

All Reddys in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh are my relatives. Just because one is a Reddy doesn't mean he got work through me. Srujan Reddy is the son-in-law of BRS MLA Upender Reddy and he got work during BRS rule. The BRS and KTR once said that the BJP is the most corrupt party and vowed to end it. Now, the same people are appealing to BJP leaders and aligning with them. KTR should challenge it legally instead of making baseless claims to deflect attention from his family's actions

- A Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister

'Poet Kalidas' works make us realise need to save environment'

WHEN 'CHOICES FELT RIGHT OR WRONG' FOR PATRALEKHA

Dil Raju to encourage NEW TALENT!

DON'T MISS...

Only one drug testing lab in TG

Only one Drug Testing Laboratory available in Telangana is limiting the inspections in the State, said Drug Control Authority (DCA) officials, at a review meeting held by Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha. This one drug testing lab in the State was established in 1956, which has a maximum testing capacity of 400 samples per month. This year, only 3,255 samples were tested due to ...

-PAGE: 3

Student's suicide triggers outrage

Bharat Rashtra Samithi Vidyarthi (BRSV) on Tuesday leaders staged a protest at the main gate of the Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge and Technologies demanding immediate resolution of problems being faced by students. The police arrested the protesters when they tried to force their way into the university. The protest followed the suicide of an 18-year-old second-year PUC student Swathi Priya at her hostel ...

-PAGE: 4

Russia keen to boost trade ties with India

Russia, which is mulling diversifying to urad and tur production, is keen to strengthen pulses trade cooperation with India, the government said on Tuesday. A Russian delegation led by Deputy Minister Maxim Titov had on Monday met Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare, discussing in details the possibility of enhancing the trade cooperation in the field of pulses. The consumer affairs department, in a statement, said Russia ...

-PAGE: 8

India eye battling revival against SA

Indian batting line-up needs to get its mojo back against a resurgent South Africa to regain the lost ground on rather unfamiliar SuperSport Park conditions when the two teams clash the third T20I here Wednesday. Since 2009, India have played only one T20I at this venue, which they lost by six wickets in 2018 and have only one survivor from that squad in this side -- Hardik Pandya. Along with that unfamiliarity factor, India will also grapple with ...

-SPORTS

LAGACHARLA INCIDENT

Pharma triggers furore

'Attack on Collector planned' Will probe and expose plot: Sridhar Babu



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that the Congress Government will not remain silent if anyone tries to threaten government officials, the Ranga Reddy district in-charge Minister, D. Sridhar Babu, said the government will conduct a comprehensive probe into the Lagacharla incident in which the public attacked the

Collector. Speaking to the media at the CLP Media Hall on Tuesday along with Deverakonda MLA N. Balu Naik, Sridhar said the government has taken the issue seriously. The attack was planned and it will come out in the probe, he said.

Nobody will be spared: CM



Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has issued a stern warning after the attack on Vikarabad District Collector Prateek Jain and other officials regarding land acquisition for the Pharma village. Reacting strongly, Revanth condemned the incident and questioned the stance of the BRS, which he claimed is indirectly supporting the attackers instead of condemning

57 detained for attack

The Vikarabad district police arrested 57 people on Tuesday in connection with the attack on officials during a public hearing on the proposed 'Pharma Village.' Of those detained, 16 have been remanded following a thorough investigation while the remaining were released. The injured officials were taken to the Parigi Government Hospital for medical examination under tight security, while the police presented the accused before the Kodangal Magistrate. IG Satyanarayana said that a person named Suresh had a hand in inciting the mob. Police teams are

Continued on Page 2

BRS leaders on way to support farmers held

The opposition BRS leaders of Vikarabad district were detained by the police when they attempted to visit farmers arrested during a protest over land acquisition for the proposed Pharma Village in

Kodangal constituency. Legislative Council Opposition Leader Sirikonda Madhusudhanachari, RS Praveen Kumar, Patnam Narendar Reddy, Karthik Reddy and others were stopped at Manneveda Cross by the police and later taken to the

police station. There, they submitted a memorandum to the Additional SP. Speaking to the media, Madhusudhanachari condemned the actions of the Revanth government, accusing it of disregarding the promised

Continued on Page 2

MLAS DEFECTION CASE HC reserves verdict

The Telangana High Court has reserved its verdict on the disqualification petitions filed against MLAs accused of defection. The judgement, initially expected fast, was put on hold after the court heard the arguments of both sides.

The court indicated that a final ruling on the matter will be delivered on November 12 causing a stir in political circles. The disqualification petition targets MLAs Danam Nagender, Telam Venkatarao and Kadiam Srihari, who were elected on the BRS symbol in the Assembly elections held last November. These MLAs, however, later switched allegiance to the Congress, sparking allegations of defection. BRS leaders subsequently moved the High Court, requesting a directive to the Speaker to disqualify these MLAs for abandoning the party on whose symbol they were elected.

During the hearing, the High Court issued instructions to the Assembly Secretary, urging the establishment of a timeline to resolve the disqualification process of the defecting MLAs. The court move to reserve its judgement has heightened political tensions, with both parties closely watching the case's outcome.

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



India successfully test-fires long-range cruise missile

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Tuesday successfully carried out the maiden flight-test of a Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile from an integrated test range off the coast of Odisha. The defence ministry said all subsystems of the missile system performed as per expectation and met the primary mission objectives.

It said the missile followed the desired path using way point navigation and demonstrated its capability to perform various manoeuvres while flying at various altitudes and speeds. The missile is also equipped with advanced avionics and software to ensure better and reliable performance.

"The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted the maiden flight-test of Long Range Land Attack Cruise Missile (LRLACM) from the

Continued on Page 2

Guv in Delhi, all eyes on Formula E probe file

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma was in New Delhi on Tuesday. This comes at a time when Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and BRS MLA KTR too are in the national capital.

The Chief Minister has raised questions over the New Delhi visit of KT Rama Rao (KTR), suggesting a potential undisclosed agreement between the BRS and the BJP.

A file was sent to the Governor by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) around 15 days ago, seeking permission to prosecute KTR.

The Governor, after consulting legal experts, has referred the matter to the Attorney General for his opinion. With both KTR and the Governor in New Delhi, the Chief Minister hinted at the possibility of behind-the-scenes discussions.

"If there is no hidden deal between BRS and the BJP, why was KTR in New Delhi at this crucial moment?" he asked, suggesting that KTR's visit could be linked to the ACB's prosecution request.

The Governor is in New Delhi to attend a meeting connected to AYUSH on Wednesday. However, while there

Continued on Page 2

'Mere allegations don't work'

KTR demands Modi to probe corruption in AMRUT tenders

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS Working President KT Rama Rao (KTR) urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to address the corruption in Telangana's AMRUT tender process.

He criticized Modi for labelling Telangana as an 'ATM' of the Congress for funding election campaigns but remaining silent on local corruption allegations.

"Modi said Telangana has become an ATM of the Congress. I agree with him but why are you not taking action? The BJP must act on the Amrut scam," KTR said.



He said that as Modi and BJP leaders have accused the Congress of committing corruption in Telangana, they must now take action to justify their statements. KTR said the BRS had submitted evidence of

Continued on Page 2

'Contracts not awarded on caste basis'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy fired back at KT Rama Rao (KTR) over allegations regarding the Amrut Scam, addressing KTR's claims about the involvement of Srujan Reddy, who is the son-in-law of BRS MLA Upender Reddy.

Speaking on the matter, Revanth clarified, "KTR is naming Srujan Reddy, pointing out his relationship to Upender Reddy. Yes, Upender Reddy is a BRS MLA, and under the BRS government,

Continued on Page 2

TG outlines plan to tone up livestock sector

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Level Executive Committee of the National Livestock Mission (NLM) which met on Tuesday under the leadership of Sabyasachi Ghosh, the Special Chief Secretary for Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development and Fisheries, decided to outline a five-year strategy to strengthen the state's livestock sector.

The meeting held at the Directorate of Animal Husbandry in Hyderabad brought together District Veterinary Officers and senior officials and discussed comprehensive plans, particularly the provision of free fodder

seeds for livestock farmers. Ghosh directed the officials to develop a detailed action plan and project report for the next five years, underscoring the necessity of accessible fodder resources.

The Telangana State Seed Development Corporation and private entities have been tasked with analysing these projects to ensure feasibility and impact. Their findings are expected to support the department's commitment to sustainable livestock development.

Banks have agreed to provide loans for 67 sheep and goat projects, along with three poultry initiatives. This

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builds upon the Animal Husbandry Department's efforts under the NLM's Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP), under which 412 projects have already been approved. Field officers, tasked with vetting projects at the grassroots level, recommended viable proposals for Central approval. Ghosh emphasised to district officials the importance of informing beneficiaries that subsidies will only be granted to projects approved by the Central Level Committee after a thorough evaluation. All documents submitted under the NLM scheme have been meticulously examined. Livestock owners will be provided with complete information about the programme to promote participation and maximise the scheme's benefits for cattle farmers across the state.

SM glitter for TG temples 408 temples to have coordinators

NAVEENA GHANATE naveena.ghanate@gmail.com ■ HYDERABAD

In a first 408 temples are going to get social media coordinators in Telangana. The Telangana Government has issued notifications to appoint administrators to manage temple committees under the Endowments Department.

Aspiring coordinators must secure a recommendation letter from the local MLA or the in-charge minister.

It is learnt that this approach is similar to RSS strategies, where critical posts in areas like public relations, social media, public affairs and the BJP party are entrusted to dedicated Sangh Parivar activists. Sources indicated that the

Congress is adopting a similar model hoping to empower local youth and encourage their participation through active social media roles.

The social media coordinators will focus on content dissemination through WhatsApp groups, X, Instagram and YouTube.

Highly placed sources said that this is a strategic move by the Congress to strengthen its grassroots presence.

Recently, notifications were issued for administrators for 408 temples across the state, and Congress activists have been encouraged to get involved in this.

Notifications have been issued for 27 committees under government administration,

Continued on Page 2



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Deliver tangible results

With 2024 set to be the hottest year on record, the stakes for COP29 are higher than ever

The 29th annual UN climate summit, COP29, has officially begun in Baku, Azerbaijan. This year's conference brings together diplomats, climate experts, activists, and political leaders from nearly 200 countries to address critical issues in the fight against climate change. However, the event is already facing challenges, both from the host country's fossil-fuel-centered economy and the re-election of Donald Trump as US President, which could impact future climate commitments from one of the world's largest emitters. COP29 is being held in Azerbaijan's capital, Baku, a decision that has sparked criticism from environmentalists worldwide, with activists like Greta Thunberg referring to the summit as a "greenwash conference." This year's COP has been dubbed the "Finance CoP" due to its focus on securing adequate funding for climate action. Low-and middle-income countries are advocating for significant financial support to help them reduce greenhouse gas emissions and transition to renewable energy. The UN estimates that developing countries, excluding China, need more than \$2 trillion annually by 2030 to make meaningful progress.



