



# the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

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

QUOTE OF THE DAY  
The pioneer

"BRS speaking about sarpanches' pending bills is akin to 'a cat going on pilgrimage after eating 100 rats'. The leaders who were the reason for the suicides of sarpanches are staging dharnas. The sarpanches' dharnas are a reflection of the sins committed by the previous BRS government."

- Ponnamb Prabhakar, Transport and BC Welfare Minister



P4

**'Firecracker ban hardly implemented'**

**THE BHAVANA PANDEY YOU DON'T KNOW**

**After a long time I ventured into a commercial space**

**HEBAH PATEL**

**DON'T MISS...**

**Controversy erupts as Ambati visits...**

Former minister Ambati Rambabu has ignited controversy during his visit to the Tirumala temple for darshan of Lord Venkateswara on Monday. The YSRCP leader was seen wearing a shirt with a sticker featuring the photo of YSRCP president Jagan Mohan Reddy, in blatant violation of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) rules, which prohibit the display of political party symbols, flags, and stickers during temple visits. BJP MP CM Ramesh expressed outrage over Rambabu's action, condemning his disregard for TTD rules. Ramesh, who was...

-PAGE: 4

**'JK govt to make all efforts for...**

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha assured the newly elected legislative assembly on Monday that the Omar Abdullah government will make all efforts to restore full statehood and constitutional guarantees to the state. Restoration of full statehood and constitutional guarantees would be a "befitting reciprocation" of the faith reposed by the people of Jammu and Kashmir in democratic institutions, he said in his maiden address to the assembly. Sinha said the government is...

-PAGE: 5

**White-collar hiring grows 10 pc in...**

White-collar hiring activity increased 10 percent year-on-year in October, mainly due to a rise in recruitment in sectors such as oil and gas, pharmaceuticals, FMCG, and IT, a report said on Monday. The Naukri JobSpeak Index, India's leading indicator of white-collar hiring activity, demonstrated robust growth in October, reaching 2,733 points compared to 2,484 in the same month of 2023, marking a significant 10 per cent year-on-year increase. Key sectors, including oil & gas (18 per cent), pharma/biotech...

-PAGE: 8

**'Superman' Wriddhiman, one...**

Spectacular with the big gloves, quietly assured with the willow and yet happy to be in the shadows, Wriddhiman Saha, in his 40 Test matches for India, has certainly been more than the sum total of all his parts. But having been out of India reckoning for over three years now, the 40-year-old has decided to call it quits from the game at the end of his team Bengal's ongoing Ranji Trophy campaign. The announcement was made on his social media page late last night. "After a cherished journey in cricket, this..."

-SPORTS

## Dy CM: AP police lax in handling of law & order

**Bats for UP model to curb crimes against women**

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj Pawan Kalyan has expressed strong dissatisfaction over the handling of law and order by the police, warning that the situation would change if he took charge of the Home portfolio.

Speaking at a public meeting in Gollaprolu, Pithapuram constituency, on Monday, Pawan Kalyan voiced his concerns over the rising attacks on women and questioned the effectiveness of the police force. He remarked, "We should consider adopting the Uttar Pradesh model to curb atrocities against women. The approach taken by UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath could be a solution for Andhra Pradesh as well."

Pawan Kalyan criticised the police, questioning their commitment to duty and asserting that the people are holding leaders accountable for the decline in law and order. "I instruct the DGP and Intelligence officials to take swift action to restore law and order. I am not concerned about power; I care about the safety of the people," he stated firmly.

He strongly objected to the practice of linking heinous crimes to caste, condemning attempts to do so in a recent case involving the assault and murder of a young girl.

Pawan Kalyan further criticised the police for inaction when threats were made openly against a leader, questioning, "Are you not IPS officers? Didn't you study BNS? Don't wait until it's too late to act." He admitted he had lost patience but said he was exercising restraint due to his position.

The Deputy Chief Minister urged Home Minister V Anitha to take



**Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan warns that things would be different if he managed the Home portfolio**

- Questions police commitment, instructing the DGP and Intelligence dept to act decisively on law and order issues.
- Deputy CM asks Home Minister V Anitha to ensure law and order, citing Dubai and Singapore as examples of low-crime regions.
- Pawan Kalyan condemns linking heinous crimes to caste and criticised police inaction in cases of public threats against leaders.
- He raises concerns over the disappearance of 30,000 women during the YSRCP regime, criticising the past administration's inaction.

**Pawan Kalyan warns YSRCP leaders against abusive statements, cautioning that NDA alliances in the State would remain unbroken**

responsibility for law and order, pointing to countries like Dubai and Singapore where such crimes are rare. He raised concerns over the disappearance of 30,000 women and girls during the YSRCP regime, criticising the previous administration's silence on the matter.

Kalyan also cautioned YSRCP leaders

to refrain from making abusive and misleading statements, warning of consequences if they continue. He confidently asserted that Opposition leaders would not be able to disrupt the NDA alliance in the state, citing Haryana's recent elections as evidence that people desire a stable government.

Continued on Page 2

## MP Lavu seeks revision of medical seat allocation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a bid to enhance healthcare education in the State, TDP MP Lavu Srikrishnadevarayulu has called for a revision of the current rule that allocates 100 medical seats per 10 lakh population. The MP made this request during a meeting with Union Health and Family Welfare Minister JP Nadda in Delhi on Monday.

After the meeting, Srikrishnadevarayulu addressed the media, highlighting several key issues relevant to the State. A major point of discussion was the long-delayed establishment of the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education & Research (NIPER) in Visakhapatnam. He noted that the construction of the institute has been stalled for the past six to seven years and emphasised the state government's commitment to providing all necessary support for its completion.

"Pharma exports worth nearly Rs 40,000 crore are currently in progress. Given this context, I have urged for the establishment of NIPER in



Visakhapatnam," the MP stated. He also advocated for conducting health tests in Uttarandhra (North AP) and Rayalaseema for individuals travelling to the Gulf, along with the creation of critical care units in newly formed districts.

Minister Nadda responded positively to Srikrishnadevarayulu's requests, indicating that the government's proposals would be considered favourably. These discussions represent a proactive step towards addressing the healthcare infrastructure and educational needs in Andhra Pradesh.

Continued on Page 2

## EG-WG Teachers MLC seat bypoll on December 5

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The bye-elections for the Member of Legislative Council (MLC) Teachers Constituency for East and West Godavari districts will take place on December 5, 2024. Chief Electoral Officer of Andhra Pradesh, Vivek Yadav, made the official announcement on Monday.

According to the announcement, the notification for the bye-election will be released on November 11, 2024. The last date for filing nominations is November 18, 2024, with the scrutiny of nominations set for November 19. Candidates may withdraw their nominations until November 21. Voting will occur on December 5 from 8 AM to 4 PM, and the counting of votes will be conducted on December 9. The model code of conduct will come into effect immediately in the respective constituencies. The bye-elections are being held to fill the vacancy left by the death of MLC Sabjee Shaik, who represented the Teachers Constituency for East and West Godavari districts.

Continued on Page 2



## 4 electrocuted, one critical

**CM announces Rs 5L ex gratia to kin of deceased**

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Four persons were electrocuted and another was critically injured while erecting a flexi banner at Tadiparru village in Undrajavaram mandal of East Godavari district on Monday.

According to the police, the villagers were preparing for the unveiling of a statue of social reformer Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud in the village. In preparation, some youths erected a large flex banner for the event.

While setting up the banner, five people came into contact with a high-tension wire. Four of them died instantly, while another, Komati Ananta Rao, sustained severe burn injuries and was admitted to the Area Hospital in Tanuku. The deceased have been identified as Bolla Veerajulu (26), Pamarti Nagendra (23), Marisetti Manikantha (28), and Kasagani Krishna (20). The Undrajavaram police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the Government General Hospital in Tanuku for postmortem.

Continued on Page 2

## Fresh tenders for Amaravati projects

AP Capital will emerge as one of the top five cities in the world within five years: Narayana

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister Ponguru Narayana announced on Monday that the closure of old tenders, which had been hindering the development of Amaravati, will pave the way for the issuance of new tenders. He expressed confidence that all development projects in the capital would be completed within the next three years.

Speaking to the media at the State Secretariat, Minister Narayana detailed the outcomes of the 39th meeting of the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA), chaired by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. The meeting focused on reviewing various development initiatives for Amaravati.

From 2014 to 2019, tenders worth Rs 41,000 crore were issued for various development projects in Amaravati, with approximately Rs 35,000 crore in works initiated. Key projects included the construction of the High Court and Assembly buildings, major roads, and accommodations for judges and government officials. However, the minister criticised the previous administration's focus on a three-capital proposal, which he claimed diverted attention and resources away from these critical



**MA & UD Minister Narayana stated that new tenders would be called by December 31 for all projects, excluding the High Court and Assembly. Tenders for these two critical buildings will be issued in January**

developments. He noted that many construction companies involved in these projects had not received payment for completed work.

To address the issues surrounding old tenders, the government established a technical committee of chief engineers in July 2024.

Continued on Page 2



## Houses for all beneficiaries by '29: CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu conducted a review of the housing department with the concerned minister and officials at the Secretariat on Monday. During the meeting, the CM emphasised the goal of constructing houses for all eligible individuals by 2029. He directed officials to take steps to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Centre to launch the PMAY 2.0 scheme in the state.

Officials informed the CM that 58,578 houses have been constructed under the PMAY Urban scheme and 17,197 houses under the PMAY Rural scheme since the formation of the NDA coalition government in the state. They also announced that one lakh houses are expected to be completed by December, with preparations underway to hand over the keys to beneficiaries for housewarming ceremonies.

The CM instructed the construction of an additional 7.60 lakh houses by 2026. Officials explained that the housing department has initiated a pilot project using drones for

## 'AP to have the best sports policy'

VIJAYAWADA: Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday declared that Andhra Pradesh's sports policy aims to become the best in the country, offering unparalleled incentives and support for athletes.

In a review meeting at the State Secretariat, the Chief Minister emphasised that good incentives would increase public interest in sports and motivate athletes. "All sports persons deserve proper recognition and respect," he said. The meeting decided to enhance cash rewards for Olympic medalists. The incentive for Olympic gold medal winners will be raised from Rs 75 lakh to Rs 7 crore, for silver medalists from Rs 50 lakh to Rs 5 crore, and for bronze medalists from Rs 30 lakh to Rs 3 crore. Additionally, athletes representing India in the Olympics will receive Rs 50 lakh each. For Asian Games medalists, gold medal winners will be awarded Rs 4 crore, silver medalists Rs 2 crore, and bronze medalists Rs 1 crore, while participants will receive Rs 10 lakh each as an incentive. The Chief Minister also encouraged the participation of state teams in prominent sports leagues, urging equal promotion for all types of sports and games.

Continued on Page 2

measuring and assessing the quality of house construction.

The CM mandated the application of the same technology in larger layouts and ordered the development of infrastructure facilities in all layouts in coordination with the

respective departments. He also agreed to the deputation of 597 personnel to the Housing Department.

Minister Koluasu Parthasarathy, Special Chief Secretary Ajay Jain, and senior officials participated in the review.

## 36 killed as bus falls into gorge in Uttarakhand



PNS ■ MARCHULA (UTTARAKHAND)

A packed beyond capacity bus carrying passengers returning to work

after Diwali fell into a deep gorge in Uttarakhand's Almora district on Monday, killing at least 36 of the about 60 people on board.

Continued on Page 2

## Harris vs Trump goes to the wire: Polls



PNS ■ WASHINGTON

The electoral battle between Vice President Kamala Harris and former president Donald Trump appears to have gone to the wire, according to latest opinion polls.

Harris, 60, is the nominee of the Democratic Party and Trump, 78, is the Republican nominee. Their party members and support bases are united with their respective parties, and independent votes might decide who would be the next occupant of the

White House.

To win the elections, a candidates needs 270 of the electoral college votes. Latest opinion polls indicate that the elections will be decided by the results in seven battle ground states of Arizona, Nevada, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Georgia.

Of these, Michigan and Pennsylvania play key role to them reaching the 270-mark.

The presidential race appears to be hurtling toward a photo finish, with the final set of polls by The New York Times and Siena College finding Harris gaining new strength in North Carolina and Georgia even as Trump erases her lead in Pennsylvania and maintains his advantage in Arizona, the daily reported Sunday.

Continued on Page 2

## Arson attacks on ballot boxes in US spark security concerns

PNS ■ NEW YORK

Last week, two ballot drop boxes in the Pacific Northwest were damaged in a suspected arson attack destroying hun-

dreds of ballots at one location. In neighbouring Portland, Oregon a fire suppression system contained a similar blaze, limiting damage.

Continued on Page 2



# AP emerging as India's clean energy titan

Andhra Pradesh, a state rich in culture and history, is rapidly emerging as a leader in India's green energy revolution. With an abundance of natural resources and a focused strategy on renewable energy, the state is positioning itself as a global clean energy superpower. Particularly in the energy-rich Rayalaseema districts, Andhra Pradesh is outpacing states like Rajasthan in renewable energy production. This shift is driven by a comprehensive approach that not only emphasizes energy generation but also the development of skilled labour and robust power evacuation infrastructure. These efforts place Andhra Pradesh at the forefront of the global clean energy transition.

The state's geographical endowments play a key role in this transformation. Andhra Pradesh enjoys over 300 days of sunshine each year, making it an ideal location for solar energy projects. The Kurnool Ultra Mega Solar Park -- the world's largest single-location solar facility -- stands as a testament to the state's ambitions. With a capacity of 1,000 MW, the park symbolizes Andhra Pradesh's commitment to large-scale renewable projects. Beyond Kurnool, the state's solar capacity exceeds 33 GW, and with the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) planning an additional 7,000 MW, Andhra Pradesh is rapidly becoming India's solar energy giant.

However, Andhra Pradesh's green energy success is not confined to solar power alone. The state has also recognized the importance of wind energy, with an impressive wind power potential of 44 GW. Wind farms are scattered across the state, providing clean energy and balancing the solar power grid. By combining solar and wind energy,

**However, Andhra Pradesh's green energy success is not confined to solar power alone. The state has also recognized the importance of wind energy, with an impressive wind power potential of 44 GW. Wind farms are scattered across the state, providing clean energy and balancing the solar power grid**

Andhra Pradesh has developed a sustainable and reliable energy mix that addresses the state's growing power needs with minimal environmental impact.

Yet, the inherent variability of solar and wind energy, where generation depends on the availability of sunlight and wind, presents challenges. Andhra Pradesh has tackled this head-on with its ambitious pumped hydro storage projects. These systems store excess energy during peak solar or wind activity, ensuring

ing a consistent supply when natural conditions fluctuate. The state has identified 29 locations with a combined capacity of 33.2 GW for these projects. The Pinnapuram Integrated Renewable Energy Project (IREP), set to become the world's largest renewable energy storage project, exemplifies Andhra Pradesh's leadership in energy storage technology. This integration of solar, wind, and hydro storage underscores the state's commitment to reliable, clean energy generation.



**DR. ARJA SRIKANTH**  
(Former Special Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh)

Driving this clean energy revolution is Andhra Pradesh's forward-thinking policy framework. The Renewable Energy Export Policy-2020, for instance, envisions the creation of 120 GW of renewable energy parks by 2025. The policy aims to meet both local energy needs and position Andhra Pradesh as a significant

exporter of renewable power to neighbouring states and even international markets. This dual focus on local and global energy solutions is both economically and environmentally sound, reinforcing Andhra Pradesh's position as a clean energy leader.

The New & Renewable Energy Development Corporation of Andhra Pradesh (NREDCAP) has been instrumental in facilitating these developments. NREDCAP ensures smooth integration of renewable projects into the state's power grid and promotes decentralized renewable energy solutions, particularly in rural areas. By expanding renewable energy access to remote regions, Andhra Pradesh is empowering communities and significantly reducing its carbon footprint.

The results of Andhra Pradesh's renewable energy drive are already impressive.

Renewable energy now accounts for 28% of the state's total power production and meets 56% of its overall energy demand. This marked shift away from traditional fossil fuels like coal and gas highlights the state's firm commitment to clean, sustainable energy.

Looking to the future, Andhra Pradesh is aligning itself with global clean energy trends. As demand for renewable energy rises, the state's role in the global clean energy economy will only grow. Andhra Pradesh's potential as both a producer and exporter of renewable energy positions it as a key player in India's and the world's green energy transition.

In conclusion, Andhra Pradesh's remarkable journey toward becoming a leader in renewable energy highlights its commitment to sustainability and economic growth. With an ambitious focus on

harnessing solar, wind, and energy storage technologies, the state is setting a new benchmark for clean energy production in India. Its strategic policies, large-scale infrastructure projects like the Kurnool Solar Park, and the integration of innovative energy storage solutions are ensuring a reliable energy supply while reducing environmental impact. Moreover, Andhra Pradesh's emphasis on workforce development, private sector participation, and regulatory streamlining is driving investment and creating jobs. As it aligns with global clean energy trends, Andhra Pradesh is not only meeting its energy demands but also positioning itself as a key player in the renewable energy revolution. The state's vision for the future is clear: to lead the charge in green energy, ensuring both environmental sustainability and economic prosperity for its people.

## Naidu lacks sincerity on Polavaram: Buggana

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Buaggna Rajendranath Reddy has criticised the coalition government for spreading falsehoods regarding the Polavaram issue, asserting that prioritising Amaravati over this national project is a concerning development.

Speaking to the media on Monday, he stated that the YS Jagan Mohan Reddy government had worked to rectify the mistakes made by the TDP from 2014 to 2019 and emphasised the need for the Chandrababu Naidu government to not compromise on the Polavaram project.

He accused the TDP government of making a significant error by accepting outdated rates from 2010-11, which only covered the irrigation component, despite rising costs and an increase in the number of dis-



placed persons. He also pointed out that the drinking water component along the route was not addressed.

Reddy claimed that after YS Jagan Mohan Reddy took office, efforts were made to rectify previous mistakes, asserting that had it not been for the COVID-19 pandemic, the project would have been completed by now.

He noted that the project, which began during YS Rajasekhara Reddy's tenure,

was neglected by Chandrababu Naidu due to his "Pattiseema misadventure." He clarified that Pattiseema was merely the right bank canal envisioned by Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy, whereas Polavaram allows water to flow by gravity rather than requiring a lift.

Reddy also stated that the state did not object to the recent decision by the Centre regarding the project's height, accusing the TDP of spreading blatant lies. He referred to correspondence concerning the reduction of the project's height from 45.72 metres to 41.5 metres, the irrigation and other components, and the confusion created by the current government. In response to Pawan Kalyan's comments, he remarked that as Deputy Chief Minister, Kalyan is effectively questioning his own government.

## Provide new social security pensions: MSME Minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Society for the Elimination of Rural Poverty, and NRI Empowerment and Relations, Kondapalli Srinivas, has instructed officials to begin the process of providing social security pensions to all eligible individuals in the state. Many eligible persons are eagerly awaiting these new pensions, he stated, emphasising the need to bring them under the social security scheme.

Minister Srinivas held a review meeting with the Society for the Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) in his chamber at the Secretariat on Monday. During the meeting, he noted that the state government, under Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's leadership, is committed to providing pensions to all eligible individuals. He added that those who were removed from the pension list under the pre-



vious government would soon receive the new social security pensions.

