

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is concentrating on blackmailing, land settlements and looting for his relatives and not on the assurances given to the people or on solving people's problems. The CM should reveal whether the Congress government has filled the land with lights after eliminating darkness during its 11-month rule. Has happiness ruled the state or is the CM living with delusions? If the CM is confident about this then he should come along with me to go to the people

- Alleti Maheshwar Reddy, BJLP leader P4

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India and China made 'some progress' in disengagement:  
**EAM**



ON SET WITH  
**AVANTIKA DASSANI, MAKING OF MITHYA: THE DARKER CHAPTER**



Nora Fatehi brings her unique charm to  
**MATKA**



**DON'T MISS...**

**Minister Kolu lays foundation for...**

Minister for Housing and Information & Public Relations, K. Parthasarathy, laid the foundation stone for development projects worth Rs 20 crore at Chatrai village on Sunday. The Minister inaugurated the construction of a road at Chatrai village at a cost of Rs 25 lakh and a CC road in Chanubanda village costing Rs 50 lakh. He also launched a road repair programme worth Rs 30 lakh. Speaking at a public meeting in Chanubanda, Minister Parthasarathy announced that Rs 20 crore worth of development works have...

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**56 metal objects removed from...**

A 15-year-old boy from Uttar Pradesh's Hathras died a day after a major surgery was performed on him at a Delhi hospital to remove an astonishing 56 objects such as watch batteries, blades, nails and other metal fragments from his stomach. The discovery of multiple foreign objects inside the body of Aditya Sharma, a Class 9 student, has left the medical community perplexed and his family shaken, the boy's father Sanjit Sharma, a Hathras-based medical representative, said. The boy died a day after the...

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**FMCG firms worry over high inflation...**

Leading FMCG companies reported a decline in margins in the September quarter on account of higher input costs and food inflation, which ultimately slowed down the pace of urban consumption. Rising prices of commodity inputs such as palm oil, coffee and cocoa were also accentuated and some FMCG firms have hinted at a price hike. HUL, Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCIPL), Marico, ITC, and Tata Consumer Products Ltd (TCPL) have expressed concerns over squeezing urban...

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**Non-performance of batters is...**

The disastrous performance of star batters is certainly a cause of concern for India, admitted Rohit Sharma after a stunning reversal against New Zealand but the skipper promised that the team will fight to deliver something 'very special' in Australia. New Zealand went strength to strength in the series while hosts India could not bring their floundering campaign back on track and ended up suffering a rare and humiliating 0-3 whitewash. Rohit (91) and Virat Kohli (93) managed less than 200 runs across...

-SPORTS

**RARE UNITY BETWEEN RULING & OPPN PARTIES**

**TDP, YSRCP vow to protect Waqf Act**

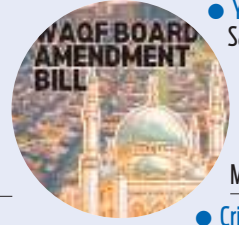
**CM Naidu praised for promoting uplift of Muslims**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a rare display of unity, the ruling Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the Opposition YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) have come together to oppose proposed amendments to the Waqf Act by the Central Government, advocating for stronger protections for Waqf properties. This collaboration was highlighted during the Waqf Pariyakshana Maha Sabha-Chalo Vijayawada event, organised by Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) Andhra Pradesh, which saw enthusiastic participation from minority communities and political leaders from both parties. Addressing the gathering, TDP Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath reaffirmed the TDP's commitment to defending the interests of the Muslim community, asserting that any amendments detrimental to Waqf properties would be met with strong resistance.

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- Community support: The Waqf Pariyakshana Maha Sabha drew significant participation from minority communities and political leaders.
- TDP's commitment: TDP MP Kesineni Sivanath assures the community of TDP's dedication to safeguarding Muslim interests and Waqf properties.
- Joint Parliamentary Committee proposal: Sivanath calls for the Waqf Board Amendment Act to be reviewed by a Joint Parliamentary Committee.
- Support from Narasaraopet MP: Lavu Srikrishnadevarayalu pledges to communicate community concerns to the Chief Minister and Central Government.
- Opposition from MA Sharif: Former Legislative Council Chairman MA Sharif promises to advocate for the cancellation of the amendments.
- YSRCP's stance: Rajya Sabha MP V Vijayasai Reddy reaffirms YSRCP's opposition to the amendments, citing contradictions with Muslim traditions.
- Criticism of TDP Union Minister: Reddy criticises TDP MP K Rammohan Naidu for not opposing the bill during its introduction.
- Formal objections: YSRCP registers formal objections to eight points within the Waqf amendment and vows to continue advocacy.



**AP's Annual Budget to be presented on Nov 11**



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Assembly session is scheduled to begin on November 11, with the TDP-led NDA government set to present its first Annual Budget at 10 a.m. on the same day. This budget presentation marks a key step for the government, which assumed office four months ago. The existing vote-on-account budget, passed by the previous administration, is set to expire at the end of November. On the first day of the session, the government will table a comprehensive budget, setting the fiscal agenda for the state. Assembly sessions are expected to continue for at least ten more days, during which various bills and the budget proposal will be discussed. The former YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government had presented a vote-on-account budget of Rs 2,86,389 crore in February 2024, ahead of the general elections. From April to July 2024, Rs 1,90,052.34 crore was sanctioned under 40 grants. When the TDP-led NDA coalition assumed power, it passed another vote-on-account budget in July to manage the state's deteriorating financial situation. This interim budget, sanctioned by the Governor, provided funds for four months ending in November.

**RAPE-CUM-MURDER OF GIRL-CHILD**



**HM hands over Rs 10L ex gratia to victim's family**

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Minister for Home Vangalapati Anitha on Sunday consoled the parents of the girl-child, who was raped and murdered at ST Colony at Alivelu Mangapuram village in Vadumulapet mandal. The Home Minister went to the house of the bereaved family and paid tributes to the three-and-half-year-old girl child, who was brutally raped, murdered and buried on the outskirts of the village on the night of Friday. Later Home Minister Anitha consoled the parents of the deceased girl. She also handed over Rs 10 lakh ex gratia payment to the parents of the deceased girl. She assured the family members of extending all support and constructing a house for them. She told them that steps would be taken to ensure that the killer of the

girl would be punished rigorously in court for two or three months. She also revealed that efforts are being made to set up fast-track courts to complete the trial in sexual assault cases. Home Minister Anitha made it clear that over 14000 CCTV cameras are being set up at all vulnerable places across the state. "The government has taken stringent steps to curb the cannabis cultivation and transportation and steps were also taken to set up a 'Narcotic Wing' in the State especially to contain the ganja menace," Home Minister Anitha announced. The Home Minister said that she felt pain with the sexual assault and murder of a three-and-half-year-old girl. Sexual assaults on women are committed by offenders in the inebriation of liquor.

Continued on Page 2

**Vasireddy Padma likely to join TDP**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vasireddy Padma, former chairperson of the Andhra Pradesh Women's Commission, is reportedly set to join the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) shortly after resigning from the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP). Sources suggest that her departure from the YSRCP, particularly following its recent electoral setbacks, stemmed from a lack of clear political assurances regarding her role in the party. Since her resignation, Padma has openly criticised YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and the YSRCP, stirring considerable interest in political circles. Known for her strong oratory, Padma held a cabinet

rank for nearly four years in the previous government. Observers speculate that her recent statements might hint at ongoing talks with other political parties, though she has yet to confirm specifics. Her association with Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath is seen as a possible catalyst for her shift to the TDP. Recently, Padma issued a public apology to TDP chief and Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, sparking conversations about her future alignment. Padma's likely entry into the TDP is viewed as a strategic boost to the party's female leadership, which currently includes few prominent figures besides Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha. TDP leaders believe Padma's oratory and organisational skills could strengthen the party's base as it gears up for upcoming challenges.



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**Steel giants eye AP: Rs 70K cr investment planned**

**ArcelorMittal Steels & Nippon Steels propose India's largest steel plant in Anakapalli**

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

In a major development for Andhra Pradesh's industrial landscape, ArcelorMittal Steels and Japan's Nippon Steels have proposed setting up India's largest steel plant in the Anakapalli district. The ambitious project, estimated to cost Rs 70,000 crore, marks a major boost for the state's economy and employment potential. Just five months after Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu assumed office, this proposal signifies a stark contrast to the previous government's industrial climate. The state government had earlier acquired 2,200 acres of land in Nakkapalli for a proposed bulk drug park. However, the steel giants have expressed interest in utilizing this land for their massive steel plant. The first phase of the project, slated



for completion by January 2029, is expected to create a staggering 25,000 jobs during the construction phase and an additional 20,000 permanent jobs once production begins. This potential for large-scale employment is believed to have influenced the Chief Minister's deci-

sion to greenlight the investment. The proposed plant, with an initial annual capacity of 7.3 million tonnes, aims to address the challenges faced by the nearby Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, which lacks its iron ore mines.

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**BC hostel inmate dies after breakfast**

**Minister Savita assures all help to parents**

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

A 12-year-old student, Konathala Syamala Rao, residing at the Kataveedhi BC Hostel, tragically died on Sunday morning due to an unexpected health issue. Syamala Rao, a 7th Class student from Ranasthalam in Srikakulam district, suddenly felt dizzy after breakfast. His condition quickly worsened, and he collapsed. He was rushed to the Government General Hospital, where doctors declared him dead. While the exact cause of death is yet to be confirmed, doctors suspect a possible heart attack. Minister for BC and EWS Welfare, S. Savita, expressed grief over the young student's sudden demise. She has instructed the BC Welfare Department to conduct a detailed investigation into the incident and submit a report. The Minister also stated that the hostel staff informed Syamala Rao's father about the tragic news. She extended her condolences to the bereaved family and assured them of full support from the state government during this difficult time.



**Houses built on 100 sq. yards exempt from plan: Narayana**

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a significant step toward easing urban development for low-income families, Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister P. Narayana has announced that houses built within 100 square yards will now be exempt from mandatory plan approvals. This initiative, revealed during a high-level review meet-

ing with officials from the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) and the Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority (VMRDA), aims to benefit economically weaker sec-

tions and simplify building permissions. "This measure reflects our commitment to simplifying procedures and supporting poor and middle-class communities," Minister Narayana said. "We recognise the challenges faced by homeowners,

and we are actively working on revising building approval processes to offer tangible benefits. Plans are underway to extend streamlined permissions to houses within 300 square yards as well." The Minister also urged officials to accelerate the completion of ongoing VMRDA projects, stressing the importance of timely execution for regional growth.

Continued on Page 2



**EPDCL to become India's first DISCOM to champion Mission LIFE: P2**

**Lakshmisha new Collector of NTR dist**



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr Lakshmisha G, an IAS officer of the 2013 batch, has been appointed as the Collector and District Magistrate of NTR District. His previous role as Vice Chairman and Managing Director of the Andhra Pradesh Medical Services and Infrastructure Development Corporation (APM-SIDC) has been relinquished as part of this new assignment. The appointment was formalised through Government Order Rt No 1884, issued by Chief Secretary

Neerabh Kumar Prasad on Sunday, which also included several other transfers of IAS officers. Dr Sreedhar Cherukuri, an IAS officer of the 2009 batch and currently serving as the Director of Industries, has been transferred to take over as Collector and District Magistrate of YSR District, filling an existing vacancy. Additionally, Muttimbaku Abhishikhth Kishore, an IAS officer from the 2015 batch and Managing Director of the Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC), has been given full additional charge of the post of Director of Industries until further notice. The Special Chief Secretary for the Health Medical and Family Welfare Department has been directed to make necessary arrangements for the in-charge roles of the Vice Chairman and Managing Director of APM-SIDC, as well as the Chief Executive Officer of NTR Vaidya Seva, until further orders.

**AHEAD OF THE POLLING DAY...**

**Millions of Americans seal their choices in early voting**

PNS ■ NEW YORK

The 42 Broadway in New York is an important address in this election season in the US. This is the office of the Board of Elections, Michael Ryan, executive director, and his deputy Vincent Ignizio are upbeat about the figures that the early voting has drawn for the city. On the first day, about 140,000 votes were cast in the early voting. "We don't want to pat ourselves on the back but we are upbeat about this. New York has already created a record in early voting and it is still on," says Ryan. Across the United States, tens of millions of voters have already cast



**Across the United States, tens of millions of voters have already cast their ballots. According to the data from the University of Florida's Election Lab tracker, more than 68 million Americans have already voted**

their ballots. According to the data from the University of Florida's Election Lab tracker, more than 68 million Americans have already

voted. Across the nation, voters are taking advantage of the flexibility offered by early voting options, whether through mail-in ballots or

in-person polling sites. This trend allows voters to avoid potential issues such as inclement weather, long queues, or unforeseen

scheduling conflicts on election day. Ryan feels that several factors played a role in ensuring the positive trend in early voting, at least for New York City (NYC). "In 2020 less than 100 polling stations were set up for early voting. This year the number is almost 50 per cent more than that," says Ryan. An early voting station has been set up at the John Jay College in the Manhattan area of NYC. The station is packed with voters coming in and casting their ballots days ahead of the main election day on November 5. Suzan, the coordinator of the station, feels the early voting process is witnessing a very positive response.

Continued on Page 2

# Monday Mirchi

## WHISPERS OVER AP CM'S SECRETARY TRAVEL TO THE US WITH LOKESH

When we talk of inherited traits, it is OK to be bandied about as "Like father, like son". In pure play politics, when the son is not yet risen; can an official designated to advise the head of the government extend his role to back the Chief Minister's son as well? In Andhra Pradesh, Additional Secretary to CM Karthikeya Mishra's junket to the US alongside Minister Nara Lokesh has whetted the curiosity of those piqued by the existing power structure. The murmurs getting louder are: why on earth did Mishra tag along with Lokesh? After all, there is neither protocol nor precedent that can justify this unusual pairing. Mishra's job, by the book, is to advise the CM directly. If so, what is he doing flying off with a Minister? The juicier grapevine is that folks in the Secretariat are wondering whether Mishra has been 'advised' unofficially to hand-hold the CM's son. Having seen a pattern in the history of 'sonrise' cases in Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana, among other states, official circles are wondering whether it is a strategic move or sheer coincidence that raised eyebrows. Whatever it is, the Secretariat gossip mill is on overdrive.

## OFFICIAL OUTDOES MINISTER IN PR

In Andhra Pradesh, the corridors of power are buzzing with hushed talk about the widening gulf between Minister for Housing and I & PR K Parthasarathy and I&PR Director Himanshu Shukla. The reason is plain as the nose on the face Parthasarathy, who is apparently frustrated over some of his key recommendations not seeing the light of day. The presumption is that Shukla, given his proximity to the Chief Minister's Office, scuttled them. Secretary to CM Pradyumna P S is adding an extra layer of twist to the tale. Insiders are nudging one another with raised eyebrows, awaiting all dimensions of the power play to unfold. Will the Minister shift gears in resentment, if not fury? Regardless of the Minister's moves, is Shukla's connection to the brass strong enough to keep things steady? The tension is palpable in expectant circles. Everyone is keeping an eye on the next act in this unfolding drama.

## LOYALTY REWARDED: PUNETHAMAINA RETURN TO ANDHRA POLITICS

The recent appointment of Anil Punetha as the Andhra Pradesh Vigilance and Enforcement Commissioner may have set tongues wagging. But what has not gone unnoticed is Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu's penchant for seeking out loyal officials who may have fallen out of favour in the long-drawn process of regime change. Known for his unwavering loyalty to Chandrababu Naidu, the career of 'Punetha' (a word which in Telugu means 'love, pure, sacred and devout') has been anything but ordinary. In fact, many remember the dramatic moment in 2019 when he was removed from the Chief Secretary position by the Election Commission. His retirement followed in May the same year. Fast forward five years, Chandrababu Naidu has given Anil a punethamaina role with the spotlight back on him. The appointment is another example of how Naidu's tight-knit team is founded on loyalty of the highest order. It has raised the hopes of other similarly placed hard-core CBN loyalists awaiting inteazaar ka phal.

## FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY GRIP OFFICIALS AMID POLITICAL CROSSFIRE

With whispers in the corridors of power getting louder, bureaucrats in Telangana are on edge. There is pervasive unease among

officials at all levels as they see the Congress government in the state involving bureaucrats in political skirmishes. Be it the Kaleshwaram project, payments related to Formula E race, or power purchase agreements; the manner in which officials are being dragged for settling political scores in relation to scams under probe has cast a shadow on decision-making in administrative ranks. For instance, the Formula E race, which once put the city in the spotlight on the world stage, has now become a flashpoint for debate over perceived irregularities, with some questioning the potential damage to the city's image as a competent host for the high-profile international championships. Beyond the public spectacle, the fallout has eroded the confidence of bureaucrats who believe in going with the flow when the situation demands to close a multi-lateral deal that involves a line-up of many competing nations. Hence, supreme confidence has now made way for paranoid caution. The mutterings of officials caught in the cross-fire suggest that most officials are increasingly wary about green-lighting any project or its components, fearing that any decision taken in deference to political diktat not backed by paperwork could boomerang on them in unexpected ways and at any moment. The concern now is: with morale low, will decision-making in the corridors of power come to a standstill? Already there is talk of the powers that be not getting a grip on administration, which informed quarters have blamed on communication breakdown. On top of that, if bureaucrats are sucked into political witch-hunt, how are they expected to deliver?