The current debate centers on who will finance these initiatives. In 2009, wealthier nations pledged \$100 billion annually in climate financing for developing countries, a goal they only reached two years behind schedule. Now, many of these recipient countries are calling for a new target of at least \$1 trillion per year to effectively address climate challenges. Countries such as China and the UAE, which are still classified as "developing" but are major emitters and fossil-fuel producers, face pressure to contribute more substantially to the climate finance fund. Another core issue at COP29 is the review of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the plans each country submits outlining their goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. With the next round of NDC updates due in early 2025, this summit is a crucial opportunity to solidify targets that align with the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius by 2100. The hope is that countries will commit to more ambitious emission reductions and be transparent about their paths toward net-zero emissions. COP28, held in Dubai in 2023, marked the first time a COP agreement openly called on countries to transition away from fossil fuels. However, progress has been inconsistent. The International Energy Agency's (IEA) tracking tool, established in April 2024, shows mixed results, with many countries struggling to meet their renewable energy targets. COP29 in Azerbaijan faces substantial challenges, from balancing climate goals with fossil fuel interests to addressing the financial needs of developing nations. If COP29 is to be a success, it must result in tangible commitments to climate finance, renewable energy, and unity among nations. This will be essential to ensuring that COP29 is remembered as a turning point in the global response to climate change—not as a missed opportunity.

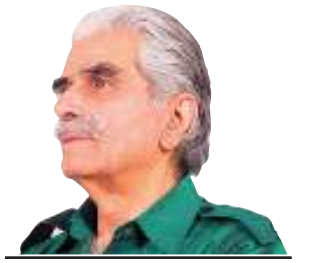
ly to the climate finance fund. Another core issue at COP29 is the review of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the plans each country submits outlining their goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. With the next round of NDC updates due in early 2025, this summit is a crucial opportunity to solidify targets that align with the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius by 2100. The hope is that countries will commit to more ambitious emission reductions and be transparent about their paths toward net-zero emissions. COP28, held in Dubai in 2023, marked the first time a COP agreement openly called on countries to transition away from fossil fuels. However, progress has been inconsistent. The International Energy Agency's (IEA) tracking tool, established in April 2024, shows mixed results, with many countries struggling to meet their renewable energy targets. COP29 in Azerbaijan faces substantial challenges, from balancing climate goals with fossil fuel interests to addressing the financial needs of developing nations. If COP29 is to be a success, it must result in tangible commitments to climate finance, renewable energy, and unity among nations. This will be essential to ensuring that COP29 is remembered as a turning point in the global response to climate change—not as a missed opportunity.

PICTALK



Students pass by a wall painting depicting a scene from 'Krishna Leela', in Prayagraj

Domestic tensions add to Oli's predicament



ASHOK K MEHTA

Amid a mounting internal criticism, Nepal's Prime Minister KP Oli faces daunting challenges, from managing a coalition to dealing with China

My Diwali and Tihar vacation in Nepal is continuing. Here is a flash report from Pokhara. After a turbulent 18-month rule, in which former Prime Minister Prachanda had to seek a vote of confidence five times, the two leading parties Nepali Congress and Unified Marxist Leninist unholy alliance ended CPN(Maoist) kingmaker Prachanda's rule of just 32 seats in a 205-member house. PM KP Oli-led coalition is short of a two-thirds majority. They share 4 to 3 in NC's favour in ruling the seven provinces. The promise of Ram-Rajya is unlikely to materialise. Two things stand out: an uneasy stability in government; and Oli's apparent unpopularity. Oli's only claim in his first 100 days is a positive stock market. And breaking the tradition of a Nepalese PM's first overseas visit to India by going first to China from 2 to 6 December, which high profile foreign minister Arzu Rana is organising, India not inviting Oli to become PM is a deliberate omission which was served to late PM Sushil Koirala also a decade ago. Oli's standing as a leader has diminished because he is a junior partner to NC which is seen favoured by India, and due to his apparent loss of control and power over UML. A front-page report in Kathmandu Post (5 November) illustrates this. But alleged corruption cases against him and his supporters including the super department store chain Bhat Bhateni owner Min Bahadur Gurung have dimmed his reputation. On occasions, he was greeted with the chant "Oli chor, desh chhod". Still, Oli retorted: "wait and watch my party perform during 2027 elections". He is hoping to resuscitate his image from his visit to China. His stock with India is low. While Rana was given a red carpet welcome in India - meeting PM Modi, NSA Ajit Doval and Secretary to Prime Minister PK Misra - Oli's meeting with Modi on the sidelines of UNGA was low-key. The China visit will have the Oli hallmark. He will meet President Xi Jinping, his counterpart Li



Qiang and Foreign Minister Wang Yi. He will try to convert the USD 250mn loan from the Exim Bank of China for the China-constructed Pokhara International Airport - a white elephant like Hambantota in Sri Lanka - to grant though China has insisted it is part of the BRI loan. Oli is expected to sign the BRI implementation plan which China has been pressing but so far, Nepal has resisted as Kathmandu wants BRI to come under a grant scheme and not a high-interest loan. The BRI deal has been pending since 2020. Oli during his 2018 China visit had outlined 35 projects which were trimmed to nine projects under BRI. If Oli can persuade China of his 'grant scheme for BRI' or place some of the nine projects under it, he will have made a big breakthrough. Strangely few protest about Chinese intrusions in the north. The Jeevan Bahadur Shahi report which had recently mapped Chinese encroachments, missing border pillars and illegal construction, has been quashed. Nepali leaders willingly oblige Beijing over the One China policy that has ensured the 'Great Wall of China' on the border to prevent Tibetan infiltration and migration to Dharamsala. Only one or two Tibetans slipped through this year. China wants Nepal to sign and ratify 'the Border

OLI'S ONLY CLAIM IN HIS FIRST 100 DAYS IS A POSITIVE STOCK MARKET. AND BREAKING THE TRADITION OF A NEPALESE PM'S FIRST OVERSEAS VISIT TO INDIA BY GOING FIRST TO CHINA FROM 2 TO 6 DECEMBER, WHICH HIGH PROFILE FOREIGN MINISTER ARZU RANA IS ORGANISING

Management System' which Kathmandu has not done so far. But Beijing hopes Oli will. China-Nepal relations were upgraded to Strategic Partnership during Xi's historic 2019 visit. The Xi visit was unique because none of the agreements signed had been implemented. A power trade agreement may be facilitated now after the completion of the 220 KVA transmission line from Rasuwagharhi to Kirung to sell power from Chinese hydro projects. It is in the energy sector that Nepal will eventually prosper. Bangladesh, Nepal and India signed a tripartite agreement for the 40MW sale of Nepal electricity to Bangladesh in the rainy season. India holds the key to the development of Nepal's power sector. Nepal is complaining about the Bureau of Indian Standards withholding certification of exports, especially with Chinese components which will hit Kathmandu, not Beijing. The opposition is in disarray with former Home Minister, once a rising star, Rabi Lamichhane, back in jail for the Pokhara Cooperative fraud. His party and his image have taken a beating though independents like Kathmandu Mayor, Balen Shah and Dharan Mayor, Harka Sampang, are progressing relentlessly to clean politics. While King Gyanendra's pop-

ularity may appear to be rising, a return to constitutional monarchy is unlikely despite his recent visit to Bhutan which triggered unusual speculation. It is India that is making quiet gains, the embassy keeping a low profile, letting PMO Delhi run the show. Lingering negativity about Indian interference has all but vanished. On Agniveer, the feeling among Indian Gorkha ex-servicemen is that Nepal should lift the embargo on it. "Something (even four years service) is better than nothing". Foreign Minister S Jaishankar's remarks in July on Agniveer (relating to Nepal) were clear. "India's foreign policy is determined by its national interest. Not by any other country". The message reportedly conveyed to Arzu Rana in Delhi was: "no change in terms of engagement on Agniveer" even as a review is ongoing. COAS Gen Dwivedi is arriving here on November 21 for a ceremonial appointment as Honorary Chief of Nepal Army which has lost its lustre because not a single Nepali has been recruited in the Indian Army for five years. (The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff; the views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CHADRACHUD'S IMPACTFUL TENURE

Madam — Apropos your editorial, "A rich legacy," published on November 11. Justice DY Chandrachud's tenure as the CJI of India, which concluded on last Sunday, was marked by transformative rulings and substantial reforms, carving out a unique legacy in the Indian judicial history. The list of judgements penned by him is long and covers almost all aspects of law. They blend scholarship and jurisprudence and are likely to inform both future decisions and how the law is studied. Striking down the Electoral Bonds Scheme and upholding the abrogation of Article 370 are among his influential verdicts that stand pillars of his legacy. His decisions resonate not only within the corridors of the Supreme Court but also in the lives of countless Indians whose rights and freedoms he defended. Through humour, resilience, and an unwavering dedication to constitutional ideals, Chandrachud exemplified judicial leadership. As India's judicial landscape evolves, his tenure will be remembered as a testament to the power of law to uphold equality, integrity, and the spirit of democracy. Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

PRIORITISE MENTAL WELLBEING

Madam—Apropos to "Creating a workplace culture that truly supports mental health," published on November 11. It is good that they chose to focus on mental health in the workplace on Mental Health Day on October 10. Because the way few professionals in both the private and government sectors have taken their lives due to undue work pressure in the last few months is alarming, to say the least. Now a days, whoever is entering the corporate world is expected to be mentally strong to cope with the rising pressure and huge mismatch in work-life balance, but how would we justify the death of a young girl who has done well academically to clear CA and get into one of the top 4 consulting firms in the country and was forced to take her life in Pune? We in India have a very abysmal psychiatrist-patient

A boost to women entrepreneurs



The Finance Minister launched five Nari Shakti branches of Union Bank of India for women entrepreneurs in a step to boost women's power. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman virtually inaugurated five Nari Shakti branches of Union Bank of India

from Bengaluru. She urged the bank to develop technology-driven, cluster-based schemes specifically tailored to support women, aiming to empower female entrepreneurs and strengthen financial inclusion for women across the country. Furthermore, she encouraged women entrepreneurs to make use of these schemes and contribute to job creation. The Nari Shakti operates with a focus on extending credit to women entrepreneurs. In addition to financing women-owned manufacturing and service units, the bank will also focus on advisory services, workshops on start-ups, skill development programs, mentorship, networking, and collaborations. Union Bank of India has opened Nari Shakti branches in Bengaluru, Chennai, Visakhapatnam and Jaipur. It is a right step in the right direction. Akhilesh Krishnan | Mumbai

Organic farming: Cultivating a climate-conscious future



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

Organic farming is emerging as a sustainable agricultural solution, offering an eco-friendly alternative to conventional farming practice

