

sunday pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

Published From: VIJAYAWADA HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN

Modi destroyed dignity of PM's post with hollow promises: Priyanka'

5

'India committed to SENDAI Framework'

8

Scaling Kailash of MUSIC as Mahadev's bhakth

11

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The Congress "guarantees" were full of fine print and empty promises. The people of Telangana didn't know that the guarantee card came with "conditions apply." Your claim of delivering on your Six Guarantees is hollow. Let alone 100 days, even 1,000 days or even 10,000 days wouldn't suffice to fulfil them. Every family is supposed to get a benefit of Rs 2.5 lakh as per the Congress guarantee card. But on the contrary, you might end up placing a debt of Rs 2.5 lakh on everyone

—Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Union Minister of State

P4

DON'T MISS...

WB, ADB experts hold workshop...

In support of the construction of the capital city Amaravati, a team of experts from the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) conducted a workshop for farmers at HSR Kalyana Vedika in Tulluru, Guntur district, on Saturday. Organised by the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA), the workshop was attended by farmers, labourers, landless individuals, women, and representatives from educational, industrial, and voluntary...

-PAGE: 3

Energy Minister promises to...

Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar has promised to take steps to resolve the issues facing people in the district. The NDA alliance held a meeting on Saturday to discuss local issues and public grievances. District leaders, including Union Minister of State for Steel and Industries, Bhupatiraju Srinivasa Varma, highlighted various problems that need attention. Speaking at the event as the chief guest, Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar reminded attendees that the NDA came to power due to the unity of the three alliance parties...

-PAGE: 4

India records 17.7% decline in TB...

India has recorded a 17.7 per cent decline in tuberculosis incidence from 237 per lakh population in 2015 to 195 in 2023, which is more than double the global decline of 8.3 per cent. Health Ministry sources have said citing a WHO report. In its Global TB Report 2024 released on October 29, WHO has acknowledged the tremendous progress India has made in closing the gap of missed tuberculosis cases since 2015, the sources said. "In 2023, India is estimated to have had 27 lakh TB cases, of which 25.1 lakh were diagnosed and put on treatment. This has buoyed India's treatment coverage to 89..."

-PAGE: 5

Amazon India records high...

Demand for premium products across categories, including television, smartphones, and large appliances, dominated the Diwali season sale during the Amazon Great Indian Festival (AGIF) 2024 that commenced from September 27, a senior company official said on Saturday. Amazon India Vice President Saurabh Srivastava told PTI that the company recorded 10-times growth in Apple iPad sales and five-times growth in Samsung tablets during the Amazon Great Indian Festival (AGIF) 2024. "One clear trend that was there is premiumisation. When we look at it, whether it is televisions or fashion and beauty..."

-PAGE: 8

CM NAIDU'S SANKRANTI PROMISE

POTHOLE-FREE ROADS

RS 860 CR PROJECT FOR ROAD REPAIRS LAUNCHED IN ANAKAPALLE DISTRICT

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA/ANAKAPALLE

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu promised on Saturday that all roads under the Roads and Buildings department in the State would be transformed into major highways by Sankranti.

"Visitors to Andhra Pradesh during Sankranti should feel proud to drive on such beautiful roads," he stated while launching a project at Paravada in Anakapalle district aimed at creating pothole-free roads, funded with Rs 860 crore. After unveiling a plaque at Vennelapalem Junction for road repair works, the Chief Minister personally operated machinery to kick off the repairs.

Detailing the initiatives being undertaken by the TDP-led NDA government to enhance basic amenities, especially road facilities, he mentioned that drones would be deployed statewide to inspect potholes by Sankranti. He assured that contractors who fail to complete roadworks on time would face consequences.

Expressing concern over the poor condition of roads throughout the state, which he attributed to the previous government's negligence, Chandrababu said the Roads and Buildings department has been given a strict two-month deadline to restore all roads to excellent condition. He emphasised that

- Drones to be deployed statewide to inspect roads for potholes.
- Contractors failing to meet deadlines to face penalties.
- The previous government's neglect left many roads in poor condition.
- A two-month deadline set for restoring roads to excellent condition.

- Ongoing national highway projects to cost Rs 76,000 crore.
- Additional road projects include Bhogapuram-Mulpet and Amaravati Outer Ring Road with a Rs 50,000 crore budget.
- A total of Rs 1.25L crore planned for national highway construction over five years.
- A four-lane railway line between Kolkata and Chennai is in the works to improve transport.

well-maintained roads are essential for civilised living and development.

"The state is on the path to progress, with roads in excellent con-

dition starting from Paravada village," he added. The Chief Minister also outlined a clear five-year plan for road development, stating that

ongoing national highway projects, costing ₹76,000 crore, would be completed within the next two and a half years.

Continued on Page 2



Lokesh: Industry-friendly AP beckons investors

Winding up his week-long tour, the IT Minister assures quick approvals

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Information Technology and Electronics Minister Nara Lokesh has announced that Andhra Pradesh has created an ideal ecosystem for industries under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, offering special incentives to boost employment for youth.

On the final day of his week-long US tour, Lokesh met with industrialists at a prominent hotel in New York City. He detailed the benefits and facilities Andhra Pradesh offers for setting up industrial units, noting that the Economic Development Board is working efficiently to ensure quick approvals for industries with ready blueprints.

Continued on Page 2

'Brand AP' US tour a huge success

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The week-long US visit by IT and Electronics Minister Nara Lokesh aimed at restoring Andhra Pradesh's growth and reputation was a major success. During the tour, Lokesh received a warm welcome from top companies, with industrialists expressing confidence in Andhra Pradesh's future under the leadership of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Lokesh. Many investors Lokesh met in the US responded positively, showing promise for results at the upcoming World Economic Forum in 2025.

Continued on Page 2

HEINOUS ACT



Girl child raped & murdered; accused arrested

CM orders stern action against culprit, announces Rs 10L ex gratia

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

In a shocking incident, a three-and-a-half-year-old girl was raped, murdered and the body was buried by a close relative of the deceased girl at Yanadi colony at AM Puram in Vadamulapet mandal. The incident took place on Friday night.

Superintendent of Police Subba Rayudu told the media on Saturday that the accused Sushant (22), lured the deceased girl with chocolate and took her to a school, located on the outskirts of the village. He sexually assaulted the girl and strangled her. Later, he buried the body at the place. Interestingly, the accused was a close relative of the deceased girl.

When the girl did not come home, the parents searched the surrounding areas and finally lodged a complaint. The police registered a case and collected clues.

The neighbours told the police that they had seen the deceased girl going with Sushant.

Continued on Page 2

GAS LEAK AT SEAFOOD UNIT



110 workers taken ill, hospitalised

PNS ■ BAPATLA

On Saturday, 110 workers at a seafood processing unit fell ill after inhaling gas that leaked from the facility and were subsequently hospitalised.

District Collector J Venkata Murali Krishna said that the incident occurred at the Royal Marine

Seafood Processing Unit in Gokarnamatham village, located in Nizampatnam mandal. He said that gas leaked from the unit, resulting in thick gas filling the entire premises, causing the workers to experience suffocation.

The affected workers were transported to the area hospital using 108 ambulances.

Continued on Page 2

Govt to seek public opinion on 'Rushikonda Palace'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has announced that the State government will explore ways to utilise the Rushikonda Palace, taking input from the people of Andhra Pradesh.

The Chief Minister on Saturday, along with Ministers and MLAs, visited the lavish 'Rushikonda Palace' in Visakhapatnam, built on 61 acres during the tenure of former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Speaking to the media later, Naidu criticised the palace's construction, claiming it violated numerous laws. "I have never seen a Chief Minister destroy the environment to fulfill his whims. Disturbing details are now surfacing. Before, no one, including the media, was allowed near the site; it was a closely guarded secret. The YSRCP government misled the National Green Tribunal, the Supreme Court, and the High Court," he asserted.

He emphasised how a few individuals had manipulated the State



Naidu criticised the palace's construction as environmentally damaging and legally questionable, citing lack of transparency during its development.

He expresses shock at the extravagant spending on the palace, highlighting a Rs 36 lakh bathtub and luxurious furnishings.

Government for their own agenda. "My friend Pawan Kalyan (Deputy CM) and I tried multiple times to visit this place, but were denied. Today, we have the responsibility to share the truth with the public," he added.

Naidu attributed his power to the democracy that the people entrusted to him by electing the TDP-led NDA alliance in the recent elections. He noted that Rushikonda is one of the most beautiful locations in Vizag, where sages once meditated.

Now, palaces have been built with rooms offering sea views. Only

kings and emperors of the past lived in such luxury. I doubt even the President of India has a corridor as grand as the one in Rushikonda Palace," he remarked.

Naidu expressed his shock at the extravagant spending by the previous government, revealing that Rs 36 lakh was spent on a bathtub alone, along with expensive fans and chandeliers. "I've traveled to many countries and met numerous dignitaries, but I've never witnessed such opulence in my long political career," he noted.

Continued on Page 2

NIMMALA'S STRONG COUNTER TO AMBATI

Govt firm on 45.72 m height of Polavaram dam

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

45.72 m and completing the project.

Minister for Water Resources Nimmala Ramanaidu has firmly rebutted former minister and senior YSRCP leader Ambati Rambabu regarding the height of the Polavaram Project Dam, a topic currently igniting statewide debate. Ramanaidu reiterated that the TDP-led NDA coalition government is committed to raising the dam height to

In a Twitter post on Saturday, he criticized Rambabu's allegations, which claimed that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu had secretly agreed with the Central Government to lower the dam height from 42.75 meters to 41.15 meters. Ramanaidu clarified that the dam's

height would not be reduced under any circumstances.

Challenging Rambabu's claims, Ramanaidu demanded that he provide any evidence suggesting that a height reduction was being considered. He accused Rambabu of spreading misinformation to please YSRCP leader YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, stating that Rambabu should disclose any proof if such a reduction had been documented, including details about who made the claim and when and where it was discussed.

Continued on Page 2

VSP will either be closed down or privatised: Botsa

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Legislative Council Opposition Leader Botsa Satyanarayana has raised serious concerns on Saturday about the future of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP). There are growing fears that the plant may close down or be privatised. Speaking to the media, Botsa highlighted several alarming issues, including the dismissal of contract workers, the shutdown of blast furnaces, the introduction of forced voluntary retirement schemes

(VRS), and the lack of a festival bonus. He believes these signs point to an uncertain future for the plant.

Botsa questioned whether the government is considering closing this important plant or facilitating privatization efforts at the Centre. He stressed the need for transparency about the government's intentions. "The community is very worried about the future of the plant, and we cannot let political interests manipulate our emotions," he said.

Continued on Page 2

OBTUSE ANGLE



Sabarimala pilgrims to get free insurance coverage of Rs 5 lakh

PNS ■ KOTTAYAM (KERALA)

Sabarimala pilgrims, who visit the Lord Ayyappa Temple during the upcoming Mandalam-Makaravilakku pilgrimage season beginning later this month, will get free insurance coverage of Rs five lakh.

State Devaswom Minister V N Vasavan said here that the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB), the apex temple body which manages the shrine, has introduced insurance coverage for all pilgrims coming to Sabarimala this year.

He said arrangements have been



completed at the hill shrine to ensure a smooth darshan to all pilgrims. "An

insurance coverage of Rs five lakh will be provided. In case of death of pil-

"An insurance coverage of Rs five lakh will be provided. In case of death of pilgrims, the Devaswoms Board will make all arrangements to bring the body home," Vasavan told reporters during a press conference

grims, the Devaswoms Board will make all arrangements to bring the

body home," Vasavan told reporters during a press conference. He said all preparations for the annual pilgrimage had been completed and a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan took stock of the final stage of arrangements on Saturday. As many as 13,600 police officers, 2,500 fire and rescue personnel and 1,000 sanitation workers will be deployed at Sabarimala during the pilgrimage season, he said.

The water authority made elaborate arrangements to ensure adequate drinking water supply in all places where pilgrims reach, he said.

If either KTR or Harish is jailed, who among them will get more sympathy?

Amid the fortnight-long tantalizing talk of 'political bombs' in the offing, some of the distinct probabilities being discussed in political circles are whether anyone from the Kalvakuntla family would end up behind bars; and, if yes, who would it be -- Bharat Rashtira Samithi Samithi working president KT Rama Rao or former health minister Harish Rao, and, as a corollary, who among them would be getting more sympathy? Strikingly, Harish Rao's name is less in reckoning. For, it is posited that if he were to face the heat of any legal action, be it on flimsy grounds or otherwise, it could ignite a wave of sympathy for him, and therefore, the BRS, given his strong reputation among the public, Harish, apart from being seen as the party's all-weather trouble-shooter, maintains an unblemished image. Once crown prince KTR, however, has a different back story. There are people, both within the party and outside, who hate him and detest his arrogant behaviour. Further, given their respective case-loads in police stations, Harish has an edge. Harish has been subtly addressing a police case lodged in Begum Bazaar PS concerning the remarks he had made during his public speeches. KTR is facing a heavier case-load and a sizeable number of his detractors in various circles would not shed a tear if things took a turn for the worse for him. When yours truly tried to get KTR to put a number on the cases against him, he did not respond. Perhaps, he lost count.

For once, Ponguleti dwarfs Revanth in airtime

It is customary for the head of the government to get relatively more airtime in TV channels as media persons tend to hang on the Chief Minister's every word. For others lower down the totem pole; in order to get more airtime in TV channels, he or she does not have to put on airs. It is enough if they stand out as the de facto CM or a replacement CM-in-waiting. A Telugu media house known for its soft corner for former Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, 'breaking' its news norms, made waves the other day by celebrating the birthday of Telangana Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy. It is not a coincidence that the same media outlet often leans heavily into critical narratives about Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. So, the sudden spotlight on birthday boy Ponguleti raised many eyebrows in political circles. The icing on the birthday cake was the predictable reaction in the Chief Minister's Office. For the unversed, the CMO keeps tabs on the airtime, precisely measuring every second of coverage each of the CM's press meet gets. It is micromanagement at its best, with every second analyzed like it is golden moment for the ruling party, if not the current ruler. What some insiders can't help raving about is that, right under the close watch of the CMO, Ponguleti was in the limelight obviating the need for a stop-watch to quantify the celebratory airtime he got. Rumors suggest the shift in focus could be strategic or just another dimension in the tangled web of state politics. Either way, it is clear: when it comes to media games, no one is really off the table and nothing is off limits.

When TDP-style political posturing backfired

Just a few weeks ago, a plot thickened among Warangal's political corridors with over half a dozen leaders banding to file complaints initially with TPCC and later with AICC against Minister Konda Surekha. It all started with seven leaders throwing in their weight. While making their way to Gandhi Bhavan, their numbers dwindled to five. By the time they had a word with TPCC chief Mahesh Kumar Goud, only four among them were left. And then came the twist - Palakurthi MLA Yashashwini Reddy, later that evening, took to 'X' to voice her support for Konda Surekha, throwing a wrench into the dissidents' plans. The leftover quartet of MLAs, undeterred, went ahead and sought the intervention of AICC. What they did not realize was that the party high command has its own antennae. So, despite securing an appointment, once they broached the subject of their grievances, they were warned pronto to steer clear of any trouble involving Konda Murali. The AICC's message was clear: nobody messes with

across Telangana.

Lawmaker-doctor gets tips to maintain his cool from hot-headed politicians

BRS legislator from Korutla Dr Kalvakuntla Sanjay is a famous spine surgeon. However, he got unsolicited advice to help him maintain his cool, after he had blown his fuse while speaking to media persons, following the sensational Janwada farmhouse raid. Dr Kalvakuntla Sanjay first countered inquisitive reporters, asking: "Don't women from Telangana consume liquor at their homes? Having liquor at home is part of Telangana culture". When reporters, who happened to be sober, retorted, "How can you pose that question to us?", Sanjay became apologetic and said 'sorry' several times. At that point, former MLA Balka Sumna entered the scene and pacified firecrackers. A couple of days later, leaders of opposition parties, in biting satire, gave Dr Kalvakuntla Sanjay tips to maintain his cool while interacting with the media. Driving home his displeasure, BJP MP from Medak M Raghunandan Rao asked Dr Kalvakuntla Sanjay to show him where in TG women were consuming liquor at home. Wrapping up the matter, Korutla Assembly constituency Congress party incharge Juvvadi Krishna Rao urged Dr Kalvakuntla Sanjay to do 'meditation' before speaking to media persons.

REPORTERS' DIARY

the formidable Konda couple. Subsequent digging by Minister Konda Surekha revealed that the move bore the hallmarks of Kadiyam Srihari's old TDP-style posturing, in a bid to push her out and snag her ministerial seat for himself. But Warangal's political grapevine is not focused just on Surekha's counterplay. It is abuzz with the Sphinx-like silence of Konda Murali. The question on everyone's mind is: When will he break his silence, and what will he say?

BRS gets all the time to prepare for the bomb

Forewarned is forearmed. 'Political bombs' are better dropped when the target least expects it. There is no fun in announcing it beforehand on foreign soil, as if it has cross-border appeal. The Congress government in Telangana may have whetted the curiosity of aam janta by strategically announcing ahead of Diwali the impending 'political bombs' linked to ongoing probes into Kaleshwaram project, phone tapping etc that are nearing completion. The unintended consequence has been that it has given the BRS plenty of room to brace themselves. Going by the whispers within BRS, the leadership has already huddled to flesh out what is to come and who are all in the crosshairs. KTR is primed and ready for whatever unfolds. Congress insiders themselves shared with yours truly that there are people in the government who are giving information to KTR, thanks to their rapport extending over 10 years. They cite how the 'Formula E race bomb' proved to be a damp squib amid promised Diwali fireworks with the matter pending at Raj Bhavan. It is no secret that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, for all his bravado, had the option to personally and directly drop the 'bomb'. Instead, he rolled it towards the Raj Bhavan. Everyone knows even a slow fuse would not take so long. Until (and if at all) it goes off, political tongues will keep wagging, raising eyebrows

AP Formation Day passes unnoticed

The coalition government in Andhra Pradesh has come under fire for not celebrating the state's formation day on November 1 -- a significant occasion that commemorates the formation of undivided Andhra Pradesh and honours the legacy of freedom fighter Potti Srimulu, whose self-sacrifice in 1952 was pivotal in the movement that had led to the formation of a separate Andhra Pradesh state. There were no official celebrations or commemorative events organized by the government, hurting citizens and political leaders. Although many central ministers and leaders wished the people of AP on the occasion, Governor of AP Abdul Nazeer was silent, though he wishes the people of other states on their respective formation days.

