

DC: Ensure no maternal mortality in Eluru dist

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K Vetri Selvi has instructed officials to take all necessary measures to ensure that there is no maternal mortality in the district. She also directed them to prepare proposals for setting up an ICU for newborns at the Government General Hospital (GGH).



During the meeting, the Collector emphasized the need for the District Medical and Health Officer (DMHO) and District Commissioner of Health Services (DCHS) to conduct training for doctors on effective strategies to control maternal and child mortality

The Collector chaired a district-level meeting on Friday, where she reviewed the implementation of the Gender Determination Prohibition Act, 1994, along with the District Level Multi-Member Appropriate Authority Advisory Committee, District MDSR (Maternal Death Surveillance and Response), and CDSR (Child Death Surveillance and Response).

During the meeting, the Collector emphasized the need for the District Medical and Health Officer (DMHO) and District Commissioner of Health Services (DCHS) to conduct training for doctors on effective strategies to control maternal and child mortality. She urged officials to conduct a case study on maternal and child deaths in the past three years and analyze how alternative treatments could

help reduce these fatalities. She also called for identifying risk factors in cases of sudden pregnancies, such as low maternal age, and taking necessary preventive measures. For high-risk cases, the Collector stressed the importance of ensuring that blood is

available at the time of delivery.

The Collector instructed Anganwadi workers, ANMs, and ASHA workers, under the supervision of the respective CDPOs, to monitor high-risk pregnant women, especially those with anaemia and other

complications, until delivery. She also emphasized the need for orientation and counselling for these women.

Regarding the proposal to establish a Neonatal ICU at the GGH, the Collector directed officials to submit the necessary reports and plans for the required infrastructure.

"Gender determination tests are a criminal offence under the law, and strict legal action will be taken against those conducting such tests. Everyone has a responsibility to protect the unborn child. Officials should intensify the implementation of the PC PNDT Act, renew the registration of scanning centres, and carry out decoy operations and surprise inspections in coordination with NGOs," the Collector stated.

She also clarified that using ultrasound medical tests for gender determination in licensed scanning centres is illegal and instructed officials to take stringent action against centres violating the rules.

The meeting was attended by Additional SP Suryachandra Rao, District Red Cross Chairman BV Krishna Reddy, District Medical and Health Officer Dr. S Sharmisti, and ICDS PD K Padmavati, among others.

8th Class student drowned in tank



PNS ■ BAPATLA

An eighth-class student drowned in an irrigation tank at Duddukuru village in Bapatla district on Friday.

According to the police, the deceased, Varun Tej (13), was studying in the 8th Class at the ZP school and was residing in the BC hostel. He, along with three other boys, went to the tank for a bath. While there, he slipped and drowned. His body was recovered from the tank and shifted to the GGH for post-mortem. The police have registered a case.

In response to the tragedy, Minister for BC, Handloom, and EWS Welfare, S. Savitha, expressed her sorrow over the death of the young student. She conveyed her condolences to the family of the deceased. The Minister has directed the Bapatla District Collector to initiate an investigation and assured the bereaved family of all necessary assistance.

MP urges Centre to reconsider old alignment of NH 165

PNS ■ ELURU

Local MP Putta Mahesh Kumar has urged V Umashankar, Secretary of the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, to reconsider the old alignment of NH 165 at Kannapuram village.



In a representation submitted to Umashankar in New Delhi on Friday, the MP explained that the proposed NH 165 BB project, which connects Jeelugumilli to Kovvuru via Kannapuram village, was initially planned to pass through the village. However, the highway alignment was later altered to bypass Kannapuram village, which, according to the MP, was a setback for the area.

Kumar requested the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways to reconsider the original alignment, allowing the highway to pass through Kannapuram village. He also urged Umashankar to issue suitable instructions to the concerned authorities to take appropriate action on the matter.

Additionally, the MP appealed for the sanctioning of Rs 289 crore to meet the growing traffic demands in the

Kaikaluru constituency. He also called for expediting the reconstruction and repair of roads, seeking suitable instructions from the concerned authorities to address these pressing issues.

20 RTC bus passengers have miraculous escape



PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

A major mishap was narrowly avoided when 20 passengers travelling in an APSRTC bus had a miraculous escape after the bus plunged into an irrigation canal at Vanapamula village in Pedaparupudi mandal.

According to the police, the RTC bus was en route to Vijayawada from Gudiwada road when the driver reportedly lost control, causing the bus to veer off the road and fall into the canal. Fortunately, all 20

passengers on board escaped unharmed in the incident.

RTC officials promptly arrived at the accident site and arranged for another bus to transport the stranded passengers to their destinations. The police have registered a case in connection with the incident.

Speaking to the media, the passengers pointed out that the Gudiwada-Vijayawada road was riddled with potholes, making it extremely difficult and unsafe for motorists.



Tourist spots in SSS district to be developed: Minister

PNS ■ PUTTAPARTHI

Minister for Handlooms and Textiles, S Savitha, has announced that tourist destinations in the Sri Sathya Sai (SSS) district will be developed to attract a large number of visitors to Lepakshi, Prasanthi Nilayam, and Thimmamma Marrimanu.

Minister Savitha inaugurated boat rides at Bukkapatnam tank in Bukkapatnam on Friday. She participated in a boat ride on a tourism boat, accompanied by MLA Sindhura Reddy and District Tourism Officer Jaya Kumar.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Savitha highlighted the importance of tourism development in the district. She mentioned that while the state government is focusing on development and welfare schemes, tourism is being given priority. The government is particularly concentrating on tourism development in Sri Sathya Sai district, she noted.

The Minister further stated that key tourist attractions in the

district, including Lepakshi, Prasanthi Nilayam, Thimmamma Marrimanu, and the Bukkapatnam irrigation tank, would be developed with all necessary infrastructure to draw more tourists. She expressed confidence that the Bukkapatnam boat rides would be successful and that the location would emerge as a significant tourist centre in the district.

She informed that a 14-seat capacity boat, four federal boats, and a risky boat are being operated at Bukkapatnam tank by Sai Aqua Boating agency. A food court will also be set up at the location. The Minister hoped that a large number of tourists would visit Bukkapatnam tank during holidays to enjoy the boat rides.

Minister Savitha also announced that a boating facility would soon be introduced at Gollapalli reservoir in Penukonda mandal as part of the district's tourism development. Additionally, a food court and children's park would be established there.

To accommodate the increasing number of tourists visiting Lepakshi, the government will augment the number of available rooms. "The birth anniversary of Sri Sathya Sai Baba will be celebrated on a grand scale in Puttaparthi on November 23," she informed.

MLA Sindhura Reddy acknowledged the efforts to develop Puttaparthi as an international tourist destination, leveraging temple tourism with support from the Central government. She also revealed that the Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple in Kadiri, Yogi Vemana Memorial, Thimmamma Marrimanu, and Lepakshi would be developed into top tourist destinations under special plans by the Central and State governments.

It was a significant moment for her as an MLA to participate in the inauguration of boating at Bukkapatnam, she said.

Tourism Regional Coordinator N Venkateswarulu and other officials also attended the event.

Entire brass of BRS will have to go to jail if found guilty: Ponguleti

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS leaders who were members of the BRS government and had committed offences must be punished, Revenue, Housing, Information and PR Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said.

He said that not only BRS Working President KT Rama Rao and former BRS Minister T. Harish Rao but also KCR and BRS MLC Kavitha will have to go to jail if found guilty, Ponguleti said.

Addressing the media on Friday in Khammam district, Ponguleti said that BRS leaders who had committed offences were now trembling. KTR is getting ready psychologically thinking that he will be arrested in connection with the Formula E race. KTR is also trying to score political points using the issue, he said.

Pointing out that the Formula E Race had drawn heavy flak, Ponguleti asked what benefit Telangana had obtained from the E-Racing event. He said that he was not making these comments targeting a person or a party. However, they should face trial, if found guilty in the inquiry. The people of Telangana know well how BRS leaders acquired assets worth crores, Ponguleti said.

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23 red sanders logs seized, 3 smugglers arrested



PNS ■ KADAPA

In a major crackdown, the Task Force team seized 23 red sanders logs and apprehended three smugglers in the Rajampet forest division of Annamayya district.