With a growing focus on environmental issues, organic farming has emerged as a powerful ally in the fight against climate change. As global temperatures climb and natural ecosystems deteriorate, there is a shared conviction among scientists, environmental activists and farmers about the pressing need to create sustainable methods for food production. Organic agriculture holds significance not just for cultivating food without synthetic pesticides and fertilisers, but also for fostering farming systems that harmonise with nature. Could organic farming be the answer to the climate crisis? The fundamentals of organic farming lies in its significant potential to greatly diminish greenhouse gas emissions. The production of these, in conjunction with chemical pesticides, demands significant amounts of fossil fuels, whereas organic farms prioritise natural fertilisers and composts that enhance soil health over time. Environmental scientists, states, "Soil in organic farms often contains more carbon



because of the organic matter used." Healthier soil retains more moisture and serves as a carbon sink, effectively capturing CO₂ from the atmosphere. Organic farming promotes a rich variety of life forms. The importance of biodiversity cannot be overstated when it comes to creating resilient ecosystems. Traditional monoculture farming strips the soil of essential nutrients, reduces the diversity of habitats, and leaves crops vulnerable to numerous pests and diseases. Organic farming often embraces a variety of crops, fosters the growth of wild plants in and around the farm, and supports pollinators like bees and butterflies. Organic farms can have as much as 30 per cent greater species richness than conventional farms, allowing for a greater diversity of birds, insects, and other wildlife to flourish alongside agricultural activities. This is similar, in part, regarding the conservation of water. Organic farms utilise techniques such as mulching and crop rotation to effectively conserve water. These methods enhance the soil's composition and increase its ability to retain moisture. This is why the organic farm is more adept at managing droughts, as numerous regions impacted by climate change are grappling with this issue. Through organic farming, we're cultivating more than just crops; we're fostering a sustainable water cycle. While there are several advan-

tages to consider, some contend that relying solely on organic farming may not suffice to nourish the global population, as it tends to produce lower yields compared to traditional practices. Incorporating organic practices, such as crop rotation and minimising reliance on chemicals, into extensive agricultural operations significantly impacts the fight against climate change. Organic farming may not be a perfect solution, yet its environmental advantages are clear: reducing carbon emissions, conserving water, and boosting biodiversity are integral components of a comprehensive strategy in sustainable agriculture. As consumers, we can contribute by opting for organic products whenever we have the chance. Together, we can achieve significant strides towards a more sustainable world. The path to achieving climate resilience is intricate; nonetheless, by embracing organic farming, we can certainly sow the seeds for a greener future. (The writer is a motivator and a freelance writer; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN BLESSINGS OVER BILLIONS

If we want to be happy, then we should earn blessings which is our real wealth



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

We all love money ...don't we? It's a fact that money makes the world go round because it can make the impossible possible and the unimaginable real. Hence, it won't be an exaggeration to say that money can do almost everything. (At least those who have it feel so for sure) There is a famous Hindi film song that says "The whole thing is that ki bhaiya Sabse Bada Rupaia". We all have experienced how money can make people change their moods and colours in a jiffy. Haven't we? It can close the eyes, seal the mouth and deafen the ears wherever needed. We have seen in many scenes of movies how witnesses of crime turn a blind eye and a deaf ear and maintain a stony silence even though they know the truth. Similarly in the world of business, money is the prime force behind the movers and shakers of mega deals, mergers and break-ups. Whether it's sports, entertainment or any other business, money can make cut-throat competitors get into cooperative mode in mutual interest. Money can match the mismatched, miss targets and change roles. At present it is observed that money has a considerable clout even in matters of faith. Like, it can gain you easy access to the holy citadels of godmen who may anoint you as their ardent follower. With money, you can also have a quick darshan of your favourite lord at the temple without having to wait in long queues. The list is unending. In short, money can buy anything and everything under the sun that can be bought. Though money creates this illusion that we are living in paradise money cannot



do any of the following for us. Like, money can buy us a beautiful house but not a happy home; it can buy us delicious food and expensive health-care but not good health; it can provide us with high security but it cannot guarantee even minimum safety; it can buy us countless things for entertainment but not cheer and joy; it can buy us a comfortable bed but not sound sleep; it can buy name and fame but not real respect; it can buy the best contacts and relations but not true and honest love; it can buy crowns and thrones but not real power; it can buy good education but not intelligence and wisdom & lastly it can bail us out from the worst crimes but it cannot help us escape divine justice & buy us liberation from our sins and sufferings. So, no matter if money does make the world go round, at the end of all the going round, we reach nowhere and get nothing substantial and real and end up being more impoverished than ever. Since ages, our scriptures and sages have spoken about the vices and virtues. Of all the vices like lust, anger, attachment, greed and ego, the most dangerous and subtle is "Greed". It is said that greed is such a kind of hunger that's never satisfied. Our desire for food ends when our hunger is appeased, our anger also subsides when its purpose is achieved, but! Greed is not satisfied even if we get the kingdom of the whole world. Hence, it is this tendency, which is created by wealth, in a person who possesses it, that leads to corruption at all levels. So, does it mean one should not recognise the importance of money? Not really! Instead, we must understand that money or wealth is merely a tool that has to be used wisely and without greed, attachment or selfishness to create happiness for all. Hence, as long as we use it as a master's, it will bring us benefit and happiness. As soon as we become slaves to it, it will bring loss and misery. An enlightened person would always use money for the maximum good of a maximum number of people, whereas for a spiritually empowered soul, money becomes a tool to create good karma and a good destiny for the self and others. So, the story's moral is that money has never made man permanently happy, nor will it. Hence if we want to be happy, then we should earn blessings which is our real wealth and which would go along with birth after birth. Think about it! (The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views are personal)

IFFI 2024: A global stage for cinema, culture and talent



CHAITANYA K PRASAD

This year's edition reaffirms IFFI's role as a powerful force in global cinema, connecting storytellers, industry leaders and audiences in a shared appreciation of the cinema



The 55th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) is set to bring a fresh wave of cinematic celebration to the scenic coast of Goa from November 20th to 28th, 2024. This year's festival promises to be more than just a film showcase; it's a convergence of global cultures, a launchpad for emerging voices, and a profound tribute to India's cinematic legacy. IFFI 2024 is a bold step forward, not only in its evolution but as a distinctive international film festival that celebrates both India's vibrant culture and the art of cinema on a global stage. This year, IFFI spotlights Australia as its "Country of Focus," emphasising the festival's commitment to bridging cultures and fostering international understanding. This section invites Indian audiences to dive into the heart of Australian cinema, exploring a curated selection of films that range from gritty dramas to adventurous comedies and reflective documentaries. Through this focused lens, audiences will experience the unique and evolving cinematic language of Australia, making IFFI a powerful platform for cross-cultural appreciation and dialogue. In doing so, IFFI 2024 goes beyond traditional film screening to create an immersive experience that positions the festival as a bridge between the stories, people, and cultures of the world. IFFI 2024's newest addition, the "Best Debut Director of Indian Feature Film" award, shines a spotlight on the next generation of Indian filmmakers. This award isn't just a recognition; it's a pivotal moment in a young director's career, marking a path for fresh perspectives in Indian cinema. By dedicating this category to first-time directors, IFFI signals its commitment to nurturing innovative voices and helping them gain visibility in an increasingly competitive industry. While many international film festivals focus on established talents, IFFI's recognition of debut filmmakers reflects its dedication to fostering growth and embracing the future of Indian cinema. This year's festival also pays homage to four towering icons of Indian cinema: Raj Kapoor,



WITH OVER 200 FILMS FEATURED IN ITS VIEWING ROOM, FILM BAZAAR IS WHERE STORIES FIND INVESTORS, FILMS CONNECT WITH DISTRIBUTORS, AND COLLABORATIONS ARE BORN

Tapan Sinha, Akkineni Nageswara Rao (ANR), and Mohammed Rafi. These legends shaped India's cinematic legacy and captured the hearts of audiences across generations. By featuring restored classics and specially curated presentations, IFFI brings their artistry to life for a new generation and provides international attendees with a meaningful glimpse into India's rich cinematic history. This tribute serves as a reminder of the depth of Indian cinema, its transformative impact on culture, and the enduring relevance of these trailblazers. IFFI's Film Bazaar, now in its 18th year, stands out as a dynamic marketplace that brings together filmmakers, financiers, distributors, and international industry leaders. With over 200 films featured in its Viewing Room, Film Bazaar is where stories find investors, films connect with distributors and collaborations are born. This dedicated platform sets IFFI apart from other festivals focused solely on screenings by creating opportunities for projects to grow and flourish beyond the festival circuit. For both Indian and international filmmakers, Film Bazaar represents a gateway to global audiences and a rare chance to network and secure support for future projects. The Indian Panorama section of IFFI has become a hallmark of the festival, offering audiences a diverse selection of contemporary Indian cinema. With 25 feature films and 20 non-feature films selected for their cinematic excellence, thematic resonance and aesthetic creativity, Indian Panorama showcases the vibrancy and diversity of Indian storytelling. For international attendees, it provides an authentic insight into India's socio-cultural landscape, spotlighting everything from regional narratives to avant-garde experiments. This section rein-

forces IFFI's mission to present Indian cinema in all its depth and diversity, making it an invaluable part of the global film conversation. One of IFFI 2024's standout initiatives is "Creative Minds of Tomorrow" (CMOT), a program by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) dedicated to nurturing young filmmakers. CMOT provides a platform for emerging voices to showcase short films, documentaries and animations, facilitating connections with seasoned industry professionals. Through CMOT, IFFI is not only showcasing young talent but also empowering the next generation of Indian filmmakers with the resources and connections to succeed. This initiative solidifies IFFI's role as a festival that goes beyond celebration to become a nurturing ground for creativity and growth. In line with the essence of Bharat Parv, which captured the world's attention at Cannes 2024, IFFI brings forth a celebration of India's diverse cultural heritage. Bharat Parv, a campaign highlighting India's rich traditions and unity in diversity, finds its cinematic expression at IFFI, where films, events, and programming reflect India's multifaceted identity. This celebration of Indian culture provides international visitors with an immersive experience and a deeper understanding of India's story, offering a window into its heritage through the powerful lens of cinema. IFFI 2024 arrives at a transformative moment for Indian cinema, serving as a platform to elevate Indian filmmakers onto the world stage. The festival's emphasis on emerging talent, global collaboration, and cultural exchange aligns with India's aspirations to be a global leader in the arts. IFFI's unique combination of industry

initiatives, recognition of fresh voices and celebration of cinematic heritage enables it to play a pivotal role in the growth of Indian cinema and its reception on the global stage. This year's edition promises to leave an indelible impact on the industry, redefining IFFI as a festival that doesn't just reflect India's cinematic culture but actively shapes its future. For international filmmakers, IFFI 2024 offers an unparalleled opportunity to connect with India's vibrant cinematic landscape. By providing exposure to a diverse Indian audience, access to Film Bazaar's resources and engagement with sections like the Australian showcase, IFFI offers international filmmakers insights into India's tastes, trends, and opportunities. IFFI's homage to iconic Indian artists also provides a rich cultural context that enables international guests to appreciate the legacy and contributions of Indian cinema. The 55th IFFI is a festival that seamlessly merges tradition with forward-thinking innovation, paying tribute to the giants of Indian cinema while embracing the voices of tomorrow. From the spirit of Bharat Parv to the debut of a new award for emerging talent, IFFI 2024 embodies the evolving nature of cinema and celebrates the power of storytelling as a tool for connection. As the festival draws international filmmakers, industry leaders, and audiences together, it positions India as a key player in global cinema and reaffirms IFFI as a festival of lasting impact and vision. (The writer is former additional DG, DFF and festival director, IFFI; Inputs provided by Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavi Srinivasan; Views expressed are personal)

