

**'Congress hell-bent on breaking OBC-ST-SC unity'**  
 5

**FRAUD**  
 DETECTION SYSTEM SAVES PUBLIC ASSETS WORTH RS 2,500 CR: SCINDIA  
 8

**'Matka has no connection with Mumbai's MATKA KING'**  
 P12

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
 The Centre is giving the money for procuring paddy including 'interest.' The Centre is bearing the entire costs of paddy procurement. What is the problem for the Telangana Congress government in procuring paddy? What will you achieve by conducting Praja Vijayotsavalu? It is better if the Congress government conducts celebrations for betraying the people as it came to power by deceiving the public

— Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs P4

**DON'T MISS...**

**Centre has no plans to privatise VSP: Union**

Union Minister of State for Steel and Heavy Industries Bhupatiraju Srinivasa Varma has asserted that the Central government has no plans to privatise the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP). Speaking to the media during his visit to Jangareddygudem on Sunday, the Union Minister stated that the government is focused on strengthening the VSP by addressing its current challenges. "The Centre aims to keep VSP as a public sector unit and is committed to resolving all obstacles," he reiterated. He emphasised that safeguarding the...

—PAGE: 4

**BJP 'disconnected' from people: Priyanka**

Congress general secretary and UDF candidate for the Wayanad LS by-poll, Priyanka Gandhi intensified her criticism of the BJP-led Centre on Sunday, alleging its leaders were 'disconnected' from the people. Addressing a corner meeting in Naiketty, Sulthan Bathery assembly constituency, she recalled her grandmother, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, and her close association with tribal communities. "Those of you who are older may remember my grandmother Indira Gandhi and the deep respect..."

—PAGE: 5

**In 17 yrs, 5 Indian full service carriers bid adieu**

When Vistara folds up into the Air India Group on Monday, the number of full service carriers in the fast-growing Indian aviation space will come down to just one from five in a span of over 17 years. Also, the merger -- that will see Vistara's 49 per cent owner Singapore Airlines holding 25.1 per cent stake in Air India post the merger-- will mark the sunset of another Indian airline jointly owned by an overseas carrier after the liberalisation of foreign direct investment norms. In 2012, Prime Minister...

—PAGE: 8

**Indian women's hockey targets World Cup**

Indian women's hockey team has overcome recent setbacks and is set to start a new journey with World Cup and Olympics in mind, chief coach Harendra Singh asserted on Sunday, saying that the performance in Asian Champions Trophy will serve as base for future. The Indian women's team has endured a very rough and long patch since its historic fourth-place finish at the Tokyo Games. It could not qualify for the Paris Olympics and lost 13 of the 16 FIH Pro League matches ...

—SPORTS

**AMARAVATI DEVELOPMENT**

**Rs 15 K cr loan from WB, ADB**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has issued formal orders for utilising funds provided by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the development of Amaravati, the State's capital city. In an important development, the government announced that both international financial institutions will jointly extend a loan of Rs 15,000 crore (approximately \$800 million each) to support Amaravati's growth. The government stated that these funds will be allocated for infrastructure development, green building projects, and employment generation in Amaravati, all aligned with high standards. The Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (AP CRDA) has been assigned the task of implementing the capital's development plans, focusing on essential infrastructure such as main roads, utility ducts, drainage systems, flood canals, water reservoirs, and safe drinking water facilities.

The AP CRDA's sustainable development plans for Amaravati were submitted to the Union Ministry of Economic Affairs and have received approval. Both the World Bank and ADB have endorsed these proposals, committing \$800 million each for the project. The state government will secure the remaining funds, with support from the Central Government.



**Key projects include roads, drainage, flood canals, water reservoirs, and safe drinking water facilities.**

- The funds will focus on infrastructure, green projects, and employment in Amaravati.
- AP CRDA tasked with implementing development projects in Amaravati.
- AP CRDA's sustainable plans for Amaravati receive Union Ministry approval.
- Both the World Bank and ADB will contribute \$800 million each for the project.
- The State government, with Central government support, will arrange remaining funds.
- A special account will manage the phased loan disbursement based on project progress.
- Special CS G. Ananth Ramu issues the budget orders for Amaravati's construction.
- AP CRDA Commissioner Katanneni Bhaskar to sign the loan agreement with the World Bank and ADB in New Delhi.