According to DSP G Balireddy, the operation was conducted under the direction of SP L Subba Rayudu and Task Force SP P Srinivas. Led by RI Chiranjeevulu and RSI P Nares, the Task Force team carried out combing operations in the forest on Friday.

During the search, the team spotted smugglers loading red sanders logs into a car near SR Palem village. As the Task Force team approached, the smugglers attempted to flee into the forest. However, the team successfully chased and captured three of them. Along with the logs, the team seized the car used in the smuggling attempt. One of the smugglers is from Tamil Nadu, and all three have previous involvement in red sanders smuggling cases. Task Force CI Suresh Kumar has registered a case.

4 notorious bike lifters arrested; 25 bikes recovered



PNS ■ KADAPA

The police arrested a four-member notorious bike-lifting gang and recovered 25 motorcycles in Yerragunta in the district. Yerragunta CI Suresh Babu told the media on Friday they arrested four bike lifters and seized 25 bikes worth Rs 25 lakh.

The four youths were addicted to vices and to earn money easily they started stealing costly motorcycles and selling them by creating fake records. The arrested bike lifters were produced before the court and sent to remand.

TTD Chairman visits Dharmagiri

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

TTD Trust Board Chairman BR Naidu on Friday visited the Dharmagiri Veda Vignana Peetham and the SV Gosala in Tirumala.

Upon his arrival at Dharmagiri, Principal KSS Avadhani extended a traditional welcome to the Chairman, accompanied by Vedic chants and Aseervachanam. During his visit, Naidu interacted with the students, encouraging them to excel in their courses and promoting Sanatana Dharma. He assured the students, "If there are any issues, we are here to resolve them. Our goal is to elevate Sanatana Dharma to newer heights."

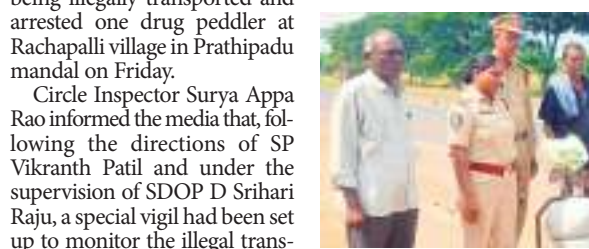


The Principal of Dharmagiri, along with Special Officer Vijayalakshmi and Health Officer Dr. Madhusudhana Prasad, briefed the Chairman on the growth and significance of the Vedic institution in Tirumala. Later, Naidu visited the SV Gosala, where he participated in the Navaneeta Seva. He observed the services rendered by Srivari Sevaks in the Seva and personally handed over butter churned from buttermilk, which is used in Ekanta Seva, to the Sevaks. He also took part in Gopuja. SV Gosala Director Dr. Harmath Reddy was present during the visit.

The Chairman's visit concluded with a trip to Pedda Jeeyar Mutt, where he sought the blessings of Pedda Jeeyar Swamy, worshipped Bedi Anjaneya Swamy, and offered coconuts in Akhilandam.

PNS ■ KAKINADA

21 kg of ganja seized, 1 held



The police seized 21 kg of ganja being illegally transported and arrested one drug peddler at Rachapalli village in Prathipadu mandal on Friday.

Circle Inspector Surya Appa Rao informed the media that, following the directions of SP Vikranth Patil and under the supervision of SDOP D Srihari Raju, a special vigil had been set up to monitor the illegal transportation of cannabis through Kakinada district.

A police team conducted vehicle checks on the Tuni-Rajahmundry highway (NH 16) on Friday and discovered that the

drug peddler, identified as Kola Manideep, was transporting 21 kgs of ganja. The arrested peddler had procured the cannabis from

Pasupulanka village in Malkangiri district, Odisha, and was attempting to transport it to Hyderabad for sale at a higher price. According to the Circle

Inspector, Manideep, who was addicted to vices, turned to selling ganja as an easy way to make money.

A case was registered against the accused under the NDPS Act, and he was produced before the court, which sent him into judicial remand. The SP appreciated the efforts of Peddapuram SDOP D Srihari Raju, CI Surya Appa Rao, and SI S Lakshmi Kanth for their role in seizing the large quantity of ganja and apprehending the drug peddler.

ACROSS THE STATES



No place for Hindus in J'khand amid infiltration

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday accused the JMM-led coalition of patronising infiltration for vote bank politics, warning that if unchecked, there will be no place for Hindus and tribals in Jharkhand in 20 years.



Two Naxalites killed in encounter

Two Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Friday, police said. The gunfight broke out around 11 am in a forest on the tri-junction of Usoor-Basaguda-Pamed villages.



Woman's body with bullet wounds found in UP village

The body of a 27-year-old woman with gunshot injuries was found in a car here on Friday, with the police suspecting the murder to be a case of honour killing, police said.



NSCN-IM threatens 'armed struggle' over 'national flag', 'constitution'

Naga insurgent group NSCN(IM) has threatened to break its 27 year-old ceasefire agreement with the government and return to its 'armed struggle' if its demands for a separate 'national flag and constitution' are not met.

'Ek hai toh safe hai', says PM Modi; slams Congress

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday accused the Congress of pitting one caste against another and cautioned people to stay united, saying 'Ek hai, toh safe hai.'



"Since Nehru's time Congress and his family opposed reservation and now their fourth generation 'yuvraj' (prince) is working for caste divisions," Modi said, addressing his first poll rally in Maharashtra for the November 20 assembly elections

The PM said the Congress and its allies should not encourage the "Pakistan agenda" and speak the language of separatists. The agenda won't succeed till he has people's blessings, said Modi.

MLAs protested, they were thrown out. The country and Maharashtra should understand this," Modi said. The BJP's star campaigner also accused the Congress of playing a dangerous game of dividing castes and communities.

Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah will quit soon, claims state BJP chief

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka BJP President B Y Vijayendra on Friday claimed that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, facing probe in the MUDA site allotment case, will resign soon.

The Chief Minister, who is an accused, is patting himself on his back. He is trying to instill confidence among legislators (Congress) that he will continue as CM, but Siddaramaiah knows what is the truth.



said at the time of election, to get the support of certain communities, such statements are made. "I don't know whether it is right or not to say this repeatedly, but the Chief Minister's resignation has already been decided," he added.

The ruling Congress last month, with a few Ministers in the Siddaramaiah Cabinet holding closed door meetings, fueling speculation about leadership change. But such activities came to a halt following instructions from the party high command.

"But, under the CM's insistence, Zameer Ahmed Khan (Waaf Minister) has taken the lead in robbing land from farmers, its implications will be felt in by-polls," he said.

PANEL ON BANGLADESHI IMMIGRANTS Jharkhand government asserts no demographic change

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday allowed the Jharkhand government not to appoint till December 3 expert members to the independent fact-finding committee directed to be constituted by the high court to identify infiltrators from Bangladesh in the state.

said that a fact-finding committee is needed but it left it to the state government. "We need to hear this matter," Justice Dhulia told Sibal and observed that it is a fact that the tribal population is reducing in the state.

Delhi Congress kicks off month-long 'Nyay Yatra'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress kicked off its month-long "Delhi Nyay Yatra" from Rajghat on Friday to put pressure on the AAP government in the city on various issues ahead of the Assembly polls due early next year.

Cong leaders support Article 370, says Union Minister



PNS ■ SURAT

Union Minister CR Paatil on Friday slammed the Congress by saying its leaders move around with a copy of the Constitution but support the restoration of the scrapped Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir.

reporting the National Conference to get a decision taken by Parliament to scrap Article 370 and 35A overturned. The real face of these parties has been exposed. They will never succeed in their intentions," Paatil said at a press conference here.

'Rahul or his descendants can't restore Article 370'

PNS ■ SANGLI

Neither Congress leader Rahul Gandhi nor his fourth generation will be able to bring back Article 370 that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir, Union minister Amit Shah said on Friday in a stinging attack on the opposition at a poll rally in Maharashtra's Sangli.

The J-K assembly on Wednesday passed a resolution seeking a dialogue between the Central government and elected representatives for restoration of Article 370 granting special status to the erstwhile state. The move was hailed by the valley-based political parties while it prompted protests by the main opposition BJP which demanded its rollback.