Recast TTD Board courts controversy

The recent appointments of members to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) board have courted controversy because of the questionable backgrounds of some of its new members, who include individuals facing police cases, non-taxpayers those linked to criminal activities. Such appointments, critics say, undermine the sanctity of the world-renowned Lord Venkateswara temple and the credibility of the TTD. The least the lakhs of devotees who visit the shrine every day expect is transparency and accountability in the selection process so that the members of the TTD board are above reproach. (With inputs from Naveena Ghanate, K Venkateswarlu and C Pradeep Kumar)

CM unveils plans for Vizag's development

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM



Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu expressed his deep love for Visakhapatnam during a recent meeting focused on development in the region. He praised the city and its people, saying they have a bright future. Naidu mentioned that the residents of Visakhapatnam are highly respected for their intelligence, as shown in recent election results.

Naidu described the people as "principled, honest, and trustworthy", especially during the tough times after the HudHud cyclone. He recalled how the community came together, noting that when they requested not to burn firecrackers during Diwali, everyone respected that request. This showed the unity and strength of Visakhapatnam's residents.

During the meeting, several development projects were discussed to improve Visakhapatnam, Anakapalli, and Alluri Sitarama Raju districts. Naidu highlighted the

need to focus on the Visakhapatnam metro project and better road connections. He urged officials to work smarter and be more innovative in their approach to governance.

Focusing on tourism, Naidu proposed taking advantage of the city's beautiful coastline and green hills. He suggested creating parks for children and projects to attract tourists for week-long visits, aiming to make Visakhapatnam a top tourist destination. He also announced plans for an outer ring road connecting

Vizianagaram, Nellimarla, Bhogapuram, and Anakapalli to Visakhapatnam to improve regional connectivity.

Looking to the future, Naidu wants to see Visakhapatnam grow from its current population of about 2.6 million to 5 million and eventually 10 million, linking it with the Uttarandhra districts. This aligns with the ambitious goals in the 2047 vision document, which aims for a growth rate of 15 percent.

To support this growth, he called for completing all development projects by 2025 or 2026, just before the Bhogapuram Greenfield International Airport opens. Naidu stressed the importance of having a proper drainage system and waste management to improve basic infrastructure.

In terms of economic plans, Naidu suggested using energy and human resources by getting companies like Tata and GMR to mentor progress. He also urged for the development of real-time artificial

intelligence projects and improving the branding of local agricultural products like areca coffee, pepper, and turmeric to expand their market.

Naidu emphasized the need to develop Anakapalli and Alluri Seetharamaraju districts to meet the agricultural needs of Visakhapatnam. He spoke about efforts to bring Godavari and Polavaram water to help with drinking water shortages. Under the Surya Ghar scheme, he announced plans to provide 200 units of electricity to each household and to focus on upskilling youth for future job opportunities.

Naidu's vision for Visakhapatnam aims for a balanced approach to urban development, highlighting innovative thinking, strategic planning, and community involvement to ensure a prosperous future for the region. With these ambitious plans, the Chief Minister is set on transforming Visakhapatnam into a symbol of progress and resilience.

'Rythu Saadhikara Samstha' gets new Executive VC

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Retired IAS officer T Vijay Kumar has been appointed as the Executive Vice-Chairman of Rythu Saadhikara Samstha and as an Advisor to the Government in the Agriculture & Cooperation Department. This appointment is for a period of two years from the date he assumes charge of the position.

In this regard, Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad issued GO RT No. 1882.

The department has been instructed to determine his pay and allowances in line with the orders issued under GO RT No. 338 by the General Administration (Poll.A) Department on February 19, 2020.

The Agriculture & Cooperation Department is to take necessary action accordingly.

Govt speeds up road repairs in Vizag under 100-day action plan

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM



As part of Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu's 100-day action plan, the state government is taking strong steps to improve road conditions in Visakhapatnam. Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development, Dr. P. Narayana, highlighted the ongoing pothole repairs at a public event on Saturday. He was joined by Minister-in-Charge Dolabala Veeranjay Swamy, Visakhapatnam Mayor Golagani Hari Venkata Kumari, MP M. Sriharath, and MLA Velagapudi Ramakrishna Babu, who symbolically participated in a pothole-filling activity at Siripuram Dutt Island Junction.

"We have made road repairs a priority across the state. In Visakhapatnam alone, we have fixed 2,009 of the 4,441 identified potholes, with a budget of Rs. 6.83 crore," said Dr. Narayana. He assured that work on the remaining potholes is

ongoing, with GVMC officials directed to speed up repairs to minimize traffic issues.

MP M. Sriharath noted the positive impact of these repairs on the daily lives of residents, saying, "Poor road conditions have caused a lot of inconvenience. The government's quick response will greatly improve things." Mayor Golagani Hari Venkata Kumari agreed, stressing the impor-

ance of good roads for the city's growth.

Dr. Narayana also shared the government's vision for Visakhapatnam, saying, "We aim not only to fix immediate issues but to make Visakhapatnam a clean and attractive city." The road repairs are part of a larger plan to boost urban development and strengthen infrastructure in Visakhapatnam

VSP will either...

Continued from Page 1

He urged the government to clarify its position and to communicate with the workers who rely on the plant for their jobs. Botsa recalled Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's previous requests for federal protection for the facility and called on ruling party members to support similar demands to secure the plant's future.

Pothole-free roads...

Continued from Page 1

Additionally, he announced that the Bhogapuram-Mulapet, Amaravati Outer Ring Road, and Vijayawada East Bypass Road would be developed at an estimated cost of Rs 50,000 crore. "Over the next five years, national highways in the state will be constructed at a total expenditure of Rs 1.25 lakh crore," Chandrababu declared. He noted the potential for several ports to be developed along the coast, as Andhra Pradesh has the longest coastline in the country.

Highlighting the government's commitment to enhancing the railway trans-

port system, the CM mentioned the construction of a four-lane railway line between Kolkata and Chennai, which would significantly reduce travel time and ease goods transport. He also informed the audience that the Centre has recently allocated Rs 2,500 crore for a rail line to Amaravati.

Chandrababu pointed out that the establishment of a proposed railway zone in Visakhapatnam had been delayed by five years due to the previous government's failure to allocate the necessary land. He assured that the foundation stone for the railway zone would soon be laid, as 52 acres have been allotted

at Mudrasara since his government took office.

Reiterating his government's priority to provide employment opportunities for youth, he announced an industrial policy aimed at offering maximum subsidies to industries that generate a significant number of jobs. He also stated that drones would soon be distributed to DWCR women for agricultural pesticide spraying.

Chandrababu issued a strong warning against atrocities towards women, promising stringent action against such offences. He announced plans to install CCTV cameras to enhance women's safety and affirmed that there would be no compromise on the liquor policy, with severe measures against illegal belt-shops.

Lokesh: Industry-friendly AP...

Continued from Page 1

"Andhra Pradesh provides a unique, favorable environment for industries like no other state in India," Lokesh emphasized.

The state boasts extensive road connectivity and a coastal network of 974 km, with solid air connectivity, Lokesh said. He informed the industrialists that an international airport would be operational at Bhogapuram in 18 months, trans-

forming the profile of North Andhra. Additionally, four new ports at Mulapet, Kakinada Gateway, Machilipatnam, and Ramayapatnam are nearing completion. Lokesh explained that the State government has conducted a skill census, the first of its kind in the country, to ensure a skilled workforce is available for various industries. The curriculum in universities and colleges is being updated to equip students with industry-relevant skills. He also

shared plans to establish an Artificial Intelligence (AI) university in Amaravati, which aims to produce AI experts with global standards.

Lokesh encouraged the industrialists to invest in Andhra Pradesh, saying, "The State is progressing on a forward-looking path, and you can be partners in this growth." The meeting was attended by CD&R Senior Advisor Tom Franco, Rupert International CEO Tod Ruppert, and several other leading industrialists.

'Brand AP' US tour a huge success...

Continued from Page 1

Lokesh's tour has brought new hope to Andhra Pradesh's industrial sector, which faced challenges in recent years. Beginning his US visit on October 25, he met with over 100 major industry representatives, explaining the state's investor-friendly policies.

Executives from global companies like Microsoft, Tesla, Amazon, Apple, Google Cloud, and Salesforce met with Lokesh. As a special guest

at the IT Survey Synergy Summit in Las Vegas on October 29, where 2,300 companies from 23 countries participated, Lokesh shared the benefits of investing in Andhra Pradesh.

Lokesh assured the US-India Business Council and the Indian diaspora that this is the right time to invest in the state. A Stanford graduate, he highlighted the state's moves toward digital governance and Ease of Doing Business, helping to restore investor confidence after past challenges.

In recent years, major companies left Andhra Pradesh due to issues like commission demands and open threats, including one faced by Kia. However, Lokesh has been actively working to build "Brand AP" since becoming the IT Minister on June 24. He met with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and AP IT Association in Visakhapatnam to reassure investors.

In a recent 90-minute meeting, Lokesh convinced Tata Group Chairman N. Chandrasekaran to set up a TCS unit in Visakhapatnam, which will employ 10,000 young people.

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

Graduates urged to register as voters for upcoming MLC elections

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State president of the Andhra Pradesh Non-Gazetted and Gazetted Officers (APNGGO) Association, KV Siva Reddy, has urged graduates to register as voters on the Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Office (AP CEO) website to participate in the upcoming elections for the Krishna-Guntur and East-West Graduate Constituencies. He emphasized the importance of every graduate exercising their voting rights, underscoring the crucial role they play in strengthening democracy.

On Saturday, Siva Reddy visited the Voter Facility Center organized by the APNGGO Association's West Krishna Unit at the APNGO Home in Gandhinagar, Vijayawada. He interacted with graduates who were registering as voters at the facility.



Speaking to the media, Siva Reddy reminded graduates to complete their registration on the AP CEO website by

November 6. He described voting as a powerful means to protect democracy and especially encouraged family mem-

bers of government employees, including those in Heads of Departments, to register as graduate voters. He also

advised graduates to choose capable candidates in the upcoming elections for the Graduate Members of the Legislative Council (MLCs).

APNGGO West Krishna president A Vidyasagar mentioned that the association is providing necessary facilities for graduate voter registration, including the presence of a gazetted officer and free Xerox services. He stressed that even those who are already registered on the electoral rolls should register as graduate voters, as previous graduate votes will not be valid for the upcoming MLC elections.

APNGGO treasurer K Ranga Rao, along with NTR district leaders D Satyanarayana Reddy, P Ramesh, G Ramakrishna, M Nagendra, CVR Prasad, Shaik Nazeeruddin, VV Prasad, Srinivasa Rao, and others, were present at the event.



Varudu calls for action on violence against women

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

MLC Varudu Kalyani, president of the YSRC State women's wing, has asserted that Andhra Pradesh is in chaos under the five-month coalition rule, expressing deep concern for women's safety. "This government has turned the state into a hotspot for rapes and murders," she asserted, demanding a comprehensive investigation into violence against women and insisting that offenders must be punished within a month. "If this does not happen, we will advocate vigorously for the victims," Kalyani warned.

Speaking to media people here on Saturday, Kalyani highlighted a surge in lawlessness, reporting over 130 incidents of rape, assault, murder, and harassment in just 130 days of coalition governance. Among these incidents, eight women were murdered, and five others took their own lives due to ongoing harassment. She pointed to the tragic case of a three-and-a-half-year-old girl murdered by a drunken assailant in Chittoor Nagar, criticizing Naidu for his "appalling lack of response." Kalyani also condemned Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan for his silence on a woman's rape and murder in Kadiam Mandal's Burri Lanka.

Kalyani questioned whether Naidu had ever reached out to victims' families or taken action against offenders.



'Mission pothole-free roads' launched in city

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District In-Charge Collector, Dr. Nidhi Meena, along with Vijayawada East MLA Gadda Rama Mohana Rao, officially launched the "Mission Pothole-Free Roads Andhra Pradesh" programme with a traditional 'pooja' for a new road project. This road will connect GNT Road to the Vijayawada-Machilipatnam Road via Auto Nagar, near the Anjaneya Swamy Temple in Vijayawada. The Roads and Buildings Department has allocated Rs 10 lakh for this initiative.

Dr. Nidhi Meena highlighted that the NTR district has around 1,309 km of roads, including 876 km of major district roads. In the first phase of the pothole-free mission, the district has earmarked Rs 7.71 crore for 54 roadworks, which are set to be completed by December. She provided a

breakdown of the projects, noting that 14 works will take place in Mylavaram Constituency, 12 in Tiruvuru, 8 in Jaggayapet, 13 in Nandigama, three in Vijayawada East, two in Vijayawada West, and two in Vijayawada Central.

MLA Gadda Rama Mohana Rao emphasized the importance of well-maintained roads, stating that road infrastructure has faced neglect over the past five years, leading to difficulties for the public. He assured that a comprehensive plan is in place to finish the ongoing works by December 31 under the pothole-free programme. Also present were Vijayawada RDO K. Chaitanya, R&B SE T. Satyanarayana, EE N. Krishna Naik, DEE Sasibhushan, 4B Construction Monopolist Tummalam Jagadish, former ILA chairman Sunkara Durga Prasad, and other officials.

INITIATIVE AGAINST GLOBAL WARMING

Climate action campaign launched in city

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In response to the growing effects of climate change, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has launched a Climate Action Campaign aimed at vulnerable regions in India. Vijayawada has been chosen as a pilot project site, led by the Andhra Pradesh Red Cross (AP Red Cross) in partnership with local educational institutions.

Dr. A. Sridhar Reddy, Chairman of AP Red Cross, emphasized the need to address climate vulnerabilities, especially in coastal areas that are significantly affected by rising sea levels and plastic pollution. "Vijayawada was selected because it faces these challenges," he explained. "If this initiative proves successful, we will expand it across the state." According to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), if current trends continue, the global temperature could increase by 2.6 to 3.1 degrees Celsius by the end of the century. Such a rise could lead to severe consequences, includ-



ing widespread famine and the displacement of millions due to flooding. The UNEP stresses the importance of limiting the temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius, a goal that requires global cooperation.

To encourage grassroots involvement, the AP Red Cross has teamed up with Krishna University to establish Climate Action Groups made up of 2,000 students from 12 colleges in and around Vijayawada. Each group, supervised by a faculty coordinator, will participate in a series of training ses-

sions led by AK Parida, a retired IAS officer and General Secretary of AP Red Cross, along with BVS Kumar, the State Coordinator for Blood Banks and Projects.

A dedicated mobile application, the AP RED CROSS App, has been launched on the Google Play Store to improve communication among group members. The app will enable volunteers to report issues like air and water pollution and coordinate community efforts, including tree-planting initiatives aimed at enhancing local air quality.

YSRCP extends Rs 10L aid to kin of murdered Dalit woman

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Guntur district president of YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) and former minister, Ambati Rambabu, has announced that YSRC president and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has provided financial assistance of Rs 10 lakh to the family of Sahana, a Dalit woman who was brutally murdered.

Ambati Rambabu, along with local YSRC leaders including former Tenali legislator A. Siva Kumar, on Saturday presented the cheque to Sahana's parents in Tenali. During the event, Rambabu expressed his outrage over the horrific nature of Sahana's murder. He alleged that she lost consciousness due to a violent attack by three assailants, yet

the hospital failed to provide timely and adequate medical treatment to save her life. He criticized law enforcement for arresting only one of the accused while the other two remain at large, claiming that political connections with the Telugu Desam Party are obstructing justice.

Rambabu also highlighted the lack of response from local officials, including a minister from the Jana Sena party, regarding this heinous crime. He lamented that the brutal rapes and murders of women in the state are not receiving the attention they deserve.

The YSRC is demanding the immediate arrest of the remaining two suspects in Sahana's case and has pledged to support her family in their pursuit of justice.

WB, ADB experts hold workshop for Amaravati farmers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In support of the capital city Amaravati's construction, a team of experts from the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) conducted a workshop for farmers at HSR Kalyana Vedika in Tulluru, Guntur district, on Saturday.

Organized by the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA), the workshop was attended by farmers, labourers, landless individuals, women, and representatives from educational, industrial, and voluntary organisations. Discussions centred around environmental concerns and the evaluation of the social system draft.

During the workshop, the World Bank team, including Warren Paul Mayes, Gerald Paul Ollivier, Sudip Mozumder, Sona Thakur, Venkat Rao Bayana, Joseph Ese Akpodje, Ranjan Verma, and Damanjit



Singh Minhas, along with ADB representatives Pravaish Kumar Mishra (Senior Social Specialist), Harshvardhan Singh (Social Safeguards Consultant), and Jomcy Mathew (Environmental Safeguards Consultant), engaged with farmers about the social and environmental impacts of constructing the capital city.

Many farmers urged the WB and ADB officials to expedite financial assistance for the capital's development, highlighting their ongoing struggles. They requested support in creating employment opportunities and skill development training for financial growth.

Farmers also reported that the CRDA is speeding up the process of handing over returnable plots to beneficiary farmers and finalizing registrations. They emphasized the need for financial and skill development training programmes.

Furthermore, farmers called for the establishment of central and state government offices, as well as research centres in Amaravati. They believe that the capital could serve as a platform for the state's overall development by simultaneously advancing the education, finance, and business sectors.

Railway ordered to compensate family for horrible journey

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In an important ruling, the District Consumer Commission-I has instructed South Central Railways (SCR) to pay Rs 25,000 in compensation to V Murthy and his family for the severe discomfort they experienced while travelling on the Tirumala Express. The Murthy family's journey from

Tirupati to Visakhapatnam on June 5, 2023, became a nightmare when they were shifted to coach 3E at the last moment. They faced non-functional air conditioning, no water in the toilets, and unhygienic conditions.