## WHY YADADRI COLLECTOR IS GRINNING

The recent shuffle of district collectors in Telangana has created a buzz since the transfers happened amid the process of preparation of electoral rolls which will continue until January. During this period, the government is required to obtain special permission from the Election Commission of India to reshuffle Collectors. Therefore, Hanumanth Rao feels twice blessed to be appointed Yadadri Collector; for, apart from the factor relating to additional layer of administrative process, he is known to have secured the position on which he had set his sight firmly for quite some time, according to insiders. On hindsight, Rao's move is more of accommodation than transfer.

## WHY CM'S WARNING ON GRAFT FELL FLAT IN THE CASE OF AMOY KUMAR

Although Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy never misses an opportunity to air his abhorrence of graft, by his inexplicable silence in the snowballing Enforcement Directorate case against Amoy Kumar, he has raised the hackles of those who are benumbed by the allegations of corruption involving the official in the dock. It was only behind closed doors that Revanth Reddy expressed his stance, noting that this situation should serve as a stern example to IAS officers nationwide. By not commenting publicly and specifically on Amoy, he has sent a clear message: if bureaucrats dip their toes into corrupt practices, consequences will follow. By letting the ED handle the matter without bothering about political undertones, he has underlined the need for accountability within the bureaucracy. This implies that even those in the upper echelons of administration are not beyond reproach. With such a high-profile case unfolding, all eyes are on how this will shape public perception about the CM's anathema for corruption.

--Yours truly

## Houses built on 100 sq...

Continued from Page 1

"Fast-tracking these projects is vital for development, and we must take all necessary actions to ensure timely delivery," he stated.

To enhance transparency in urban planning, officials announced that pending documents would be uploaded to the Director of Town and Country Planning (DTCP) website, making details like Transferable Development Rights (TDR) publicly accessible. "Our goal is to make key data available and clear," Minister Narayana emphasized, highlighting the government's commitment to transparent governance.

The review meeting also discussed strategic urban initiatives, including the design of master plan roads, fund mobilisation, the upcoming Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the metro rail project, and updates on housing developments by the Andhra Pradesh Township and Infrastructure Development Corporation (ITIDCO). The Minister's call for efficiency resonated with the attendees, including MP M. Sriharath, MLC Duvvurapu Rama Rao,



## Ayyanna in Sydney to take part in CPC

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chintakayala Ayyannapratru, Speaker of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly, arrived in Sydney, Australia, on Sunday. He is in Sydney to participate in the 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) hosted by the Parliament of New South Wales. He is accompanied by

his son, Chintakayala Rajesh, and Prasanna Kumar Suryadevara, Secretary-General of the Andhra Pradesh Legislature. Upon his arrival, Ayyannapratru received a warm welcome at Sydney International Airport from the Telugu community residing in the city. Despite arriving late at night, many people gathered to greet the Speaker enthusiastically.

# EPDCL to become India's first DISCOM to champion Mission LIFE

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Eastern Power Distribution Company Ltd. (EPDCL) is set to become the first distribution company in India to champion Mission LIFE, aligning with Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's commitment to the Union Government's initiative. The company plans to implement a series of initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable living practices and promoting environmental conservation, according to Prudhvi Tej, Chairman and Managing Director of EPDCL.

Headquartered in Visakhapatnam, EPDCL's initiatives will focus on reducing waste, conserving water and energy, adopting renewable energy sources, and promoting energy-efficient appliances certified by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE). In collaboration with BEE, the Ministry of Power, and the Andhra Pradesh State Energy Conservation Mission (APSECM), EPDCL is developing a comprehensive com-



munication strategy to empower consumers in Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, Srikakulam, East Godavari, and West Godavari districts to make informed choices.

Recently, EPDCL launched the Mission LIFE promotional poster, created by BEE's Media Adviser Wing for Southern States and Union Territories. This milestone

event was attended by key officials, including Praveen Gupta, Member of the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Milind Deora, Secretary of BEE, and senior officials from the Andhra Pradesh power sector, including Chandram, Bhaskar, and Kumar Reddy.

With the support of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, ongoing monitoring by Energy

Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar, and guidance from Special Chief Secretary K. Vijayanand, along with the financial and technical backing of BEE and cooperation from consumers, EPDCL aims to enhance energy efficiency and expand renewable energy sources. These efforts are expected to result in a reliable and high-quality power supply for consumers.

"We are fully committed to leveraging Mission LIFE to drive sustainable practices, stimulate economic growth, and provide exceptional power supply across the region," stated Prudhvi Tej. "By empowering consumers to adopt sustainable lifestyles, we will contribute to a cleaner, greener future while enhancing the economic vitality of EPDCL."

Milind Deora praised the Andhra Pradesh government's dedication to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for sustainable development, highlighting the state's commitment to promoting energy efficiency and the adoption of renewable energy.

# APJAC-Amaravati demands IR

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Joint Action Committee-Amaravati (APJAC-Amaravati), Bopparaju Venkateswarlu, has urged the State government to announce Interim Relief (IR) for all government employees, as promised by the TDP-led NDA Coalition during the elections. He also called for the appointment of a new Chairman for the 12th Pay Revision Commission (PRC), following the resignation of the previous chairman.

The APJAC-Amaravati State Secretariat meeting took place at the Revenue Bhavan in Governorpet, Vijayawada, on Sunday. During the meeting, leaders discussed the IR, the appointment of the new 12th PRC Chairman, and various employee-related matters.

Speaking on the occasion, Bopparaju Venkateswarlu noted that employees and pensioners had lost all the benefits accrued from the 11th PRC under the previous



government. He stated that employees were hopeful for support from the TDP-led NDA government and expected the fulfillment of all assurances made during the election campaign. He urged the government to promptly address both financial and non-financial issues.

Furthermore, he mentioned that significant festivals like Dasara and Diwali had passed without any action, despite the NDA government having completed its five-month term. Employees are eagerly awaiting an announcement from Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, he added. He

also expressed satisfaction with the timely payment of salaries on the first of every month.

In addition, representations regarding 18 pending issues have been submitted to the Chief Minister's Secretary and the Finance Secretary. He expressed hope that the state government would make a favourable decision regarding these outstanding matters. APJAC-Amaravati secretary general Paliseti Damodara Rao, Associate Chairman TV Phaniperraju, treasurer K. Sangeetha Rao, and other members were present at the meeting.

# Amarnath condemns CM's remarks on Rushikonda project

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Former minister Gudivada Amarnath has strongly condemned Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's recent remarks about the Rushikonda Tourism project, urging the ruling party to focus on pressing state issues rather than repeatedly criticising the previous government.

Addressing the media, Amarnath criticised Naidu for implying that the buildings at Rushikonda were constructed solely for YSRCP leader Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, which he called a "highly condemnable" suggestion. He highlighted that Naidu's decision to visit the



Rushikonda site during his tour itself acknowledges the project's intended purpose.

"The Chief Minister's remarks are objectionable. If he wishes to make the buildings open for public view, he should also showcase the substandard and costly temporary structures he erected for the State Secretariat and Assembly, where

rainwater leaks in," Amarnath stated. He added that Vizag lacks adequate accommodation for VVIPs, which was the primary reason for initiating the Rushikonda Tourism project.

Recalling the project's inauguration by former Minister R.K. Roja, with Amarnath in attendance, he mentioned that a committee had deemed the structure suitable for the Chief Minister's Office, aligning with YSRCP's policy on three capitals.

Amarnath further criticised the government's focus on disparaging Jagan Mohan Reddy, ignoring key issues. He noted the stalled Deepam scheme, highlighting that beneficiaries are now asked to pay upfront

for reimbursement. In contrast, he praised Jagan Mohan Reddy's welfare measures, which disbursed Rs 2.75 lakh crore even during the pandemic.

He also urged Naidu to address critical issues like sand supply, free bus travel, "Talliki Vandanam", and liquor regulation, pointing out the proliferation of discount banners at liquor shops. Touching on the Vizag Steel Plant's crisis, he called on Naidu to leverage his party's influence in the NDA to negotiate with the Centre.

Amarnath concluded by criticising the current government's emphasis on publicity over real progress.

## Steel giants eye AP: Rs 70K...

Continued from Page 1

To ensure a steady supply of raw materials, the companies have secured agreements with NNDC and other suppliers for pig iron from Odisha and Chhattisgarh.

To facilitate smooth operations, ArcelorMittal and Nippon have sought 3,000 meters of

coastline for a dedicated port, which is projected to create thousands of permanent jobs. Additionally, the companies plan to build a residential township for employees, requiring an additional 440 acres of land. The companies are also considering a second plant with a capacity of 10.5 million tonnes per year, which would necessitate an

additional 8,800 acres of land. If both phases materialise, this would become India's largest steel manufacturing facility.

Analysts predict that Anakapalli district could experience rapid development comparable to Visakhapatnam if these projects proceed as planned. "This could be a turning point for the region, ushering in unprecedented economic growth," said an industrial development expert.

## TDP, YSRCP vow to protect...

Continued from Page 1

He praised Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for his ongoing efforts to enhance the development of the Muslim community and noted the party's proposal for the Waqf Board Amendment Act to be examined by a Joint Parliamentary Committee, a move facilitated by Naidu.

Echoing this sentiment, Narasaraopet MP Lavu Srikrishnadevarayalu expressed support for the event, labelling it a significant step in opposing the amendments. He pledged to communicate the community's concerns to both the Chief Minister and the Central Government to protect the rights of Muslims and their Waqf properties.

Former Chairman of the AP Legislative Council, MA Sharif, also spoke passionately against the proposed changes, stating that the TDP would actively pursue their

cancellation through discussions with Chief Minister Naidu.

From the YSRCP, Rajya Sabha MP V Vijayasai Reddy reiterated his party's opposition to the Waqf Amendment Bill, arguing it undermines Muslim traditions. He criticised TDP MP and Union Minister K Rammohan Naidu for his silence during the bill's introduction in the cabinet, highlighting constitutional obligations for ministers who disagree with cabinet decisions.

Reddy confirmed that the YSRCP has formally registered objections to several aspects of the Waqf amendment and will persist in advocating for Muslim rights until the amendments are rescinded.

This unprecedented collaboration between the TDP and YSRCP underscores a united front in the fight to protect Waqf properties and the interests of the Muslim community in Andhra Pradesh.

## HM hands over Rs 10L...

Continued from Page 1

Taking strong exception to the politicising of the heinous crime incident by the Opposition leaders, she lashed out that the police system was crippled during the five years YSRCP regime, she alleged, adding that the same system is being bolstered now.

Similar heinous crime incidents took place during the previous YSRCP regime including in the then CM Jagam Mohan Reddy's constituency Pulivendula, she pointed out. Illicit liquor was sold indiscriminately in the State during the five years of YSRCP rule, she flayed.

She came down heavily on former Minister RK Roja denying her comments on the incident. She described Roja's remarks as ridiculous. RK Roja was trying to use the issue for political mileage, and the Home Minister slammed and questioned her why she was quiet when liquor was sold by the government across the State. Those who have sense do not politicize such heinous crime incidents, she stated.

The Chandrababu Naidu-led NDA government is committed to providing women empowerment and security to women, the Home Minister acknowledged.

# Through collective spirit, we'll keep working towards TB-free India: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the decline in TB incidence is an outcome of India's dedicated and innovative efforts, and asserted that "we will keep working towards a TB-free India" through a collective spirit.

His remarks came in response to a post by Health Minister J P Nadda in which he stated that the World Health Organization (WHO) has recognised India's "remarkable" progress, with a 17.7 per cent decline in TB incidence from 2015 to 2023 -- a rate more than double the global decline of 8.3 per cent.

In his post on X, Modi said,



"Commendable progress! The decline in TB incidence is an outcome of India's dedicated and innovative efforts."

"Through a collective spirit, we will keep working towards a TB-free India," the

prime minister said.

In his remarks on Saturday, Nadda said, "Under the visionary leadership of PM Shri Narendra Modi ji, our government has expanded and strengthened the National TB Elimination Programme by taking key initiatives such as the Ni-Kshay Poshan Yojana to provide essential nutritional support to TB patients, and introduction of the BPALM regimen, a novel treatment for Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis."

"I also acknowledge the tireless efforts of the Health Ministry's dedicated healthcare workers, whose unwavering commitment and hard work play a crucial role in this fight against tuberculosis," Nadda said.



# Koneru Centre to be developed in PPP mode

There will be no potholed roads in State in next five years: Kollu Ravindra

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Minister for Mines & Geology and Excise, Kollu Ravindra, has revealed that the State government is preparing plans to develop the Koneru Centre in the Private Public Partnership (PPP) mode.

In view of Krishna district in-charge Minister Vasamsetti Subhash's tour to the district, Minister Ravindra and APSRTC Chairman Konakalla Narayana addressed the media at the party office in Machilipatnam on Sunday. On

Monday, Minister Subhash, Machilipatnam MP Vallabhaneni Balashoury, Minister Ravindra, and APSRTC Chairman Narayana will launch the pothole-free road programme estimated to cost Rs.3 crore.

Ravindra claimed that there will be no potholed roads in the State in the next five years. The State government has taken up a prestigious programme, aiming to make the roads across the State pothole-free, and all the works are planned to be completed by Sankranti.

Also, he said the TDP-led NDA government is accountable to the public and it was proved within four months of the government being formed. The State government aims to develop the State transparently and fulfil all assurances given before the elections, he said.

The State government aims to complete the Machilipatnam Port by 2025. On the other hand, the fishing harbor development works will be completed within the stipulated time. He made it clear that his government is committed to fulfilling all promises made during

the election campaign. He said none of the States in the country is distributing Rs.4,000 per month as pension and disbursing it on the first of every month. As part of the Super Six schemes, his government launched the three free-gas-cylinder programme on Diwali. He added that the State government sanctioned Rs.30 crore for the development of Machilipatnam.

Former Machilipatnam Municipal Chairman M Baba Prasad, JSP leader Bandi Ramakrishna and others were present.

# Inquiry officer allegedly persuades farmers to reach compromise

Negligence of Nunna VHA resulted in farmers being denied compensation for crop damage



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Following directives from Horticulture Director Srinivasulu, NTR District Horticulture Officer P. Balaji Kumar has conducted an inquiry into the alleged negligence of Village Horticulture Assistant (VHA) Shyam Victor Paul, who failed to register the e-crop booking. The inquiry took place at the Rythu Bharosa

Kendram in Nunna, near Vijayawada, and centred on Paul's failure to register black gram crops, which were cultivated as an intercrop in mango gardens, in the e-crop system. However, DHO Balaji Kumar attempted to persuade farmers to reach a compromise instead of conducting a proper investigation. He assured them that strict action will be taken if such negligence

recurred. This approach frustrated the farmers, who demanded stricter inquiry, including a recommendation for the suspension of VHA Shyam. The farmers firmly rejected any compromise and insisted on appropriate action against him, leading to a heated argument between them and Balaji Kumar.

According to the farmers, approximately 200 acres were

planted with black gram as an intercrop in mango gardens during the previous Rabi season. Unfortunately, the Michung Cyclone severely damaged the entire black gram crop in December. Due to VHA Shyam Victor Paul's negligence, the entire black gram crop was not registered in the e-crop system, resulting in the farmers being denied compensation from the State government. They felt that a lack of coordination between Agriculture and Horticulture officials and their slow response to complaints exacerbated their losses.

Subsequently, the affected farmers reported their grievances to the NTR District Agriculture and Horticulture Officers, seeking justice for their crop loss and demanding action against VHA Shyam Victor Paul for failing to fulfil his duties. Instead of addressing the farmers' concerns, the officials attempted to mediate a compromise between the farmers and the VHA. Despite the farmers repeatedly voicing their complaints over the past 10 months, little action was taken.

Eventually, the farmers met Horticulture Director Srinivasulu and submitted a formal complaint against VHA Shyam Victor Paul, seeking his suspension. In response to their complaints, the Horticulture Director ordered an inquiry. However, the farmers expressed their dissatisfaction with the conduct of the inquiry. They warned that if the inquiry officer does not submit a thorough report, they will forward their complaint directly to Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.

# Complete hospital buildings soon: EO



PNS ■ TIRUPATI

TTD EO J Shyamala Rao has ordered the Engineering officials to complete the Sri Balaji Institute of Oncology, Central Drug Store, and other buildings under construction in the hospital quickly and make them accessible to patients. The EO, along with SWIMS Director Dr RV Kumar, reviewed the medical facilities being provided to patients in various departments of SWIMS on Saturday evening.

Along with the main departments, the heads of departments like General Surgery, General Medicine, Neurology etc. reviewed the treatments being done in their departments, the steps to be taken to provide better facilities and increase the number of patients. Later, they inspected the operation theatres on the third floor of the General Ward and Padmavati Hospital and made several suggestions.

Later, the doctors in the Emergency Department inquired about the medical services being provided to patients, other facilities, NTR Aarogyasri medical services, OP registration and other issues. The EO inspected the patient assistants'

**Along with the main departments, the heads of departments like General Surgery, General Medicine, Neurology etc. reviewed the treatments being done in their departments, the steps to be taken to provide better facilities and increase the number of patients**

room and spoke to the people waiting there about the food and medical facilities provided by TTD.

As part of this, the EO spoke to patients like Doraswamy from V Kota in Chittoor district, Subbarao from Jammalamadugu in Kadapa district, Chakravarthy from Chittoor, and Sainath who underwent general surgery about the medical assistance being provided to them.

The patients and bystanders expressed satisfaction with the quality of medical care and other facilities provided by TTD.

CE Satyanarayana, SE Manoharam, EEs Prasad, Mallikarjun, SWIMS Medical Superintendent Dr Ram, RMO Dr Kotireddy, and Nursing Deputy Director Prabhavathi were present.

