinivas, was a key member in the PRP party floated by Chiranjeevi and he has long association with him. We shared this film story with Chiranjeevi and after hearing it, he gave us his blessings to go ahead. With his encouragement, we began work on the film," said Basavaraju. He added that he showed the songs to Chiranjeevi and got good appreciation.

Laharidhar said he started working on this film in 2019, but because of the pandemic he had to put it on hold. "We started again last year with few modifications to the story," said the producer. He added that director Kiran worked earlier with Maruthi and made his debut as director with this one. Talking about the lead pair, he said Dharma trained at Satyanand in Vizag and roped in Aishwarya with an audition. He said that the theatrical and OTT business for small films is somewhat sluggish at present. "However, we are confident that our film's content will be appreciated and confident about the success," he said. He added that his main focus is on Drinker Sai and once it's released, he will begin preparations for his next project.





Siddharth lends his voice for It's Okay Guru

A ctor Siddharth is known for his best performances as an actor and has also occasionally proved to be a great singer. The actor first began singing with his film *Chukkallo Chandrudu*, nearly 18 years back and continued his virging is Theorem 17. tinued his singing in Telugu and Tamil films. Now, the he has lent his voice for the film It's Okay Guru.

Charan Sai and Usha sri are playing the lead roles in this film, produced by Suresh Anapurapu and Baswa Govardhan Goud.

lyrics penned by Rahul Red Infinity. Siddharth gave his energetic and mellifluous voice. The song expresses intense emotions of love, with lyrics that convey the depth of devotion. The song exudes a beautiful, heartfelt love vibe.

Anandhi's *Garividi Lakshmi* inspired by real-life

delugu girl and actress Anandhi has made her mark both in Telugu and Tamil films. She is known for her powerful performance in films like Poriyaalan, Kayal and many other Tamil films. She was last seen in Itlu Maredumilli Prajaaneekam and Vidhi. Now, the actress's new film was launched in style, not in Hyderabad, but in Adoni, in Andhra Pradesh. She brings depth to her characters, is set to deliver another impactful portrayal in this film, produced by TG Vishwa Prasad and TG Krithi Prasad. The title is also interesting. Gowri

Naidu Jammu is the director. The ceremony saw the presence of actors from the film including Anandhi, VK Naresh, Rag Mayur present for the launch. The film portrays the inspiring story of the iconic Burra Katha artist Garividi Lakshmi from North Andhra and tackles the theme of women's identity theft. The shooting is scheduled to commence in the third

week of January in Adoni. TG Krithi Prasad, the daughter of renowned producer TG Vishwa Prasad, is making her debut as a producer with this film.