"The Railways are responsible for ensuring basic facilities for all passengers, especially in premium compartments like 3AC," the com-

mission stated. "Denying access to essential services like water and air conditioning undermines the comfort promised to passengers." V. Murthy shared his distress, saying, "We expected a comfortable journey since we paid for 3AC tickets. The lack of basic facilities made our travel unbearable." Despite filing a complaint, SCR did not address the issues.



Walkathon organised to raise anti-corruption awareness

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In observance of Vigilance Awareness Week 2024, the Union Bank of India (UBI) organised a walkathon on Saturday along BRTS Road in Vijayawada. The event aimed to raise awareness among bank customers and the general public about the importance of combating corruption and promoting transparency and integrity. UBI Zonal Head CVN Bhaskara Rao, along with others, flagged off the walkathon.

Speaking on the occasion, Zonal Head Bhaskara Rao highlighted that corruption has become a serious issue in soci-

ety, noting that bankers, as custodians of public funds, have a greater responsibility to tackle this challenge. He mentioned that the bank is actively working to create awareness among customers and the public on this matter. Regional Head Muvvala Sridhar added that adhering to the Central Vigilance Commission's guidelines in both letter and spirit is essential to enhancing transparency and integrity in daily transactions.

The event was graced by UBI Deputy Zonal Heads Sarada Murthy and Rama Rao, Deputy Regional Head Harish Betha, ISS Murthy, and other bank officials.

APAAR is based on the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE+) portal, which assigns a unique 12-digit ID to each student, in line with the "One Nation-One Student ID" initiative. However, even small differences in documents are blocking registrations. A district education office staff member explained, "Minor mismatches in Aadhaar and school records can stop the APAAR registration process."

APAAR initiative faces delays due to data mismatches

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR), a new government programme to provide unique ID cards for students from Class I to Intermediate, is facing delays due to mismatches in student information. Discrepancies in names, dates of birth, and parents' details between school records and Aadhaar data are slowing down the project.

A local teacher involved in the registration process shared that while many students can register easily, issues with Aadhaar details are causing delays. Correcting these details often requires trips to Aadhaar

centres, which can be challenging for families, especially those in remote areas.

APAAR is based on the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE+) portal, which assigns a unique 12-digit ID to each student, in line with the "One Nation-One Student ID" initiative. However, even small differences in documents are blocking registrations. A district education office staff member explained, "Minor mismatches in Aadhaar and school records can stop the APAAR registration process."

To address these issues, the Education Department has proposed holding correction camps in high schools, allowing on-site Aadhaar

updates. An official suggested, "We're planning at least four camps per mandal for primary and upper-primary students. This would make it easier for families to match Aadhaar details with school records, reducing the need for multiple trips."

So far, only 75,110 out of 3,44,254 students in the district have registered, with 38,072 completing their details. A teacher overseeing the process noted that faster birth certificate issuance and more Aadhaar correction camps could help more students get their APAAR ID cards without delays. Despite these challenges, the Education Department is optimistic that these steps will speed up registrations.





APTDC chief inspects renovation works of Haritha hotel

PNS ■ NELLORE Balaji directed the officials not to compromise with the quality of works. He ordered them to take steps to keep the surrounding clean to attract more tourists. He emphasised that the Haritha hotel should be popularized to attract tourists. He told the officials to put up sign boards on the highway indicating directions to reach the Haritha hotel.



Atrocities against women increased in AP: Roja

PNS ■ TIRUPATI She pointed out that this incident marks the second heinous crime to occur in the Chief Minister's own district. She demanded that the government provide an ex gratia payment of Rs 20 lakh to the bereaved family. RK Roja also claimed that the parents and relatives of the deceased girl managed to apprehend the accused, Sushant, and handed him over to the police. The former Minister criticized the Naidu-led government for allowing the establishment of liquor shops, stating that these establishments have proliferated throughout the state. She called on the government to regulate the liquor shops more effectively. RK Roja also made strong comments against Chandrababu Naidu, Home Minister V. Anitha, and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, asserting that many crimes are committed under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

3 killed as car collides with auto

PNS ■ KURNOOL Three women lost their lives, and a young girl sustained critical injuries after a car collided with an auto-rickshaw at Dharmavaram village in Nandavaram mandal on National Highway 167 on Saturday. According to the police, the car was reportedly speeding when the driver lost control, causing it to crash into the auto-rickshaw. The accident claimed the lives of Veera Nagamma (60), Gowramma (61), and Bibi (32), who were travelling in the auto-rickshaw. The vehicle was en route to Mantralayam from Adoni when the tragic incident occurred. All three deceased



were residents of Halaharvi village in Nandavaram mandal, where the news has cast a shadow of grief. An eight-year-old girl, Rajia, was critically injured and has been admitted to the Government General Hospital (GGH) in Yemmiganur. Following the collision, both vehicles veered off the road and ended up in nearby fields. The police have registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH for postmortem examination.

Energy Minister promises to resolve public grievances

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar has promised to take steps to resolve the issues facing people in the district.

The NDA alliance held a meeting on Saturday to discuss local issues and public grievances. District leaders, including Union Minister of State for Steel and Industries, Bhupatiraju Srinivasa Varma, highlighted various problems that need attention.

Speaking at the event as the chief guest, Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar reminded attendees that the NDA came to power due to the unity of the three alliance parties.

"The government is to implementing welfare schemes transparently and efficiently. We revoked the garbage tax upon coming to power and are working on transforming waste into health resources," he said. The minister mentioned that the government has started



providing free gas cylinders under the Deepam 2 program, fulfilling an earlier promise. He also noted that the free sand policy is already in effect.

Addressing energy concerns, the minister clarified that the government led by Chandrababu Naidu opposes implementing smart meters.

Ravi Kumar further assured that he would discuss and resolve the 22A land issues with the Chief Minister. Criticizing the previous YSRCP government, he said, "Their failures and wrongdoings have now become a burden on the people."

Key NDA leaders, including

Water Resources Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu, MLAs Pulaparti Ramanayulu, K. Raghurama Krishnam Raju, B. Srinivas, Pitani Satyana rayana, APIIC Chairman Mantena Ramaraju, former Minister Pitala Sujata, and other party leaders, were present at the meeting.



Four notorious burglars held; booty worth Rs 44L recovered

PNS ■ ELURU

The police arrested four notorious burglars and recovered stolen items worth Rs 44 lakh, including gold jewelry and motorcycles.

Speaking to the media on Saturday, SP K. Pratap Shiva Kishore shared that due to a rise in burglary cases in the district, special police teams were formed to catch the culprits. The teams arrested four notorious burglars: K. Naga Pulla Rao, B. Himakar, B. Tarun, and A. Naveen.

The police seized gold jewelry

weighing 590 grams, silver ornaments weighing 1.63 kg, and three motorcycles, all valued at Rs 44.22 lakh. The burglars were involved in 28 cases in Eluru and NTR districts of Andhra Pradesh and in Khammam district in Telangana.

Special teams led by DSP K.V.V.N.V. Prasad, CI Rama Krishna, and SIs N. Lakshman Babu and Ramakrishna carried out the arrests. The SP praised the officers for their efforts in catching the interstate burglars and recovering the stolen items.

Tuskers go on the rampage, destroy auto

PNS ■ PARVATIPURAM

A herd of elephants destroyed an auto-rickshaw and a tilling machine in Manyam district on Saturday.

Sources said that a herd of tuskers on seeing the auto rickshaw and land tilling machine became amok and attacked them. They destroyed the auto-rickshaw and tilling machine on the road. The passers panicked and fled the scene. However, no one was hurt in the incident.



Potti Sriramulu's birth & death anniversaries to be celebrated on grand scale: Kolusu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Housing and Information and Public Relations, Kolusu Parthasarathy, announced that the government will organise grand celebrations for the birth and death anniversaries of freedom fighter Potti Sriramulu, who sacrificed his life for the formation of Andhra Pradesh. Speaking at a Telugu Desam Party (TDP) membership registration event led by party leader Gottipati Ramakrishna in Vijayawada on Saturday, he criticized the opposition for alleging that the TDP government neglected these important occasions.

Minister Parthasarathy expressed disappointment over the opposition's accusations, saying, "It's unfortunate that they choose to criticize the government on such meaningful matters." He assured that, under



Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's leadership, the government would honor national heroes like Potti Sriramulu with fitting tributes.

The minister also highlighted the TDP's commitment to supporting weaker sections of society, mentioning that the party ensures leadership positions are given to individuals from these communities. He noted the Chief Minister's special focus on including members from

the Backward Classes in ministry roles and other important positions.

Parthasarathy added that the Chief Minister aims to achieve a membership of one lakh in every constituency and encouraged all party members to work towards this goal. The event was attended by Vijayawada East MLA Gadde Ramamohan Rao, APSRTC Chairman Konakalla Narayana, and other party leaders and activists.

3,800 litres of jaggery wash destroyed

PNS ■ ELURU

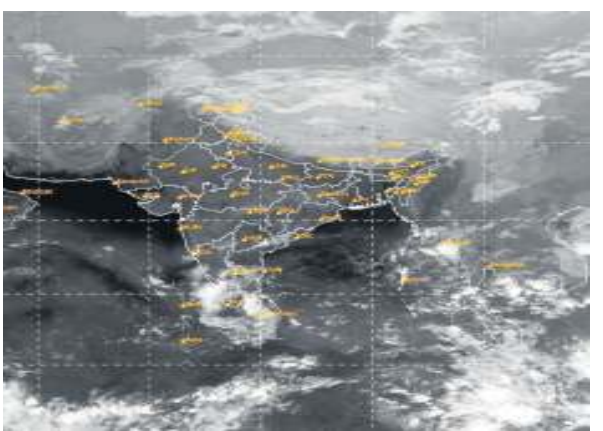


The police conducted a raid at Ravigudem village in Buttayagudem mandal and destroyed 3,800 liters of jaggery wash meant to brew illicit liquor.

On the directions of Assistant Commissioner of Prohibition and Excise KVN

Prabhu Kumar, a police team led by CI Phanikumar conducted a raid at the village on Saturday.

Phanikumar told the media that on a tip-off, a police team conducted a raid at the village and found jaggery wash in several drums. They destroyed the jaggery wash. The police registered a case.



Rains likely at isolated places in AP

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Friday's cyclonic circulation over the Gulf of Mannar and neighbourhood now lies over the south Tamil Nadu coast and adjoining Sri Lanka and extends up to 5.8 km above mean sea level, the Meteorological Centre said on Saturday.

A daily weather report here said that thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are likely to occur at isolated places in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the

next 24 hours and on November 5 and 6. The same situation is likely to prevail in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh on November 5 and 6.

The report added that light to moderate rain or thundershowers are likely to occur at one or two places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next seven days. Rainfall occurred at one or two places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh, and dry weather prevailed in Rayalaseema during the last 24 hours.

'Even 10,000 days not enough for Cong'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar said that even 10,000 days are not enough for the Congress government to implement its assurances in Telangana. He said the Congress deceived the people of Telangana with false assurances.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy re-posted Prime Minister Modi's tweet on Congress assurances in Telangana. However, Sanjay re-tweeted saying, "Dear Shri@reventh_anumula guru, Your 'guarantees' were full of fine print and empty promises. The people of Telangana didn't know the guarantee card came with 'conditions apply'. Your claim of delivering on six guarantees is hollow. Let alone 100 days, even 1,000 days or 10,000 days wouldn't suffice to fulfil them. You cheated Telangana. Your unrealistic guarantees are pushing the state and people into a debt trap. Every family is supposed to get Rs 2.5 lakh benefit as per your guarantee card. But on the contrary you might end up putting debts of Rs 2.5 lakh on every Telangana individual just like KCR even a newborn."



Farmers were promised waiver of loans up to Rs 2 lakh but most farmers were excluded proving once again that the Congress guarantee means nothing but smoke and mirrors. Rythu Bharosa was halted this season, let alone hike. In no time you created farm distress, he said. The Rs 500 paddy bonus is bogus. Even kids know that. Grain procurement centres have not been started properly. In the Rs 500 gas cylinders and 200 units of free power, many eligible individual were left out, a stark indicator that the Congress government's guarantees are just

empty rhetoric.

You have Rs 1.5 lakh crore for the Musi Project but no money for implementing the six guarantees. Musi is shaping up to be another Kaleshwaram-style ATM. The Centre under the leadership of Hon'ble PM @narendramodiji through the PM Awas Yojana is giving houses for construction but your Congress government knows only to demolish the houses of the poor. Traffic from AICC Delhi to Hyderabad has increased and it's clear your government is not even able to manage the congestion, he said.

Students started protesting over bad food in hostels. Government job hopefuls were lathi-charged without even being heard. Students and colleges are running from pillar to post to get fee reimbursement dues. Even the job calendar released before elections and in the Telangana Assembly was not adhered to. It was a horrible joke cracked at the expense of job hopefuls, KTR said.

This neglect speaks volumes about the government's priorities. Women are being raped and murders are happening in broad daylight reflecting the government's failure to protect its citizens. Temples are under attack and Congress has completely failed to maintain law and order, she said.

Telangana is not rising but facing the shadows of bogus promises. The list of fake promises of the Congress is never ending and won't be fulfilled in this lifetime. Instead of reconstruction you are causing destruction and pushing Telangana into darkness like never before. I reiterate to you to take up a Padayatra if you really believe you've implemented the six guarantees. Go to the people and find out the truth yourself.

15 students taken to task for forcing boy to dance in the 'nude'

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

Gurukula schools in Telangana have been in the news for various reasons daily. Incidents of students suffering from food poisoning and ending up in hospitals have been frequent, and the behaviour of some teachers towards children has also become controversial. Recently, another shocking issue has come to light, sparking widespread discussion. The inappropriate behaviour of fellow students towards a student has caused agony to the student's parents. In the Bhikkannur Social Welfare Gurukula School in Kamareddy district, it has

been revealed that 15 students from the same class have been behaving inappropriately towards a classmate. This came to light when the student herself expressed his distress to his father, crying out in agony. Fifteen students in the class shut the door at midnight and forced him to dance in the nude. If she slept, they woke her up. He mentioned that he was threatened with dire consequences if he told anyone about it. He further explained that such incidents had increased since he returned from the Dasara holidays and that he felt unable to stay there. On October 27, with the help of relatives, the

affected student returned home and shared everything with his father, bringing him to tears.

After hearing about the suffering his son endured, the father became very angry and immediately called the principal to address the issue seriously.

As a result, it is reported that the principal reprimanded the students involved. Subsequently, the victim was called to the school to gather full details, and counselling was provided to the offending students, who were warned that strict actions would be taken if they repeated such behaviour.

Rs 10 cr sanctioned for road repairs in Kakinada

PNS ■ KAKINADA

District Collector Shan Mohan announced that the government has sanctioned Rs.10 crore in the first phase for road repairs across Kakinada district, aiming to make the roads pothole-free.

The Collector inaugurated the road repair works on Saturday at the Pithapuram-Kondevaram road near Drivers Colony on the outskirts of Pithapuram town. Speaking on the occasion, he stated that the Roads & Buildings (R&B) department would undertake repairs in the Pithapuram constituency at a cost of Rs.2.60 crore to ensure a

smoother commute. He added that road repair requirements across the district have been identified, with projects being executed in a phased manner. The Collector instructed officials to regularly inspect the quality of the road works and submit progress reports.

He further noted ongoing efforts to comprehensively develop the Pithapuram constituency, securing necessary funds with the support of Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan. Former RDO Mallibabu, Pithapuram Municipal Commissioner Kankarao, and R&B SE K. Kanth were present at the event.

BANGLE TRIBUTE TO DEITY



Bangle garlands being readied on the eve of "Gajula Mahotsavam" in connection with Kartika Masam at Kanaka Durga Temple atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Saturday. Photo: Ch. Vijaya Bhaskar

ACROSS THE STATES



Navy airlifts critically ill seafarer from vessel

The Indian Navy on Saturday safely evacuated a critically ill seafarer from a merchant navy vessel off the western seaboard, an official said. The Navy received information from the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC), Mumbai and the Indian Coast Guard in the wee hours of the day about a seafarer in a critical condition onboard MV Babylon. The 52-year-old Indian seafarer had suffered a stroke (cerebrovascular accident) the previous night — a case with left-sided hemiplegia, the Navy said in a release. An ALH helicopter was configured to the medical intensive care unit (MICU) role and launched from INS Shikra with a medical officer and medical attendant onboard. "Notwithstanding prevailing poor visibility, the aircraft identified the merchant vessel and landed onboard for a successful medevac (medical evacuation)."



Exhibition to feature works by surreal master Dali

The works of Salvador Dali, one of the most influential surrealist artists of the 20th century, will feature in an upcoming exhibition here at Bruno Art Gallery from November 15. The exhibition brings Dali's rare etchings, watercolours, and tapestries from the prestigious Pierre Argillet Collection to India for the first time, the organisers have announced. "Dali Comes to India" celebrates Salvador Dali's groundbreaking contributions to surrealism, presenting over 200 original works that span his illustrious career. The exhibition will feature key pieces from the Pierre Argillet Collection, a celebrated ensemble that reflects Dali's unparalleled creativity and collaboration with his long-time publisher and friend, Pierre Argillet," they said. Dali's surreal landscapes and psychological themes serve as mirrors to contemporary issues, reflecting complex notions of identity, mental health, and the intricacies of human emotion.



379 fresh farm fire cases in Punjab

Punjab recorded 379 farm fires on Saturday, with Sangrur district witnessing the highest number of 66 such incidents, taking the total case count in the state past 3,900. The state registered the current season's biggest spike in farm fires on Friday with 587 cases. Sangrur had reported the highest number of 79 cases. From September 15 to November 2, the state has seen 3,916 farm-fire cases, according to data from the Punjab Remote Sensing Centre. Ferozepur district reported 50 farm fires on Saturday, Tarn Taran 42, Amritsar 27, Bathinda 28, Moga 26, Patiala 21 and Kapurthala and Ludhiana 15 each. The districts with farm-fire cases in single digits included Fazilka (one), Rupnagar (two), Hoshiarpur (two), Faridkot (six), Jalandhar (eight), Malerkotla (five), Barnala (six) and SBS Nagar (three). Punjab reported 484 farm fires on Thursday, with Sangrur recording the highest number of 89 cases. There has been a steep jump in the number of farm fires over the last few days.