He further recalled that during the TDP's regime in 1995, Chandrababu Naidu initiated the DWACRA groups in the state. After implementing several reforms, the District Poverty Evaluation Project (DPEP) was transformed into SERP. The department is set to celebrate its Silver Jubilee next year, he mentioned, and at this juncture, the government aims to strengthen SERP to enhance its effectiveness.

## TTD EO releases booklet on 'Kartika Brahmotsavams'

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Executive Officer J Syamala Rao on Monday released a booklet detailing the schedule for the 'Kartika Brahmotsavams' of Sri Padmavati Temple in Tiruchanoor, set to take place from November 28 to December 6. The booklet was unveiled at the TTD Administrative Building in Tirupati.

Addressing the occasion, EO Syamala Rao highlighted that the 'Brahmotsavams' will commence with the 'Dwajorohanam' (flag hoisting) on November 28. Key events include the 'Gajavahanam' on December 2, 'Bangaru Ratham' on December 3, 'Rathotsavam' on December 5, and 'Panchami Thirtham' on December 6. TTD Joint Executive Officer Veerabrahm, Chief PRO Dr T



Ravi, and Deputy EOs Govindarajan and Smt Prasanthi were also present.

The details of 'Vahana Sevai' for each morning and evening are as follows:  
**November 28:** Dwajorohanam and Chinna Sesha Vahanam  
**November 29:** Pedda Sesha Vahanam and Hamsa Vahanam  
**November 30:** Mutyapu Pandiri Vahanam and Simha Vahanam  
**December 1:** Kalpavriksha Vahanam and Hanumantha

Vahanam  
**December 2:** Pallaki Utsavam, Vasanthotsavam, and Gaja Vahanam  
**December 3:** Sarva Bhupala Vahanam, Swarna Ratham, and Garuda Vahanam  
**December 4:** Surya Prabha Vahanam and Chandra Prabha Vahanam  
**December 5:** Rathotsavam and Aswa Vahanam  
**December 6:** Panchami Thirtham and Dwajavarohanam

## 'AP to have the...'

Continued from Page 1

The meeting resolved to increase the sports quota in employment from the current 2% to 3%. The sports policy has been structured around four mission objectives: 'Sports for All', 'Nurture Talent', 'Sports Ecosystem', and 'Global Visibility'. The Chief Minister instructed officials to make necessary amendments to the policy and present it to the Cabinet. The meeting was attended by Sports Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy, Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) Chairman Ravi Naidu, and other officials.

## EG-WG Teachers...

Continued from Page 1

Shaik tragically lost his life in a road accident on December 15, 2023, while his term was scheduled to last until March 29, 2027.

## Harris vs Trump...

Continued from Page 1

According to The New York Times, Harris is now narrowly ahead in Nevada, North Carolina and Wisconsin, the polls show, while Trump leads in Arizona.

"The polls show them locked in close races in Michigan, Georgia and Pennsylvania. But the results in all seven states are within the margin of sampling error, meaning neither candidate has a definitive lead in any of them," the daily reported.

The Real Clear Politics, which tracks all the major national and battleground polls, said it's a tie between Trump and Harris. In the national polls, Trump leads by 0.1 percentage points, and in battleground states the former president has an edge of 0.9 percentage points.

In the battleground states, as per Real Clear Politics, Trump has a lead, though within the margin of error, in Georgia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Arizona; while Harris has an edge in Michigan and Wisconsin.

"The presidential race is tight, and neither candidate has a clear lead," The Hill said.

In its final poll, the NBC News said the poll shows Harris getting support from 49 per cent of registered voters in a head-to-head matchup, while Trump gets an identical 49 per cent. "Just two percent of voters say they're unsure about the choice," the news channel said.

## Arson attacks on ballot...

Continued from Page 1

These attacks involving ballot collection boxes have raised concerns about the security of the US presidential polls ahead of the main Election Day.

In New York, the officials of the Board of Elections say a "stolen election" isn't possible and elaborate measures have been put in place to counter any subversive attempts.

"A multi-jurisdictional national, state and city wide security plan is in place for NYC. Some of these you see, some you don't. All the ballots are secured by the NYPD and we work closely with them. A stolen election in NYC is not possible. We are always trying to stay ahead of the bad guys for sure,"

says Vincent Ignizio, Deputy Executive Director Board of Elections in New York.

Ballot drop boxes have become an increasingly important part of the voting process in many states. As many as 27 states and the District of Columbia allow the use of ballot drop boxes. They are particularly crucial in states like Oregon and Washington, where voting predominantly occurs via mail or ballot drop-off.

In Clark County, Washington, about 60% of ballots are submitted through drop boxes. The security of ballot drop boxes has become a significant focus in US presidential elections, with various measures implemented to ensure their integrity and protect against potential threats.

## MIR Alpha Spectral Lab inaugurated at KVK in Lam

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The MIR Alpha Spectral Laboratory was inaugurated on Monday at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) in Lam. This facility is a joint initiative of Rythu Sadhikara Samstha and the Indo-German Global Academy for Agroecology Research and Learning (IGGAARL), with support from KfW.

The inauguration was led by B Rajasekhara, Special Secretary of the State Agriculture Department, alongside T Vijay Kumar, Executive Vice Chairman of Rythu Sadhikara Samstha. During the event, Vijay Kumar highlighted the laboratory's



potential to benefit not only Andhra Pradesh but also twelve other states, and possibly support international agroecology research. He emphasised that this facility would contribute to global knowledge by offering research-backed recommendations for farmers.

Equipped to analyse diverse soil samples, the MIR Alpha Spectral Laboratory will support extensive research. In collaboration with the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF), Rythu Sadhikara Samstha is also working on the Land Degradation Surveillance

Framework (LDSF) to address soil health and degradation concerns.

Vijay Kumar expressed the vision of developing the lab into a major knowledge hub that addresses research objectives and serves farmers' needs across the country.

The event was attended by several dignitaries, including ANGRAU Vice Chancellor Sharada Jayalakshmi Devi, Rythu Sadhikara Samstha Executive Director Samuel Anand, Senior Thematic Lead Dr Zakir Hussain, Senior Consultant Varaprasad, Senior Lab Technician Bel Kauma from Nairobi, and Senior Consultant Dr Rahman, Dr Sarvi, among others.

## Fresh tenders for Amaravati...

Continued from Page 1

This committee was tasked with developing procedures for closing the old tenders and submitted a report on October 29 containing 23 recommendations. Following a thorough discussion in the CRDA meeting, these recommendations were approved.

Minister Narayana stated that new tenders would be called by December 31 for all projects, excluding the High Court and Assembly.

"Tenders for these two critical buildings will be issued in January. He expressed confidence that Amaravati would emerge as one of the top five cities globally within five years.

Additionally, the World Bank has agreed to provide Rs 15,000 crore for the development of Amaravati, with representatives emphasising the need for swift completion of flood prevention works.

The government plans to

- MA & UD Minister P Narayana briefs the media about the outcome of the 39th meeting of APCRDA headed by CM Chandrababu Naidu
- From 2014-2019, tenders worth Rs 41,000 cr were issued, with nearly Rs 35,000 crore of projects initiated.
- The previous govt's three-capital proposal diverted resources away from Amaravati's growth.
- New tenders for High Court and Assembly buildings will be issued in January 2025.
- The World Bank has sanctioned Rs 15,000 crore for Amaravati's development, urging quick flood prevention measures.
- Reservoirs inspired by Dutch designs are planned for Amaravati's core capital area and surrounding regions.
- Bypass roads, an Inner Ring Road, and an Outer Ring Road are part of Amaravati's infrastructure plans.

construct reservoirs within the 217 sq. km core capital area and surrounding regions, following designs inspired by the Netherlands.

Projects include reservoirs at Kondaveeti, Palavagu, and Gravity Canal within the city and storage facilities in

Neerukonda, Krishnayapalem, Sakhamuru, and Undavalli.

Narayana also reaffirmed the ongoing construction of bypass roads around Amaravati and the plans for an Inner Ring Road and Outer Ring Road, as previously decided.

## 36 killed as ...

Continued from Page 1

Twenty-four people were injured, four of them critically, when the 43-seater bus, operated by the private Garhwal Motor Owner Association, was on its way from Pauri in Garhwal region to Ramnagar in Kumaon about 250 km away. The accident took place around 8 am, almost the end of the overnight journey, said District Magistrate Alok Kumar Pandey.

The bus plunged into a 200-metre gorge in Almora's Marchula area 35 km before its destination Ramnagar, he said.

Visuals from the area pointed to the magnitude of the accident, the vehicle reduced to a mangled mess as it rolled down the forested, rocky slope and stopped just short of a stream. Rescuers could be seen working to pull out the passengers. Of the 36 killed, 10 are women. A magisterial probe has been ordered and the assistant regional transport officers of Pauri and Almora suspended.

## 4 electrocuted, one...

Continued from Page 1

A pall of gloom descended on Tadiparru village over the tragic loss of four young lives.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu expressed shock and grief over the incident. In a release on Monday, he described the accident as unfortunate and conveyed condolences to the bereaved families. He directed officials to ensure the injured receive the best possible treatment and announced an ex gratia of Rs 5 lakh for each of the deceased's families.

Minister for Tourism Kandula Durgesh also

expressed sorrow, noting the tragedy occurred on the auspicious day of 'Karthika Somavar'. He assured support to the families of the deceased and to the injured.

Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha shared her condolences over the incident, which took place during preparations for the state unveiling of Sardar Sarvai Papanna.

Mines and Excise Minister Kollu Ravindra also expressed grief and inquired with officials about the accident. Villagers informed the media that veteran Telugu actor Suman was scheduled to unveil the statue of Sardar Sarvai Papanna in the village.

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH**  
**IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT**  
**E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE**  
No. From 17 to 28/2024-25 Dt: 02-11-2024  
Superintending Engineer, Irrigation Circle Dhavaleswaram Jurisdiction, invited tenders for 12 works with an estimated cost of Rs 2894.99 lakh. Date of availability of tenders is on 04-11-2024 from 11.00 am to 18-11-2024 11.00 am. For other details <https://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in>, Phone No. 0883-2417419.  
Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Irrigation Circle, Dhavaleswaram  
E.O. No: 146/IGAD/INT/11/2024-Dt: 02.11.2024



Home Minister Anitha visits Tirumala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha visited the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Tirumala on Monday. TTD officials offered a traditional welcome to the Home Minister who entered the temple and made arrangements for darshan. After the darshan, vedic scholars blessed the Home Minister at the Ranganayakula Mandapam. TTD officials offered Tirtha Prasadam of the Lord to the Home Minister. Speaking on the occasion, the Home Minister said she wished that all the people of the State would be prosperous under the rule of the coalition government. The HM said that the Andhra Pradesh government under the leadership of CM Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan is taking steps towards welfare and development.

After the darshan of the presiding deity, Home Minister Anitha met TTD EO Shyamala Rao. The Home Minister discussed the development of Sri Kalki Venkateswara Swamy Temple located in Upamaka village of Nakkapalli mandal of Payakaraopet constituency. She requested that the deity of this temple, which was part of TTD on November 18, 2015 during the TDP government, be restored. The Home Minister explained the history of the temple, that it is not only an ancient shrine, but also the only temple where Sri Kalki Venkateswara Swamy, the last of the 10 incarnations, is worshipped.

# 'Price stabilisation fund with Rs 500 cr corpus to be set up'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Government of Andhra Pradesh is set to establish a price stabilisation fund with a corpus of Rs 500 crore.

The announcement was made during a meeting of the ministers held on Monday, presided over by Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar. Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav, Agriculture Minister K. Achannaidu, and relevant officials also attended the meeting.

The ministers discussed several critical issues, including the stabilisation of prices for red gram, rice, tomatoes, and onions. Minister Manohar reviewed the prices of these commodities and their current stock levels.

Speaking to the media, Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar stated that special outlets have been established in Rythu Bazaars to help regulate rice prices. Additionally, red gram prices have been man-



aged by opening counters that sell the commodity at subsidised rates. Manohar noted that the recent increase in edible oil prices was a result of the Centre raising the import tax.

To address the rising costs of palm oil, the government is selling it at a subsidised price of Rs 110 through special

counters. Discussions have also been held with importers and wholesale traders to stabilise commodity prices, he revealed.

Manohar confirmed that rice, red gram, and sugar are currently being sold at subsidised prices in Rythu Bazaars. He added that necessary measures have been taken to bring

Manohar stated that special outlets have been established in Rythu Bazaars to help regulate rice prices. Additionally, red gram prices have been managed by opening counters that sell the commodity at subsidised rates. Manohar noted that the recent increase in edible oil prices was a result of the Centre raising the import tax.

# Centre of Excellence, Cricket Academy to come up at Mulapadu

ACA chief inspects Mulapadu Cricket Stadium; second pitch within a month

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Cricket Association (ACA) president and Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath, known as Chinni, has announced that the ACA is set to establish a Centre of Excellence and a Cricket Academy at the ACA Cricket Stadium in Mulapadu, Ibrahimpatnam, in NTR district. The academy is expected to be inaugurated within a year, with designs currently in development.

During a visit to the Dr Gokaraju Laila Gangaraju ACA Cricket Stadium in Mulapadu, Sivanath, along with ACA treasurer Dandamudi Srinivas, inspected the stadium's facilities, including two cricket playfields, players' dressing rooms, swimming pool and floor rooms. They provided guidance to ACA staff on maintaining these facilities.

Sivanath said that the second cricket pitch at the stadium will be ready within a month. He



noted the unique advantage of the Amaravati region, which boasts three international-standard stadiums—one in Mangalagiri and two in Mulapadu—all of which are set to be fully operational within a year.

Additionally, Chinni emphasised the ACA's commitment to identifying rural cricket talent, which has already led to selections in major leagues like the IPL and APL. Plans are underway to construct cricket grounds across all 175 Assembly constituencies that

currently lack such facilities. This initiative aims to develop Centres of Excellence and Cricket Academies across Andhra Pradesh, making ACA the first cricket body in India to implement such a wide-spread development programme.

ACA Admin Manager G Srinivasa Rao, Krishna District Cricket Association (KDC) Secretary M Ravindra Chowdary, Joint Secretary Rajanikanth, and other officials were also present during the visit.

# Illegal sand mining erodes trust in AP's free sand policy

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's initiative to provide affordable sand through a free sand policy is now facing severe criticism due to widespread illegal mining activities. Reports reveal that sand is being illicitly transported to Visakhapatnam from the sand reaches of rivers Nagavali and Vamsadhara, situated within the Srikakulam, Amadalavalasa, and Narasannapeta Assembly constituencies.

Every night, around 500 lorries traverse the Srikakulam region, covertly hauling sand obtained through unlawful means to the bustling urban centre of Visakhapatnam. Each load, fetching between Rs

50,000 and Rs 70,000, has reportedly attracted the interest of local officials who are suspected of ignoring these illegal transports. "Everyone knows what is happening, yet the silence from those meant to enforce the rules is deafening," lamented a local activist from Srikakulam, who chose to remain anonymous for fear of retaliation. "We witness lorries loaded at night, and despite the check-posts at district borders, they pass without hindrance." Investigations have unveiled significant violations of sand mining regulations. Heavy earthmovers are being employed to excavate sand, blatantly disregarding established norms aimed at encouraging sustainable practices. Additionally, the nighttime

transportation of this sand highlights an alarming trend of evading detection by enforcement agencies. The skyrocketing prices for sand in Visakhapatnam, often far exceeding mandated rates, severely undermine the purpose of the free sand policy, depriving ordinary citizens of affordable access.

Local resident Rajendra Prasad expressed his deep concern: "The unchecked movement of these lorries not only affects the environment but puts residents at risk. The roads are damaged, and accidents have become all too frequent." Despite the widespread acknowledgment of these illegal activities, the complicity of local officials has rendered enforcement efforts nearly inef-

fective. "It's an open secret," remarked a retired government officer, who wished to remain anonymous. "Officials at check-posts and regulatory departments appear to be 'managed' by sand traders, allowing this illegal trade to flourish."

The lack of consistent inspections has intensified the issue, resulting in significant environmental degradation across various sand reaches. Locals report that checkpoint personnel rarely intervene against overloaded or unauthorised lorries. As discontent grows, environmental advocates and community members are demanding urgent government intervention. "If the government does not act swiftly, the damage will be irreversible, both to our rivers and

Sand being illicitly transported to Visakhapatnam from sand reaches of rivers Nagavali and Vamsadhara

# Govt unveils infrastructure projects in tribal villages

Minister Sandhyarani launches Deepam Scheme 2.0 in Bangaru Metta

PNS ■ PADERU

Tribal and Women and Child Welfare Minister Gummadi Sandhyarani has announced plans to connect every tribal village with a robust road network, significantly reducing the communities' reliance on traditional transport methods. Sandhyarani's visit to Paderu mandal also included the launch of a programme to distribute free gas connections in the Bangaru Metta village.

"We have allocated Rs. 46 crore for the development of the Sileru road," Sandhyarani stated, emphasising the government's commitment to infrastructure improvement. "I promise to return soon to commence this vital project." In alignment with these efforts, Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has pledged



to construct roads in 1,300 villages over the next two years, investing an impressive Rs. 1,800 crore. Highlighting the significance of the Deepam Scheme 2.0, which aims to provide three free gas cylinders to eligible beneficiaries, Sandhyarani added, "We are providing these gas connections as a Diwali gift to the poor, ensuring no family struggles with cooking fuel."

# Awareness programme stresses role of palliative care in oncology

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Sri Venkateswara Institute of Cancer Care and Advanced Research (SVICCAR), Tirupati, set up by the Tata Cancer Care Foundation, has hosted an educational programme to raise awareness about the essential role of palliative care in oncology.

End-of-life care stands at the pinnacle of nobility, exemplifying a selfless commitment to empathy and dignity in life's final stages. In this spirit, the event underscored the importance of compassionate, comprehensive care for patients facing serious health conditions such as cancer.



The Tata Cancer Care Foundation recognises the cancer care challenges that exist in India and has dedicated itself to bringing affordable, high-quality oncological services closer to patients' homes. Guided by values of integrity, compassion, and a philosophy of care, it has established a network of healthcare facilities across the

length and breadth of the country. Apart from patient-centric approaches and leveraging innovative technology, its care model gives due importance to raising awareness about cancer symptoms and timely screening, especially at the grassroots, such that detection takes place at an early stage, reducing the need for palliative care.

# GITAM celebrates as Team Tyrants EV triumphs at Indian Karting Race-2024

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

GITAM Deemed to be University is celebrating a remarkable achievement by its Mechanical Engineering students. Team Tyrants EV, a group of talented engineering enthusiasts, has clinched a prestigious national award at the Indian Karting Race-2024, cementing their place among India's top young engineering minds.

The Indian Karting Race-2024 saw fierce competition, featuring 53 teams from some of the most renowned universities across the country. Despite the intense rivalry, Team Tyrants EV stood out due to their exceptional engi-



neering expertise and innovative vehicle design. The team spent four meticulous months designing and assembling their electric kart, which reflected not only technical skill but a profound understanding of advanced automotive engineering principles.

charge Vice-Chancellor of GITAM, shared his excitement about this victory: "This national award is a testament to GITAM's commitment to providing hands-on learning experiences. Our students' dedication, creativity, and technical expertise have truly shone through," he stated.