Staying grounded: Lessons from the 1984 elections and anti-Sikh riots

Both politicians and journalists risk misjudgment when they distance themselves from the realities on the ground

The 1984 election results were a shock to many. Rajiv Gandhi won a record-breaking 414 seats, toppling major political figures. Veteran leaders like Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Chandra Shekhar faced unexpected defeats—Vajpayee in Gwalior and Chandra Shekhar in Ballia. But this story is less about the triumphs or losses and more about a crucial lesson this journalist learned from an open-hearted conversation with Chandra Shekhar. In an interview, this journalist asked the seasoned leader if he had anticipated the wave that swept away even stalwarts like himself. Chandra Shekhar replied candidly: "To be honest, I had become



MANOJ RAVHUVANSHI

disconnected from the grass roots. I didn't realise there was such a wave." This realisation left a lasting impact on the journalist, shaping their perspective going forward. The same kind of shock had reverberated through the nation during the 1977 elections, but in the opposite direction. Indira Gandhi was

ousted from power, losing her own seat in Rae Bareilly, while her son Sanjay Gandhi lost in Amethi. The Congress party was routed, failing to win a single seat in Uttar Pradesh or Bihar. Despite her stature and the counsel of her closest advisors, Indira Gandhi had also become detached from grassroots sentiment. This disconnect was something this journalist later witnessed in the field of journalism itself. During the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, this journalist returned from the field after witnessing the violence firsthand. His editor, Ayub Syed, was discussing the events with a senior journalist, OP Sabherwal, who was analysing the riots from afar.

Sabherwal likened the situation to 1947, predicting that the riots would continue indefinitely. The journalist respectfully intervened, sharing what he had observed in RK Puram: a Gurdwara under attack, granthis being rescued by the army, looters scattering when a single soldier raised his hand, and a crowd dispersing with just a shout. He explained to his seniors that the violence was being stoked by the Congress government, with rioters emboldened by police assurances of impunity. The journalist conveyed that the riots were far from uncontrollable and could be stopped whenever the government chose. And he was proven right; the violence



ceased once the government decided it had gone too far. The lasting lesson? Whether a politician or a journalist, detachment from reality clouds judgment. Without a connection to the ground, even the most obvious forces at play can go unseen. The 1984 election and subsequent events taught a vital lesson about staying connected to the grassroots. Rajiv Gandhi's landslide victory, which swept aside prominent leaders like Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Chandra Shekhar, highlighted how even seasoned politicians could lose touch with public sentiment. In a candid interview, Chandra Shekhar admitted his own disconnect from the grassroots, mirroring

the misjudgment that cost Indira Gandhi the 1977 election. This theme resonated again during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, where a journalist's firsthand observations clashed with distant analyses in the newsroom. The violence, stirred by political agendas, was ultimately controllable when authorities chose to act. The takeaway? For both politicians and journalists, a disconnect from on-the-ground realities can obscure clear judgment, leaving critical forces unrecognised. Staying rooted is essential to understanding and addressing the true dynamics at play in any situation. (The writer is a senior journalist; views expressed are personal)

IN BRIEF



Gold, silver extend losses amid sluggish demand

Gold, silver prices continued to extend losses for the second straight day in the national capital on Tuesday owing to a sluggish demand from jewellers and weak global cues, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Inflation soars to 14-month high of 6.2% Breaches RBI's tolerance level

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Retail inflation breached the Reserve Bank's upper tolerance level, soaring to a 14-month high of 6.21 per cent in October mainly on account of rising food prices.

Statistics Office (NSO) on Tuesday, inflation in the food basket increased to 10.87 per cent in October, compared to 9.24 per cent in September and 6.61 per cent in October 2023.

"Year-on-year inflation rate based on All India Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the month of October 2024 is 6.21 per cent. Corresponding inflation rates for rural and urban are 6.68 per cent and 5.62 per cent, respectively," NSO said.



Inflation based on the consumer price index (CPI) was 5.49 per cent in September and 4.87 per cent in the year-ago month. Retail inflation trended below the RBI's upper tolerance band of 6 per cent since September last year.

The RBI, which mainly factors in the CPI while arriving at its bi-monthly monetary policy, has been tasked by the government to ensure retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

According to the data released by the National

October 2024 significant decline in inflation was observed in the 'pulses and products', eggs, 'sugar and confectionery' and spices sub-group.

"High food inflation in October 2024 is mainly due to increase in inflation of vegetables, fruits and oils and fats," the NSO said.

Russia keen to strengthen pulses trade ties with India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Russia, which is mulling diversifying to urad and tur production, is keen to strengthen pulses trade cooperation with India, the government said on Tuesday.

A Russian delegation led by Deputy Minister Maxim Titov had on Monday met Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare, discussing in details the possibility of enhancing the trade cooperation in the field of pulses.

The consumer affairs department, in a statement, said Russia has emerged as a major source of India's import of masur (lentils) and yellow peas from the recent past.

Apart from these two pulses, Russia is also contemplating to diversify its pulses production to urad (black matpe) and tur (pigeon pea), it said.

India is dependent on pulses imports to meet the domestic shortages of 3-4 million tonnes. On pulses availability in the country, the government said there is a significant ease in supply of key pulses like tur,



Apart from these two pulses, Russia is also contemplating to diversify its pulses production to urad (black matpe) and tur (pigeon pea), it said

and change since July 2024 due to better kharif prospect and continuous imports.

"The overall availability of pulses has been comfortable with robust inflow of imports of tur, urad, chana and yellow peas, this year," it said.

The tur crop is reported to be good and early harvest of tur crop in pockets of Karnataka has started. Tur and urad imports for the

2024 calendar year, was at 10 lakh tonne and 6.40 lakh tonne, respectively, by the first week of November, have already exceeded the whole year import figures during last year. The government said the arrival of chana imports from Australia in bulk cargoes are expected from November.

The recent diversification of source countries for pulses played an important role in ensuring continuous inflows at

increasingly competitive rates, it added.

Meanwhile, the preliminary reports of rabi sowing for chana, masur, urad, and moong indicates that initial delay in some states due to prolonged rainfall are now recovering the lag in area coverage. "Overall sentiment and sowing intention are reported to be upbeat because of good price realisation," the statement added.

India imposes anti-dumping duty on chemical imports

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has imposed an anti-dumping duty of up to USD 557 per tonne on a chemical used mainly in the adhesive industry from China, Korea, and Thailand for five years to guard domestic players against cheap imports from these nations.

The levy is imposed following recommendations for the same by the commerce ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR). Anti-dumping probes are conducted by countries to determine whether domestic industries have been hurt because of a surge in cheap imports.

SATCOM LICENCE Musk's Starlink yet to comply with security norms: Scindia

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Telecom Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Tuesday said Elon Musk-owned Starlink is yet to comply with security norms, and a licence for satellite communications services will be issued only after they meet all the requirements for services in India.

The satellite communication services major is in the process of completing all the requirements and will get a licence once they complete the process, the minister added.

"We are more than happy to give them (licence) if they (Starlink) comply with all the conditions. You have to look at it from a security perspective, making sure that all security concerns are addressed. When they do that we will be more than happy to give it. Obviously, they are in the process of doing it," Scindia told reporters.

He was replying to a question on the status of the licence for Starlink. At present, the govern-

ment has issued a licence to Bharti Group-backed OneWeb and the Jio-SES joint venture Jio Satellite Communications. The two companies are yet to start their operations as they are waiting for spectrum allocation, for which pricing and rules are under process.

According to sources, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) is likely to finalise its recommendation on proposed rules related to spectrum allocation for satellite communications by December 15.

"The government will evaluate Trai's recommendations and thereafter decide on allocating spectrum to satellite communication companies, which will pave the way for satellite-based broadband services in the country. When asked about the status of the Rs 24,700 crore bank guarantee waiver sought by Vodafone Idea, the minister said any decision of the government will not be company-specific, albeit it will have an impact on the entire sector.



Govt to offload more onions in markets to stabilise retail prices

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Tuesday said it is keeping a close watch on onion prices and has decided to offload more quantities from buffer stock in retail markets to stabilise rates amid temporary supply constraints.

According to government data, the retail price of onion is Rs 67 per kg in the national capital while the all-India average retail price of the kitchen staple is Rs 58 per kg. "The government has decided to upscale the onion disposal in order to address temporary constraint in onion supply observed in certain markets in the past 2-3 days owing to festival season and closure of mandis," an official statement said.

Co-operative NAFED has indented two more rakes for Delhi-NCR and one for Guwahati this week. Similarly, dispatch through road transport would also be upscaled to ensure the availability of onions in the market.

"The availability of onions would be further accentuated by more supplies from NCCF,



both through rail and road transport," it added.

Moreover, the government has also decided to offload onions kept in cold storage at Sonapat to meet the requirements of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Himachal, Jammu & Kashmir, Delhi etc.

"The government is alive to the market developments and keeping a close watch to take ameliorative action to stabilise the onion prices," the statement said.

The government procured 4.7 lakh tonnes of rabi onion for price stabilisation buffer this year. It started offloading on September 5 through retail sales at Rs 35 per kg and also

through bulk sales in major mandis across the country.

Till date, over 1.50 lakh tonnes of onion in the buffer has been dispatched from Nashik and other source centres to consuming centres through trucks by road transport.

As per the assessment of the Department of Agriculture, the actual kharif sown area this year was 3.82 lakh hectare which is 34 per cent higher than 2.85 lakh hectare sown last year.

The sowing progress of late kharif onion is also reported to be normal with coverage of 1.28 lakh hectare till the first week of November.

Factory output turns positive, rises 3.1 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's industrial production expanded by 3.1 per cent in September after recording a contraction in the preceding month, as all three major segments -- mining, manufacturing and power generation -- showed improvement.

However, the growth in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) during the month was lower than 6.4 per cent registered in September 2023.

The factory output had turned negative in August at (-) 0.1 per cent, mainly on account of floods affecting mining operations in the different parts of the country.

According to the data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO), mining sector output grew by 0.2 per cent, manufacturing production by 3.9 per cent and electricity output by 0.5 per cent in the month of



September 2024.

In August, the mining sector output contracted by 4.3 per cent and power generation by 3.7 per cent. The growth in manufacturing too was muted at 1.1 per cent.

"The IIP growth rate for the month of September 2024 is 3.1 per cent which was (-) 0.1 per cent in the month of August 2024," NSO said in a statement.

During April-September 2024-25, the IIP growth was 4 per cent lower than 6.2 per

cent in the year ago.

As per the use-based classification released by the NSO, the capital goods segment growth decelerated to 2.8 per cent in September 2024 from 8.4 per cent in the year-ago month.

The data also showed that the output of primary goods rose by 1.8 per cent as against a growth of 8 per cent a year earlier.

