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VIJAYAWADA DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI **DEHRADUN HYDERABAD**

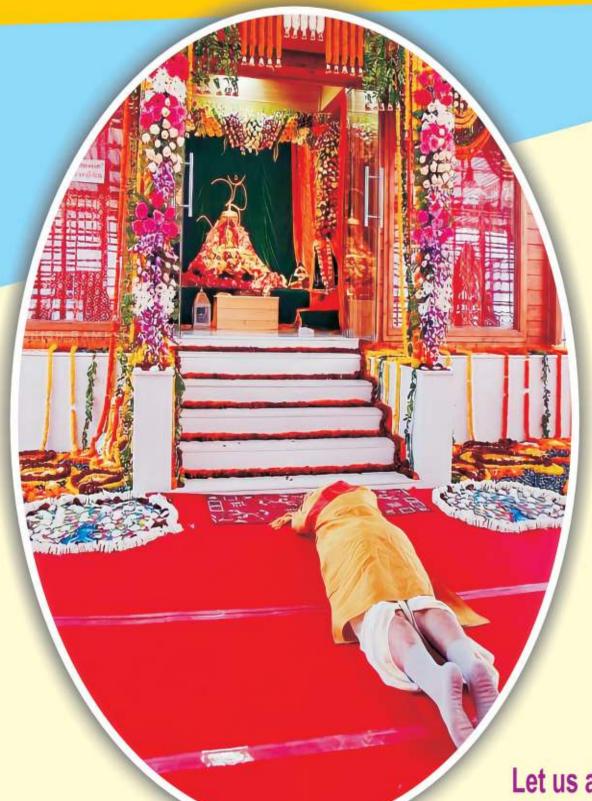
*LATE CITY VOL. 6 ISSUE 82 *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

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Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple, Ayodhya Ramlalla Pran-Pratishtha Ceremony

Paush Shukla Dwadashi, Vikrami Samvat 2080 Monday, 22 January 2024, Time 12:20 pm



Honourable Presence

Mahant Nritya Gopaldas Ji Maharaj

President, Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra

Honourable Narendra Bhai Modi Ji

Prime Minister, Government of India

Dr. Mohanrao Bhagwat Ji

Sarsanghchalak, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh

Anandiben Patel Ji

Governor, Uttar Pradesh

Yogi Adityanath Ji Maharaj

Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

Saints & Seers of about 125 Bhartiya **Traditions and 2500 Dignitaries** from various fields will grace the occasion

Let us also make our Village / Locality / Colony Ram Mayi.

Rejoice and Welcome Ram Lalla
By Singing Auspicious Songs By Colouring Bharat Ram Mayi By Lighting Diyas At Our Doorstep In These Historic Moments

- Run a cleanliness campaign at your nearest temple from Makar Sankranti to 22nd January.
- On 22nd January, collectively perform Ram Naam Sankirtan in a temple near you.
- Watch the Pran Pratishtha program collectively by installing a TV/LED/Screen at your nearest temple.
- After Pran Pratishtha, distribute Prasad in your village/colony/locality.
- . On the day of Pran Pratistha in the evening, light at least five diyas at the doorstep of your house and workplace/shop.
- After Pran Pratistha Day, visit Ayodhya at your convenient time for Darshan.

Regd.No.76/1683

PAN - AAZTS6197B



Camp Office: Mandir Nirman Karyashala, Ramghat Chauraha, Ayodhya-224123





Importers urged to utilise VPA to expand businesses

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Durgesh Kumar Dubey, Deputy Chairperson of the Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA), has urged the importers and exporters affiliated with the AP Chambers to seize the available opportunity. He encouraged them to expand their business both internationally and domestically through the Port of Visakhapatnam, emphasising its role in fostering the overall development of export and import activities in Andhra Pradesh. Dubey served as the chairperson for the trade meet jointly organised by the Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA) in partnership with the AP Chambers of Commerce and Industry Federation (AP Chambers).

During the event, B Ratna Sekhar, Traffic Manager at VPA, delivered an exclusive and comprehensive presentation highlighting the various developmental and infrastructural features of Vizag Port. This included details about



In commemoration of the event, Dr M Angamuthu, Chairperson of the Visakhapatnam Port Authority, extended his wishes to the AP Chambers. He conveyed that trading through Vizag Port would significantly enhance business in Andhra Pradesh. particularly in industries such as Indian Tobacco, Chillies, Textiles, Cotton, and others.

Addressing the audience, Potluri Bhaskara Rao, president of AP Chambers, highlighted Guntur's significance as a hub for agri-based products like spices, rice, textiles, tobacco, and granites. He commended AP Chambers for actively contributing to export policy inputs, coordinating with embassies and consulates, and organizing events to promote exports from the State. Rao expressed satisfaction with Vizag Port's improved operational efficiencies and its diverse facilities for handling various commodities, including liquids, and fresh and frozen food.

He encouraged exporters and importers to take advantage of the port, citing its cost-effectiveness compared to the Chennai port.

The event saw the presence

The event saw the presence of AP Chambers Executive Vice President L Raghuram Reddy, General Secretary B Raja Sekhar, Past President G Sambasiva Rao, APEDA Regional Manager RP Naidu, AP Textile Mills Association Chairman P Koti Rao. Chairman P Koti Rao, President AP Food Processing Industries Federation K Ramalinga Reddy, India Tobacco Association President M Venkateswara Rao, Chillies Exporters Association India president V Sambasiva Rao, Cotton Association President P Raghava Rao and Secretary K Řama Rao, Visakha Container Terminal Ltd. Head Sudeep Chakraborty, and other distinguished personalities.

No e-office services for 6 days in AP

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Secretary KS Jawahar Reddy has said that the eoffice services in all government departments in the State will not work from January 25 to 31 due to upgrade work. The CS said that e-offices are being changed from the current version to the new version from Gram Panchayat level to secretariat departments, department heads, autonomous bodies, state units and district government offices in the state. He further said that therefore, the state government has clarified that the current old version of e-offices will not

work from January 25 to 31. Jawahar Reddy has ordered that the top officials of the respective departments should take necessary measures to ensure the smooth functioning of the offices in these six days. He said that the new version of e-offices will be available from February 1. The CS suggested that alternative measures should be taken.

Jagan banking on castes to come back to power

Bets big on voters, not party leaders

The forthcoming Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections are creating more interest due to the policies of major political parties.

The Chief Minister who is the President of the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) is making drastic changes among sitting MLAs and MPs for the coming Assembly and Lok Sabha elections Sabha elections.

Jagan has refused party tickets to many sitting MLAs and MPs and is picking fresh faces with winning possibility as the main criteria.

Due to this, many sitting MLAs and MPs of the YSR Congress are leaving the party.

It appears that Jagan depends on voters rather than leaders to retain power. He strongly believes that his social welfare schemes implemented in the last four years have created a strong vote bank for the



party. In addition to this while selecting candidates Jagan is giving importance to majority castes in all Assembly con-

This shows that Jagan is banking on voters and castes to ensure his party's victory. So he does not worry about sitting MLAs and MPs leaving

the party. Meanwhile, the TDP-Jana Sena alliance is banking on the weakening of the YSR Congress. The alliance thinks with many sitting MLAs and MPs leaving the YSR Congress it is becoming weak. Sitting YSR Congress MLAs and MPs who were denied tickets are now looking towards the TDP and Jana Sena. The TDP leadership is not ready to give tickets to those who are joining the party from the YSR Congress. The Assembly elections are crucial for the TDP. So winning the Assembly elec-

its future. If the TDP leadership thinks that sitting YSR Congress MLAs are strong they will be given tickets as victory is more important for the party. However, the TDP leadership

tions is vital for the TDP and

is not ready to give tickets to all defectors. This indicates that Jagan's decision to deny tickets to them is right.

Bangla team lauds natural farming practices in AP

PNS VIJAYAWADA

A delegation from Bangladesh, currently on a visit to the Eluru district, commended the proactive measures taken by the State government in adopting Nature Farming through the Rythu Sadhikaraa Samstha. The delegation acknowledged that these initiatives have yielded positive outcomes in safeguarding health, ensuring food security, and promoting women's empowerment.

During their four-day tour of the State, on the second day (Saturday), the team explored Janardhanavaram, engaging with Agricultural Officers and practitioners of Nature Farming. The delegation toured Health and Nutrition programs and a vegetable exhibition, expressing admiration for local farmers cultivating diverse varieties of vegetables in their residential plots.

In a statement, the Bangladeshi delegates underscored the innovative methods etable cultivation and agricul- insights.



ture, emphasizing that these practices serve as a source of inspiration for other nations. They highlighted that several countries have adopted Nature Farming systems similar to those implemented in the state, leading to positive agri-cultural transformations. Pamarthi Nageswara Rao,

sarpanch Janardhanavaram, Agricultural Officer K Siva Sankaran, and various local farmers actively participated in the program, contributing to

SVBC to provide live telecast of **Ayodhya temple** consecration

PNS TIRUMALA

The consecration ceremony of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya is scheduled for January 22, between 11:30 am and 12:30 pm. Sri Venkateswara Bhakti Channel, under the auspices of TTD, will broadcast the Vedic and spiritual rituals in the Ayodhya temple on its Tamil, Kannada, and Hindi channels, as well as on the SVBC Telugu YouTube chan-

The live telecast of the consecration ceremony events in Ayodhya will be available on SVBC Telugu channel until noon. Following that, the Tirumala Srivari Kalyanam will be broadcast live as usual from noon onwards. Post the Kalyanam, the programmes in Ayodhya will continue.

TTD earnestly appeals to devotees to witness these auspicious events and watch the Avodhva Prana Pratista ceremony on SVBC Telugu, Tamil, annada and Hindi to receive divine blessings.

YSRCP govt committed to welfare of artistes: Roja

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Tourism and Culture RK Roja distributed identity cards for artistes which was for the first time after the bifurcation of the united Andhra Pradesh state. The Minister, distributed identity cards to the eligible artists, at a programme organised in Tummalapalli Kalakshetram in Vijayawada on Saturday. Vijayawada Central MLA Malladi Vishnu presided over

the proceedings.
Minister Roja, the chief guest of the programme, expressed her satisfaction in being part of the programme, and emphasised the historical significance of providing identity cards to artists across the State. The initiative, she highlighted, is a crucial step in ensuring that artists receive due recognition and support.

Minister Roja underscored the government's dedication to the welfare of artists, particularly those involved in culturedged the challenges artists of the AP State Creativity and



faced due to the absence of accurate data and credited Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for unwavering support. Minister Roja, herself an artist, spoke about her commitment to addressing the concerns of fellow artists since

assuming office. Highlighting the government's implementation of Navaratna schemes for artists, Minister Roja urged artists to support their government and encouraged artists to actively apply for identity cards through village/ward secretariats and volunteers, emphasizing the ongoing nature of

the process.

She underscored the government's dedication to the welfare of artists, particularly those involved in cultural celebrations.

Commission, expressed gratitude on behalf of all artists, recognizing the historic nature of providing identity cards. City Mayor, Rayana

Bhagyalakshmi, Creativity and Culture Commission Chairperson Vangapandu Usha, Visual Arts Academy Chairperson K Satya Shailaja, Sahitya Academy Chairperson Srilakshmi, Sangeetha Nritya Academy Chairperson P Sirisha, Science & Technology Academy Chairperson T Prabhavati, and Language Authority Members Mastanamma and State Culture Department CEO

Treat women with utmost respect: Judge

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

In a resounding call for creating a safe and empowered environment for women, District Justice Alapati Giridhar on Saturday urged district officials to support and promote their rights. Addressing an awareness conference on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplaces Act, 2013, he emphasised that women should be treated with utmost respect and considered family members.

The conference, organized by the District Legal Service Association, brought together legal experts, government officials, private sector representatives, and other stakeholders to shed light on the provisions of the Act and its crucial role in safeguarding women's dignity and professional rights. Justice Giridhar underscored

the importance of ensuring compliance with the Act across all workplaces. He urged officials to familiarize themselves with its tenets and implement them diligently. To further bolregular awareness meetings

within offices, aiming to equip every employee with the knowledge to prevent and address instances of harassment.

Highlighting the need for a collective effort, the Judge emphasised the responsibility of every individual to create a supportive and empowering environment for women. He called upon district authorities to uphold the Act's rules and regulations, ensuring that women are not subjected to harassment in any form, be it through words, actions, or unwelcome advances.

The conference saw insightful deliberations from legal experts who shared their perspectives and experiences in dealing with cases of workplace harassment in Visakhapatnam.

Moderate rain likely in north coastal AP

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham

Tithi: Ekadashi:

Nakshatram:

Mrigashirsha:

Rahukalam

Varjyam

Gulika:

Rohini:

Light to moderate rainfall is likely at isolated locations in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh from Sunday to next Wednesday, as indicated by the Meteorological Centre's latest report on Saturday. The forecast suggests dry weather

prevailing in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema over the next seven days, with North Coastal Andhra Pradesh experiencing dry conditions for the next 24 hours. The minimum temperature dropped

to 17 degrees Celsius in Arogyavaram, Rayalaseema, during the night between Friday and today, according to the report.

Sukla Paksha

Jan 20 07:26 PM

Jan 21 07:27 PM

Jan 21 03:09 AM

Jan 22 03:52 AM

to Jan 22 03:52 AM

to Jan 23 04:58 AM

4:37 PM to 6:01 PM

12:27 PM to 1:50 PM

09:44 AM to 11:24 AM

3:14 PM to 4:37 PM

12:34 AM to 02:13 AM

12:04 PM to 12:49 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Updated: January 20 2024 5:00 PM

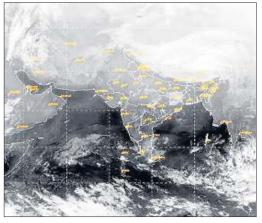
Forecast: Mostly Sunny

Temp: 32[∞] Humidity: 66%

Sunset: 5:58 PM

to Jan 21 07:27 PM

to Jan 22 07:52 PM



Ambedkar statue helps Jagan...

Continued from Page 3

Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy articulated his vision to transform Andhra Pradesh into an egalitarian society, following in the footsteps of Dr BR Ambedkar. He stated, "The land of Vijayawada, once a hub of capitalism has now become the epicentre of social justice. The Ambedkar Statue in Vijayawada will inspire future generations to fight against inequality.'

In contrast, the earlier TDP government, led by Chandrababu Naidu, had promised to install the statue but faced criticism for choosing a remote village in Amaravati. The project remained confined to a groundbreaking ceremony, the unveiling of Dr. Ambedkar's statue drawing ire from Dalit and downtrodden leaders. Some Dalits continue to criticise Chandrababu for his comments against a section of people during his tenure.

Social Welfare Minister Merugu Nagarjuna, the driving force behind the project, asserted that Dr Ambedkar Smriti Vanam would be etched in the country's history. He highlighted the opposition's resistance to the statue's installation and credited Chief Minister Jagan for overcoming challenges to make the installation of the monumental bronze statue a reality.

demonstrated the Chief Minister's solidarity with Dalits and the downtrodden. Dr Praveen commended Jagan for his commitment to social justice, citing the appointment of Deputy CMs from all

He also noted that while Ambedkar

may lack recognition in India, Columbia University has included him in its curriculum, increasing awareness about Dr Ambedkar. Dr Praveen anticipated that Dr Ambedkar Smriti Vanam would become a tourist attraction, and he expressed strong support from the Dalits Christian JAC chairman Dr. and Bahujans for Chief Minister Jagan, Yalamanchili Praveen emphasized that endorsing his leadership for the State.

YS Sharmila...