To ensure effective fund management, the government has ordered the creation of a special account to receive the loan assistance in phases, linked to the progress of development work. The AP CRDA Commissioner has been authorised to receive and manage these funds, overseeing the project's implementation under CRDA's supervision. Special Chief Secretary of the Municipal Administration Department, G Ananth Ramu, issued the orders, confirming special budget allocations for Amaravati's development activities.

As part of the government's strategy, AP CRDA Commissioner Katanneni Bhaskar is set to formalise the financial assistance agreement with the World Bank and ADB in New Delhi tomorrow, marking a crucial step in advancing Amaravati's growth plans.



**Jagan 'threatening IPS officers': Dy CM Pawan**

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Pawan Kalyan, Andhra Pradesh's Deputy CM, on Sunday claimed YSRCP chief Jagan Reddy is "threatening IPS officers" and stated that the government would intervene if harm befalls them. His remarks follow recent statements by Reddy, who warned that a future YSRCP government would not spare police officials for allegedly harassing opposition party members. "The former CM (Jagan) is threatening police officers. I am saying that if anyone makes these threats to officials and if even a fly falls on them or they suffer a scratch, Jagan will be held responsible. We will take suo motu cognizance of these threats," Kalyan told reporters on the sidelines of a Forest Department event. The actor-politician stated that no official would be intimidated by Reddy's threats, noting that while the YSRCP chief may be a former CM, he still bears responsibility. Reminding that Jagan is also an MLA, Kalyan claimed that the NDA government, comprising TDP, BJP, and Janasena, is a "good government" and not an "inefficient one". Further, the Janasena chief assured that if Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president Y S Sharmila, sister of Jagan, applies for security, the government "will assess the threats against her and provide security accordingly". Additionally, he suggested that "neighbourhood defence committees" should be established in the state similar to those in the Poonch sector in Jammu and Kashmir to protect women. **Continued on Page 2**

**Ronald Rose is AP's new Finance Secretary (B&IF)**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has announced a series of key IAS officer appointments and transfers, as per orders issued by Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad under GO Rt No 1935 on Sunday. Senior IAS Officer D Ronald Rose of the 2006 batch, who was awaiting posting, has been appointed as Secretary to the Government, Finance Department (B&IF). This move marks a significant step in streamlining leadership in the Finance Department. **Continued on Page 2**



step in streamlining leadership in the Finance Department. **Continued on Page 2**

**AP govt to table budget today**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government is expected to present the state budget on Monday, during the assembly session starting tomorrow, according to official sources. The budget is expected to be presented with just over four months remaining in the FY 2024-25. The TDP-led NDA government had previously promulgated an ordinance approving a Vote-on-Account budget of Rs 1.3 lakh crore for the period from August to November. Earlier, the previous YS Jagan majority of this financial year—eight months in total. According to the August 1 ordinance by the TDP-led government, the state opted for another Vote-on-Account budget for four months (August to November) due to the new NDA government taking office. The other constituents of the coalition government are Janasena and the BJP. Meanwhile, the Finance Department, in coordination with other departments, has been finalising liabilities and resources with input from revenue-generating sectors, necessitating additional time for the regular budget presentation



Mohan Reddy-led YSRCP government had presented a Vote-on-Account budget in February covering April to July, ahead of the state polls. As a result, two Vote-on-Account budgets have accounted for the



**Justice Khanna to be sworn in as 51st CJJ today**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Justice Sanjiv Khanna, who has been part of several landmark Supreme Court judgements such as scrapping the electoral bonds scheme and upholding abrogation of Article 370, will be sworn in as the 51st Chief Justice of India on Monday. President Droupadi Murmu will administer the oath of office at Rashtrapati Bhavan in a ceremony scheduled at 10 am. Justice Khanna will succeed Justice DY Chandrachud, who retired on Sunday, and his term will last until May 13, 2025. The Centre officially notified Justice Khanna's appointment on October 24 following Chief Justice Chandrachud's recommendation on October 16. Friday was the last working day of Justice Chandrachud as the CJ and he was given a rousing farewell by judges, lawyers and staff of the apex court and the high courts. **Continued on Page 2**