The expansion in the intermediate goods segment was 4.2 per cent. Commenting on the data, Aditi Nayar, chief economist, ICRA said that the IIP expanded by 3.1 per cent on a year-on-year basis in September 2024 after declining by 0.1 per cent in August 2024, amid a favourable base.

The uptick was broad-based with all the use-based segments witnessing an improvement in their year-on-year growth in September 2024 vis-à-vis August 2024, she said.

Infra, transport sectors expect growth in earnings, headcount

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is likely to see the implementation of one of the largest infrastructure programmes in the 21st century amongst large economies and creating fiscal sources of capital would be key to this initiative, according to a KPMG report.

The report titled 'KPMG 2024 Infrastructure and Transport CEO Outlook' further said a survey of 120 sector leaders from across the world found that CEOs in the infrastructure and transportation sector anticipate business growth over the next three years, in terms of earnings and headcount.

It revealed that globally 57 per

cent of sector CEOs say stakeholder expectations pertaining to ESG are changing faster than they can adapt their strategy.

More than half of CEOs believe that a global failure on climate-change adaptation will have a real short-to-medium term impact on their growth, it added.

With confidence and trust in governments declining around the world, the report said 62 per cent of respondents believe the public is looking to businesses to fill the void on societal challenges. Seventy-one per cent also state that they are willing to divest a profitable part of the business if it was damaging their organization's reputation, it said.

NEW CLIMATE FINANCE GOAL

G77, China rejects framework for draft text

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

G77 and China, the largest bloc representing around 130 countries at the UN climate talks, has rejected the framework for a draft negotiating text on a new climate finance goal -- the central issue at this year's climate summit in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The substantive framework for a draft negotiating text, prepared by the co-chairs of the Ad Hoc Work Programme on the New Collective Quantified

Goal (NCQG) and published in October, is the first item for countries to deliberate on.

However, on Tuesday, G77 and China rejected the framework, arguing it does not accurately reflect the suggestions that developing countries have made for the new climate finance goal.

Other groups of developing countries, including the Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDCs), Alliance of Small Island Developing States (AOSIS), Least Developed



Countries (LDCs), and the Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC), backed G77 and China in this rejection.

Damage Collaboration, an international coalition of climate researchers and activists, G77 and China have requested that the co-chairs prepare a new draft text before the next negotiating session.

G77 and China demanded that the new climate finance package meet their needs and priorities, with a minimum quantum of USD 1.3 trillion.

The group said that this amount should support mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage initiatives, and

should be exclusively allocated to developing countries.

Developing countries also insist that the new climate finance goal, or NCQG, should prioritize public, grant-based, and concessional finance, as these types of funding are less burdensome for nations already facing financial challenges. Public finance provides a stable support source, while grants and concessional loans (with very low or zero interest) are easier for developing countries to manage.

Advertisement for Northern Power Distribution Company of Telangana Limited, including tender notices and contact information.

When 'choices felt right or wrong' for Patralekhaa

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In her decade-long journey, Patralekhaa Paul Rao has evolved from a fresh-faced newcomer to a mature actress, shaped by her choices, challenges and resilience. Reflecting on her career, she admits she never saw herself in any other field, despite her father's hope that she would pursue a career as a chartered accountant.

"I started auditioning for ads and just kept going from there," she recalls. That seemingly small step eventually led to her breakout role in *CityLights*—a film that set her on a trajectory as one of India's most promising talents. "Looking back, I couldn't imagine myself doing anything else."

Known for her distinctive, thoughtful approach to roles, Patralekhaa's process has transformed since her early days. She explains, "There's a stark difference between the 24-year-old girl who started out and the woman I am now." Life has changed her perspective on acting, deepening her connection with the characters she portrays. "Acting is so personal because you pull so much from your own experiences, from the highs and lows of life itself." Her latest role in *IC 814: The Kandahar Hijack* presented both a creative and personal challenge—one she was thrilled to take on.

Securing this role, however, required patience and determination. When she learned that Anubhav Sinha was working on the script, she immediately reached out. "I pestered him for six months," she says, recalling her persistence. Although Sinha was initially uncertain, she was relentless in her pursuit. "He finally relented and wrote something for me. Working with directors like him or Hansal Mehta is non-negotiable for me—they're masters of their craft."

Her commitment to *IC 814* meant embracing the intense atmosphere on set, particularly in the claustrophobic setting of an airplane parked amid the mountainous terrain of Jordan. "It felt overwhelming at times, especially with 100 extras, crew members and cameras everywhere," she explains. The realism of the set amplified her immersion in the role. "Once inside, it felt so claustrophobic. Anyone who's been on a plane knows the space is tight and we had so many people crammed in. It definitely got to me."

Despite the emotional toll, she had little time to unwind. Immediately after wrapping up the shoot, she flew to London for her next project. "I didn't realise how drained I was until I got there," she admits. "It took a while to bounce back, but starting on something new helped me shake off the intensity of the last shoot. Still, it was surreal—imagine coming straight from a plane hijack to boarding another plane!"

As for regrets, Patralekhaa is clear she has none. "Every choice felt right or wrong in its moment, but I'm genuinely happy when films I passed on work for the people who made them," she says. And in every role, she finds a piece of herself. "It's a tricky question, but I'd say all my characters are like me in some way. They're not copies, but there's a little of me in all of them and when I finish a project, each character leaves something behind with me too."

This project also reunited her with actor Vijay Varma,



IN AN EXCLUSIVE CONVERSATION WITH THE PIONEER, PATRALEKHA PAUL RAO OPENS UP ABOUT HER JOURNEY, REFLECTING ON THE MILESTONES, CHALLENGES AND TRIUMPHS THAT HAVE SHAPED HER INTO THE ARTIST SHE IS TODAY. WITH UNBRIDLED HONESTY AND CHARACTERISTIC CANDOR, SHE ALSO SHARES INSIGHTS INTO HER CREATIVE PROCESS, HER MOST RECENT ROLE IN *IC 814: THE KANDAHAR HIJACK* AND THE LESSONS SHE'S LEARNED ALONG THE WAY

an old friend and respected peer. "I've known Vijay for a long time. The first time we met was during auditions and I knew even then he was destined for success." Although they don't see each other often, they share a supportive bond. "I cheer for him from afar. Whenever I see a performance of his that moves me, I make it a point to tell him."

Alongside her career achievements, Patralekhaa has found unwavering support in her partner, actor Rajkumar Rao. "He's my biggest cheerleader," she asserts. "When the reviews for *IC 814* started coming in, he was happier than I was. If I need to practice a scene, he's the one taking my audition." However, they rarely rehearse scenes together, as Patralekhaa believes in spontaneity. "We discuss our scenes but don't rehearse them. For me, preparing too much can make a scene feel rehearsed rather than real. I want the magic to happen on set."

As Patralekhaa reflects on her journey, she recognises that each experience, role and relationship has added a new layer to her as an artist. And with this latest project, she's embraced a new level of intensity, one that's bound to make an impact on audiences and deepen her evolving legacy in the industry.

IT TOOK A WHILE TO BOUNCE BACK, BUT STARTING ON SOMETHING NEW HELPED ME SHAKE OFF THE INTENSITY OF THE LAST SHOOT



Uncovering sweet deception of stevia

Stevia-based sweeteners are growing in popularity, especially for those seeking healthier alternatives to sugar. Despite their rise, many misconceptions persist about stevia and its products. Let's debunk five common myths about stevia and set the record straight.

Myth 1: Artificial in nature

Stevia is completely natural, extracted from the leaves of the stevia plant, contrary to the misconception that stevia is an artificial sweetener. This makes it different from synthetic sweeteners like aspartame or sucralose. Stevia products, including those from SweetLeaf, provide a plant-based sweetening option for those who prefer natural ingredients in their diets.

Myth 2: Has significant side effects

Some people still question the safety of stevia, but this myth has been debunked by extensive research. Stevia is a natural sweetener derived from the Stevia rebaudiana plant and has been approved by health authorities such as the FDA, EFSA and WHO. It's been used safely for centuries in several cultures, making it a trusted alternative to sugar for those who want a healthier option without any risks.

Myth 3: Catered only to diabetics

While stevia is widely known for its benefits in managing blood sugar levels, it's not exclusively for people with diabetes. Stevia is a great choice for anyone looking to reduce their sugar intake, whether for weight

management, overall health, or dietary preferences. It's vegan, keto-friendly, and zero-calorie, which means it can fit into a wide range of dietary plans beyond diabetic management.

Myth 4: Bitter aftertaste

One of the most persistent myths is that stevia leaves a bitter or licorice-like aftertaste. While early versions of stevia sweeteners did have this issue, advancements in processing have significantly improved the taste. Most high-quality stevia products today, like those offered by SweetLeaf, are formulated to deliver a sweetness that closely mimics sugar, without the bitter-taste. This makes it an enjoyable option for beverages, desserts, and daily cooking.

Myth 5: Can't be incorporated in cooking or baking

Another myth is that stevia can't replace sugar in recipes, especially for baking. However, stevia can be easily incorporated into cooking and baking, offering the same sweetness without the calories. Whether you're whipping up traditional sweets for festivals or everyday desserts, stevia can be used in place of sugar, ensuring your treats are both delicious and healthier.

Stevia-based products are a versatile, safe and natural alternative to sugar, suited for a wide range of dietary needs. From managing blood sugar levels to creating guilt-free desserts, stevia offers a solution to many of the issues associated with traditional sweeteners. It's time to move past the myths and embrace the benefits that stevia provides for a healthier lifestyle.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT THROUGH FITNESS

Jacqueline Babitha Xavier is a force to be reckoned with. This dynamic fitness enthusiast has been shattering glass ceilings and pushing boundaries with her remarkable journey, inspiring countless individuals to embrace their true potential. In this exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, she shares her fascinating story, revealing the secrets behind her success and the driving forces that propel her forward

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With a heart full of passion and a spirit that refuses to be tamed, Jacqueline Babitha Xavier is a shining example of what it means to live life on your own terms. This remarkable woman from Hyderabad has not only conquered the world of running but has also triumphed over depression and self-doubt, emerging stronger and more radiant with each passing day. As a fitness instructor, marathon runner and powerlifter, she embodies strength, grace and determination. In this uplifting interview, she shares her extraordinary journey of self-discovery, growth and transformation, inspiring us all to embrace our true potential and live life to the fullest.

"I come from a corporate background, but I felt like life was fizzling out. I needed to do something beyond what I was doing," says Hyderabad's Marathon woman, recounting her journey. She took a plunge, quit working at 38 and got into fitness. Post which, she did certification in aerobics, Zumba and personal training. It didn't just stop there. She moved on to marathon coaching and injury management.

Jacqueline's running career took off when she won her first podium at a 21-kilometer run. "If I hadn't won that podium, I wouldn't have been a runner. I would have continued being a fitness trainer," she admits. Her aerobic base, built through years of aerobics training, helped her transition to running naturally. "I didn't have to put in

an effort. I would just do some aerobics and strength training, and then directly go run and win medals."

However, her journey wasn't without its challenges. She faced depression and struggled to understand her body, particularly during perimenopause. "I didn't know what was happening to my body. I had hot flashes, acne and weight gain. But I did a course on understanding menopause, and that's when I realised it was a harmony imbalance."