Continued from Page 3

Former Chief Minister YS Rajasekhar Reddy assumed the role of APCC president from 1983 to 85 when the party was in opposition. Subsequently, before the 1999 elections, he held the position for a second term from 1998 to 99, during which the Congress party remained in opposition. Similarly, Sharmila is set to take on the party leadership amid challenging times, as the Congress party has faced significant challenges over the past decade. Notably, YS Sharmila Reddy steps into a leadership role at a time when the Congress party is grappling with a severe crisis. Interestingly, she will be contending against her brother, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's YSRCP, in the upcoming elections. Despite Sharmila's impending entry into the Congress, Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy did not make any efforts to deter her from joining

the party. Conversely, several discontented YSRĆP leaders are in contact with YS Sharmila, expressing their willingness to switch allegiance. Among them are numerous sitting MLAs, former MLAs, and MPs who were denied YSRCP tickets for the upcoming elections and have decided to leave the party before the release of the election notification. As a result, one of the senior leaders within the party believes that achieving the YSRCP's target of 175 segments in the State will be challenging. Additionally, he emphasises the significant role the Congress party is poised to play in the 2024 elections.

Continued from Page 3

'Refrain from....

The ministry flagged the relevant portions of the Norms of Journalistic Conduct, the Programme Code laid down by the Press Council Act and the Cable Television Networks Regulation Act that deal with accuracy and fairness, reference to caste, religion and communities and paramount national

Television channels have been asked to follow the Programme Code that states that no programme should be carried on the cable service that contains anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos and half truths; or content that is likely to encourage or incite violence or contains anything against maintenance of law and order or which promote antinational attitudes

Modi takes holy dip...

Continued from Page 3

The PM took a dip in the 22 'theerths,' inside the temple complex and devotees consider taking a dip in theerths an auspicious, spiritual activity. The 22 theerths are natural springs, and each one of them are known as 'Nazhi Kinaru' (well) in Tamil.

Modi was accorded traditional honours by priests and he also took part in 'Bhajans' performed in the shrine. One of the ancient temples and a popular pilgrimage centre, the shrine's long, third corridor is very famous. The Sethupathy Maravar rulers of Ramnad and Sivaganga have made immense prayed at the temple. contributions for Ramanathaswamy temple by way of endowments. Also, their role in further extending the temple complex and guarding it is significant.

Epigraphist S Ramachandran

said: "Rameswaram is an ancient

ence in Sangam literature Akananooru which speaks of Lord Ram staying in Dhanushkodi while preparing to wage a war against Ravana.'

The temple, tucked away in the Pamban or Rameswaram island of Tamil Nadu's Ramanathapuram district, has a connect to the Ramayana, as the Shiva linga here was installed by Shri Ram. Lord Ram and Sita Devi prayed here. The Ram Setu (Adam's bridge) is also a popular and well-known link. The Rameswaram temple is one of the 12 jyothirlinga shrines and in 1897, Śwami Vivekananda

After worshipping at the Sri Ranganathaswamy temple in Tiruchirappalli district, Modi arrived here by an Air Force chopper and was accorded a rousing reception by BJP workers and the local people.

Rs 10k cr needed every...

Continued from Page 3

At least one BU, one CU and one VVPAT machine make up for one

Keeping in mind various aspects, the minimum $\ EVMs$ and $\ VVPATs$ required for simultaneous polls would be: 46,75,100 BUs, 33,63,300 CUs and 36,62,600 VVPATs, the Commission said in its letter to the Law Ministry in February last year.

In early 2023, the tentative cost of EVM stood at Rs 7,900 per BU, Rs 9,800 per CU and Rs 16,000 per unit of VVPAT. The EC was responding to a questionnaire on simultaneous polls sent by the Law Ministry. The poll panel also underlined the

need for additional polling and security personnel, enhanced storage facilities for EVMs and more vehicles.

The commission said keeping in mind the production of new machines, increasing warehousing facilities and other logistical issues, the first simultaneous elections can only be held in 2029.

It also observed that five articles of the Constitution will need amendments to hold simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies.

The provisions which would need amendment are Article 83 which related to the duration of Houses of Parliament, Article 85 relating to the dissolution of the Lok Sabha by the President, Article 172 relating to the duration of the state legislatures, Article 174 relating to the dissolution of the state legislatures, and Article 356 relating to the imposition of President's

Rule in the states. It also noted that the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution relating to disqualification on the grounds of defection

will also require necessary changes. The government has constituted a panel, headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind, to examine the issue of holding simultaneous elections in the country has been renamed.

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the pioneer People gave a verdict against the BRS in the Assembly elections and I am challenging 'Billa and Ranga.' Starting from Indravelli on January 26, I will undertake a whirlwind tour to all the corners of Telangana. I will dig a 100 metre grave and bury the BRS in it during the Parliament elections. Some opposition leaders said the 'Tiger' (KCR) had woken up and will

QUOTE OF THE DAY

- Revanth Reddy, TS Chief Minister

come out. I am

waiting with a net to capture the tiger.

Ganja smuggling into city goes...

The Vijayawada City police have failed to take action against the illegal transportation of ganja, with a lack of routine checks throughout the city. Two packets of ganja, valued at Rs. 2 lakh, were discovered on the footpath of the Prakasam Barrage, underscoring the lapse in security measures during Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's visit to the city on January 19. Over the past few years, there has been an illicit influx of ganja into Vijayawada and other regions from the North Coastal and Odisha...



Farm produce worth several...

Agricultural produce worth several crores of rupees was destroyed in a major fire accident which took place in the Subham Maheshwari cold storage located at Duggirala Cold storage owner Shyam Ratan Maheshar said on Saturday that fire broke out in the cold storage on the night of Friday and continued till Saturday evening. Over one lakh turmeric and black gram bags were stocked in the cold storage. The cold storage staff noticed smoke emanating from the first floor. The flames spread all over the storage area

Hike tax exemption limit on principal...

In its pre-Budget wish list, realtors apex body CREDAI has urged the government to increase tax exemption limit on principal amount as well as interest paid on home loans to boost demand for Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI) has also sought changes in definition of affordable housing. In its pre-Budget recommendations, CREDAI has sought deduction under section 80C for principal repayment of housing loan should be increased from existing limit...



Barely hours away from the grand inauguration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, enthusiastic devotees here have arranged an aweinspiring and innovative Tesla car light show dedicated to Lord Ram Over 100 Tesla car owners, calling themselves "Ramji ki Gilahariyan of Greater Houston" gathered at Shri Guruvayurappan Krishna Temple for the light show on Friday evening, attracting hundreds of Ram Bhakts and passersby in the neighbourhood. The cars had a giant-sized Ram Rath in the backdrop, with a life-size temple oil painting, and loud music of "Jai Sri Ram" giving the place a divine look and feel of being at the temple. Tesla Car drivers use a key feature wherein the headlights can be programmed to off and on at the

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Ambedkar statue helps Jagan win Dalit hearts ahead of elections

C PRADEEP KUMAR VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada witnessed the grand unveiling of the world's tallest bronze statue of Dr B R Ambedkar, named the 'Statue of Social Justice,' marking a political move for the ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP). The huge monument became a strategic asset for the party in wooing Dalits and Bahujans ahead of the upcoming

2024 elections, as the YSRCP capitalised on the failure of the previous TDP government to install a similar statue.

On January 19, 2024, a festive atmosphere engulfed the State as Dalits and Bahujans from all corners gathered in Vijayawada to witness the historic moment. Over a hundred and fifty thousand people congregated to celebrate the unveiling of the statue, a symbol of the architect of the Constitution,

The earlier TDP government, led by Chandrababu Naidu, had promised to install the statue but faced criticism for choosing a remote village in Amaravati. The project remained confined to a groundbreaking ceremony, drawing ire from Dalit and downtrodden leaders.

Dr Ambedkar. The monument stood out from others, capturing the hearts of the people with its impressive presence.

Addressing the public gathering, Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy conveyed a resolute mes-

sage to the over 75% population belonging to SC, ST, BC & Minority communities. He referred to them as the 'Backbone Class' and pledged to empower them financially, politically, and

Continued on Page 2

Naxalism will go in 3 yrs, asserts Shah

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday asserted that the country will be free from the menace of Naxalism in the next three years.

Shah, while addressing the Sashastra Seema Bal's 60th Raising Day at Salonibari near here, also said among all the central armed police forces, SSB plays "a unique role in minutely integrating culture, history, topography and language" of the border villages, and bringing people in those areas closer to rest of the

Besides guarding the borders, the SSB along with other CAPFs have performed their duties effectively against the Naxals in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Bihar, he said.

"In the next three years, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country will be



100 per cent free from the Naxal problem," asserted Shah.

At another event in Guwahati, he said the government will stop free movement of people at the Myanmar border.

Addressing the passing out parade of the first batch of the five newly constituted Assam Police Commando battalions, Shah said the Centre is rethinking the free-movement facility with Myanmar.

'The India-Myanmar border will be protected like the

Bangladesh border... The Government of India will stop the free movement with Myanmar," the home minister said.

The central government had said it plans to fence a 300-km stretch of unfenced boundary with Myanmar and end the Free Movement Regime, which allows people living on both sides of the international border to travel within 16 km into each other's territory without visa.

He also said the prime minister's mission of bringing peace and development in the northeast has been successful.

The Congress had a policy to "divert attention from problems and enjoy power, which led to the deaths of thousands of people in the region", particularly in the Bodoland, alleged Shah said at the 13th Triennial Conference of the All Bathou Mahasabha in Dhekiajuli in

YS Sharmila all set to take oath as APCC chief today

PNS VIJAYAWADA

After a hiatus of 25 years, YS Sharmila Reddy, a scion of the family of former chief minister Dr YS Rajasekhar Reddy, is poised to assume the role of Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president. It is noteworthy that YS Rajasekhar Reddy held the position of APCC chief in the unified Andhra Pradesh, whereas Sharmila Reddy is set to assume the same role in the bifurcated Andhra Pradesh.

The inauguration ceremony for Sharmila Reddy's appointment as the APCC Chief is scheduled for January 21 at the Aahwanam Kalyana Mandapam in Tadigadapa, near Vijayawada.

Sources within the Congress party have indicated that no other leader from a family has held the position of APCC chief for a second term. This marks a historic moment for the State, as YS Sharmila Reddy, following in the footsteps of her father YS Rajasekhar Reddy, assumes the responsibilities of the



Congress party, according to insiders. Interestingly, after a gap of 25 years, Sharmila Reddy aims to guide the Congress Party to prominence in the upcoming elections.

Historically, only Dr YS Rajasekhar Reddy, Dharmapuri Srinivas, Jalagam Vengala Rao, and Kona Prabhakara Rao have held the combined APCC Chief post for two terms. Except for Dharmapuri Srinivas and Kona Prabhakara Rao, the remaining leaders, Dr. YSR and Jalagam Vengala Rao, served as Chief Ministers for the combined

Continued on Page 2

SIMULTANEOUS POLLS

Rs 10k cr needed every 15 years for new EVMs

PNS NEW DELHI

The Election Commission would require an estimated Rs 10,000 crore every 15 years to procure new Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) if simultaneous polls are held for Lok Sabha and assemblies, according to the poll body.

In a communication sent to the government, the Commission noted that the shelf life of EVMs was 15 years and one set of machines could be used to conduct three cycles of elections in their life span if simultaneous polls were held.

According to estimates, a total of 11.80 lakh polling stations would be required to be set up across India for Lok Sabha polls this year.

During simultaneous polls, two sets of EVMs would be needed per polling station -- one for the Lok Sabha seat and another for assembly constituency.

Based on past experiences, the EC said in the communication sent to the government, certain percentage of Control Units (CUs), Ballot Units (BUs) and Voter-Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) machines are required as reserves to replace defective units at different stages, including on election





Jagan ignoring tribal welfare: Naidu

PNS VIJAYAWADA

TDP chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu has strongly criticised the YS Jagan Mohan Reddy government for neglecting the development of the Araku region and betraying the tribals in numerous ways.

Speaking at the 'Raa Kadali Raa' public meeting in Araku, Naidu highlighted the plight of tribal farmers in Araku under the YSRCP government, where they struggle to secure affordable prices for their crops. While TDP made efforts to promote Araku Coffee globally, the former CM claimed that the YSRCP has been promoting illegal activities, such as ganja cultivation, for the past five years, leading some farmers

down an unlawful path.
Chandrababu Naidu accused CM Jagan Mohan Reddy of completely ignoring the problems faced by the tribals. Criticising Jagan Mohan Reddy's claims of social justice through unveiling Dr BR Ambedkar's statue, the TDcChief challenged the current AP CM to explain why GO No. 3, introduced by TDP to provide jobs to local Tribes, was cancelled. Assuring the reintroduction of GO No 3, the TDP chief stated that TDP would fight in court to ensure its implementation. He further revealed that 16 tribal welfare schemes were discontinued by the Chief Minister, including the neglect of the Giri Puthrika Kalyana scheme, food basket, and feeder ambulances.

Naidu slammed Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy for permitting

TDP chief announces plans to establish a 'special' district for 7 flood-affected mandals in Polavaram area

illegal mining of bauxite and laterite, resulting in the exploitation of natural resources in tribal areas. He said that laterite was shifted from the agency area to Jagan Mohan Reddy's Bharathi Cement. Criticizing the lack of road construction in agency areas over the past five years, Naidu dead bodies of a woman and a six-

month-old child in Chittempadu were carried home on a scooter. He revealed that some women are having deliveries on roads as they are carried by people on foot with no vehicles to take them to hospitals.

Naidu announced plans to establish a 'special' district for the seven flood-affected mandals in the Polavaram area, taking responsibility for assisting them in various ways. Expressing confidence that TDP and Janasena Party will form the government, he stated that the ruling YSRC wouldn't secure victory even in tribal regions. If people vote for Jagan Mohan Reddy, who killed his uncle and has a criminal mentioned an incident where the record, he expressed that the entire



Chopper veers off course, ATC blamed

A helicopter carrying Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday strayed from its designated route, causing some anxious moments and raising concerns about communication lapses. The chopper was en route to Aarku for a party event when the unexpected deviation occurred.

Naidu's chopper, flying from Visakhapatnam, veered off course due to a reported error in coordination between the pilot and Air Traffic Control (ATC). The ATC



raised an alarm and instructed the pilot to return to the departure point, prompting a safe landing back in Visakhapatnam. However, the saga wasn't over.

Upon seeking clearance to resume

the journey, the chopper's renewed flight permission was abruptly revoked due to persistent communication glitches. Finally, after ironing out the misunderstandings, the helicopter received the green light and successfully reached its destination in Aarku.

Officials attributed the incident to a miscommunication between the pilot and the ATC. Despite the temporary setback, Naidu proceeded with his planned district tour, and the TDP event in Aarku went ahead as scheduled with the chopper landing safely.

Rashmika video creator held

• Wanted to increase followers: Delhi Police

PNS NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Saturday said it has arrested a B-Tech graduate from Andhra Pradesh in connection with a deepfake video of actor Rashmika Mandanna that was widely circulated on social

The accused identified as 23year-old Eemani Naveen, a native of Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, had created the video to increase the followers on his fan page of Rashmika Mandanna Instagram, an official said.

On November 10, an FIR was registered under sections 465 (punishment for forgery) and 469 (forgery for purpose of harming reputation) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and sections 66C and 66E of the Information Technology Act at the Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO) Unit of the Delhi Police's Special Cell. The case was registered on the complaint of the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW).

Soon after registering the FIR, the IFSO Unit wrote to Meta to get the URL and other details to identify the accused who made the video and put it on the social media, the official added.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), IFSO, Dr Hemant Tiwari, said that Naveen created the deepfake video of the actress just to increase the followers and



posted it on the fan page on October 13.

He had used the AI (artificial intelligence) technique with the help of Youtube to make the video, he added. The DCP said that the fan following of this page increased from 90,000 to 1,08000 within two weeks due to the deepfake video.

When Naveen later realised that it became a national sensation and also saw tweets from famous film stars against the said Deepfake video, he got scared and deleted the said posts from the Instagram Channel and also changed the name of Insta channel, he added. Tiwari further said that Naveen had also deleted the relevant digital data from his devices.

Another officer said it was found during the preliminary analysis that the original video was uploaded by a British Indian girl on her Instagram account on October 9, 2023, and later on deepfake video of Mandanna was created and circulated on various social media platforms.