# Tiru Nakshatrams of devotees in November

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

Besides observing several festivals dedicated to Sri Venkateswara Swamy in Tirumala all through the year, the Tiru Nakshatrotsavams of ardent devotees of Srivaru are also equally observed with religious fervour every year.

In November several such events are lined up. Each devotee is being revered till today even after centuries for their selfless contributions in the services of Srivaru.

On Sunday, the Tirumala Nambi Sattumora was observed. This great Sri Vaishnavite devotee is revered



for pioneering Theertha Kainkaryam in Tirumala. There is a temple dedicated to

Sri Tirumala Nambi on South Mada Street. On November 6, the

Sattumora of Sri Manavala Mahamuni will be observed. It is believed that Manavala Mahamuni is the incarnation of Sri Ramanujacharya in the 14th century.

While on November 9, the Tiru Nakshatram of several prominent sages and Sri Vaishnavite devotees are lined up including Atri Maharshi, Sri Pillailokacharya Varsha, Sri Poigai Alwar, Sri Pudattalwar, besides the Sattumora of Sri Vedanta Desika.

On November 10, the Varsha Tiru Nakshatram of Peyalwar, and on November 11, Sri Yajnavalkya Jayanti are scheduled.



# Kanaka Durga adorned with thousands of bangles

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam, located atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada, was beautifully adorned with thousands of colourful bangles on Sunday to celebrate the annual Bangle Fest (Gajula Alankaram).

Goddess Durga Devi was adorned with beautiful bangles donated by devotees, symbolising prosperity and devotion. The sanctum sancorum, Malleswara Swamy Temple, and Nagendra Swamy Temple were all decorated with the bangles as part of the Karthika Masam Utsavalu.

The event took place on the sixth floor of the Mallikharjuna Maha Mandapam, where Vedic scholars conducted prayers. A large number of devotees gathered to witness the dec-

orations and seek darshan of Durga Devi. An estimated 75,000 devotees visited the temple on the occasion, participating in the festivities and receiving blessings.

Temple Executive Officer (EO) KS Rama Rao ensured that all necessary arrangements were made for the comfort and convenience of the devotees. Highlighting the cultural significance of the event, EO Rama Rao noted, "Bangles are symbols of prosperity for women and are offered as gifts to the goddess. Adorning the temple and Kanaka Durga with bangles is a long-standing tradition in Karthika Masam. We are grateful for the overwhelming response from devotees."

He added that the temple will distribute bangles to women devotees after the festival, continuing this cherished tradition.

# CCTV cameras in city found non-functional

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The city's once-vigilant surveillance network has fallen into disrepair. A shocking survey by the new coalition government revealed that thousands of CCTV cameras throughout Visakhapatnam are currently non-functional. This revelation has cast a shadow over the city's security apparatus, leaving law enforcement and city officials grappling with the consequences.

The previous administration's neglect of the extensive camera system has led to a crisis that is now hindering crucial investigations. The recent fire at the Visakhapatnam Harbour, suspected to be arson, serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of a dysfunctional surveillance system. Investigators were left without crucial footage from non-functional CCTV cameras, significantly delaying their probe.

Similarly, the disappearance of a young woman from Guntur after posting a distressing video from Beach Road was further complicated by the lack of functional cameras in the area. This incident highlights the urgent need for a robust surveillance system to assist in search and rescue operations.

# Crisis is hindering crucial investigations



Bagchi has announced immediate steps to address the alarming gaps in public safety.

A detailed survey has been conducted to identify non-functional cameras and areas requiring new installations. This information will be shared with the GVMC Commissioner to prioritise repairs and new installations.

Recent findings indicate that Visakhapatnam has a significant shortfall in its surveillance infrastructure. While the city has 2,967 government-installed cameras and 61,466 public ones, a staggering 1,308 GVMC cameras require urgent maintenance, and 6,521 privately installed cameras are unaccounted for. To bolster its surveillance capabilities, the city needs an additional 14,307 cameras.

As Visakhapatnam grapples with this crisis, immediate action is imperative to restore the CCTV network and safeguard the community.

The safety of the city's citizens must remain paramount, and addressing the shortcomings in the surveillance system is crucial to achieving this goal.

The mismanagement of the surveillance network has also raised questions about accountability. Various agreements with installation companies, including maintenance periods, have long since expired, leaving thousands of cameras unmonitored. Additionally, the City Operation Centres project, aimed at installing smart surveillance poles, faltered due to funding deficiencies.

In response to this growing crisis, Police Commissioner Dr. Sankhabrata

# NTR CP, Durga Temple ex-EO have darshan of deity

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhara Babu and senior IRS officer Koteswaramma, who is also the former Executive Officer of the Kanaka Durga Temple, had darshan of the Goddess at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam located atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Sunday. The officials visited the temple along with their family members separately, and offered special pujas to Durga Devi.

Executive Officer of the temple, KS Rama Rao, welcomed them and facilitated their darshan. Later, the temple scholars offered blessings to them at the Veda Ashirvachana Mandapam. Later, EO Rao presented them with Laddu Prasadam, Sessa Vastram, and a portrait.



# 'CM, Dy CM misleading public'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Senior YSRCP leader and former minister Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani) has criticised Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, accusing them of misleading the public for political gain. He alleged that since the coalition government took power, YSRCP leaders and workers have faced continuous harassment. "Those who harass us will receive tenfold in return," he warned, asserting that the YSRCP would demonstrate its strength well before the next elections.

The remarks were made during a programme in Vijayawada on Sunday, where YSRCP leader Devineni Avinash assumed charge as the NTR district party president. Addressing the gathering, Perni Nani claimed that coalition leaders have become increasingly reckless since coming to power. He emphasised that YSRCP's true strength lies in its cadre, declaring, "No one can prevent us from raising the YSRCP flag, regardless of the challenges or insults." He also took a jibe at DCM Pawan Kalyan, questioning his inac-



tion to support Jana Sena workers facing attacks, allegedly by TDP activists.

Meanwhile, Rajya Sabha member Alla Ayodhya Rami Reddy highlighted the upcoming Jamili (simultaneous) elections in two years, asserting that YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has continued to lead the party with dedication even without being in power. Rami Reddy expressed confidence that the party will secure victory in the simultaneous elections, working in unity to serve the people. Taking charge as the NTR district president, Devineni Avinash reassured party workers of support, stating that no one should fear the false cases allegedly filed against them by the coalition government. He affirmed his commitment to fight alongside the people under YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's leadership, vowing to stand strong against any obstacles.

# Minister Kolusu lays foundation for Rs 20 cr developmental works

PNS ■ ELURU

Minister for Housing and Information & Public Relations, K. Parthasarathy, laid the foundation stone for development projects worth Rs 20 crore at Chatrai village on Sunday.

The Minister inaugurated the construction of a road at Chatrai village at a cost of Rs 25 lakh and a CC road in Chanubanda village costing Rs 50 lakh. He also launched a road repair programme worth Rs 30 lakh.

Speaking at a public meeting in Chanubanda, Minister Parthasarathy announced that Rs 20 crore worth of development works have commenced in the Nuzvid constituency. He affirmed the government's commitment to making state roads pothole-free, with a large-scale pothole-filling programme for R&B roads under-way, totalling Rs 820 crore across Andhra Pradesh.

The Minister revealed that Rs 76 crore is allocated specifically for roadworks in the Eluru district, with a target to complete all repairs by



Sankranti. He also recalled that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has issued strict warnings to officials, stating that any road found

with potholes after January would result in the suspension of the responsible officials.

Highlighting the government's achievements,

Parthasarathy noted the issuance of DSC notifications and the increase in pension from Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,000. He also mentioned the establish-

ment of skill development centres to train unemployed youth and the launch of a free gas cylinder scheme from Deepavali.



## Free transport facility for TIDCO residents

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Minister for Water Resources Development, Nimmala Ramanaidu, flagged off a vehicle donated by the Dharma Rao Foundation, aimed at providing free transportation to the residents of the TIDCO colony in Palakollu on Sunday.

The Dharma Rao Foundation contributed a vehicle worth Rs 8 lakh to help the colony's residents commute without cost. Speaking at the

event, Minister Ramanaidu highlighted that TIDCO residents often need to travel to places like Gandhi Statue Centre, RTC bus stand, and the railway station, typically incurring around Rs 200 per trip—an amount many middle-class and poor residents struggle to afford.

Acknowledging this need, the Dharma Rao Foundation stepped forward to offer a dedicated vehicle for free transportation, available for the

colony's residents from morning to evening. The Minister further assured that pending TIDCO housing works would soon be completed, and the homes would be handed over to beneficiaries.

Both Minister Ramanaidu and the colony residents expressed gratitude to the Dharma Rao Foundation for their generous donation. Leaders from BJP, Janasena, and TDP were also present at the event.

## 'TG CM and his family are happy but not the poor'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Happiness has come to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and his family but not for poor commoners, BJP leader Alleti Maheshwar Reddy said.

"Light has come not to the people but to the coterie surrounding Chief Minister Revanth Reddy," he said.

Speaking to the media at Warangal on Sunday, Maheshwar said, "The CM is focussed on blackmailing, land settlements and loot for his relatives and not on the assurances he had given to the people and on solving people's problems."

He asked the CM to reveal whether the Congress government had filled the state with light after eliminating darkness during its 11-month rule. Has happiness filled the state or is the CM having illusions? If the CM is confident then he should come along with me and we can go to the people, Maheshwar said throwing a challenge at the CM.

Maheshwar said that Prime Minister Modi's post on X that the Congress government had destroyed Telangana with its fake assurances had created a

flutter in the Congress.

He said that the CM posted a reply to Modi as per the directions of the Congress high command but it was nothing but an attempt to hide the ground-level facts in Telangana.

Maheshwar pointed out that A I C C President Mallikarjuna Kharge had said that governments should give assurances to the people based on their budgets. Otherwise, the states will go bankrupt. This statement looks like an attempt to avoid implementing the assurances given to the people, he said.

The Revanth government is trying to avoid implementing assurances as Kharge said. However, the BJP will not remain silent if Revanth tries to avoid implementing his assurances, Maheshwar warned.

He said that the Congress knew about the financial condition of Telangana and the BRS admin's debts but still, it gave impossible assurances to come to power. The BJP will not remain silent if the Congress government tells cock and bull stories to avoid implementing its assurances, he warned.

## 'Seaports and airports crucial for AP'

PNS ■ NELLORE

Municipal Administration Minister P Narayana has emphasised the necessity of establishing seaports and airports to drive the state's development. Speaking at the District Review Committee (DRC) meeting in Nellore on Sunday, chaired by Minority Welfare Minister NM Farooq, Narayana highlighted efforts to expedite the setting up of an airport in Dagadarthi.

Narayana noted that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu is committed to attracting industries to Andhra Pradesh. The Minister also informed that the district Superintendent of Police has been directed to set up traffic signals in Nellore, while discussions with NH officials are underway for flyovers at Chinthareddypalem and Kanuparthipadu intersections.

District in-charge Minister NM Farooq stated that the meeting reviewed key departments' performance and underscored the district Collector's responsibility in implementing the decisions. Farooq praised the Chief Minister's focus on the 'Super Six' schemes, which aim to provide financial support to the underprivileged, calling it a "people's government."

District Collector Anand provided updates on various ongoing projects, including MGN-REGA, RWS, and Jal Jeevan initiatives. He shared that Rs 80 crore per constituency has been



**Narayana noted that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu is committed to attracting industries to Andhra Pradesh. The Minister also informed that the district Superintendent of Police has been directed to set up traffic signals in Nellore, while discussions with NH officials are underway for flyovers at Chinthareddypalem and Kanuparthipadu intersections**

allocated for MGNREGA works and Rs 43 crore sanctioned by the 15th Finance Commission. The Collector added that protected drinking water projects are underway and will be handed over to local Panchayats.

MLA Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy appealed for the construction of three bridges at the Telugu Ganga office, Erugalamma crossroads, and

Pottepalem Kaluju. He also shared that 562 acres of land were acquired for an Industrial Park in Amancharla, with Rs 50 crore paid to farmers. Ministers Anam Ramanarayana Reddy, MLAs Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy, Nageswara Rao, Krishna Reddy, and others also attended. An unexpected moment unfolded as MP Vemireddy

Prabhakar Reddy expressed displeasure over not being formally invited to the meeting with a flower bouquet, a protocol extended to the Ministers. The MP left the meeting, stating, "This is not the way to treat someone in my position." Despite Endowment Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy's efforts to bring him back, Reddy declined, voicing his disappointment.

In response, Minister Narayana apologised to the MP and instructed the Collector to prevent such oversights in the future. Minister Farooq also expressed regret over the incident, affirming that steps would be taken to ensure respectful treatment of all attendees at official events.

## Strict action against those storing and transporting sand illegally: CP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhar Babu has issued a strong warning to transporters who illegally store and transport sand, violating the State government's prestigious free sand policy. He stated that the Police Department has implemented robust surveillance technology at all sand extraction sites in the district. Furthermore, he warned that strict action will be taken against those who transport sand to other States.

On Sunday, the Commissioner monitored sand stockyards and excavation activities at various locations throughout the NTR district using CC cameras and drones from the Command Control Room in Vijayawada. He provided clear instructions to the Task Force, Special Branch, and Law & Order police to prevent illegal sand transportation.

During his address, Rajasekhar Babu mentioned that the police received numerous complaints from the public regarding the lack of sand supply. Many individuals were transporting sand illegally through various means. This could undermine the objectives of the free sand policy, he noted. Consequently, the

**Police have implemented robust surveillance technology at sand extraction sites**

Commissioner instructed police officials to take necessary measures to ensure the public has access to sand without issues while also taking strong actions against those engaged in illegal transport and charging exorbitant prices. Additionally, he emphasised that the Police, Revenue, and Mines & Geology Departments are collaborating effectively. They have installed CC cameras and drones at all sand extraction sites, stockyards, and other significant locations. Advanced technology, including drones and CC cameras, have been arranged at all 17 checkpoints.

These systems are interconnected with the Command Control Room in Vijayawada, allowing for efficient monitoring of stockyards, checkpoints, extraction sites, and other areas.

Lastly, he instructed the relevant officials to file cases against those who create large sand dumps and transport sand illegally. Appropriate action will be taken according to the law, he explained.

## Diabetes patients urged to stay vigilant against heart disease

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr Nuthakki Vijaya Lakshmi, renowned cardiologist, emphasised the critical importance of heart health for diabetes patients during a health awareness event held at Guntur on Sunday. She stated that individuals suffering from diabetes must remain vigilant as the condition can severely impact various organs, particularly the heart and by effectively managing heart health, many lives can potentially be saved from sudden cardiac events.

The awareness programme was organised jointly by the SHO Hypertension & Diabetic Club and a local voluntary organization called Manavatha Seva Samastha. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Vijaya Lakshmi pointed out a common misconception

among patients regarding heart examinations. Many assume their hearts are in good condition if an ECG report shows normal results. However, she cautioned that collateral blood vessels often mask underlying issues, and a resting ECG may not reveal significant problems. She recommended that diabetes patients undergo treadmill tests and echocardiograms at least once every five years to obtain a comprehensive assessment of their heart health.

The cardiologist also highlighted the prevalence of neuropathy among diabetes patients, which may prevent them from sensing chest pain during cardiac events. Dr Vijaya Lakshmi recommended reducing the intake of white rice in favour of green leafy vegetables and regular

physical exercise. She acknowledged the growing incidence of diabetes and heart disease in today's society, attributing it to changes in diet, job-related stress, and increasing anxiety. Dr Vijaya Lakshmi encouraged the community to consume food mindfully and engage in consistent exercise to maintain overall health.

Dr T Seva Kumar, founder of the SHO Hypertension & Diabetic Club, reiterated the organisation's commitment to public health through health awareness sessions and free medical camps. Club president TV Sai Ram added that proactive health management can benefit families both in terms of well-being and financial stability by preventing financial losses associated with health issues.

## Woman killed, another hurt as cross-wheel collapses



PNS ■ TIRUPATI

In a tragic incident, a woman was killed and another seriously injured when the cabin of a cross-wheel ride they were enjoying collapsed at Shilparamam in Tiruchanur near here on Sunday. The deceased, identified as Lokeshwari, was enjoying the ride with her friend when the mishap occurred.

According to police, the cabin in which they were seated detached while the ride was in motion, causing

both women to fall to the ground. Lokeshwari died instantly, while her friend, whose identity has not yet been confirmed, sustained critical injuries. Lokeshwari hailed from Subba Reddy Nagar.

The injured woman was rushed to Ruia Hospital, where her condition is reported to be critical. The police have apprehended the cross-wheel contractor, Prabhakar, and have registered a case to investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident.

## 130 litres of illicit liquor seized

PNS ■ NANDYALA

Police seized 130 litres of illicit liquor, adulterated ghee, and several vehicles during a cordon and search operation conducted in multiple areas on Sunday.

Under the direction of SP Adhiraj Singh Rana, police teams carried out searches in the Allagadda rural police station limits, including Ahobilam, Bodanam village in Bandi Atmakur limits, Gaddamekalapalli in Owk limits, and Kollabapuram in Brahmin Kothur limits.

During the operation, police seized 130 litres of

illicit liquor, 36 liquor bottles, 30 kg of adulterated ghee, 39 motorcycles without valid documents, and three auto-rickshaws. Police also conducted counselling for rowdy sheeters and suspects in the area, urging them to maintain peace and avoid involvement in any violent incidents, with a warning of strict action against offenders.