With US cooperation, we'll be able to deter illegal immigration: MEA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after the US authorities deported a batch of Indian nationals who were staying in that country illegally, New Delhi Saturday said it hopes that with India-US cooperation on mobility and migration, "we will be able to deter illegal immigration".

At his weekly briefing here, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India engages in "regular dialogue" with the United States on migration and mobility.

"On October 22, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS), through US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), conducted a large-frame charter removal flight to the Republic



of India of Indian nationals who did not establish a legal basis to remain in the United States," the DHS said in a statement last week.

This week's flight demonstrates the department's contin-

ued commitment to pursuing "sustained cooperation" with the Indian government and other international partners to reduce and deter irregular migration and jointly work to counter human smuggling, it had said.

Jaiswal, in response to a query on this deportation, said, "You would have seen, recently we had some deportations from the US. We have a regular dialogue with the United States on migration and mobility. And the idea behind that is to create more avenues for legal migration."

As part of this, "our regular consular dialogues and arrangements, we have facilitated the movement of people who are staying in the US illegally or are a part of an irregular movement", he added.

"This has been going on for some time. We hope that with this cooperation and our engagement with the US on mobility and migration, we will be able to deter illegal immigration," the MEA spokesperson said.

MEA ON ANMOL BISHNOI CASE

Under established procedures action will be taken

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of Mumbai police seeking extradition of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi's younger brother Anmol, the external affairs ministry on Saturday said these matters come under legal domain and so action will be taken under established procedures.

The proposal was sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs after the US authorities informed Mumbai police about his presence in their country, a senior police official said in Mumbai on Saturday.

Anmol Bishnoi has been named as an accused in some high-profile crimes, including the Baba Siddique murder case. "You spoke about Anmol Bishnoi. Investigation is underway. Probe is in

progress. These matters come under legal domain. And, since these things come under legal domain, so under established procedures, action will be taken on this issue," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told reporters in Delhi.

He was asked if the US has shared any details on the brother of Lawrence Bishnoi for extradition.

Last month, the Mumbai police's crime branch moved the special Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) court here stating that it intends to "initiate the extradition procedure of fugitive criminal Anmol Bishnoi".

It filed an affidavit "for further necessary action", which was allowed by the special court.

'98% schools have separate toilet facilities for girl students'



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has informed the Supreme Court that more than 97.5 per cent of schools in the country, including government, government-aided and private ones, have provided separate toilet facilities for girl students.

It has filed an affidavit in a pending PIL moved by Congress leader and social activist Jaya Thakur seeking directions to the Centre and states to provide free sanitary pads to girl students of Classes 6 to 12 and ensure separate female toilet facilities in all government, government-aided and residential schools.

The Centre has told the top court that states and Union territories, such as Delhi, Goa and Puducherry, have achieved 100 per cent targets and complied with the earlier orders of the court.

It has also informed the

court that 16 lakh toilets for boys and 17.5 lakh toilets for girls have been constructed in more than 10 lakh government schools and 2.5 lakh toilets for boys and 2.9 lakh toilets for girls have been made available in government-aided schools.

The Centre has pointed out that in West Bengal, separate toilet facilities have been provided for girl students in 99.9 per cent schools and in Uttar Pradesh, 98.8 per cent schools have separate facilities for girls.

The figure is 99.7 per cent in Tamil Nadu, 99.6 per cent in Kerala, 99.5 per cent in Sikkim, Gujarat, Punjab, 99.6 per cent in Chhattisgarh, 98.7 per cent in Karnataka, 98.6 per cent in Madhya Pradesh, 97.8 per cent in Maharashtra, 98 per cent in Rajasthan, 98.5 per cent in Bihar and 96.1 per cent in Odisha, it has informed the court.



BJP says it stands for credibility, Congress for crisis

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday asserted that it stood for the credibility of promises made to people under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and the Congress for the "crisis of credibility", as the ruling party fired a fresh salvo at its rival in a war of words between them over unkept poll pledges.

BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi claimed his party believes in creating wealth and distributing it among the poor while "destruction of wealth" defined the Congress, and was joined by Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri who cited figures to depict India's changing face under Modi.

The ruling party made the fresh charge a day after Mallikarjun Kharge claimed that "Modi ki guarantee" was a cruel joke on people after the prime minister had seized on the Congress president's advice to his state colleagues in Karnataka that they should be guided by budgetary constraints in making poll announcements.

Modi destroyed dignity of PM's post with hollow promises: Priyanka

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a scathing attack on Narendra Modi, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday said the prime minister has "destroyed" the dignity of the country's highest post by repeatedly making "hollow promises" to 140 crore Indians.

She also said that Modi should work on "restoring the dignity of his post by resorting to truth" instead of worrying about the Congress.

Her remarks came after Modi on Friday said the Congress stands "badly exposed" in front of the people for promising to them



what the party knows it will never be able to deliver.

The prime minister launched a fierce attack on the opposition party as he seized on Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge's com-

ments that the Congress' state units should make promises that are properly budgeted.

He also said the developmental trajectory and fiscal health in the Congress-ruled states of Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana is going from bad to worse.

Hitting back at the prime minister, Priyanka Gandhi said in a post in X in Hindi, "Mahatma Gandhi used to say 'Truth is God.' 'Satyameva Jayate' written in Mundaka Upanishad is our national motto. These mottos establishing truth became the ideals of the Indian freedom movement, the reconstruction of India and public life.

'BJP-SP 'alliance' fighting UP bypolls with mutual understanding'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Saturday claimed that the BJP and Samajwadi Party are contesting the upcoming bypolls in Uttar Pradesh with "mutual understanding" and their "alliance" has lost sleep since the BSP entered the fray on all seats.

The former UP chief minister also slammed the two parties for their ongoing war of slogans -- BJP's 'Batenge toh Katenge' and SP's 'Judenge toh



Jeetenge' -- and said these are designed to divert the people's attention from the real issues.

"Ever since bypolls have been announced and BSP decided to contest the bypolls solo on all nine seats, the BJP-BSP alliance

have lost their sleep. Except for a couple of bypolls, BSP has not contested byelections here," Mayawati said here in a presser. "They have so far been contesting elections with a mutual understanding, but now with the BSP contesting the bypolls, the troubles of their 'alliance' have increased.

"To divert public attention, now the BJP has invoked 'Batenge toh Katenge' slogan while SP says 'Judenge toh Jeetenge' and are busy popularising them," Mayawati added.

Identity of Jharkhand tribes being 'erased' in Assam: Soren

PNS ■ KHUNTI (JHARKHAND)

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Saturday hit out at his Assam counterpart Himanta Biswa Sarma, alleging that the identity of Jharkhand tribes in the northeastern state was being erased by not according them ST status.

Addressing an election rally at Tapkara in Khunti district, Soren said that a large number of people with roots in Jharkhand have been residing in the tea gardens of Assam but their condition was not good.

"The chief minister of Assam pretends to be a well-wisher of



the tribals here. But he has erased the identity of Jharkhand tribes in the northeastern state by not providing them Scheduled Tribe (ST) status," Soren alleged. The CM accused the saffron

party of dividing the society in the name of religion, and backward and forward.

He alleged that the election in Jharkhand was announced a month before its schedule due

to "BJP's conspiracy to prevent the state government from carrying out development work".

Soren said that his government, in its first two years, struggled to deal with the COVID pandemic.

"When the situation started returning to normal, the opposition hatched one conspiracy after another. When they failed, they finally put me behind the bars," he said.

Soren said that as his government expedited development work, the election was announced before its schedule.

"To stop a single Hemant Soren, many opposition leaders are roaming around the state in helicopters," he said.

Delhi's air quality falls into 'very poor' category again

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The pollution situation deteriorated in Delhi on Saturday, with the air quality falling into the "very poor" category again after showing improvement in the morning.

The capital's 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI), recorded at 4 pm every day, stood at 316, worsening from 290 recorded in the morning.

Air pollution levels reached the "severe" category (AQI above 400) at Anand Vihar, while the 27 other monitoring stations in the city recorded the AQI in the "very poor" category, with levels above 300. Neighbouring Ghaziabad (330) also recorded the AQI in

the "very poor" category.

However, Gurugram (209), Greater Noida (250) and Noida (269) recorded slightly better AQI levels, falling in the "poor" category, while Faridabad's AQI (166) was in the moderate category, according to the Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) data. Despite people flouting the ban on firecrackers on Diwali night on Thursday, Delhi's air quality did not enter the "severe" category as expected due to favourable winds.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", 401 and 450 "severe" and above 450 "severe plus".

'TN is not against Hindi but opposes its imposition'

PNS ■ KOZHIKODE/CHENNAI

Speaking on literary and linguistic ethos in Dravidian



Deploring that many north Indian states lacked a film industry of their own to protect their identity and cultural ethos, as the south does, Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin on Saturday said if states failed to protect their own languages, then Hindi will take over and erode their identities.

This was the reason why the Dravidian movement is against Hindi imposition, but it did not have any animosity towards that language, he said.

politics, he said the Dravidian political movement in Tamil Nadu, known for its strong lin-

guistic and cultural pride, has held long the literature and language as its foundation pillars.

"This fusion of literary, linguistic, and political ethos created a powerful identity that profoundly shaped Tamil Nadu's social and political landscape," he said, speaking at the Art and Literature festival of Manorama Daily group at Kozhikode today.

He said both Tamil Nadu and Kerala were the two most progressive states in India and both have successfully kept the fascist and communal forces at bay.

India records 17.7% decline in TB incidence, says WHO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has recorded a 17.7 per cent decline in tuberculosis incidence from 237 per lakh population in 2015 to 195 in 2023, which is more than double the global decline of 8.3 per cent, Health Ministry sources have said citing a WHO report.

In its Global TB Report 2024 released on October 29, WHO has acknowledged the tremendous progress India has made in closing the gap of missed tuberculosis cases since 2015, the sources said.

"In 2023, India is estimated to have had 27 lakh TB cases, of which 25.1 lakh were diagnosed and put on treatment. This has buoyed India's treatment coverage to 89 per cent in 2023 from 72 per cent in 2015, thereby bridging the gap of missing cases," an official



source said. The source said WHO has "acknowledged a drop in India's tuberculosis incidence from 237 per lakh population in 2015, to 195 per lakh population in 2023 accounting for

a 17.7 per cent decline.

"This is more than double the pace of decline as compared to the global decline of 8.3 per cent," the source said.

The Health Ministry sources asserted that the leap in cover-

In its Global TB Report 2024 released on October 29, WHO has acknowledged the tremendous progress India has made in closing the gap of missed tuberculosis cases since 2015, the sources said

the country. While WHO had down-sized its estimation of tuberculosis mortality in India last year, the current report documents the sustained reduction in deaths due to the disease achieved by India from 28 per lakh population to 22 per lakh population, a 21.4 per cent decline, they said.

The government has been able to strengthen and expand the National TB Elimination Programme with sustained domestic financing, official sources said.

The tuberculosis budget saw a historic 5.3 times leap in allocation from Rs 640 crores in 2015 to Rs 3400 crores in 2022-23. The WHO report noted that a majority of the funding for the TB programme comes from government resources.

WYNN MACAU DEBUTS DRUNKEN FISH

DINING REDEFINED!



Wynn Macau's Drunken Fish redefines Chinese dining with bold seafood creations and Moutai-infused dishes crafted by Executive Chef Henry Zhang, writes RUPALI DEAN



A vibrant tribute to Chinese culture, Drunken Fish at Wynn Macau, led by Executive Chef Henry Zhang, redefines luxury dining by marrying tradition with contemporary flair. Chef Zhang's innovative approach spotlights the ocean's rarest treasures, enhanced with China's revered national liquor, Moutai, creating an exceptional culinary experience. In Chinese mythology, the creature Kun lives in deep, shadowed waters, where light barely reaches its vast form. Rising to the ocean's surface, Kun morphs into Peng, a radiant bird soaring to lofty altitudes and casting its expansive shadow below. Symbolising transformation and boundless ambition, this legend mirrors human potential, urging us to transcend limitations. Inspired by this myth, Wynn Macau presents its latest venture, 'Drunken Fish, or 'Jiu Kun,' under Zhang's expert vision. This dining experience showcases a lavish seafood spread featuring prized ingredients such as French blue lobsters, Sri Lankan crabs, and

Malaysia's famed 'king of river fish,' all crafted using traditional Chinese techniques with modern twists. "Our philosophy respects tradition while embracing innovation," Zhang affirms.

EXCEPTIONAL SEAFOOD, ARTFULLY CRAFTED

Drunken Fish employs an array of traditional Chinese techniques that amplify the natural flavours and nutrients of the seafood. Steaming preserves freshness, while stir-frying ensures a delightful texture, and braising and poaching add layers of aromatic richness. The restaurant offers a wide range of preparations, inviting guests to explore local and global flavours, including spicy Sichuan, Hong Kong-style, and a fusion of Singaporean, Thai, and Japanese influences. This diverse approach results in a stunning variety of dishes designed to satisfy every palate. Cooking with Moutai is an exhilarating process

that demands balance to enhance rather than overpower a dish's flavour. At Drunken Fish, this unique liquor is used in two signature offerings, demonstrating the culinary finesse required to incorporate Moutai's distinct, pungent essence without it overshadowing the seafood's natural taste.

SAVOUR THE EXPERIENCE

A highlight of the menu is the Moutai flambe crispy chicken, a dish that harmonises tradition with innovation. The crispy skin and tender meat, infused with the distinct flavour of Moutai, create an unforgettable taste experience. Another standout is the red-spotted grouper with pickled tomato, chili, and bean sprouts—a nod to the traditional sour soup of the Miao and Dong ethnic groups of Guizhou, where the liquor subtly enhances the fish's freshness. Additionally, the empurau, a rare Malaysian fish steamed in soy sauce using Cantonese methods, presents a remarkable

delicacy, available only in select seasons and prized for its exquisite taste.



Drunken Fish at Wynn Macau offers a captivating dining experience that celebrates traditional Chinese flavours while embracing innovative culinary techniques. The warm and welcoming setting, accentuated by custom hand-bent aquariums and a chic turquoise Moutai bar, creates an ideal atmosphere for seafood lovers. With a menu that skilfully blends familiar and daring dishes, each visit promises a memorable journey for the senses. Interactive auctions of fresh seafood and exclusive liquors on weekend evenings add to the allure, ensuring each dining experience is as engaging as it is delectable.

(Awarded the "Best Food Writer in the Country" by the Indian Culinary Forum, WACS, and the Ministry of Tourism, Rupali Dean writes on food and travel.)



Oktoberfest on a Platter

This Oktoberfest season, Smoke House Deli, in collaboration with United Breweries, brings a month-long celebration featuring a host of special culinary delights

BY SHARMILA CHAND

Our Oktoberfest menu captures the essence of the celebration through bold, vibrant flavours thoughtfully crafted to elevate the beer experience," says Chef Shamsul Wahid, Group Executive Chef, Impresario Entertainment & Hospitality Pvt Ltd. "We've curated a unique selection, including Pizza Dogs, Panuzzos, and Tramezzas, blending tradition with modern innovation. It's a menu designed to surprise and delight, offering a fresh, exciting take on Oktoberfest while staying true to the festive spirit," he adds.

SPECIAL MENU

The well-crafted menu offers a variety of small plates, hearty mains and indulgent desserts, all crafted to pair perfectly with your favourite brews. There's a selection of Pizza Dogs, Panuzzos, and Tramezzas, alongside other delectable dishes. It's more than just a meal—it's a festive feast in true Smoke House Deli fashion, where great food meets great beer for a celebration you won't forget. Start your feast with a delicious selection of Pizza Dogs, each offering a unique twist on a classic favourite. Try the Plant-Based Sausage Dog, topped with mozzarella and tomato. For a smoky kick, the Smokin' Chicken Frank is loaded with ketchup, mustard, citrus chilli, and gherkin relish. Meat lovers won't want to miss the Bolognese Dream Dog, featuring a chicken frank and bold paprika for an unforgettable flavour.



black pepper. For something a bit more savoury, try the Chicken Balsamico with balsamic chicken, tomato, onion, and fresh greens, or the A-BLT, with crispy bacon, lettuce, avocado, and tomato for a satisfying crunch. Tramezzas truly pack a punch of flavour in every bite, perfect for those who crave a satisfying yet balanced meal. Do not miss the Truffle Shuffle, a decadent mix of brie and truffle oil tossed with oyster, shiitake, and button mushrooms. For a more comforting option, the Deli Roast brings together roast chicken with hollandaise and caramelised onions. If you're craving something richer, try the BLT Molten Brie, combining bacon, brie, tomato, and lettuce, or go for the crispy, creamy combination of The Pollo Frito, featuring fried chicken and a creamy egg salad. For a heartier choice, the Shroom Smash blends a tenderloin patty with grilled mushrooms for a deliciously savoury experience.

And of course, no Oktoberfest is complete without beer! Pair these delicious dishes with a variety of beers from United Breweries, available in buckets of 4 and 8, specially selected to enhance your dining experience and bring the festive spirit to life.

SIGNATURE VEG DISHES

- Plant Power Frank (Pizza Dog) – Italian-style hot dogs served with French Fries (Plant-based sausage, mozzarella and tomato).
- Classic Caprese (Panuzzo) – Crispy, stuffed turnover pizza sandwiches served with French Fries (Tomato, fresh mozzarella, basil, EVOO & ground black pepper).
- Truffle Shuffle (Tramezza) –



- Folded pizza sandwiches served with French Fries (Brie, truffle oil tossed oyster, shiitake & button mushrooms).
- NON-VEG DISHES
- Bolognese Dream Dog (Pizza Dog) – Italian-style hot dogs served with French Fries (Minced mutton bolognese, chicken frank and paprika).

- Chicken Balsamico (Panuzzo) – Crispy, stuffed turnover pizza sandwiches served with French Fries (Creamy, diced balsamic chicken, tomato, onion & fresh greens).
- The Shroom Smash (Tramezza) – Folded pizza sandwiches served with French Fries (Smashed tenderloin patty & grilled mushroom).