OBTUSE ANGLE



Refrain from publishing false content on Ram Temple event'

PNS NEW DELHI

The government on Saturday issued an advisory to media outlets and social media platforms cautioning them against publishing any false or manipulated content related to the January 22 Ram temple event in Ayodhya.

The advisory, issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, said it was observed that certain unverified, provocative and fake messages were being

which can disturb communal harmony and public order. Ahead of the consecration of the idol of Ram Lalla at Ayodhya, many people have received fake messages related to VIP invitations, donation drives and prasaad of the mega event.

eral other dignitaries in atten-

The consecration ceremony of the Ram Lalla idol in Ayodhya will be held on January 22 with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and sev-

The advisory asked newspapers, spread, especially on social media, private satellite TV channels and

publishers of news and current affairs on digital media to refrain from publishing and telecasting any content that may be false or manipulated or has the potential to disturb communal harmony or public order in the country.

"Further, as part of their due diligence obligations, social media plat-forms are advised to make reasonable efforts to not host, display or publish information of the nature mentioned above," the advisory

Continued on Page 2

Modi takes holy dip in 'Agni theerth' beach



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday worshipped at the Lord Ramanathaswamy temple here after taking a holy dip at the Angi theerth' beach.

Modi, who was seen wearing a rudrakshamala, prayed in the Ramanathaswamy shrine, an ancient Shiva temple in Tamil

Continued on Page 2

Ganja smuggling into the city goes unchecked

2 packets of cannabis worth Rs 2L found on Prakasam Barrage footpath

DASARI SRINIVASA RAO

The Vijayawada City police have failed to take action against the illegal transportation of ganja, with a lack of routine checks throughout the city. Two packets of ganja, valued at Rs. 2 lakh, were discovered on the footpath of the Prakasam Barrage, underscoring the lapse in security measures during Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's visit to the city on January 19.

Over the past few years, there has been an illicit influx of ganja into Vijayawada and other regions from the North Coastal and Odisha districts. Despite numerous toll plazas and check-posts from Visakhapatnam to Vijayawada, officials failed to detect the illegal transportation of ganja packets.

Ganja continues to be smuggled into the city, leading to its availability in Vijayawada. Unfortunately, a growing number of youths and college stu-dents have succumbed to addiction, adversely impacting their lives. Despite parental concerns regarding ganja prevention, there has been a noticeable lack of response from officials.

Police officials claim that unidentified miscreants brought the ganja packets to Vijayawada for sale. On the day Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan unveiled the Dr. BR Ambedkar statue and Smriti Vanam at Swarajya Maidanam, the city's main roads were under tight police control.

In response to the heightened security, it is alleged that those involved in the transportation of Ganja became apprehensive



Over the past few years, there has been an illicit influx of ganja into Vijayawada and other regions from the North Coastal and Odisha districts. Despite numerous toll plazas and checkposts from Visakhapatnam to Vijayawada, officials failed to detect the illegal transportation of ganja packets.

about police checks, prompting them to abandon the Ganja packets on the Prakasam Barrage footpath. Unfortunately, the gravity of the issue has not been adequately acknowledged by the authorities.

Upon receiving information, One Town police promptly reached the barrage, confiscated the two ganja packets, and initiated a police case for further investigation. However, as of now, the individuals responsible for transporting the Ganja packets into the city remain unidentified.

There are growing concerns that police officials are not taking this incident seriously, despite the city having sufficient CCTV cameras. Residents are well aware of ganja sales proliferating across the city, originat-

ing from the North Andhra and Odisha districts. Yet, the police have allegedly failed to address the illegal transportation of Ganja adequately, contributing to the rise in Ganja smoking among college youth.

Vijayawada West Zone ACP

Dr K Hanumantha Rao, when contacted, revealed that no individuals responsible for bringing the Ganja packets to Vijayawada have been identified so far. He cited the police's focus on security arrangements for the Chief Minister's program on Friday as a reason for the over-

One Town police have filed a case regarding the two ganja packets on the Prakasam Barrage. Our police officials are actively investigating the issue,"



Award for linguist

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

Professor Prasanna Sree Sathupati, linguist and chair of the Board of Studies at Andhra University, has been named the sole female and sole Indian recipient of the Endangered Alphabet Writing Award for 2024.

The Endangered Alphabets Writing Award, conferred by a respected international body, acknowledges and celebrates efforts around the globe to conserve and reintroduce alphabet teetering on the brink of extinction. The award ceremony will be held on January 23 in Vermont, United States.

NEW APCC CHIEF

Gidugu oversees steps for swearing in fete

Former president of the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) and a special invitee to the Congress Working Committee (CWC), Gidugu Rudra Raju, conducted a thorough inspection of the preparations for the upcoming swear-ing-in ceremony of the newly appointed party chief, YS Sharmila Reddy.

The much-anticipated ceremony is scheduled to unfold at the Aahwanam Kalyana Mandapam in Tadigadapa, near Vijayawada, this Sunday. A size-able gathering of over 3,000 party leaders and cadre are

expected to grace the occasion.
YS Sharmila Reddy, the recently-appointed APCC president, will touch down at Gannavaram Airport on a special flight originating from Kadapa on January 21 at 9:30 am. Party leaders are geared up to extend a warm and grand welcome to their esteemed

leader, and the daughter of the late Chief Minister Dr. YS Rajasekhar Reddy.

Upon arrival at the airport, a jubilant rally will be organized, commencing from the airport and culminating at Aahwanam Kalyana Mandapam in Tadigadapa. At 11 am, Sharmila will officially assume the APCC leadership, with the presence of key figures such as party affairs in charge and MP Manickam Tagore, AICC secretaries Meyyappan, and Christopher Tilak. After the oath-taking ceremony, Sharmila will address the gathering of party func-

to visit the party state office, Andhra Ratna Bhavan in Vijayawada, where discussions with party leaders will unfold to strategise the plan of action.

Post the ceremony, she is set

Simultaneously, the oath-taking ceremony of Sharmila Reddy will be held at the

Mandapam. Notable figures overseeing the arrangements include former PCC Chief Gidugu Rudra Raju, Working President Shaik Mastan Vali, Rakesh Reddy, Sunkara Padmasri, vice presidents Padmasri, vice presidents Kolanukonda Sivaji, Dhanekula Murali, Gollu Krishna, Krishna District party president Sanjeeva Reddy, and Vijayawada City president Naraharasetti

CPI faults govt for not inviting, Prez, Guv to statue inaugural

CPI State secretary and former MLA, K Ramakrishna, has commended the State government for the installation of Dr BR Ambedkar's statue in Vijayawada. However, he voiced criticism over the government's decision not to extend invita-tions to Draugadi Murmu, the President of India, and SA Nazeer, the Governor of Andhra Pradesh, for the event.

On Saturday, a delegation from the CPI, led by Ramakrishna, visited the Dr BŔ Ambedkar statue situated at Swarajya Maidanam in Vijayawada. During the visit, the party leaders paid heartfelt tributes to the iconic leader, Dr.



Addressing the gathering, Ramakrishna emphasised Ambedkar's global significance as a leader who championed the cause of oppressed communities and fought against untouchabil-

He expressed disappoint-

ment did not extend invitations to the President, the state Governor, as well as political party leaders and Dalit intellectuals for the inauguration of Ambedkar's statue.

Furthermore, Ramakrishna alleged that the ruling YSRCP had politicised the inauguration of the Ambedkar statue and Smriti Vanam. He strongly denounced the statements made by several ministers drawing comparisons between YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and Dr. Ambedkar.

The event was attended by CPI state secretariat member Jalli Wilson, along with party leaders Ch Koteswara Rao, P Jamalaah, B Rayappa, and other prominent figures.



VISWAROOP AND HIS WIFE HAVE DURGA DARSHAN

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Transport, Pinipe Viswaroop, accompanied by his wife, paid a visit to the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam situated atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Saturday. The couple participated in special pujas dedicated to the Goddess Durga Devi.

KS Rama Rao, the executive

the minister and facilitated their darshan. Subsequently, the temple's Vedic Scholars bestowed their blessings upon the minister and his wife. In a gracious gesture, the

officer (EO) of the temple,

extended a warm welcome to

temple EO Rama Rao presented the couple with a portrait of the goddess, Shesha Vastram,



'Focused probes key to deal with cases of missing kids, women'

PNS ■ PARVATHIPURAM -MANYAM

In a serious bid to address the sensitive issues of missing children and women, the Parvathipuram Mandal Nyaya Seva Committee held a crucial meeting on Saturday at the court premises. The meeting, presided over by Second Additional District Judge S Damodara Rao, brought together key stakeholders including police officers and judicial officials to brainstorm and devise proactive strategies.

Judge Rao emphasised the need for thorough and focused investigations, particularly when dealing with missing children. He underscored the importance of vigilance in preventing financial and other forms of fraud against women and raised awareness about the rising threat of cybercrimes. Recognizing the seriousness of illegal cross-border movement, the Judge called for a united effort to safeguard the community.

Recognizing the gravity of illegal cross-border movement, Judge Rao advocated for a collaborative effort to strengthen border security and ensure public safety. The meeting witnessed vital contributions from Principal Junior Civil Judge A Ramesh, Training DSP MD Aziz, and Sub Inspector, who actively engaged in strategic discussions to formulate effective solutions.

This collaborative endeavour aims to bolster existing initiatives and implement robust protective measures. By prioritising vulnerable individuals and fostering a vigilant environment. Parvathipuram Mandal strives to establish a secure and equitable space for all its citizens.

Awareness drive marks National Girl Child Day

In a proactive event held on the eve of National Girl Child Day, the District Medical Officer's office in hosted gramme emphasising gender equality and the Prevention of Pre-conception and Foetal Gender Determination Act 1994 (PC & PNDT Act). The event featured engaging competitions – essay writing, painting, and elocution – held at the mandal and divisional levels before culminating at the district level. This initiative, targeting students from government schools, aimed to foster awareness and critical thinking on the crucial aspects of gender equality and eradicating gender-based discrimination.

District Medical and Health Officer, Dr. S. Bhaskara Rao, personally awarded certificates of appreciation to the talented participants. The event also witnessed the presence of distinguished dignitaries, includ-ing Additional District Medical Health Officer Dr. K. Rani Garu, Nodal Officer Dr R. Achutha Kumari, and Sub-District Medical Health Officer Dr. N. Surya Narayana. The



This initiative, targeting students from government schools, aimed to foster awareness and critical thinking on the crucial aspects of gender equality and eradicating gender-based discrimination.

program actively engaged representatives from various line departments, including the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), the Education Department, and nursing schools. This collaborative approach underscored the importance of inter-departmental coordination in tackling the social issue of gender discrimination.

The vibrant participation of students from schools injected a sense of optimism and emphasized the critical role of educating and empowering the youth to become agents of positive change. Disha SI

Narayana Rao Garu, along with other officials, played a vital role in ensuring the program's successful execution.

The event transcended a mere celebration of National Girl Child Day by serving as a platform to actively strengthen the significance of the PC & PNDT Act. By highlighting its role in curbing unethical practices of pre-conception and fetal gender determination, the program reaffirmed the collective commitment towards fostering a society where every girl child is valued, protected, and empowered to achieve her full potential.

Lack of tools burdens NREGS workers in Srikakulam

PNS SRIKAKULAM

A concerning trend has emerged in Srikakulam district, where workers enrolled in the Mahatma Gandhi National Scheme (MGNREGS) have been forced to shoulder the financial burden of essential equipment for four consecutive years. The absence of tools, often costing between Rs 350 and Rs 500 per labourer, raises questions about the scheme's implementation and worker welfare.

The revelation comes amidst the Central government's clear allocation of funds under the MGNREGS. As per guide-lines, 60% of funds must be allocated to laborer wages, 40% to the equipment department, with strict controls on administrative expenses. Despite this provision, the Development Department's lack of approval for equipment procurement has hindered supply chains for over four years. Previously, workers received shovels, spades, mats, tents for shade, and first aid kits. However, the current scenario paints a far

grimmer picture. The absence



of even basic first-aid supplies raises concerns about worker safety in case of accidental

Srikakulam boasts 3.84 lakh job cards, employing approximately 6.20 lakh workers. Yet, only 1.40 lakh are currently engaged in work for two months. This inconsistency points towards shifting state priorities in implementing the scheme. Officials suggest diverted funds are now directed towards infrastructure projects like CC roads, sewage canals, village secretariats, and health centres.

Labourers express strong dissatisfaction at the financial burden unfairly placed on them. District Water Management

(DWMA) Project Director GV Chittiraju, emphasizes the state's four-year failure to provide basic equipment, including first-aid kits. As a temporary measure, medicines are being sourced from Primary Health Centers in each mandal. "We will provide the equipment as soon as the government allocates it," assures GV Chittiraju, acknowledging the urgent need for intervention to alleviate the financial strain on labourers and ensure a safe working environment. This situation demands immediate attention from relevant authorities to safeguard the welfare of workers and uphold the integrity of the MGN-

CHIRU HONOURS INDLA RAMA SUBBA REDDY

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

The prestigious Lok Naik Lifetime Foundation Achievement Award was bestowed upon renowned psychiatrist Dr Indla Rama Subba Reddy in a grand ceremony held today in

Visakhapatnam. Megastar Padma Bhushan Chiranjeevi graced the occasion and presented the award, recognizing Dr. Reddy's remarkable contributions to the field of psychiatry and mental health.

The Lok Naik Foundation, established by Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad, awarded Dr. Reddy for his dedication to improving mental health care and addressing mental health stigma in India. The ceremony saw the dis-

tinguished presence of High Court senior justice Sri Akula Seshasai and Narasaraopet Lok Sabha member, Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu, who joined Chiranjeevi as guests of honour.

Road Safety Month' kicks off with helmet bike rally

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

In a bid to tackle the rise in Visakhapatnam kicked off its Road Safety Month on Saturday with a helmet bike rally and a call for responsible driving practices. The event, held at Kali Mata Temple in RK Beach, saw Joint Collector K.S. Viswanathan highlight the importance of following traffic rules and the dangers of

unsafe driving. Viswanathan urged citizens to be proactive in preventing accidents by adhering to safety guidelines. He expressed hope that the month-long campaign will raise awareness about the dangers of negligence and the importance of responsible driving.

He stressed the escalating frequency of accidents, emphasizing the collective responsi-bility to curb them. High-



was underscored.

Regional Jt. Transport Commissioner Dr. Vaddi Sunder stressed the need for disciplined and careful driving, emphasizing the importance of seat belts and helmets for all road users. He commended the police for their efforts in accident prevention and highlighted positive outcomes from implemented mea-

Transport Deputy Commissioner Rajaratnam spoke about the success of special drives in reducing accidents. He high-

lighted ongoing initiatives addressing issues like mobile phone usage, alcohol consumption, and high-speed driving to

curb accidents.

Launching the Campaign and Building Participation: Viswanathan flagged off the helmet bike rally and unveiled posters related to the monthlong campaign. The event wit-

nessed participation from Traffic ADCP Srinivasa Rao, motor vehicle inspectors, road safety committee members, police officers, and other stakeholders. Road Safety Month is expected to contribute to a safer road environment by raising awareness and promoting adherence to traffic regu-

leads to death of a couple

Row over Rs 500

PNS MACHILIPATNAM

A dispute over Rs 500 led to the death of a couple in Gudivada on Saturday.

According to police, the deceased Kolusu Rambabu picked up a quarrel with his wife K Kanaka Durga on spending Rs 500. In a fit of rage, Rambabu committed suicide by hanging himself to the ceiling fan. His wife Kanaka Durga informed her son about the incident and took Rmbabu to a hospital where he was declared dead.

Knowing about the death of her husband, Kanaka Durga also committed suicide by hanging herself in her house. The son of Kanaka Durga brought the body of his father to his house where he saw his mother hanging to the ceiling fan.