Through her journey, Babitha has learned the importance of lifting weights, particularly for women. "Lifting is something that a woman has to do to keep herself fit, her bone health, muscle mass, and to keep her sanity in place." She now focuses on powerlifting and has won gold at the national level in her weight category.

Also the founder of Sweat n Burn, her story is an exemplification of the power of understanding one's body and taking control of one's health. "When you understand your body, when you know what is right, when you do a lot of research, when you read journals, you not only help yourself, you help your fellow runners, you help the fellow women, everyone around you."

She recounts her personal story, sharing her struggles during the early stages of menopause. "I was going through depression, feeling very low, had no interest in anything and struggled to sleep," she says. But then something changed. She started running and everything transformed. Running became her salvation, giving her a sense of achievement and purpose. People began to notice her and she started to see herself in a new light. She was no longer just a mother, wife, or daughter; she was an individual achieving something.

Through running, she discovered her identity and broke free from the roles that defined her. She started prioritising her own needs and focusing on self-care. Running became her therapy, her sanctuary, and her passion. Jacqueline's advice to those struggling with depression is to find an activity they enjoy. "If you can't run, try lifting. If you can't lift, try something else. Just move your body and you'll see the difference," she encourages.

Today, she is a source of inspiration for many, including her two daughters. "People often mistake us for sisters when we walk together (she chuckles). Fitness has not only

transformed my body but also my mind. I'm no longer depressed, and I feel alive. You don't have to be a runner or a lifter to be fit. Just find what works for you and embrace it," her family has been a significant source of support for her. "My husband and daughters are all into fitness. We encourage and motivate each other to lead a healthy lifestyle."

In fact, her husband was inspired to start working out after being mistaken for having three daughters. Hahaha! "He started cycling and working out, and now we all do it together as a family," she shares.

Her daughters are also into fitness, with one pursuing a master's degree in sports science and sports psychology. "We make time for ourselves, no matter how busy we are," Jacqueline emphasises. "We believe that taking care of our physical health is essential for our overall well-being."

Initially, she did face challenges while running alone, particularly safety concerns. "I used to carry a water bottle in one hand and a stone in the other," she recalls. "Now, I carry pepper spray and a small Swiss knife in my waist pouch."

Despite these challenges, Xavier has continued to pursue her passion for fitness. "The only challenge I face now is running alone. But I've learned to overcome it by finding support from my family and friends."

She has also faced incidents of harassment while running alone. "Once, a guy flashed me while I was running on a dirt track," she recounts. "I didn't want my daughter to see it, so I quickly turned around and ran back with her."

However, Jacqueline didn't let this incident deter her from pursuing her passion for fitness. Instead, she found support from her family and the fitness community.

Through her experiences, she has learned the importance of finding support and overcoming fear. She emphasises, "Fitness has given me the confidence to face any challenge that comes my way. We need to



teach men to respect women and treat them as equals. It starts at home, and we need to bring up our sons to be progressive and respectful towards women."

She also highlights the need for women to take control of their own safety and well-being. "We need to learn self-defence techniques and be aware of our surroundings," she advises. "We can't rely on others to protect us." That's not all! She challenges societal norms that restrict women's freedom and autonomy. "We need to break free from the shackles of societal expectations and embrace our individuality," she says. "We need to uplift and encourage each other. We need to create a sisterhood of support and solidarity." Through her fitness journey, she has learned to embrace her body and challenge societal beauty standards. "I wear what makes me comfortable and confident," she says. "I don't dress for others; I dress for myself."

For her, fitness is a full package. "You can't just focus on one aspect, like running. You need to incorporate strength training, lifting, and cross-training to repel toxins and build overall fitness."

She further emphasises the importance of varied workouts, including running, strength training and cross-training activities like cycling or swimming. "I like to challenge myself and can't do just one type of workout. I need to mix it up to stay motivated and avoid plateaus."

In terms of nutrition, Jacqueline stresses the importance of a balanced diet that includes carbohydrates, protein, salads and fiber.

"You can't just focus on one food group," she advises. "You need to have a mix of everything to fuel your body."

Her approach to fitness and nutrition is holistic and balanced, emphasising the importance of varied workouts and a balanced diet to achieve overall wellness. "Fitness is a journey, not a destination," she says. "It's about finding what works for you and making it a sustainable part of your lifestyle."



what's brewing?

Several celebrities, fashion lovers and socialities, marked their presence at the Desire Designer Exhibition, held at Hotel Taj Krishna in Banjara Hills.

● Preethi

● Dr. Naditha

● Furhung and Sushila

● Anita Agarwal

● Pinky and Masma

● Vaanya

PARTY

Photos by - SV Chary

Katriya Hotel & Towers brings in traditional cake mixing with a motive to cherish special occasions and festivals with our future generations. A cake mixing ceremony is an expression of joy, love and happiness. To set the cake mixing ceremony off, the staff members and specially invited the guests, along with Master Chef Bakti Arora and Gopi, Executive Chef of the Hotel and Shiva Rama Raju, Managing Director, among the rest.

Trust Limited announced the listing of its equity shares on the National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE). Trading of the company's shares commenced on Tuesday, marking a significant milestone in Master Trust Limited's journey as it continued to expand its market presence and commitment to delivering value for its shareholders and clients.

Former IPS and Jai Bharat Party President V.V. Lakshmi Narayana, inaugurated a satellite digital education studio at Laksi-Ka-Pul, set up jointly with Meta LearnNinspire Private Limited, powered by iLearningEngines, under the auspices of Grameena Vidya Jyothi Bharat Private Limited. He praised the initiative of using satellite technology to deliver lessons to students in rural and remote areas without the need for internet access.

Guru Nanak University and Guru Nanak Institutions hosted its national level programme TedXGNI. This year's theme was 'Uncovered Origins' which brought forth a lot of learning for the audience. Notable speakers gave motivational speeches to the students to develop in their future career.

Dr. Hypno Padma Kamalakar is being entrusted with the responsibilities of the Nava Bharath Lions Club by Lions Club 320A District Governor Dr. D. Koteswara Rao and Dr. G. Mahendra Kumar Reddy.

FUN

ARCHIE

PILTON'S BEEN SEEING A LOT OF TINA!

SHE'S THE FIRST THING TO CATCH HIS EYE THAT WASN'T LOAFER WITH MICROCHIPS!

YOU TWO MUST HAVE REALLY CLICKED!

WELL, WE MET EACH OTHER ONLINE!

SO ACTUALLY, WE DOUBLE-CLICKED!

CALVIN AND HOBBS

HOBBS, IF YOU TELL ME HOW MY COMIC BOOK ENDS, I'LL KILL YOU. I'VE WAITED ALL MONTH TO FIND OUT.

I'LL GIVE YOU A HINT, OK? CAPTAIN NARRUM TAKES HIS NUCLEAR...

NO HINTS! NO HINTS!

BY GOLLY, YOU HAIRBALL, IF I DIDN'T HAVE A BEE ON MY BACK RIGHT NOW, I'D...

MAYBE THERE'S A BEE AND MAYBE THERE ISN'T. I'LL NEVER TELL.

WHAT?? IS THE BEE GONE? CAN I MOVE? TELL ME! IS IT STILL THERE?? HUH? ROGGL! IS IT?!

GARFIELD

THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE BEEN MEANING TO SAY

WHAT'S THAT?

BARK! BARK! BARK!

I WALKED RIGHT INTO THAT ONE

REALITY CHECK

THAT C-PAP MACHINE WORKS GREAT! YOU DIDN'T SNORE ALMOST THE WHOLE HIBERNATION!

SPEED BUMP

I GUESSED I WAS LUCKY SHE JUST HAD A FOOT PETCH.

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5
6			7	8
9			10	
12	13		14	15
17			16	
19				

NANCY

IT'S LONELY WITH NANCY AT HER CLUB

I WISH THERE WAS SOME WAY TO KNOW WHAT SHE WAS UP TO

WAIT A SECOND—!

BING

STREAMING SESSION ENDED. TOO MANY USERS ON ACCOUNT

IF WE KEEP THE VOLUME LOW, NOBODY WILL KNOW WE'RE WATCHING ANYTHING

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- People who carve statues
- Use your brain
- Straps held by a jockey
- Not difficult
- Say again
- Put this sachet in a teapot
- This insect flies at night
- The number of sides on an octagon
- A round thing with spokes
- Know by sight
- Watch plays here
- A soft type of bag for carrying books
- A design pricked into skin
- Have a quarrel
- Follows orders
- A graceful water bird

SOLUTION

T	H	R	T	E	N			
A	B	O	B	S				
S	C	R	I	B				
S	S	A	S	S	A			
E	A	T	I	N	G	D	E	A
M	R	T	S					
H	R	N	S	T	R	I	O	
L	E	S	A	A				
E	X	A	C	T	R	A	F	O
S	C	O	V	E	R			
S	H	I	P	H	E	R		

GINGER MEGGS

I NEED TO LOSE SOME WEIGHT.

WHY DON'T YOU JOIN WHALE WATCHERS?

I MANAGED TO GET OVER THE HILL WITHOUT GETTING TO THE TOP.

GINGER, I THINK YOU MEAN WEIGHT WATCHERS.

I KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

Dil Raju to encourage new talent!

Producer Dil Raju, in order to encourage new talents, has started a new production banner. He speaks to the media, sharing more details about it. "I started this new banner to encourage new talent and content," said the producer. He added that he is setting up a new team to look after everything. "Anyone can approach my team with your content through our team or website. I will listen to the scripts brought by this team once a week," said Dil Raju. The producer said that he is going to launch the website soon. "All the stars and directors close to me are coming for the launch of this website," said Dil Raju. On this occasion, the producer said that two NRI producers are working on two projects collaborating with his new banner. "I want this to be a platform for newcomers to showcase their talent," said Raju. He also said that he is going to involve some of the critics in this scrutiny of scripts. "Many of

the films are reviewed by critics and I wanted them to be part of this script work before it actually goes into production. It helps to come out with good content." The producer said that many filmmakers approached him to release the teaser, first look, trailer, or something for their film promotions. "It's often unclear how many films are coming or going. When these people approach me, I can instantly tell why certain films are being made. I'm aware of the kind of money that is being wasted. This is why I founded DilRaju Dreams—to minimise such losses and create a platform with a purpose," he said.

Dil Raju said that they want to produce four to five films a year under a new banner. "There are no recommendations here. Everyone must submit their work through the website," said Dil Raju.



VARUN CAN REMEMBER THIS FILM FOR 20 YEARS: KARUNA KUMAR

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

The Varun Tej starrer *Matka* is all set to hit the screens tomorrow (November 14). Director Karuna Kumar, known for *Palasa*, is the director of the film. Ahead of the release, he talks about the film and the inspiration behind it. "My family and I had attended a family marriage, where we casually discussed many things. Later, my father-in-law told us about this game called *Matka*. I do know about the lottery, but was not really aware of *Matka*," began the director, Karuna Kumar, who back then got very curious about the game. "The discussion prolonged about Vizag and the club culture in older days and how the cabaret dance happened in Vizag at that time. In Vizag, these things happened in One Town, so I got interested in these stories and decided to do some kind of research about the game and also the old culture of Vizag," said Karuna Kumar. That's how he got inspired for the story. He initially wanted to write the story first. "I didn't want to make a film, as I wanted to write a short story with the title *Vadipoyina Poolu*. Later, I thought that this story was good for cinema. So, I have taken the original incidents and then added a complete fictional story to it with my own imagination," said Karuna Kumar.