The operation involved five Circle Inspectors, 12 Sub-Inspectors, and around 100 personnel, including Quick Response Teams (QRT). Police also held meetings with villagers, advising them to uphold peace in the area.



## Two pilgrims killed as lorry collides with auto

PNS ■ KURNOOL

Pilgrimage turned tragic as two pilgrims were killed and seven others injured when a lorry collided with the auto-rickshaw in which they were travelling at Ganekal village near Adoni town on Sunday.

Police said that a group of pilgrims from Karnataka State were going to Narasimha Swamy temple, located at Urukunda village. A speeding lorry collided with the Auto rickshaw killing Veessanna (50) belonging to Chitradurga and Ratnabai (40) of Bellary of Karnataka State.

Both were killed on the spot. Seven others were injured in the accident. The condition of one of the injured was said to be critical. The injured were admitted to the GGH in Adoni.

## TS Minister Ponnamp receives warm welcome

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Telangana Minister for Transport, Ponnamp Prabhakar, received a warm welcome upon his arrival at Gannavaram Airport. Congress leaders, including CWC Special Invitee Gidugu Rudra Raju, APCC Vice-President Kolanukonda Shivaji, and Allam Rajesh, greeted him at the airport.

According to APCC Vice-President Shivaji, Ponnamp Prabhakar is scheduled to meet Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu to discuss various issues.

## ACROSS THE STATES



### Odisha govt orders probe into unnatural deaths of elephants

Expressing concern over the unnatural deaths of about 60 wild elephants, Odisha's Forest Minister Ganesh Ram Singkhuntia ordered a detailed inquiry into it. Singkhuntia wrote to Additional Chief Secretary (Forest) Satyabrata Sahu in this regard, a statement said on Sunday. He ordered a division-wise thorough investigation into the deaths and directed that stringent action should be taken against those officials found responsible. He also sought a report on this within a month. Describing the matter as very alarming, the minister said additional care is necessary to curb such deaths, according to the statement. He said the state government has been taking various steps to prevent the unnatural death of elephants. "However, there is a need for more care and sincerity on the part of forest officials to ensure a safe environment with statutory protective measures for the safety of the elephants," he said. "Priority must be given on the matter and errant officers must not be let scot-free," he added.



### Terror associate arrested in Pulwama; arms, ammo seized

Security forces have arrested a terrorist associate linked with the proscribed terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district and seized arms and ammunition from him, police said on Sunday. They identified the man as Sajad Ahmed Dar, a resident of Pulwama's Tahab area. A spokesperson said a joint team of police, the Army and the CRPF arrested Dar from Dangerpora, Pulwama, on November 2 in connection with a case registered under the Explosives Act and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. "Sajad Ahmed disclosed the location inside his shop where he had kept arms and ammunition. Accordingly, the joint team of the forces raided the said spot where they recovered and seized the hidden arms and ammunition, including a pistol, a magazine with 12 rounds and two live grenades," he added. Earlier this week, a terrorist associate of Hizbul Mujahideen -- Danish Bashir Ahangar -- was arrested in the instant case.



### Over 2 lakh devotees take holy dip in Yamuna

Over two lakh devotees took a dip in the holy water of Yamuna river at several ghats of Mathura and Vrindavan on the occasion of 'Yam Dwitiya' on Sunday, officials said. "A large number of siblings belonging to different age groups celebrated the festival by taking holy dip," Senior Superintendent of Police Shailesh Kumar Pandey said. He added that over two lakh devotees took a dip in Yamuna on the occasion which is celebrated on the day of Bhai Dooj. Narrating the legend of the festival, priest Kanta Chaturvedi said, "Lord Yamraj, pleased by his sister Yamuna's hospitality, granted her a boon." "According to the boon, siblings of any age group taking a dip in the holy Yamuna river at Mathura's Vishram Ghat together on the day of 'Yam Dwitiya' will be spared from the wrath of the messengers of Lord Yam," the priest said. While majority of the devotees took a dip at Vishram Ghat, those unaware of the legend took dip in Bangali Ghat, Swami Ghat, and on the other bank of Yamuna. After taking dip, they paid obeisance at the Dharmraj temple situated on the bank of Yamuna near Vishram Ghat, Dhanech Chaturvedi, a resident of Mathura said.

### JMM terms BJP's 'Sankalp Patra' as 'jhoot, loot, thag patra'

The ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) on Sunday labelled BJP's 'Sankalp Patra' (manifesto) as 'jhoot, loot and thag patra' (lies, loot and fraud) and claimed that the saffron party has acknowledged its defeat 20 days before the election results. Speaking to reporters, JMM spokesperson Supriyo Bhattacharya said beneficiaries would receive Rs 2,500 under the Hemant Soren government's Maiyan Samman Yojana, rather than Rs 2,100 under the BJP's 'Gogo Didi' scheme. "The Home Minister is demanding an account of 5 lakh jobs in Jharkhand. The Modi government had promised to provide two crore jobs every year. Shah should reply if they provided 22 crore jobs in 11 years. Leave 22 crore, just provide the statistics of two crore jobs," Bhattacharya said. He said the BJP manifesto promises to provide 27 per cent reservation to OBC without impacting others. "We have already passed a bill assuring 28 per cent reservation to ST, 26 per cent to SC and 27 per cent to OBC.



### Naxalism will be wiped out from country by March 2026: Shah

Attacking the Hemant Soren-led JMM coalition for "fuelling Naxalism," Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday asserted that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Union government will eliminate the menace from the face of the country by March 2026. Shah expressed confidence that the NDA would form the government in Jharkhand, claiming it would win at least 52 out of 81 assembly seats based on the calculations from the recently held Lok Sabha elections. "It is time to oust the anti-Dalit, anti-tribal, anti-poor, and anti-youth Hemant government from Jharkhand, which is fuelling Naxalism for petty political gains," he said while addressing a rally in Simaria, Chatra district. "We uprooted the menace from Jharkhand during the last five years, and now the Prime Minister Modi-led Centre will wipe out Naxalism from India by March 2026."

### No provision for 'digital arrest' worldwide

Report cybercrimes at earliest: Experts

Posing as CBI and RBI officials, suspected cybercriminals recently put a retired banker and his wife under "digital arrest" for five days in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut district and convinced the elderly couple to transfer more than Rs 1 crore to them. A senior doctor from Lucknow's SGGIMS lost Rs 2.81 crore under a similar ruse in August while reports of such crimes have also emerged from Noida and Varanasi, among other places in the state. Cybercrimes, particularly digital arrests and financial frauds under the pretext of investment or employment, have surged since the COVID-19 pandemic. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also warned citizens about these threats during a recent "Mann ki Baat" address. Subject experts explain that digital arrest refers to a deceptive tactic used by cybercriminals, who falsely claim to have the authority to arrest an individual through digital means, often over the phone or via online communication. Scammers pose as law enforcement or regulatory officials and use threats or intimidation to coerce victims into transferring money or providing personal information, claiming that they are involved in illegal activities. This method exploits fear and confusion, taking advantage of the victim's panic to facilitate financial fraud.



enforcement or regulatory officials and use threats or intimidation to coerce victims into transferring money or providing personal information, claiming that they are involved in illegal activities. This method exploits fear and confusion, taking advantage of the victim's panic to facilitate financial fraud.

### Protecting Constitution is primary battle, says Rahul



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday emphasised that the primary struggle in the country today is to protect and preserve the Constitution. He said the Constitution of the country was not written with hatred, but with humility and love. "The main fight in the country today, that is taking place, is the fight for the Constitution of our country. The protection that we get, the greatness of our country, all emerged from the Constitution," the Lok Sabha MP said while addressing a corner meeting in Mananthavady here as part of the campaign for his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. Priyanka is the Congress candidate for the Wayanad Lok Sabha by-election. "The Constitution was not written with anger or with hatred. It was written by the people who fought the British, the people who had suffered, who spent years and years and years in jail. And they wrote the Constitution with humility, with love and with affection," he said. "The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha pointed out that this is a fight between love and

hatred. "A fight between confidence and insecurity. And if you truly want to win this fight, then you must help by removing anger from your heart, by removing hatred from your heart, and replacing them with love, humility and compassion," he told the gathering. Rahul Gandhi highlighted the qualities of her sister and shared nostalgic memories of their childhood. He also said it was the first time he is seeking votes for his sister, who has campaigned for him, and their parents earlier. "She is the person who went and hugged the girl who was implicated in my father's (Rajiv Gandhi) assassination. She said to me after she came back after meeting Nalini, she went emotional and then she said to me that I'm feeling bad for her," Rahul Gandhi recalled. "That is the training that she has received. And to me, this is the type of politics that needs to be done in India. Not the politics of hatred, but politics of love and affection."

### India and China made 'some progress' in disengagement: EAM

PNS ■ BRISBANE

India and China have made "some progress" in disengagement, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Sunday, describing the development as a "welcome" step. His comment comes days after Indian and Chinese troops completed disengagement at two friction points at Demchok and Dapsang Plains in eastern Ladakh. The Indian Army commenced verification patrolling at Dapsang, while patrolling at Demchok had begun on Friday. "In terms of India and China, we have made some progress. You know, our relations were very, very disturbed for reasons all of you know. We have made some progress in what we call disengagement," Jaishankar said while responding to a question during an interaction with the Indian diaspora here.



There are very large numbers of Chinese troops deployed along the Line of Actual Control who were not there before 2020 and we, in turn, have counter-deployed. There are other aspects of the relationship which also got affected during this period. So clearly, we have to see after the disengagement, what is the direction we go. But we do think the disengagement is a welcome step. It opens up the possibility that you know, other steps could

"There are very large numbers of Chinese troops deployed along the Line of Actual Control who were not there before 2020 and we, in turn, have counter-deployed. There are other aspects of the relationship which also got affected during this period. So clearly, we have to see after the disengagement, what is the direction we go. But we do think the disengagement is a welcome step. It opens up the possibility that you know, other steps could

happen," said the minister. He said that the expectation after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Chinese President Xi Jinping in Russia last month was that "both the national security advisor and myself, we would meet our counterpart. So that's really where things are". On October 21, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said in Delhi that an agreement had been finalised between India and China following negotiations over the past several

weeks and that it would lead to a resolution of the issues that arose in 2020. The agreement was firming up on patrolling and disengagement of troops along the LAC in eastern Ladakh, a breakthrough to end the over four-year standoff. The ties between the two Asian giants nosedived following a fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the two sides in decades.

### 56 metal objects removed from UP teen's stomach

PNS ■ HATHRAS (UP)

A 15-year-old boy from Uttar Pradesh's Hathras died a day after a major surgery was performed on him at a Delhi hospital to remove an astonishing 56 objects such as watch batteries, blades, nails and other metal fragments from his stomach. The discovery of multiple foreign objects inside the body of Aditya Sharma, a Class 9 student, has left the medical community perplexed and his family shaken, the boy's father Sanchit Sharma, a Hathras-based medical representative, said. The boy died a day after the surgery at Safdarjung Hospital as his heart rate spiked and his BP dropped alarmingly, his



father said. The foreign objects inside Aditya's stomach were detected during multiple medical check-ups in different hospitals in Uttar Pradesh, Jaipur, and Delhi, Sanchit said. He said his family's ordeal started after his son complained of severe stomach

### 'Do what it takes to punish terrorists'

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday in the wake of a grenade attack directed the Union Territory's top police officer and other security officials to give a forceful response to the terrorists. "The LG spoke to DGP Nalin Prabbhat and senior officials of the security agencies on the grenade attack in Srinagar. He directed the security officials for an effective and forceful response to punish the terrorists and their associates," an official spokesman said. The LG asserted that the terrorists attacking civilians will have to pay a very heavy price. "You have full freedom to crush terror outfits and leave no stone unturned to complete this mission," he said. "Terrorists lobbed a grenade at a CRPF bunker near a crowded flea market in Srinagar on Sunday, injuring at least 11 civilians.



### Uniform Civil Code won't be allowed in Jharkhand: CM

Shortly after Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday announced that the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) would be implemented in Jharkhand, Chief Minister Hemant Soren hit back saying neither the UCC nor the National Register of Citizens (NRC) would be allowed in the state. Soren emphasised that the Jharkhand would adhere only to the Chotanagpur Tenancy (CNT) and Santhal Pargana Tenancy (SPT) Acts to protect tribal culture, land, and rights. "Neither the UCC nor the NRC will be implemented here. Jharkhand will rely solely on the Chotanagpur Tenancy and Santhal Pargana

### Social outfit launches campaign to save, rejuvenate Yamuna

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A year-long campaign to clean and rejuvenate the Yamuna river in Delhi-NCR and the Braj region was launched by a social organisation in the national capital on Sunday. The campaign -- "Bhikshatan Mahayajna" -- was launched on the occasion of Bhai Dooj by Ravi Shankar Tiwari, the convener of Yamuna Sansad. Tiwari travels through Delhi-NCR and the Braj region to engage with local communities, civil society members and environmental organisations for rejuvenating the river, a statement from the organisation said. "This year-long initiative aims to raise awareness about



the river's critical condition, particularly in Delhi-NCR and the Braj region," it said. The campaign was inaugurated near the Chhath ghat at ITO and was attended by community representatives and schoolchildren, among others, it added. The partici-

The campaign -- "Bhikshatan Mahayajna" -- was launched on the occasion of Bhai Dooj by Ravi Shankar Tiwari, the convener of Yamuna Sansad

The river is facing threats from pollution and encroachment, the statement said. Tiwari emphasised the need for public involvement in the campaign and plans to visit households in Delhi-NCR and the Braj region to gather support and contributions for the initiative.



### Need people's support to ensure 'good work' continues in Delhi: Kejriwal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said he needed the support of the people to defeat the BJP and ensure that the "good work" continued in Delhi. The former chief minister resumed his 'padyatra' following a break for the festivals and urged the people of Delhi to vote for AAP in the assembly elections while accusing the BJP of halting development work.

"I need your support to defeat the BJP and keep the good work going in the city because I cannot do it alone. The BJP will stop all the work if it comes into power as it cannot match the facilities (being provided in Delhi) in states where it is already in power," he claimed. There was no immediate response from the BJP on the claims. AAP leaders are undertaking 'padyatras' (foot marches) in different assembly segments in the run-up to the polls, due in February.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Bangladesh protests

Protests erupt in Bangladesh as international voices express concern over escalating human rights crisis

Tens of thousands of minority Hindus in Bangladesh took to the streets on Friday, demanding immediate protection from ongoing violence and harassment following the recent political upheaval. The protests, primarily held in the southeastern city of Chattogram, saw around 30,000 Hindus gather, raising slogans for justice and security. The demonstrations were heavily guarded by police and military personnel, as Hindu community leaders urged the interim Government to intervene amid rising attacks on their community. The protests follow a series of reported attacks against the Hindu minority, which has been particularly vulnerable since the overthrow of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's secular government in August. After Hasina's departure, Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus was appointed to lead an Interim Government, which has faced criticism for its alleged inability to maintain order and protect minority groups. The influential Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council claims that over 2,000 attacks on Hindus have occurred since August, a period marked by escalating violence from hard-line Islamist groups. Hindus represent approximately 8 per cent of Bangladesh's population of nearly 170 million, while the Muslim majority makes up around 91 per cent. Despite being a significant minority, Hindu communities say they are inadequately protected and often targeted amid political and social instability. The unrest has also affected other groups; reports indicate that supporters of Hasina's Awami League party and its ally, the Jatiya Party, have faced violence as well. The recent spike in violence has sparked international concern. United Nations human rights officials, along with global advocacy groups, have voiced alarm over the human rights situation in Bangladesh under the Interim Government. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed concern over the attacks, while US President Joe Biden's administration announced that it is monitoring the situation closely. Adding his voice to the chorus, former US President and current presidential candidate Donald Trump condemned the "barbaric violence" targeting Hindus, Christians, and other minorities, describing Bangladesh as "in a total state of chaos." The Hindu activists who have been rallying since August are pressing the Government with a list of eight key demands which include the establishment of a minority protection law, the creation of a dedicated ministry for minority affairs, and a specialised tribunal to address and prosecute incidents of violence against minorities. Friday's protest in Chattogram was partly fuelled by recent sedition charges filed against 19 Hindu community leaders. As Bangladesh continues to grapple with political and religious tensions, minority communities remain on edge. With increasing international attention and escalating domestic demands for protection and justice, the Interim Government must restore peace and address the rights and safety of its minority groups, else there is a clear danger of it plunging into anarchy and eventually into a civil war.



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# America decides: Will Kamala make history



KALYANI SHANKAR

While polls show Harris narrowly leading, Trump's momentum and attacks on Harris, alongside economic concerns, keep the outcome unpredictable

The upcoming election for the White House is of immense significance, as it will determine the next tenant of the White House and shape the future of the United States. Whether America will get its first woman president or a second Donald Trump term is a debate going on among not only the politicians but also the public. A week before the November 5 presidential polls, election fever hit the country hard. However, there is a possibility that knowing the final result may take a few more days. Narrow victories in a handful of swing states will likely determine who gets the top job. Polls and prediction markets are signalling a Republican sweep in the election.

As the Republican candidate, Donald Trump, and the Democrat nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris, wrap up their campaigns, the potential impact of this election on the future of the United States cannot be overstated.

It is no surprise that the campaign has been not only highly negative but also personal, with Trump attacking his rival, hitting her below the belt and calling her "dumb." While the reports claim that the fight is very tight, with Trump leading now and Kamala making up her lead, the suspense will continue for a few more days, even after the election date. The Electoral College is the system that decides presidential elections: A candidate must secure at least 270 votes - allocated by state based on the outcome of their respective vote - to win the White House. Although certification sabotage has not yet resulted in such an extensive delay, many attempts have been made before. County election boards generally have no legal authority to investigate any allegations of fraud or irregularities.