The provision was scrapped on August 5, 2019. Addressing a rally in Sangli for Mahayuti (ruling alliance) candidates Sudhir Gadgil and Sanjay Kaka Patil, the Union Minister said the Congress was supporting the National Conference, the ruling party in J-K, in this endeavour.

ROHINI NAYYAR PRIZE FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

Engineer who ferries fun and science to village kids awarded

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

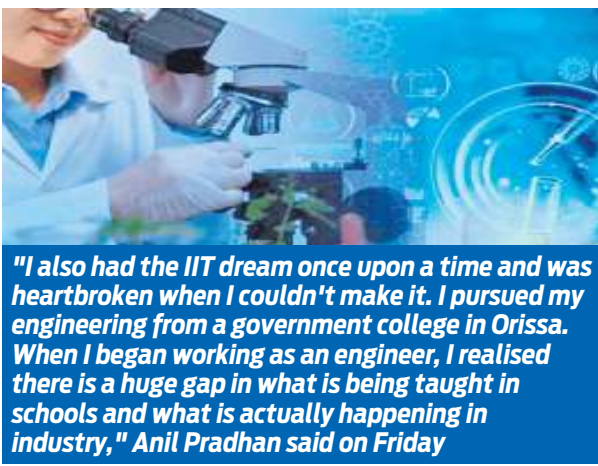
It's no ordinary village bus to ferry passengers. A veritable treasure chest of knowledge and fun, the minibus known as Tinker on Wheels travels from school to school in rural areas and invites students on board to give them a hands-on experience of scientific activities such as robotics and 3D printing.

"I also had the IIT dream once upon a time and was heartbroken when I couldn't make it. I pursued my engineering from a government college in Orissa. When I began working as an engineer, I realised there is a huge gap in what is being taught in schools and what is actually happening in industry," Anil Pradhan said on Friday.

students so far with his Tinker on Wheels.

The students gather in the school playground, where the minibus is parked and the play area gets converted into a laboratory for the day giving them a chance to innovate and create.

The unique project has reached over 140 schools in Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Telangana, and has reached over 2.5 lakh students.



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touch with them but now schools reach out themselves too. Depending upon the number of students at the school, mostly above Class 5, we arrange the time span for visit of the bus. Sometimes it goes for a day, sometimes for more days, depending upon the strength. The idea is to give at least eight hours to each batch of students.

Anti-corruption sleuths detain doctor, pharmacist

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Anti-corruption vigilance officials on Friday detained a doctor and a pharmacist from a government hospital for accepting a bribe of Rs 40,000 from a contractual nursing officer at Baipariguda in Odisha's Koraput district.

allegation from the nursing officer, whose services had recently been regularised. She was entitled to an arrear payment of approximately Rs 4,83,572 after the government ordered the release of differential financial benefits from October 2022 onward.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Rape capital

Despite countless promises and policies, the capital continues to fall short on women's safety

In yet another harrowing incident that highlights Delhi's persistent reputation as the "rape capital" of India, a young woman was allegedly gang-raped by three men near the busy ITO chowk. On October 10, 2024, the survivor, a community leader and researcher from Puri, Odisha, was assaulted and then abandoned near the Sarai Kale Khan area. It would take more than three weeks for Delhi Police to apprehend the suspects in what was an elaborate and challenging investigation. This case, though one among many, casts an intense spotlight on Delhi's persistent challenges with women's safety. Despite widespread public outrage, nationwide protests, and even legislative reforms spurred by the 2012 Nirbhaya case, the city remains one of the most dangerous places for women. This incident underscores the gaps in ensuring safety, accountability, and justice for women, despite heightened scrutiny and the promises made over the years. In the wake of the Nirbhaya gang rape, public demands for justice led to significant legal reforms, including amendments to the Criminal Law in 2013. These included harsher punishments for sexual offenders and the establishment of fast-track courts. The Delhi Police increased surveillance, deployed women patrol teams, and set up additional helplines. However, cases like this illustrate that systemic changes alone haven't proven sufficient to curb these crimes. Although police presence has increased, patrols are often sparse in secluded areas where many such crimes occur.



There are also challenges with delayed response times and gaps in the training and sensitivity of law enforcement officials towards victims of sexual violence.

Crimes against women are frequently dismissed or downplayed, especially in cases where victims are perceived as "easy targets." The perpetrators in this case allegedly targeted the survivor believing she was mentally unwell. Many survivors face severe trauma, which impacts their ability to recount details of the assault or pursue legal recourse effectively. While authorities in this case took extraordinary steps to support the survivor, such efforts are still rare. Establishing accessible and widespread trauma-informed support systems is crucial for the safety and wellbeing of survivors. This horrific incident should prompt a critical examination of the measures that have failed Delhi's women. Reforms need to extend beyond legal frameworks and involve deeper societal and systemic changes. Expanding surveillance to cover secluded areas, introducing real-time monitoring could enhance response times and deter potential offenders. Law enforcement must receive adequate training in trauma-informed approaches, victim sensitivity, and rigorous investigative procedures. Transforming societal attitudes towards women and sexual violence is critical. Public campaigns and educational programmes that challenge stereotypes and promote empathy can help change the culture that enables such

PICTALK



A Rajasthani nomad vendor waits for customers, in Pushkar

India 2047: Towards a unified developed nation



J S RAJPUT

Achieving 'Viksit Bharat' will demand a collective effort to foster religious harmony, address environmental threats and navigate global tensions

India awaits 2047 as it aspires to become one of the developed nations, and obviously, that would mean striving, sincerely and collectively for the welfare of each of its citizens. Hopefully, in the Viksit Bharat, none would need a free ration, and freebies doled out as allurement for votes would become history. It would also unhindered availability of potable water, clean air, an all-weather roof over their heads, and freedom from a 'no-work-to-do' situation. Hunger, ill health and malnutrition would become history! India would have a system of education that would ensure equality of access and success at the same level for the children of the Lutyens zone and those in the Jhabua Village!

Education shall no longer remain a 'necessary utopia!' Moving in this direction necessitates getting rid of communal disharmony and socio-cultural exclusion of every kind. We expect a nation that no longer suffers the minority-majority concerns! Having seriously studied various aspects of social cohesion and religious amity - or social and religious cohesion and amity - in India, there is no escape from acknowledging that it is a very complex conundrum of communal curvatures that are resistant to various well-intentioned initiatives to smoothen it out.

There are human values that are common to every religion, and these could become the ground for cementing comradeship without in any way interfering with the ways of faith and religious practices. The global rise of fundamentalism, terrorism, and fanaticism, and the consequent expansion of distrust, oppression and seclusion are certainly not conducive to a better life for the people, no matter how many more gadgets are made available in their homes.

Sadly enough, it was very clear at the turn of the millennium that in days ahead, things would get tougher for leadership to handle, and the very survival of the human race would be at stake. In the third decade of the 21st century, humanity and the planet Earth confront the challenges



posed by climate change, a sharp deterioration of man-nature relationships, and ever-increasing violence in various forms and formats. The futility of the peace-making efforts by those whose economic interests require greater production of lethal weapons, and their sale and consumption is no longer a hidden secret.

The tensions, turmoil and anxiety that all of this creates are now being experienced everywhere, particularly in the West, which accepted the refugees and intruders with open arms, many of them are now repenting their policies of the past! The rise of distrust and apprehension constitutes greater danger than sporadic violence the instances of which are increasing in European nations.

These examples give some indications of the world before the young of today, and those who would wield power tomorrow!

India is a major Asian nation that suffers from a huge influx of illegal migrants, and most of them get support from several political parties. It is clear that this support is based purely on communal considerations, and is certainly not in the national interest. It adds to the fragile relationship that has existed all along, was fuelled during the freedom struggle and led to the partition of



THERE ARE HUMAN VALUES THAT ARE COMMON TO EVERY RELIGION, AND THESE COULD BECOME THE GROUND FOR CEMENTING COMRADERY WITHOUT IN ANY WAY INTERFERING WITH THE WAYS OF FAITH AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

India, the possibility of achieving social cohesion and religious amity remained elusive. The two-nation theory was elaborated in an oft-quoted speech of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in his Meerut speech delivered in March 1888, his view of the scenario that may emerge after the British leave: "Is it possible that under these circumstances two nations - the Mohammedans and the Hindus - could sit on the same throne and remain equal in power? Most certainly not."