The director said that there is vast literature in Telugu. After Bengal, he says, it is the Telugu literature, which has a very vast and highest number of stories. He added that people often complain about Telugu cinema compared to Malayalam and Tamil. "There is a misconception that Telugu cinema means a protagonist wears a colourful shirt and dances with four to five girls. But we have enormous literature in our Telugu and there are thousands of stories to tell. Before in any other language, we are the first ones to come out with a social problem film like *Malapilla* by Gudavalli Ramabrahmam," said Karuna Kumar. The director said that because of not using Telugu literature and stories properly, there is a big loss to the Telugu people. "Rajinikanth is a superstar in Tamil and even in Telugu. Same with some other Tamil actors and we also encourage other language films too. But when it comes to Tamil Nadu, our actors' films are not shown on many screens. Chiranjeevi's film is not screened in Tamil Nadu, unlike a Rajinikanth film screened in Telugu," said the director about Telugu.

Talking about this, *Matka*, he said he made it in his own style. "This is a typical commercial entertainer where I narrated the story of Vasudev or Vasu," said the director. "In reality, if you

Director Karuna Kumar talks about his upcoming film *Matka* and how Varun Tej came into this project, the Telugu culture and Vizag city

look at many powerful people from Visakhapatnam, most of them are outside people. They came to Vizag and then became popular. Likewise in my film, Vasudev came from Burma to Vizag and started his journey here," said Karuna Kumar. The director said that the present generation may know about this game, but he showed it in the film, which can be understood. "When there was no mobile, they sent the same number to the entire country in one day. That is the interesting point to me and you can watch the film for this," he said. The director said that he didn't show Ratan Khatri's story in it. "His



life is a big story and Nagaraj Manjule is making a web series on him, which is good and can be told in many hours. The only reference is Ratan Khatri came from Pakistan and Vasu came from Burma; this is the only reference I have taken," said Karuna. Talking about Varun Tej as the lead actor, he said he narrated three stories to the Vyra production house. "In those three, they picked this one and it is suited for Varun Tej. That's how the story went to him and we started the film," he said. "Varun gave a fantastic performance and I am confident that he is going to mention *Matka* film in the coming 20 years," said about Varun Tej. He added that he is a very down-to-earth person and a director's actor.

He has taken nearly 3,600 images for reference. "To get the period look and also the Vizag city in the 50s to 80s, I have taken many images as references. The look is very important and we erected sets for it," said the director.

The director said he made films within the budget. "If you look at my previous films, I made films within the budget and never went overboard after the shooting starts," he said. He added that his next film is supposed to be for Dheeraj Mogilineni! "The story is ready and we also scouted for shooting locations and finalised the lead actor too. But the lead actor is busy with another project and he wants to give a few days to my film, which I didn't like. I wanted to start my next film by January or February," said Karuna Kumar.

Kishan Reddy hails Rakesh Varre's power-packed role in *Jithender Reddy*



Union Minister G Kishan Reddy watched the film *Jithender Reddy* at a multiplex in Hyderabad. He commended actor Rakesh Varre, who portrayed the title role, and director Virinchi Varma for creating a meaningful film. "Jithender Reddy and I worked together in the *BJP Yuva Morcha*," Kishan Reddy said, recalling memories with his late friend. "He was an active leader of RSS and ABVP. He organised the meeting of Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Warangal, arranging 50 buses from the Jagtial area to make the event a success."

The Union Minister went on to highlight Jithender Reddy's dedication to helping the poor

and uniting people. "Naxalites killed Jithender Reddy, firing 72 bullets into his body. His efforts showed that violence cannot achieve what peaceful means can," said Reddy. "This movie emphasises that it is a mistake to believe that guns and violence can achieve meaningful goals; it's a mindset that must change."

Praising the film, Kishan Reddy noted, "Rakesh Varre truly embodied the role of Jithender Reddy with remarkable acting. I also appreciate director Virinchi Varma for his excellent work in making this film." *Jithender Reddy*, based on true events in Jagtial, Telangana, was released on November 8.

Why did Akkineni family choose Annapurna Studios for Chay's wedding?

Akkineni Naga Chaitanya and Sobhita Dhulipala's wedding will take place on December 4 at Annapurna Studios. Initially, the Akkineni family planned a destination wedding, but they ultimately chose their family-owned studio as the venue! Wedding invitations have already been distributed to family and friends, with Nagarjuna and Supriya overseeing all arrangements at Annapurna Studios. The idea to hold the wedding there came from Nagarjuna, who felt that Annapurna Studios was the ideal setting, especially in this landmark year, celebrating Akkineni Nageswara Rao's 100th birthday. The family believes that holding the wedding at Annapurna Studios, under the blessing of ANR's statue unveiled there last year, adds emotional significance. According to a source, Naga Chaitanya feels beginning his marital journey in this iconic setting, with his grandfather's blessings, is deeply meaningful.



'Amid wedding preparations, Sobhita continues filming'

In the midst of this personal milestone, Sobhita remains committed to her professional endeavours. A source close to the actress reveals, "Sobhita Dhulipala is currently immersed in filming for her next project, gracefully balancing her work with wedding preparations alongside Naga Chaitanya." Despite the excitement surrounding her wedding, her dedication to her work remains unwavering.



Rana Daggubati, Sundeep Kishan backs up Ashok Galla

Ashok Galla is all set to release his second film, *Devaki Nandana Vasudeva*, directed by Arjun Jandhyala, hitting screens on November 22. The film is produced by Somineni Balakrishna. On Tuesday, the makers held a function to release the film's trailer, attended by special guests Rana Daggubati and Sundeep Kishan, who showed their support for Ashok Galla.

An interesting aspect of the film is that Prashanth Varma, the director of *Hanuman*, provided the story. Ashok Galla undergoes a

notable transformation for his role, with his commanding screen presence standing out. Manasa Varanasi stars as the female lead. After watching the trailer, Rana Daggubati praised Prashanth Varma, saying, "He is the master storyteller of the present generation. He is an amazing writer and director and I am happy that he is telling mythology stories to today's generation. I thought this social movie, *Devaki Nandana Vasudeva*, was also inspired by Krishna and Kamsa." Rana added that he attend-

ed the function to support Ashok. He also spoke about the female lead, Manasa, noting, "I am happy to see a Telugu girl as the female lead in our film."

Actor Sundeep Kishan also expressed support for Ashok and wished him success. "I liked director Arjun's first film and I saw the trailer for this one. You can see that everyone worked very hard for this film. I hope it will be a great success for everyone," said Sundeep Kishan. Ashok's father, former MP Jayadev Galla, also attended the event.

Color Photo director Sandeep Raj engaged to actress Chandini Rao

Director Sandeep Raj, known for his National Award-winning film *Color Photo*, announced his engagement to actress Chandini Rao on Monday. The couple, who have been in the spotlight for their relationship, shared their engagement news with fans. "Presenting you my official Ring Master," wrote Sandeep on social media, along with photos of the engagement.

Chandini Rao has appeared in several Telugu films and web series, including *Panasthali* and *Pelli Gola*. Rumours of their relationship had circulated after Chandini posted pictures with Sandeep, but the engagement has now confirmed their commitment. The couple plans to announce a wedding date soon. Sandeep is currently directing a new film, *Mowgli*, featuring Roshan Kanakala, son of popular anchor Suma Kanakala.

NBK109 TO UNLEASH BEAST, HINTS NEW POSTER

God of Masses Nandamuri Balakrishna has been on a blockbuster success streak in recent years with his stunning action entertainers. Now, he has joined hands with blockbuster director Bobby Kolli, who is known for his massy presentation and scintillating action entertainers.

Ever since the announcement of the film, working title *NBK109*, the movie has been generating huge buzz across different platforms. The anticipation regarding the powerful title glimpse has been sky high among the fans and movie lovers. Already, the two big action glimpses released featuring NBK have gone viral and everyone praised the director for presenting Balakrishna in a never-before-seen stylish and massy avatar. The makers have announced the

eagerly awaited title teaser release date with a mass rugged poster of NBK.

We see him holding a blood-spilled axe and many weapons ready for action, hinting at a thick-bearded look. The excitement regarding the title teaser has grown multi-fold with the poster. On the auspicious occasion of Karthika Poonima, the *NBK109* title teaser is set to release on November 15th. *Animal* fame Bobby Deol is playing a prominent role in the film. Suryadevara Naga Vamsi, Sai Soujanya of Sithara Entertainments and Fortune Four Cinemas are producing the film on a massive scale, while Srikanth Studios is presenting it. The movie shoot is currently in the last leg and it is set to release for Sankranti 2025 worldwide.



3rd T20I: India eye batting revival against SA at Centurion

PTI ■ CENTURION

Indian batting line-up needs to get its mojo back against a resurgent South Africa to regain the lost ground on rather unfamiliar SuperSport Park conditions when the two teams clash the third T20I here Wednesday.

Since 2009, India have played only one T20I at this venue, which they lost by six wickets in 2018 and have only one survivor from that squad in this side -- Hardik Pandya.

Along with that unfamiliarity factor, India will also grapple with the ordinary form of their batters, particularly when the pitch here is touted to be similar to the one at Gqeberha -- quick and bouncy.

In the second T20I, India batters struggled against South African pacers upfront, getting restricted to 124 for six, and Centurion has similar characteristics.

The problem starts from the top -- more precisely with Abhishek Sharma, whose extended lean run with the bat has now snowballed

into a serious concern. He is in desperate need of a good outing here before the management thinks of juggling the combination.

Even now, they can think of giving the job of partnering Sanju Samson at the top to Tilak Varma and bring in Ramandeep Singh in the middle to add more muscle to the unit.

However, the senior batters like skipper Suryakumar Yadav, Pandya and Rinku Singh too cannot absolve themselves of the blame entirely for India's struggles.

Both Suryakumar and Rinku have shown only fleeting images of their prowess here while Pandya made 39 in the second match but he consumed 45 balls for it.

In fact, the power-hitter took 28 balls to find his first boundary and, again, could not find the ropes between balls 39 and 45.

So, these three batters will have to chip in more to support in the in-form Samson or to carry India to a strong total even when the Kerala man has a vapid day.



Similarly, pacers Arshdeep Singh and Avesh Khan had two contrasting games. Arshdeep returned with figures of 1 for 25 at Durban, but in the second game he had stats of 1 for 41.

The left-arm pacer's third and fourth overs which went for 28 runs -- including four fours in an over against Tristan Stubbs -- made a deep impact on the low-scoring match.

So, they will be eager to change the script here, unless the management looks at other options such as Yash Dayal or Vysakh Vijaykumar.