TDP-friendly media insulted Ambedkar: Roja

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister RK Roja came down heavily against the TDPfriendly media for the false and baseless anti-government articles. She said that the TDP and its supporting media have no respect for Dr Ambedkar who is the architect of the Constitution of India.

Speaking to the media persons on Saturday, she criticized a section of media for not telecasting the unveiling of Dr Ambedkar's statue programme and stated that Ambedkar's true successor is CM Jagan Mohan Reddy.

She said that while everyone was praising CM Jagan Mohan Reddy, a section of the media was not able to tolerate it and said to boycott those sections of media and newspapers. Minister Roja said that Ambedkar's statue unveiling programme was not telecasted even for a minute on Friday by those channels which was an insult to Dr Ambedkar. She further said that it is an insult to the Dalits and Bahujans and those who support Ambedkar.

Will strive to fulfil YSR's wish of making Rahul PM: Sharmila

APCC president appointee YS Sharmila has said that she will strive to fulfil the last wish of her late father YS Rajasekhar Reddy.

YS Sharmila went to Idupulapaya in a chartered flight from Hyderabad accompanied by KVP Ramachandra panied by KVP Ramachandra Rao and former APCC presi-dent N Raghuveera Reddy. Sharmila paid tributes to his late father and former Chief Minister Y S Rajasekhar Reddy at his tomb at YSR ghat on Saturday.

Later talking to the media, YS Sharmila said that she would take charge as APCC president in Vijayawada on Sunday. "My father YS Rajasekhar Reddy's wish was to make Rahul Gandhi the Prime Minister of the country. I will strive to fulfil my father's last wish," she stated.

"I have joined the Congress to fulfil the aspirations of my father Rajasekhar Reddy," she



stated. Making Rahul Gandhi the Prime Minister of India is not only my wish but also all Congress leaders," Sharmila said, adding that the theory of the Congress should be upheld. She said that she went to YSR ghat to take the blessings of her te father YS Rajasekhar Reddy.

"Secularism and pluralism

have become meaningless in the country now. Rajasekhar Reddy used to follow the secular theory of the Congress party. I will also follow the Congress theory like my father," she said.

Former APCC president Raghuveera Reddy recalled that Rajasekhar Reddy's last wish was to make Rahul Gandhi the Prime Minister of the country and his daughter Joined the Congress to fulfil his last wish. Rajasekhar Reddy had striven to bring the Congress party to power twice. Former APCC President S Sailajanath and other leaders were present.

Anganwadi workers obstruct Peddireddy's convoy

The agitating Anganwadi workers obstructed the convoy of Mines and Environment Peddireddy Minister Ramachandra Reddy by squatting on the road in Uravakonda on Saturday.

Minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy went to Uravakonda to inspect the arrangements being made for chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's programme to be held on January 23.

When the Minister's convoy was going on the road, a large number of Anganwadi work

number of Anganwadi workers rushed there and squatted in front of the convoy. They raised slogans against the Chief Minister demanding a hike in their salary.

The Minister remained in the car for about half an hour. However, the police dragged the anganwadi workers from the road and cleared the way to the Minister. The police whisked away to the police station some of the CITU leaders who were extending support to the agitating anganwadi work-

Talking to the media, the Leader of the Anganwadi workers alleged that the police acted excessively and rudely with them. The police slapped some Anganwadi workers, they regretted. An Anganwadi worker suffered an injury in the melee, they said.

Knowing about the incident, Uravakonda TDP MLA Payyavula Keshav rushed there. The Anganwadi workers complained to him about the highhanded behaviour of police with them.

Meanwhile, the Anganwadi workers organized a rasta roko on the Bangalore highway at Tapovanam near here.

Hundreds of vehicles were stranded for about 1 km on either side of the road following the rasta roko on the busy highway. The Anganwadi workers warned of obstructing the Chief Minister's programme on January 23 unless their legitimate demands are conceded. The police whisked away the CITUC leaders and some Anganwadi union lead-

ers to the police station. The agitating Anganwadi workers organized a rasta roko at the NTR statue in Renigunta near Tirupati as well. Later they tried to take out a rally from the Ambedkar statue to the weekly fair centre but the police dispersed them.

Mega art contest on 'Eco Vizag' today

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a collaborative effort to promote environmental consciousness through art, the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC), in partnership with the Vizag Art Community, is set to organise a Mega Art Contest themed around 'Eco Vizag.' The event is scheduled to take place at the Vishwanath Sports Club and Conventions Stadium Akkayyapalem on Sunday,

starting at 8 a.m.
The 'Eco Vizag' theme encompasses the ideals of ecological cleanliness, green living, sustainable practices, plastic-free initiatives, and a commitment to zero pollution. Artists of all ages are invited to participate and contribute their creativity to raise awareness about environmental

GVMC Commissioner CA Saikanth Varma expressed enthusiasm about the event. highlighting its significance in fostering a sense of envithrough the medium of art. ity converges with environ-The art contest will be conducted in two categories senior (participants aged 15 years and above) and junior (participants below 15



A notable feature of the Mega Art Contest is the recognition of talent, as 50 artworks from both senior and junior categories will be selected for consolation prizes.

The competition aims to not only showcase artistic prowess but also to celebrate the commitment of the participants towards promoting a sustainable and eco-friendly Vizag. Artists and enthusiasts are encouraged to attend this mental advocacy.

The Mega Art Contest promises to be a vibrant display of artistic expression and a collective effort towards a greener and cleaner Vizag.

Grandhi inaugurates CC roads and 'Kalyana Mandapam' in Bhimavaram

Government Whip and YSRCP MLA Grandhi Srinivas has said that several development works have been carried out in Bhimavaram town including construction of drains and roads during the last four and half years.

The Whip formally inaugurated some completed projects here on Saturday. The whip opened the newly constructed BT road in the 34th ward which was constructed at Rs 20.50 lakh, SRKR-ASR Kalyana Mandapam road which was constructed for Rs 19.50 lakh and the CC road at Adarsh Nagar. He also formally opened the VSS Garden road which was constructed for Rs 29.50 lakh.

Speaking on the occasion, Whip Srinivas said that during the last four and half years many development works had been carried out in Bhimavaram town. No government had done such a development in the town previously, he claimed.

"The welfare and development are the two eyes of the YSRCP government. The long pending problems of the town have been resolved. The Bhimavaram constituency is witnessing development in a big way. House sites were given to over 15,000 beneficiaries in the constituency," the Whip stated, adding that efforts are being made to make the Bhimavaram constituency an ideal constituency in the state in development.

Whip Srinivas said that so far Rs 100 crore has been spent to carry out various development works in the constituency. "The 100-bed hospital is being constructed on four acres of land here. An amount of Rs 36 crore was sanctioned for the construction of the approach road to the bridge across the Yanamadurru drain. The tender process has already begun for the same," he highlighted, stating that six-and-a-half acres of land were acquired for the establishment of a compost fertiliser yard here.

Municipal Commissioner M Shyamala, State Goud Corporation Director Kamana Nageswera Rao and other lead-



Speaking on the occasion, the District Collector said that there should be separate entrances for going to the polling stations, or if there is one big entrance, there should be a partition. She also suggest-

ed that there should be separate toilets for women and men, and if there is only one toilet, a temporary toilet should be set up for men.

Officials directed to provide

facilities at polling stations

The Collector directed the officials to prepare a ramp for disabled voters. She said that the lighting arrangements should be perfect and high mast lights should be installed

where necessary.
The District Education Officer should monitor the facilities in the polling stations set up in the schools and the municipal commissioners pare community halls, Anganwadi centres, and agriculture and association halls in the urban areas. RDO K Srinivasulu Raju and Municipal Commissioner M Shyamala were among those who accompanied the Collector.

Major tennis tourney begins

PNS KAKINADA

The 67th national-level boys' lawn tennis tournament began here on Saturday. District Collector Kritihika Shukla formally declared the tournament open. The national-level lawn tennis tournament for boys will be played from January 20 to 24.

Speaking on the occasion,

the Collector wished the players to excel at the national level. This is the second biggest sports event being taken place in the district, she said. She asked the players and coaches to maintain sports spirit while participating in the tour-

Collector Krithika Shukla said that all needed facilities were provided to the players who are taking part in the tournament. DEO G Nagamani said that 109 tennis players from 24 states and 46 coaches were taking part in the tournament. As many as 100 officers were providing facilities to the players and their coaches. MLC Karri Padmasri, KUDA chairman Ragireddy Chandrakala Deepthi, additional SP B games federation chairman G Bhnumurthy also spoke. Earlier, the players held a March fast in the stadium. The students of various schools performed cultural programmes on the occasion.

Farm produce worth several crores destroyed in fire

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Agricultural produce worth several crores of rupees was destroyed in a major fire accident which took place in the Subham Maheshwari cold storage located at Duggirala. Cold storage owner Shyam

Ratan Maheshar said on Saturday that fire broke out in the cold storage on the night of Friday and continued till Saturday evening. Over one lakh turmeric and black gram bags were stocked in the cold

The cold storage staff noticed smoke emanating from the first floor. The flames spread all over the storage area within an hour. Since thick smoke engulfed the cold storage, the staff could not go inside to assess the situation



Though four fire tenders swung into operation to extinguish the fire, they could not control it. The cold storage owner said that one lakh bags of turmeric and black gram bags worth about Rs 70 crore were stored in the storage when the mishap occurred. Thousands of bags of turmeric and black gram produce were gutted in the fire. As per the preliminary assessment, the loss could be around Rs 50 crore. However, the exact loss could be ascer-

tained after extinguishing the flames completely, fire officials said. The exact reason for the major fire mishap could be short circuit but it could be ascertained and examine the storage thoroughly.

Fire tenders from Guntur, Mangalagiri, Tenali and Vijayawada rushed there to put out the flames. Regional fire officer Sk. Jilani and district fire officer Srinivasa Reddy per-sonally monitored the opera-

Joint Collector Rajakumari visited the ill-fated cold storage and knew the details. Flames were seen in the cold storage in the afternoon also. As many as 11 staffers suffered minor injuries in the fire mishap. Officials said that after verifying the records the exact loss

Will bury BRS in Lok Sabha elections

PNS HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy launched a scathing attack on former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Saturday in London saying that he will dig out a 100 meter grave and bury BRS party without any sign of it in the Parliament elections. He said if the tiger (KCR) comes out, it will be caged and tied to a tree. "The tiger was sleeping in his house. It has got up now. I am also looking for it. We have a cage and a net. Our activists will take up the responsibility of tying up the tiger on a tree. It seems that they have not come out from the power hangover. Our activists will take up the task of bringing down their strength in the next election. A people's government has been formed. Nobody wants Dora to rule. People's rule is needed. With the blessings of everyone a government was formed in Telangana.

• We will cage the tiger and tie it up if it comes out: Revanth Today I came to Great Britain with the blessings of the Telangana people. We have met many of our family members here," Revanth said.

Addressing Telugus in London on Saturday, Revanth said that they had freed Telangana from a family which was troubling the state. Everyone worked hard to free Telangana. We know the fighting spirit you showed in dumping K. Chandrasekhar Rao's government in the Bay of Bengal.

He said that he does not speak politics after crossing the country's borders and that there is no scope for politicking abroad. He said he had come here to work for the development of TS.

"I decided to speak on political issues and governance from London after seeing the attacks



Some have looted lakhs of crores from the exchequer for their families, he said. However, the same people are saying not to discuss development and not to reveal the state of Telang

of the father, the son and the nephew on the elected people's government," Revanth said.

Some have looted lakhs of crores from the exchequer for their families, he said. However, the same people are saying not to discuss development and not to reveal the state of Telangana's economy, he said.

Revanth said that 16 CMs contracted a debt of Rs 72,000

ana's economy, he said. crore in 60 years, however, one family increased the debt to Rs

7,000 billion. The government is now not in a position to raise salaries. However, the Congress government paid the salaries of employees before the fifth of this month. The government is guiding the state towards develop-

ment from the crisis, he said. "We will implement the 6guarantees within 100 days.

However, KTR and Harish Rao asked on the very first day of the Assembly to explain how the Congress government will implement the 6-guarantees. They did not come to their senses even though the people taught them a lesson. I am throwing a challenge to Billas and Rangas. I am ready to settle the matter in the LS polls. I will take up a whirlwind tour of the state after the first public meeting in Indravelli on January 26. I will bury the BRS during the next Parliament elections," the CM

He said that he came from a simple farmer's family and reached the CM's post. "I did not become CM easily. It was not given to me by my father or somebody else. I did not come to enjoy life using my father's name," he said.

5,000 tetra packs with liquor seized

PNS CHITTOOR

The police seized over 5,000 tetra packets of liquor, worth Rs 5 lakh, while being brought from Karnataka state illegally in a van at Prattikonda village in Gangavaram mandal.

DSP N Sudhakar Reddy told the media that on a tip off, a police team led by CI E Krishna Mohan and SI Pratap Reddy conducted checking of vehicles.

They found 5000 tetra packets of liquor in the van. The tetra packets were worth Rs 5 lakh. The police seized the liquor packets, the van and arrested one person. The police launched a search to arrest the remaining accused in the



Role of education in building a better society stressed

PNS VIJAYAWADA

A programme focusing on 'Legal Empowerment and Awareness' was organised by Andhra Loyola College (Autonomous) in Vijayawada on Saturday. The event, presided over by R Rayappa, Head of the Department of Visual Communication, aimed to underscore the importance of equipping students with legal knowledge and rights to navigate a secure and safe life in society.

Addressing the gathering as



the chief guest, IV Additional Senior Civil Judge P Raja Ram emphasised the role of education in shaping individuals for a better society. He stressed the need to instil values such as quality, inclusivity, and diversity, highlighting their signifi-

ery and organs of justice available for addressing legal issues and grievances. P Ramu, Legal Service Officer of Mandal Legal Service Committee (MLSC), delved into the operational framework of the committee and shared real-life experiences about litigation cases. He discussed the resumption

order, emphasizing its role in

shedding light on the machin-

cance in fostering a healthier ensuring the immediate execu-community. Judge Raja Ram tion of denied rights, along tion of denied rights, along provided insights into various with the provision of free and aspects of the justice system, accessible legal aid services aimed at delivering swift justice to economically disadvantaged individuals. Approximately 350 students

from the degree sections actively participated in this enlightening program. Dr. L. Subha, the program coordinator, along with the Dean of Student Activities and other faculty members from the degree sections, were present during the event.

CENTRE TO SUPREME COURT

No mechanism finalised for regulating cryptocurrencies

PNS NEW DELHI

The Centre has told the Supreme Court it is yet to take a decision on a mechanism to regulate cryptocurrencies and effectively investigate related

A bench of justices Surya Kant and KV Viswanathan was told by Additional Solicitor General Vikramjit Banerjee, appearing for the Centre, that the issues related to the digital currency are continuously evolving and the government is deliberating on the mechanism to regulate the cryptocurrencies

He sought time to file an affidavit by the next date of hearing in the case giving updated position on the mech-

"So far as the stance of the Union of India with reference to the matters of cryptocurrency arising in different states is concerned, the Additional Solicitor General of India seeks and is granted four weeks' time to file an appropriate



affidavit," the bench ordered on Friday.

During the hearing, Justice Kant said the court only wants that there are appropriate safeguards to protect the common man from frauds and misuse of cryptocurrencies.

We are not experts on what kind of currencies you should have or regulate. If there is no mechanism to regulate it, then anyone can create a currency and start transacting in it. It will be very dangerous," the bench told Banerjee.

The ASG assured that delib-

erations are going on but it's an

evolving question and he will

file an affidavit giving details of

it on the next hearing of the

The bench posted the mat-

ter for further hearing on

It was hearing a bail plea of one Ganesh Shiv Kumar Sagar

booked for cryptocurrencies

fraud in various states like

Jharkhand, Maharashtra and

Gujarat. He has also sought

clubbing of various FIR lodges

The top court made the interim protection from arrest granted to him on July 27, 2023 as absolute after counsel for the Jharkhand government submitted that he has joined the probe into the case and fully cooperating with the investigating officer.

against him in different states.