Sir Syed was one of the most respected and admired of the leaders of the Muslim community who had opened the doors of modern education for them, and hence, the enlightened Muslim youth adored him. The essence of the above represented the prevailing sentiments of the Muslim community, and these were perpetuated by others, particularly by those who opposed the views of Sir Syed on modern education.

They, however, grabbed the idea of two nations! Subsequently, in the same lecture, Sir Syed elaborates his views further: the principle of a representative government is 'that it is government by a nation, and that the nation in question rules over its own people and own land.' It is as simple as that: there could be no possibility of any representative government elected by

Hindus and Muslims together ever ruling over India consisting not only of the nations of Hindus and Muslims but others who should also constitute nations of their own. Indian democracy establishes that communal harmony is possible, and the two communities are equally enlightened to work together.

While Sir Syed deserves and gets praise for his futuristic outlook on modern education and its dire need to uplift the Muslims, it would certainly remain a matter of serious debate whether his definition of two nations did create a lasting impact on the psyche of the community that persists even today.

The doctrine of the two-nation theory finally got buried with the formation of Bangladesh, and emerging multi-religious societies in Europe. If there is one nation that could present a functional model of religious unity it is India, the Hindus and the Muslims of India. Nowhere else, the equality of all religions is so deep-rooted in thought and deed as in the ancient Indian culture. It could be revived by the hereditary dialogical tradition which has excelled historically.

(Professor Rajput works in education, social cohesion and religious amity. He is an Atal Fellow in the PMML, New Delhi; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SC UPHOLDS MADARSA ACT

Madam — Recently, the Supreme Court, in its landmark judgement has upheld the constitutional validity of Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act 2004, reversing an Allahabad High Court ruling that "it was unconstitutional." The Madarsa Act provides a legal framework for these institutions in UP. The Allahabad High Court had said in its judgement that the Act made it compulsory for students to study Islam and more modern subjects were made optional, which is a violation of the right to free compulsory education under Article 21A of the Constitution.

By upholding the educational rights of minority communities in Uttar Pradesh, the Supreme Court has now confirmed the state can regulate the madarsa education board to ensure standards of excellence. Also, SC observed that though minorities have a right under Article 30 of the Constitution to establish and administer madarsa to impart religious or secular education, the right is not absolute. SC has also said that so long as the regulation is reasonable and rational, states can regulate aspects of education in minority institutions without violating their rights to handle the administration. At the same time, in a significant move, SC has struck down a part of the Madarsa Act's section 9 which allows the Board to grant degrees as it is against UGC norms. In general, the SC verdict not only safeguards the right of madarsa students to pursue education but also affirms the constitutional principles that protect religious minorities and their educational institutions.

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

TRUMP'S HISTORIC WIN

Madam— Apropos to "Trump wins hands down" published on November 7. Someone who has so many serious cases against him that even his candidature was not confirmed, and from that situation to secure candidature, surviving two

Gambling's global impact



Gambling, casinos, and betting, once limited and far less accessible, have now become available 24 hours a day through social media, mobile phones, and gambling apps. In the past, individuals had to travel and stand in queues to participate in such activi-

ties. This easy access has significantly accelerated the harmful impact of gambling. To date, an estimated 450 million people worldwide have faced negative consequences, including severe financial losses, deteriorating physical and mental health, broken family relationships, and, tragically, suicide.

These alarming trends paint a grim and toxic picture of our global future. The issue doesn't spare any age group. Research shows that 15.8 per cent of adults are addicted to gambling, with an even higher rate of 26.4 per cent among adolescents. Given the severity of the situation, it is imperative for the world to introduce and implement comprehensive strategies to address this crisis. Learning from the past, it must act decisively to safeguard future generations and build a healthier, safer society.

Jakir Hussain | Kanpur

assassination attempts and becoming President again is a massive turnaround and achievement, and it would be an understatement to call Trump a proverbial phoenix. He is now the oldest person in US history to be elected president. He may have been out of power from 2020 to 2024, but he was never away from America's psyche. Either you love him or hate him, but he is here to stay.

His main poll planks were reviving the US economy, vanishing inflation, and illegal immigration, and all these seem to have resonated with US voters. Moreover, this verdict cannot be construed against Kamala Harris, it is more against the Joe Biden administration. She hardly had 100 days to prepare, campaign, and fight. The world would hope that Trump walks the talk and plays a big role in ending the war in Ukraine-Russia.

Trump's policies would be keenly watched because if he follows America's first policy, then Indian exporters in textiles, pharma and automobiles may feel the pinch and H1-B rules could further

be tightened, which could mean Indian IT professionals and companies will be adversely impacted.

Bal Govind | Noida

DELHI CONGRESS NYAY YATRA

Madam — The Delhi Congress commenced a month-long 'Nyay Yatra' on November 8, with the goal of tending to residents' concerns and advocating for governmental action. Senior leaders such as Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, and K C Venugopal have been invited to spearhead the troop, which will traverse all 70 Vidhan Sabha constituencies.

This was disclosed by state unit chief Devender Yadav. Congress workers will engage with locals to listen to their concerns and collect suggestions. Running until December 4, the campaign will showcase a variety of community members and act as a precursor to the upcoming Assembly elections.

Neha Tomar | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

India's AI dilemma: Balancing innovation with job security



ABHAYA AGRAWAL

As AI transforms industries globally, it also raises concerns about job displacement in India, especially within sectors like IT, management and creative fields

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping industries across the globe and India is no exception. The introduction of AI promises growth opportunities, new business models, and enhanced competitiveness in the global market. However, it also raises significant concerns, especially around job security. This is particularly true for workers in sectors perceived as more susceptible to automation, such as IT, management, writing, and entertainment. The duality of optimism for AI's potential and anxieties over job displacement is a pressing issue for India as it seeks to balance these perspectives.



and efficiency, but at the potential cost of middle-management jobs.

Similarly, the creative industries are feeling the impact of AI. Fields such as modeling, advertising, voice acting, and content creation face increasing competition from AI-generated graphics, voices, and written content. AI models are now advanced enough to produce realistic images, draft coherent articles, and even mimic human voices, reducing the need for human involvement in creative tasks. This shift leaves specialists in these areas concerned about future employment prospects. The challenge lies in adapting to these changes, harnessing the benefits of AI while mitigating job loss. The Indian government recognises the implications of

AI on job creation and is actively working to address these challenges. One of its main strategies is to focus on human capital development and workforce preparedness. Initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PMKVY) aim to upskill a significant portion of the population, emphasising AI, machine learning, and robotics. These initiatives intend to create new job opportunities in AI while managing its impact on the workforce. The private sector is also contributing to this effort. Major Indian IT firms, such as Infosys, Wipro, and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), have launched extensive upskilling programmes to prepare their employees for the digital future.

Infosys, for instance, has developed a global training initiative to help its workforce keep pace with advancements in AI and other emerging technologies. These transformation-focused programs prioritise skills in AI, cloud computing, and data science, equipping workers to stay relevant in a rapidly evolving job market. Some companies are also

finding ways to integrate AI that enhance, rather than replace, human productivity. Transitioning to an AI-driven economy has its benefits and challenges. On one hand, AI is expected to spur economic growth and innovation, creating new opportunities. On the other hand, it raises concerns about job security and the redistribution of work. Addressing these challenges requires a collaborative effort among workers, businesses, and the government. For workers, adaptability is key, requiring a willingness to acquire new skills and embrace evolving work environments. For businesses and policymakers, there is a shared responsibility to invest in reskilling initiatives and create jobs that align with AI-driven changes. By prioritising human capital and fostering a proactive approach to workforce development, India can position itself to benefit from AI while minimising the risk of widespread job displacement.