# 124 petitions received from public

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Officials in the NTR district received a total of 124 petitions during the Public Grievance Redressal System (PGRS) held at the Pingali Venkaiah Meeting Hall at the collectorate on Monday. The Revenue Department received 64 petitions, while the Police and the Municipal Administration and Urban Development departments received 15 each.

The session was chaired by Dr Nidhi Meena, the in-charge Collector. During the programme, Dr Meena emphasised the importance of officials gaining a clear understanding of the nature of the complaints in order to resolve them effectively. She stated that the public will be pleased when their petitions are fully addressed.

Upon receiving the petitions, she instructed the relevant officials to thoroughly study them and clarify the specific issues involved. Dr Meena further highlighted that the State government initiated this programme to address the problems faced by the public. She also suggested that officials should review the status of petitions that are pending resolution. Dr Meena explained that if officials provide permanent solutions to the public's petitions, the government's objectives will be achieved.

Other participants in the event included DRO M Lakshmi Narasimha, DRDA PD K Srinivasa Rao, DM & HO M Suhasini, Civil Supplies District Manager T Satish, and Horticulture Officer P Balaji Kumar.

# APTDC struggles to keep up while private operators flourish in Visakhapatnam

APTDC faces challenges of outdated infrastructure and limited promotion

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As the festive season is drawing thousands of tourists to the beautiful coastal city of Visakhapatnam, the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) has found itself grappling with the rising demand. Private tourism operators have seized the opportunity, offering tourists well-crafted packages and modern services, while APTDC is struggling to keep pace with its limited resources and outdated infrastructure.

"Our private packages are designed to offer tourists a comfortable and memorable experience," a representative from a prominent local travel agency shared. "We believe this enhances Visakhapatnam's appeal and attracts even more tourists, both domestic and international." In contrast,



APTDC's efforts have been stifled by a lack of effective promotion, which many believe is harming the city's tourism potential. "APTDC lacks even basic information centres outside railway stations and RTC bus complexes," noted a hospitality analyst. "Tourists are often unaware of the tours and accommodations offered, which impacts the entire district's appeal as a travel destination."

The corporation has also faced issues with its accommodation facilities. Key resorts,

such as the popular green resorts at Rushikonda, are no longer operational, and Yatrinivas at Appghar has been closed for modernisation for over two years. "We've tried to maintain a presence in the market, but with limited resources and aging facilities, it's challenging," admitted an APTDC staff member.

While APTDC does offer city tours and trips to popular destinations such as Araku and Lambasingi, their fleet faces limitations. Two buses

remain out of service due to needed repairs, and proposed improvements are yet to be approved. "We can only provide city tours or trips to popular locations," said an APTDC employee. "For anything beyond that, visitors must find their own transportation, often turning to private operators."

Private operators have capitalised on these gaps, providing a wide range of vehicles at competitive rates. APTDC's higher fares and lack of air conditioning in buses have made it a less attractive option for tourists. APTDC Chairman Balaji recently visited Visakhapatnam to review the situation. Expressing concern over the corporation's aging fleet and lack of promotional efforts, he urged the team to develop a strategy to attract tourists and compete with private operators effectively.

# Ancient Telugu inscription unearthed at Simhachalam temple

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a significant archaeological discovery, epigraphists from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) have unearthed a rare 16th-century Telugu inscription at the ancient Simhachalam temple near Visakhapatnam. The temple, a 13th-century Vaishnavism shrine dedicated to Varaha Lakshmi Nrusimha Swamy, has long been a revered pilgrimage site.

The newly found inscription, located above the statue of Lord Hanuman, sheds light on the temple's rich history and cultural connections. Dr MVR Varma, leading the ASI team from the Mysore branch, expressed excitement about the discovery. "This inscription adds another layer to our understanding of the Simhachalam temple's history and its regional cultural connections."

The inscription reveals that the Hanuman temple was constructed by a Kurma Mudali, son of Tammu Mudali, under the divine guidance of Lord Jagannath of Puri. This connection highlights the influence of the Eastern Ganga dynasty and the cultural exchange between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh

Expert says Mudalis, potters by origin from Odisha, likely collaborated with local Telugu speakers to engrave the inscription

during that period.

K. Sai Kumar, an INTACH volunteer, explained that the Mudalis, potters by origin from Odisha, likely collaborated with local Telugu speakers to engrave the inscription. "This inscription reflects the cultural exchange between regions and the Mudalis' devotion despite linguistic barriers," he noted.

As most inscriptions at Simhachalam are in Odiya, this Telugu inscription offers a unique glimpse into the temple's history and the diverse cultural influences that shaped it. As a prominent Narasimha shrine, Simhachalam continues to attract devotees and remains a vital pilgrimage site, preserving centuries of Vaishnavism tradition in the region.



Telugu inscription seen on the wall of the statue of Lord Hanuman

# Bridge under construction across Suddagadda stream: Dy CM Pawan

Launches a slew of developmental works in Pithapuram constituency

PNS ■ PITHAPURAM

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj K Pawan Kalyan has announced that a bridge across the Suddagadda stream is being constructed at a cost of Rs 4 crore.

Pawan Kalyan also officially launched various developmental works and inaugurated a science lab at the ZP High School on Monday.

Addressing a public meeting, the Deputy Chief Minister revealed plans to establish the Pithapuram Area Development Authority (PADA) for the overall development of Pithapuram town. He also stated that the 30-bed Pithapuram Primary Health Centre (PHC) would be upgraded to a 100-bed hospital, with estimations for this project submitted to the government at a cost of Rs 39.76 crore. Additionally, he announced the construction of a TTD Kalyanamandapam at U Kothapalli village at a cost of Rs 2 crore.

In response to concerns



raised by sericulture farmers, Pawan Kalyan mentioned that scientists from the AP State Sericulture Research and Development Institute in Hindupur have come to study the issue of silkworms not

producing cocoons, which has led to significant losses for farmers. He assured that the government is providing compensation for these losses. Pawan Kalyan committed to developing parks in

Pithapuram town at a cost of Rs 1 crore and promised to upgrade the government school in Chandurthi village to a high school. He highlighted that 223 CC roads are being constructed in the Pithapuram

constituency at a cost of Rs 14.48 crore.

He clarified that the construction of CC roads connecting to the highway would be undertaken at a cost of Rs 5.44 crore. He mentioned a drinking water supply project aimed at providing potable water to villages in U Kothapalli and Gollaprolu mandals, and stated that the Doodala Santha project would be modernised under the Comprehensive Product Welfare Scheme at a cost of Rs 1.43 crore. He added that an integrated social welfare building would be completed with an allocation of Rs 23 lakh and urged MLAs to visit social welfare hostels to understand and resolve the issues faced by the personnel.

Earlier, Pawan Kalyan inaugurated the science lab at the ZP Boys School in Gollaprolu and later interacted with 10th Class students, encouraging them to excel in their studies. In response to a request from the students, he assured them that a computer lab would be set up in the school.



## Controversy erupts as Ambati visits Tirumala with political sticker

**BJP MP CM Ramesh expressed outrage over Rambabu's action, condemning his disregard for TTD rules. Ramesh, who was also visiting Tirumala for darshan, stated, "It is outrageous for Ambati Rambabu to come to the Tirumala temple with a political party sticker in his pocket." He questioned Rambabu's respect for the temple, asserting that such actions reflect a lack of reverence for the sacred site.**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Ambati Rambabu has ignited controversy during his visit to the Tirumala temple for darshan of Lord Venkateswara on Monday. The YSRCP leader was seen wearing a shirt with a sticker featuring the photo of YSRCP president Jagan Mohan Reddy, in blatant violation of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) rules, which prohibit the display of political party symbols, flags, and stickers during temple visits.



ence for the sacred site.

Ramesh further insisted that individuals like Rambabu, who disrespect the sanctity of Tirumala, should not be allowed in the temple. He questioned how Rambabu could wear a sticker of someone who allegedly disrespects the temple's traditions. In light of the incident, CM Ramesh announced his intention to lodge a formal complaint with the TTD regarding Rambabu's conduct, emphasising the need to uphold the sanctity of the holy site.

BJP MP CM Ramesh expressed outrage over Rambabu's action, condemning his disregard for TTD rules. Ramesh, who was also visiting Tirumala for darshan, stated, "It is outrageous for Ambati Rambabu to come to the Tirumala temple with a political party sticker in his pocket." He questioned Rambabu's respect for the temple, asserting that such actions reflect a lack of reverence for the sacred site.

## 'Projects being successfully implemented despite financial struggles'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Labour, Factories, and Boilers & Insurance Medical Services and Krishna district in-charge Minister Vasumsetti Subhash, has stated that everyone should work together for the development of the district. Though the State's financial position is not good, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan are successfully implementing development and welfare programmes, he said.

Krishna district in-charge Minister Subhas conducted a review meeting at the Zilla Parishad Meeting Hall in Machilipatnam on Monday. Minister for Mines & Geology and Excise Kollu Ravindra Machilipatnam MP



Vallabhaneni Bala Shoury, APSRTC Chairman Konakalla Narayana Rao and other MLAs of the district were present. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Subhash said that the State government is aiming to provide 20 lakh jobs to the youths and for that, they are establishing Industrial Corridors in all 175 Assembly constituencies. CM Naidu had the vision to develop the IT sector to provide employment opportunities, he said. Alongside they are aiming to develop an Industrial Corridor at the Mallavalli Industrial area around 1,122 acres.

## True-up charges: CPM burns notification copies

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM) staged a protest at Governerpet in Vijayawada, where they burned copies of a notification from the Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulation Commission (APEREC) regarding additional true-up charges. The charges would impose an extra Rs. 11,000-crore burden on consumers, beyond a previously announced Rs. 6,072 crore, which led to the CPM's opposition.

CPM leaders, including State secretariat member Ch. Babu Rao and leaders Donepudi Kasinath, B Satya Babu, and K Sri Devi, criticised the additional charges and demanded that the government rescind this financial burden on the public. They

alleged that the TDP-led NDA government failed to honour its election promise to relieve the public of such charges. Babu Rao claimed that APERC's latest notification imposes an additional Rs.11,000 crore in true-up charges for the 2023-24 fiscal year, which the CPM sees as an undue burden.

Babu Rao called on the government to allocate special funds to the power sector to absorb these costs. He suggested that if funds aren't allocated, the State government should bear the financial impact rather than pass it on to the public. The CPM plans to continue its opposition with protests from November 8 to 14, culminating in demonstrations outside government offices on November 14, he said.



Kodala had a respectable place in TDP: Minister Gottipati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar has assured that the late Kodala Shiva Prasad will always hold a respected position within the Telugu Desam Party (TDP). He highlighted the invaluable contributions Kodala made to the party and pledged that his honour and dignity will remain intact. Speaking at a media briefing, Minister Ravi Kumar stressed that everyone in Palnadu district recognises Kodala's significance, stating there is no need for covert actions, such as installing his statue at midnight. He announced plans to formally honour Kodala Shiva Prasad by unveiling his statue with all necessary permissions in the presence of district leaders.

The Minister also expressed concern over certain forces attempting to create issues in this matter, asserting that the party will not tolerate any actions that could harm its interests for selfish political gains.

## Kishan Reddy has no Telangana in his DNA: Ponnam Prabhakar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Do geographical preferences come encoded in a person's DNA? Keeping aside science, Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnam Prabhakar on Monday commented that Union Minister of Coal and Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy had 'no Telangana in his DNA', adding: "Kishan Reddy would have done something for Telangana if he had Telangana in his DNA."

Ponnam Prabhakar claimed that Kishan Reddy could become BJP Telangana unit president on the advice of former chief minister K

Chandrasekhar Rao. Ponnam Prabhakar observed: "Should we keep quiet if such a leader criticizes the Congress government? I demand Kishan Reddy to tell us to what he has done for the sake of Telangana before questioning the Congress government? Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay have to tell what they have done for Telangana over the last 10 years."

During his chat with scribes on Monday, Minister Ponnam Prabhakar lamented that the Centre gave mere Rs.400 crore, though the State government had submitted a report on Rs.10,000 crore loss caused by floods to Union

Agriculture Minister Shivaraj Chouhan.

Ponnam Prabhakar said that Bharat Rashtra Samithi leaders were provoking people living on the banks of the Musi River. However, Congress leaders would go to people along the Musi after BRS leaders' programme. He alleged that BRS was a party that would "collect money on dead bodies". However, the Congress was a party whose leaders had sacrificed their lives for the sake of nation. Ponnam Prabhakar said, "BRS speaking about sarparches' pending bills is akin to 'a cat going on pilgrimage after eating 100 rats'. The leaders who were



the reason for the suicides of sarparches are staging dharnas. The sarparches' dharnas are a reflection of the sins committed by the previous BRS government. The Congress government has guaranteed payment of pending bills of sarparches and urged them not to fall in the trap of political parties. There is no need to get agitated".



## Dr NTPS officials hand over cheque for Rs 4 Cr to Collector

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Following the directives of KVN Chakradhar Babu, Managing Director of APGENCO, officials from APGENCO and the Dr Narla Tata Rao Thermal Power Station (Dr NTPS) in Ibrahimpatnam have presented a cheque for Rs. 4 crore to Dr Nidhi Meena, the NTR District Collector in charge. This contribution was given as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme.

They urged the Collector to use these funds to implement CSR activities in the surrounding villages of Dr NTPS like Kondapalli, Ibrahimpatnam, Elaprolu, Guntupalli, Juppudi, Tummalapalem, Mulapadu

and Kelesapuram. They further said that various activities like plantation, medical and veterinary camps are being conducted regularly in the surrounding villages in addition to depositing CSR funds with the Collector.

They have also informed that all the measures are being taken to minimise the pollution by carrying out an overhaul of the balance three units as per schedule based on grid demand. Later, Collector Nidhi Meena appreciated the steps by APGENCO and Dr NTPS for supporting the CSR programme in the districts. NTR District Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Y Srilatha, Dr NTPS Superintending Engineer (SE, Civil) ChV Ramana Murthy and others were present.

## YSRCP stands in support of social media activists

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP State general secretary Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy has emphasised the party's strong commitment to protecting social media activists facing false cases and harassment.

In a teleconference with party leaders and coordinators, he highlighted the spike in cases of targeting social media activists by the TDP coalition government as part of a deliberate effort to suppress their voices and prevent them from exposing government failures.

He stressed the importance of supporting activists who challenge false propaganda and promote public awareness. He added that party chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has directed the party to stand by social media activists, ensuring they felt secure and backed by YSRCP.

Constituency coordinators were asked to assure activists of the party's support and to quickly respond when assistance is needed, including providing legal backing. Sajjala mentioned that the YSRCP legal cell and district teams are prepared to act swiftly in cases of harassment.

## Minister urges rice millers to help combat illegal export of PDS rice

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Civil Supplies Nadenla Manohar has sought the cooperation of rice millers to curb the illegal transport and export of rice meant for the Public Distribution System (PDS).

Addressing a meeting organised by the Federation of All India Rice Millers Association on Monday, he urged rice millers to work together in checking the illegal export of PDS rice. He assured them that their issues would be resolved and recalled that the proposal to reduce the market cess on rice millers from 2 percent to 1 percent is currently under consideration. Welcoming the initiative to hold a meeting for all rice millers to discuss their concerns, Nadenla Manohar praised them for establishing rice mills in rural areas and providing employment to local communities. "Let us discuss and study the possibility of a Uniform Policy regarding the export, transport, and sale of rice in the country," he stated.

The Minister noted that there



are over 1,550 rice mills in the state and criticised the previous YSRCP regime for leaving Rs 41,150 crore in arrears to the incumbent government. He pointed out that despite the Civil Supplies department's turnover being Rs 19,800 crore, the previous government failed to disburse the required payments.

"The NDA government has disbursed Rs 1,674 crore to farmers for their paddy produce purchased by the government. We have taken steps to ensure that farmers receive payments within 24 hours of selling their paddy," he remarked. He also acknowledged the cooperation of rice millers in supplying rice to flood-affected victims.

# Elephant rescue centre proposal in Parvathipuram Manyam hits a roadblock

PNS ■ PARVATHIPURAM

The escalating man-elephant conflict in Manyam district has sparked concerns over the need for a dedicated elephant rescue center. However, the ambitious project faces significant hurdles due to the lack of suitable land. To address the issue, forest department officials from Vizianagaram, Manyam, and Srikakulam districts recently visited the Elephant Conservation and Care Centre (ECCC) in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh. The aim was to study the facility's operations and explore the feasibility of establishing a similar center in the region.

A herd of elephants migrating from Odisha has settled in the district's forests, leading to frequent incursions into human settlements. Currently,

11 elephants are roaming across two locations, causing significant damage to crops and posing a threat to human life. "One group of seven elephants is moving around Dibagudivalasa village, while another four elephants are near Jamiguda village," said GAP Prasuna, District Forest Officer, Parvathipuram Manyam. The department has urged residents to maintain a safe distance of at least 300 meters from the elephants and avoid venturing into fields when the animals are nearby.

A senior forest official emphasized the need for at least 1,000 acres of suitable land for the proposed rescue center. "We have scouted various areas but haven't found an appropriate location," the official said. To manage the situation, the Karnataka gov-



ernment has pledged to send trained 'Kumki' elephants and mahouts to AP. These ele-

phants are trained to interact with and guide wild elephants, potentially aiding in crowd

control and conflict reduction. The department has also warned against the dangerous

practice of villagers gathering to view and feed the elephants. "Forest officials are risking their lives to monitor these animals, but it's difficult to ensure villagers' safety without their cooperation," Prasuna said.

The department is working to sensitize communities about best practices in elephant-prone areas. However, a collaborative approach involving local law enforcement and community leaders is crucial to prevent further escalation of the conflict. Section 144 of the CrPC may be enforced in affected areas to deter large gatherings. As the search for suitable land continues, the urgent need for a comprehensive strategy involving all stakeholders remains paramount to address the growing human-elephant conflict.

ACROSS THE STATES



Goa will be ready to host IFFI: CM

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Monday said that the preparations for the upcoming International Film Festival of India (IFFI) are in the final stages and are expected to be complete by November 15. The 55th edition of IFFI will be held in Goa from November 20 to November 28. "We will be ready to host the festival by November 15. I will chair a meeting on November 18 to review the preparations," Sawant told reporters. As an added attraction, the chief minister said the government will hold a special float parade on November 22 to showcase the best of Shigmo and Carnival, two of the prominent festivals in the coastal state. The float parade will start from Kala Academy and will take the route alongside River Mandovi, he added. Sawant said the Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG) will be the nodal agency to host IFFI in association with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Till date, 3,659 people have registered online as delegates for the festival, he said.



3 staffers held for Rs 31 L robbery at credit society

Three employees were arrested for allegedly stealing cash and gold cumulatively valued at more than Rs 31 lakh from a cooperative credit society in Maharashtra's Jalna city, a police official said on Monday. The theft of Rs 11.56 lakh cash and gold worth Rs 19.76 lakh at Aditya Urban Cooperative Credit Society in Old Monda area took place on October 31 and was discovered on Sunday, the official said. "Our probe zeroed in on the cooperative society's cashier Govardhan Savade (22), clerk Laxman Dongre (26) and peon Jagdish Lolewar (21). The accused have confessed to carrying out the crime to pay off loans obtained by mortgaging fake gold," the Sadar Bazar police station official said. "They broke the bank's shutter and opened the locker using firecrackers. They also destroyed the fake gold. Further probe into the incident is underway," he added.