The counsel for Sagar submitted that he undertakes to continue to appear before the Investigating Officer as and when required till the investigation gation reaches a logical conclu-

On September 21, 2023, Attorney General R Venkataramani, appearing for the Centre, said that the matter requires in depth consideration at the level of the Union of India keeping in view the domestic and international perspective.

He had submitted that due deliberations will be made within two-three months and this Court shall be apprised with the outcome at the ear-

One crore job applications received from women in tier-II, III cities in 2023: Report



PNS MUMBAI

The number of women striving to join the active workforce in the tier-II and III cities witnessed a 13 per cent growth in 2023 with 1 crore applications, a report said on Saturday.

In 2022, there were 2.7 crore applications from tier-II and III cities, of which 87 lakh were from women looking for financial independence, according to data from jobs and professional networking platform apna.co.

According to the report, the total applications for tier-II and III cities in 2023 were 3.2 crore, of which 1 crore were from women, the report said.

Over 100 job applications per minute from women in

tier-II and III cities signal a turning point in workforce dynamics, the report said.

Over 80 per cent of these applications are for officebased roles, underlining the eagerness of women to engage in the workplace physically, refusing to let the option of working from home limit their career growth, it revealed.

The report by apna.co is based on an analysis of data of job applications and postings on its platform in 2022 and

There has been a tenfold increase in managerial job postings in sales support, enterprise sales, advertising, real estate, inside sales, brand and marketing and e-commerce, as per the report.

MONEY MATTERS

Govt suspends 3 directors of SAIL, NMDC



suspended two boardlevel officials of steel PSU SAIL and one director of iron ore major NMDC for alleged misconduct. according to exchange filings by the companies. SAIL also has suspended 26 other officials with immediate effect for violation of its code of conduct, the steel PSU

said in a filing to BSE. The filing said the Ministry of Steel vide its letters dated January 19, 2024, "in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-rule (1) of Rule 20 of the Conduct, Discipline and Appeal Rules, 1977 of Steel Authority of India Limited, has placed V.S. Chakravarthy, Director (Commercial) and A.K. Tulsiani, Director (Finance) on suspension with immediate effect". Another Steel Ministry PSU NMDC also announced that its board-level official, V. Suresh, has been suspended with immediate effect. "Ministry of Steel...in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-rule 1 of Rule 20 of the Conduct, Discipline and Appeal Rules, 1978 of NMDC Ltd.

IREDA profit zooms 67 % to Rs 335 crore



tate-owned IREDA on Saturday posted a 67 Der cent rise in net profit to Rs 335.54 crore for the quarter ended in December 2023, bolstered by higher income. It had clocked Rs 200.75 crore net profit during the October-December period of the preceding 2022-23 fiscal, the company said in an exchange filing. The company's total income

surged to Rs 1,253.19 crore in the third quarter of FY24 from Rs 868.97 crore a year ago. Its expenses were Rs 867.05 crore in the period under review, as against Rs 634.27 crore in the year-ago period. The equity shares of the company were listed on BSE and National Stock Exchange on November 29, 2023. In a separate statement, IREDA CMD Pradip Kumar Das said, "For investors and stakeholders, these results signal the promising trajectory of IREDA's contributions to India's energy transition and environmental sustainability." The company's loan book was at Rs 50,579.67 crore, up 33.50 per cent from Rs 37,887.69 crore in the same quarter a year ago. IREDA's net-worth also rose by 45.49 per cent to Rs 8,134.56 crore from Rs 5,591 crore in the year-ago period. IREDA, under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, is a nonbanking financial institution engaged in promoting, developing and extending financial assistance for setting up projects related to new and renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency/conservation.

Investments in Generative AI can boost job creations: Experts

PNS NEW DELHI

Major investments in generative AI (artificial intelligence), incentives from the government and open-source content can boost employment generation and reduce disparities in the country, say experts.

Generative artificial intelligence refers to the use of newage technology to create new content like text, images, music, audio, and videos.

"Generative AI will boost new job roles and can help people with limited skill levels perform higher level jobs, thus reducing the economic divide", said Vishal Talwar, Director, IMT Ghaziabad in a statement.

According to the statement, highlighting the need for robust infrastructure and special provisions in the upcoming budget for Generative AI-related innovation, IMT Ghaziabad



steered a key discussion on Generative ÁI's role in skill development, job creation, and business education transformation earlier this month.

The deliberations concluded that major Investments in Generative AI can boost employment and reduce disparities in society.

Talwar, emphasized during the deliberation that in the wake of India's ambitious AI

initiatives, including India's AI Mission, the nation is poised for a significant leap in AI-driven skill development and job opportunities..

The IMT Ghaziabad envisions a future where Generative AI acts as a catalyst, not just for technological advancements but for empowering individuals with the skills needed in a rapidly evolving job landscape, ĥe stated.

Amusement industry growing at 15%, to reach Rs 25,000 cr, say experts

PNS NEW DELHI

The amusement industry is growing at 15 per cent and is likely to reach the Rs 25,000 crore mark by 2030 or even before that in the country, say industry officials.

Industry experts said that the sector holds huge potential for job creation and offers investment opportunities in religious and mythological theme-based parks with the help of technological innovation, laser shows and others.

Speaking at a panel discussion on the growth of tourism, amusement, food, travel, Indian Association of Amusement Parks and Industries (IAAPI) chairman Shrikant Goenka said that the amusement industry is growing at the rate of 15 per cent, and there are huge employment opportunities.

There are immense investment opportunities to create

more theme-based stories, mythological and religious theme parks with the help of technological innovation, laser shows, videos etc. at various religious circuits which are being developed by the Centre and State tourism boards, Goenka said.

"Our annual turnover stands at Rs 11,500 crore and we hope that it will reach Rs 25,000 crore by 2030 or we will be able to achieve this figure even before that," Goenka said.

There are about 300 amusement parks and 2,500 indoor amusement centres in India. Panelists that included Arun

Chittilappilly, Managing Director, Wonderla Holidays, Jai Malpani, Managing Director of Imagicaaworld and Abhishek Bansal, Executive Director of Pacific Development Corporation also discussed the growth prospects in the amusement industry in collaboration.

Rajasthan gets Centre's nod for 35 roads

PNS ■ JAIPUR

The central government has sanctioned 35 roads in Rajasthan under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).

Union Rural The Development Ministry issued approval in this regard on

According to the official statement issued here on Saturday, under the scheme (PMGSÝ), approval has been received to build 35 roads of 394.65 km length in the state at a cost of Rs 251.38 crore. Under this, 35 roads will be built in Didwana-Kuchaman, Jhunjhunu and Nagaur districts. In the statement, Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari said that this approval has been received due to the special efforts.

EPFO adds 13.95 lakh net members

PNS NEW DELHI

Retirement fund body EPFO added 13.95 lakh net members in November 2023, as per the latest payroll data released on Saturday.

Cumulative net addition of members during the current financial year continues to remain higher than that of the corresponding period of the previous year, a labour ministry statement said.

According to the statement, the EPFO's (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) provisional payroll data highlighted that the body added 13.95 lakh net members in November.

Megatherm Induction sets IPO price band at Rs 100-108/share

PNS NEW DELHI

Machinery maker Megatherm Induction on Saturday said it has fixed a price band of Rs 100 to Rs 108 per share for its Initial Public Offering (IPO).

The issue will open for public subscription on January 25 and conclude on January 30, the company said in a state-The public issue is entirely

a fresh issue of 49.92 lakh equity shares, it said.

At the upper-end of the price band, the company aims to raise about Rs 53.91 crore from the public issue.

The company's shares are scheduled to list on the NSE Emerge platform. The sole book-running lead



manager to the issue is Hem and machinery, to meet work-Securities Ltd, while Bigshare Services Pvt Ltd is the registrar for the IPO.

The issue proceeds will be utilized in funding capital expenditure towards construction of a factory shed and installation of additional plant ing capital requirements and general corporate purposes.

Megatherm Induction is a subsidiary of Megatherm Electronics. The company also manufactures upstream and downstream equipment and machinery for steelworks.

Shares of Reliance Industries settle nearly 1 per cent lower

PNS MUMBAI

Shares of Reliance Industries recovered some of the lost ground and settled for the day lower by 0.80 per cent on Saturday after the company reported its quarterly earnings.

During the morning deals, it fell 1.30 per cent as the oilto-retail-to-telecom conglomerate reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 17,265 crore in the third quarter of the current fiscal, 9.3 per cent higher compared to the year-ago peri-

The stock touched an intraday low of Rs 2,698.60 during the day on the BSE. Later, it recovered some of the early lost ground and ended at Rs 2,713.20, lower by 0.80 per cent from the previous close. On the NSE, the shares of



Reliance Industries opened at Rs 2,730.00, then fell to Rs 2,700.00 and finally settled for the day at Rs 2,716.00, down 0.69 per cent over its last

Reliance Industries' quarter-on-quarter profit was lower when compared to Rs 17,394 crore earnings in the preceding three months ended September 30.

Ramco Systems, BDO **International** ink deal



ayroll solution provider Ramco Systems has entered into a partnership with BDO International aimed at leveraging the strengths of As per the agreement, the two companies would jointly offer a unified, digital platform enhanced with advisory-led expertise superior customer

experiences, security and data privacy among others. This partnership merges state-of-the-art technology, payroll computation and advisory, with an unwavering commitment to security and data privacy, a press release here said on Saturday. The aim is to redefine the outsourced payroll experience for managing global payrolls through scalable expert solutions that span beyond borders. "Joining forces with BDO India reflects our dedication to deliver cutting-edge technology bundled with associated services, to enable a world-class payroll experience. We are very excited to share how Ramco and BDO India will offer an integrated payroll service for MNCs operating across the globe," Ramco Systems chief executive officer Sundar Subramanian said. BDO India LLP is one of the leading professional services organisations and is part of BDO International. "We are glad to collaborate with Ramco to forge a path towards a one-stop global payroll future. This strategic partnership combines the capabilities of Ramco's leading payroll platform with our strong expertise in advisory and global delivery to offer solutions that transform and streamline payroll processes with a holistic view of global operations," BDO India Managing Partner

CREDAI URGES CENTRE ON HOME LOANS

Hike tax exemption limit on principal, int

PNS NEW DELHI

In its pre-Budget wish list, realtors apex body CREDAI has urged the government to increase tax exemption limit on principal amount as well as interest paid on home loans to boost demand for residential properties.

Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI) has also sought changes in definition of affordable housing.
In its pre-Budget recommendations, CREDAI has

sought deduction under section 80C for principal repayment of housing loan should be increased from existing limit of Rs 1.5 lakh.

Alternatively, it suggested that the deduction for principal repayment of housing loan should be considered for a separate or standalone exemp-

Moreover, CREDAI said the



Confederation of Real Estate **Developers' Associations of** India (CREDAI) has also sought changes in definition of affordable housing

definition of affordable housing, which was capped at Rs 45 lakh, was given in 2017 and is "Due to inflation alone, there has been significant rise in real

yet to change since. "Due to inflation alone, there

years. As per data from the National Housing Bank (NHB), there has been an increase of 24 per cent in housing rates since June 2018 in India, which makes the current cap of Rs 45 lakh extremely unfeasible for developers to adhere to," it argued. CREDAI has recommended

that the definition of affordable housing to be revised as "a unit with 90 square meter RERA carpet area in Metros Cities and 120 square meter RERA Carpet Area in Non-metros without a cap on cost of the unit".

Among other major demand, the association said the present limit for deduction of interest on home loans under section 24(b) is Rs 2 "It is suggested that, in the case of individuals, the interest

in respect of first self-occupied

property should be allowed

the limit for deduction of interest should be increased to Rs 5 lakh in respect of the self-occupied property. "With its significant contri-

bution to GDP, employment generation, and infrastructure development, the real estate sector needs a supportive budget that addresses long-standing challenges and paves the way for sustainable growth, especially for the affordable housing segment," said Boman Irani, President, CREDAI.

Atul Monga, CEO & Cofounder, BASIC Home Loan, said the industry is advocating for a significant increase in the tax deduction for home loan interest.

"Currently capped at Rs 2 lakh, there is a push to raise this limit to at least Rs 5 lakh. This adjustment is expected to revitalize the market, especially in the budget homes segment," subdued trend influenced by

Sensex, Nifty end lower; FMCG, IT stocks top drags

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty pared initial gains and settled lower on Saturday due to selling in FMCG and IT

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell by 259.58 points or 0.36 per cent to settle at 71,423.65 as 24 of its components declined

and six advanced. The Nifty declined 50.60 points or 0.23 per cent to 21,571.80.

Among the Sensex firms, Kotak Bank, PowerGrid, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, PowerGrid were the major gainers.
HUL, TCS, M&M, IndusInd
Bank, HCL Tech were among

the losers. "Amid rising optimism about AI, US markets surged over the weekend. However,

Profit booking was noted in IT and FMCG, while private banks witnessed selective buying post the recent sharp correction and stable Q3 earnings, Nair added. Among sectors, FMCG and domestic markets exhibited a

Services said.

IT stocks suffered the most,

Research, Geojit Financial

extended holidays, low volwhile banks and financial serumes, and weekly option expivices gained. ration," Vinod Nair, Head of Shares of HUL and Reliance

> results. Reliance Industries shares settled 0.80 per cent down at Rs 2713.20 on BSE post its

Industries were under pressure

after their December quarter

third quarter earnings announcement on Friday.

The company posted a 9 per cent rise in its December.



In Romance of the Three the imperial and aggressive policy of China from the classic, there is a story of third century BC to the Zhuge Liang, a general of the Shu kingdom. As the story goes, the general finds his fortress city of Xicheng besieged by a much superior army of the Wei kingdom. Finding it difficult to hold on to the fort, Zhuge does the unthinkable: he gets all the city gates opened and asks his soldiers to disguise themselves as ordinary householders and go about their daily lives in full view of the advancing Wei army. Zhuge himself sits atop a city gate, playing 'qin', a Chinese string instrument. Confused, the Wei forces dare not enter the gates, suspecting some sort of ambush awaiting them. They, instead, make a

hurried withdrawal. While one should desist While one should desist from robotically applying historical patterns, much less an old tale, to understand present-day China, the story does provide an overarching view about how the Chinese mind works: that China may not always mean what it not always mean what it says, and it can do what it vehemently denies in public. This makes China a difficult country to comprehend, more so if one is alien to its history and culture. The communist cocktail, present in China for over a century now and in power since 1949, has further given a heady turn to the already

intricate Chinese mind. Today, as the militaries of India and China are stuck in a standoff-like situation for more than three years at the Line of Actual Control [LAC] in eastern Ladakh, India needs to crack the Chinese code faster than others. It needs to understand why China would never say never to a neighbour's territory that it strongly believes it can have annex, intrude into, or at least lay claims at. And, why the proverbial elephant invariably finds itself on the wrong side of the dragon. Explaining the innate imperialist streak in China, eminent historian R.C. Majumdar wrote in The Organiser, Diwali issue, 1965: "Thanks to the systematic recording of historical facts by the

Chinese themselves, an

almost unique achievement

in oriental countries [...] we are in a position to follow

present day, a period of more than 2,200 years... It is characteristic of China that if a region once acknowledged her nominal suzerainty even for a short period, she would regard it as a part of her empire forever and would automatically revive her claim over it even after a thousand years whenever there was a chance of enforcing it."