SIGNATURE COCKTAILS

- Peach House – Bitter Ginger Roku Gin, Peach Schnapps & Ginger Beer.
- Nobel Nectar – Hendrick's Gin with Fresh Cucumber Juice & Elderflower Tonic.
- Gimlet Di Basilico – Roku Gin, Limoncello, Basil Oil & Shiso Leaf.

COMFORT MEETS SOPHISTICATION

Smoke House Deli is renowned for its contemporary culinary experience, offering guests comfort food in a casual and relaxed ambience. The menu is curated using locally sourced ingredients, elevating familiar dishes into gastronomic masterpieces. Smoke House Deli is celebrated for its diverse range of modern European cuisine, featuring exceptional grills, artisanal pizzas, exquisite charcuterie, fine spirits, delectable bakes, sumptuous desserts, and a variety of pastas. Each outlet reflects a Deli-style architecture, telling the tales of the unique history and landmarks of its locale, adorned with whimsical décor, creating the perfect setting for memorable dining experiences. It's an ideal destination for a family meal, a romantic date, or a catch-up with friends, offering a versatile and inviting atmosphere for any occasion. "For over a decade, Smoke House Deli has evolved from a café into a cherished classic, known for its beautifully crafted food and memorable experiences," says Chef Shamsul. "At the core of our ethos is a deep commitment to serving comfort food made from ethically sourced, wholesome ingredients. What truly sets us apart is the attention to detail—whether it's sourcing organic produce from local farms or handcrafting every dish with care. Our whimsical décor, combined with novel offerings and a thoughtfully curated, ever-changing menu, strikes the perfect balance between indulgence and mindful eating. This creates a warm, inviting space that has been cherished by our guests for years."

Sharmila Chand is an author, columnist, and journalist who writes on Food, Travel, Culture, and Lifestyle.



Vegan Wonders: Where to Eat Next!

BY TEAM AGENDA

MISS MARGARITA

Miss Margarita features a newly launched menu with a dedicated section for vegetarian and vegan dishes, showcasing its commitment to inclusive dining. Highlights include Classic Guac 'N' Chips with fresh guacamole, Avocado Agua Chile, Charred Sweet Potato & Crispy Cauliflower Tacos, and Stuffed Chilli and Chipotle Potato Skewers, all designed to please plant-based diners.

BEEYOUNG BREWGARDEN

BeeYoung Brewgarden offers an exciting range of vegan cocktails that emphasise innovative drinking options. Signature drinks include Hearts on Fire, Pulp Fiction, and Nuttea Sour, along with unique choices like Trufflesome and To Beer, or Not to Beer. These cocktails reflect the venue's dedication to flavourful, inclusive beverages.

ROSE CAFE

Located in Malviya Nagar, Rose Cafe is known for its extensive vegan menu featuring hearty soups, fresh salads, and delicious pastas and pizzas. Diners can enjoy options like Roasted Tomato & Basil soup, Big Greek salad, and Aubergine Parmigiana, all within a cosy atmosphere that makes it a must-visit for vegans.

GUPPY AND THE GRAMMAR ROOM

Guppy and The Grammar Room are celebrated for their creative vegan offerings, focusing on fresh, seasonal ingredients. These restaurants provide inviting spaces for diners to enjoy delightful plant-based meals that highlight vibrant flavours and sustainability.

LIVING IT UP IN AN AIRBNB IN LONDON

When planning my trip to London, selecting the perfect Airbnb was crucial. I focused on vibrant neighbourhoods, safety and charming details to ensure an unforgettable experience in this bustling city

BY AKANKSHA DEAN

RELYING ON AIRBNB

For my travels, I have relied on Airbnb with unwavering confidence. Whether transitioning between flat shares or advising friends, it remains my top choice. The perks include local insights, a genuine neighbourhood experience, and costs often lower than hotels but far superior to hostels. While some listings require minimum stays, and occasionally hosts can be problematic, the advantages far outweigh the drawbacks. Thus, I enthusiastically recommend London Airbnbs.

SELECTING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

When selecting my Airbnb in London, the area was my first consideration. If you have a specific itinerary in mind, staying nearby is a no-brainer. Each neighbourhood in London feels like its own city, so I explored options that sparked my excitement. For a taste of the hipster scene, Hackney, Brixton, and Shoreditch were perfect choices. For luxury, Westminster, Soho, Fitzrovia, or Kensington beckoned, while Hampstead, Islington, and Greenwich offered a cosy, local vibe. These insights gave me a clearer picture of what each neighbourhood had to offer.

I opted for a two-bedroom flat in Marylebone. Nestled between Hyde Park and Regent's Park, this area embodies serene sophistication in London's heart. Its upscale charm provided easy access to Mayfair, Westminster, and The City, as well as the captivating shopping, dining, and majestic architecture of the iconic West End. It's truly a refined oasis amidst the bustle. My Airbnb was within walking distance of Marylebone Station, Tesco, and a couple of delightful restaurants, including one that served amazing Vietnamese food and another renowned for its Fish and Chips.

DETAILS MATTER

When considering my stay, I focused on price points, assessing my overall budget and daily accommodation expenses. In London, Airbnbs typically range from £30 for a private room to £80-£100 for an entire unit. Prices climb as you approach Central London. I always seek discounts for first-time stays, ensure my flat has a kitchen to save on meals, and choose a location within walking distance of must-see sites. This time, the Airbnb I liked was



roughly £300 over my budget for the entire stay. I messaged the host on the app, and they kindly waived the extra cost. While it may not be paramount for everyone, the details matter when finding the perfect Airbnb in London. I prioritise essentials like Wi-Fi, a washing machine, a tea kettle, microwave, toaster, hairdryer, lift, and air conditioning. I also appreciate visually appealing rooms, often with a splash of colour or, if I'm fortunate, a lovely view. This time, I enjoyed a spacious terrace adjacent to the living room, offering beautiful views and sunlight.

SUPERHOST FOR THE WIN

When browsing for an Airbnb, I always make it a point to delve into the reviews. No matter how visually appealing a property might be, a poor host can mar the entire experience. I pay particular attention to feedback from other women, as safety is my foremost concern when selecting accommodations. While security measures are in place, one can never be too cautious. If I encounter a single negative review over something trivial, I typically brush it off. However, if there are multiple red flags, it's wise to take your hard-earned pounds elsewhere. I personally favour the "Superhost" option. These hosts often come with glowing reviews and little extras that enhance the stay dramatically. Though some might say it's controversial, I recommend booking your London



Airbnb well in advance — falling in love with a place only to discover it's fully booked is disheartening. Once you find an Airbnb that fits your budget and has good reviews, seize the opportunity and don't look back. After finalising my travel plans, I saved two or three potential Airbnb options. I compared them and made my booking a month in advance. Exploring London was the true highlight of my trip. Visiting London without indulging in afternoon tea is akin to going to Paris and skipping the Eiffel Tower.



LONDON EXPERIENCES

My tea experience began at Sketch, nestled in a stunning 18th-century building in Mayfair. I was enchanted by the restaurant's signature pink dining room, adorned with whimsical artwork by David Shrigley. By night, this charming tea room transformed into a

vibrant restaurant and cocktail bar led by renowned French chef Pierre Gagnaire.

For more culinary adventures, I discovered the modern European flair of The Ivy Cafe Marylebone, the Art Deco elegance of The Wolseley, the fresh seafood at Scotts Mayfair, and the decadent Austrian charm of Fischer's Marylebone. No shopping spree is complete without a visit to Selfridges on Oxford Street, a landmark since 1909, followed by a stroll down Marylebone High Street, where boutiques like Le Labo and Lululemon await. Culturally, I explored The Wallace Collection, housed in a historic Marylebone townhouse, featuring masterpieces by Titian, Rubens, and Rembrandt. I also visited the renowned British Museum nearby. I discovered a world of luxury at the UK's premier shopping destination, Bicester Village. Just a train ride from Marylebone, I explored over 150 chic boutiques in the charming Oxfordshire countryside. With brands like Gucci, Armani, and Givenchy, I indulged in a rich retail

experience and enjoyed savings of up to 60%. As a special guest, I even received an extra 10% off the Village price—truly a shopper's paradise. Surrounded by beautiful parks, my London experience was truly unforgettable.

THE LAST LEG

As my journey from London began, I couldn't help but feel excitement for my return home after a good two weeks in London. I had chosen a Premium Economy seat with Virgin Atlantic after extensive research. For those who don't know, Virgin Atlantic, founded by Richard Branson in 1984, stands out as a refreshing alternative to conventional carriers. Flying in Premium, simply called Premium, was a transformative experience. The leather seats offered noticeably more space than standard Economy, with an extra inch of width and enhanced recline, making the long-haul flight far more comfortable. I appreciated the adjustable headrest and the additional luxuries, like a pull-out footrest. The in-seat entertainment system, Vera, featured a 13-inch screen packed with an impressive selection of films.

Ultimately, my upgrade was a brilliant choice, making the journey back home a truly enjoyable experience. Akanksha Dean is an independent food & travel writer, a chef, and a catalyst. She is the first Indian to have trained at Osteria Francescana in Modena, Italy, rated as the world's best restaurant in 2016 and 2018.



Srisailam: A journey to spiritual splendour

Discover Srisailam, the "Kailash of the South," where spirituality meets natural beauty. This sacred Andhra Pradesh town offers a profound journey through ancient temples, serene landscapes and cultural wonders, says VISHESH SHUKLA



With a spirit of adventure and a heart full of curiosity, I set out from Bhubaneswar, the vibrant capital of Odisha, on a journey that promised to be extraordinary. Boarding the Yesvantpur Superfast Express, excitement coursed through me as I made my way to a small town in Andhra Pradesh, often called the "Kailash of the South." This enchanting place is home to Sri Mallikarjuna Swamy, one of the twelve sacred Jyotirlingas, and Goddess Bhramaramba, one of the eighteen Mahashakti Peethas, giving it an aura of deep spiritual significance. Nestled in the picturesque Nandyal district, Srisailam is a town where natural beauty and profound spirituality merge, offering a treasure trove of experiences waiting to be uncovered.

Markapur Road railway station serves as the gateway for devotees bound for Srisailam, with convenient connections to this revered destination. Upon arrival, travellers can hire autos for ₹30 to reach Markapuram bus stand, where buses run regularly to Srisailam. The 2.5-hour journey, costing ₹250, offers breathtaking views of the lush landscape, especially during the monsoon season. After arrival, the Shiva temple is within walking distance from the bus stand. Affordable accommodations, such as Kakatiya Anna Satra Sangam (?1100), cater to pilgrims' needs.



The Mallikarjun Swami and Mata temple, a primary attraction, welcomes devotees until late evening. Local eateries like Trishul Family Restaurant provide delicious refreshments. Srisailam's well-organised transport and amenities ensure a hassle-free experience for pilgrims, making the spiritual journey truly unforgettable.

JOURNEY TO SERENITY

After a refreshing night's sleep, one can start the morning with a visit to the ancient



Hatreshwar Mahadev Temple, where Lord Shiva defeated the demon Tripurasura. Following the blessings of Lord Shiva, visitors often head to the unique Sakshi Ganpati Swamy temple, where Lord Ganesha is depicted seated with a pen and paper,

recording devotees' wishes to fulfil them. As the sunlight gently touches the mountains, the Paldhara-Panchdhara waterfall awaits, captivating visitors with its serene beauty. Covering all the scenic spots, I proceeded to Palthal Ganga, where I enjoyed a ropeway ride and boating on the Krishna River, savouring the serene view of the Srisailam reservoir. After visiting the major sites, I stopped for brunch at a local hotel serving delicious idli, dosa, and mendoovada. Satisfied with my meal, I returned to my place to rest and took a two-hour nap.

SOUVENIRS OF SRISAILAM

The next morning began at 5 AM. After checking out of the hotel, I enjoyed a hearty dosa breakfast before taking an express bus from Srisailam to Markapur for ₹200. I reached Markapur railway station around 10:15 PM to board the Vasco-da-Gama Shalimar Express. With around eight hours left in my journey, I had breakfast from the train's pantry car and spent some time reading. As the journey concluded, I was met with an enchanting surprise—the breathtaking beauty of Chilika Lake, which unfolded before me as the train traversed its waters. Unaware of its majesty, I found myself mesmerised by this unexpected sight, a perfect conclusion to an extraordinary journey.

IN BRIEF



ACI appoints SGK as president for APAC

SGK Kishore, a senior GMR Group executive, has been appointed the new president for the Asia Pacific and Middle East of the world airport operators' apex body, Airport Council International (ACI), effective January 1 next year. Kishore, currently the executive director and chief innovation officer at GMR Airports, will succeed Emmanuel Menanteau, Board Director of Cambodia Airports/Regional Director, VINCI Airports, GMR group said in a statement. As President of Hong-Kong headquartered ACI-APAC & MID, he will be at the forefront of supporting and driving growth in the region, it stated. According to the GMR group, Kishore's leadership will focus on enhancing regional standards, fostering collaboration among members, and addressing challenges unique to this rapidly expanding aviation landscape.



Hero MotoCorp sales rise 18 pc to 6.8 lakh units

Hero MotoCorp on Friday said its overall sales increased by 18 per cent year-on-year to 6,79,091 units in October. The country's largest two-wheeler maker has sold 5,74,930 units in October 2023. Domestic dispatches to dealers rose to 6,57,403 units compared to 5,59,766 units in the year-ago period, the company said in a statement. The company's exports rose to 21,688 units last month from 15,164 units in the year-ago period, it added. This significant growth was primarily driven by robust demand from key urban and rural areas, particularly in the 100cc and 125cc segments during the festive period, the company said. Hero MotoCorp said its electric vehicle brand VIDA continued to have a strong growth trajectory this year and achieved its highest-ever monthly dispatches, reaching 8,750 units in October 2024.



CIL has to ramp up production to higher levels: Minister

Coal production through domestic sources is important to avoid expensive imports and Coal India Ltd (CIL) has to ramp up production to higher levels in the future, Coal minister G Kishan Reddy said, as the state-owned behemoth entered its 50th year. CIL accounts for over 80 per cent of the domestic coal output. Coal is yet to peak to its full potential in the country, Reddy said, urging CIL to increase production to even higher levels, as per a statement by the coal ministry. Production through domestic sources is important to avoid expensive imports, Reddy said, adding that Coal India has to ramp up production to higher levels in the future. Coal India Ltd (CIL) came into being on November 1, 1975 as an apex holding company of the nationalised coking coal and non-coking mines. From producing 89 million tonnes (MT) during 1975-76, the maharatna coal behemoth ended FY24 with 773.6 MT, registering an 8.7-fold growth, according to the statement.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 'India committed to Sendai Framework'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister P K Mishra has affirmed India's commitment to the Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction and called for increased international collaboration on knowledge sharing, technology transfer and sustainable development to enhance disaster resilience globally.

Mishra said this while participating in the G-20 Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group (DRRWG) ministerial meeting in Belem, Brazil, according to an official release.

He led a high-level Indian delegation which took part in the meeting held from October 30 to November 1.

With the active participation of the Indian delegation, a consensus was arrived at on finalising the first ministerial declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), the release issued by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs said.

During various sessions,



Mishra shared the progress made by the government of India in reducing disaster risks and in upscaling disaster financing.

He emphasised India's proactive approach to disaster risk reduction on five priorities of the DRRWG which were enunciated during India's presidency of G20 -- early warning systems, disaster resilient infrastructure, DRR financing, resilient recovery and nature-

based solutions.

On disaster resilient infrastructure, he spoke about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's global initiative of Coalition for Disaster Resilience Infrastructure (CDRI), which now has 40 countries and seven international organisations as members, the release said.

The Indian delegation also participated in a trioka meeting with the ministers of Brazil

and South Africa. It also held bilateral meetings with ministers from Brazil and other countries, namely Japan, Norway, South Africa, South Korea, Germany, and heads of invited international organisations.

Responding to discussions on extreme heat, Mishra shared experience and steps being taken, including the focus on promoting traditional practices, to suit local conditions.

The first DRRWG was established on India's initiative during its G20 presidency in 2023.

Mishra congratulated Brazil on its continuation of the DRRWG and scaling it up to the ministerial level and affirmed India's support to South Africa on the DRRWG during their G20 presidency next year.

India's participation underscores its growing role in global DRR efforts and its commitment to building a safer and more resilient world, the release said



ADB said the cess significantly contributed to strengthening the budget of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy during 2010-2017 and provided the initial funds for the country's Green Energy Corridor scheme and its National Solar Mission, which helped bring down the cost of utility-scale solar energy and fund many off-grid renewable energy solutions

ADB lauds India's fossil fuel subsidy reforms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has since 2010 made noteworthy progress on fossil fuel subsidy reform through a calibrated 'remove', 'target', and 'shift' approach, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said in a new report.

"By carefully balancing the combined effect of three key policy levers - retail prices, tax rates, and subsidies on selected petroleum products - the country was able to reduce its fiscal subsidy in the oil and gas sector by 85 per cent, from an unsustainable peak of USD 25 billion in 2013 to USD 3.5 billion in 2023," it said.

In its 'Asia-Pacific Climate Report', ADB said India gradually phased out the subsidy on petrol and diesel (from 2010 to 2014) and carried out incremental tax increases (from 2010 to 2017), which created fiscal space to increase government support for renewable energy, electric vehicles, and strengthening of electricity infrastructure.

"The additional tax revenues from increases in excise duty on petrol and diesel from 2014 to 2017, a period of low international crude oil prices, were also redirected to improve access and target subsidies for expanding the use of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) among the rural poor," it said.

Subsidies for LPG have

since grown and "may now require efforts to improve targeting and to incubate non-fossil-fuel cooking alternatives," it said.

From 2010 to 2017, Government of India introduced a cess (tax) on coal production and imports. Around 30 per cent of the cess collections were channelled to a national clean energy and environment fund that supported clean energy projects and research.

ADB said the cess significantly contributed to strengthening the budget of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy during 2010-2017 and provided the initial funds for the country's Green Energy Corridor scheme and its National Solar Mission, which helped bring down the cost of utility-scale solar energy and fund many off-grid renewable energy solutions.