Tight races in crucial battleground states in 2020 and an increase in mail-in voting amid the COVID pandemic saw prolonged vote counts. That helped fuel unfounded claims of election malfeasance pushed by Trump and his allies. State election law provides other checks and safeguards through which suspected



irregularities can be adjudicated. These mechanisms are designed to resolve disputes. Extended delays in county-level certification could run against deadlines for certifying statewide results. According to the Associated Press, the winner will likely not be projected for days. However, states and the whole election results are typically "called" long before final votes are counted. In 2020, Vice President Joe Biden won. The result was called for four days after November 3, when Pennsylvania's result was confirmed. The state gave Biden 20 electoral college votes, taking over the 270 required to win. In 2016, Hillary Clinton conceded to Trump the morning after the election. With the presidential contest in the final countdown and Harris and Trump maligning the opponent, the vice president has called Trump dangerous. Harris insists she's doing both - establishing a contrast with Trump and laying out her agenda on the economy, immigration and more. She says "It's either Donald Trump in there, stewing over his enemies list, or me working for you, checking off my to-do list." Trump is relentless in attack-



IT IS NO SURPRISE THAT THE CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN NOT ONLY HIGHLY NEGATIVE BUT ALSO PERSONAL, WITH TRUMP ATTACKING HIS RIVAL, HITTING HER BELOW THE BELT AND CALLING HER "DUMB"

ing Harris, sometimes in crude terms. His core strategy has been to tie Harris to voters' frustrations with the Biden administration.

According to the latest reports, Harris leads Trump by four points, 51 per cent-47 per cent, in an ABC/Ipsos of likely voters released Sunday. This is up slightly from her 50 per cent-48 per cent edge in early October. Meanwhile, a CBS/YouGov survey out Sunday shows Harris up 50 per cent-49 per cent, a shift from the vice president's 51 per cent-48 per cent lead in mid-October. According to FiveThirtyEight's election forecast, Trump is favoured to win 54 times out of 100, compared to 46 for Harris. As for the campaign spending, Harris routed Trump in fundraising for their official campaigns in September by pulling in \$222 million compared to the Republican's \$63 million. Those numbers are down from the same period in 2020 when Biden raised \$281 million and Trump raised \$81 million.

Harris was able to spend a lot on TV ads. According to the Wesleyan Media Project, the Harris campaign has also dramatically outspent Trump in

digital advertising and dominated cable and radio advertising, which tracks campaign advertising spending.

The economy and inflation remain prominent concerns, with 90 per cent and 85 per cent of registered voters calling them highly important in their votes, respectively. Harris' campaign insists she's doing both - establishing a contrast with Trump and laying out her agenda on the economy, immigration and more. As she said in Georgia earlier this week: "It's either Donald Trump in there, stewing over his enemies list, or me working for you, checking off my to-do list." The economy and inflation remain prominent concerns, with 90 per cent and 85 per cent of registered voters calling these highly important in their vote. The problem for Kamala Harris is that she is a woman of Asian descent. Despite being a highly developed country, people are shying away from electing a woman. Hillary Clinton tried hard, but she could not win the presidency. Let us see if Kamala is successful.

(The writer is a popular columnist, currently in the US; views are personal)

### PICTALK



About 1001 food items offered at the Akshardham Temple during the 'Annakut' festival, in Jaipur

PTI

## Art and literature: An imperative than a choice for students

Embracing art and literature is an investment in their mental wellbeing tomorrow—an invaluable asset for their future life



ASHA IYER KUMAR

Many decades ago, when I opted to take literature in college, at a time when many of my peers chose science, people raised their brows. It was believed to be the choice of the mediocre, a subject that didn't need much of an intellect or dedication. It was where students who didn't secure a seat in prime areas finally settled. Art and literature weren't considered durable then. Neither is it given much weightage now by parents.



Creative pursuits are still categorised as hobbies, and they get sidelined as children reach higher grades or enter college. Why? Because art is not sustainable. It is not lucrative. It doesn't build careers as easily as a degree in science, technology or accounting does. There still may be some truth in that contention prompting parents to wean off their children from extracurricular activities as the race to the future heats up. But the role of creative activities in providing our children with a respite from the stress of career-building cannot be undermined. At a time when they are grappling with the chal-

lenges of higher education, what might bring them respite from their anxieties are artistic endeavours. It is often in the lines of a sketch or the verses of a poem that children find a voice beyond words—a silent yet powerful release of their inner thoughts and emotions. In a world that measures success by exams and marks, these activities provide a refuge, where the mind is free to wander, explore, and create without boundaries. Studies have consistently shown that students who engage in painting, writing, music, dance or theatre experience lower stress levels than those who do not. These activities act as a counterbalance to the rigid schedules and deadlines that studies impose, allowing children to unwind and channel their

energies into something entirely their own. One of the often overlooked merits of art and literature is the development of emotional intelligence. When children immerse themselves in stories, they begin to understand complex emotions, both their own and those of others. A novel might teach empathy, while a piece of music might mirror feelings they struggle to articulate. These moments foster self-awareness, which is critical in today's fast-paced world where young people are grappling with social pressures and academic demands. These creative pursuits don't just make children more empathetic; they also teach them to become aware of their inner world—a skill that will serve them well beyond the walls of a classroom. In those moments when they feel overwhelmed, they can turn to the comfort of a favourite book, the joy of drawing, or the calm of journaling. It becomes a personal ritual, a way to recharge and refresh, like finding shelter from the storm within the pages of a story or the hues of a canvas. Extracurricular

activities such as dance, music, fine art and creative writing are not mere pastimes; they are crucibles where life skills are forged. Problem-solving, adaptability, and innovation—all essential skills in adulthood—find their roots in these pursuits. Children learn patience through practice, resilience through failure, and confidence through expression, creating a sturdy foundation that will support them through life's inevitable challenges. Parents and educators must recognise the role these activities play in a child's mental and emotional development. Fostering a balanced approach between academics and extracurricular interests can create resilient individuals who are not only high achievers but also happy, healthy humans. As life's pressures mount, these creative expressions transform into anchors, grounding us in times of stress and rekindling the joy we may have set aside in the haste of growing up.

(The author is a columnist and children's writing coach based in Dubai; Views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### TRUMP'S BANGLADESH CONCERN

Madam — Former President Donald Trump vowed to protect Hindu Americans from the radical left's anti-religion agenda, pledged to strengthen US-India relations, and condemned violence against minorities in Bangladesh. Donald Trump extended greetings and pledged to safeguard the interests of Hindu (may be forgotten that Sikh, Jain and Buddhists also followed Deepawali) Americans, vowing to shield them from what he described as the "anti-religion agenda of the radical left."

This is for the first time that Trump has addressed the crisis in Bangladesh, where reports indicate that hundreds of Hindus were killed during protests in July and August. He contrasted his approach to that of President Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, whom he accused of ignoring the plight of Hindus both globally and in America.

Actually, this is not the love of Trump towards Hindus and minorities. This is just a political stunt with a view to lure the Indian population (a significant number in the United States now and very much capable of swinging the outcome of this tightly balanced election of 2024) in the US to vote for him in the Presidential election and nothing else. He is not that generous towards Indians as he is attempting to show. By nature, Trump is a bit of a dictator and is against the people migrating to the United States from various other countries. He terms migrated people as "Garbage". Whatsoever, we should not want to forget that it was the US (read CIA) who purported the coup along with ISI to destabilise the region. US has always been and will be doing these things in future. Hence, don't take his love for Hindus seriously.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

### ERIGAI'S NATURAL GAME

Madam — Ever had so many Indian chess players shine on international circuit simultaneously like the present bunch of

## Adieu Bibek Debroy!



Bibek Debroy, a name that needs no introduction for him; for the people of our country, to relate and recognise him as a public personality. From handling the India's PM Economic Advisory Council (EAC) to contributing in India's erstwhile Planning Commission i.e. Niti Aayog policy making, Debroy had left an indelible mark of contribution on India's intellectual and policy making landscape. His passing away at the age of

69 is a huge loss of our nation. He was truly a man of wide ranging interests, be that in Economics or Sanskrit, English or Puranas; his variety of interests into scholarly, put him at the epitome of the versatility in multi-discipline. His books, columns, and other translation works of Indian Vedas and Puranas into English had been an intellectual gift to all the Indian nationals from time to time. His sad demise is a huge loss of India's economic, cultural and scholar landscape. He put his knowledge and experience at the best use for his country holistic development. His visionary contribution to public policy, administration, literature and economics will keep on serving as a guide and bearing as torch for the next generation.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

extremely talented youngsters. The exploits of R Praggnanandhaa are too well-known to need reiteration. Gukesh Dommaraju is on the brink of making history as he prepares himself to square off with Ding Liren in the World Chess Championship final in little less than a month. Meanwhile, Arjun Erigaisi has achieved the stupendous feat of reaching 2800 Elo points in the FIDE live rating, becoming only the second Indian after Viswanathan Anand and the sixteenth player in the world to do so. Only French Grand Master Alireza Firouzja—at 18—reached there earlier than the Indian GM. Erigaisi has joined the elite club of Magnus Carlsen, Garry Kasparov, Vladimir Kramnik and Ding Liren among others. Known as a risky player, Erigaisi relishes the "accusation" as he feels top level chess needs some serious risk taking. Without his natural style of attacking game, the 21-year-old would not have broken into the top five of world chess at such a young age. The razor sharp player's new approach of not bothering

about records and ratings but concentrating on the game at hand appears to have paid him rich dividends. High energy and incredible motivation have driven him thus far, and the top rated Indian is all set to conquer new heights in chess.

Ganpathi Bhat | Akola

### US SANCTIONS ON INDIAN COMPANIES

Madam — The current US sanctions against Indian firms raise major worries about Indian vital posture. Should India reconsider its trading links with countries participating in the Russian defence supply lines? How can governments better educate firms on how to adhere to global sanctions in order to avoid future repercussions? On top of that, what steps would be executed to protect Indian enterprises caught up in geopolitical tensions? Addressing these issues is critical for protecting national interests amidst developing global conflicts.

Anshu Bharti | Begusarai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

### FINDING STILLNESS AMIDST A FLOOD OF THOUGHTS

A journey toward tranquillity begins by learning to simply "be" in the present moment



RAVI VALLURI

Sometime back I had written a piece on "Mind Management" and received certain queries about the generation of multiple thoughts and the acceptance by people that the mind was not at ease. It was frightening and troubling that several people of various age groups were plagued by all kinds of negative thoughts. People were troubled by thoughts arising during the whole day and particularly at night time. Thoughts arising at bedtime reside with us and seep deep into our consciousness and the following morning we are again troubled by those very thoughts and are not like fresh dew on petals. The Ashtravaka Gita says that "all action resides in the mind" and this is further corroborated by modern science. Modern science amplifies that there is no difference in the activity of the mind; whether you slap someone or merely think of slapping someone. It is the brain's limbic system, which is where motor control gets expressed. Just thinking of slapping someone activates all muscles that would be employed to undertake that specific action. On average, we are bombarded by 60 thousand thoughts a day. And we seem to have no control over them. These thoughts arise on account of our memory bank (past impressions and Karma), the company we keep, past and current experiences and also the food that we partake in. According to the Ashtavakra Gita, enlightenment occurs only when we live in our hearts. The heart is synonymous with a point of inflexion where there is no past or future. There is only one present. Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar says that "the present moment is inevitable". And this state is true enlightenment. How does one reach that state of



"present moment"? Before dwelling on some techniques, let us witness a few stories. Two Buddhist monks were riding cycles and were on their way to meet a Zen Master. Monk one described the number of trees, clouds, wafts of cold breeze striking his cheek, mountains, beautiful blue sky, fruits plucked on the way, and village folk he encountered among others before meeting the Zen Master. The second monk in all trepidation, meekly replied that he only cycled to meet the Zen Master. Immediately, the Master proclaimed the second monk to be the next Zen Master. Why? Because he was only cycling! He was in the present moment. Yet another Buddhist story. Two Buddhist monks were travelling through a dense forest. On their way, they came across a naked woman. The older one removed his apparel clothed the bare woman carried her across the river and left her on the other side of the bank. The younger monk was greatly troubled by this act of his senior. He kept chiding the senior monk, literally accusing him of what he perceived as an act of sacrilege. The older one just smiled and remarked that he carried the lady across the river and left her there, while the other monk was still carrying the lady in his mind. Practising pranayama, Sudarshan Kriya, yoga, undertaking vigorous exercise, pursuing hobbies, contemplating, praying, observing nature and just being a spectator or a witness will also help a seeker and those with troubled minds to live in the present moment. Confucious says, "Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated."

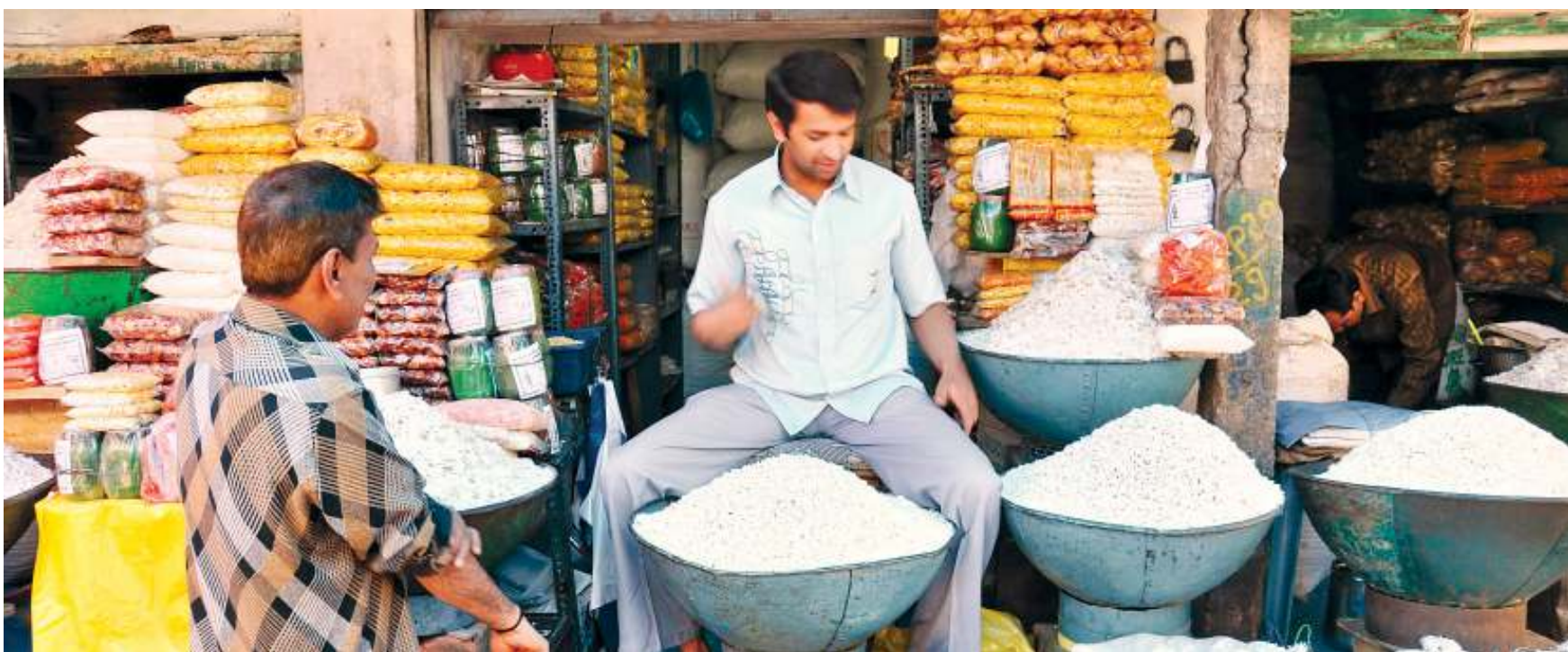
(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

# Food subsidy reforms: Can Govt tackle mounting costs



UTTAM GUPTA

Timely disbursement of funds to FCI would go a long way to streamline the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, which provides free food grains to the people



The Ministry of Finance (MoF) has released Rs 97,000 crore towards food subsidy expenses in the first half of the current financial year (FY) to the Food Corporation of India (FCI). This is over two-thirds of the required fund support of Rs 147,000 crore to FCI during the current FY. The MoF is expected to release the balance amount by December 31, 2024. Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), the Centre asks the FCI and other state agencies to procure food from the farmers at MSP (minimum support price) and distribute it to around 820 million people for free. Under the Scheme, each beneficiary gets 5 kg of food per month. The entire cost i.e. MSP paid to farmers plus handling and distribution cost (HDC) is reimbursed to the FCI/other state agencies as a subsidy. The money comes from the Union Budget's allocation for 'food subsidy'. The FCI conducts the bulk of the food procurement, handling and distribution operations on behalf of the Centre. At Rs 147,000 crore, it gets around 72 per cent of the total food subsidy Rs 205,250 crore being the budget estimate (BE) for 2024-25. The government is duty-bound to make timely payments to FCI to enable the latter to conduct its operations 'smoothly' and 'effectively'. **What is so special about the current FY?** In the past, thanks to inadequate budgetary allocations (often prompted by the compulsion to keep the fiscal deficit - excess of total expenditure over total receipts - under check), the government's payments to FCI had fallen short, forcing the latter to take recourse to working capital from banks to sustain operations. To bridge cash-flow mismatch, the extant arrangements provided for the FCI to avail a short-term loan with a tenure of 90 days up to Rs 75,000 crore at any given point in time. This led to an increase in subsidy as interest cost on loans taken from designated banks (the interest rate ranges between 6.98 per cent to 7.36 per cent per annum) had to be reimbursed to the FCI. The gap between budget allocation and actual requirements used to be so huge that cash-