(The writer is faculty-emerging technologies, Wadhvani Centre for Government Digital Transformation; views are personal)



FIRST COLUMN

TRUMP 2.0:
IMPACT ON INDIA

Trump's return could offer India a pivotal role in global tech and manufacturing



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The third time is a charm, as the saying goes and we are not talking about PM Modi coming back to power for three consecutive terms, but his close friend, the 47th President of the US, Donald Trump. Having successfully dodged a couple of bullets (quite literally), impeachments, and felony charges, President Trump, triumphed over the collective choice of the most powerful economy in the world the United States of America. While the right-wingers across the globe, including in India celebrated his victory, as a literal victory for the "RIGHT" and what they saw as the tyranny of the so-called "left" liberals, President Trump 2.0 is most likely to be more nuanced than his version one. What it means for India is a mixed box of chocolates which can be bitter or boldly sweet depending on the pick.

President-elect Trump is known to be a hard negotiator, particularly on trade topics and he has famously described India as one of the highest offenders on this front. He is a businessman with decades of experience and has a transactional approach to trade, something not alien to Indian politicians particularly, from the Western regions. Trump's presidency 1.0 and the humungous growth in India-US bilateral commercial relations, plus a business-oriented Indian government at the centre, for now over a decade, has also served as a training ground for several tough negotiators to emerge from the bureaucratic class in India. Therefore, while officials in the government are aware of the tough negotiations ahead with the US on trade-related matters or import tariffs or say restrictions, they are hopeful, of finding a middle path given their familiarity with the President's style of functioning.



The dragon in the room would be cagey, as President-elect Trump in the run-up to the elections has vowed to impose stiff tariffs on imports from China. This may be great news for India, especially with the current government's focus being on making Bharat the manufacturing hub for electronics hardware, at least for the region.

Indian bureaucrats pushing the manufacturing envelope are deeply aware, that developing India into a hub, is a long-term game that may outlive the current regimes in DC and Delhi. They are also acutely aware that, by allowing friendshoring to India, by large US companies in the China plus one model, Trump will have an advantage. He could negotiate this card by pressuring India to buy perhaps more hydrocarbons or defence technology from the US. While the technology partnership was not primarily the centrepiece of India US bilateral relationship under Trump 1.0, his successor Joe Biden created a delectable topping with cooperation on critical and emerging technologies as an important element of the partnership. Initiatives such as iCET (initiative for critical and emerging technologies) which are directly monitored by the heads of both countries have put an unwavering sanctity to the tech partnership between the two democracies.

President Trump could either encourage US tech to keep fulfilling India's avowed target of being the next global electronics manufacturing hub while holding it as a bargaining chip, or, he may find a creative solution to persuade some of these companies to shift back some of their factories to domestic shores. The latter possibility seems unlikely as Donald Trump has, traditionally been a huge supporter of creating more jobs for Americans in the old manufacturing sectors. Much of President Trump's technology policy is likely to be curated by his biggest donor and tech czar Elon Musk. Elon Musk has business interests in China where he has some of his largest Tesla factories, besides, he has been trying to enter the Indian automobile market with little success. His other business interests including satellite-based telecommunication services, have struggled to start beaming in India. Many of these factors would determine the crucial next four years of the Modi-Trump era.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Trump's return: A radical shift in US foreign policy



K S TOMAR

As Donald Trump returns to the White House, he may redefine the boundaries of American leadership and influence in an increasingly multipolar world

Trump's return to the White House in 2024 sparks a torrent of questions about the future of NATO, the American economy, relationships with allies, and the trajectory of the Ukraine war. Trump's previous tenure exhibited a strong tilt toward "America First" policies, frequently challenging long-standing global alliances and multilateral commitments. A Trump-led presidency, therefore, could dramatically shift the geopolitical landscape, leaving allies like NATO in uncertainty, reorienting America's economic policies, testing India's balancing act, and redefining China relations.

The Future of NATO: Endurance or Erosion? NATO, the cornerstone of Western defence since 1949, stands as a central topic of speculation with Trump's return. During his presidency, Trump questioned the alliance's relevance, particularly its financial obligations, going as far as to imply a possible US withdrawal if members didn't contribute "their fair share." This stance generated unease among NATO allies, who rely on the US for critical defence resources, particularly amid heightened Russian aggression. As Trump resumes office, his approach to NATO could undergo even bolder recalibration. The European defence structure, largely dependent on the US, might face significant strategic and funding shifts, possibly prompting European powers to take on more defence responsibilities. A reduction in US military and financial support for NATO might embolden adversarial actors, especially Russia. A scaled-back US commitment could mean vulnerabilities for Eastern European countries like Poland and the Baltic states, which depend on NATO's security umbrella to counter Russian expansionism. The impact on NATO, therefore, hinges heavily on Trump's strategic decisions regarding alliance burden-sharing and his capacity to persuade European allies to increase their defence expenditures.

The Global Stakes: A Pivotal Crossroads The implications of Trump's return extend far beyond America's borders. With China's rise and Russia's ambitions continuing to shape global security dynamics, Trump's foreign policy choices will carry weighty consequences. His transactional approach to alliances, "America First" economics, and unpredictable stance on defence alliances could reshape international relationships, with traditional allies rethinking their reliance on US support. His handling of NATO's commitments, the Ukraine war, and relations with global powers like India and China will determine the future stability of Western influence and the global balance of power.

China and India: Competing powers: Under Trump, the US-China relationship could revert to one defined by rivalry, as he has consistently advocated a tough stance on China's trade practices and global ambitions. Trump may reassert his strict tariffs on Chinese goods and impose even tighter restrictions on Chinese companies operating in the US, aiming to curb China's influence in areas like technology and manufacturing. For India, Trump's return poses a mix of opportunities and challenges. His administration was notably warm toward India, fostering stronger economic and defence ties through agreements such as the "2+2" Dialogue. A renewed focus on countering China could make India a key strategic partner, particularly in the Indo-Pacific. Trump might offer India more defence cooperation or



A RENEWED FOCUS ON COUNTERING CHINA COULD MAKE INDIA A KEY STRATEGIC PARTNER, PARTICULARLY IN THE INDO-PACIFIC. TRUMP MIGHT OFFER INDIA MORE DEFENCE COOPERATION OR TECHNOLOGY TRANSFERS, POTENTIALLY STRENGTHENING INDIA'S MILITARY AND ECONOMIC POSITIONING IN ASIA

technology transfers, potentially strengthening India's military and economic positioning in Asia. However, India's balancing act between the US and Russia—given India's defence ties with Moscow—could be complicated if Trump takes a firm stance against the Ukraine conflict. India's careful neutrality on the Russia-Ukraine issue might attract scrutiny, with Trump possibly expecting more alignment with US strategic priorities.

Economic Fallout-America's Financial Future: Trump's economic approach has traditionally leaned toward protectionism, focusing on restoring jobs, renegotiating trade deals, and limiting dependence on foreign supply chains. This economic philosophy could be reinvigorated if he returns to the Oval Office, with potential implications for trade, inflation, and employment in the US. One possible outcome is the continuation or even intensification of tariffs on China, aimed at reducing the US trade deficit. However, these tariffs historically contributed to increased costs for American consumers and businesses, raising prices on imported goods and creating inflationary pressures.

Another protectionist push could have similar consequences, forcing Americans to pay more for everyday products as companies pass on tariff costs. Trump's "America First" approach could also mean tax reforms or incentives for companies to manufacture domestically. This reshoring could create jobs but would also drive up production costs due to higher wages, potentially making US goods less competitive internationally. Furthermore, a rigid stance on trade could strain relations with economically integrated allies,

with Trump demanding trade terms perceived as fair to the US., which could disrupt existing agreements and introduce new economic tensions globally.

Allies under Pressure: A Reshaped Global Order?

The Trump administration's approach to alliances was often unpredictable, blending close relationships with some leaders while alienating others. His "transactional" foreign policy style prioritised immediate gains over long-standing partnerships, which led to fractures with allies. Now Trump's return could mean intensified pressure on allies to prioritise bilateral deals over multilateral cooperation, transforming relationships with the EU, Japan, South Korea, and other allies. Trump's policies toward Europe might manifest in demands for favourable trade deals or concessions on defence spending. For Japan and South Korea, his re-emergence could signal heightened pressure to contribute more to their defence arrangements, potentially testing their security alliances with the US. Even Middle Eastern allies, like Saudi Arabia, could face new expectations under a Trump administration more interested in specific, tangible returns on US support rather than abstract commitments.