After grenade attack, security beefed up in Srinagar

Security was beefed up in Srinagar city on Monday, a day after a grenade attack near a market left 11 people injured, officials said. Terrorists lobbed a grenade at a CRPF bunker near the crowded flea market in the heart of the city here on Sunday. The attack came a day after security forces eliminated a top Pakistani commander of the Lashkar-e-Taiba in downtown Srinagar. "After yesterday's attack, the security apparatus has been beefed up. We have heightened security, especially since the assembly session began today," an official said. Checkpoints have been put in place across the city, especially at all the entry and exit points, and random frisking and checking of people and vehicles is being undertaken, the official said. Mobile vehicle checkpoints have also been established while security forces are undertaking area domination exercises and maintaining a strong vigil in the sensitive areas of the city, he said. Deployment of security forces personnel has been increased around vital installations and sensitive areas, especially where the presence of non-locals is high, the official said.

Modi: Congress will snatch reservation from tribals

PNS ■ RANCHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday accused the Congress of making attempts to snatch reservations meant for tribals and hand them over to its "vote bank".

Addressing an election rally in Chaibasa in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district, the PM said he worships those who have been rejected by the others.

"Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar has ensured the provision of reservation to protect tribal rights but Nehru-ji had opposed it. The Gandhi family opposed reservation till they were in control of power post-Nehru. Now once again they have openly announced that they will scrap reservations for tribals. They will snatch tribal reservations and hand it over to their vote bank," he said.

"They (Congress) have devised one more strategy. They are declaring schools, colleges and universities as minority institutions. By this, the reservation of tribals, Dalits and backward castes is being stopped. Beware of this conspiracy by Congress," he added.

Modi alleged that the JMM-led ruling coalition in the state has put tribal "identity, dignity and existence" at stake by "facilitating" Bangladeshi infiltrators to make fake documents.



"Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar has ensured the provision of reservation to protect tribal rights but Nehru-ji had opposed it. The Gandhi family opposed reservation till they were in control of power post-Nehru. Now once again they have openly announced that they will scrap reservations for tribals. They will snatch tribal reservations and hand it over to their vote bank," he said.

"Infiltrators are snatching your daughters, grabbing land and devouring your bread," he said, claiming that efforts were being made to change

Jharkhand's demography. The PM said that if the BJP is voted to power in the state, it will bring stringent legislation to return land grabbed by infiltrators. Panchayats would be

strengthened through the implementation of the Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act, he said.

Modi also attacked the Congress-led opposition for "humiliating" BJP candidate Sita Soren in Jharkhand and a woman leader in Maharashtra, saying "insulting women is their habit".

He was referring to Congress minister Irfan Ansari's derogatory remarks against Sita Soren, the sister-in-law of Chief Minister Hemant Soren who joined the BJP recently.

Modi also targeted the chief minister for remaining silent on the issue.

'JK govt to make all efforts for restoration of full statehood'

Says LG Sinha in address to Assembly



PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha assured the newly elected legislative assembly on Monday that the Omar Abdullah government will make all efforts to restore full statehood and constitutional guarantees to the state.

Restoration of full statehood and constitutional guarantees would be a "befitting reciprocation" of the faith reposed by the people of Jammu and Kashmir in democratic institutions, he said in his maiden address to the assembly.

Sinha said the government is "fully geared up to realise" the hopes and expectations of people. In the backdrop of the demand for restoration of statehood, the LG said that this aspiration remained strong, pointing out that Prime Minister

Narendra Modi had, on several occasions, expressed his commitment to it.

"The Council of Ministers of Jammu and Kashmir has recently passed a unanimous resolution calling for the immediate restoration of statehood. This resolution reflects the collective will of the elected representatives, echoing the aspirations of the people for the reinstatement of full democratic governance.

"My government will make all efforts for restoration of full statehood and constitutional guarantees available to the state. It would be a befitting reciprocation of the faith reposed by the people of Jammu and Kashmir in our democratic institutions," he said in the ceremonial speech that puts forward the government's agenda and is cleared by the cabinet.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Expressing serious concern over high pollution levels in Delhi during Diwali festival, the Supreme Court took exception to the violation of court orders and said its directives on firecrackers ban were "hardly implemented".

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih referred to newspaper reports mentioning a considerable violation of court orders and sought the Delhi government's

'Firecracker ban hardly implemented'

SC expresses concern over Delhi's pollution level



response on "perpetual ban" on firecrackers in the national capital. The top court asked the Delhi government and the police on the steps that were taken to implement the orders completely banning manufacture, sale and bursting of firecrackers in the

national capital and the action they have taken against the violators.

"We want the Delhi government to immediately respond as to why this has happened. We want all the orders to be placed on record banning the sale,

manufacture and bursting of firecrackers in Delhi. "We are also issuing notice to the Delhi police commissioner on the action police has taken so far against the violators and the steps it is taking to implement the orders of the court," the bench said. It

directed the Delhi government and police commissioner to file their responses within a week saying, "there cannot be any dispute that the orders of the court banning firecrackers were hardly implemented".

"Firecracker bursting was the major cause of pollution during Diwali and if the orders of the court are not implemented, it will be a chaotic situation," the bench told Additional Solicitor General Archana Pathak Dave, appearing for the Centre, and the counsel for Delhi government.

Women playing key role in civil aviation: Murmu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Monday said women are playing a key role in various operational and technical areas in the country's civil aviation sector.

Interacting with a group of women achievers in the Indian aviation sector at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here, she emphasised that along with increasing the participation of women in the aviation industry, equal opportunities moving forward in this field are also necessary, an official statement said.

Murmu said apart from education and proper training, the support of family members is also important, it said.

"It is often seen that many women are not able to fulfil their dreams even after receiving higher education due to a lack of support from the family," the president was quoted as having said in the statement issued by her office.

She urged the women achievers to become guides for other women and encourage them to choose their careers and realise their dreams, the statement said.

According to the president, women are playing a key role



in various operational and technical areas in India's civil aviation sector.

The meeting took place under the 'President with the People' initiative which aims to establish a deeper connect with people and recognise their contributions, the statement said.

Murmu said, "Fifteen per cent of Air Traffic Controllers are women, 11 per cent of flight dispatchers are women, and 9 per cent of aerospace engineers are women".

She also noted that 18 per cent of pilots who received commercial licenses last year were women.

The president appreciated all women achievers who think innovatively and dare to tread new paths.

MUDA CASE

Lokayukta police summon K'taka CM for questioning

PNS ■ MYSURU

The Lokayukta police have summoned Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for questioning in the MUDA site allotment case on November 6, official sources said on Monday.

They had on October 25 questioned his wife Parvathi B M, who is also an accused in the case.

"We asked him to appear on Wednesday morning," a senior Lokayukta official said.

The CM is facing allegations of illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

Reacting to Lokayukta police summons, Siddaramaiah, speaking to reporters in Haveri district, said: "I will go..."

Siddaramaiah, his wife, brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy and Devaraju -- from whom Swamy had purchased a land and gifted it to Parvathi -- and others have been named in the FIR registered by the Mysuru-located Lokayukta police establishment on September 27. Swamy and Devaraju have also been named in the Lokayukta police



Siddaramaiah, his wife, brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy and Devaraju -- from whom Swamy had purchased a land and gifted it to Parvathi -- and others have been named in the FIR registered by the Mysuru-located Lokayukta police establishment on September 27. Swamy and Devaraju have also been named in the Lokayukta police

decision of a single judge bench in connection with the MUDA site allotment case that had come as a setback to him.

The bench of Justice M Nagaprasanna had on

September 24 dismissed the CM's petition challenging Governor Thawarchand Gehlot's approval for a probe against him in the case, observing that the gubernatorial order nowhere "suffers from want of application of mind".

Siddaramaiah had challenged the legality of Gehlot's sanction for the investigation against him in the alleged irregularities in the allotment of 14 sites by MUDA in a prime locality.

Following the High Court order, a Special Court here on the very next day had ordered a Lokayukta police probe against Siddaramaiah, and directed to file the investigation report by December 24.

The Special Court exclusively to deal with criminal cases related to former and elected MPs/MLAs had issued the order directing the Lokayukta police in Mysuru to initiate an investigation on the complaint filed by RTI activist Snehamayi Krishna.

Parvathi, meanwhile, had written to MUDA to cancel 14 sites allotted to her and the MUDA had accepted it.

On September 30, the ED filed an enforcement case information report (ECIR) to book the CM and others taking cognisance of the Lokayukta FIR.



'India fast jettisoning colonial mindset'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Monday said India is fast jettisoning its colonial mindset by defying colonial-era ideas and symbols, and it was time the public administration had Indian characteristics aligned with the country's post-Independence aspirations.

Addressing the 70th annual meeting of the general body of Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) here, Dhankhar said, "Indian public administration should have Indian characteristics distanced from colonial mindset aligning with our aspirations post-Independence."

He said India is now defying the earlier deified colonial ideas and symbols. King's Way is now Kartavya Path and Race Course Road is Lok Kalyan Marg, he said.

"Netaji now stands in the canopy where once King George's statue was there. The ensign of India Navy was changed to include our tricolour and 1,500 colonial-era statues are not on the law book anymore," he said.

The new criminal laws — Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) — have unshackled Indian criminal justice system from colonial legacy, Dhankhar pointed out.

India, he said, is quickly jettisoning the colonial mindset. "Now you do not need English to learn medicine or technology," he added.

He said our public administration will be out of sync with the national mood and spirit if it does not imbibe these values.

Study links PM2.5 component with poor memory in children

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Exposure to ammonium nitrate, a key component of PM2.5 pollution and a product of agricultural emissions, has been found to affect learning ability and memory in children, according to a new study.

The chemical is formed when ammonia gas -- released from agricultural activities -- reacts with nitric acid produced after burning fossil fuels.

Previous studies have found ammonium nitrate to heighten risk of ageing-related conditions such as Alzheimer's and dementia -- in which cognition and memory is affected, suggesting that long-term exposure to

PM2.5 can cause neurocognitive harm across one's lifespan.

A critical measure of air quality, PM2.5 is a mixture of dust, soot, organic compounds and metals, a particle of which is below 2.5 micrometres in diameter. It is known to travel deep into the lungs, from where it can enter the bloodstream and then pass through the highly selective blood-brain barrier, thereby causing serious health problems.

In a 2020 study, a team including researchers from the University of Southern California (USC), US, looked at PM2.5 as a whole and found no potential impact on children's cognition.

However, this study, conducted by the same team and pub-



A critical measure of air quality, PM2.5 is a mixture of dust, soot, organic compounds and metals, a particle of which is below 2.5 micrometres in diameter. It is known to travel deep into the lungs, from where it can enter the bloodstream and then pass through the highly selective blood-brain barrier, thereby causing serious health problems

lished in the journal Environmental Health Perspectives, analysed 15 chemicals constituting PM2.5 and

thus, ammonium nitrate emerged as a "prime suspect".

Based on residential addresses of nearly 8,600 children, aged

9-11 years, from across the country, the researchers used spatio-temporal models to analyse year-

ly levels of exposure to PM2.5

components.

"No matter how we examined it, on its own or with other pollutants, the most robust finding was that ammonium nitrate particles were linked to poorer learning and memory. That suggests that overall PM2.5 is one thing, but for cognition, it's a mixture effect of what you're exposed to," study author Megan Herting, a professor of population and public health sciences at USC, said.

Further, "understanding these nuances is crucial for informing air quality regulations and understanding long-term neurocognitive effects," Herting said.

The study added to mounting evidence that has shown PM2.5

pollution to be detrimental to memory and cognition for people of all ages.

"Mixture modelling revealed cumulative negative associations between chemical components of PM2.5 and children's cognitive performance across all three cognitive domains, with the greatest contributions from ammonium, nitrates, potassium, silicon, and calcium," the authors wrote.

"Building upon a decade of research suggesting that PM2.5 exposure is detrimental to cognition, this work links childhood exposure to PM2.5 source mixtures to individual differences in cognition at 9-10 years of age," they wrote.



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

## Smogged capital!

Delhi's air has taken a hazardous turn with the city enveloped in a thick blanket of smog and the AQI reaching alarming levels

Delhi's pollution levels have once again reached alarming highs, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) crossing the 400 mark just two days after Diwali. As of Sunday morning, the city witnessed hazardous air conditions, recording AQI values that are 65 times above the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended limits. The city's air quality entered the "hazardous" category as a thick blanket of smog descended. For context, an AQI level above 450 is classified as 'severe-plus,' posing serious health risks, especially for vulnerable populations like children, the elderly and individuals with respiratory issues. On Saturday night, Delhi's AQI stood at 327, but within just 12 hours, it shot up to 447, marking a significant spike. This worsening air quality is not limited to isolated pockets of the city; regions across Delhi-NCR, including Jahangirpuri, Mundka, Narela and Sonia Vihar, also recorded dangerously high levels.

Many people reported respiratory issues due to the poor air quality and eye irritation, a direct effect of the dense smog. These symptoms highlight the immediate health repercussions of Delhi's worsening air quality, especially after Diwali. Firecrackers during Diwali celebrations have a substantial impact on Delhi's air quality. The smoke and particulate matter released from fireworks contain pollutants like sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide and heavy metals that remain suspended in the air, exacerbating pollution levels. The annual agricultural practice of stubble burning in neighbouring states, including Punjab and Haryana, contributes to Delhi's smog. Its persistence remains a critical factor in the air quality crisis. During winter, Delhi's colder temperatures and lack of

strong winds trap pollutants close to the ground. This natural 'trapping effect' worsens in the days following Diwali as pollutants from firecrackers and stubble burning accumulate in the air, creating hazardous conditions. In an effort to tackle this recurring issue, the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP-II) was implemented in Delhi-NCR starting October 21, following the dip in air quality to the 'Very Poor' category. This plan mandates restrictions on activities that contribute to pollution, such as construction and industrial operations. However, despite GRAP-II's implementation, the AQI remains alarmingly high, showing the need for stricter enforcement and possibly, more robust solutions to address the city's persistent air quality issues. Delhi's post-Diwali pollution crisis is a reminder of the complex and multifaceted nature of air quality management. Efforts to control pollution through initiatives like GRAP and public awareness campaigns have had limited success, underscoring the need for more effective and sustained interventions. A multi-pronged approach involving stricter restrictions on firecrackers, better stubble management practices, and real-time pollution control is essential to bring lasting improvement to Delhi's air quality. As Delhi faces yet another winter of hazardous air, urgent, long-term solutions are crucial to protect the health and wellbeing of its citizens.

### PICTALK



People purchase bamboo baskets and other items ahead of the 'Chhath Puja,' in Gurugram

# Providing a fulcrum for the new global order



SUDHIR HINDWAN

The Indo-US partnership stands out as a stabilising force, rooted in shared democratic values and a commitment to security, peace and technological progress

The global power structure has undergone profound changes, shifting from the Cold War's rigid bipolarity to an era of unipolar dominance, and now, to a complex multipolar framework. This transition has amplified the voices of countries that were once sidelined, making their contributions essential to shaping international relations. For a stable and cooperative world, active participation from all nations is necessary in this evolving paradigm of global politics.

A key relationship in this multipolar world is the strengthening bond between India and the United States, founded on shared respect and strategic interests. Over the past decade, their alliance has evolved significantly, propelled by a common vision for regional stability and global security. Regions like West Asia and conflicts like Russia-Ukraine illustrate how global geopolitical tensions are often rooted in complex interplays of power, ideology, and rivalry. Maintaining peace requires transparent diplomacy, cooperation, and trust-based dialogue among nations. To sustain global stability, countries must collaborate on critical fronts such as climate action, renewable energy, and technological innovation.

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is an example of how emerging powers are asserting influence, sparking responses from other nations. India's growing partnership with the US stands as a stabilising counterforce in this landscape. Key agreements like the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) have enhanced defense and data-sharing capabilities, primarily to counter security threats in the Indo-Pacific region. Additionally, India and the US have institutionalised their cooperation through strategic initiatives like the 2+2 Dialogue, a platform that enables regular high-level discussions and reinforces a multi-layered security partnership. These collaborations reflect the importance of joint efforts in combating modern challenges, from chemical weapons control to



counter-terrorism initiatives, underscoring the need for stringent international regulations.

The role of smaller nations is also evolving within this multipolar order. These countries are adapting to shifting global dynamics, often requiring support from larger nations for economic, strategic and cultural integration. India's growing recognition as a mediator in international disputes, as seen in its balanced stance on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, reflects its increasing diplomatic stature. This approach not only underlines India's commitment to global peace but also highlights its ability to bridge divides as a neutral party.

With an evolving international landscape, new security frameworks and collaborative information-sharing networks have become critical for countering emerging threats. India's active role in tackling these challenges showcases the potential of soft diplomacy. This diplomatic approach resonates with India's cultural philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (One Earth, One Family), which advocates for inclusive governance and unity. This ethos aligns well with the India-US partnership, which is also rooted in shared democratic values and mutual respect for sov-



IN AN ERA WHERE POWER IS INCREASINGLY DISPERSED, THE INDO-US RELATIONSHIP REFLECTS A PROACTIVE RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED BY MULTIPOLARITY

eighty. Recent technological agreements, including the US support for the production of F414 engines, advanced drones, and fighter jet components in India, symbolise the strides both countries are making toward a robust defense alliance. Such agreements not only solidify defense cooperation but also pave the way for smoother technology transfers.

Beyond defense, India and the US are deepening cooperation in areas like artificial intelligence (AI) and information technology (IT), underscoring India's expanding role in global tech markets. Indian companies, particularly in the IT sector, have successfully established a presence in international markets, creating jobs, fostering trade, and contributing to the US economy. With an Indian diaspora of about 5.6 million living, working, and studying in the US, these contributions further strengthen the economic ties and cultural connections between the two democracies. This vibrant Indian-American community enhances mutual understanding and shared aspirations between the two nations, fostering a unique bond that complements strategic cooperation.

The Indo-US partnership holds strategic importance not only for bilateral benefits

but also as a pillar for building broader international coalitions to address global security threats. As two of the world's largest democracies, India and the US are in a unique position to lead efforts against transnational terrorism and other pressing security issues. By jointly developing a forward-looking security framework, both countries can drive global initiatives for peace and stability. Through shared commitments, this alliance has the potential to shape a diplomatic roadmap that champions prosperity, security, and harmony on a global scale.

In an era where power is increasingly dispersed, the Indo-US relationship reflects a proactive response to the challenges and opportunities presented by multipolarity. As both nations continue to strengthen their alliance, they contribute not only to their own security but also to a collective effort aimed at promoting peace, economic stability, and shared progress. This partnership is more than just a bilateral relationship; it embodies the hope for a cooperative, resilient global order that values inclusive growth and sustainable peace.

(The author, a recipient of the Bharat Gaurav Award, is a professor and expert in strategic affairs; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### EDUCATION SYSTEM REVAMP

Madam — The article 'Reforming India's education...' (November 2) presents suggestions that could be considered positively. The education system we had for long could produce creative brains and talents that have been absorbed by the knowledge and talent seeking institutions all over the world. Most of the scientists and technocrats contributing to most inventions and developments in various countries are Indians, who had their basic education in India. The country is caught in the grip of confusion over the type of education we need to provide to our students.