"However, with the introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST) in India after 2017, the cess on coal production and imports was subsumed within the country's GST compensation cess, the flows of which were redirected to compensate states for revenue losses associated with the new tax regime," it said.

As a result of India's subsidy reforms and taxation measures, the country's fossil fuel subsidies plummeted from 2014 to 2018.

Buffett sitting on \$325 billion cash as Berkshire keeps selling Apple stock

PNS ■ OMAHA (US)

Warren Buffett is now sitting on more than USD 325 billion cash after continuing to unload billions of dollars worth of Apple and Bank of America shares this year and continuing to collect a steady stream of profits from all of Berkshire Hathaway's assorted businesses without finding any major acquisitions.

Berkshire said it sold off more Apple shares in the third quarter after halving its massive investment in the iPhone maker last quarter. The stake valued at USD 69.9 billion at the end of September remains Berkshire's biggest single investment, but it has been cut drastically since the end of last year when it was worth USD 174.3 billion.

Berkshire said Saturday that investment gains again drove its third quarter profits skyward to USD 26.25 billion, or USD 18,272 per Class A share. A year ago, unrealised paper investment losses dragged the Omaha, Nebraska-based conglomerate's earnings down to a loss of USD 12.77 billion, or USD 8,824 per Class A share.

Buffett has long recommended that investors pay more attention to Berkshire's operating earnings if they want to get a good sense of how the businesses it owns are doing because those numbers exclude investments. Berkshire's



bottom-line profit figures can vary widely from quarter to quarter along with the value of its investments regardless of whether the company bought or sold anything.

By that measure, Berkshire said its operating earnings were only down about 6% at USD 10.09 billion, or USD 7,023.01 per Class A share. That compares to last year's USD 10.8 billion, or USD 7,437.15 per Class A share.

The four analysts surveyed by FactSet Research predicted that Berkshire would report operating earnings of USD

7,335.11 per Class A share.

Berkshire's revenue didn't change much at USD 92,995 billion. A year ago, it reported USD 93.21 billion revenue. That number was ahead of the USD 92.231 billion revenue that three analysts surveyed by FactSet predicted.

Berkshire owns an assortment of insurance businesses, including Geico, along with BNSF railroad, several major utilities and a varied collection of retail and manufacturing businesses, including brands like Dairy Queen and See's Candy.

Puri targets Kharge for indulging in shoot and scoot

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Saturday took on Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge for "delusional opinions", saying the opposition party was using "lies, fabricated figures and fake data" in its classic shoot and scoot policy.

In a series of post on X, Puri quoted data to counter Kharge's assertions saying the Modi government's inclusive development policies will make the country a developed nation by 2047.

"Congress Party and Mr Kharge seem to be oblivious of the changes that have transformed the lives of Indians for the better," he said.

The Modi government has pulled more than 24 crore

At 3.87 crore bottles, pre-Diwali liquor sales set new high in Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Liquor sales in the national capital in the fortnight leading to Diwali set a record with over 3.87 crore bottles sold, mopping up a revenue of Rs 447.62 crore for the excise department of Delhi government, officials said on Saturday.

From October 15 to October 30, a whopping 3.87 crore bottles were sold from the liquor stores run by four corporations of Delhi government, including 2.98 crore bottles of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) and 89.48 lakh beer bottles, official figures showed.

Diwali celebrated on October 31 was a 'dry day', meaning all liquor stores were closed across the city on that day.

On Diwali eve on October 30, a total of 33.80 lakh bottles were sold, yielding a revenue

FESTIVE 'SPIRIT'



of Rs 61.56 crore, according to the data.

As compared to last year, 1.18 crore more bottles were sold in the fortnight leading to Diwali this year, from 2.69 crore in 2023 to 3.87 crore this time.

Emerging from the shadows of the disruptions caused due to the withdrawal of the 2021-22 liquor policy, the excise department has earned a revenue

of Rs 3,047 crore in the first half of the ongoing financial year (April-October 2024), a growth of around 7 per cent as compared to the same period in 2023 when liquor worth Rs 2,849 crore was sold, officials said.

The total excise revenue, including VAT, earned between April and October 2024 stood at Rs 4,495 crore as against Rs 4,188 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year, said a senior excise department official.

"These figures are despite the hiccups in the ESCIMS software in September and transition to the eAbkari system in October. Revenue flow is being steadily streamlined and scaled up," the official said.

The retail liquor business took a hit in the national capital after a new excise policy launched by the Delhi government was withdrawn in July

Govt revises wastage, input-output norms for gold, silver jewellery exports

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government revised the norms related to the permissible amount of wastage with regard to the export of gold, silver and platinum jewellery. The wastage norms are the permissible amount of gold or silver that can be lost during the manufacturing process of jewellery for export.

An industry official said the wastage norms have been slightly adjusted from the earlier norms, released on May 27, after the industry urged the government to look into the issue.

The industry had expressed concerns over the May rules which reduced the wastage norms across jewellery categories.

After their concerns, the Commerce Ministry deferred the implementation of those rules till December 2024.

Now, the ministry has come out with the revised norms again, which have been welcomed by the industry.

"The wastage permissible and standard input-output norms with regard to export of jewellery have been revised," the Directorate General of Foreign Trade said in a public notice. The new norms will be applicable from January 1,

next year.

The industry had made two key requests - to set the wastage norms that realistically align with the jewellery manufacturing process and permit an adequate transition period for adapting to new regulations.

Standard input-output norms (SION) are rules that define the amount of input/inputs required to manufacture a unit of output for export purposes.

Input output norms are applicable for products such as electronics, engineering, chemical, and food products including fish and marine products, handicrafts, plastic and leather products.

In May the wastage by weight in plain gold and platinum jewellery was reduced to 0.5 per cent from 2.5 per cent and in silver to 0.75 per cent from 3.2 per cent. In studded jewellery, the wastage was reduced to 0.75 per cent in gold, silver and platinum jewellery from 5 per cent earlier.

According to the new norms announced on Friday, wastage of 2.25 per cent is allowed in handmade jewellery of gold and platinum from 2.5 per cent applicable now and 3 per cent in silver jewellery from 3.2 per cent.

Amazon India records high growth in premium product sales

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Demand for premium products across categories, including television, smartphones, and large appliances, dominated the Diwali season sale during the Amazon Great Indian Festival (AGIF) 2024 that commenced from September 27, a senior company official said on Saturday.

Amazon India Vice President Saurabh Srivastava told PTI that the company recorded 10-times growth in Apple iPad sales and five-times growth in Samsung tablets during the Amazon Great Indian Festival (AGIF) 2024.

"One clear trend that was

there is premiumisation. When we look at it, whether it is televisions or fashion and beauty, gaming laptops, home and kitchen appliances, we have seen a clear trend of premiumisation. People are preferring more premium products. Again, this is not limited to just top cities," Srivastava said.

He said large-screen TVs contributed to about 30 per cent of the total unit sales in the segment and there was 10-times growth in their demand on a year-over-year basis with Samsung, Xiaomi, and Sony emerging as the most-preferred TV brands.

"In tablets, Apple and Samsung are premium prod-



ucts.

Apple tablets grew 10 times, and Samsung tablets 5 times year on year (YoY). When you think about large appliances, obviously, these are washing

machines and refrigerators and ACs, but premium ones like front-load washing machines, or side-by-side refrigerators, or bigger than 1.5-ton ACs, grew 30 per cent

YoY," Srivastava said.

He said the fashion and beauty segment recorded a 400 per cent spike in premium categories across watches, fragrances, handbags, Korean beauty, jewellery, luggage, etc.

Srivastava said the company registered 20 per cent more customers visiting during

AGIF 2024 compared to the festive season sale during the same period a year ago.

"The Amazon Great Indian Festival 2024 witnessed 140 crore customer visits -- the highest ever. More than 85 per cent customers were from non-metro cities," Srivastava said.

Amazon India saw 50 per cent year-on-year growth in

B2B customers who made their first purchase from Amazon Business.

"AGIF 2024 also set new milestones for seller success and witnessed more than 70 per cent increase in sellers surpassing a crore in sales compared to last year. The online marketplace bolstered its fast delivery capabilities, delivering over 3 crore products to Prime members across India within the same or next-day which is 26 per cent increase from previous year," he said.

Amazon India said in a statement that 70 per cent of Prime members who shopped during the festive season were from Tier-2 and 3 cities compared to 60 per cent last year.



From Bollywood classics to *Harvest*

TEJAL SINHA
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

With a legacy that echoes through the corridors of Indian cinema, Sandesh Shandilya stands tall as a visionary music director and composer. He is a renowned Indian music director and composer who has left an indelible mark on the Bollywood music industry.

With a career spanning over two decades, he has crafted iconic soundtracks for films like *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*, *Chameli*, *Socha Na Tha* and *Jab We Met*, cementing his reputation as a master of melodic storytelling. Born into a family of musicians, Sandesh's innate talent and passion for music drove him to pursue his dreams, from humble beginnings to becoming one of India's most revered composers. His diverse compositions, ranging from romantic ballads to upbeat anthems, have resonated with audiences worldwide, transcending generations and genres.

Through his symphonies, Sandesh has harmonised the heartbeat of India, capturing the pulse of the nation and transporting listeners to a world of love, laughter and tears. Now, he has taken a bold new step with his latest album, *Harvest*. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, he shares the inspiration behind this significant departure from his previous works.

"*Harvest* was born out of a desire to reach a broader audience across all ages," reveals the music composer behind K3G's tracks like *You Are My Soniya*, *Suraj Hua Maddham*, *Deewana Hai Dekho* and *Vande Mataram*. Just imagine a debut with these songs that have created a legacy of their own—how astonishing! Well, getting back to *Harvest*, "I wanted to create a fresh listening experience, blending youthful energy with a refined touch." To achieve this, he collaborated with emerging talents like Mir, Pho and Farozan, who brought a raw, authentic sound to the project.

Unlike his previous works, tied to film narratives, *Harvest* allowed Sandesh to embark on a free-flowing creative journey. "Working with a vibrant team of lyricists, musicians, and directors gave the album a diverse texture," notes the *Big Brother* music composer. This album aims to resonate deeply, offering listeners a multi-layered experience that combines familiar Indian sounds with modern, international influences.

Sandesh's music has always balanced traditional Indian sounds with contemporary elements. As he continues to push the boundaries of Indian music, *Harvest* stands as a testament to his innovative spirit and dedication to crafting melodies that resonate with listeners of all ages. *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*'s impact extends beyond the film itself, with its soundtrack influencing a generation

From the soulful notes of *Suraj Hua Maddham* to the modern rhythms of *Harvest*, Sandesh Shandilya's musical journey has been a testament to his innovative spirit. *The Pioneer* presents an exclusive conversation with the acclaimed composer, delving into the making of *Harvest* and his remarkable musical legacy



of musicians and music lovers. His work on the album cemented his position as a leading composer in Bollywood. Reflecting on *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*, he says, "It was a beautiful blend of traditional Indian musical roots with subtle modern tones." By including classical instruments alongside a refined arrangement, he shares the songs maintained an emotional depth while appealing to younger audiences. Similarly, *Harvest* pushes this balance further, experimenting with new genres like hip-hop and rap. "The addition of English lyrics and youthful energy brought by artists like Mir and Pho gives it a refreshing edge while still retaining the soul of Indian music."

Collaborations have been a hallmark of Sandesh's career, including working with legends like Ustad Sultan Khan. "His artistry added a timeless quality that elevated the music to another level," Sandesh reminisces. In *Harvest*, working with young talents brought a different kind of magic. "Their

innocence and fresh perspective injected new life into the music."

Chameli's soulful soundtrack, crafted by Sandesh, beautifully captured the essence of rain-soaked streets and the emotions that accompany them. Tracks like *Bhichchi Hui* continue to mesmerise listeners with their haunting simplicity and depth. *Chameli*, a special project for Sandesh, marked a shift toward a more layered, soulful approach to music. "Its tracks were crafted to capture the essence of rain-soaked streets and the emotions that accompany them."

As a composer with a long-standing career, Sandesh acknowledges the challenges of creating music in today's evolving industry. "Each project brings new challenges, but *Harvest* felt particularly unique." He notes that working with newer artists introduced fresh ideas and approaches, pushing him to expand his creative boundaries.

Sandesh's iconic tracks, like *Suraj Hua Maddham*

and *Aao Jab Tum*, have timeless appeal. "In *Harvest*, I wanted to bring that same emotional depth but in a way that resonates with the modern listener." The mood in *Harvest* is a blend of reflective and uplifting, designed to evoke a sense of journey and connection.

When creating music for cinema, Sandesh emphasises the collaborative process. "You're crafting music that not only sounds good but also supports the characters' emotions and the movie's overall atmosphere." In contrast, *Harvest* offered creative freedom to explore themes without limitations.

With the rise of streaming platforms, Sandesh believes *Harvest* will connect with the new generation of listeners. "By combining hip-hop elements and international sounds, I think *Harvest* will appeal to both young listeners seeking something new and older fans who appreciate depth and melody."

Personal experiences often influence Sandesh's work. "Melodies arise from feelings, memories, or



even fleeting moments in everyday life." *Harvest*'s themes of journey and growth mirror his own creative evolution. For Sandesh, music has always been about connecting with listeners on an emotional level. "Love, longing and nostalgia are universal feelings that everyone relates to." In *Harvest*, these core emotions remain, reimagined in new ways that reflect the world around us today.

Reflecting on his creative process for *Jab We Met*, Sandesh says, "I start with a concept and then build melodies that reflect the emotions of the characters and story." With *Harvest*, the process was similar but more flexible. "I would start with a melody and then we'd experiment with lyrics and voices, letting the song evolve naturally until it felt complete."

WHAT'S NEW



This festive season, why not gift yourself or your favorite womaniya the ultimate beauty upgrade? Fix My Curls and Fae Beauty—the collaboration you didn't know you needed! The duo brings you a limited edition gift box.

Price: Rs 1500/-



BRACELET WOVEN IN FRENCH NAVY'S HERITAGE

The Pelagos FXD platform has now expanded to suit the needs of the French Naval Aviation, with the addition of a function that allows aviators and flight support personnel to keep track of "Zulu time" in addition to local time and a third time zone. The new Pelagos FXD GMT is master chronometer-certified by METAS to ensure maximum precision and reliability in the adverse real-world conditions endured by personnel of the Aéronautique Navale.

RADIANT ON-THE-GO

Light up your skin with the Glow On The Go Kit (Mini) by Milagro Beauty! Perfect to prep your skin before and after the season's most glamorous parties. This travel-friendly kit has everything you need to shine. Get glowing with the luminous 24K Gold essential oil, brighten up tired eyes with the under-eye oil and keep your complexion fresh with the green tea & watermelon face toner. The puff, satin sponge and hydrogel sunblock make for the perfect addition to your flawless look.

Price: 6440/-

BE ULTIMATE DESI GIRL THIS FESTIVE SEASON



SPARKLE, SHINE AND CELEBRATE

Everyone's favourite season is right around the corner and The Natural Wash made it special with their festive skincare hamper. The hamper includes amazing products like vitamin C serum, multani mitti face wash, underarm roll-on, sun defense SPF50, rose water and more perfect for enhancing your festive glow. Each product is crafted to nourish and protect your skin, making it the ideal addition to self-care routine.

Price: 2300/-

GOLDEN GLOW GIFT HAMPER

This beautifully curated hamper by IGP is crafted to elevate your traditional Bhaidoj celebrations. Presented in an eco-friendly red box, it includes roasted and salted cashews and almonds, two elegant metal candles, besan laddoo, incense sticks, a puja kit and a Laxmi-Ganesha idol set—perfect for a complete festive ritual. With essential puja items, this hamper makes a thoughtful gift for friends and family, sending warm wishes for a prosperous and blessed Bhaidoj.



CHOCOLATE HAMPER FOR BHAIDOJ

Make this Bhaidoj sweeter with the chocolate hamper by FNP - a luxurious collection of indulgent chocolates designed to bring joy to your celebrations. This beautifully crafted hamper is filled with an irresistible assortment of rich, creamy chocolates, offering a mix of classic and festive flavours. Elegantly packaged, this hamper makes an ideal present for family, friends, or corporate gifting, ensuring a memorable Bhaidoj for everyone.

TIMELESS ELEGANCE

Sri Jagdamba Pearls offers a timeless collection of jewellery that embodies elegance and tradition, making it ideal for gifting during these auspicious occasions. From delicate pearl pendants and earrings to modern pearl-studded bracelets and rings, Jpearls has something for everyone. Each piece is crafted to complement traditional and contemporary styles, allowing your loved ones to treasure these gifts long after the festivities are over. Make this season extra special by gifting jewellery from Sri Jagdamba Pearls that adds sparkle and meaning to every celebration.



NUTTY GRUTTIES HAMPER

Nutty Grutties has launched its exquisite "Collector's Edition Box - Celebrating Traditions". The box has handpicked, fresh and crunchy dry fruits in jars catering to different taste palates - sweet, savoury, salted and spicy that are must-haves to enhance your celebrations and bring joy to every moment.

HOROSCOPE



ARIES

You may feel insecure, leading to stress and relationship challenges, but your energy attracts support. Balance work with rest and nurture your loved ones. Success will follow.



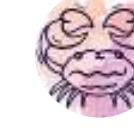
TAURUS

You may feel irritable but stay calm under pressure. Focus on health, relationships and purposeful work. Use your energy wisely and let others' insecurities be their burden.



GEMINI

Stay calm under pressure and nurture relationships. Balance work with family, and prioritize romantic moments. Your energy and resilience will help you overcome and revitalize yourself.



CANCER

Restless and energetic, you'll tackle challenges and succeed. Balance work with family time to strengthen bonds. Embrace new experiences. Your loving nature draws care from others.



LEO

Stay confident through challenges, as success is near. Manage emotions carefully. Romantic moments and unexpected support will uplift you. This is a crucial phase for students.



VRIGO

Harmony surrounds you, though frustrations may arise. Stay positive, nurture relationships, and avoid negative thoughts. Health needs attention, but joy and success await in plenty.