The Ukraine War: A Fractured Consensus?

Trump's return to the White House could introduce an alternative perspective on the Ukraine conflict, deviating from the largely unified Western support for Ukraine. Trump has openly criticised high US financial aid to Ukraine, signalling his belief that European countries should shoulder more of the burden.

With the conflict consuming billions of dollars in American aid, he

may choose to reduce US involvement, putting pressure on European allies to increase their support and potentially compelling Ukraine to consider negotiations. A Trump-led administration might seek to avoid confrontation with Russia, which could weaken Ukraine's position on the battlefield. Trump's emphasis on diplomacy over confrontation with Moscow could affect NATO's cohesion, with some members potentially favouring a stronger stance against Russia while the US takes a more hands-off approach. This scenario could embolden Russia, who might see a shift in US leadership as a chance to pursue more aggressive tactics in Ukraine or even attempt to influence other former Soviet territories.

The fate of the Ukraine war, therefore, would depend largely on Trump's approach—whether he chooses to maintain US support for Kyiv or pivot toward encouraging negotiations, potentially shifting the course of the conflict and signalling a new era of US-Russia dynamics. In many ways, Trump's presidency would signify a recalibration of American foreign policy, returning to his brand of nationalism mixed with pragmatism.

However, this approach could generate friction with allies, alter the global economy, and challenge existing diplomatic norms. Whether this path will foster a stronger, more self-reliant US or an isolated and fragmented world order remains to be seen. As Trump is poised to start second term, his return promises to redefine the boundaries of American leadership and influence in an increasingly multipolar world.

(The writer is strategic affairs analyst and political analyst based in Shimla; views are personal)

Expanding healthcare for India's elderly: A new phase for PM-JAY

Comprehensive healthcare needs of India's rapidly growing elderly population require further policy evolution, aiming for a holistic, sustainable healthcare system for the aging citizens

India is home to a significant elderly population, with approximately 138 million people aged 60 and above, including more than 10 crore individuals over the age of 70. This segment of the population has unique and pressing healthcare needs. As people age, they are increasingly susceptible to multiple chronic conditions that require specialised care and consistent medical attention. According to the Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI), every fourth Indian over 60 years and every fifth Indian over 45 years reports poor health. Additionally, 75 per cent of the elderly have one or more chronic diseases, and 40 per cent experience disabilities. 1 in 4 elderly individuals has



ASHISH PANGHAL

multi-morbidity, with diabetes and cancer rates rising, particularly in urban areas. As per the Global Health Estimates data of 2019, non-communicable diseases such as ischemic heart diseases, stroke, and diabetes are leading causes of disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) lost among individuals over 60. This highlights the growing need for specialised treatments and consistent

medical attention for age-related disorders. The rising prevalence of hypertension, heart disease, and respiratory issues among the elderly increases the need for hospitalisation and specialised care, placing immense pressure on healthcare providers and overwhelming the elderly and their families. The financial burden associated with recurrent hospital visits and treatments is a significant challenge.

Also, India's current medical inflation rate, standing at approximately 14 per cent which worsens the healthcare difficulties confronting the elderly. Escalating medical costs, including those for hospitalisation, doctor consultations, and medications, make it increasingly chal-

lenging for this vulnerable population to access necessary care. Inflation, coupled with the high cost of living, leaves many elderly individuals struggling to afford even basic healthcare services.

Additionally, as medical inflation continues to rise, insurance companies are compelled to cover higher expenses for medical procedures and treatments. This, in turn, results in increased premiums for policyholders. For many elderly individuals, these higher insurance costs compound the financial burden, deepening the overall healthcare affordability crisis.

While the expansion of the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana



(AB PM-JAY) is a significant step towards improving healthcare access, covering an additional 6 crore individuals from 4.5 crore families, and focusing on seniors aged 70 and above, several challenges persist in the insurance market. Current insurance products are limited, particularly for individuals over the age of 70. Pre-existing diseases (PED) such

as diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, and cancer often result in waiting periods or outright denial of coverage. Furthermore, insurance premiums for senior citizens are substantially higher due to the associated health risks, making insurance unaffordable for many. Denial of insurance based on PED, combined with exorbitant premiums, often forces elderly individuals to rely on personal savings or government schemes, leaving them without adequate financial protection against serious illnesses.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), India's elderly population is projected to nearly triple by 2050, reaching 320 million. This demo-

graphic shift will necessitate more comprehensive solutions to safeguard the well-being of the nation's senior citizens. While the expansion of PM-JAY is a welcome development, it does not fully address the broader geriatric needs of India's aging population.

AB PM-JAY is largely limited to inpatient care. The scheme does not cover outpatient services, which make up a considerable portion of healthcare costs. Research published in the International Journal of Preventive Medicine shows that outpatient care accounts for 40-80 per cent of health expenditures in India. Consequently, even with the enhanced insurance coverage, many individuals may

continue to face out-of-pocket expenses for treatments that do not require hospitalisation.

There is an urgent need to expand coverage to include services such as long-term care, outpatient services, mental health support, palliative care, and rehabilitation, which are essential for ensuring the well-being of the elderly.

Additionally, the government must focus on reducing financial barriers to healthcare, such as high insurance premiums, and ensuring the inclusion of PED coverage without long waiting periods.

(The writer is senior consultant at Enira Consulting; views are personal)

Sidharth Malhotra leads VVAN

In an exciting update, two giants of the entertainment world, Balaji Motion Pictures and The Viral Fever (TVF), have come together for the first time for their upcoming project VVAN, which will redefine what we call the 'Cinematic Landscape.'

The announcement was made by both production houses on the auspicious occasion of Chhath Pooja, leaving everyone excited to witness a never-before-seen cinematic experience.

Balaji Telefilms and TVF have joined hands for a maiden project featuring the super talented and handsome hunk Sidharth Malhotra, titled VVAN, to be directed by Deepak Mishra, who has directed India's most iconic series, Panchayat.

They are set to introduce the genre of folk mythological thriller, something entirely new to the audience. With this collaboration,

these mega-creators of the entertainment world aim to deliver an experience that is incredibly different from anything



seen before. The project is set for release during Chhath Pooja 2025.



'Beautiful blessing' of Athiya-Rahul coming soon

It's time for some good news, folks! Actress Athiya Shetty and Indian cricketer KL Rahul have announced that they are expecting their first child. The couple, who tied the knot in January 2023, shared the news taking to their Instagram.

"Our beautiful blessing is coming soon," posted the couple, signed Athiya & Rahul, the announcement was filled with warmth and excitement, receiving an outpouring of love and congratulations from fans and well-wishers.

The news came in as a surprise to the fans and celebrities. Soon, blessings poured in for the couple. According to sources, the couple will welcome their baby in 2025.

Athiya's brother Ahan was amongst the first ones to congratulate the couple.



Imran Khan's comeback with Break Ke Baad director?

Break Ke Baad, featuring Imran Khan and Deepika Padukone, continues to be one of the most cherished movies to this day. In light of various reports regarding Khan's expected return, the director of the rom-com, Danish Aslam, in a recent interview, discussed his close friend Imran Khan and affirmed that they are collaborating on a new project.

Aslam added, "We will happily announce it to the world once things are locked."

In a latest chat, Danish Aslam suggested a possible collaboration with Imran Khan but mentioned he couldn't disclose many details right now. Aslam mentioned that there has been speculation in the media concerning the project.

He further said, "Some of it is true, some of it is not. Unfortunately, it is a project that is still work-in-progress. So the moment things are locked and fall into place, we will very happily announce it to the world. But all I can say is that I'm working with Imran Khan on something."

Danish also mentioned his directorial debut, Break Ke Baad, when conversing about romantic comedies.

The 2010 movie starring Imran Khan and Deepika Padukone might not have been a commercial success at first, yet it received acclaim in the years that came after.



'I am a Hindu, but a Hindu means you are secular'

The trailer of The Sabarmati Report has truly resonated with the masses. Powerful, hard-hitting and impactful, it showcases glimpses of one of the most devastating incidents in India's history. During the grand trailer launch, producer Ektaa Kapoor spoke boldly and fearlessly about the film.