Sadly, for most part of its post-Independence history, scholars like R.C. Majumdar were viciously targeted and hounded out by the Leftist gang of intellectuals who found instant political patronage in the Nehruvian ecosystem. This new intellectual class, despite its proclaimed emphasis on scientific temper and rational academic rigour, was attuned to give preference to ideology

over truth. India, thus, failed to produce real experts on China. There is no doubt a few brilliant Indian minds explaining China, but they exist not because of Chinese Studies in India but despite them. To add to it, becoming an independent-minded China expert isn't an easy exercise. As Michael Pillsbury writes in The Hundred-Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower, "It has long been known among China scholars that the people most trusted to report on China are those academics, journalists and writers who have been denied visas into the country. The rest routinely make compromises, consciously subconsciously, to maintain

their access." No wonder, India still doesn't thorough, comprehensive understanding of the 'idea of China'. Most scholars who masquerade as China experts, especially in the field of academia, are Sinophiles, who blindly admire Chinese system and culture, are often in awe of them, and many a times compromised by

Chinese favours! The above article is an edited extract from Utpal Kumar's book, 'Bharat Rising: Dharma, Democracy, Diplomacy', published by Bluone Ink



AS RAM RISES, BHARAT TOO WILL

UTPAL KUMAR'S treatise on emerging India is a compelling read to put its past in perspective and understand its future trajectory

By Monica Verma

India is on the cusp of a transformation. Nothing speaks this more than the sense of exhilaration in the air ahead of Ram Mandir inauguration in Ayodhya. There may be a small section which is associating the event with a particular political party, but largely across India, people are mostly engulfed in a sense of warm comfort that finally their revered God will be in a home of his own. That's not it, there is a strong conviction even among the most elite and educated class that the Ram Mandir inauguration marks a moment of civilisational awakening in India. It is this India which is confident about its roots that Utpal Kumar is writing about in his latest book, Bharat Rising: Dharma, Democracy, Diplomacy.

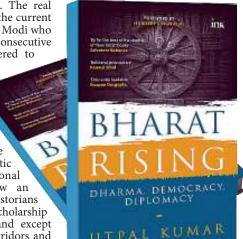
As someone who has lived through the 1990s and 2000s and grown up watching Doordarshan NCERT textbooks and watched TV debates with one-sided panels full of Lutyens' club members, the current India seems like a fundamentally changed country. When Kumar writes about this new India, he starts by outlining the characteristics of the Old India first. The old India refers to India under Congress rule where Jawaharlal Nehru may have been personally active only until his death in 1964 but the remnants of Nehruvian state continued to shine for nearly 50 years thereafter. Even Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a Prime Minister from the Sangh fold, hasn't been spared by Kumar for being a Lutyens insider after all. The real change begins only with the current Prime Minister Narendra Modi who despite ruling for two consecutive terms hasn't once bothered to

co-opt the Lutyens coterie and vice Kumar points out the excesses of Nehruvian consensus

in almost every single domain of Indian life including religion, domestic politics and international politics. He notes how an empowered section of historians continued to build their scholarship with no evidence in hand except their access to power corridors and their poor scholarship of cross-citing each other exclusively. The Indian state in its desperation to please the Left-'liberal' lobbies world over, chose secularism which turned out to be Hindumisic in all its glory. Whether it was the forced imposition of personal laws on only Hindus, or the unspoken truth of state-sponsored violence against Brahmins and Dalits, or even the insertion of the very word 'secular' undemocratically by the Indira Gandhi government during Emergency in the Constitution, the Indian state has done more to damage the civilisational fabric of

India more egalitarian in character for all the religions. Kumar's book has focused on three important pillars of new India which include - Dharma, Democracy and Diplomacy. Each of them have been addressed through twelve eclectic

this country than to actually make



BHARAT RISING: DHARMA, DEMOCRACY, DIPLOMACY BY UTPAL KUMAR **BLUONE INK, ₹599**

essays that are a must-read for every young Indian in today's date. Revisionist scholarship can sometimes pave the way for a more confident and self-secure polity. For instance, when Kumar talks about the "three musketeers" of India's freedom struggle - Subhas Chandra Bose, VD Savarkar and BR Ambedkar and how they were personally hounded by Gandhi-Nehru regime for presenting an

gather tangible power something Bose actually did and also stay aware of the danger of pan-Islamism, something which Ambedkar warned about. Similarly when Kumar calls Marxist scholarship on India as a project to declare it as a "Railway Station" where no one is native and everyone including the Indians themselves have migrated, then it leads to a reckoning as to why the positioning of India as a civilisational state which it rightfully is leads to so much discomfort among the Left-'liberals' today. Kumar's attention is not limited

to domestic politics or dharma debates alone. He shifts his thoughts to the domain of international politics where early Indian leaders' failure to read the political undercurrents has caused significant strategic damage to India. As an Indian who grudgingly looks at China today in terms of its economic size and geopolitical reach, I can't but agree wholeheartedly with him. At a time when Beijing was courting Western powers to build its strength by showing them the chimera of an accommodative China, India was busy putting its foot on the diplomatic axe. We failed to read Mao's aggression, we were busy identifying the good Pakistani from the bad Pakistani, and we kept on ignoring the friendly Japan and sympathetic US in the process. Kumar highlights this while also alternative idea of free India, then it cautioning that India's rise is justifies India's current quest to not something to which US

should be expected to commit unconditionally. Among other gems that this book offers, this one stands out for its sheer truth value. If China slows down, the daggers will be out for India's rise and that's already started to happen if we look at the West's attitude towards India lately. We must always keep this in mind while focusing on our long-term Overall, Kumar's book is a sincere

attempt in critiquing the old shibboleths and explaining why the new India must get rid of them to enable its rise globally. Every single country that has become a formidable power in the world had a set of people who were proud of their civilisational bedrocks and believed that they are destined for great things. In India, too much energy has been spent in pleasing the international lobbies - whether it includes nitpickers who cajole India to appease Islamists or the international press that vents out its hatred towards strong governments in India by shaming its democracy. Kumar has befittingly exposed them without any mercy at all. His book will be one for the keeps which must be read by every young Indian mind today. A great intellectual churn is going on and Utpal Kumar's contribution to this would be

The revieweris a columnist and a visiting faculty of International Relations at NECU, Dimapur. She completed her PhD from South Asian University and writes regularly on strategic affairs and foreign policy.

A Roller Coaster Of Thriller And Suspense

BAPPADITYA CHAKRAVARTY has skillfully curated a gripping narrative that promises to captivate thriller enthusiasts—exploring the intricate lives of terrorists, navigating the diverse schools of terrorism, and delving into the dark underbelly of drug and arms

BY KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

Tt is rare to find out from book readers those who have not read at least a dozen spy novels in their youth. Authors ranging from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (the Scotland born writer credited with the creation of Sherlock Holmes and his associate John Watson), Agatha Christie, Ian Fleming, Ken Follet, Frederick Forsyth, Robert Ludlum etc were a craze for generations belonging to the pre-1980 era. The National Network of Doordarshan had telecast the series Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" during late 1980s and it had considerable viewership.

Agatha Christie was rated as the best-selling novelist by none other than conservative literary critics. Once you start reading books by Christie to Ludlum, chances of leaving the books midway through are bleak because of the heights to which these works elevate readers and the style in which these authors tell the stories. Fleming's James Bond, (the British spy with a plot of the story.

obsession among the youth as well as the middle aged for

The spy novels by authors from USA and UK had focused on two World Wars and the subsequent Cold War which kept the world tense and panicky. There was no literature in these works of fiction except the possibilities of science and technology which were utilized to its full extent by the authors. Thus, we had James Bond wearing a wrist watch with which he could communicate with his Boss sitting in London from anywhere in the world. These books had varieties in them.

The plots did not limit to just Capitalism v Communism but the two World Wars too provided enough canvas for the authors. Ken Follet's "Key To Rebecca" and "Eye of the Needle" are based on Second World War and retain their freshness even today. The Day of the Jackal by Frederick Forsyth is based on a real life story featuring the then President of France General Charles de Gaulle. An assassin was hired to assassinate de Gaulle in 1963 and this forms the

license to kill!!) had been an The fact that a spy story need not be written in the format of a novel was first established by "God's Bankers, A History of Money and Vatican" authored by Gerald Posner, a lawyer-turnedjournalist. It is a chilling account of the death of Pope John Paul I, the last Italian to be ordained as the Holy See and the boss of the Vatican Bank. The book is the result of nine years of painstaking research by Posner and it is as exciting and thrilling as any work of fiction. Posner's another book "Case Closed: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assassination of JFK" has been described as a classic work of investigation and research. Spy novels are a rare commodity

in India, despite the fact that the Moghul Rule and the freedom fight against the British colonial masters offer a wide canvas to prospective authors. Once the Cold War ended and the unipolar world emerged, the spy novels lost their charm, But the emergence of a new form of terrorism in West Asia with special focus on Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and of course the Punjab's Khalistani

ultras has given enough ingredients and raw materials for our spy masters.

Indian authors are yet to make use of the possibilities while one of the works by Forsyth had Islamic terrorism as theme (The Afghan). The book featured India in certain chapters and it was a runaway success in the subcontinent.

counter terrorism expert working with RAW had forewarned the policymakers through his treatise

"A Terrorist State As a Frontline Ally", our own Flemings and Follets failed to see the scope of the topic. It took many years for Indian author to hit bookshelves decades and SWORDPLAY by Bappaditya Chakravarty is the book which we were waiting for. The book is published by Garuda

Prakashan, which shot into fame by bringing out the pathbreaking work "Delhi Riots 2020-The work "Delhi Riots 2020-The Untold Story", authored by Monika Arora, Sonali Chitalkar and Prerna Malhotra. SwordPlay is a chilling account of extremism of the highest order involving Islamic and Khalistani terrorists capable of doing anything for realizing their objectives. What the world missed with the collapse of Communism as well as the Iron Curtain has come back to SwordPlay haunt us. including everything terrorists, various schools of terrorism, drug and arms

Though B Raman, a reputed blooded murders and experts in central India as the plot unfolds. double crossing.

Set in America, Europe, Asia (particularly Asia, India and Hong Kong), the items book takes the reader for a trouble -free flight from the opening page itself. Please do not ask whether this is a work of fiction or a flower that bloomed in a fertile mind. There is a proverb that states that no questions should be asked about the authenticity of a work of fiction. The undercover agent Paramjyot Singh and his deputies declare an inter-continental war against an axis of Islamist-Khalistani terrorists and tuhat forms the storyline..

The Khalistani terrorists have managed to mobilize a nuclear weapon from the country's western border to Haridwar under the guise of a bike-rally for unity of religions. The spy master Brigadier Paramjyot Singh is the person who briefs the country's top political authority about the operation which has been launched to save millions. The narration shifts from Canada to running, under cover agents, cold Marseilles to New Delhi and Follet.

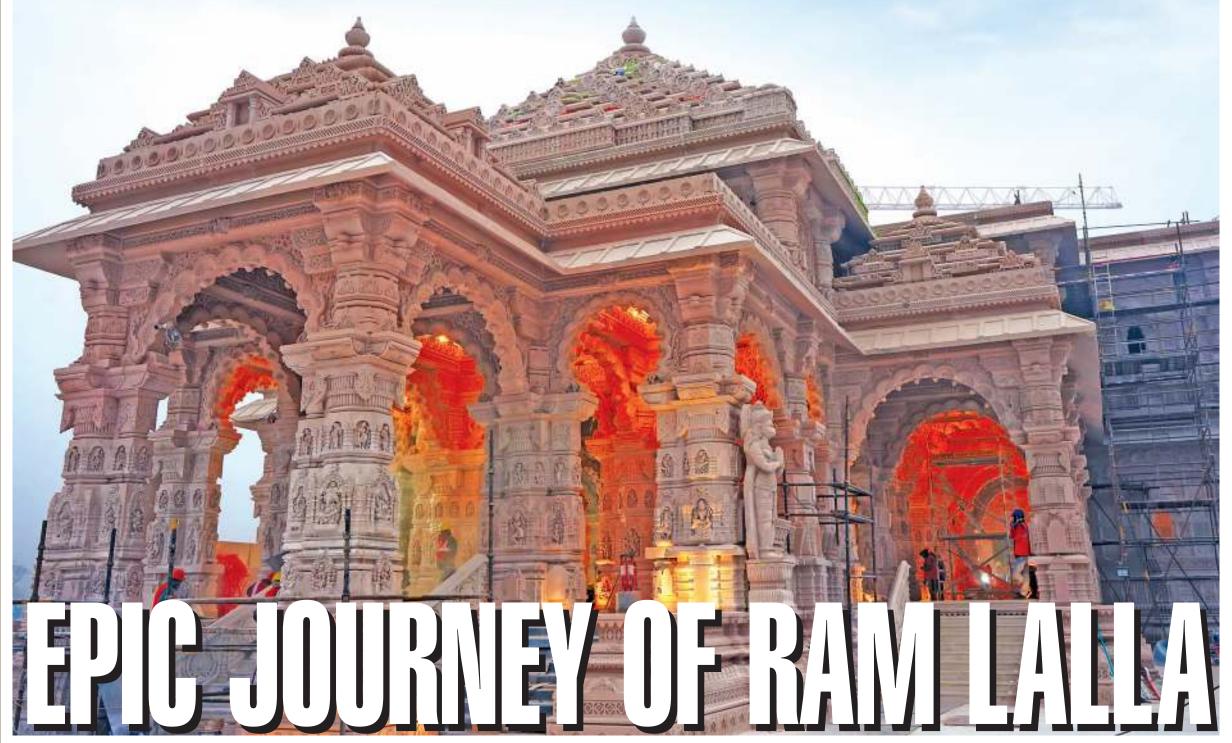
To bring in a feeling of western spy thrillers, the author has added Pakistan, steaming black coffee, bourbon Afghanistan, Iraq, south east whiskey and what not. The only missing conventional Aston Martin and other sleek sports cars. SwordPlay may not be in the same league as that of Eye of the Needle, Day of the Jackal, Odessa File or Bourn Identity. But it is interesting and readers will enjoy it. Chakravarty has made it easy for a movie maker to make a suspense thriller and the film to be made out of this plot has the potential to fill the moolah. Hope he writes more as with IS, JeM, LeT and Khalistani Forces working overtime to create subversion across India. One more important observation to be noted is that forces are out to disintegrate India by hook or by crook. This has been brought to light by Rajeev Malhotra through his works "Breaking India" (co-author Aravindan Neelakandan) and "Snakes in the Ganga" (co-author Vijaya Viswanathan). Bappaditya Chakravarty has a bright future to be a desi Frederic Forsyth or Ken

VIJAYAWADA, January 21, 2024

the <u>pioneer</u>

"As different streams having different sources all mingle their waters in





Chronicling the journey from Rath Yatra to consecration, BISWAJEET BANERJEE captures the perseverance, struggle, and unyielding commitment of leaders who shaped the Ram Mandir movement

he journey towards the completion of the majestic temple consecration of Lord Ram in Ayodhya on January 22 is a testament to a fivecentury-long arduous struggle. This historic moment, marked by the completion of the grand Ram temple, is the culmination of a tumultuous saga characterised by disputes, violence, and prolonged legal battles. The path to this monumental achievement was paved by the unwavering perseverance of devotees and a landmark court ruling that resolved long standing conflicts. The Ram Janmabhoomi struggle had its roots deeply embedded in history, with the dispute over the site being a focal point for centuries. It revolved around the belief that the Babri Masjid was constructed on the birthplace of Lord Ram, becoming a flashpoint for communal tensions and triggering a series of events that defined the course of the struggle. The perseverance of the devotees

emerged as a driving force that sustained the movement across generations. The unwavering faith in Ayodhya as the sacred birthplace of Lord Ram fueled the determination of those involved in the movement. Over decades, they encountered challenges ranging from political opposition to societal discord, yet their commitment remained steadfast. The movement also witnessed the

instrumental role played by key figures who became central to its narrative. These individuals not only dedicated their lives to the cause but also navigated the intricacies and challenges of the struggle. Their leadership, often in the face of adversity, was crucial in steering the movement towards its ultimate goal.