The act of leaving education to market forces dominated by avaricious private players has converted the essence of education from learning to just scoring high marks, which helps in gaining seats in educational institutions and nothing more. The cream is able to gain placement in the IT sector, and the rest are left to be satisfied with a degree that cannot fetch them a job. It is all the more a serious concern that now the system is made to suffer the onslaughts of the communal flare ignited in every sphere of life. As a result, those who have a degree but no employable skill are taken up for infusing skills in them to make them employable. We need to wait and see how this is going to yield the desired result. It is time to leave education to the States to compete themselves in creating skilled and knowledgeable forces for mutual benefit.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

### INDIA-CANADA TENSIONS

Madam — Apropos of 'MEA summons Canadian diplomat' (November 3), Canada's baseless and unsubstantiated allegations against Union Home Minister Amit Shah under pressure from Khalistani extremists, have taken Indo-Canadian diplomatic relations to a new low. The surveillance of the Indian diplomats in Canada is beyond all diplomatic norms and is illegal. Even earlier, Canada failed and refused to provide any proof or congenial evidence of India's involvement in Canada-based Khalistani extremist Nijjar's murder.

## Toxic work culture



The recent tragic death of a 26-year-old Chartered Accountant from Kerala working in a MNC in Pune has reignited discussions about exploitative work conditions prevalent in many Indian organisations. In fact, her mother wrote a letter to the chairman of the company, blaming the toxic work environment as the reason for her daughter's death. The woman's case is not an isolated

incident. Stories of young professionals suffering from burnout, stress and even physical collapse due to inhumane work hours are becoming disturbingly common in India.

While many Indian companies boast of initiatives aimed at employees' engagement and their wellbeing, these things appear to be at the surface level, failing to bring meaningful change to daily work experiences. While many issues can play a role in attributing to toxic workplace cultures, the most pervasive is weak leadership. In the pursuit of chasing profits, companies often overlook the human cost of overworking employees. Meaningful change is urgently needed to address the exploitative practices rampant in Indian MNCs.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Urapakkam

No terrorist or extremist organisation activates itself or indulges in separatist, destructive or terrorist activities without state support and sponsorship. Pakistan is the best example of such state-sponsored terrorist organisations. Justin Trudeau is facing fierce opposition within its ranks and in the country while the parliamentary elections are approaching fast. Khalistani extremists do have some political support in India, but such political parties and leaders miserably lost elections in recent Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. It is very strange that anti-India Khalistani extremists have no support in India and are not relevant for Canada too, so Justin Trudeau's support for them is highly undiplomatic and unbefitting of his Government. The large Indian diaspora in Canada may not be favourable of their Khalistani support.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

### NEW ZEALAND'S CLEAN SWEEP

Madam — This is one of the most humiliating defeats for team India at home and Skipper Rohit Sharma can't have any

excuse for this shocking performance of the players and especially the batters. Full credit goes to New Zealand for their absolute commitment and application in all departments of the game and Captain Latham led by example with his cool strategies to record 3-0 by cleanly whitewashed India. The Indian batters who have taken their place for granted so far played miserable throughout the series.

The performances of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli were crestfallen and we don't see any kind of seriousness from them in the middle to realise the match situation. After their dismal outcome at Bengaluru and Pune, when the fans expected a turnaround at Mumbai by expecting the captain to stay in the middle for longer, the post-match press conference for Rohit became longer than the time he spent at the wicket, which was a very sorry affair and a huge disappointment for the Indian fans across the nation.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## Finding strength in the face of life's deepest sorrows



SANJAY CHANDRA

Adversities are integral to our lives. However, we possess a wellspring of strength that enables us to recover and move on

First read about resilience in my physics classes in school as the ability of a material to absorb energy and release back that energy as it springs back to its original shape.

Later, I understood a third element, the ability to spring back without creating a permanent distortion. Human resilience is no different. I have met many people who bounced back. I then understood its meaning in daily life. It was about humans and their strength to face adversities and move forward with renewed vigour. I remember an incident from almost four decades back.

I was only 26-years-old. My colleague was 56. His only child, a son around my age, died in a boat accident while on vacation with his friends in the Sundarbans. I went with my wife to condole and realised that words were superfluous. What do you tell an old couple who had just lost their only child? I had tears in my eyes, and I found the gentleman consoling me instead. He sought solace



and strength from the scriptures.

Another colleague lost her 41-year-old son. She wanted to write about it, had even tried multiple times, but could not bring herself to articulate her feelings. I encouraged her to write. She shared her innermost thoughts, 'A woman goes through severest of physical pains and mental suffering through labour pain at the time of her child's birth. This is the natural cycle of life.

But what is unnatural is when this cycle of life breaks due to the untimely death of the younger per-

son, whom the woman had given birth to, and nurtured, to become a good and strong human being to face the world.'

The lady now lives through her son's memories. She also expresses her emotions by writing poetry or short stories. This is her way of coming out of her traumatic experience and honouring her son's life. Another lady that I recently interviewed for an episode of a virtual show lost her young son of 22 a few years back. She 'transcended' her grief cherishing the fond memories of a limited time spent together. She helps others transform their grief into growth.

The loss of a child is probably the most difficult form of adversity. We face challenges and find the inner strength to deal with them. There are a few, who unfortunately are not able to cope, and sometimes take extreme steps.

There are also a few people who may require additional medical help to deal with feelings of depression. Above all, they require love

and support from the near and dear ones. Each human is a wellspring of resilience. All that is needed is to tap within and for others to help. We may adopt a few lessons from the lives of resilient persons. They believe they are masters of their destiny, they are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, they adapt to situations, they do not obsess over factors over which they do not have control, they are optimists and many more.

However, resilience does not require us to present a brave facade at all times. It is also important to create a social environment and not hesitate to seek help. I close the article, with a prayer that all of us find the courage to be resilient, and with a quote from Emil Dorian, a Romanian poet, prose writer, and physician, "Strong people alone know how to organise their suffering so as to bear only the most necessary pain."

(The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)



## FIRST COLUMN BUILDING WORKPLACE RESILIENCE

Resilience is more than just bouncing back from setbacks; it's about adapting and staying steady



SAKSHI SETHI

Quite often we come up with research studies that state that employees with access to mental health resources, such as counselling and stress management programmes, reported higher resilience levels while those who received mindfulness training and stress-reduction workshops were better equipped to handle workplace challenges, leading to lower absenteeism and higher engagement. But the question arises are we workplace resilient? In today's fast-paced and often unpredictable business environment, resilience has become a critical quality for both organisations as well as individuals.

The term resilience usually refers to something more than just the ability to bounce back. It is the ability to adapt to challenges, recover from setbacks and maintain a steady course even in times of uncertainty. It is an adaptive skill that enables employees to handle stress and maintain productivity under pressure. Effective resilience management helps businesses not only survive but thrive during challenging periods by fostering a resilient workforce that can navigate complex and shifting landscapes.

The need for resilience, in recent years, has undoubtedly become increasingly evident due to factors such as economic fluctuations, organisational restructuring and external crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. The ability to manage resilience allows organisations to build a workforce that can handle continuous change without compromising the wellbe-



ing of employees or the quality of work. Resilient employees contribute to a positive workplace culture by handling stress effectively and collaborating with others to solve problems. They also tend to show higher levels of job satisfaction, reduced burnout and a greater sense of purpose in their roles. These attributes are beneficial not only to the individual but to the organisation, as resilient employees contribute to a stronger, more cohesive team dynamic.

Several approaches such as encouraging a positive work culture; providing access to training and development; promoting work-life balance and encouraging team cohesion and collaboration can help organisations promote resilience at both individual as well as organisational levels. Only when employees feel valued and supported, they are more likely to develop a strong sense of belonging and purpose. An environment where employees feel safe to express concerns and seek help when needed promotes emotional resilience. Additionally, professional development opportunities build confidence, thereby helping employees feel more competent and ready to face obstacles.

Leadership plays a crucial role in resilience management. On the other hand, leaders too, who show resilience, especially during challenging times, inspire confidence in their teams can also provide the necessary guidance, recognise stress signs early on, and take action to support struggling employees. Resilient leaders foster a growth mindset within their teams, viewing setbacks as learning opportunities rather than failures.

Only fostering a team-based environment where collaboration and mutual support are encouraged enables employees to rely on one another in times of need. When employees trust their teammates, they are more likely to share concerns, ask for help and aid others, which collectively contributes to a resilient workforce. In conclusion, managing resilience in the workplace is essential for creating a thriving, adaptable, and supportive work environment. Investing in resilience is ultimately an investment in organisational success and individual wellbeing. By prioritising resilience, businesses will be better prepared to face future challenges, ensuring a sustainable and positive work environment.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

# India's gold repatriation: Safeguarding India's wealth



SHIVAJI SARKAR

India has taken a bold step by repatriating 214 tonnes of gold from the Bank of England, signalling a strategic move to protect national wealth against global shock



In a striking move to safeguard national wealth, India has repatriated 214 tonnes of gold from the vaults of England, a signal of heightened concern over escalating geopolitical tensions and looming sanctions. This shift reflects a broader trend, with central banks globally ramping up their gold purchases.

In May alone, India recalled 100 tonnes from the Bank of England, reinforcing a strategy to shield assets amid global uncertainty. Now, as global gold prices soar toward a potential \$3,000 per ounce, the world is watching closely, with India emerging as a key player in the race to secure precious metals in these volatile times. The government of India has decided to prioritise protecting its assets in the face of global geopolitical unrest. About 100 tonnes were returned from the Bank of England in May.

A total of 324.01 metric tonnes of gold were held in the custody of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) and the Bank of England, while 510.46 metric tonnes were retained domestically. Additionally, 20.26 metric tonnes of gold were stored as deposits. The gold in the world market is projected to rise to \$3000 per ounce, according to Goldman Sachs. The Diwali 2024 market sparkle appears subdued for several reasons despite cracker sales going back almost to the fuzzy pre-ban era of the National Green Tribunal.

The traditional gold sales could not touch previous years' highs as the metal was priced at around Rs 78,430, almost 30 per cent higher than last year. "Silver sales rose 33 per cent, while gold volume fell by 15 per cent," according to the Indian Bullion and Jewellers Association. The market is stated to be as dizzy as it was in 2015 or 2019, marked by slowdown. In its report titled "43rd Half Yearly Report on Management of Foreign Exchange



GOLD HAS RISEN TO MULTIPLE ALL-TIME HIGHS THIS YEAR. SIZABLE CENTRAL BANK PURCHASES OF GOLD BARS HAVE RESET THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RATE AND PRICE LEVELS SINCE 2022

Reserves: April - September 2024," the RBI stated that it had a total of 854.73 metric tonnes of gold in both domestic and foreign repository facilities.

The RBI has been buying gold to diversify its forex reserves and hedge against external risks. In 2024, the RBI added 54.7 tons of gold to its reserves, the highest acquisition in three years. After the Ukraine war, \$ 300 billion worth of Russian currency and other assets, kept as reserves in the US dollar, Euro and sterling pound, were seized by the US and the G7 countries. The assets are being used to bolster funding arms and other supplies to Ukraine. India has since acted cautiously even in deals with the purchase of Russian crude. The recent spat with Canada and the US-Israel escalation of the war to Lebanon and Iran has added to the caution.

This forced the repatriation of gold by RBI, which has been purchasing gold and stocking it abroad for payments in terms of gold instead of dollars. The RBI saves huge amounts in terms of vault rents as well. Robust demand in the world's second-biggest gold consumer could further push up global prices, which hit record highs last week. Rising demand for imports of gold could also widen India's trade deficit and put pressure on the rupee. Yes, India's gold purchases have contributed to rising global gold prices.

India's gold demand in 2024 is likely to fall to its lowest in four years as a rally in prices to a record high is seen denting purchases during the peak festival season, the World Gold Council

(WGC) said on Wednesday. Gold demand in the world's second-biggest consumer of the precious metal could stand around 700 and 750 metric tonnes in 2024, the lowest since 2020 and down from last year's 761 tonnes, according to Sachin Jain, CEO of WGC's Indian operations. This Dhanteras, gold sales dipped in India to 35 tonnes, down from last year's 42 tons.

Gold has risen to multiple all-time highs this year. Sizable central bank purchases of gold bars have reset the relationship between rate and price levels since 2022. Goldman Sachs Research estimates that 100 tonnes of physical demand lifts gold prices by at least 2.4 per cent. Credit card usage also hit new highs, with card spending reaching Rs 80,000 crore in September, a 57 per cent increase from last year. The retail mom-and-pop shops have problems as the footfall was subdued due to many turning to online shopping. Both Amazon and Flipkart reported a strong Diwali season, with Flipkart leading with a 64 per cent market share during the initial October sales.

Sales from online platforms saw year-on-year growth of 23 per cent, with goods worth Rs 32,000 crore sold. More are BNPL or Buy Now Pay Later customers, or paying in instalments helped by credit cards, indicating a cash shortage among the people.

This trend was especially pronounced among new shoppers from tier 2 and tier 3 cities. Car sales have suffered during most of the year before just margin-

ally picking up during the Dussehra and Diwali festive seasons. Maruti profits lowered to Rs 3102 crore in September, by 18 per cent, as against Rs 3762 crore a year ago.

Maruti CEO RC Bhargava says "Affordability is a concern". The demand for cars below Rs 10 lakh is in demand. Small cars inventory levels hit a "historic high" of 80-85 days, leaving dealers with a stock of 790,000 vehicles worth 800 billion rupees, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations says.

Despite high inflation, Indian consumers opened their wallets wide this Diwali season, pushing festival-related spending to about Rs 1.25 lakh crore, claimed Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) general secretary Pravin Khandelwal. Delhi alone saw spending of Rs 25,000 crore, including FMCG goods, consumer durables and home décor earthen lamps and electronic goods, traditional and modern products, he says. Mobile phones in the below Rs 20,000 range had brisk sales.

Mobile phones were among the hottest sellers this season, with a 12-15 per cent rise in the average selling price, driven partly by a shortage in device availability. This scarcity led to consumers grabbing whatever stock was available, increasing the average price of phones sold. Rising gold and commodity prices, a fall in rupee value, crunch in income and manufacturing are concerns amid a global unstable war-like situation.

(The author is a senior journalist; views are personal)

## India and Israel: A Bond forged in intelligence and shared threats

From R&AW's inception in 1968 to today's advanced defence collaborations, the Indo-Israeli alliance has quietly strengthened in the face of shared security challenges

It was three years after the Indo-Pakistan war. The year was 1968. India's external intelligence agency, The Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) was formed and its director was firmly advised by the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, to develop deep ties with Mossad; Israel's formidable intelligence agency. The two have been working closely together to eliminate potential threats and impending security challenges. The interests of both agencies aligned; obliterating the similar nature of terror emanating from their borders.



ISHAAN SAXENA

Taiba, daily in the restive state of Jammu and Kashmir; which also happens to be one of the world's most heavily militarised zones. Pakistan, a nuclear-armed country, also happens to be the epicentre of global terrorism. Fast-forward to the year 1999 when India was engaged in the Kargil conflict with Pakistan. It was then that Israel provid-

ed India with drones to monitor the treacherous Himalayan terrain. Now, as Israel is entangled in its battles, India's Adani group has delivered several Hermes 900 drones which are also capable of aerial bombardment. They have been deployed in Gaza. This, of course, is beyond the ambit of the Indian Government's control since it's a joint venture between Adani Defence and Aerospace and Israel's Elbit systems. Besides, allegedly India sent two shiploads of arms to Israel early this year. Over the past few years, Mossad has conducted a series of assassinations. These have included top Iranian nuclear physicists, professors and the head of

Iran's nuclear programme. Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed that Israel will not tolerate a nuclear Iran. So, in the foreseeable future, it is very likely that Israel will strike Iran's nuclear facilities because Iran is going to relentlessly pursue the nuclear path. This is irrefutable.

In recent times, the agency in collaboration with the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) has assassinated the top leadership of Hamas and Hezbollah; Ismael Haniyeh-the Hamas political leader in Tehran, Hassan Nasrallah-the Hezbollah leader and Yahya Sinwar who was the chief architect of the 7th October 2023 attacks on Israel. The very recent precision



strikes in and around Tehran would have sent shockwaves in the power corridors of Iran. The reverberations of these calculated strikes would have sent Iran's security cabinet scrambling to fathom how Israel could pursue such an accurate military operation. One will have to wait and watch Iran's reaction. Will it retaliate and escalate the exacerbated situation in the West Asia or

will it choose to mitigate the situation and let its proxies corner Israel?

But this outcome was almost certain. Israel had to engage in a limited military response. But what captured the imagination of the world was how Hezbollah paggers and walkie-talkies exploded simultaneously. Contentious debates regarding such a deadly operation were circulating to the centre stage. The vociferous debates focus on the morality and ethics of such an unprecedented operation.

After all, it does set a precedent for future attacks anywhere in the world. But as Israel's Ambassador to New Delhi put it; you have to surprise your enemy in a manner that does not involve the

conventional use of force. They say necessity is the mother of all inventions. Israel's campaign epitomises it perfectly.

They say that offence is not the best form of defence but in Israel's case, this chain of thought is unconvincing. The state exists in a precarious security zone. Israel may find itself alienated from the rest of the world as the valiant men and women of the IDF battle on various fronts, but the war and Israel's meticulous planning must continue.

Iran's proxies must be annihilated. Its relentless campaign to eliminate groups like Hamas and Hezbollah must not end anytime soon. Political parties or not, these actors harbour a twisted,

malicious and hostile ideology. There is no space for such entities to exist in a modern world. Israel must never forget that the long-lasting ties between the two nations will continue and India's explicit support will not fade anytime soon. The Indo-Israeli ties will be a durable bond in the years to come. This relationship which hinges on mutual respect and specific interests will bloom and crystallise in the years to come. Golda Meir, the fourth Prime Minister of Israel, articulated it quite clearly; 'peace will only usher in when Arabs love their children more than they despise us.'

(The writer is a socio-economic commentator; views expressed are personal)

IN BRIEF



**US firm Alkomex to expand R&D footprint in India**

Global pharma company Alkomex GBN looks to expand its research and development footprint in India and has roped in nutraceuticals expert Sanjay Agrawal to spearhead its strategic initiatives in the country, a statement said on Monday. Alkomex GBN has formed a partnership with Dr Sanjay Agrawal, a renowned Indian expert in health management and nutraceuticals, and has appointed him as the Scientific Advisor for Alkomex GBN, the statement said. "His leadership will be instrumental in driving our growth as we continue to expand our footprint in the nutraceutical and functional food sectors," Alkomex CEO Alex Meneses Vega said. Agrawal will be based in Ahmedabad and will spearhead the US firm's research and strategic initiatives, it said, adding that he will guide the company's R&D efforts and integrate Indian research into Alkomex's global operations.



**UP amends policy to attract foreign investors**

Foreign firms investing in Uttar Pradesh by bringing in equity as well as loans will now be eligible to avail benefits under the state government's incentive policy. A decision in this regard was taken by the cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath here on Monday. The incentive policy has been rechristened as 'Foreign Direct Investment, Foreign Capital Investment and Fortune Global 500 and Fortune India 500 Investment Promotion Policy 2023'. Earlier, incentives under the policy were available to only equity investments. "Through this amendment, the Yogi government has given big relief to foreign investors. Through this, now foreign companies will also be able to invest in the state which brings in investment through equity as well as loan or any other source. With this decision of Yogi government, there is a possibility of increase in foreign investment in the state," an official statement said. Briefing about these decisions, UP Finance Minister Suresh Khanna said that a slight amendment has been made in the policy, though the minimum investment for eligibility in the policy will continue to be Rs 100 crore.