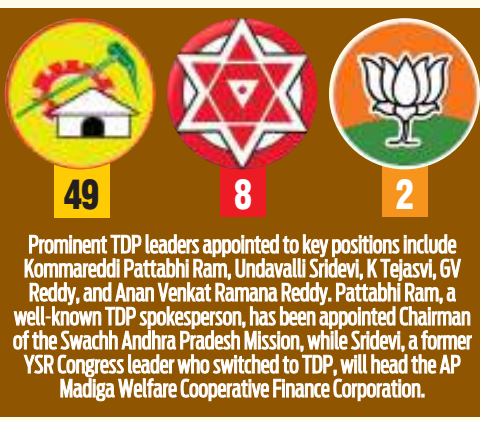
**Low pressure likely over Bay**

PNS ■ GUNTUR

A fresh low pressure area is likely to develop over the southwest Bay of Bengal in the next 36 hours. According to the Meteorological Department (MET) on Sunday, this system is expected to bring a fresh spell of heavy rainfall over Andhra Pradesh from November 12 to 15. Heavy rain is likely at isolated places in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema between November 11 and 14. Thunderstorms, accompanied by lightning, are also expected in these regions during the same period. **Continued on Page 2**

**TDP gets lion's share in nominated posts**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



The Andhra Pradesh coalition government led by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has filled 59 nominated posts in the second phase of appointments, with a strong preference for the Telugu Desam Party (TDP). Out of the 59 posts, 49 were allocated to TDP, while Jana Sena received 8 posts, and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured 2. These appointments aim to reward loyal party workers and ensure representation across various sections, particularly Backward Classes (BCs), reflecting the government's focus on inclusivity and gratitude for contributions to the TDP's success in the 2024 elections. Prominent TDP leaders appointed to key positions include Kommareddi Pattabhi Ram, Undavalli Sridevi, GV Reddy, and Anan Venkat Ramana Reddy. Pattabhi Ram, a well-known TDP spokesperson, has been appointed Chairman of the Swachh Andhra Pradesh Mission, while Sridevi, a former YSR Congress leader who switched to TDP, will head the AP Madiga Welfare Cooperative Finance Corporation. Other TDP appointees include GV Reddy as Chairman of AP State Fibernet Ltd and M Mohan Krishna as Chairman of the AP State Warehousing Corporation. The selection process emphasised individuals who were instrumental in the party's efforts during the recent elections. **Continued on Page 2**

**Baby declared dead, later found alive at KGH**

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A newborn baby, initially declared dead at Visakhapatnam's King George Hospital (KGH), was found to be alive after being transferred to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Doctors confirmed on Saturday that the baby's condition is now stable. The incident began on Friday evening when a pregnant woman was admitted to the maternity ward of KGH around 9 pm, experiencing labour pains. She underwent a caesarean section, and the baby was delivered. Although the infant was born underweight, immediate medical care was provided. However, by 4 am on Saturday, the doctors found that the baby had stopped breathing. "Upon examination, we thought the baby had passed away," said one of the attending doctors. Following this, the family began preparing for the final rites. But as they were making arrangements, they noticed slight movements from the baby. "We were shocked when we saw the baby move. We were getting ready for the last rites," said the infant's father. "We quickly informed the doctors." Upon receiving the alert, the medical staff acted promptly and transferred the baby to the NICU, where resuscitation efforts were resumed. Doctors later confirmed that the baby's condition had stabilised, and it continues to receive care in the specialised unit. The incident has raised concerns about medical procedures, with the family questioning the initial declaration of death. "How could the doctors declare the baby

dead without being completely sure? This is a serious matter," the mother said, clearly distressed. In response, Dr. P. Sivananda, the superintendent of KGH, explained that the baby's condition was likely due to an "apneic spell," a common occurrence in babies born with low birth weight, where they temporarily stop breathing. "This is not unusual, and it was the case here," Dr. Sivananda explained. "We have ensured the baby is receiving the necessary care." Both the mother and the baby are said to be in stable condition, and the hospital has promised an investigation into the incident. "We take all such concerns seriously, and we will investigate to understand the circumstances better," Dr. Sivananda assured. The family, though relieved that their baby survived, continues to question the handling of the situation. "We are just thankful that our baby is alive, but we hope this doesn't happen to anyone else," the father added.