A landmark court ruling in 2019 provided a decisive resolution to the legal disputes surrounding the site. The judgment acknowledged the historical and religious significance of the land, paving the way for the construction of the Ram temple. This legal victory marked a turning point in the struggle, offering a path for reconciliation and

As Ayodhya prepares for the consecration of the Ram temple, it stands as a symbol of triumph over adversity and a testament to the indomitable spirit of those who dedicated their lives to the cause. The signifies not only a religious milestone but also reflects the resilience and determination that shaped the history of the Ram Janmabhoomi struggle. The saga witnessed significant contributors who played pivotal roles in shaping the movement and steering it towards success. Among them are key figures whose journeys reflect the intricacies and challenges faced during this transformative period.

LAL KRISHNA ADVANI

RATH YATRA ARCHITECT The Rath Yatra led by former Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani in 1984 is widely regarded as a watershed moment in the Ram temple movement. In the aftermath of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination, Advani's Rath Yatra became a significant catalyst, solidifying the roots of the movement. Despite the BJP winning only two seats in the 1984 Lok Sabha elections, Advani assumed leadership, emphasising Hindutva policies. Under his guidance, the BJP included the goal of building the Ram temple in its manifesto. In 1990, Advani announced the Rath Yatra from Somnath in Gujarat to Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh. The journey, filled with fervent support, encountered obstacles when Lalu Prasad, then Chief Minister of Bihar, arrested Advani. Nevertheless, the Rath Yatra had already set the movement in motion, becoming a defining moment in the history of the Ram temple struggle.

MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI THE TORCHBEARER

After Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi emerged as a significant leader actively involved in the Ram temple movement. Present during the demolition of the disputed structure in Ayodhya, Joshi played a crucial role in shaping the movement's strategies. His involvement extended to studying every aspect related to the Ram Mandir movement, contributing to meticulous planning and implementation.

Joshi's influence reached a peak during a meeting held in Lucknow in December 1992, where he urged people to go to Ayodhya the next day. His resolute stance, expressed in statements like "there is no power that can stop the construction of the Ram temple," underscored his commitment to the

AS AYODHYA PREPARES FOR THE CONSECRATION OF THE RAM TEMPLE, IT STANDS AS A SYMBOL OF TRIUMPH OVER ADVERSITY AND A TESTAMENT TO THE INDOMITABLE SPIRIT OF THOSE WHO DEDICATED THEIR LIVES TO THE CAUSE. THE COMPLETION OF THE **MAJESTIC TEMPLE IS** NOT ONLY A RELIGIOUS MILESTONE BUT ALSO A REFLECTION OF THE RESILIENCE AND DETERMINATION THAT SHAPED THE HISTORY OF THE RAM JANMABHOOMI STRUGGLE



cause. Joshi's political career included serving as an MP from various constituencies, including Varanasi, Allahabad (now Prayagraj), and Kanpur.

KALYAN SINGH UNWAVERING COMMITMENT

In 1991-92, at the peak of the Ram Mandir movement, then UP Chief Minister Kalyan Singh played a crucial role in galvanising Ram devotees. Initially expected to refrain from participating in the yatra to avoid potential arrest, Singh surprised everyone by joining the procession near Hanumangarhi. His impassioned address emphasised the relentless pursuit of building the Ram temple, further energising the movement. Despite the movement's success, Kalyan Singh faced political repercussions and lost his position due to his unwavering

commitment to the cause. Unfortunately, he passed away in August 2021, missing the consecration of the Ram temple.

VINAY KATIYAR BAJRANG DAL COMMANDER

In 1984, Vinay Katiyar assumed the role of the first president of Bajrang Dal, formed for the Ram Mandir movement. Tasked with rallying people for the cause, Katiyar travelled from village to village, organising meetings, and garnering support. These efforts bore fruit as, under Vinay Katiyar's leadership, Bajrang Dal successfully connected people across the country for the Ram Mandir movement. His political stature grew postmovement, leading him to become the National General Secretary of the BJP. He served as an elected Member of

Parliament thrice from the Faizabad (Ayodhya) Lok Sabha seat.

UMA BHARTI THE FIREBRAND LEADER

Known for her fiery speeches during times of crisis, Uma Bharti played a pivotal role in the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. Post the movement, Bharti remained active in politics, serving as a minister in the central government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Narendra Modi. She also held the position of CM of Madhya Pradesh from 2003 to 2004.

SADHVI RITAMBHARA VOICE OF PASSION

As the second firebrand woman leader of the Ram Mandir movement, Sadhvi Ritambhara's impassioned speeches resonated across the country. Despite her withdrawal from active politics, she an ashram named Vatsalya Gram in Vrindavan.

ASHOK SINGHAL CHIEF ARCHITECT

Ashok Singhal, the international president of Vishwa Hindu Parishad for 20 years, is considered one of the chief architects of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. His strategic planning and leadership were instrumental in shaping the movement, including the organisation of the parliament held at Vigyan Bhawan in Delhi in 1984. Singhal's role extended to leading the Kar Sevaks who demolished the disputed structure in 1992. He passed away on November 17, 2015.

RAM AND SHARAD KOTHRI SAFFRON FLAG BEARERS

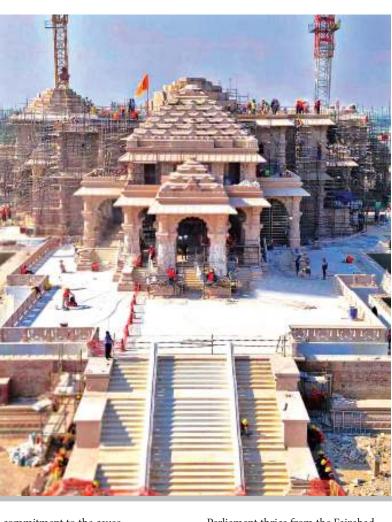
Real brothers from Kolkata, Ram Kumar Kothri, and Sharad Kumar Kothri played significant roles in the movement. They were part of the initial group of Karsevaks in 1990, raising the saffron flag on the disputed structure. Tragically, both brothers were shot during the kar seva on November 2, 1990, becoming martyrs and inspiring a surge of support for the movement."

BEHIND-THE-SCENES ARCHITECT

Champat Rai, the General Secretary of Ram Mandir Trust, worked diligently behind the scenes, gathering documentary evidence related to the Ram temple even before the demolition of the disputed structure. Rai's meticulous efforts included studying thousands of documents, reading scriptures, and providing crucial evidence to lawyers fighting the legal battle for Ram Janmabhoomi.

PRAVEEN TOGADIA FIREBRAND VHP LEADER

Alongside Vinay Katiyar, Praveen Togadia actively contributed to the Ram Mandir movement as a leader associated with Vishwa Hindu Parishad. Recognised for his dynamic speeches, Togadia played a significant role in rallying public support and fostering enthusiasm during the movement. Although currently not affiliated with Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Togadia's legacy remains connected to the fervor of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement.





A forgotten war: Looking back, looking forward

The Russia-Ukraine war, which began in February 2022, is about to enter its third year. When Russia invaded Ukraine, not even those within President Vladimir Putin's inner circle believed that the war would last for such an extended period.

Why has the West provoked Russia? Can Putin reshape his image as a strongman after the bloody war? Is Volodymyr Zelenskyy a winner? It is certain that, under the leadership of the US, the West has been attempting to . War encircle post-Cold Russia. Putin, being a former KGB man, is sensitive to the limits of security and the opportune time to intervene. Russia can't be further bullied by the West. The reason behind this is that the West, especially the US, has its own internal problems and external responsibilities.

For Putin, losing is not an option. He is desperate to win not only against Ukraine but also against the West. As temperatures drop to freezing points, forces on both sides are gearing up for hardened

For Zelenskyy, the war, despite being a significant financial burden humanitarian crisis, hardly makes any difference. The reason is that Ukraine, as a frontline state to Russia, has been reeling under the threat of war for years. Ukrainians know what they are destined for; they have to fight for their survival against the onslaught of a Russian invasion, whether today or tomorrow. The international community still recalls what Zelenskyy aired just before the onset of the war in 2022. He warned the West not to create panic about the buildup of Russian forces on the border of Ukraine. However, US President Joe Biden then clearly stated that he believed "Russia could attack its neighbour next month." Ultimately, Putin did attack Ukraine, signaling his intention to dislodge and denazify the country.

A war-monger from the

for Nazification of Ukraine and the major world powers to doing overtly or covertly.



should be tried before a court. Another lawmaker called for the establishment of a "modern analogy to the Nuremberg Tribunal" as Moscow geared up to Ukraine. denazify summary, the language used by various Russian top leaders, officials, pro-Kremlin journalists, writers, and especially Putin himself, was absolutely shocking.

Clearly, the term Nazi was an unbelievable assertion about a country whose leader, Zelenskyy, is Jewish. Interestingly, just before the war's onset last fall, Zelenskyy numerous narratives to justify antisemitism in his country. his invasion of Ukraine. Certainly, the war between Initially, he claimed that Russia and Ukraine is a battle Ukraine's government is of wills and might. The stealth. Putin is a world-class "openly neo-Nazi" and "pro- current conflict, propelled by Nazi," controlled by the "Little Putin's belligerence and Nazis." arrogance, caught the had miscalculated his moves, A top Russian lawmaker then attention of the media and he, too, had failed to asserted that President Biden showman Zelenskyy, who had and American officials are scarcely understood how to its allies in Europe might the address and when to convince react to what he had been

stop the Muscular Man of Moscow. By the time Kiev took action, Moscow was already well ahead in launching the invasion, ostensibly in the name of protecting the ethnic Russian population in the Donbas region. Indeed, Putin had planned it long in advance. According to many experts, he remained quiet for nearly eight years after the annexation of Crimea from February to March 2014.

As John Simpson rightly said, "The annexation of Crimea was the smoothest invasion of modern times. It was over efore the outside world realised it had even started." The occupation of Crimea had occurred entirely by strategist, a true "Spy Guy". On many occasions, the West understand how the US and

just begun, both Bill Powell and Naved Jamali strongly argued that "Putin has never lost a war." They further pointed out that "during past conflicts in Chechnya, Georgia, Syria, and Crimea, over his two decades in power, Putin succeeded by giving his armed forces clear, achievable military objectives that would allow him to declare victory credibly in the eyes of the Russian people and a wary watching world. His latest initiative in Ukraine is unlikely to be any different." So, these are the strong credentials of Putin, who has delivered significant victories to his fellow countrymen since his accession to power in August 1999, when the first President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, entrusted him with the job of Prime Minister after the tumultuous breakdown of the

erstwhile USSR. The political atmosphere in Russia at that time led to

Yeltsin's resignation, paving the way for Putin to take over as the Acting President of the country. Subsequently, he won the presidential election in March 2000, becoming the second President of the Russian Federation. Since then, he has been the President of the country, except for a full term from 2008-2012 when his friend Dmitry Medvedev occupied the post, simply because the Russian Constitution barred a person from remaining as President for a third consecutive term.

However, this provision no narrative suggesting that the bloodshed in the last three longer exists (thanks to a referendum conducted in 2021), and Putin can continue to remain as President until

serving Russian leader since Joseph Stalin, who ruled the USSR from 1924 to 1953. This is how Putin has risen to the current rank and power. Washington needs to handle the former KGB man very

carefully. He is well-versed in all the routes and dangers that might emerge from the current war. An aging Biden and NATO members in Europe, not closely aligned (as many, like Germany, have definitive interests and dependence on Russia), may fail to check Putin's Kremlin this year in Ukraine. Yes, it is true that the

offensive moves from both Ukraine and Russia have failed to attain a decisive victory for either party throughout the year 2023. However, this has led to a war has reached a stalemate Given the current global focus on the Israel-Hamas conflict since October 7 of last year, discussions and Today, he is the longest- efforts for an immediate solution to the situation in the contested Gaza Strip have taken precedence, pushing the Russia-Ukraine war to a

backseat in global politics. The perception of a stalemate.

material and military advantage of both parties will determine the course of action this year. The West, especially the US (facing a presidential election on November 5), will face a challenging time, and the rest of Europe, particularly NATO members, will need to decide whether to provide substantial aid to Kiev for a credible offensive in 2025 against Moscow or concede an irrecoverable advantage to Putin. Putin is expecting and planning his grand strategies accordingly. However, a new strategy can protect the sovereign frontiers of Ukraine and prevent Russia from winning the war.

experts, is flawed.

Peace continues to elude Ukraine, with Russia on a warpath and Putin showing no inclination to negotiate. Since his entry into the Kremlin, Putin has been consistently opposed to the West. The futile goal of the West so far has been to defeat Russia and humiliate Putin, but this approach is no longer effective. Engagement with Russia by the West must be realistic and flexible, offering a sustainable guarantee that Russia's leadership is acknowledged, and further NATO expansion in Europe is halted to avoid encircling the country. It is time to address mutual interests, and Washington should adopt a forward-looking approach if Putin is willing to abandon his aggressive stance.

Importantly, the West needs to understand that Putin and the Kremlin, under his leadership, do not speak for all Russian people, even though it may seem so for now. America should have learned by now how to navigate dealings with leaders like Putin. If Biden returns to power in 2025, he must remember that in Putin's unpredictable world, expecting the unexpected is

always prudent. America should be realistic and agile in handling Putin to prevent further suffering akin to that of Zelenskyy. The world has witnessed enough portion of it can be attributed

miscalculations or misguided policy perspectives. While Putin is not solely to blame, America bears its share of responsibility for the current

(The writer is currently president of the Global debated by many strategic Research Foundation)

Amid the Russia-Ukraine conflict's complexity, it is crucial for the West to adopt a pragmatic approach. Recognising Putin's strategies and prioritising mutual interests can potentially reshape the geopolitical landscape, preventing further bloodshed and fostering a path towards lasting stability.



MAKHAN SAIKIA

REVIEW

Navigating perpetual complexities of love

the 2023 novel "Lost in ethical, political, filial, and the Love Maze," Mukul religious dimensions. Kumar, a postmillennial The author adopts a focus on writer, delves into the poetic realism, exemplified perpetual complexities of through Mihir's dual dreams commitment, opportunities, and immersing reflects the complexity of in the space between Mihir's aspirations and conflicting interests and mirrors the multifaceted practices. skillfully contradictions within Mihir's emphasis on psychology and character, addressing shyness a broader exploration of the and egoism, thereby adding dvnamism and personality. Kumar's heightened transformation.

precision is evident in the than disregarding them. discovery, and the nuances of cultural enduring efficacy

rafting the narrative for commitment across aesthetic,

emphasises of becoming an IAS officer seizing and a writer. This choice author nature of human desires. dramatises Kumar's approach places human fabric. juxtaposition of

The multidimensionality to his bureaucratic ambition with exploration of existential the creative pursuit of writing awareness highlights the tension canonises the storyline, between societal expectations exploring internal conflicts, and personal passion. character development, and Importantly, this poetic the potential for growth or realism acknowledges the insights from modernism, commitment to learning from them rather

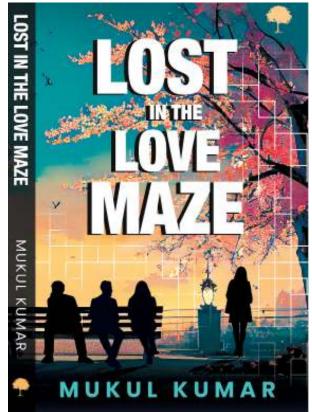
author's exploration of As a postmillennial writer, characters themes such as identity, self- Kumar delves into the socioinstitutional human behaviour. Kumar structures of love, marriage, with cultural family, and caste. He ramifications that contribute navigates the difference separation of Jyoti and Mihir. institutions and the school of Mukul skillfully dramatises life through the "lived" the crises, vulnerabilities, and realities in the creation and of production of postmillennial

Jyoti's realisation of Mihir's melancholy suggests an underlying emotional struggle, possibly stemming from the conflict between conventional paths and unconventional aspirations. Mihir's analogy of life as a balloon with the potential to burst at any time conveys fragility and unpredictability, echoing existential themes. The reference to Albert Camus and absurdism adds a philosophical laver, deepening the thematic

angst and the quest for

purpose in the face of life's

uncertainties. The writer shifts to relational aesthetics, turning away from utopianism and the aesthetics of confrontation towards an ethos of collaboration and dialogue. The struggles of achieve meaningful empathetic connections challenge readers' assumptions. Characters like Jyoti and Mihir dislocate themselves to the overwhelming between actual didactic outside narrow cultural models to imagine and maintain their empathies with others, challenging assumptions and embracing



collaborative approaches. envision Thev experiences of the other while the writing seems to be in competition with reality.