**Rupee falls 4 paise to hit all-time low against US dollar**

The rupee on Monday fell 4 paise to a record low of 84.11 (provisional) against the US dollar, tracking a weak trend in domestic equities and relentless foreign capital outflows. Forex traders said the Indian rupee touched new all-time lows weighed down by negative domestic markets which fell nearly 1.18 per cent. A recovery in crude oil prices and FII outflows also dented investor sentiments. However, the softening of the US dollar prevented a sharp fall. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.07 against the US dollar. During the session, the local currency oscillated between a high of 84.06 and a low of 84.12. It finally settled at its all-time low of 84.11 (provisional), a loss of 4 paise from its previous close. On Thursday, the rupee edged up 1 paise to 84.07 against the US dollar. The forex market remained closed on Friday on account of Diwali.

**White-collar hiring grows 10 pc in India: Report**



PNS ■ MUMBAI

White-collar hiring activity increased 10 percent year-on-year in October, mainly due to a rise in recruitment in sectors such as oil and gas, pharmaceuticals, FMCG, and IT, a report said on Monday.

The Naukri JobSpeak Index, India's leading indicator of white-collar hiring activity, demonstrated robust growth in October, reaching 2,733 points compared to 2,484 in the same month of 2023, marking a significant 10 per cent year-on-year increase.

Key sectors, including oil & gas (18 per cent), pharma/biotech (12 per cent), FMCG (8 per cent), and IT (6 per cent) emerged as primary

drivers of this positive trend, with AI/ML roles showing exceptional growth at 39 per cent year-on-year, the report stated.

Hiring in the IT sector showed positive growth in four out of the seven months this financial year, auguring well for balance of year trends, added the report.

The Naukri JobSpeak is a monthly Index representing the state of the Indian job market and hiring activity based on new job listings and job-related searches by recruiters on the resume database of Naukri.com.

The report further revealed that overall, global capability centres (GCCs) demonstrated consistent growth with a 17 per

cent year-on-year increase in October.

GCCs showed significant traction in emerging hubs like Kolkata (68.46 per cent) and Ahmedabad (47.68 per cent) indicating a growing preference among international companies to expand beyond traditional tech centres for their India operations, it added.

The festive period also witnessed a significant growth in data-focused positions -- data/big data testing engineer (64 per cent), full stack data scientist (46 per cent), data platform engineer (26 per cent) and data scientist (23 per cent), it said. The report also found that after a sluggish performance throughout 2024, hiring for freshers showed encourag-

ing signs with a 6 per cent year-on-year growth in October.

When it came to locations, southern states demonstrated exceptional growth in white-collar hiring, with multiple cities showing strong year-on-year gains, said the report.

Tamil Nadu emerged as the strongest performer with a 24 per cent year-on-year growth, followed by Telangana (16 per cent), Karnataka (12 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (9 per cent) and Kerala (7 per cent), it stated.

"The accelerating pace of fresher hiring is a strong indicator of business confidence and presents exciting opportunities for upcoming graduates," Naukri Chief Business Officer Pawan Goyal said.

**Sebi cautions investors against illegal trading platforms**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Monday cautioned investors against undertaking trading activities through virtual trading or gaming platforms and asked them to deal only through registered intermediaries.

The advisory statement came after the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) noticed that some apps /web applications / platforms are offering virtual trading services or paper trading or fantasy games to the public based on stock price data of listed companies. Such activities are in violation of Securities Contract (Regulation) Act, 1956 and Sebi Act, 1992 which are laws



designed to protect investors, the regulator said.

In a statement, Sebi reiterated that the public can invest and undertake trading activities in the securities markets only through/with registered inter-

mediaries. "Participation in unauthorized schemes, including sharing of confidential and personal trading data, is at the investors' own risk, cost and consequences, as such schemes / platforms are not registered with Sebi," it added.

Cautioning investors, Sebi asked them not to engage with or undertake investment or trading activities through unregistered intermediaries / web applications / platforms / apps.

For any kind of disputes relating to engaging with such activities, mechanisms such as benefits of investor protection under Sebi or exchanges would not be available to investors, it added.

**Gold drops Rs 1,300 to Rs 81,100 per 10 gm**  
**Silver plummets Rs 4,600**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices retreated from record high in the national capital on Monday, declining Rs 1,300 to Rs 81,100 per 10 grams following fresh selling by stockists and retailers, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had traded flat at Rs 82,400 per 10 grams -- its all-time high -- on Thursday.

Silver also remained under selling pressure and slipped below the Rs 95,000-mark, depreciating Rs 4,600 to Rs 94,900 per kg. It had closed at Rs 99,500 per kg on Thursday. Traders said tepid demand



from jewellers and retailers in local markets weighed on gold prices.

Prices of gold of 99.5 per cent purity decreased Rs 1,300 to Rs 80,700 per 10 grams. The yellow metal had closed at Rs 82,000 per 10 grams -- its all-time high -- in the previous ses-

sion on Thursday. In futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) on Monday, gold contracts for December delivery fell Rs 329, or 0.42 per cent, to trade at Rs 78,538 per 10 gm. "Gold prices experienced volatility as Comex gold found support near USD 2,730 but struggled to break above USD 2,750. "With the US election results due in the next two days, market participants are expected to have mixed sentiments, likely resulting in a range-bound session between Rs 78,000 and Rs 79,000 in MCX," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

**NTPC, ONGC join to work in renewable energy space**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Power giant NTPC and oil major ONGC on Monday announced that they have joined hands to explore opportunities in the area of new and renewable energy.

The two entities will form a joint venture through their respective subsidiaries, NTPC said in a statement.

"NTPC and ONGC have collaborated to form a Joint Venture Company (JVC) through their Green Energy Subsidiaries (NTPC Green Energy Ltd and ONGC Green Energy Ltd) to further promote their interest in renewable and new energy arena," it said.

NGEL has also submitted an application to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs for the incorporation of a 50:50 Joint Venture Company with OGL, the statement said.

**Stock investors become poorer by Rs 5.99 lakh cr as Sensex tanks**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investors' wealth eroded by Rs 5.99 lakh crore on Monday due to heavy sell-off in stock markets with the BSE Sensex tumbling more than 1 per cent. Markets were dragged down by Reliance Industries, banking shares and unabated selling by foreign investors. Investors also turned cautious ahead of the US presidential elections and Federal Reserve interest rate decision scheduled to be announced later this week.

The BSE benchmark tumbled 941.88 points or 1.18 per cent to settle at 78,782.24, the lowest closing level since August 6. During the day, it slumped 1,491.52 points or 1.87 per cent to 78,232.60.

In line with a weak trend in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms eroded by Rs 5,99,539.5 crore to Rs 4,42,11,068.05 crore



(USD 5.26 trillion).

"Markets witnessed broader sell-off as investors turned risk averse ahead of key US election outcome and Federal Reserve's policy decision in the next few days time. While stretched valuation concerns have been weighing for some time, the persistent foreign fund outflows have created a lot of uncertainty amongst the investors resulting in a steep correction.

"Also, corporate earnings have failed to meet expectations, which has further dampened investors' sentiment," said Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Adani Ports, Reliance Industries, Sun Pharma, NTPC, Bajaj Finserv, Tata Motors, Axis Bank and Titan were among the major laggards.

**India re-elected as President of International Solar Alliance**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi on Monday said India has been re-elected as the President of Indian Solar Alliance (ISA) from 2024 to 2026.

Addressing the press conference at 7th General Assembly of the ISA, Joshi informed that France has been re-elected as Vice-President of the ISA.

India's election to the President post is a testament to

Germany and Italy have been selected as Vice Presidents from the Europe and the Others Region, along with Greece and Norway as Vice-Chair. Leading the Regional Committee of the Latin America and the Caribbean region will be Grenada and Suriname, Jamaica and Haiti as Vice-Chairs, he said.

ISA Member Countries have also selected the third Director General of the Alliance. Ashish Khanna is the Director General Designate and will assume office in March 2025, when the tenure of the incumbent Director General, Ajay Mathur, comes to a close, he informed.

ISA initiated Demonstration Projects in 2020 to meet the needs of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Development States (SIDS).

The aim was to exhibit solar technology applications that can be scaled up and build the capacity of member countries to replicate these solar-powered solutions.

Joshi noted that 11 of these projects were dedicated to the people of the respective countries: Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cuba, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Samoa, Senegal, The Gambia, and Tonga.

ISA remains committed to supporting governments in their efforts to scale up solar energy projects and improve the lives of their people, he stated.



**Air purifier sales spike as air quality worsens**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Demand for air purifiers has witnessed a surge as air quality, especially in Delhi-NCR, dropped to hazardous levels, according to manufacturers of the product.

Companies, including Kent RO Systems, Xiaomi, and LG Electronics India, said in the festive season, air purifiers sales grew up to 50 per cent as the Air Quality Index (AQI) of Delhi and the adjoining moved towards an alarming level.

Like the previous year, the appliance makers have witnessed growth in the last 2-3

weeks in sales and enquiries for air-purifiers and expect a further uptick with the increase in the AQI index in the coming weeks.

Air purifier is a very small segment of the appliances market and its sales generally peaks in October and November, when the pollution level in North India, particularly Delhi NCR, and some other parts worsens due to stubble burning and Diwali celebrations.

LG Electronics India Senior VP- Home Appliances Sanjay Chitkara said: "As Delhi battles one of its worst pollution seasons yet, suddenly the demand



for air purifiers has surged in Delhi NCR."

The city's AQI has crossed hazardous levels, with pollutants that are much smaller than the common PM2.5 par-

a significant surge during the winter months in India, coinciding with the deterioration in air quality.

The alarming levels of pollution, especially in the northern regions, create a sense of urgency among consumers to protect their health, he said.

"During the festive season, we observe a noticeable increase in sales of about 20-25 per cent as consumers become more conscious of indoor air quality and their overall well-being," he said.

Xiaomi said amid rising pollution levels, particularly in the North region, there has been a

noticeable shift in consumer behaviour, with a growing focus on health and cleaner indoor environments.

"This has driven a sharp rise in Xiaomi's air purifier & air purifier filter sales, with numbers climbing over 50 per cent higher than usual in the past month," said a Xiaomi spokesperson.

According to a report from EMR, the India air purifier market size attained a value of Rs 777.75 crore in 2023. The market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 16.30 per cent between 2024 and 2032, it said.





## VARUN DHAWAN JOINS FORCES WITH JACKIE SHROFF AND MORE

Varun Dhawan's film *Baby John* has finally released its taster cut and it's everything fans were hoping for. Directed by Kalees, *Baby John* is an exciting masala family entertainer filled with action, drama and thrilling moments, complemented by great music and a stellar cast. Produced by Murad Khetani, Priya Atlee and Jyoti Deshpande, *Baby John* has already received tremendous praise at a special screening for exhibitors and distributors at the Big Cine Expo, heightening the anticipation. Adding to the excitement, the *Baby John* taster cut is attached in cinemas across the country with Diwali entertainers *Singham Again* and *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*, where audiences can witness this big-ticket marvel. With music by S Thaman, this film is sure to captivate audiences in both single-screen theaters and multiplexes. This Christmas, *Baby John* promises nothing but good vibes, only as the teaser suggested. Varun Dhawan leads an impressive ensemble cast, which includes Jackie Shroff, Keerthy Suresh, Wamika Gabbi and Rajpal Yadav. This holiday season is going to be even more exciting for cinema lovers. Presented by Jio Studios in association with Atlee and Cine1 Studios, *Baby John* is a production of A for Apple Studios and Cine1 Studios. Directed by Kalees, the film is set to hit theaters on December 25, 2024.



## Freedom At Midnight unfolds with its third teaser

The highly anticipated third teaser of *Freedom At Midnight* has been unveiled, showcasing a pivotal moment in history, where Mahatma Gandhi urges Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to offer the leadership seat to Muhammad Ali Jinnah in a last-ditch effort to prevent partition. *Freedom At Midnight* is an epic political thriller that vividly captures the dramatic

and defining events surrounding India's independence in 1947. Produced by Emmay Entertainment (Monisha Advani & Madhu Bhojwani) in association with StudioNext, *Freedom At Midnight* boasts a stellar team behind

the scenes. Nikkhil Advani spearheads this project as the showrunner and director, while the story is penned by a talented team, including Abhinandan Gupta, Adwitiya Kareng Das, Gundeep Kaur, Divya Nidhi Sharma, Revanta Sarabhai and Ethan Taylor. Based on the eponymous book by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, the series delves deep into the tumultuous events surrounding India's struggle for independence.

## SRK quits smoking; says, 'Thought I wouldn't feel breathless, but I do'

Shah Rukh Khan, who previously confessed to smoking 100 cigarettes daily, shocked his fans on his birthday by announcing that he has stopped smoking. At a fan event celebrating his birthday, the actor, who has previously discussed his smoking habit, shared exciting news with fans during a meet-and-greet. In a video posted by his fan page Shah Rukh Khan Universe, SRK reveals that he has quit smoking. "There's a good thing—I'm not smoking anymore, guys," Khan told an enthusiastic crowd.



He further went on to share, "I thought I wouldn't feel breathless after quitting smoking, but I still do. By God's grace, that will also be fine." On Saturday, SRK was sent heartfelt birthday greetings by daughter Suhana and wife Gauri Khan on social media.

## Ajay Devgn joins newcomers, in Azaad

Bollywood is abuzz with excitement as Abhishek Kapoor, the acclaimed director of films like *Kai Po Che* and *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui*, prepares to unveil his next magnum opus, *#Azaad*. This January 2025, get ready to witness a cinematic spectacle that promises to leave audiences spellbound. *#Azaad* boasts an impressive ensemble cast, featuring the debutants Aaman Devgan and Rasha Thadani, who are poised to make a lasting impact on the industry. Joining the newcomers is the versatile and seasoned actor Ajay Devgn, who brings his signature intensity to a powerful role that's sure to leave fans eager for more. The stunning Diana Penty, known for her captivating on-screen presence, adds glamour and depth to the cast. As anticipation builds, the teaser of *#Azaad* is slated to drop today, offering a tantalising glimpse into Abhishek Kapoor's vision. With its release just around the corner, *#Azaad* is shaping up to be one of the most highly anticipated films of the year. Cinema lovers can expect an epic adventure that combines stunning visuals, electrifying action sequences, and emotional depth. Abhishek Kapoor's mastery of storytelling is set to transport audiences to a world of drama, excitement and inspiration. Mark your calendars for January 2025 and get ready to experience the grandeur of *#Azaad* on the big screen!



## SUNNY LEONE'S INTIMATE VOW RENEWAL

Sunny Leone and Daniel Weber, who have been married for 13 years, recently renewed their vows in an intimate ceremony in the Maldives. The couple was joined by their children, Nisha, Noah and Asher. A source close to the couple shared that Sunny and Daniel had wanted to renew their vows for quite some time but waited until their children were old enough to understand the significance of the occasion. They chose the Maldives because it's one of their favourite family destinations.



## ANIRUDH SHARMA AND MRUNAL PANCHAL'S LOVE STORY CULMINATES IN DREAMY WEDDING

Popular social media influencers Mrunal Panchal and Anirudh Sharma got married in a fairytale wedding ceremony. After a week, the couple shared their romantic wedding photos on Instagram and their fans are over the moon. Mrunal and Anirudh, who are not familiar with them, have been in a relationship for a considerable period and have publicly shown their affection for each other on social media. Sharing the pictures, the couple wrote in the caption, "Qayamat se manga milgya vohi

milgya tu hi 26:10:2024." Mrunal appeared stunning in a red lehenga with intricate golden embroidery. Anirudh appeared stylish in a classic white groom outfit. Soon after the announcement, her best friends Nagma Mirajkar and Anam Darbar, among the other guests, shared some heartwarming pictures with the newlyweds. On Monday, Mrunal shared some adorable selfies with her then-boyfriend and now-husband Anirudh. Mrunal recently launched her makeup

line 'Mrucha Beauty'. Announcing the makeup line, she wrote, "From experimenting with makeup to creating a brand that empowers others to do the same, @mrunchaBeauty isn't just about looking good—it's about feeling unstoppable. Join us as we redefine beauty, one bold step at a time!"

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



### NANCY



### GINGER MEGGS



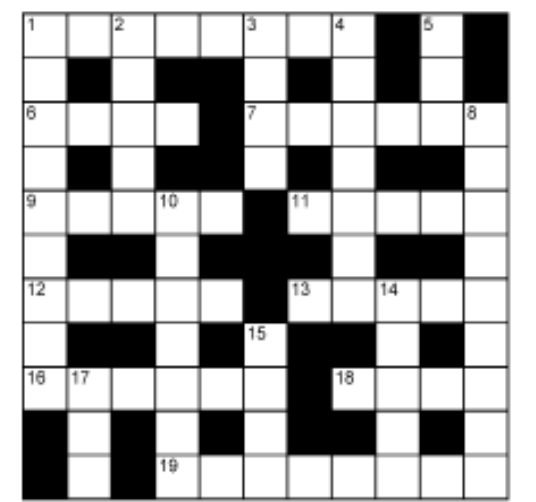
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

- 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

- Air-holes in your nose
- Become larger
- A spider's trap
- Speaks
- The body's pump
- Uncles' wives
- Took away illegally
- Hot coals left from a fire
- Meat from a cow
- Unexpectedly, without warning
- Topic
- A chopping tool
- An insect that flutters by
- Baby cats
- Sea
- Second-hand
- A month

### DOWN

- A frightening dream
- Small seat without a back
- A feeling that makes you want to scratch





## THE BHAVANA PANDEY YOU DON'T KNOW

Unmasking the magic of Bhavana Pandey, *The Pioneer* presents an exclusive conversation with the reality TV sensation. Join us as she delves into her life's passions, challenges and triumphs and reveals the secrets of her captivating on-screen presence

SHIKHA DUGGAL  
shikhaduggalwork@gmail.com

As we watched *Fabulous Lives vs Bollywood Wives*, we saw Bhavana Pandey, a stunningly beautiful woman with a golden heart who also adds warmth and elegance to our screens. Her inspirational journey as a devoted mother and fervent businesswoman is evidence of her fortitude and tenacity. She is a cherished character in the lives of those around her in the show because of her contagious smile and giving nature, which skillfully combined glamour and humility. Prepare to be amazed by her wit, insight and unflinching optimism as she unlocks the doors to this exclusive interview with us once again. Because of her unreserved confidence, Bhavana has been the show's breakthrough star and viewers consistently refer to her as the most relatable cast member. In an interview with *The Pioneer*, Bhavana opens up about her public persona, the camera's gaze, rivalry portrayed on the show and more! She has a personal philosophy that reads, "I went into the show really excited, but I didn't realise how much attention and exposure it would bring. I believe the show has given viewers a better understanding of me outside of my persona as 'Ananya's mom' or an entrepreneur. Connecting with followers who value us as genuine individuals, with all of our eccentricities and imperfections, has been energising. Despite all of the highs and lows, the experience has taught me to love being in the spotlight and simply being myself."