The newborn receiving treatment in the NICU.

**The incident has raised concerns about medical procedures, with the family questioning the initial declaration of death. "How could the doctors declare the baby dead without being completely sure? This is a serious matter," the mother said, clearly distressed.**

**Dozens killed as Israeli jets pound Lebanon and Gaza**



PNS ■ DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP)

Israeli strikes killed dozens of people including children on Sunday in Lebanon and northern Gaza, where the military has waged a major offensive for more than a month that aid groups say has worsened the humanitarian crisis in the besieged enclave. The Israeli airstrike in Lebanon killed at least 23 people including seven children in Aalmat village north of Beirut, far from the areas in the east and south where Hezbollah militants have a major presence. Lebanon's Health Ministry said another six people were wounded. There was no immediate Israeli comment. Hezbollah began firing rockets, drones and missiles into Israel after war broke out in Gaza, in solidarity with the Palestinians and fellow Iran-backed militant group Hamas. Israel retaliated, and a series of escalations have led to all-out war. In northern Gaza, an Israeli strike on a home sheltering displaced people in the urban refugee camp of Jabaliya killed at least 17 people including nine women, according to Dr Fadel Naim, director of Al-Ahly Hospital in Gaza City. **Continued on Page 2**



FATE OF JOURNALIST COLONY IN VIJAYAWADA

# Two decades of negligence

SEELAM AROZIE  
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Unpaved roads, lack of drainage system and proper water pipelines bane of the colony since inception



**M. Raghunath, vice-president of the Journalist Colony Welfare Association, said that residents have been facing many hardships due to the lack of basic infrastructure. He has appealed to Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni) and MLA Bonda Umamaheswara Rao to visit the colony and understand the problems firsthand. He also requested immediate action to improve the living conditions of the residents in line with the government's mission of development and welfare.**

It has been more than 20 years since journalists were allotted land in the Payakapuram area of Vijayawada in 2003. The decision, made by the then Chandrababu Naidu-led State government, was welcomed by the journalist community. However, despite the passing of many years, successive governments have failed to develop the promised infrastructure in the colony.

Former MLA Malladi Vishnu visited the colony a few times, but no progress was made. After the change in government, the Journalist Colony Welfare Association (JCWA) approached Vijayawada-Central MLA Bonda Umamaheswara Rao, requesting basic facilities such as proper roads, drainage systems, and water pipelines. The MLA assured them that work would begin in October 2024, once funds are released for development. However, as of now, there has been no visible improvement in the colony.

During the rainy season, even a small drizzle causes serious problems for residents. The unpaved roads turn into slush, making it difficult for people to travel. With only one temporary BT road and a small extension, the residents struggle to access their homes. Additionally, the colony has only one 2-inch pipeline in some areas, which is insufficient for drinking water supply. The area meant for a park has become marshy due to stagnant rainwater.

The residents are urging the government to address their concerns, especially as



the State government has started a mission to lay new roads and repair old ones. They are requesting the government to fulfil its promise of providing pucca roads, reliable drinking water, and a proper drainage system. The colony's park area, which remains underdeveloped, should also be looked into.

M. Raghunath, vice-president of the Journalist Colony Welfare Association, said that residents have been facing many hardships due to the lack of basic infrastructure. He has appealed to Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni) and MLA Bonda Umamaheswara Rao to visit the colony and understand the problems firsthand. He also requested immediate action to improve the living conditions of the residents in line with the government's mission of development and welfare.



Vedic pundits performing the '08 Kalasams Puja' ceremony organised by EVE Chairman Eda Vedadri in Kothuru Tadepalli near Vijayawada on Sunday



Vizianagaram MP Kaliseti Appala Naidu interacting with the people during the garden party held at Nunna near Vijayawada on Sunday

## People throng picnic spots, mango orchards for 'Karthika' parties

Bhavani Island witnesses huge rush as APTDC resumes boat-ride between the Punnami Ghat and the island

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

During the Karthika Masam Vana Bhojanalu (Garden Party), many people visited tourist destinations and mango gardens in and around Vijayawada city on the second Sunday of Karthika Masam. Picnicking during this time of year is an age-old tradition.