During the trailer launch, when asked about being afraid of sending the film to the censor, Ektaa responded, saying, "I

was not afraid at all because I have never acted out of fear in my life. I am a Hindu. But a Hindu means you are secular. I will never make a comment about any religion."

Presenting a glimpse of the facts about what really happened on the Sabarmati Express on the morning of February 27, 2002, the much-awaited trailer of The Sabarmati Report took us on a journey through an incident that changed the socio-cultural factor of India. This perspective on the event has rarely been discussed, yet it has had a lasting impact on countless lives.

Balaji Motion Pictures, presents A Vikir Films Production, The Sabarmati Report starring Vikrant Massey, Raashii Khanna and Ridhi Dogra, directed by Dheeraj Sarna and produced by Shobha Kapoor, Ektaa R Kapoor, Amul V Mohan and Anshul Mohan, a worldwide release by Zee Studios.

The film will be releasing in theatres on November 15, 2024.

Nilanjana Ghosh Dastidar calls out T-Series, Sachet-Parampara for plagiarism!

T-Series is once again caught up in a plagiarism controversy, as musician Nilanjana Ghosh Dastidar claims that the company and composer duo Sachet-Parampara have copied a piece by her husband, Rajarshi Mitter, for the song Maiyya featured in Netflix's Do Patti. The movie, featuring Kriti Sanon and Kajol, premiered on Netflix on October 25.

Dastidar expressed her disappointment on social media, demanding accountability from T-Series and Sachet-Parampara while sharing a link to Mitters original work.

In a post on Facebook, Nilanjana stated, "I am asking all my fellow musicians and artists to shame this music director and the entire Joker t-series music company! How dare you



guys even do this?! If you can't make music, then don't steal it, you useless buggers! Shame on you guys. shame shame shame! sachet tandon I am speaking directly to you, you shameless, filthy thief! How dare you not even ask for the rights from my husband?! you thief! go to hell! (sic)"

Bandish Bandits returns!

Prime Video's fan-favourite musical drama Bandish Bandits is coming back this December for yet another enchanting season! As the series gears up for the much-awaited second season, here is a special look back at season one that takes fans through the highlights of the season and aspects that made fans fall in love with the series!

With an ensemble cast led by some of India's finest actors, the first season drew praise for its exceptional casting, with lead actors Ritwik

Bhowmik (Radhe) and Shreya Chaudhry (Tamanna) being appreciated for their chemistry and nuanced performances. Actors Naseeruddin Shah, Sheeba Chadha, Rajesh Talias and Atul Kulkarni too were standouts, bringing gravitas to the series with their layered portrayals.

Set in Rajasthan, Bandish Bandits showcases the region's vibrant culture and heritage with stunning visuals that highlight its beauty.

As the first ever Indian series set against the

backdrop of music, the show's deep dive into Indian classical music stood out, offering viewers a rare and respectful portrayal of the art form. The soundtrack was widely celebrated, especially for tracks like Sajan Bin, Chedkhaniyan and Lab Par Aaye, which beautifully blended classical and contemporary music. Furthermore, the scenes capturing classical music performances and the royal aesthetic added to the rich tapestry of the series.

The story explored the clash between traditional Indian classical music and modern pop culture, resonating with audiences who appreciated its fresh take on an age-old cultural con-

flict. The romantic drama between Radhe, a classical music prodigy and Tamanna, a rising pop star, was engaging and exciting. The show blended romance, drama and music with a coming-of-age narrative, making it appealing to a wide audience. The balance between Radhe's disciplined journey in classical music and Tamanna's modern approach helped capture viewers from different backgrounds and musical tastes.

Directed by Anand Tiwari, who also serves as a co-creator with Amritpal Singh Bindra, Bandish Bandits is produced by Leo Media Collective Private Limited.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



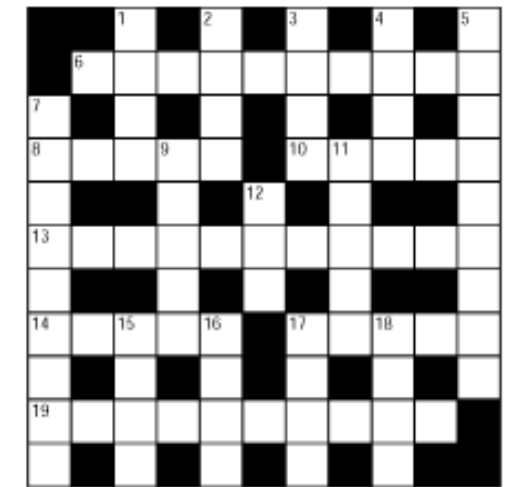
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 6 A machine in a kitchen
 - 8 Frequently
 - 10 A room just under the roof
 - 13 A country famous for making watches
 - 14 Imagine things while you are asleep
 - 17 Normal
 - 19 A large African animal with a horn on its nose
- DOWN**
- 7 Thinks over
 - 9 More than is needed
 - 11 Speaks
 - 12 Not many
 - 15 A door out of a building
 - 16 This orbits the Earth
 - 17 Second-hand
 - 18 On



NANCY



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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.

GINGER MEGGS



'I found my true rhythm in Hyd,' says musician PVR Raja

TEJAL SINHA
 tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

PVR Raja is a highly acclaimed musician whose work has made a lasting impact on the Telugu film industry. Born and raised in Vizianagaram, his deep passion for music began at an early age, shaping his destiny and guiding his career toward a life dedicated to sound and rhythm. His commitment to music, which he describes as the one constant in his journey, has led him to compose scores for films such as *Vitamin She* (2020), *Black* (2022) and *Madhi* (2022), where his unique compositions have been widely appreciated.

Raja's association with Hyderabad spans nearly two decades. His decision to move to the city in 2006 was a defining moment in his career. "When I first came to Hyderabad, I was in search of a place where I could grow as a musician. It felt like a city full of opportunities, a place where people from all over the country came to pursue their dreams," he recalls. "Back then, Hyderabad felt like an entirely different world—I hadn't been able to travel much, but I believed that the world was coming to Hyderabad. It felt like the right place for me to be."

Over the years, what once seemed like an unfamiliar city has become a home, both personally and professionally. "The city has played a huge role in my journey. It gave me opportunities that I could never have imagined back in my hometown. I met the right people here, people who, like me, had come from different parts of the country looking for a fresh start. It's because of this city that so many doors began to open for me," reflects Raja with great enthusiasm and pride. Hyderabad is more than just a professional hub for Raja; it's also become a place that has shaped his identity as an artist. While he holds his hometown close to his heart, he acknowledges that his connection to Hyderabad runs deeper. "Hyderabad is where I



Hailing from Vizianagaram, music composer, record producer, songwriter and guitarist PVR Raja credits Hyderabad's vibrant culture and the growth of Tollywood for shaping his music and fueling his creative journey. In an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, he reflected on how moving to Hyderabad transformed his career

that living in a city like Hyderabad can come with its own set of challenges. "When people first come to Hyderabad, it can be overwhelming. Some people struggle to adapt and they start comparing it to their hometowns," he explains, who is known as 'Iaiyaraaja of short films'. But the reality is, "Hyderabad is a city that invites you to create your own path. Once you embrace the opportunities it offers, it becomes a place where you can truly grow."

For him, Hyderabad represents more than just a professional opportunity. "It's a city that has given me a fresh start. A second chance, in many ways. It's where I was able to find my place in the industry, where I connected with like-minded individuals and where my career took shape," he says thoughtfully. As he reflects on his journey, it's clear that Hyderabad has played an integral role in PVR Raja's growth as a musician. The city has provided him with opportunities, a sense of community and the space to evolve as an artist. What began as a hopeful move in search of a new beginning has, over time, become a place of deep personal and professional significance — a place where Raja's dreams continue to flourish.

found my professional footing. It's the place that turned my dreams into reality. My hometown will always be special to me, but professionally, Hyderabad is where I grew up. It has become a city that represents both my career and my personal growth," he says.