IN THE PAST, THANKS TO INADEQUATE BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS, THE GOVERNMENT'S PAYMENTS TO FCI HAD FALLEN SHORT, FORCING THE LATTER TO TAKE RECOURSE TO WORKING CAPITAL FROM BANKS TO SUSTAIN OPERATIONS

credit limits sanctioned by the banks proved to be inadequate. This prompted the FCI to even borrow funds from the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF). The NSSF is a public account (established on April 1, 1999) where all deposits received under National Saving Schemes are credited. All withdrawals by depositors are made out of the accumulations in this Fund. Normally, the government is not expected to use the NSSF to meet its revenue expenditure and expenses on food subsidy fall in this category. Yet, it encouraged the FCI to encroach on the Fund to plug the shortfall in its receipts. When the FCI started taking loans from NSSF in FY 2016-17, the Centre had committed to release the subsidy arrears to enable FCI to pay back the loans in subsequent years. But, that was not to be as subsidy arrears kept mounting, and FCI continued borrowing increasingly from NSSF. At the end of 2018-19, FCI's cumulative borrowing from NSSF was Rs 200,000 crore. This continued into 2019-20 on a much larger scale. In that year's budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had kept the BE for food subsidy at Rs 184,000 crore and drastically reduced it to Rs 109,000 crore in the revised estimate (RE) just because she wanted to keep the FD close to the target. Against this, the requirement being Rs 219,000 crore, the shortfall of Rs 110,000 crore was made up by FCI borrowing from NSSF. In the budget for 2020-21, she kept BE at Rs 116,000 crore against the requirement of Rs 137,000 crore. TV Somanathan, the then expenditure secretary, saw nothing wrong in the above practice arguing that borrowings by FCI were against the assets it held in the form of food stocks. The argument was flawed since loans

were taken against subsidy receivable from the Centre. In the case of wheat, for instance, on every kilo sold under the National Food Security (NFSA), the subsidy was Rs 23 (MSP plus HDC of Rs 25 minus Rs 2 being the price paid by the beneficiary). The loan was given against this amount promised by the Centre. This liability couldn't be adjusted against the food stock, which, on giving to the NFSA beneficiary would fetch only Rs 2. The Secretary further argued that keeping these borrowings off the Centre's balance sheet would prevent crowding out, and help the private sector borrow from the market at a lower interest cost. This needed to be weighed against erosion in the credibility of fiscal consolidation, which is inevitable when a strict liability of the Centre is kept off its balance sheet. A wrong can't be justified simply because the honest course of reflecting the liability in the Union budget would lead to problems for private firms. The government recognised the flaw in the above approach even as Sitharaman made a course correction while presenting the budget for FY 2021-22. In the RE for FY 2020-21, she provided for a massive allocation of Rs 529,000 crore. That amount included Rs 462,000 crore towards payment of subsidy to the FCI against a claim of Rs 216,000 crore by the latter. The excess amount was used by the FCI to extinguish all its accumulated liabilities to the NSSF. During 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24, the government stayed on course with allocation for food subsidy at Rs 372,000 crore, Rs 287,000 crore, and Rs 211,394 crore respectively adequate to fully cover the requirement. As for payments to the FCI, during 2021-22, the subsidy received was Rs 208,000 crore against the claim of Rs 207,000

crore. During 2022-23, the amount received was Rs 200,000 crore against the claim of Rs 204,000 crore. During 2023-24, the FCI received Rs 139,000 crore against the claim of Rs 133,000 crore. During the current FY, having already received 2/3rd of its likely annual requirement, Rs 147,000 crore, during the first half, the FCI is expected to receive the balance 1/3rd by December 31, 2024. It receives the money almost round the clock, meaning it doesn't have to resort to short-term credit even from banks (forget NSSF), as its operational expenses are fully met from timely reimbursement of subsidy dues by the Centre. From the Centre's perspective, all its liabilities regarding food subsidies are 'fully' reflected in the budget for any given FY. The government no longer indulges in window dressing, no carryover of subsidy dues, and the process is fully 'transparent'. Moreover, there is no interest cost boost to subsidy payments as the FCI need not borrow. But the unsustainable increase in food subsidies continues to haunt us. This has to do with 'universal' coverage of PMGKAY (820 million beneficiaries and at least 100 million waiting to be included as per an order of the Supreme Court), promise to give them 'free' food eternally, purchase of 'unlimited' quantum of food from farmers at MSP resulting in high stocks with FCI (at 44 million ton, its stock of rice as on October 1, 2024 is over three times the requirement) and associated high carrying cost, reimbursement of cost to FCI on 'actual' basis and pilferage of subsidized food. Addressing these maladies calls for major reforms in the Scheme. Can Modi bite the bullet? (The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

# AI enabled technologies: The game changer in spinal cord injury care

## Spinal cord injury care has yet to receive the focused attention it deserves from the government

In the realm of spinal cord injury (SCI) care, recent advancements in enabling technologies are revolutionising treatment, rehabilitation, and long-term care. These innovations are all set to redefine the quality of life for SCI patients. The International Spine and Spinal Injuries Conference (ISSICON) 2024, organised recently in New Delhi by Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute and the Spinal Cord Society, highlighted this potential by bringing together over 600 participants, including national and international experts, all focused on advancing SCI care. Experts discussed the transformative role of technologies like the role of Exoscope, Robotic surgery, Neurorehabilitation



H S CHHABRA

tools, and Artificial Intelligence (AI). It is evident that these enabling technologies are going to be the game changer in SCI care. Unlike in previous decades, where survival was the primary focus, today's innovations allow for the enhancement of function, mobility, and independence, shifting our approach from survival to empowerment and

functionality. Visibility and precision are paramount in spinal microsurgery. The ability to maintain a clear view of the surgical area with magnification is crucial, as it allows surgeons to operate with accuracy while providing adequate illumination. Traditionally, microscopes have been the gold standard in such complex procedures, offering the depth of field and lighting necessary to navigate intricate anatomical structures. However, the limitations of traditional microscopes—primarily the fixed head position required for prolonged periods—often lead to neck and back strain for surgeons. Unlike traditional microscopes, exoscopes are equipped with high-definition cameras and 3D viewing

screens, allowing surgeons to view a magnified 3D image on a large screen rather than through an eyepiece. This shift not only alleviates physical strain but also enhances ergonomic comfort, which can be transformative for procedures requiring extended focus. The exoscope's ability to provide improved illumination and 3D visualisation allows for sustained precision, minimising fatigue and supporting a higher level of surgical performance over prolonged periods. Moreover, it offers seamless integration with digital systems, assisting with documentation and enabling real-time collaboration with other specialists. Remote access to the exoscope's 3D feed allows for consultations with experts out-



side the operating room, which is particularly valuable in teaching hospitals and cases that require multidisciplinary input. By reducing the physical toll on surgeons and offering digital connectivity, the exoscope is paving the way for better, more collaborative care in spinal surgery. The inclusion of AI in spinal surgery is another game-changer, with the potential to reshape the field by allowing for data-driven insights and

more precise treatment planning. Through AI, vast amounts of patient data can be analysed to identify optimal surgical approaches and predict complications. Such AI insights combined with robotic precision could minimise human error and variability in outcomes, enhancing both surgical efficiency and patient safety. Currently, robotic systems are already being used in spinal procedures, aiding in the precise placement of screws, rods, and other implants. With AI-driven data analytics, robotic assistance could reach new levels of effectiveness. AI systems could improve preoperative planning based on large datasets, enabling more accurate hardware placements and efficient decision-making. This

technology can analyse past surgeries to predict potential complications and suggest the most effective treatment paths, offering a personalised, data-backed approach to surgical care. Furthermore, AI-driven analytics have the potential to predict patient outcomes based on prior cases, guiding surgeons on probable recovery trajectories and aiding patient consultations. ISSICON 2024's workshops reflected this commitment to enabling technologies by providing participants with hands-on experience in emerging techniques, such as robotic and navigation-assisted spine surgery and robotic-assisted rehabilitation. The conference was aligned with the World Health Organisation's Rehabilitation 2030 initiative, reinforcing a

global commitment to improving access to advanced rehabilitation services, particularly in underserved areas. To ensure the longevity of these innovations, ISSICON 2024 is developing eight position statements, created through pre-conference deliberations and expert discussions, to serve as guidelines for SCI care. The Spinal Cord Society has been advocating for a National Spinal Care Program that addresses the rising needs in spinal injury care and back pain management. (Dr H S Chhabra is president of the Spinal Cord Society, director of Spine & Rehabilitation Services at the Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute, and Chairman of the ISSICON 2024 Organizing Committee; views are personal)

## MONEY MATTERS



### Canara Bank aims Rs 6,000 cr recovery

State-owned Canara Bank aims to recover about Rs 6,000 crore from bad loans during the second half of the current fiscal. "We are anticipating recovery somewhere about Rs 3,000 crore in the third quarter and a similar amount in the fourth quarter," Canara Bank managing director and CEO K Satyanarayana Raju told PTI. The bank has recovered Rs 2,905 crore, including recovery in written-off accounts, in the second quarter. Slippages would be much less than recovery as the bank would be underwriting good loans, Raju said. Asked about the initial public offering (IPO) of Canara Robeco Asset Management Company, he said it may happen in the fourth quarter of this financial year. The approval from the finance ministry for the IPO of Canara Robeco Asset Management Company (AMC) is expected shortly. The lender holds a 51 per cent stake in the mutual fund. It plans to offload a 13 per cent stake through IPO. Last December, Canara Bank gave an in-principle approval to start the process of listing its mutual fund subsidiary by an initial share sale.



### Magicpin slashes platform fee to Rs 5 per delivery

Hyperlocal e-commerce app magicpin has slashed platform charges to Rs 5 per delivery, half of the fee set by its competitors, a top company official said on Sunday. Around two weeks back, Zomato and Swiggy raised platform fees in the range of 42-67 per cent per delivery. Magicpin founder and CEO Anshoo Sharma, on social media platform X, announced the reduction in platform fees applicable for deliveries during the present calendar year. "We can find a balance towards the welfare of our delivery heroes and our customers during festive seasons. Hence, here is a magicpin promise to let more people enjoy the festive season. magicpin's platform fees slashed by 50 per cent of competition to Rs 5 only for the rest of the year," Sharma said. He said there will be no fee hike on food delivery for the rest of the year 2024. Zomato increased the platform fee from Rs 7 to Rs 10, which will be charged to customers besides the delivery fee per order. Swiggy followed suit and raised the platform fee to Rs 10 from Rs 6 it charged earlier. Before Diwali, Magicpin was levying a platform fee of Rs 7, which it has slashed by about 29 per cent, following which it has recorded a two-fold jump in order on a year-over-year basis.



### Dr Reddy's recalls over 3.3 lakh bottles of generic medication

Dr Reddy's Laboratories is recalling over 3.3 lakh bottles of a medication used to treat high calcium levels in the blood and hyperparathyroidism in the US market due to manufacturing issues. According to the latest Enforcement Report by the US Food and Drug Administration, Dr Reddy's is recalling the 3.31,590 bottles of Cinacalcet tablets in multiple strengths in the American market due to CGMP (current good manufacturing practice) deviations. The recall is due to the "presence of N-nitroso Cinacalcet impurity above FDA recommended interim limit", it added. New Jersey-based Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Inc., a unit of Hyderabad-based drug major, is recalling 2,85,126 bottles of Cinacalcet tablets in 30 mg strength. Besides, the drug major is recalling 35,880 and 10,584 bottles of 60 mg and 90 mg strengths, respectively, USFDA said. The affected lot has been produced in India, it added. US-based Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Inc. initiated the Class II nationwide (US) recall on October 9 this year. As per the USFDA, a Class II recall is initiated in a situation in which the use of, or exposure to, a violative product may cause temporary or medically reversible adverse health consequences or where the probability of serious adverse health consequences is remote.

# India rises as global player in exports with surging share

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's export competitiveness has witnessed healthy gains in multiple sectors -- particularly petroleum, gemstones, agrochemicals and sugar -- during the last five years, as these segments have increased their share in global trade, according to the commerce ministry data.

The other sectors where the share of India's exports has increased during 2018 and 2023 are electrical goods, pneumatic tyres, taps and valves, and semiconductor devices. The ministry data analysis showed that petroleum exports rose to USD 84.96 billion in 2023, with India's market share surging to 12.59 per cent last year from 6.45 per cent in 2018, positioning it as the second-largest global exporter. It was ranked fifth in 2018.

In the precious and semi-precious stones segment, the country's share in global shipments has soared to 36.53 per cent last year from 16.27 per cent in 2018. It has propelled the country to the top position in the category, with exports reaching USD 1.52 billion in 2023 from USD 0.26 billion in 2018. It was at the second spot in 2018.



Similarly, in cane or beet sugar, the country's outbound shipments have more than quadrupled to USD 3.72 billion from USD 0.93 billion in 2018. India has achieved tremendous growth in the export of cane or beet sugar, with its global market share increasing from 4.17 per cent in 2018 to 12.21 per cent in 2023. "As the world's second-largest exporter of sugar, India's success can be attributed to both favourable agricultural policies and its strong production base.

The country has capitalised on the growing global demand for sugar, especially in regions like Southeast Asia and Africa," an official said.

India's share of the global market for insecticides and fungicides has also shown healthy improvement.

The country increased its global share from 8.52 per cent in 2018 to 10.85 per cent in 2023, with exports reaching USD 4.32 billion.

India's ability to meet interna-

tional agricultural and environmental standards and its emphasis on innovation in agrochemicals have led to this improvement, the official said. India is now the third-largest exporter globally against the 5th position in 2018, the data showed.

Further, the country's position in the global market for rubber pneumatic tyres has also strengthened, with exports growing to USD 2.66 billion in 2023 from USD 1.82 billion in 2018.



## Mcap of 6 firms jump Rs 1 lakh cr

State Bank, ICICI Bank top gainers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The combined market valuation of 6 of the top-10 most-valued firms surged Rs 1,07,366.05 crore last week, with State Bank of India and ICICI Bank becoming the biggest gainers.

Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE conducted a one-hour special 'Muhurat Trading' session on the occasion of Diwali on November 1, marking the start of the new Samvat 2081.

Last week, the BSE benchmark climbed 321.83 points, or 0.40 per cent.

While Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank, State Bank of

India, ITC, Hindustan Unilever, and Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) were the gainers, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, and Infosys faced erosion from their market valuation.

The valuation of State Bank of India jumped Rs 36,100.09 crore to Rs 7,32,755.93 crore.

ICICI Bank added Rs 25,775.58 crore to Rs 9,10,686.85 crore in its market valuation.

LIC's valuation surged Rs 16,887.74 crore to Rs 5,88,509.41 crore and that of Reliance Industries soared Rs 15,393.45 crore to Rs 18,12,120.05 crore.

### Coal India hopes to rejoin dividend list as ECL betters performance



PNS ■ KOLKATA

Coal India aims to eliminate Rs 2,200 crore in accumulated losses at its subsidiary, Eastern Coalfields Ltd (ECL), and to rejoin the dividend list by FY 2025-26, a top official said on Sunday.

At the foundation day event, Coal India chairman P M Prasad said Bharat Coking Coal Ltd, another previously loss-making subsidiary, has already re-entered the dividend list. He expressed confidence that ECL would achieve similar success by FY 2025-26. Coal India has seven coal-producing subsidiaries.

"ECL is performing well and is on track to meet its production target of 54 million tonnes this year. We expect to eliminate two-thirds of its Rs 2,200 crore accumulated losses this fiscal year, with the remaining losses cleared by the following year, allowing it to rejoin the dividend list," Prasad said.



### Govt infuses Rs 1,650 cr in RINL to keep it as a going concern

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

According to an official document, the government has infused around Rs 1,650 crore into state-owned RINL, which is gripped with operational and financial issues.

The government is also taking various measures to keep RINL as a going concern, the Ministry of Steel said in a note.

"In this regard, the Government of India has infused Rs 500 crore towards equity on September 19, 2024, and a working capital loan of Rs 1,140 crore on September 27, 2024," according to the document.

It also said that SBICAPS, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the State Bank of India (SBI), is preparing a report on the sustainability of RINL.

"RINL is in serious financial trouble, and the (Steel) Ministry is taking several steps to keep RINL as a going con-

cern in consultation with the Ministry of Finance," it added. Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL), under the Ministry of Steel, is a steel manufacturing company. It owns a 7.5 million tonne plant at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh. The company has been facing severe financial and operational issues. Two of the three blast furnaces (BF) were closed till October 28 this year, when the second BF was made operational after nearly 4-6 months. The overall dues of RINL have gone above Rs 35,000 crore.

In January 2021, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) gave its 'in-principle' approval for 100 per cent disinvestment of government stake in RINL, also called Visakhapatnam Steel Plant or Vizag Steel, along with RINL's stake in its subsidiaries/joint ventures through strategic disinvestment by way of privatisation.

## Fed interest rate, FIIs trading to be key mkt movers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Analysts said the November 5 US presidential elections, the Federal Reserve interest rate decision, foreign investor trading activity, and the upcoming quarterly earnings from domestic firms are the major triggers that will influence sentiments in the equity market this week.