She certainly knows how to handle the camera gaze! "Being so conscious of the camera makes it difficult to be authentic, but I do my best to remain grounded and true to myself. Although appearing on a reality show can highlight some aspects of our lives, the main goal is to be genuine. The show is relatable to viewers, in my opinion, because there are times when we are laughing, sobbing, or even disagreeing. In order to stay genuine and hopefully connect



with the audience, I try not to overthink things."

Bhavana has become an inspiration to young women since the show's premiere. You can view anything in the comments if you scroll down to any part where she is mentioned. "I strive to instill the same principles in Ananya and Rysa and staying grounded is really essential to me. Despite the glamour, I want to instill in my girls a spirit of hard work and thankfulness. At home, we place a strong emphasis on staying loyal to who we are, helping one another and keeping our roots in mind. I remind them that even if we are blessed to lead a particular lifestyle, it is crucial to maintain a strong foundation of family values and to be modest," adds the television personality.

Oh, let's talk about the infamous Delhi vs. Mumbai rivalry: "The dynamic between Delhi and Mumbai gave the season new vitality! Scrutinising the variations in the two cities' personalities, fashions and even thoughts was fascinating and the rivalry gave a playful element. However, everyone was in a cheerful mood. In the end, it all comes down to savouring each other's

company and recognising the unique flavours that each member contributes to the group. It's what, in my opinion, made this season even more thrilling for both me and the audience."

As the founder of LoveGen, she is well-known for being a prominent person in the fashion business. She says, "Fashion has always played a significant role in my life and working in the industry has shaped my style and how I express myself. I enjoy showcasing my unique style and originality on the show since it's a fun opportunity to express who I am. I strive to instill confidence in every episode since fashion is more than simply clothes. I want to demonstrate my boldness, even on camera, as LoveGen taught me to do." Well, that's just Bhavana for you!

"I am thankful for friendships that have endured, particularly those with Seema, Maheep and Neelam. Finding people you connect with on such a deep level is uncommon in any industry, but I believe the secret is to be honest with one another and support one another without passing judgment. Together, we have experienced a great deal, both on and off screen and our friendship is maintained by our honesty and loyalty. The difference is that we always have each other's backs," conveys an emotive Bhavana.

One of the most satisfying things she has experienced as a mother is seeing Ananya flourish. As a mother, she experiences the anxieties that accompany having a daughter in the spotlight, but she is also immensely proud of her. The family always finds time to spend time together and encourage one another, even though it can be difficult to strike a balance between Bhavana's goals and theirs. Her daughter's graceful handling of fame and criticism validates all the effort and motivates Bhavana to continue on her path. Bhavana also remembers, "I wish the audience could see more of my entrepreneurial side and my love for fashion. Work, family and friendships are all very important and although the glitz is a part of our lives, there is a lot of effort and commitment that goes on behind the scenes. I want viewers to understand that I prioritise personal development and meaningful friendships in addition to the amazing parties and events."

Because, as she concludes, "Privacy is a luxury in today's world, especially with social media. We've learned as a family to set limits and value our private time away from the spotlight. Whether it's a private weekend getaway or a family supper, we make time for ourselves. With Ananya and Rysa, I also stress the importance of striking a balance between sharing and protecting. It all comes down to holding onto the things that are most important to us."

## TURNING BACK CLOCK WITH MICRONEEDLING, MESOBOTOX & THREAD LIFT

Climate change, pollution and a stressful lifestyle are leading to premature aging, fine-appearing lines, and sun damage. While medical science offers a host of choices to combat these, non-invasive procedures are fast gaining ground in India and overseas. Consumers are turning to mesotherapy, microneedling and thread lift procedures for their aesthetic needs. According to studies, the global non-invasive aesthetic treatments market was valued at \$61.2 billion and it is expected to grow 15.40 percent between 2023 and 2030. One of the primary reasons for their increasing popularity is quick results and minimum risk.

Let's now talk about the procedures of microneedling, mesobotox and thread lifting in detail:

### MESOBOTOX

In contrast to regular Botox treatments, which target deeper muscles, Mesobotox often referred to as micro-botox, is a cosmetic procedure in which minute doses of diluted botox are injected into the skin's superficial layers. The main goals of this treatment are to tighten pores, improve the texture of the skin, minimise fine wrinkles and give the face a smoother, younger-looking appearance without preventing facial expressions.

The advantages of mesobotox include better skin texture and pore tightening. This treatment also minimises the appearance of larger pores by lessening the activity of fine muscle fibers that are immediately beneath the skin. This results in tighter, smoother skin, especially around the eyes, on the forehead and on the cheeks.

### MICRONEEDLING

Microneedling is referred to as 'collagen induction' therapy and like mesotherapy, it is a minimum risk non-invasive procedure. Microneedling involves controlled micro-injuries made to the skin using very

small, fine and sterile needles. The main thrust here is to ensure that the body's natural healing reactions are catalysed to enhance the collagen levels. The latter are key ingredients for ensuring that the skin looks much younger and healthier besides giving it a glowing, refreshed look. It takes care of fine lines, wrinkles, crow's feet, uneven skin texture and also enlarged pores and acne scars. Microneedling causes the collagen to fill the scars and pores and also make the skin a lot less oily.

### THREAD LIFT PROCEDURE

If you are looking for something that has lasting results and is also a non-surgical solution, then thread lift procedure is the right procedure to choose. A minimally invasive cosmetic surgery called a thread lift is used to tighten and raise drooping skin, particularly on the neck and face. To lift the skin and give the illusion of younger skin without open surgery, temporary, dissolvable sutures are inserted beneath the skin. Over time, the firmness of the skin is improved by the collagen formation that is stimulated by the threads used in the process.

Like the other two procedures, you can resume your activities after undergoing this treatment. The plus point here is that as soon as this procedure is done, the effects are almost instantly visible and in the forthcoming weeks and months, the collagen built up continues making the skin appearance brighter and younger.

A gentle, natural-looking improvement is achieved through the gradual tightening of the skin and the synthesis of collagen. Though not permanent, thread lifts can last one to three years, depending on lifestyle and skin type.

Experts say that dryness, redness, swelling, and bruising are some of the common side effects of these procedures, but they subside in a few days. Therefore, it's a good idea to consult a seasoned professional to understand all aspects of these procedures and watch out for any allergic reactions.



## Crafting cinematic brevity

AARTI SREENATH  
aarti.sreenath9@gmail.com

When it comes to capturing India's socio-political landscape on screen, few filmmakers do it with as much raw intensity as Tigmanshu Dhulia.

Known for iconic works like *Gangs of Wasseypur*, *Paan Singh Tomar* and *Raag Desh*, he has established himself as a storyteller, unafraid to delve into the complex layers of human nature and history. Yet, with his recent venture into short films, the seasoned director faced a whole new challenge that required him to make every second count.

In the world of cinema, where feature films often take hours to unravel their magic, creating a short film poses a unique challenge for any director. For the mind behind *The Promise*, this challenge was not just about condensing a story but about honing the visual craft, conveying emotion and igniting impact in a matter of minutes.

"It's a great challenge as a director," he reflects, noting that the shorter format demands a distinct approach. "You have to say a lot in a short time, often in ways that words can't capture, so your visual skills really come into play." And it's this very challenge that excites him, calling short filmmaking "a true test of creative dexterity." Platforms like the Royal Stag Barrel Select Large Short Films are, in his view, a godsend for filmmakers aiming to master this nuanced art form. "Short films celebrate select storytelling in a way that full-length features often can't," he shares, adding that festivals like MAMI not only offer exposure but also cultivate a dynamic space for networking and connecting with audiences on a deeper level. "At a festival, you're not just watching the film. You're meeting the creator, engaging with the story and broadening your horizons." But what inspired *The Promise*? "Honestly, I was just looking for a story," he says candidly. "I didn't set out with a grand message; I wanted something understated, emotional—a love story with minimal drama." When a friend shared a simple story with him, he immediately saw potential in its quiet depth. The short film format allowed him to push his boundaries, sharpening his storytelling skills by working within the constraints of time and budget. "Making a 10-minute film has its own pros and cons," he reflects, "but I relished the challenge."

Short films, as he explains, demand a technical finesse that differs from feature filmmaking. "Every technical aspect becomes crucial in a short film. Aspect ratios, shot composition, pacing—all of these come to the forefront in a way I don't always get to explore in full-length films. It's like trying on a different lens," he says with evident excitement.

Known for his full-length films like *Raag Desh* and *Paan Singh Tomar*, which delve into socio-political landscapes, he admits that such themes remain close to his heart. "Addressing social issues is essential to me," he says, underscoring his belief that cinema should reflect the world's stories, especially those that provoke thought and inspire change.

Having worn the hats of actor, director, and producer, he acknowledges that each role brings fresh insights into the filmmaking process. "Filmmaking is ever-evolving," he says. "With new technologies, distribution models and even AI shaping our industry, there's always something to learn. But at its core, it's still all about telling a story."

In *The Promise*, he captures the essence of storytelling within a tightly woven narrative, proving that sometimes, a few well-chosen frames can resonate as profoundly as a full-length feature.

With his foray into short films, **Tigmanshu Dhulia** tackles the unique challenge of cinematic brevity, mastering the art of conveying complex emotions and socio-political commentary in just a few minutes. In this exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, he shares his creative process, technical finesse and passion for storytelling, revealing what drives him to push boundaries in the ever-evolving world of cinema



# Series defeat against NZ will impact India's performance against Aussies: Gilchrist, Warner

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australian legends Adam Gilchrist and David Warner have little doubt that Indian players' psyche would have been scarred after the recent whitewash at home by New Zealand, but they said it will be naive to consider Rohit Sharma's side "easy beats" in the five-Test Border-Gavaskar Trophy, beginning at Perth from November 22. The Tom Latham-led Kiwis blanked India 3-0, marking one of the lowest points in their Test history, also denting the chances of qualifying for the World Test Championship (WTC) final next year. "It does (series defeat has an impact), more for the Indian players and the Indian team internally. They have to be asking themselves pretty hard questions," former wicketkeeper batter Gilchrist told Fox Sports. "But I'm not expecting them to come out and be easy beats,

but I do think on the back of that loss and the fact that it was a clean sweep - I cannot remember when that's happened to them, just losing a series, let alone a clean sweep - I think that will raise some questions internally. "The pressure and the expectation and the desire from a passionate cricketing nation to see that change around, that'll ride heavily on those shoulders of all those players." Gilchrist said India has the wherewithal to regroup after the heavy setback. "There are a few ageing players (with the Indian team) who may start to even second guess themselves a little bit. There're some high-class cricketers in that Indian squad. It's going to be fascinating to see how they rebound from that challenge," he added. **WE NEED RUNS AGAINST BUMRAH, SIRAJ:** Warner said the series defeat



against the Black Caps will certainly be playing in Indian cricketers' minds. "It (the series defeat) helps the Australian guys. They're coming here after being beaten at home 3-0 for five Tests against the Australian boys, (who have) three world class quicks and a world class spin bowler, and I'd be nervous if I'm in their batting order. I would be nervous," said Warner. The left-hander felt that countering pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj would be key to Australia's success in the upcoming series. "The Australian top order needs to make runs against Bumrah and Siraj who are their spearheads. I think if Australia can get through those two gentlemen, there could be some big runs put on the board. "But we're going to have to come out with our chest out against India. We have lost our

last two series here against India (and) they have got a lot to play for." Warner also did not read too much into the modest form of Indian veterans like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. "You have got Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Ashwin, Jadeja. You got these guys there who are in the back end of their careers. So, there's a lot to play for there, and whether or not they finish their careers this year or next year, they will want to finish on a high. "I know those guys very, very well, and they will be so determined to come out here and score big runs." Former Australian batter Mark Waugh said India will miss the services of seamer Mohammed Shami, who is still recuperating from a surgery. "If Mohammed Shami is not on the tour, that is a huge blow for India because I think their pace attack would worry us with Shami in there. He is a big loss," reckoned Waugh.



## So proud of you: Ravindra reveals rare message from dad after NZ historic series win

PTI ■ MUMBAI

New Zealand's Rachin Ravindra revealed a rare text message he received from his father, expressing pride in the batter's achievements after the Black Caps notched a "special" Test series win in his parents' place of birth. New Zealand wrapped up a memorable tour of India, becoming the first team in history to register a 3-0 Test series sweep against the Asian giants in their own backyard. The 24-year-old, who was the star of the first Test, was born and brought up in Wellington but his familial roots are firmly entrenched in Bengaluru. "I haven't heard my dad say to me, 'so proud of you' often in my life, so it was nice to get that message when we won," Ravindra said on Sen Radio. The stylish left-hander's parents Ravi Krishnamurthy and Deepa hail from Bengaluru, while his grandparents T. Balakrishna Adiga, a noted educationist, and Poornima still stay in the Indian city. He revealed that his father was present to witness Ravindra's match-winning exploits first-hand in Bengaluru where he scored a century and an unbeaten 39 in his two innings to fashion New Zealand's eight-wicket win in the series opener.



up cricket, waking him up at 5 a.m. Each day for throwdowns in the driveway. "Obviously I'm just very grateful for everyone in my inner circle. I was making him get up and he'd come and throw balls for me two hours before school. "Mum getting me ready every day for school, training and games - that unconditional love, which I'll never forget. That's stuff I'll never take for granted." New Zealand ended India's 12-year unbeaten home run in Tests by winning the first two matches. It is also their first-ever series victory in India since they started touring the country in 1955-56 under Harry Cave. The Black Caps also scripted history by becoming the first team to notch a 3-0 series win in India, winning the third Test by 25 runs in Mumbai on Sunday. "It was unbelievable. On the field, it was a different feeling. I think it's nothing like I've quite experienced before. "Just seeing everyone's elation, running towards each other. Ajaz's sixth wicket, and being in Mumbai and seeing all the boys together in a huddle jumping around. "It's hard to quite quantify, but it's pretty special," Ravindra said.

## I've come to know the feeling of running the drinks really well: Will Young

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Replacing a player of Kane Williamson's stature can be a daunting task but Will Young, who played a pivotal role in New Zealand's historic 3-0 Test series win in India, saw it as an opportunity to create his own mark after "running the drinks" as a reserve batter for four years. If New Zealand's batting appeared thin with Williamson not making it to India for the first Test in Bengaluru due to injury, the 31-year-old Young banished any such doubts with his unbeaten 48 as the Kiwis hammered the hosts by eight wickets. As it became evident that Williamson would not make it to India in time to help New Zealand clear trials by spin at Pune and Mumbai, Young had given enough indications that he was ready for the challenge. "Since my debut about four years ago, I've been in and out through form (or) through selection. "I've been a reserve batter for a number of years now so I've come to know the feeling of running the drinks really well," Young told media here after New Zealand's historic win, insinuating that

he was always ready. "When I do get an opportunity to play, I'm more excited to go out and do my own thing in my own way and not try to replace Kane or whoever it might be, just play my own game and see it as a great opportunity rather than big boots to fill," he added. Young acknowledged the role Williamson played in New Zealand's training camps back home and also during his presence on the earlier assignments in the Indian subcontinent. "Unfortunately Kane's not here and if he was, he'd be a great person to lean into and to ask what he thinks in certain situations. We also had three really good camps leading into the series back home and he was at those camps. "But it's great at the moment because we've got fantastic batters all throughout our lineup and they've all got slightly different methods and on the day you've just got to pick what method you think will work and you've got to have the courage to back that and show your skills. "Yeah, I try not to bat like Kane, I try to bat like me and do it my own way," he added.

For New Zealand to beat India at their own game on spinning wickets was as special as their series win in this part of the world, and Young conceded scoring runs on turning tracks in Pune and Mumbai was more satisfying. "If you look at all three matches, there was different challenges in each. In Bangalore, a lot of wickets fell to spin and then (in) Pune and Mumbai it was a lot more challenging against spin." "As a New Zealander coming over here and playing in Indian conditions, it's always going to be slightly more satisfaction of scoring runs against spin, so I'd suppose scoring runs in Pune or Mumbai felt more special," said Young, who ended the series as the third highest run-getter. With 244 runs at 48.80 across three Tests, Young finished behind India's Rishabh Pant (261 runs) and compatriot Rachin Ravindra (256 runs). However, his biggest contributions came in the third Test at Mumbai when Young's 71 and 51 across the two innings helped New Zealand become the first team ever to beat India 3-0 in their own backyard.

"I had Dad watch the first Test in Bangalore in his hometown, which was nice, and I'm sure Mum was biting her nails in front of the TV, not moving an inch back home. "It's very special and to be able to do it in the country of (my parents') birth is amazing," Ravindra admitted. "Although I've always maintained I'm

100 percent Kiwi born and brought up, it's nice to get that reminder every now and again," he added. Ravindra ended the series as New Zealand's leading run-getter, collecting 256 runs at an average of 51.20. It was his father's passion for the game that inspired a young Ravindra to take

## Shami's return to competitive cricket delayed

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Mohammed Shami's return to competitive cricket has been further pushed back after the veteran pacer was not named in the Bengal squad for the next two rounds of the Ranji Trophy against Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh. Bengal will take on Karnataka at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here from Wednesday, before travelling to Indore to take on MP from November 13. Shami was expected to play the fixture against Karnataka to test his fitness in a real-match situation as he bowled at full tilt at nets after India's recent Test match against New

Zealand here, though with bandage on his operated leg. On that occasion, he was also monitored by India's bowling coach Morne Morkel. Later Shami said during a promotional event that he was feeling "100%" at nets. "I had been bowling with half a run-up on and off since I can't put too much stress on my body. So, we decided that I would bowl properly, and I gave my 100%. "It felt great, and the results are good. Hopefully, I'll be back on track soon," he had said. India skipper Rohit Sharma had also opined against taking an undercooked Shami to Australia. "We don't want to bring undercooked Shami to

Not to play for Bengal against Karnataka, MP



Australia. We are keeping our fingers crossed," Rohit had said in Bengaluru recently. Other than Shami, Bengal will also miss the services of prolific opener Abhimanyu

Easwaran, wicketkeeper batter Abhishek Porel and pacer Mukesh Kumar, who are with India A squad in Australia. Pacer Akash Deep, who was part of the Indian team for the

recent series against New Zealand, was also not named in the state squad. However, veteran wicketkeeper batter Wriddhiman Saha, who has announced his retirement from cricket after the ongoing domestic season, has been named for the two matches. **Bengal squad against Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh:** Anustup Majumdar (capt), Wriddhiman Saha (wk), Sudip Chatterjee, Sudip Gharami, Shahbaz Ahmed, Wriddick Chatterjee, Avilinn Ghosh, Shuvam Dey, Shakir Habib Gandhi, Pradipta Pramanik, Aamir Gani, Ishan Porel, Suraj Sindhu Jaiswal, Mohammed Kaidi, Rohit Kumar, Rishav Vivek.