The influence of Tollywood, one of India's largest and most influential film industries, is not lost on Raja. His decision to settle in Hyderabad coincided with the rapid growth of the Telugu film industry, and the city became a natural hub for his musical aspirations. "Tollywood is huge now and being in Hyderabad has given me access to so many talented musicians and filmmakers," he shares. "It's allowed

me to be a part of the industry at a time when it's at its peak. The opportunities that came my way here have been incredibly important to my career."

Hyderabad's cultural diversity also played a significant role in his musical evolution. The city is a melting pot of influences, blending tradition with modernity, and that has shaped his music in many ways. "The cultural landscape of Hyderabad is unique. From its folk traditions to its festivals, the city has its own rhythm, which I've drawn inspiration from. The music scene here is vibrant, shaped by so many different influences and I've been fortunate to be part of that."

However, Raja also acknowledges

FROM CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES AND NAVIGATING THE COMPLEXITIES OF FAME TO HER PASSIONS AND PLANS FOR BOLLYWOOD DOMINATION, ALFIA OFFERS AN UNPRECEDENTED GLIMPSE INTO HER LIFE, REVEALING THE FIRE, RESILIENCE AND UNWAVERING DEDICATION THAT DEFINE HER RISE TO STARDOM IN AN EXCLUSIVE CHAT WITH *THE PIONEER*

Star power with Jafry twist!

AARTI SREENATH
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Alfia Jafry may come from Bollywood royalty, but she's no pampered princess; she's a firebrand in her own right, breaking into the entertainment industry with a bang!

From her headline-grabbing turn on *The Tribe* to her glamorous LA lifestyle, this diva is fast becoming the girl everyone's talking about. With looks that stop traffic and a personality that's pure dynamite, this social media star has the confidence of a seasoned pro and the audacity to say what she thinks—no matter who's listening.

Forget the so-called "rich brat" labels; she's got hustle in her DNA, working since her teens and challenging every stereotype with her raw authenticity. Now, she's turning heads, making waves and bringing a whole new vibe to the influencer scene, all while dreaming of a Bollywood takeover.

Alfia Jafry greets with an effortless warmth and confidence, setting an upbeat tone for the conversation. "Hope you're doing great! I'm doing amazing. How's it going?" She begins, her lively energy radiating as she reflects on her unique journey from her budding career to her life in Los Angeles and her dreams of making it big.

Despite her current trajectory, she admits she has long been ambivalent about entering the entertainment world. "I was always in two minds about it. Honestly, I wasn't even sure I wanted to be part of this industry," she confesses. But, as fate would have it, her career took shape by coincidence. When friends of hers started an influencer agency, she was invited to join—and surprisingly, it felt right. "It was like destiny. I didn't chase it or even work too hard to get here," she laughs, reflecting on how naturally things unfolded. Testing her on-screen comfort through *The Tribe* was just the beginning.

One of her standout memories from *The Tribe* was an emotional confrontation that unfolded on the show. "I know it looked like I was just fighting over one thing, but it was months of built-up emotions coming out," she explains. Her transition to Los Angeles had been overwhelming, with its mix of isolation and excitement. The show provided both an outlet and a support system and the experience became a lifeline that resonated deeply with fans. "I now hear from so many girls dealing with anxiety or diabetes who tell me how my story helped them," she shares. The connection with her audience, even if it's just a handful of people, has made her journey even more meaningful. "If even ten people feel connected, I'm happy to have made a difference."

When asked about the criticism she faces as a so-called "rich brat," she laughs, caught off guard. "Who calls me that? No one sends me these articles!" she jokes, brushing it off with a lighthearted wave. But she's quick to clarify: "I've been financially independent since I was 16," she says, detailing her early work as a production designer on music videos, even loaning props from her own home. From there, she assisted casting directors for years. Raised among strong, self-made women, she proudly shares, "My family taught me to prioritise my own identity and independence." Her grandma, a former principal, her aunt, a national hockey player and her "workaholic" mother all set powerful examples of resilience. "People think I'm rich because of my dad. No! My father's rich—I'm 'Raees', not 'Ameer'," she says with a grin.

Fashion, surprisingly, isn't something she obsesses over, even though her style has won fans. "I'm pretty chill—I'll wear whatever someone hands me," she chuckles. But growing up surrounded by fashion-forward women—her mom, nani and maasi—style became ingrained in her. "I'm not following trends, but I was raised around it," she says, shrugging with an effortless elegance.

Her stint with *The Tribe* is another passion, one she shares with close friends in a WhatsApp group called "CT Girls." They coordinate brand projects, share ideas and even dance together for content. "Even if some of them aren't into dance, they join me anyway," she says, visibly touched by their camaraderie. The friendships run deep, too; *The Tribe* is less about fame and more about genuine connection. "It's real friendship, not competition. We're just a group of friends killing it together."

As for her professional connections, she speaks reverently of Karan Johar, who helped launch her career. "He's my boss, not my friend," she clarifies. "I owe him my break and have endless respect for him." *Fabulous Lives of Bollywood Wives* holds a special place in her heart, particularly because of her bond with Seema Khan. "Seema's like

my godmother. Half of who I am is because of her," she says fondly, acknowledging Seema's unwavering support. Watching women like Seema find success later in life is inspiring to her. "Forget Kardashians; these are my role models," she asserts.

Alfia addresses a common misconception about influencer life: that it's effortless. "I used to think it was easy too—until I tried it myself!" she laughs. "You're the actor, director, producer, editor—everything! You end up reshooting and editing countless times." Content creation, she admits, is tougher than it seems.

Even with her passion for *The Tribe*, her heart still beats for Bollywood. "I'd love to play a character like Karishma Kapoor in a modern-day setting," she says. She's selective with projects, balancing her bold style with her boundaries. "I'm not perfect, but I know my limits," she says with conviction.

At the heart of her success is a close-knit support system. "My makeup artist is a school friend; my manager's been with my dad for 18 years; my stylist is an old friend," she shares. This loyalty from friends and family keeps her grounded, even with newfound fame.

When asked what's next, she gives a playful tease: "A lot! But I believe in nazar; I don't say anything until it's set." Her focus remains on *The Tribe*, a project she's determined to keep in the spotlight. She credits her family for keeping her humble. "My mom, my nani, my friends—they keep me grounded, believe me!" she laughs.



Unlocking joint health by distinguishing Rheumatoid from Osteoarthritis

Arthritis is a term that describes a range of conditions affecting the joints, and two of the most common types are rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and osteoarthritis (OA). While both lead to joint pain and discomfort, they are fundamentally different in their causes, symptoms, and treatment options. Understanding these differences is crucial for effective management and treatment of the conditions.

Understanding basics of rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disease, meaning that the body's immune system mistakenly attacks its own tissues. In the case of RA, the immune system targets the synovial membrane, which is a protective lining in the joints. This leads to inflammation, swelling, and pain, often affecting both sides of the body simultaneously. RA can develop at any age, but it typically manifests during midlife.

On the other hand, osteoarthritis is primarily associated with wear and tear on the joints over time. It occurs when the cartilage—the smooth tissue that cushions the ends of bones—breaks down. This can lead to pain and discomfort in the affected joints, especially after prolonged activity. OA is most common in older adults and generally develops gradually, affecting one joint or a specific area more than others.

Recognising symptoms of each condition

When someone visits a doctor complaining of joint pain, the specifics of their symptoms can provide important clues about whether they have RA or OA.

In rheumatoid arthritis, patients often experience significant morn-



ing stiffness that can last for an hour or more, along with other symptoms such as fatigue, low-grade fever and a decreased appetite. Additionally, lumps known as rheumatoid nodules may form under the skin. The bilateral nature of the pain—affecting both sides of the body—is also a strong indicator of RA.

Conversely, osteoarthritis usually develops more slowly and is often experienced in one specific joint. The pain associated with OA tends to worsen with activity and improves with rest. Symptoms may include stiffness after periods of inactivity, as well as cracking or grinding noises when moving the joint. People with OA may also notice

bony bumps developing over their finger joints.

Risk factors and treatment options

Both rheumatoid and osteoarthritis have overlapping risk factors, such as family history and being overweight. However, certain factors may increase the likelihood of developing one type over the other. For example, women are more prone to rheumatoid arthritis, while osteoarthritis is often linked to joint injuries, aging, and repetitive stress on the joints.

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