In an eventful week ahead, a host of macroeconomic data announcements and global trends would also drive the markets, experts said.

"The upcoming week is poised to be eventful on the global front. The US presidential election on November 5 is a key focus, and the US FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) meeting will be crucial. Geopolitical tensions and oil price movements will remain key variables as well," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investment Ltd.

Domestically, the final phase of Q2 earnings will be critical, while foreign institutional investor (FII) behaviour will remain under close watch, Meena added.

"The outlook for the market will be guided by the US presidential election and major macroeconomic data such as HSBC India manufacturing



PMI, services PMI, US Fed interest rate decision, US S&P global composite PMI, US S&P global services PMI and BoE (Bank of England) interest rate decision," Palka Arora Chopra, Director, Master Capital Services Ltd, said.

Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE conducted a one-hour special 'Muhurat Trading' session on the occasion of Diwali on November 1, marking the start of the new Samvat 2081.

Last week, the BSE benchmark climbed 321.83 points, or 0.40 per cent.

"This week, investors' attention will be on developments in the US markets, especially the upcoming elections on November 5 and the Federal Reserve's policy meeting," said Ajit Mishra -- SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

"On the domestic front, earnings reports from key companies, including Dr Reddy's, Titan, Tata Steel, M&M and Tata Motors will be in focus. Additionally, the release of key economic indicators, such as the HSBC manufacturing PMI and services PMI, will provide insight into the country's economic momentum," Mishra said.

Relentless selling by FIIs last month contributed hugely to the over 7 per cent decline in benchmark indices from their all-time peaks.

"Global markets will respond to the US presidential elections for a few days, after which fundamentals like US GDP growth, inflation and rate cut by the Fed will influence market moves," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services.

## ONGC draws a blank on offer of stake in Deen Dayal gas field

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation's (ONGC) third attempt to get a partner to rescue the Deen Dayal gas field in the KG basin in Bay of Bengal has met with the same fate as previous efforts as it got no bids, sources said.

The tender offering stake to technical and financial partners in the Deen Dayal field, which ONGC had acquired from a Gujarat government firm for USD 1.2 billion, received no bids, two sources aware of the matter said.

ONGC on June 12 sought expression of interest from "global oil and gas companies with requisite technical exper-



tise and financial strength to join as partner (with participative interest) for firming up a viable strategy" for the field, according to the tender document. Bids closed on September 12.

The field has produced negligible quantities of gas since ONGC in January 2017

acquired Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation's (GSPC) 80 per cent interest in the KG-OSN-2001/3 block off the east coast of India.

The block contains the Deen Dayal West (DDW) gas/condensate field which was discovered by GSPC almost two decades back. The Gujarat government company had showcased the field as a promising prospect when it sold its stake to ONGC in order to cut its debt.

The field, which was initially said to hold up to 20 trillion cubic feet of in place gas reserves - by far the biggest in any deepsea field in the country - but later trimmed to a tenth, has proved to be tougher than anticipated.

### 'Gold poised for 15-18 pc returns in Samvat 2081'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold is expected to deliver a stellar 15-18 per cent return in Samvat 2081, driven by positive economic factors and safe-haven demand, analysts said.

Samvat 2081 marks an important period for Indian investors as it signals the start of a new financial year in the Hindu calendar, coinciding with the auspicious festival of Diwali. Gold and silver have delivered a robust performance in Samvat 2080, and the outlook remains positive for Samvat 2081, though investors may see moderate gains amid possible shifts in global market factors, they added.



### Lower sales realisation hit margins of cement makers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Major cement manufacturers reported a decline in margins in the September quarter, mainly on account of lower prices, leading to lower sales realisation.

Barring three leading cement producers -- UltraTech Cement, Ambuja Cement, and Dalmia Bharat -- other smaller players, including Nuvoco Vistas Corp, JK Cement, Birla Corporation, and Heidelberg Cement, reported a decline in topline and sales volume in the second quarter of the current fiscal year.

Industry observers said the increase in sales volume of UltraTech and Ambuja Cements is mainly due to the several acquisitions by both companies that consolidated their position further in the industry.

The industry also faced challenges such as extended monsoon, floods, and a slow pickup in government

demand, cumulatively leading towards a weak demand. Power, fuel, and other costs, however, largely remained stable for the industry. The all-India average cement price was around Rs 348 per 50 kg bag in June 2024. It decreased 11 per cent year-on-year to Rs 330 per bag in September, though it increased 2 per cent on a month-on-month basis.

In the first half of FY25, cement prices declined 10 per cent year-on-year to Rs 330 per bag. A year earlier, the average prices stood at Rs 365 per bag and Rs 375 per bag in FY23, according to an Icr report.

Leading cement maker Ultratech reported a 68 per cent capacity utilisation with a 3 per cent growth in volume terms.

However, its sales realisation for grey cement declined 8.4 per cent year-on-year (YoY) and 2.9 per cent quarter-on-quarter (QoQ), in the July-September period.

## FMCG firms worry over high inflation; hint price hike

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leading FMCG companies reported a decline in margins in the September quarter on account of higher input costs and food inflation, which ultimately slowed down the pace of urban consumption.

Rising prices of commodity inputs such as palm oil, coffee and cocoa were also accentuated and some FMCG firms have hinted at a price hike.

HUL, Godrej Consumer

Products Ltd (GCPL), Marico, ITC, and Tata Consumer Products Ltd (TCPL) have expressed concerns over squeezing urban consumption, which according to industry experts forms 65-68 per cent of FMCG total sales.

"We think this is a short-term hit and we will recover the margins through judicious price increase and stabilising of costs," said GCPL Managing Director and CEO Sudhir Sitapati in a Q2 earning statement.



GCPL, makers of Cinthol, Godrej No 1, HIT had a steady quarter given the headwinds of oil costs and tough consumer demand in India and its stand-alone EBITDA margin was lower, caused entirely by high inflation in palm oil.

The rural markets, which were earlier lagging behind, continued their growth journey ahead of urban. Besides, FMCG players reported growth from premium products and from sales through quick-commerce

channels.

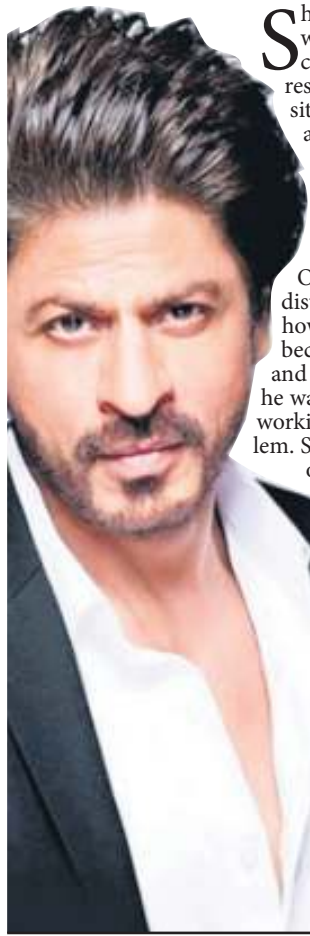
Another FMCG maker Dabur India also said the demand environment was challenging in the September quarter marked by "high food inflation and a resultant squeeze in urban demand."

The maker of Dabur Chyawanprash, PudiniHara and Real Juice reported a decline of 17.65 per cent in its consolidated net profit to Rs 417.52 crore and revenue from operations slipped 5.46 per cent to Rs 3,028.59 crore.



# what's brewing?

## 'IT'S STRANGE MY KIDS HAVE NEVER FOUGHT TO DATE'



Shah Rukh Khan celebrated his birthday by spending time with his fans on November 2. During a fan gathering, the celebrity expressed gratitude towards the attendees and responded to their questions with his typical humour. The situation became comedic when a fan inquired about the actor's stance when his children, Aryan Khan, Suhana Khan and AbRam, argued.

"They don't fight with each other. It's very strange. I was just thinking how they have never fought till date," said King Khan, who further humorously adds, "And I hope they don't in the future as well. Otherwise, there'll be a big problem in property distribution." Shah Rukh Khan also spoke about how he spent his birthday. "I woke up late today because there was dinner last night. So I woke up and went to spend some time with my little one; he was having his own issues. His iPad was not working. Then, after that, my daughter had a problem. She had some outfits that were not looking okay. The fitting was all wrong. Then my elder son..." he said, stopping midway.

"So, I learned from my family that the more kids you have, the more patient you become. This is the learning I carry from my home to my work, which is a lot of patience, a lot of love, and a lot of care. Whoever needs to fix things, I am there for them. At work, home, or office. I think patience is the one thing that I have learned from my family," Shah Rukh Khan claimed. Meanwhile, Shah Rukh Khan, who once admitted smoking 100 cigarettes a day, revealed that he has quit smoking.



## Margot Robbie and Tom Ackerley's bundle of joy is here!

Actress Margot Robbie and her husband, producer-actor Tom Ackerley, have announced the arrival of their first son. Per reports, the couple's son arrived on October 17, ahead of schedule.

Reports claimed that the Australian actor, aged 34, went into labour two weeks earlier than expected. According to reports, the family is thriving and both pairs of grandparents are planning to visit Los Angeles in the near future to meet their grandson. The couple, along with their intimate circle, have chosen to keep mum about the news until now. Speculations began circulating when Tom Ackerley was spotted shopping for baby supplies close to their Venice Beach home.

Margot Robbie and Tom Ackerley have been in a relationship since 2013, after meeting on the set of the movie *Suite Francaise*. The pair wed in a secluded event in Byron Bay, Australia, in December 2016.

In terms of her work, Margot is set to collaborate with Jacob Elordi in Emerald Fennell's upcoming film based on Emily Bronte's novel *Wuthering Heights*. The film, co-produced by MRC and LuckyChap, is set to commence pre-production in the UK in 2025, featuring Margot as Catherine Earnshaw and Jacob in the role of Heathcliff. Furthermore, her film, *A Big Bold Beautiful Journey*, is scheduled to be released in May of next year.



## CARDI B SLAMS ELON MUSK FOR 'PUPPET' REMARK

With the US presidential elections approaching, Cardi B, a Grammy Award-winning rapper, criticised Elon Musk, the South African-born tech and business magnate, for referring to her as a "puppet" for Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris' campaign.

Elon, a staunch follower of Donald Trump, recently made a snide remark about Cardi B. Elon criticised another puppet who relies on scripted words in a quote-tweet responding to a Trump fan account. The account posted a video of the Bodak Yellow singer at a Milwaukee rally for the vice president and presidential candidate.

He appeared to be alluding to Cardi B experiencing a teleprompter malfunction at a Milwaukee rally, causing her delay while someone gave her a phone with her speech notes. Reacting to the same, Cardi B shared, "I'm not a puppet Elon.. I'm a daughter of two immigrant parents that had to work their ass off to provide for me!"

"I'm a product of welfare, I'm a product of section 8, I'm a product of poverty and I'm a product of what happens when the system is set up against you....But you don't know nothing about that. You don't know not one thing about the American struggle.... PS fix my algorithm," she added.



## Honouring mumma's, one name: Dua Padukone Singh steals hearts

There has been an internet uproar following the announcement of actor-couple Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh's baby girl's name, Dua Padukone Singh. During Diwali, Deepika and Ranveer released the first look of their new baby girl to fans. The couple also disclosed that their daughter's name is "Dua", which translates to prayer.

Now taking to X (formerly Twitter), a fan said, "In the world of baby names like Raha Kapoor, Jeh Ali Khan and Akaay Kohli, being a Dua Padukone Singh is something the society needs. Babies can carry the legacy of their mom's name as well." An X user shared a clip of the song *Khuda Jaane* from Deepika's 2008 film *Bachna Ae Haseeno*. A line in the song goes: *Ban gaye ho tum meri dua*. Posting it, they wrote, "Conversations between Deepika Padukone and Dua Padukone and her sister Anisha Padukone, mentioning that Dua represented the first letters of their names. The user said, "Wow, Dua Padukone Singh is actually carrying so many people's legacy." Another fan pointed out that the 'A' was from Ranveer's mother, Anju Bhavnani's name. "It's the 3 mothers—Deepika, Ujjala and Anju," they wrote. "This feels so great," read a comment.

## KELCE SMASHES PHONE AFTER HOMOPHOBIC COMMENT ABOUT BROTHER TRAVIS

Former Philadelphia Eagles center Jason Kelce became upset when someone made a homophobic comment about his brother, Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce, for being involved with singer Taylor Swift. Numerous videos and images from the Saturday incident surfaced on various social media platforms. In a video posted on X (formerly Twitter), Jason was observed strolling through State College, Pennsylvania. Someone can be heard asking, "Kelce, what is it like for your brother to be criticised for dating Taylor Swift?" The individual was observed



holding his phone while he filmed Jason. Jason pivoted, grabbed the man's phone, and forcefully smashed it onto the ground. Jason made sure to take the phone with him before he left the area. In a different video posted by TMZ, Jason was shown bending down to grab something from the ground when the individual shoved him, causing him to stumble and collapse. Jason repeated the question to the individual multiple times, "Who is the f\*\*\*\*\*

now?" The man was observed chasing after Jason as well. He was in State College to participate in ESPN's College GameDay to advertise Penn State's upcoming football game against Ohio State University. Sharing a video on X, a person wrote, "You Don't Mess with #JasonKelce Baby Brother." A comment read, "I hate the slurs used, I'm all about him standing up for his family and smashing the phone." An X user said, "He's lucky that Jason didn't crush him!" A person wrote, "He should have kept walking. His employer may not take to kindly to this." A social media user said, "Not a name!! Still doesn't give him the right to take someone's property and break it."

### FUN

#### ARCHIE



#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### GARFIELD



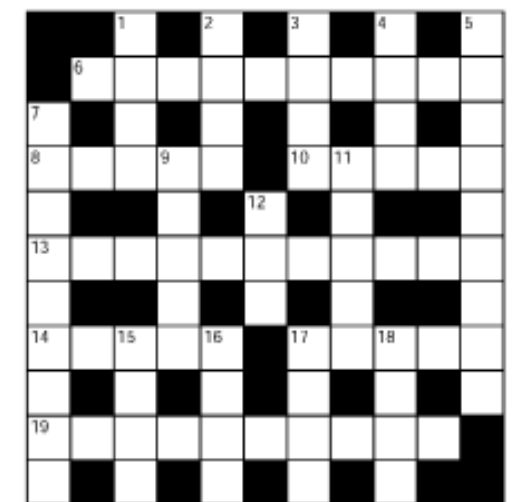
#### REALITY CHECK



#### SPEED BUMP



#### CROSSWORD



#### NANCY



#### SUDOKU

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

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

Rules

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

- ACROSS
- Television advertisement
  - Group of eight
  - A black and white animal in China
  - A kind of small glass tube for showing temperatures
  - Time of darkness
  - Comes to a standstill
  - Rang up
  - Our planet
  - Watchful, ready for anything that might happen
  - Plaything
  - A very strong wind
  - Adhesive strip
  - Shortly
  - Unlock
- DOWN
- Mistake
  - Leave out
  - Put paper around something
  - A large African cat
  - A very large seabird
  - Lucky
- SOLUTION
- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | P | I | T | A | S | P | O | I |   |
| A | B | O | O | A | B | O | O | I |   |
| E | A | A | B | E | R | N |   |   |   |
| C | L | A | S | S | E | T |   |   |   |
| S | E | P | I | A | Y |   |   |   |   |
| I | B | I | G | G | E | T |   |   |   |
| L | E | S | N | K | S |   |   |   |   |
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#### GINGER MEGGS



# Vijayawada

## ON SET WITH AVANTIKA DASSANI, MAKING OF MITHYA: THE DARKER CHAPTER

SHIKHA DUGGAL  
shikhaduggalwork@gmail.com

The first season of *Mithya*, which follows a troubled author who finds herself on the brink of a sharp wedge, has enough suspense to entice us to watch it again. But the new season, which was directed by a different person, however produced by the same production house, is everything that the first wasn't. Returning as the aggressive Rhea Rajguru, Avantika Dassani is more determined than ever to ruin Jui's life. She continues to appear at various awkward times, enticing a suspicious man—who has become even more suspicious in the interim—to carry out her nefarious tasks for her, such as kidnapping and killing. Following a fascinating interview with Huma Qureshi, Avantika is now on board to share what she knows from the second season of *Mithya* with us!

When asked how she thinks her character has evolved, Avantika had this to say, "For me, the move from season 1 to season 2 has been a significant and difficult one. My character was portrayed in season one as a disturbed adolescent seeking affection and acceptance, a foolish method of attracting attention and someone who genuinely intended to stir up controversy. She has now experienced repeated betrayal from those who are meant to be her family, never received love or affection and even had those same people put her in jail. As the new owner of the Rajguru estate, she now emerges from prison with a great deal of internal and outward authority, stronger than ever, to assist her in taking charge and obtaining all she desires by any means necessary." She believes that both Rhea and her personality are strong-willed, emotionally invested and reserved. And, like most people, a yearning for love and understanding. These are the main ways the starring actress could identify with her while developing her character, albeit the methods in which each of these qualities appears in her role are clearly different from Avantika's. And realise that they are the main reasons she does everything! The *Menu Student Sir* fame continues, "I believe I gained a lot of knowledge from working with Huma, Param and Indraneil. They are all excellent actors who are skilled at turning things on and off. Additionally, we all had a very warm and cordial relationship with Naveen, Rajat Sir, Krishna Anandita and Anurita during both seasons, which made it extremely simple for us to have fun both on and off set."