## 'Superman' Wriddhiman, one of India's finest keeper-batter to retire

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Spectacular with the big gloves, quietly assured with the willow and yet happy to be in the shadows, Wriddhiman Saha, in his 40 Test matches for India, has certainly been more than the sum total of all his parts. But having been out of India reckoning for over three years now, the 40-year-old has decided to call it quits from the game at the end of his team Bengal's ongoing Ranji Trophy campaign. The announcement was made on his social media page late last night. "After a cherished journey in cricket, this season will be my last. I am honoured to represent Bengal one final time, playing only in the Ranji Trophy before I retire," Saha said. "Let's make this season one to remember," he added in a post that went up late on Sunday night, typically unambiguous from the unassuming player. He never had the aura of a Mahendra Singh Dhoni or the insane daredevilry of a talented Rishabh Pant but Saha, with his hands as safe as a house, was more than a mere hyphen between the two powerhouse performers of

Indian cricket. The 104 dismissals behind the stumps, including 92 catches in Tests, some of them absolutely splendid, Saha's three centuries and six fifties aren't always spoken about for their effectiveness. Neither the eight six-laden century in a losing cause for erstwhile Kings XI Punjab in the 2014 IPL final. But Saha, for the better part of the 17 years since his Ranji debut in 2007, was happy to stay out of the spotlight. Patience came easy to him as he had to wait nearly two years between his debut and second Test and nearly three years between his second and third Tests. He was always that ever present understudy to Dhoni, knowing well that he will have to wait till the great man called time in whites. Saha was an old fashioned Indian keeper like Syed Kirmani or Nayan Mongia -- brilliant behind the stumps and a safe batter, who could be used as a floater in the middle order. Whether keeping up to R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja on perennially under-prepared Indian tracks or gauging the



wobbly seam movement of Ishant Sharma's deliveries, between 2015 and 2018, Saha was undoubtedly one of the world's best glovemen at work. And one can say that with assurance despite his contemporaries being Matthew Wade, BJ Watling, Mushfiqur Rahim, and Jonny Bairstow. There were moments behind the stumps that one simply cannot forget. A flying catch to pouch South Africa's Faf du Plessis off Ashwin's delivery in front of silly point, which earned him the moniker of 'Superman WriddhiMan', was a moment of sheer brilliance. His keeping was so exceptional that despite an IPL hundred, three Test tons and a brilliant Irani Cup double ton in a tricky chase, his batting never got the due it deserved. And when Pant burst into the scene with his 'X-factor' batting, he was again confined to being the second keeper. Once Gabba happened, the writing was on the wall for Saha and Rahul Dravid, the new coach, in a frank discussion during the tour of South Africa decided to show him the mirror that at 38, it makes no sense to be a second

keeper behind a 20-something. Having scored a fifty (vs New Zealand) in a preceding series and probably misunderstanding former BCCI president Sourav Ganguly's generic encouragement as an assurance, his impregnable patient "defence" was breached as he fired some verbal salvos. A spat with a Cricket Association of Bengal office-bearer saw him leave for Tripura for a couple of years before coming back home for a final hurrah. His attitude towards life remained the same. From the time he was a 16-year-old, who came from North Bengal's Siliguri and stayed at a dingy PG in central Kolkata's Koley Market area, to the time he became a known figure with a posh South Kolkata apartment and a luxury car, all he wanted to do was complete his tasks and answer only in mono-syllables. Trust Virat Kohli to find that enduring. "You particularly feel happy when a team-mate like Saha does well. Such a nice person, never cribs about anything, does not have a bad word to say about anybody, ready to bat at Nos 8, 9, or 10; the skipper had once said about his teammate.

# BANKING ON LUCK

## DULQUER SALMAAN'S BOLD DIVE AS BHASKAR!

**With a filmography that transcends borders and languages, Dulquer has established himself as a cinematic force to be reckoned with, delivering memorable performances. In an exclusive interview, Dulquer Salmaan, the versatile and captivating actor, opens up about his latest role as 'Bhaskar' in the film *Lucky Bhaskar***

AARTI SREENATH  
aarti.sreenath9@gmail.com

Dulquer Salmaan is not just a name; he's a cinematic force that transcends borders and languages, captivating audiences with each role he embraces. He captured hearts with his charming portrayal of Charlie, where his character's free-spirited nature resonated with audiences. Later, he went on to deliver a powerful performance in *Mahanati*, where he embodied the legendary actor Gemini Ganesan, adding depth to the biopic about the celebrated actress Savitri. Dulquer has also impressed audiences with his roles in *Kali*, where he navigated the complexities of anger and love and in *Zoya Akhtar's Karwaan*, he brought a delightful blend of humour and heart to the screen. From *Bangalore Days* to *Ustad Hotel* to *O Kaadal Kammani*, with back-to-back over-packed performances, he has not just won hearts but also souls.

In addition to his stellar work in Malayalam cinema, Dulquer has made significant inroads into other film industries, starring in Tamil hits like *Kali* and *Vaanam Kottattam* and showcasing his talents in Telugu. In an interview that seamlessly wove together insights on the complexities of

banking and the actor's craft, he shared his experiences working on *Lucky Bhaskar*, a film set against the backdrop of finance and scandal.

For the *Kurup* star, stepping into Bhaskar's world was about more than memorising banking terminology—it was about fully inhabiting the life of a character grounded in a familiar, yet risky, reality. "Venky's attention to detail was so thorough that every question I had about banking, he had an answer for," he recalled. "Knowing a director has done so much homework gives you confidence. It's like you're in safe hands and you're part of a story that respects both the narrative and the field it represents."

But beyond the script's financial intricacies, the *Hey Sinamika* fame appreciated the universal appeal that Bhaskar's story held. While finance might seem a domain reserved for urban multiple audiences, the film's treatment of Bhaskar as a relatable man with dreams and aspirations bridges the gap between city dwellers and rural communities.

In discussing the challenges of portraying Bhaskar, he highlighted how the setting and authenticity of the production made it easier to connect with the character. The set's detailed recreation of Bhaskar's home was particularly impressive. Although only parts of the house were physically constructed, CGI brought the street and neighbourhood to life. "It felt incredibly real; I didn't feel like I was acting in a fabricated world. Every day on set felt natural, like I was stepping into Bhaskar's life," he said, clearly cherishing the film's immersion.

While *Lucky Bhaskar* veers towards intellectual storytelling, a refreshing divergence in his filmography, he recognised the risk of making complex subjects palatable. For him, Venky managed to strike the delicate balance of creating a smart film without alienating audiences. "You can't make it so dense that people feel lost," he emphasised. "But you also can't simplify it to the point where you're underestimating the audience's intelligence. Venky did an exceptional job with that balance."

The *King of Kotha* star's journey from apprehension to acclaim in the world of cinema reveals both his meticulous approach to acting and his love for stories over stardom. Reflecting on one of his latest roles, he chuckles, "We wanted Bhaskar to have that touch of arrogance—a character that isn't so easy to root for." Despite playing a character with a darker edge, it's clear his own charm has little to do with arrogance.



Though his films have brought him closer to a pan-Indian market, he seems genuinely at ease with the idea that he may never capture the sheer volume of Bollywood fans like some of his contemporaries. "I'm just enjoying the journey," he says, a statement that reflects his grounded nature. Language, he reveals, is one of his greatest loves—and strengths. "I like languages," he explains, sharing that Hindi was his second language in school. Yet his heart remains closer to the southern film industries. "Films made here have an appeal that just travels so seamlessly across Tamil, Malayalam and Telugu audiences. With Hindi, though, I feel like it's tougher to achieve that level of crossover."

He also spoke about his journey of adapting to various languages and cultural nuances within Indian cinema. While Malayalam, his native language, posed unique challenges, Telugu and Tamil felt slightly more intuitive. "Telugu was easier to dub and surprisingly Tamil as well," he admitted, noting the intricacies each language brings to the screen.

His breakthrough in the Telugu industry with the monumental *Mahanati* nearly didn't happen. When director Nag Ashwin approached him to portray the legendary Gemini Ganesan, Dulquer initially balked. "It's an ambitious film with beloved icons and I didn't want people to watch it and think, 'Why cast this guy who doesn't speak Telugu?'" With unfamiliar language came a unique challenge: "When you're new to a language, there's a delay in how you respond emotionally to lines. Initially, I relied on prompts, which affected my timing." But he is as much a perfectionist as he is passionate and he was willing to put in the work, knowing the rewards would be worth it. The reassurance of the *Mahanati* team and their trust in his abilities gave him the confidence to make the role his own.

His deep respect for portraying nuanced roles, often set in the grey areas of morality, underscores his commitment to exploring complex characters. "Characters with shades of grey are more satisfying. As actors, we're drawn to roles that feel real, layered," he explained. "We spend our lives following rules, but on screen, we get to take risks and break rules. Bhaskar's one of those characters—someone willing to push boundaries and take risks."

One trait that has set Dulquer apart is his deep commitment to character development, eschewing any notion of 'typecasting' in favour of well-crafted stories. For him, stories always come before any specific 'dream role' and it's a belief

he's carried since the beginning of his career. Even his father, Mammooty, who has played every kind of character imaginable, has advised Dulquer to follow the story rather than get stuck on the character. "The role has to feel real," he reflects, sharing that he dives into each role by carefully studying the character's quirks, mannerisms and backstory. And it's the smallest details—a pair of glasses, the way a bag hangs from his shoulder—that often help him unlock a character's essence.

For *Mahanati*, he remembers, "Gemini Ganesan had such distinct mannerisms. He'd sit with the chair turned around; he loved cooking—these were details his family shared with me." And he ensured every nuance came through in his performance, down to the way he sat in every scene.

Reflecting on his own success and grounded by his iconic lineage as the son of Mammooty, he expressed gratitude for the opportunities and freedom he's enjoyed in his career. "I've been very lucky in every way. Being my father's son opened doors, but I also had the safety net to say no to roles that didn't resonate. That privilege lets you be selective, to wait for the right films."

For now, he remains focused on choosing roles that challenge and intrigue him, with sequels on the backburner as he continues his quest for originality in storytelling. Yet, as he laughed off the notion of preempting a "career checklist," his love for fresh stories and dynamic scripts was evident, making him one of the most versatile actors in Indian cinema today.

Breaking out of the 'chocolate boy' image took time, but he laughs it off today. "I'm 41, a father. I kept trying to move away from those romance-centered roles, but they somehow keep finding me." Still, he's grateful for the audience's unwavering affection and even enjoys their attention with a hint of nostalgia. Fans send him handmade crafts and photo albums filled with memories of his films and thoughtful gestures he treasures. "When I was younger, no one noticed me like this," he admits, smiling. "Now, they know every detail about my family, my wife and my daughter—and they're still incredibly respectful."

The conversation shifts to the lighter side of being a public figure, the occasional pitfalls of fame. He recalls some close calls with cybersecurity risks, noting, "Sometimes I see attempts from places like New Zealand trying to access my accounts!" Even in this, there's a careful thoughtfulness; he is at once the dreamer, the realist, and the actor who holds his craft above all else, forever looking for stories that resonate across screens, languages and hearts.

## JATHARA BASED ON TRUE INCIDENT: DIRECTOR SATISH BABU

Satish Babu, the director of the upcoming film *Jathara* will also be seen playing the lead actor. "I completed the script in 2016. I met the



producer at an event where we exchanged our ideas. He liked the story and he narrated the story to his family, which they also responded positively and then we decided to start. The producers asked me to direct the film and I wanted to rope in a big actor for it. We approached a big actor, but we couldn't get how to get him on board and roaming around for six months, then I decided to act as the lead actor in it," added Satish Babu when asked how he became a director and leading actor of the film. Deeya Raj will be seen playing the female lead, while Radhakrishna Reddy and Shiva Shankar Reddy are the producers of the film. "We wanted to rope in a Telugu speaking girl and went in search of the same to Mumbai

to get a female lead. Later finalised Deeya Raj, who speaks Telugu. She is from Vijayawada," said Satish Babu about the female lead. The film has completely Chittoor slang, he added. Talking about the upcoming film's plotline Satish said that the film is based on a true incident. "One human turned cruel and decided to harm the Goddess, on the other hand another human fought against the cruel man and put the Goddess back in the temple. It's a real incident and I added a few cinematic scenes to it," said Satish Babu. He added that he told the incident in the same way, it became a documentary. "If I made this story as it happened it would become a documentary, so I took cinematic liberty to tell it in a commercial way," he said. The director said that the Goddess's temple is located in the Madanapalle area of Chittoor district, where people from 18 surrounding villages come to worship. "Over a year and a half, I interacted with local people and conducted research to craft the script. Gangamma, the Goddess, is revered with great devotion by the Telugu people and my film *Jathara* is a film that pays tribute to her," said Satish Babu.

Satish Babu earlier worked as clinical scientist and later as an advocate. "I also worked as intellectual property and I was in immigration law. I have a lot of liberty to work on a lot of scripts, so that's how I came up with the script," said Satish Babu. "From my childhood I wanted to work in the film industry. I would like to continue in the industry as an actor or director whichever comes to me. I have a few stories to narrate and also met a couple of producers. With this film's experience I know, I can narrate some good stories in the future," said Satish Babu.

## After a long time I ventured into a commercial space: Hebah Patel

**HEBAH PATEL OPENS UP ABOUT HER UPCOMING FILM *DHOOM DHOOM*, RELATIONSHIP STATUS, WHAT GIVES HER HIGH AND FUTURE PROJECTS**

SURESH KAVIRAYANI  
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

Hebah Patel is playing the female lead in the film *Dhoom Dhaam* opposite Chetan. Directed by Sai Kishore, the film is releasing on November 8. "Sai Rajesh told me that Gopi Mohan and Ramkumar are searching for a lead actress and he had suggested my name and asked me to go for it, in case I liked it," said Hebah.

Later, both Gopi Mohan and Ram Kumar narrated the script to Hebah and she was in awe. "After doing many thriller and serious roles, this came as a refreshing change to me. It's complete commercial entertainment and I am playing a glamorous role in it and it's a very lighthearted one too," she said about her role. The shooting took place in Poland for nearly a month. "It was like a picnic for us. There are many people who I worked with earlier, like cinematographers, choreographers and so many. I play the role of Suhana; interestingly, the director's daughter's name is also the same, so he wanted to add the name to my role. I play a rich, spoiled girl who goes on a vacation to Europe and meets the protagonist there," she said about the story. The team had travelled to Poland during the beginning of the winter. "I had to wear mostly wear sarees, which I felt to be slightly tough there," she said. The actress didn't have many scenes with other actors; the reason being she comes from a really small family in the film. "The protagonist's family is very big," she said. She added that she follows the director for this film to play her character. *Dhoom Dhaam* is a complete entertainer with many hilarious scenes. "It is very tough to do a comedy scene rather than a glamorous or romantic scene.

Because when I do a comedy scene, people should laugh; otherwise, I didn't do well, so doing comedy is tough," said Hebah Patel.

The actress said that the film is an easygoing one. "The director made us do our work in a more comfortable way. There were no tough scenes and it is really a cakewalk for me. The director is a fun person and it is easy to work with him and he makes you comfortable on the sets," said Hebah. Talking about her co-actor Chetan, she said, "I am very hyperactive and he is completely opposite to me; he is very calm and focused on work. I want to be like that after seeing him," she said. The actress said that she doesn't have any regrets till now. "I am happy where I am now.

It is not like that I am not getting work; I was busy with work," she said. She added that she did a web series, OTT film, or a feature film. "Facing the camera is difficult for me. Whether it's an OTT, feature film, special song, or a web series or if it is a photo shoot, I get myself in front of the camera and always feel high," she said.

The actress said that she has done so many content driven roles in the recent times. "After a long time, I have ventured into commercial space with this film. I am expecting that everyone likes me in this glamorous role," she said. For another question she said that she is single and not in a relationship. "I have to like a person and then get into a relationship with him, after that I then prepare for a marriage. I am hyperactive and talkative, so the person should be calm and composed. I am looking for a person like that, till then I want to be single," said about her marriage proposal.

Hebah Patel is very active on social media, but after some negative comments, she took a decision. "I used to read the comments, but there are negative comments which make me feel sad. So, from then onwards I decided not to read comments or never look at likes. I used my Instagram page as a photo album, where I like some photos which I wanted to post like an album," she said. The actress is busy with work with her upcoming films. "I am playing an extended cameo in *Odela 2*, signed a horror film with Srinivas Raga, another film is also there and a Tamil film is releasing," she said about her future projects.



## NITHIIN'S THAMMUDU LOCKS RELEASE DATE

Actor Nithiin joined hands with Sriram Venu, *Vakeel Saab* fame and director for their upcoming film *Thammudu*. The shooting going at a brisk pace, produced by Sri Venkateswara Creations. The movie is titled *Thammudu*, which is Pawan Kalyan's old film title and the makers announced the release date of this film.

The film is going to hit the screens on Maha Shivaratri 2025. The makers said that it is a perfect festival day to bring an impactful story to the big screen. The festival day happened to be on February 26. According to the poster, the story revolves around a village and Nithiin looks captivating. It is a known fact that, Nithiin is a big fan of Pawan Kalyan; now he gets the title of his favourite actor, which is interesting.

Yesteryear actress Laya is playing a key role in the film. Director Sriram Venu earlier delivered the successful *Vakeel Saab* that stars Pawan Kalyan and now he is coming up with this *Thammudu* film. After *DI* and *Srinivasa Kalyanam*, this is the third collaboration of Nithiin with the production house.

## RANA TO PLAY VILLAIN IN JAI HANUMAN?

After the successful *Hanuman*, the director of the film Prashanth Varma announced that he is coming up with a sequel to it titled *Jai Hanuman*. Initially, Niranjan Reddy, who produced *Hanuman*, was supposed to produce this sequel also. However, due to some differences between the director and producer, the film is now being produced by Mythri

Movie Makers. Post that, Prashanth Varma announced that Rishabh Shetty is playing Lord Hanuman in this sequel, which was announced a few days back. Now, Prashanth Varma made another surprise on his social media where he shared a picture of him along

with Rishabh Shetty and Rana Daggubati. According to the latest buzz, Rana Daggubati is playing the character of the antagonist in this film. The film is now into new heights with Rana's entry into it.

With Rishabh Shetty as Lord Hanuman, the villain had to be a powerful actor to play the villain and Prashanth chooses Rana Daggubati to do it. Prashanth didn't mention whether Rana is acting in the film or not, but he captioned it as *Jai Jai Hanuman*. This picture is now going viral on the internet and everyone comes to the conclusion that Rana is definitely playing an important role in this *Jai Hanuman*.

## 'Jai Hanuman came to me at the right time like a divine blessing'

National Award winner Rishabh Shetty spoke about his highly anticipated release *Jai Hanuman* which was announced recently. He said that he will begin shooting for the film after *Kantara: Chapter 1* releases in theatres. "Pragati and I were lucky to visit the Hanuman Garhi temple! It is too early to speak about *Jai Hanuman* now. I will join the team only after *Kantara: Chapter 1* releases in theatres. We did a test shoot and my role was announced, because the makers had some commitment to do so."

Spilling the beans on *Jai Hanuman*, Rishabh shared a few anecdotes about his childhood memories on *Ramayana*. "*Ramayana* was a big part of my life growing up. When I was young, I used to attend these Akhanda Bhajane, where they would narrate *Ramayana*-related stories and recite songs for 24 hours non-stop. Then, many stories in Yakshagana are based on *Ramayana*." "When I went to Ayodhya during the Ram Mandir consecration, I had landed a day early and Pragati and I were lucky to visit the Hanuman Garhi temple. I feel

everything just came together right on time," he concluded. Marking the beginning of the Indian superhero cinematic universe on a new scale, the first look poster of the film was recently released and promises the dawn of the world's biggest superhero universe, rooted in rich Indian mythology. Producers Naveen Yeneni and Y Ravi Shankar, known for their commitment to quality, assure that *Jai Hanuman* will showcase unparalleled production values and top-notch technical standards like never before.