LIBRA

Manage emotions and avoid clashes with siblings. Your energy and boldness attract others but may invite criticism. Nurture relationships, embrace joy, and stay communicative.



SCORPIO

Your humour and energy attract others, but work challenges may arise. Stay calm, consult wisely, and embrace new opportunities. Avoid depression by focusing on family harmony.



SAGITTARIUS

Focus on self-improvement. Stay confident and logical while managing stress. Separation from the family will foster independence. Students should focus on their studies.



CAPRICORN

Stay calm amid workplace challenges and balance personal and professional obligations. Your supportive nature will bring contentment. Find rejuvenation through new friendships.



AQUARIUS

Your charm and wit attract others, but insecurity may arise. Embrace new challenges and accept advice to progress. Emotional issues could affect health. Go for a fresh start.



PISCES

Your humour and enthusiasm make you popular, but agitation may hinder your charisma. Focus on family time, accept others' ideas, and seek balance to improve health and revitalization.



"Nothing is easy in cricket. Maybe when you watch it on TV, it looks easy. But it is not. You have to use your brain and time the ball!"
— Rohit Sharma

SHAMI FINISHED THE **ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP 2023** AS THE TOURNAMENT'S LEADING WICKET-TAKER, WITH AN IMPRESSIVE **24 WICKETS** ACROSS SEVEN MATCHES. HIS REMARKABLE PERFORMANCES INCLUDED **THREE FIVE-WICKET HAULS** AND A **FOUR-WICKET HAUL**, HIGHLIGHTED BY A **CAREER-BEST 7/57** AGAINST NEW ZEALAND IN THE SEMI-FINALS

Mohammad Shami has been pushing the boundaries of pace and redefining the role of fast bowlers. His comeback adds depth to India's bowling attack, and his journey inspires the youngsters writes GYANESHWAR DAYAL

THE COMEBACK MAN

After nearly a year away from the field, 34-year-old Indian pacer Mohammad Shami is set to make his highly anticipated comeback. Having missed out due to an ankle injury that sidelined him since November last year, Shami has been seen practicing hard on the main pitch at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru, following the first Test between India and New Zealand. With a five-Test tour of Australia approaching this November, fans are eagerly awaiting the return of one of India's most formidable fast bowlers.

After a year-long hiatus, Mohammad Shami, India's lethal pace bowler, has returned to international cricket with renewed vigour, reminding fans of his remarkable skill and unyielding determination. Shami's journey back to the pitch is not just a testament to his resilience, but also an inspiring comeback story that showcases his unwavering commitment to the game. With career-defining spells and an uncanny knack for turning games in India's favor, Shami's return has once again fortified the Indian bowling lineup.

In 2023, Shami delivered an outstanding season, claiming 56 wickets in 27 innings and earning the prestigious Purple Cap in the IPL. He finished the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 as the tournament's leading wicket-taker, with an impressive 24 wickets across seven matches. His remarkable performances included three five-wicket hauls and a four-wicket haul, highlighted by a career-best 7/57 against New Zealand in the semi-finals.

Despite battling a persistent heel issue, Shami's dedication to cricket was unwavering, playing a crucial role in India's World Cup journey. Since India's defeat to Australia in the ODI World Cup final in November 2023, Shami has been sidelined. He was initially selected for India's two-Test series in South Africa in December 2023, but fitness concerns prevented his participation. In January 2024, Shami travelled to London for specialized injections to treat his ankle. Following this treatment, he was advised to gradually resume physical activity. Unfortunately, the injections did not bring the desired relief, leading to surgery on his Achilles tendon. Following a prolonged break due to injuries and personal challenges, Shami's return has been nothing short of extraordinary, proving that his time away from the game did little to diminish his prowess. "Every comeback has its own set of challenges but cricket has always been my calling. Being on the field and playing for the country puts me on cloud nine", Says Shami. Known for his high-velocity deliveries and pinpoint accuracy, Shami has



remained dedicated to refining his craft, training rigorously to ensure his return was one for the books. His work with renowned trainers and sports psychologists was instrumental in fortifying both his physical and mental resilience, setting the stage for a triumphant return to the Indian squad. Returning from a prolonged injury is always a test of resilience, particularly for a cricketer under the global lens. The mental challenges of injury can be as tough as the physical ones, with constant scrutiny adding to the pressure. Shami's journey reflects the dedication required to overcome these obstacles, as he not only returns to the sport but does so with a renewed sense of self-belief.

Comeback after an injury is not easy, the biggest setback is psychological apart from the physical challenge. And if it extends for a year the challenge is immense. "I had one resolve to be back on the field and play for the country. And if the goal is clear God gives you resilience and courage to withstand the storm. I practiced and maintained my poise and worked on my game and fitness and my overall wellbeing." Says Shami with a smile. Shami's transformation has not been limited to his athletic pursuits. In addition to his rehabilitation, he recently underwent a hair transplant as his hairline had thinned. Now when he will be back on the field he would be sporting the look of a younger man with flowing hair. "Indeed it was his perseverance and health regime that the results were better than we expected," says Dr Arika Bansal, at Eugenix Hair Sciences Shami's choice of Eugenix highlights the clinic's reputation for delivering outstanding hair restoration results. Dr. Pradeep Bansal also expresses his gratification working with Shami, calling it "an honour to serve an eminent cricketer who exemplifies resilience." Indeed, the results have not only enhanced Shami's appearance but also reignited his confidence, adding a renewed energy to his presence on and off the field.

Mohammed Shami's home ground is Eden Gardens in Kolkata, where he made his Test debut against the West Indies in 2013. Shami has always had a special connection with India's cricketing venues, with the Eden Gardens, his home ground in Kolkata being particularly close to his heart. He considers the iconic stadium to be his lucky ground, where he has delivered several memorable performances. "Eden Gardens has a special vibe; the crowd and atmosphere push you to go that extra mile. There's no place quite like it." He quips. Shami has now earned a name for himself as a right-arm fast-medium bowler. He's known for his ability to swing the ball at pace, and for his reverse swing. He hails from Amroha, Uttar Pradesh. Shami was a mainstay in India's T20 World Cup teams in 2021 and 2022. In the 2023 World Cup, he was India's highest wicket-taker. The Uttar Pradesh government is building a mini-stadium and gymnasium in Shami's village, Sahaspur Alinagar, to honor him. The stadium will be built on one hectare of land and will also include an open gym and race track. Shami's journey has been marked by significant challenges, both on and off the field. Despite setbacks, he has shown a profound level of mental toughness, using the time off to focus on his inner resilience. He once remarked, "The game of cricket teaches you a lot about life. It's a test of patience, hard work, and mental strength." His perspective has evolved to not only focus on physical fitness but also to prioritize mental well-being, which has been a key element in his recent comeback. When asked who he finds the hardest batsman to ball, he simply smiles and replies, "No one!"

Shami's return has not only bolstered India's pace attack but has also brought in a seasoned leader to the younger bowlers. His experience and ability to read the game are assets that elevate the team's overall performance.

Known for his tactical approach, Shami's presence is invaluable, particularly in high-stakes matches, where his sharp instincts and seasoned techniques shine.

As Shami steps back into the limelight, his journey stands as a testament to grit and resilience. The Indian cricket fraternity and millions of fans eagerly watch as he once again takes to the pitch, embodying the spirit of Indian cricket at its finest.

Photo: Pankaj Kumar



CHAT-O-CINO

Hansal Mehta on storytelling, social change and creative evolution

TEJAL SINHA
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

Hansal Mehta, the visionary Indian film director, producer and screenwriter, has been celebrated for his unflinching and socially conscious storytelling. With a prolific career spanning over two decades, Mehta has helmed critically acclaimed films like *Shahid* (2013), *CityLights* (2014), *Aligarh* (2016), *Simran* (2017), *Omerta* (2017), *Chhalaang* (2020) and *Faraaz* (2022), showcasing his mastery over diverse genres and themes.

Through his production company, Mehta nurtures emerging talent and pushes the boundaries of Indian cinema. Mehta's films consistently spark important conversations and garner prestigious awards. With a commitment to exploring complex social issues, Mehta solidifies his position as one of India's most respected and innovative filmmakers.

His latest thriller, *The Buckingham Murders*, continues his legacy of provocative storytelling, delving into the darker aspects of human nature.

The Pioneer had the opportunity to quickly have an exclusive chat with the much-celebrated filmmaker just after being a jury for the Royal Stag Barrel Select Large Short Films at the 2024 MAMI Mumbai Film Festival.

Mehta's association with MAMI dates back to 2012 and he has been an integral part of the festival's growth. His involvement has included mentoring emerging filmmakers and showcasing his own critically acclaimed films. This year, Mehta brought his expertise to the jury panel.

"I've been a part of MAMI in some capacity or the other since 2012... When they asked me to be on the jury, I was thrilled," Mehta shared. "The opportunity to discover new voices and filmmakers is always exciting." With great regards and excitement in his voice for his fellow jury members, he gleefully enthuses, "We rarely get to meet and discuss something that all of us love the most we share in common—a love for stories."

When evaluating the short films, the *Aligarh* filmmaker and his fellow jury members considered multiple factors. They sought films that told compelling stories, showcased exceptional craftsmanship and left a lasting impact. The emotional resonance of each film played a significant role in their decision-making process.

"We responded emotionally. What did the storytelling do to us? What is the story you're telling? What is the world you're showing me?" Mehta explained. "We argued, discussed, but ultimately had a unanimous choice."

The *Scam* franchise filmmaker's approach prioritises character development.

ment over plot. His films often explore complex social issues, delving into the human condition. This approach has yielded nuanced characters in films like *The Buckingham Murders*.

"For me, stories are more about character than about plot. I follow characters and explore them and through them, I find the plot," Mehta revealed. "I'm glad people see it that way."

Just a few days back, we had this fun chit-chat with chef Ranveer Brar, during which he discussed Hansal Mehta and Brar's bond over food on sets. In fact, it was because of his love for food that got him the role in *The Buckingham Murders*.

"Ranveer cooked a lot for us. Whatever you see on TV, his food is even more amazing," Mehta chuckled. "Collaborating in the kitchen, he doesn't let anyone work with him in the kitchen. All he let me do was chop onions and that too he didn't allow because he chops onions so fast."

Mehta's filmmaking has evolved over the years, driven by his desire to learn and

observe. He attends film festivals, engages with emerging talent and explores new themes. This growth mindset enables him to stay relevant and innovative.

"I'm still evolving and learning," says the *Shahid* director, who being present at the festival adds, "I'm watching all these new films and then they've had a huge impact on me. You watch more; you observe the world more. You look at the way people are looking at the world. You keep reexamining your own perspective. I'm not stuck in the past; like, I don't have negatives of my films and I don't have copies of any of my older films. So when people ask me for screenings as I don't have anything, I move on. I leave it behind because you have to start fresh."

Well, this makes it evident that despite the pressures as a filmmaker in the industry, he maintains his mental well-being by not taking things too seriously. He has developed a coping mechanism to deal with criticism and negativity.

"What takes a toll on your mental health is sometimes the way, the pressure you put on yourself to be seen in a particular way or to be perceived in a particular way," affirms the *Chhalaang* director and thus he says, "Work never does that and so I've learned to deal with it. I've had enough pig fights on social media to learn to cope with it. I now amuse myself. I don't take all these things seriously. My first commercial film was called *Dil Pe Mat Le Yaar* and that's what I follow in life."

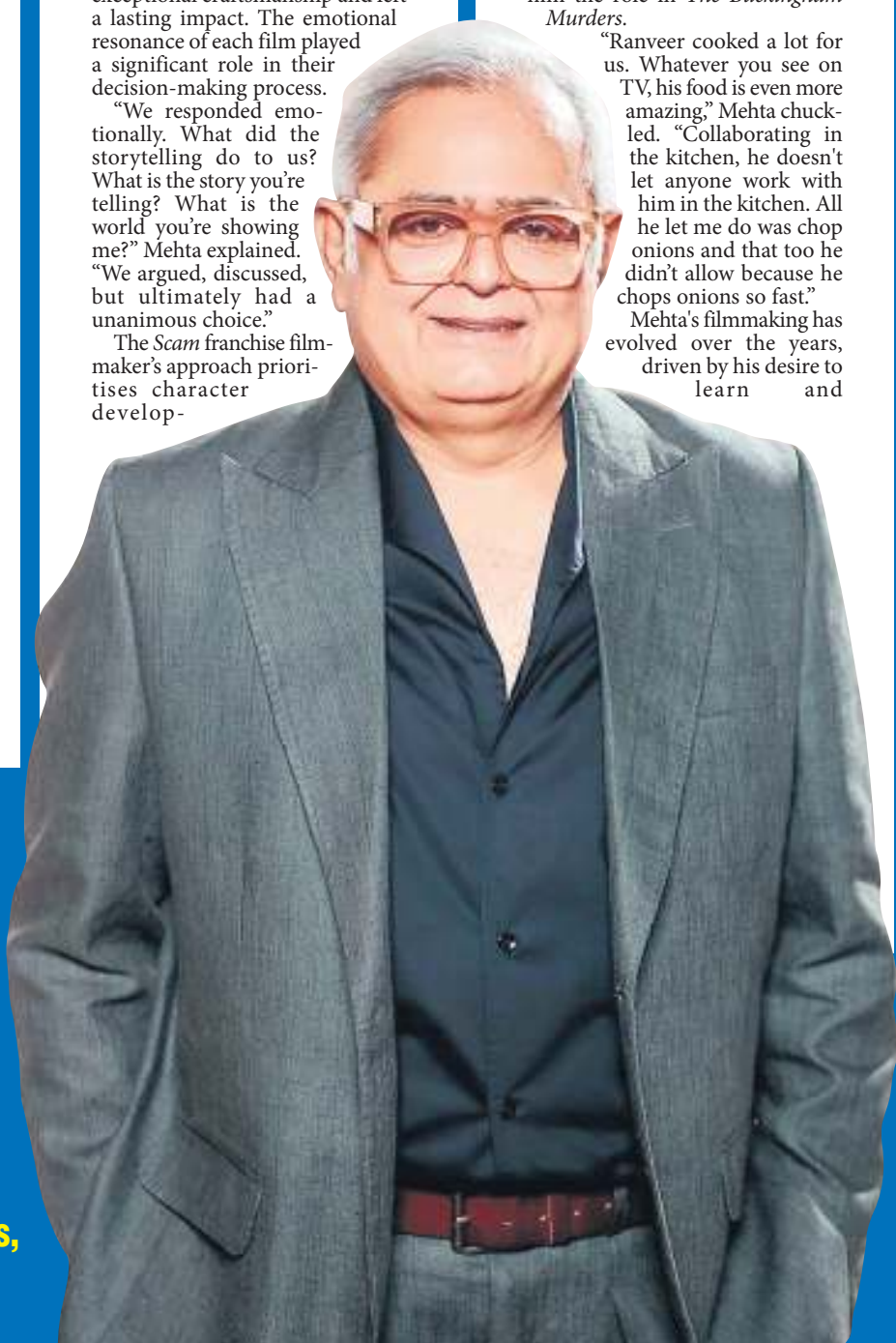
Something we all really need to think of looking at the current scenario—*Dil Pe Mat Le Yaar*.

Getting back to his artistic process, when it comes to tackling true events in his films, he strives for objectivity. He avoids judging his characters, instead observing and exploring their complexities.

"I try to stay away and not judge my characters. Judging your characters will colour your storytelling," he further emphasised. Heading towards the end of the chat, Mehta expressed optimism about the future of Indian cinema, citing the emergence of new talent and innovative storytelling.

"There's a lot of exciting work happening. I'm hopeful about the future of Indian cinema," signs off the *CityLights* filmmaker on a brighter note.

Hansal's influence on Indian cinema will be felt for generations to come. His innovative approach, artistic vision and commitment to socially conscious storytelling have created a lasting impact, shaping the industry's future and inspiring a new era of bold, thought-provoking filmmaking.



From the dark alleys of *CityLights* to the poignant corridors of *The Buckingham Murders*, Hansal Mehta's films have consistently challenged societal norms and sparked crucial conversations. In a candid interview with *The Pioneer*, Mehta lifts the curtain on his artistic process, collaborations and the future of Indian storytelling

TRENDING

PERSON

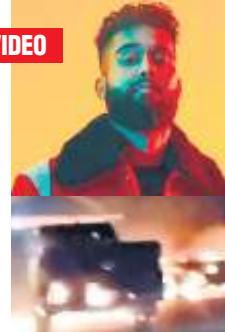
BIBEK DEBROY



In Hyderabad, South star Chiranjeevi received the esteemed Akkineni Nageswara Rao (ANR) National Award. Bollywood icon Amitabh Bachchan congratulated the actor. The award was created in 2005 by the Akkineni International Foundation to honour actors who have made exceptional contributions to Indian film.

AP DHILLON HOUSE FIRING

VIDEO



A video that purports to show multiple bullets being fired at the Canadian home of Punjabi musician AP Dhillon has surfaced. Additionally, it depicts two cars that were set on fire during the Vancouver event on September 2. The singer, who resides on Vancouver's Victoria Island, was unharmed in the shooting.

SINGHAM AGAIN

MOVIE



On November 1, Rohit Shetty's cop universe movie *Singham Again* entered theatres. The audience was treated to a unique surprise: Salman Khan.

AMI JE TOMAR 3.0

SONG



Ami Je Tomar 3.0, which starred Madhuri Dixit and Vidya Balan, was released on YouTube. The video has gotten 8 million (80 lakh) views in the 15 hours since it was released.

RETURN OF RAM LALLA TO HIS HOME

PICTURE



On Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that Diwali is 'special' since Lord Ram will celebrate the holiday in the Ayodhya temple for the first time in 500 years.

Fight against breast cancer continues

AARTI SREENATH
aarti.sreenath9@gmail.com

HEALTH TALK

With the stirring theme of "No One Should Face This Battle Alone" October offered a moving reminder of the fortitude and resiliency of individuals impacted by breast cancer as we commemorated Breast Cancer Awareness Month 2024. Breast cancer stands as one of the most frequently diagnosed cancers globally, with India reporting approximately 200,000 new cases each year. Fortunately, when identified early, the disease is highly treatable. Raising awareness

about the initial signs of breast cancer is crucial for improving patient outcomes. In this article, we share insights from survivors and medical professionals, focusing on recognizing early symptoms, the significance of routine screenings, and a comprehensive overview of treatment options based on the various stages of the disease.