However, the efforts of Varun Chakravarthy, who bagged a maiden fiver in the previous match, and Ravi Bishnoi over the last two matches have been outstanding and the spinners will be looking for an encore in the third match to hand back the advantage to India.

The expected bounce and pace on the pitch here will be an encouraging factor as well for the Indian duo.

From a batting perspective, South Africa too face a similar issue as

senior pros skipper Aiden Markram, David Miller and Heinrich Klaasen are yet to fire in this series.

They required runs from less-pedigreed batters Tristan Stubbs and Gerald Coetzee to get over the line in the second contest, and the Proteas will certainly cherish a heftier contribution from their veterans, especially against Indian spinners.

Teams (from):
India: Suryakumar Yadav (c), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (WK), Rinku Singh, Tilak Varma, Jitesh Sharma (WK), Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Ramandeep Singh, Varun Chakravarthy, Ravi Bishnoi, Arshdeep Singh, Vijaykumar Vysakh, Avesh Khan, Yash Dayal.
South Africa: Aiden Markram (c), Ottneil Baartman, Gerald Coetzee, Donovan Ferreira, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Patrick Kruger, Keshav Maharaj, David Miller, Mhlabi Mpongwana, Nqaba Peter, Ryan Rickelton, Andile Simelane. Lutho Sipamla, Tristan Stubbs.

Perth pitch to have really good pace and bounce: Curator cautions India

PTI ■ PERTH

India will be accorded a tough welcome to Australia as the Optus Stadium pitch for the opening Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy has been prepared to offer "good bounce and pace" true to the tradition of the fiery tracks in Perth.

India will enter the Perth Test, beginning from November 22, without playing any practice match as the visitors had cancelled an intra-squad side game that was scheduled to be played behind closed doors from November 15 to 17.

Now, India will focus on centre-wicket training at the nearby WACA stadium, where Australia will also polish their skills.

"This is Australia, this is Perth... I'm setting ourselves up for really good pace, really good bounce and really good carry," Western Australia Cricket head curator Isaac McDonald told 'ESPNewsInfo'.

McDonald is trying to prepare a pitch that has similar traits of the one



that he readied for the first Test against Pakistan in December last year.

In that match, Pakistan were bundled out for 89 in the second innings as the Aussies celebrated a massive 360-run victory. The pitch too had developed cracks as that match wore on and batters like Marnus Labuschagne copped blows on their hands.

Overall, the three Aussie pacers -- Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc -- grabbed 12 of the 20 Pakistan wickets.

More recently, Pakistan pacers Shaheen Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah and Haris Rauf

tore through Australian line-up, bowling the hosts out for 140 in the third ODI here.

McDonald said he is looking to leave some grass on the pitch to make it a bit spicier.

"It's (10 mm) a good starting point. Ten millimetres was pretty comfortable with the conditions that we had (last year) and that held the conditions together nicely for the first few days. Live grass on the pitch is speed.

"Both bowling units (Australia and Pakistan) were pretty rapid last year and hoping for much the same this year (for India match)," he added.

Australian opener McSweeney braces for 'unique' Bumrah challenge

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Australia opener Nathan McSweeney, who is set to debut against India in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, said he has been preparing for the "unique" challenge of facing star pacer Jasprit Bumrah.

McSweeney was drafted into the Australia squad after a slew of impressive performances in the Sheffield Shield tournament and in the recent 'A' series against India.

The 25-year-old South Australian will partner Usman Khawaja at the top in the series opener in Perth and during the upcoming five-Test series.

"There's probably not (much) I can do to replicate how Bumrah bowls). Obviously, he's got a unique action. He's one of the best bowlers in the world." So, it's going to be hard to mimic that. I'm just looking forward to all of that and I can't wait," McSweeney told SEN.

McSweeney, who captained



the Australia A side in the 2-0 series win against India A, said he has been watching the bowling clips of Indian quicks including Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj to be mentally ready for the task.

"I'll definitely dive a lot deeper into it when I get to Perth. I've looked at a few clips of what they're bowling

attack stacks up like. I'm just trying to visualise how I'm going to go about it. Facing a new bowler can be a slight challenge to just pick up their action," he said.

"I've got a whole week before I head off to Perth, so I can get mentally ready and I guess it starts now in preparation to hopefully start

really well," he added.

However, a quiet confidence runs through the young batter ahead of the important series.

"In the last month or so I really feel like I'm batting the best I ever have. I think I'm the best I've ever been prepared to take this opportunity, so hopefully I

can do that.

"No doubt there's plenty of learning and experiences that I haven't experienced yet and I'm looking forward to learning all about the challenges of Test cricket and challenging my game against the very best," he said.

McSweeney will step into the shoes of David Warner, who retired from international cricket after the home Test series against Pakistan in January this year, and the Adelaide man realises the enormity of the job.

The right-hander has a plan for it.

"Being an opening batter, it's making sure I'm leaving the ball well and making the bowlers are bowling to me. Then being ready and positive to score when they miss is as simple as I want to make it.

"If I'm reacting well and doing those things well, hopefully, it equates to me spending time in the middle and chipping away at the scoreboard," he said.

Blind T20 WC: Indian team eyes clearance from MHA, MEA; Sports Ministry clears travel to Pakistan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/KARACHI

The Sports Ministry has given NOC, with no cost to the government, to a 17-member Indian cricket team to travel to Pakistan to participate in the T20 World Cup for the Blind, and the side now awaits clearance from Home and External Affairs ministries.

The fourth edition of the Blind World Cup, in which India are the reigning champions, is scheduled to be played at Lahore and Multan from November 22 to December 3.

Upon receiving the clearance from the ministries concerned, the squad is scheduled to travel to Pakistan via the Wagah Border on November 21.

The development came in the backdrop of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) informing its Pakistan counterpart that the Men in Blue will not travel to the neighbouring nation for next year's Champions Trophy.

The BCCI sent a mail to the International Cricket Council to that



effect, leaving the future of the marquee event in limbo.

Meanwhile, Shailender Yadav, General Secretary of the Cricket Association for Blind in India (CABI) said the 17-member Indian squad for the T20 WC was picked after 26 players underwent a 12-day selection trials in Gurugram.

"The team has been training in

Gurugram. The players now await an NOC from the Ministry of External Affairs and remain hopeful for a positive response," said Yadav.

Apart from India and Pakistan, the T20 World Cup features teams from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, South Africa, Nepal and Sri Lanka. India won the three previous events, defeating

Pakistan twice and Bangladesh once. Tournament as scheduled: PBCC. The Pakistan Blind Cricket Council (PBCC) said the tournament will go ahead on schedule irrespective of India's participation.

"Pakistan will be hosting the event on schedule and it makes no difference whether the Indian team comes or not," PBCC chairman Syed Sultan Shah said.

Shah said arrangements for hosting the World Cup had been completed by the PBCC.

"All the other teams in the event have also sent confirmation that they have no issues playing in Pakistan," he said.

Indian team for T20 Blind WC: Ajay Kumar Reddy, Debaraj Behera, Nareshbhai Tumda, Nilesh Yadav, Sanjay Kumar Shah, Praveen Kumar Sharma, Venkateswara Rao, Pankaj Bhue, Lokesh, Rambir Singh, Irfan Diwan, Durga Rao Tompaki, Sunil Ramesh, Sukhram Majhi, Ravi Amiti, Dineshbhai Rathva, Dhingar Gopu.

PTI ■ SHARJAH

Afghanistan all-rounder Mohammad Nabi has announced that he will retire from One-Day Internationals after next year's Champions Trophy in Pakistan.

After Afghanistan's 2-1 series win over Bangladesh here on Monday, the 39-year-old said he had been pondering about quitting the format since last year's ODI World Cup.

"In my mind, from the last World Cup, I was retired. But then, we qualified for the Champions Trophy, and I felt if I could play that, it would be great," he told the official broadcaster after being adjudged the Player-of-the-Series.



Nabi has featured in 167 ODIs since 2009, scoring 3,600 runs in 147 innings at an average of 27.48 and a strike rate of 86.99, including two centuries and 17 fifties, with a top score of 136.

With the ball in hand, he has bagged 172 wickets in 161 innings at an average of 32.47 and an economy of 4.27, including four four-

wicket hauls and a fiver (5/17). Afghanistan qualified for the Champions Trophy, thanks to their sixth-place finish during last year's World Cup.

It would also be Afghanistan's first-ever appearance in the eight-team competition scheduled to be held in Pakistan in February next year.

Players believing in our style of play is the key, says Manolo Márquez

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Indian football team head coach Manolo Márquez on Tuesday said it is critical for his players to follow a synchronised approach while representing the country, in order to start getting results in the international arena.

The Indian senior men's national team began its training camp ahead of the friendly match against Malaysia on November 18 in Hyderabad.

With the Indian Super League going into a break with the start of the November FIFA international window, the Blue Tigers checked into the city on Monday and will have a total of six days of training sessions before the match.

"We were supposed to play two games last month but due to external reasons, Lebanon couldn't come. For people, more games is better. But it's difficult to train the day before and after the match. We need to train tactically



as well.

"I feel it's necessary to prepare for not just the game against Malaysia but the official matches which will come in March," Márquez said.

Márquez had a rough start to his coaching stint with the national team as India were held 0-0 by Mauritius in September and beaten 0-3 by Syria in the Intercontinental Cup, also in Hyderabad.

His boys put up an improved showing, especially in the second half, against Vietnam in a 1-1 draw last month in Nam D'nh.

The Spaniard has continued the trend of calling up new players in each FIFA window so far. This time, Hmingthamawia Ralte, Vbin Mohanan, Irfan Yadwad and Thoiba Singh Moirangthem earned their first national team call-ups. The latter was a last-minute arrival after Anirudh Thapa suffered an injury during the match between Mohun Bagan Super Giant and Odisha

FC on Sunday.

Since taking charge in July, Márquez's priority has been to utilise the friendly matches and training sessions to find the best group of players for the 2027 AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers, scheduled to start in March 2025.

"It's true that we want to check some new players. But obviously it's impossible to change the whole group and call 40 players in March. It's true that we are finding the group. It means that we have maybe 14, 15, 16 players who will be there, but we don't know exactly. And there are a lot of players who can get there," the coach said.

"Obviously, it's still four months, and the situation can change with a lot of things unfortunately with injuries and the players' domestic form. But, I repeat again, as a coach you need to find the group which can play the style that we want.

"I am fully focussed on the Malaysia match at the moment.

In a way, it's a dangerous game because the players are in the middle of the fight for the ISL and this is just one friendly game in November, and the next camp will be in four months. "But I am very confident in this group and I feel we will have a good performance next Monday," said Márquez. Still awaiting his first win with India, Márquez remains patient. For now, the key is to find the groove with the right bunch and get results where they matter the most.

"Obviously everyone wants to win every game. But the feeling we got after the draw with Vietnam was completely different from what we got after drawing with Mauritius or losing to Syria. "In some moments, we played superb. The one key thing is that the players have to believe in our style of play. I want to win every game and even every training session. The Malaysia game is the last friendly window before the official games."