Acknowledging divided love and obligations to his parents and Jyoti initiates a nuanced exploration of conflicting establishment of the moral manages to leave a lasting

between parental selflessness and Mihir's love creates a moral dilemma, urging readers to ponder the navigation of societal norms and personal fulfillment. Mihir's sacrifice for Jyoti, while recognising his parents' sacrifice, adds moral and philosophical dimensions, influencing characters' choices and the narrative trajectory. This prompts implications and question expectations when pursuing happiness within the constraints of obligation and parental love. The character of Sheetal

introduces another angle to the paradigm of narcissistic deception, and manipulation to achieve one's goals, implying a strategic and interpersonal relationships. favorite, serves as a catalyst, highlighting the dual and contradictory aspects of behaviour and human tensions between genuine emotions and concerns, especially in the pursuit of love. This adds depth to the

responsibilities. The clash fabric for postmillennial

The line of argument in the novel unfolds as a characterdriven chronicle, seamlessly blending the cultural backdrop into the lives of its protagonists.

Mukul Kumar's emphasis on

the complex fabric of human existence elevates aesthetic commitments and aspirations into a moral form, crafting a nuanced depiction of identity consider and otherness that resonates not only with 20th-century readers but also transcends its temporal boundaries to endure in the new millennium. The author has indeed intensified exploration and succeeded in infusing virtue into potentially repetitive and recycled anecdotes, transforming the work into a psychologically opportunistic approach to nuanced and socially detailed masterpiece.

Sheetal, also the author's transformation, deeply rooted in enduring beliefs about character, authenticity, and agency, broadens the range of perspectives offered to readers and leaves a compelling and enduring impression.

"Lost in the Love Maze"

imprint with its exploration of human complexities, poignant thematic depth, and Mukul Kumar's portrayal of characters navigating the delicate balance between collective expectations from life and personal desires. Despite minor flaws, the novel succeeds in delivering a thought-provoking emotionally experience.

('Lost in the Love Maze' author Mukul Kumar is a bureaucrat, novelist, and poet. He serves as an Indian Railway Traffic Service Officer and is currently posted in the Ministry of Railways. Mukul has received the National Award for outstanding service to the Indian Railways, the Bharat Nirman Award for literary excellence from the Bharat Nirman Foundation, and the Poorvanchal Gaurav Samman for his contributions to society as both a bureaucrat and a writer. His latest work is his fourth fiction title.

The reviewer, Chetana Pokhriyal, is the Head of Department of English, Dean, School of Languages, Doon University, Dehradun)

Emotional problems

in young people were rising rapidly even before the pandemic



uman behaviour is an enigma that fascinates many scientists And there has been much discussion over the role of probability in explaining how our minds work.

Probability is a mathematical framework designed to tell us how likely an event is to occur and works well for many everyday situations.

For example, it describes the outcome of a coin toss as or 50% because throwing either heads or tails is equally probable.

Yet research has shown that human behaviour can't be fully captured by these traditional or "classical" laws of

Retired post master pedals through six states, appeals to use bicycle for good health

ferred not to go of 75, people usually take a break and relax, on holiday if but S Arunachalam decided to go on a bicycle journey all alone from Puducherry to Varanasi. Upon his return here recently, Arunachalam, a retired Post Master of Puducherry Head Post office, said on Saturday that he was spiritually elated by this adventure covering 2125 kms. He said he had a meeting with the seer of Kanchi Sankara Math Vijayendra Saraswathi Swamigal at Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam at Varnasi and received his blessings. His journey began from the union territory on September 3 last year. Arunachalam said he was able to pedal through various states before reaching Uttar Pradesh and arriving at the Kanchi

Mutt in Varanasi. "I know Hindi, English, and Tamil is my native language. I could get the guid-

At the ance of age the peor the people on the way in the Hindi speaking states. I could realise how helpful it was for me to have knowledge of Hindi." The retired govern-ment servant said he had clocked almost 100 kms a day and did not feel any set back in his health.

The septuagenarian returned to Puducherry by flight on the advice of the Kanchi seer and his bicycle was sent by train to Puducherry. He said he is planning to undertake another cycle tour to Ayodhya and hopes to accomplish the feat soon accomplish the feat soon.

Giving a message to the younger generation, Arunachalam said, cycling is good for health and this advice has been repeatedly given by doctors.

among young people even before COVID-19. He also attributed his healthy physique without Adolescence is an age facing any problem of dia-betes or blood preswhen people are particularly vulnerable to mental health probsure to his habit of lems, which may then continue into adulthood. Studies have highlighted cycling." concerning trends showing a steep rise in

mental health issues in recent decades. However, the reasons most frequently given for this rise, such as changes in family life, school factors and social media, do not fully explain all the issues.

We wanted to know if rates of emotional problems had increased in young people in Wales between 2013 and 2019 and if any trends varied between groups of young people, such as boys and girls or richer or poorer fam-ilies. We also wanted to determine whether changes in friendship quality and the prevalence of bul-lying over time mirrored any increase in adolescent emotional problems, and whether these factors could explain a part of this rise. Good quality friendships are associated with better self-esteem and in Houston mental health, whereas bullying is linked with poorer mental

organise Tesla
Light Show ahead of
Ram Mandir inauguration health. We used data from secondary school c h i l d r e n

wasn't just the virus that spread

Lduring the pan-

demic anxiety,

depression and

other mental health

concerns saw a worrying rise as well.

But new research

from my colleagues

and I confirms there had already been a

substantial increase in

emotional problems

lected every two years via the School Health Research Network. This is used to increase our understanding of risk factors for health, and to help schools and other organisations improve the lives of young people in Wales.

Students answered questions about emotional problems, including how often they felt low, irritable, nervous and had sleep difficulties. They also answered questions about friendship quality and bullying, both in person and online. In total, we looked at data from more than 200,000 students aged between 11 and 16 from three surveys of Welsh secondary schools in 2013, 2017

RISE IN EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

We found a substantial increase in emotional problems among young people in Wales between 2013 and 2019. The proportion of young people with high numbers of emotional problems rose from 23% to 38%. Our findings are in line with increasing rates of emotional disorders, referrals to child and adolescent mental health services, and youth self-harm and suicide during this period. Our study highlights that existing mental health inequalities were getting worse even before 2020. This is a particularly concerning trend as it predates COVID, which is known to have exacerbated mental health problems. Girls and those from poorer families experienced steeper increases in emotional problems.

The reasons for this finding are complex. While our study doesn't examine potential reasons, other research suggests that being richer allows families to access better housing, adequate food, better healthcare and less stressors more generally.

There are several possible reasons for worse mental health among girls, including sex hormones, lower self-esteem, more interpersonal stressors, gender-based violence and on a societal level a lack of gender equality and discrimination. But not enough research has been conducted in this field.

The proportion of students experiencing bullying increased

slightly between 2013 and 2019, and friendship quality decreased slightly. However, while we found a strong association between the quality of adolescent social relationships and emotional problems, social relationships such as friendship quality and bullying did not appear to explain these population-level increases in mental health problems.

increases in mental health problems.

Mental health support: Our findings highlight a growing need for mental health support for young people to address the steep increase in their emotional problems over the past decade, particularly among poorer families. Currently, one in three Welsh children live below the poverty line. We need to pay particu-

lar attention to supporting these young people, and others across the UK, who are at greater risk of emotional problems.

screen-printed Tshirt of Ayodhya temple." The cars were lined up in such a way that when drones took pictures, an unusual letter of "RAM" in red illuminated the surroundings.

"Despite chilly weather and long workday, it was heartwarming to see the enthusiasm amongst hundreds of participants as well as attendees at the temple for this show," said Achalesh Amar from Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), one of the organisers of the event.

"Throughout the USA, we noticed unprecedented enthusiasm for these events. Since mid-January we (VHP) organised 51 massive car rallies in 21 states and 41 cities around the IS and participation has been at its peak said. "The Tesla light shows in Houston, DC and San Francisco, or rallies and rath yatras are a small gesture of love for the beginning of the celebration of the Ram Temple inauguration in India as the Hindu community has waited for over 25 generations (495 years) for this moment," said Umang Mehta, one of the active volunteers.

Old forests are critically

important for slowing

climate change

 Γ orests are an essential part of Earth's operating system. They reduce the buildup of heat-trapping carbon dioxide in the atmosphere from fossil fuel combustion, defor-

estation and land degradation by 30 per cent each year.
This slows global temperature increases and the result-

ing changes to the climate. In the US, forests take up 12

and store the carbon long term in trees and soils.

per cent of the nation's greenhouse gas emissions annually

Mature and old-growth forests, with larger trees than

Could quantum physics be the key that unlocks the secrets of human behaviour?

probability. Could it instead be explained by the way probability works in the more mysterious world of quantum

Mathematical probability is also a vital component of quantum mechanics, the branch of physics that describes how nature behaves at the scale of atoms or sub-atomic particles. However, as we'll see, in the quantum world, probabilities follow very different rules. Discoveries over the last two decades have shed light on a crucial role for "quantumness" in human cognition how the human brain processes information to acquire knowledge or under-standing. These findings also have potential implications for the development of artificial intelligence (AI).

HUMAN IRRATIONALITY

Nobel laureate Daniel Kahnemann and other cognitive scientists have carried out work on what they describe as the "irrationality" of human behaviour. When behavioural patterns do not strictly follow the rules of classical probability theory from a mathematical perspective, they are deemed "irrational". For example, a study found that a majority of students who have passed an end-of-term exam favour going on holiday afterwards. Likewise, a majority of those who have failed also want to go for a holiday.

If a student doesn't know their result, classical probability would predict that they would opt for the holiday because it is the preferred option whether they have passed or failed. Yet in the experiment, a

arely hours away from the grand inau-Buration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, enthusiastic devotees here have arranged an awe-inspiring and innovative Tesla car light show dedicated to Lord

selves "Ramji ki Gilahariyan of Greater Houston", gathered at Shri Guruvayurappan Krishna Temple for the light show on Friday evening, attracting hundreds of Ram Bhakts and passersby in the neighbourhood. The cars had a giant-sized Ram Rath in the

Over 100 Tesla car owners, calling them-

backdrop, with a life-size temple oil painting, and loud music of "Iai Sri Ram" giving the place a divine look and feel of being at the

Tesla Car drivers use a key feature wherein the headlights can be programmed to off and on at the same time. Soon after the beautiful light show, they

assembled at the temple for aarti, joined by

other bhakts who sang resounding bhajans

dedicated to Lord Rama and Krishna and distributed Prasad amongst the devotees. According to the organisers of the Tesla

major-

they didn't

whole time. But classical probability

does not accurately capture the behaviour,

so it is described as irrational. Many similar viola-

In classical probability, when a sequence of

depend on the order in which the questions are

questions is asked, then the answers do not

posed. By contrast, in quantum physics, the answers to a series of questions can depend

crucially on the order in which they are

One example is the measurement of the spin of an electron in two different directions. If you first

measure the spin in the hori-

zontal direction and then

in the vertical direc-

tion, you will get

one outcome.

tions of classical probability rules have been observed

know how

they'd done.

Intuitively, it's

not hard to

understand that

students might not

want to go on holi-

going to be worry-

QUANTUM BRAIN?

day if they are

ing about their

ity of stu-

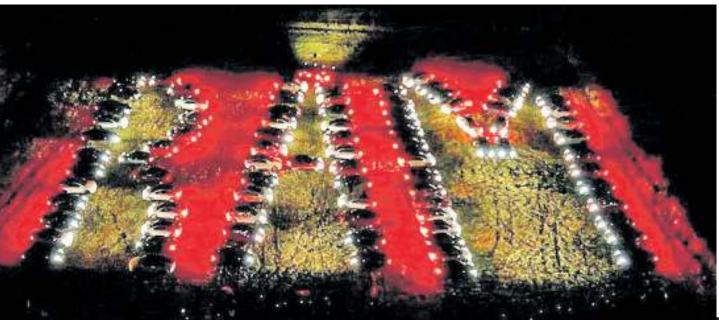
dents pre-

Light Show, participating car owners had to register for the event in advance.

'We requested all the Ram Bhakts to register for the show, acknowledge and sign the

Indians

waiver form, to provide vehicle plate numbers for security reasons. Everybody who registered got a magnetic decal or sticker for their car along



Women and children are main victims of Gaza war: UN

omen and children are the main victims the Gaza war, with some 16,000 killed and an estimated two mothers losing their lives every hour since Hamas' surprise attack on Israel, the U.N. agency promoting gender equality said

As a result of the more than 100-day conflict, UN Women added, at least 3,000 women may have become widows and heads' of households and at least 10,000 children may have lost their fathers.

In a report released Friday, the agency pointed to gender inequality and the burden on women fleeing the fighting with children and being displaced again and again. Of the territory's 2.3 million population, it said, 1.9 million are displaced and "close to one million are women and girls" seeking shelter and safety.

UN Women's executive director, Sima Bahous, said this is "a cruel inversion" of fighting during the 15 years before the Hamas attack on Oct. 7. Previously, she said, 67% of all civilians killed in Gaza and the West Bank were men and less then 14% were women.

She echoed U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' calls for a humanitarian ceasefire and the immediate release of all hostages taken captive in Israel on Oct. 7.

"However much we mourn the situation of the women and girls of Gaza today, we will mourn further tomorrow without unrestricted humanitarian assistance and an end to the destruction

and killing," Bahous said in a statement accompanying the report.
"These women and girls are

deprived of safety, medicine, health care, and shelter. They face imminent starvation and famine. Most of all they are deprived of hope and justice," she said. The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza says nearly 25,000 Palestinians have been killed in the conflict, 70% of them women

and children. The United Nations says more than a half million people in Gaza a quarter of the

population are starving.
In Israel, around 1,200 people were killed during the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas that sparked the war, and some 250 people were taken hostage by militants. More than 100 hostages are believed to

still be held captive in Gaza. Bahous said UN Women had heard "shocking accounts of unconscionable sexual violence during the attacks" by Hamas, and she echoed U.N. calls for accountability, justice and support for all those affected.

Despite escalating hostilities in Gaza, the agency said women-led and women's rights organizations continue to operate. It found that 83% of women's organizations surveyed in the Gaza Strip are at least partially operational, mainly focusing on the emergency

response to the war.
But UN Women said its analy-

sis of funding from las year's flash appeal for Gaza found that just 0.09% of funding went directly to national or local

women's rights organizations. Bahous said there is a need for much more aid to get to Gaza, especially to women and chil-

dren, and for an end to the war. "This is a time for peace," she said. "We owe this to all Israeli and Palestinian women and girls. This is not their conflict. They must no longer pay its price.

younger forests, play an outsized role in accumulating carbon and keeping it out of the atmosphere. These forests are especially resistant to wildfires and other natural disturbances as the climate

Most forests in the continental US have been harvested multiple times. Today, just 3.9 per cent of timberlands across the US, in public and private hands, are over 100 years old, and most of these areas hold relatively little

carbon compared with their potential.

The Biden administration is moving to improve protection for old-growth and mature forests on federal land, which we see as a welcome step. But this involves regula-

tory changes that will likely take several years to complete. Meanwhile, existing forest management plans that allow logging of these important old, large trees remain in place.
As scientists who have spent decades studying forest

ecosystems and the effects of climate change, we believe that it is essential to start protecting carbon storage in these forests. In our view, there is ample scientific evidence to justify an immediate moratorium on logging mature and old-growth forests on federal lands.

Federal action to protect mature and old-growth forests A week after his inauguration in 2021, President Joe



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