"Awareness is essential," says Anchal Sharma, a breast cancer survivor and founder of the CanHeal Community on coto. She emphasizes the importance of early detection, especially through self-examinations. "The most common symptom is a new lump in the breast or underarm. These lumps can vary in size, shape and texture; some may feel tender, while others are painless." Anchal stresses that even subtle changes can be significant, and these changes shouldn't be overlooked. Other early signs include alterations in breast size or shape. For example, one

breast may suddenly appear larger or more prominent, indicating a potential concern.

Changes in the nipple, such as inversion or unexpected discharge, are also key indicators. Any unusual discharge, particularly if bloody, should be promptly evaluated by a doctor. Additionally, skin changes on the breast, like dimpling, puckering, or a rough, "orange-peel" texture, may be warning signs. Persistent pain or tenderness, especially in a localised area, is another symptom worth monitoring. Swelling in the armpit area can also signify the spread of cancer to nearby lymph nodes, highlighting the need for vigilance in detecting changes across the entire chest area.

Hina Khan's journey through breast cancer is one of remarkable resilience, made all the more poignant as she chooses to share it publicly. In one of her first posts on Instagram, she reflects on a recent award

night that happened just before her first chemotherapy session. Hina reveals that, though her diagnosis weighed heavily on her mind, she consciously chose to attend the event to "normalise" the experience, not only for herself but for those facing similar battles. "I refuse to bow down," she writes, conveying her resolve to face this life-altering journey with grace and determination.

Through her posts, Hina introduces powerful affirmations: embracing the scars that now tell her story while looking forward

with hope. "The scars are mine; I embrace them with love because they're the first sign of the progress I deserve," she states, emphasising how these marks represent her strength and progress. Another post introduces a deeply supportive figure in her life, Mahima Chaudhry, who has been a source of love and guidance throughout her treatment. Hina describes Mahima as a "hero" and "superhuman," someone who not only shared her wisdom but also ensured that Hina knew she wasn't alone. As Hina opens up about her experience, she brings hope, warmth, and community to others battling cancer, reinforcing that even in the toughest of times, self-belief and the support of loved ones can illuminate the path forward.

Dr. Abhishek Raj, Senior Consultant and Head of Medical Oncology at Sarvodaya Hospital, emphasizes that timely screenings are essential, particularly for women aged 40 and above. "Breast cancer treatment has a cure rate of over 90-95% when diagnosed early," he explains. "Regular screenings allow us to detect tumors at stages where treatment is most effective." He advocates that every woman over 40 undergo regular mammograms, as this is the most effective way to detect changes early on. Dr. Abhishek Raj also underscores that while breast changes can signal cancer, many are benign, and only a healthcare provider can determine the cause of these symptoms.

Breast cancer treatment is largely dependent on the stage of the disease, ranging from Stage 0 to Stage IV. "Each stage has distinct characteristics and treatment protocols," says Dr. Lakhani Kashyap, Consultant of Medical Oncology at Manipal Hospital. These stages are classified based on tumour size, lymph node involvement and spread to other organs, determined through tests like CT scans, PET scans and biopsies.



Stage 0: Known as ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), this non-invasive stage confines abnormal cells to the milk ducts. Treatment typically involves surgery, and radiation may be recommended in high-risk cases to prevent recurrence.

Stage I: At this early stage, tumors are usually no larger than two centimeters and may or may not affect nearby lymph nodes. Treatments generally involve surgery, such as mastectomy or lumpectomy, with radiation therapy. Hormone therapy or chemotherapy may also be advised based on the tumor's characteristics.

Stage II: Tumors in this stage range from 2 to 5 cm and are more likely to affect multiple lymph nodes. Surgery remains a primary treatment, but chemotherapy, radiation, and targeted therapies may also be part of the

regimen, depending on the cancer's specific subtype.

Stage III: This locally advanced stage often involves larger tumors that may affect the chest wall, skin, and more lymph nodes in the neck or armpit but have not yet spread to distant organs. Treatment often begins with chemotherapy or immunotherapy to shrink the tumour, followed by surgery and radiation.

Stage IV: Also known as metastatic breast cancer, this stage indicates that cancer has spread to other organs such as the liver, lungs, brain, or bones. The focus of treatment at this stage shifts toward managing symptoms and slowing disease progression to improve quality of life. "Systemic treatments like chemotherapy, hormone therapy, and immunotherapy help manage the disease, even though Stage IV is not curable," notes Dr. Kashyap.



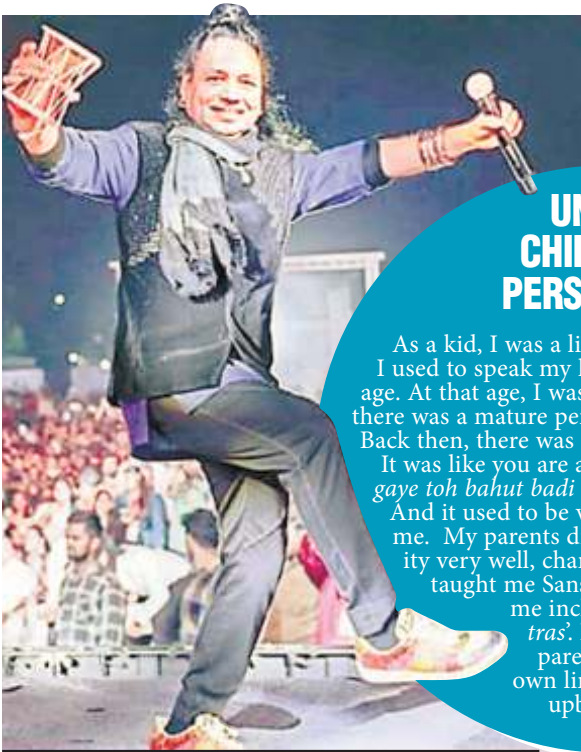
Both experts and survivors stress the importance of seeking timely medical advice. "If you notice any change in your breasts, if it seems minor, consult your doctor," advises Anchal. Family history can also increase the risk, so regular check-ups are especially important for those with hereditary risk factors. Dr. Abhishek Raj adds that early-stage cancers have survival rates nearing 100%, while advanced stages are increasingly manageable with modern treatments. Ultimately, awareness and early detection remain the most powerful tools in the fight against breast cancer. With regular screenings, timely intervention, and adherence to treatment plans, many individuals can achieve positive outcomes. "Don't hesitate to seek medical attention if you have concerns," Anchal Sharma emphasises. Early diagnosis can indeed save lives, turning what may initially seem like a challenge into a story of hope and resilience.

Kailash Kher, renowned Indian playback singer and music composer, who has contributed enormously to various segments of the film industry, including Bollywood and South Indian cinema, with his soulful voice, battled against several odds in life to scale the heights in his career as a musician.

A Padma Shri recipient, Kher has won multiple industry awards, including two Filmfare Awards and a National Film Award nomination. In a conversation with Tejal Sinha of *The Pioneer*, he shares vignettes of his checkered life, including the period when he lived the life of a runaway kid. But that did not really stop Kher, the 'ziddi' kid, from making his mark in life. Perhaps bitten by the singing bug when he, as a kid, joined priests and the devout offering Ganga Aarti in Rishikesh; his breakthrough came with 'Allah Ke Bande' (2003), which became an anthem, catapulting him to fame. Some of his notable works in Bollywood include 'Ya Rabba' from the film *Salaam-e-Ishq* (2007), 'Chand Sifarish' from *Fanaa* (2006), 'Arziyan' from *Delhi 6* (2009) and 'Tumhi Ho' from *Cocktail* (2012). With over 700 songs in his discography across languages, Kailash Kher remains a much-sought-after singer. He is known for his energetic live performances and soul-stirring renditions that resonate with music lovers of all ages and backgrounds. Through his music, Kher has transcended linguistic and cultural boundaries, uniting music lovers across India. Kailash Kher's south Indian connection is a significant aspect of his musical journey. He has sung numerous iconic songs in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam films, showcasing his versatility and adaptability. In Telugu cinema, his notable songs include 'Ek Niranjan' from *Magadheera* (2009), 'Adiga Adiga' from *Jalsa* (2008), and 'Jay-Jaykara' from *Baahubali* (2015), which became a massive hit. He has also lent his voice to Tamil films like 'Oru Kootu' from *Poi Solla Porom* (2008), 'Kaatriley Nadanthene' from *Aadhavan* (2009) and 'Unna Vitta Yaarum' from *Vettaikaran* (2009). In Kannada cinema, his notable songs include 'Hudgeer' from *Birugaali* (2009) and 'Nanaginta' from *Jungle* (2009), while in Malayalam cinema, he has sung 'Kanneer Poovil' from *Paappi Appacha* (2010) and 'Aaromale' from the dubbed version of *Vinnaitaandi Varuvaya* (2010). Kher has eminent composers, including M.M. Keeravani for *Baahubali* and *Magadheera*, A.R. Rahman for *Vinnaitaandi Varuvaya*, Harris Jayaraj for *Poi Solla Porom* and *Aadhavan*, Devi Sri Prasad for *Jalsa* and Manam and Ilaiyaraaja for *Unnaipol Oruvan*.

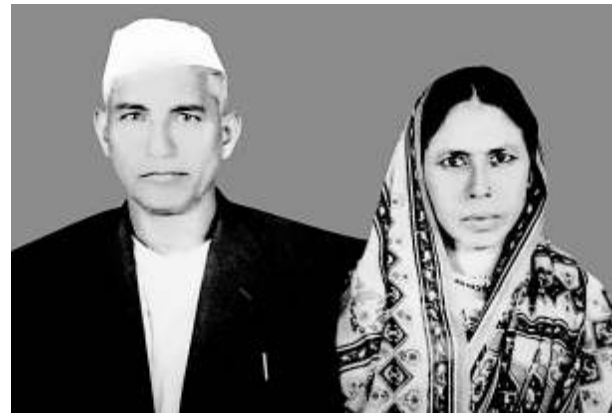


SCALING KAILASH OF MUSIC AS MAHADEV'S BHAKTH



UNIQUE CHILDHOOD PERSPECTIVE

As a kid, I was a little unique in many ways. I used to speak my heart out at a very tender age. At that age, I was very observant; it felt like there was a mature person's soul within me. Haha! Back then, there was no Mama's boy or Dad's boy. It was like you are a boy and *agar aap sambhal gaye toh bahut badi baat hai*. I was a little 'ziddi'. And it used to be very difficult to take care of me. My parents discharged their responsibility very well, channelizing my energy. They taught me Sanskrit and Vedas, making me inclined towards the 'shastras'. I was a 'laadla' of my parents. But I had my own limits during my upbringing.



KABIR FOLLOWING PAPA'S FOOTSTEPS

Yes, Kabir, my son, is actually learning music. He is learning guitar and vocals. He intends to get into performing arts, but right now he is in 9th grade. I first want him to focus on his studies. But let me tell you, he is a good soul.



MOORINGS IN RISHIKESH

I was in Rishikesh, where I was learning all the things of a pandit and all the rituals; pooja-path. It is also a study and a degree course. I had gone there to do my graduation. So, there you have this Ganga Aarti that happens and I used to sing there. When I used to sing, the sadhus and pandits used to dance. It was then that I realised that maybe this is something that I will be able to do well. I believe, *Khush rehna aur rakhma*, not everybody can do. So, singing used to make me happy. I did not really know if I would be able to earn or not, but keeping myself and others happy, I knew I could do that.



OUTLAWS WERE IN AWE OF HIS PIOUS DAD

My father was not a professional musician. He was a priest for whom music was a hobby, like in the case of many people. As an amateur, he used to also sing. He was one of those pious people *joh dil se cheezin karte hai*. It was so nice to be around him. More than his singing, his thoughts and teachings of life used to be very useful for us as kids.

There were many criminals in the place where we resided, apart from people from different walks of life. Trust me when I tell you this: not just the other people, but criminals would also touch his feet. That was the kind of aura he had. My dad was an inspiration. His influence, beyond a doubt, has been there in my complete life and not just in my musical career.



FULL CIRCLE IN HIS HOMETOWN

Being conferred Padma Shri was an honour. It was in the same city where I had grown up, which had broken my confidence so many times. In the same city and in such a monumental place, getting the award from the President feels like being on cloud 9. I had never even imagined getting any award, *Padma Shri toh durrr ki baat hai*. That moment, I was speechless. Receiving awards does not lessen the challenges in your life and, in fact, this honour has placed a great deal of responsibility on me. I am aware that people will now admire me even more. These rewards are a reflection of your karma.

WHEN HE HAD TO RUN AWAY FROM HIS HOUSE

Back then, the situation was such that I had to run away from our home. Our financial difficulties were such that I could properly learn music. There were a lot of challenges and hardships that we had to go through. However, let me tell you, these situations make you who you are today. It is never going to happen that you only get to witness ease, comfort and happiness. That phase of my life was that difficult one, when no one else but God became my family and kept me strong to face these difficulties. Padma Shri recipient Kailash Kher's journey was never easy and is a learning experience for many. I always say this: '*Kabhi bhi haar na nahin, humaesha darr kar nahin durt kar rehna*'. It was that decision that got me Padma Shri.

TRAVELLING WORLD WITH BAND

My band *Kailasa* was formed in 2005. It all started with just a few people and now we are a 16-member band. We have performed over 1,800 times over the years. I hope we get to perform in different festivals all around the world, be it whatever language, city, or country it is. We are also going to do a US tour soon and we will also be going to Russia and then to Australia. Before this year ends, we have these global tours.

ARDENT MAHADEV BHAKTH

In my 18 years of career, you can say that I have got '100 years of experience and happiness'. There were times in many events (life happenings) when I would lose my self-confidence for various reasons. Surprisingly, the past 20 years have been as if my Mahadev, having given birth to just one child, has taken care of almost 100 people. I have got the opportunity to sing different kinds of songs. I have got the opportunity to travel around the world and sing at different platforms and festivals.



NOT MAKING MUSIC....FOR THE HECK OF IT

Be it any creative work, I do not want to make it just for the heck of it. I believe that the divine being has made us all for some reason, right from trees, fruits, flowers, et al. Every creature has its own 'wajood'.

KKALA DHAAM

I am honored that I am now able to bring in new talents, which not many musicians in the industry have done. People from my own academy are making their own mark in the field of music. In fact, in my recent song *Hey Kanha Hey Gopala*'s video, the one who plays the part of Radha is from our Kailash Kher Academy for Learning Arts. In short, the name of the Academy comes from 'KKALA', as we say *Kkala Dhaam*. We believe in empowering each other in the best way possible.

PROUD TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH BAAHUBALI

Let me tell you this... Even before *Baahubali*, there were so many films made, but highlighting the Almighty so well was in this film, which starred Prabhas. *Baahubali* also created a difference in India that we are just not about entertainment and only entertainment. There are many films that show the divine in a funny way and many put things in a bad light. Many films show India as only poor and needy. It was for the first time, and I believe that the makers had shown God in such a big *swaroop*. It is because of the strength I have got from my *Parmatma*, where we see so many families where the members themselves are against each other, planning negative things around each other, even in that how the truth wins from the strength of *Parmatma* was so well portrayed in this film. The film was strong, the story was strong, and the makers of the film were all so respectful towards all of it. I am glad that God has given me an opportunity to get connected with such a project. I am so proud to have been associated with a project like *Baahubali*. In fact, I had sung three songs in *Baahubali*: *The Beginning* and then in the second, I sang only one song, *Jai Jai Kaara*, which is huge as compared to many.

HONOURED WITH NANDI AWARD.....

Along with *Mirchi* and *Filmfare*, I have also received the Nandi award from the Telangana government. It feels great, actually. Though awards are like these affidavits, something bigger than that is getting the love from people of a place you had previously never been to. Right? The love that today I've been receiving today from my south fans, I feel so great that they have made them all into an anthem in their own way.



OPENING DOORS WITH ALLAH KE BANDE

The journey of *Allah Ke Bande* has been a beautiful journey. This song opened new doors for me, after which came *Teri Deewani*, *Tauba Tauba* and the rest. Now, as I see, there are so many reels on your Instagrams with this music. Isn't that something adorable? I sang that years ago and here I am, listening to my own songs trending with technology. In fact, it is even more amazing to see how my songs are being sung in so many reality shows. I feel so blessed seeing new performers coming and singing *Allah Ke Bande* or any of my other songs in their own way.

INFLUENCE OF SACRED UPBRINGING

Our upbringing was mainly done by saints in a spiritual environment. So even in my romantic songs—*Teri Deewani*, *Saiyaan*, and *Aaj Mere Piya Ghar*—every song has purity and 'pavitrat'. The world is sacred; that is true romance. Even for '*Shringar*', we are inspired by the example of Shri Krishna. Even in my romantic songs, there is a pinch of spirituality with purity. And I believe that is true love.



TERI DEEWANI...PERSPECTIVE OF SOUL TO ALMIGHTY

This song is special in its own way. The lyrics are from a woman's point of view and the vocals here are of a man. I have always learned one thing in my life: whenever a saint speaks to us, he does not speak based on the gender of the person. We are all souls and ultimately our journey is supposed to be with God. The matching of the soul with God is the whole matter. And so the lyrics say *Tune kya kar dala, marr gayi mai mit gayi mai ho ho ji ha ha ji hogayi mai Teri Deewani*, is a perspective of a soul to the Almighty.



LANGUAGE IS NEVER A BARRIER

Language was never a barrier. When you are loved and loving, language would never be a barrier. The language of love is emotions, feelings. For feelings, you don't need a syllable. You can interact through your eyes and even touch.

RAPID FIRE:
DESCRIBE YOURSELF IN THREE WORDS: Father, Himalaya and Gagan
YOUR DRIVING FORCE: Being true to myself
YOUR IDOL: My Mahadev
RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL: Spiritual
HIGHEST PHASE OF YOUR LIFE: Every moment
LOWEST PHASE OF YOUR LIFE: It's never a dull moment for me