The majority portions of both seasons were filmed in Darjeeling and it's reasonable to say that filming season two felt almost like a homecoming to actress Avantika. In both their schedules, the Darjeeling people were extraordinarily friendly and welcoming. This season, they also added a number of stunning new locales that truly enhanced the show's mood! While working, it also gave them the opportunity to see more of Darjeeling. Apparently, they have many enjoyable recollections of strolls along the mall road and the forest region, as well as cosy bonfire nights! And lots of momos. This interview also reveals that "Oh, the new character of Naveen, well, he is nice to deal with! With *Mithya*, I

With her character's transformation from a troubled adolescent to a calculating and ruthless force in *Mithya: The Darker Chapter*, Avantika Dassani delivers a nuanced performance that keeps viewers on the edge. In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, she dives into the complexities of Rhea's evolution, reveals what drives her character's relentless pursuit of power and revenge and more

believe we've been quite fortunate in that everyone who joins the team has not only been incredibly skilled but also genuinely wonderful to be around. It is incredibly easy to work with him because he is such a natural on-screen and reactive actor. The intriguing plot of his novel keeps us on edge and makes us wonder what's actually happening here. Therefore, I believe that this new addition to the *Mithya* realm will be well received by audiences." She added, "This season has seen a lot of changes and back and forth, so I'm not sure if anyone else could have accomplished what Kapil Sir has! Because, in all the chaos, he was the most soothing influence. He was a pleasure to work with because, no matter how busy things became, he was always willing to work with all kinds of ideas, questions and thoughts while bringing an unrivalled enthusiasm that was equal parts calm and enthusiastic. His pet moniker, Kaps, is the fitting name since he is a true captain of the ship." In hindsight, as an actor, Avantika believes she may occasionally be too critical of herself and continuously doubt her performance in an effort to improve. She is certain that she will be able to identify many areas in which she could do better, but she also harbours the optimism that she will always be alive and eager for improvement!



## Indianising Citadel-verse with desi melodies

TEJAL SINHA  
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

With an impressive repertoire that seamlessly blends tradition with modernity, Aman Pant is set to elevate the espionage thriller genre with his work on the highly anticipated Amazon Prime series, *Citadel: Honey Bunny*. Starring Varun Dhawan and Samantha Prabhu, this installment of the global *Citadel* franchise—created by the acclaimed Russo brothers—promises to be an edge-of-your-seat ride.

Aman's distinctive sound, which masterfully merges electronic elements with the richness of Indian instruments like the electric sitar, is poised to captivate audiences worldwide. His accomplished career boasts notable milestones, including the theme music for Netflix's *The Great Indian Kapil Show* and the upcoming Shah Rukh Khan starrer *Dunki*, directed by the illustrious Rajkumar Hirani.

As we sit down with Aman Pant, we delve into the creative process behind his innovative scoring, his inspirations and what drives his passion for crafting unforgettable sonic experiences. In this exclusive conversation, Aman shares the story behind his craft, his vision for *Citadel: Honey Bunny*, and the art of elevating storytelling through music.

Starting his career in 2008 in Delhi and moving to Mumbai in 2013, Pant has since built an impressive portfolio of over 4,000 ad films, collaborating with nearly all the leading directors in the industry.

Aman Pant, a rising force in Indian music and cinema, reflects on his remarkable journey, which began at the tender age of 19. "My journey has been an interesting one because I started early," he says. "I started as an advertising composer during my engineering days. For me, the clarity that I wanted to become a composer came at the right time." Pant's passion for music was evident even earlier, as he composed his first song in 9th or 10th standard.

After securing his first salary in Delhi in 2008, Pant continued to build his advertising portfolio, eventually shifting to Mumbai in 2013. "Fortunately, I did not face any sort of thing because everything was an experience," he notes. Despite occasional setbacks, Pant's work largely gained traction through word-of-mouth, leading to collaborations with prominent brands and directors. To date, he has worked on over 3,000 to 4,000 ads. Pant's cinematic breakthrough came with R Balki's acclaimed film *Chup* in 2022, showcasing his ability to craft emotionally resonant scores. This opportunity arose from his existing relationship with Balki and his wife, with whom he had worked on numerous ads. "I used to work with R Balki sir and his wife in many ads. And later *Chup* happened. I did-

n't really have the wish to work in films. I was doing really well in ads. Things were going well."

*Chup* marked the beginning of Pant's successful foray into films, followed by notable projects such as Bhumi Pednekar's *Thank You For Coming*, *Good Luck Jerry* starring Jahnvi Kapoor and Raj & DK's *Guns and Gulaab*. His work on *Janhit Mein Jaari*, featuring Nushratt Bharuccha, further demonstrated his ability to create socially impactful scores. As Aman Pant reflects on his journey in the music industry, he reveals that working in films was always a subconscious aspiration. "Technically, back of the mind, everybody wants to do films," he admits. However, his experience in advertising has been invaluable. "Ads for me are a lot of fun because they teach you a lot. It was a learning experience, which was financially good as well."

He considers himself fortunate to work with acclaimed filmmakers like Rajkumar Hirani and Raj & DK. "Then Raj & DK asked me to do *Citadel*. It feels so amazing working with them once again." Pant praises Raj & DK's unique storytelling style and the creative freedom they afford him.

Despite his success in films, Pant remains fond of advertising. "Ads will forever be my first love. I've still been working on ads; I never left it." He appreciates the experimentation and learning that advertising provides.

*Citadel* presented a fresh challenge for Pant, requiring an electronic, high-energy style. He rose to the occasion by incorporating the electric sitar into the main theme. "Usually, we avoid using Indian instruments in global shows, but I felt it fitting to integrate the electric sitar for this India-based *Citadel* series." Pant's innovative approach blends electronic music with traditional Indian elements.

When asked about challenges, Pant responds with a laugh, "Challenge? There's nothing. Trust me, this was not a challenge because I got to experiment and do something that I never did." He attributes his success to creativity and honesty. "If your work has honesty, the universe will help you out."

Pant's philosophy is to continually move forward, seeking improvement and learning from each project. "When you move forward, it's then that you'll be able to learn something new." With *Citadel: Honey Bunny* and future projects on the horizon, Aman Pant's unique soundscape is poised to leave an indelible mark on Indian cinema.

Aman Pant's remarkable journey, from advertising to films, showcases his versatility and passion for crafting unforgettable sonic experiences. With *Citadel: Honey Bunny*, he pushes the boundaries of music composition, seamlessly merging tradition with modernity. As he continues to collaborate with visionary filmmakers, Pant's distinctive sound is set to resonate with audiences worldwide, cementing his status as a leading music composer in Indian cinema.

**As Amazon Prime's *Citadel: Honey Bunny* gears up for release, *The Pioneer* engages in an exclusive conversation with its talented music composer, Aman Pant. From his early days in advertising to crafting unforgettable sonic experiences, Pant bares all about his creative odyssey**

## Discover these four hidden gem resorts for an unforgettable festive getaway

For those looking to break away from the urban bustle of festivities, India's hidden nature retreats and wellness resorts nestled within lush jungles, peaceful beaches and serene plantations make for an ideal escape. These secluded havens offer a rejuvenating experience surrounded by pristine natural beauty, providing a refreshing alternative to the festive hustle

### ANCHAVIYO

It is a unique adventure resort with distinctive & conceptual room stays and a range of activities, adventure and water sports, all in the heart of nature. Experience the charm of ultimate luxury hidden amongst innumerable fruit trees and panoramic riverside views. Enjoy the instrumental art of Santoor & Rubab, indulge in entertainments like ghazal nights, karaoke, Tarpa dance and more. The sweet sounds of the Santoor reflect the serenity of nature as they fall soft on your ears in the night air while the ghazals will transport you to a space of introspection revealing the complexities of human emotions. Contrasting fun awaits in the form of karaoke where you get a chance to display your singing talent and learn the art of simplicity and coordination with the Tarpa dance. There's a lot more in store for the guests at Anchaviyo as it hosts a fun-filled festive week celebration.

### CANARY ISLANDS

An unparalleled stay awaits as you plan to unwind at a private oasis. Tucked away amidst the clustering trees and the winding mountains nestles a boutique resort surrounded by the beautiful lake, a global gourmet beach bar – the white crane designed and conceptualised to give you a unique experience! You are welcome to visit the Canary Islands with your friends and family. Options to opt for themed meals, festive celebration with entertainment and more. Inspiring food ideas revolving around unique concepts including regional specialities will be a part of the celebration. You can choose from a range of amazing platters and cuisines and even customise some to fascinate your taste buds. Make this festival a homecoming if you are going to choose traditional festival treats at the resort!

### THE FOREST CLUB RESORT

Experience India's largest meandering pool with direct access from luxurious executive rooms. Nestled atop a hill with lush, serene views, this resort blends nature's rhythm with modern elegance. From unique trees and an infinity pool to extensive amenities and unmatched hospitality, every detail promises a memorable stay. Festive mela at the resort with different entertainment, fun activities, snacks and more. Celebrate the triumph of good over evil at the traditional mela organised with festivities, music and dance. The entertainment is distinctive and the fun extraordinary. Make your festival memorable and capture-worthily at the resort!

### ELEGANT WATERFRONT RESORT

The waterfront resort boasts state-of-the-art amenities, impeccable service and unparalleled magnitudes of hospitality. With much-preferred options for travellers because of the convenient stay options, meeting and conference venues and the plethora of activities that they provide, Elegant Waterfront Resort is situated on the backwaters of Bhama Ashkhed Dam and the property is surrounded with a three sided water body and a beautiful mountain view on the behind. There are options for themed meals, a festive celebration with entertainment and more. Creativity and memorability take over with conceptual meal platters taking centre stage. Appetisers and aphrodisiacs complement each other across the menu, sparking culinary inspiration. Food categories are tweaked to novelty to present a taste that goes beyond the ordinary.





## TOLLYWOOD'S FRESH FACES

# MANASA AND SRAVANTHI TALK ABOUT DEBUT FILM RAHASYAM IDHAM JAGATH



Two Telugu actresses, Manasa and Sravanthi, are making their debut in the upcoming film *Rahasyam Idham Jagath*, directed by Komal R. Bharadwaj. The movie, primarily filmed in the United States, is a science fiction tale with a mythological twist. Both Manasa and Sravanthi are settled in the U.S. but are now stepping into the Telugu film industry.

For Manasa, acting runs in the family; her parents and grandparents were involved in Telugu cinema. "My parents' grandparents produced films with legends like ANR and NTR," she shared. Manasa studied screen acting and earned a diploma in the field, having worked in theater, short films, web series and even a few Hollywood projects. In *Rahasyam Idham Jagath*, she plays a scientist, a role she prepared for by conducting extensive research. "To portray a scientist, I read books on physics and mythology to understand my character better," she added, noting that the director's clarity and guidance helped her get into the role.

Manasa shared that her passion for acting began in childhood, where she learned singing and dancing. "My parents encouraged me to pursue acting after I completed my education, especially since my grandparents were involved in the film industry," she said.

Sravanthi Pratiapati, born in Rajahmundry and raised in Hyderabad, moved to the United States, where she completed her primary education. She began acting during the pandemic, joining a theater group and appearing in Hollywood commercials. When *Rahasyam Idham Jagath* began casting in Portland, Sravanthi was selected. "I was surprised a Telugu film was being shot here in Portland, but I was thrilled to join the project," she shared. Playing an Indian girl in the film, she worked on perfecting her Telugu accent through workshops with the director.

Sravanthi has now committed to acting full-time, having left her previous job. In addition to acting, she is an event manager and yoga instructor. "Theater taught me a lot about performance, which makes on-screen acting feel more natural," she reflected. Both actresses recalled the environmental challenges they faced while shooting in unpredictable weather, often outdoors in forests, where sudden rain and snow created unique hurdles.

## Dulquer Salmaan celebrates success of *Lucky Bhaskar*

Dulquer Salmaan is thrilled with the positive reception for his third Telugu film, *Lucky Bhaskar*, which follows his successful Telugu debuts in *Mahanati* and *Sita Ramam*. In Hyderabad, to celebrate the film's success, Dulquer credited his Telugu film journey to directors like Nag Ashwin and Hanu Raghavapudi, who first trusted him with major roles. "I never imagined myself in Telugu cinema, but Nagi (Nag Ashwin) believed in me; Hanu sir (Director Hanu Raghavapudi) carried it forward with *Sita Ramam* and I am grateful to him for giving me a movie to remember. Now, *Lucky Bhaskar* is another memorable film in my career," said Dulquer Salmaan.

Dulquer expressed his gratitude to his co-stars and crew, including cinematographer Nimish Ravi, with whom he has a longstanding collaboration. Working with senior actors like Ramky and Sai Kumar was a highlight for him. "Sai Kumar sir's voice resonates on set; it's incredible," he said.

Reflecting on the film's journey, Dulquer thanked director Venky, whom he praised as "wise beyond his years," for creating a blockbuster film. He also acknowledged the expertise of editor Navin Nooli, with whom he had disagreements during the editing process. "But on the first day of release, I realised he knew exactly what was best for the film," Dulquer concluded, adding that he looks forward to future projects with Navin Nooli.



## Viplav wears many hats in his debut film

It is time for small films hitting screens next Friday and *Eesaraina* is one of them. Viplav is the director and also played the lead actor in the film. The story is set in a beautiful rural backdrop and follows an unemployed young man as he prepares for a government job and embarks on a journey to find love. The film is releasing on November 8.

"It's a challenging one for me as I am making my debut as lead actor and also at the same time as director," said Viplav. He added that he is confident about the film. "We put our efforts into making a nice film and I hope that everyone liked it," said Viplav.

Another interesting thing about the film is that Viplav also produces this film. He also provided the story, screenplay and dialogue for it. "Though I am the producer, I should thank Sankeerth, who managed everything," said Viplav.

Female lead Ashwini plays the Shirisha role in this one. "Filming for this film felt like a summer vacation and I'm thrilled to have a character like this in my debut film. It's not just a movie—it's an experience," said Ashwini.



## Matka trailer builds anticipation, adding to Varun Tej's confidence

After a series of underwhelming box-office results, actor Varun Tej is hopeful about his latest film *Matka*, directed by Karuna Kumar of *Palasa* fame. The recently released trailer has generated excitement, and the film, set in 1950s-80s Visakhapatnam, features elaborate recreations of iconic locations like the city's Purna Market. The storyline is based on the life of Ratan Khatri, the legendary "Matka King."

Dressed in a retro look for the trailer launch event, Varun expressed optimism, calling the film a fresh take on a commercial drama. "This film will offer audiences something new, and I believe it will resonate with them," he said. Playing the character of Vasu, Varun shared that he crafted the role without relying on any particular reference. "Director Karuna Kumar gave me helpful inputs, but he encouraged me to make the character my own," he added.

Varun's uncle, Megastar Chiranjeevi, praised the trailer, describing it as "massy" when he released it on his social media. Co-starring Meenakshi Chaudhary, *Matka* is set to release on November 14, with Vijayender Reddy Theegala and Rajini Talluri producing the film.

## Nora Fatehi brings her unique charm to *Matka*

Global sensation Nora Fatehi is set to impress audiences as she takes on an exciting role in her first Telugu film, *Matka*. In this exciting venture, Nora shares the screen with Varun Tej and the makers have officially released the film's thrilling trailer, giving fans a taste of the high-octane drama and action in store. Scheduled to hit theatres on November 14, *Matka* promises an exhilarating cinematic experience. Nora shared the official poster on her social media, along with a link to the trailer, building anticipation for her dynamic role. Known for her mesmerising performances and chart-topping dance numbers, Nora is set to bring her unique flair to *Matka*, adding yet another impressive project to her film portfolio. Previously, the song *Le Le Raja* from the movie was released, which featured Nora's signature dance moves. It received rave reviews from fans and highlighted her strong screen presence. With nearly 47 million Instagram followers, Nora's global influence reached new heights when she performed the FIFA anthem *Light the Sky* at the FIFA World Cup finale last year. Her musical hits like *Pepeta*, *Dirty Little Secret* and *Nora* have further cemented her status in the music industry. Recently, her collaboration with international artist CKay on the song *It's True*, from his album *Emotions*, topped the charts and earned rave reviews.

## DHOOM DHAAM PROVIDES YOU MUCH NEEDED ENTERTAINMENT: DIRECTOR SAI KISHORE

Chetan Krishna and Hebah Patel are the lead pair in the film titled *Dhoom Dhaam*. Sai Kishore Macha is the director and it is releasing on November 8. The director earlier worked with Srinu Vaitla for a film and then worked with a few other directors.

"I worked for *Srikaram* in the direction department and later worked on the *Brinda* web series that stars Trisha. During this time, writer Gopi Mohan introduced me to the *Dhoom Dhaam* project and I instantly connected with the story, which is how the movie began," said director Sai Kishore. The makers wanted to shoot the film in the USA, but they couldn't get the permission. "Eventually, we chose Poland for our European shoot. Producer Ram Kumar ensured that we had all the comforts and facilities, making us feel as if we were in India," said the director. Talking about the story, he said it revolves around the relationship between a father and son. "An unexpected incident occurs in the lead actress's life due to this father-son relationship and the film follows the protagonist's journey to resolve it," he said. He added that the film has loads of entertainment, especially the wedding scenes after the interval.

The director praises the lead actor Chetan and his comic timing in the film. "I am confident that this film will be a significant milestone for him," he said and added that lead actress Hebah Patel also delivered a remarkable performance. The director promises that *Dhoom Dhaam* is going to give full entertainment for the ticket price. "We held a paid premiere in Visakhapatnam recently, and people who have seen the film enjoyed it a lot, which made me incredibly happy," said the director.