Community groups, associations, families, and individuals, along with children, eagerly participated in the garden parties. This event allowed people to break from their routine and enjoy a holiday during the auspicious month. A large crowd gathered at Bhavani Island to take part in the picnic.

Following recent floods, the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) resumed boating operations in River Krishna between Punnami Ghat and Bhavani Island. Flooding had previously submerged Bhavani Island, halting recreational boating between Punnami Ghat and Pakasam Barrage, as well as to the island. Fortunately, boat rides were reinstated before Karthika Masam, and many people



People enjoying themselves at Bhavani Island in Vijayawada on Sunday



Photo: Ch. Vijaya Bhaskar

enjoyed this activity.

To ensure the safety of picnickers during boating, APTDC officials, in cooperation with local police, deployed swimmers and staff. Additionally, the police increased vigilance at Manginapudi Beach in Machilipatnam, where many people took holy dips in the sea. Monitoring was also stepped up at Hamsaladevi Beach in Avanigadda mandal.

Meanwhile, mango gardens in the NTR and Krishna districts were filled with families, associations, and individuals enjoying the festivities. Notable locations included Nunna, Pathapadu, Kothuru Tadepalli,

Kondapalli, and G Konduru in the NTR district, as well as Surampalli and Kesarapalli in the Krishna district. Many gardens also hosted Karthika Vana Bhojanalu in Advanekkalam and Agiripalli in the Eluru district.

Vizianagaram MP Kaliseti Appala Naidu attended a garden party at a mango garden in Nunna, organised by the Royal Club Association. Club members, led by president Yarramsetti Srinivas and Baditha Sankar, welcomed and honoured the MP. During the event, he interacted with attendees who had migrated from Vizianagaram district to

Vijayawada years ago. Additionally, the Eda Vedadri Engineers (EVE) organisation, along with chairman Eda Vedadri, conducted the Karthika Vanasamaradhana at a mango garden beside the Polavaram Right Main Canal in Kothuru Tadepalli, near Vijayawada. The couple performed a special puja with milk to initiate the Kalasa Puja Ceremony by using 108 Kalasams. Fifty couples participated in conducting Abhishekams to Ganga Parvathi Sametha Shiva, alongside the Srinivasa Shyanam, in the presence of Vedic Pundit Raghu Ramacharyulu.



APJAC-Amaravati Chairman Bopparaju Venkateswarlu addressing a meeting held at the Revenue Bhavan in Vijayawada on Sunday.

## Implement equal pay for equal work: APJAC-Amaravati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Joint Action Committee - Amaravati (APJAC-Amaravati) Chairman, Bopparaju Venkateswarlu, has urged the State government to comply with Supreme Court directives to ensure equal pay for equal work. He highlighted the need to regularise contracts and outsource drivers to provide them with job security.

Venkateswarlu also appealed to the government to sanction paid leave and implement a Human Resources policy to support outsourcing employees and their families.

A state-level meeting of the Andhra Pradesh Government Vehicle Drivers' Central Association was held on Sunday

at the AP Revenue Bhavan in Governorpet, Vijayawada, presided over by the association's president, S. Srinivasa Rao.

Speaking at the meeting, Venkateswarlu underscored the State government's responsibility to fulfil the NDA's election promise to implement welfare schemes for outsourcing drivers, who, despite working the longest hours, currently earn the lowest wages. He reiterated the need for job security, an HR policy, and salary increments based on seniority.

The meeting was attended by Association general secretary K Chiranjeevi, Outsourcing and Contract Drivers' Welfare Association president Pamarthi Nagaraju, Secretary D. Ramana, and other members.

## Facilities to be improved at Anakapalli Rly Station, assures MP CM Ramesh

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

Anakapalli MP and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways CM Ramesh has announced that better facilities will be provided to passengers at Anakapalli railway station under the Viksit Bharat programme. Ramesh made the statement after inspecting the station along with alliance leaders to review the progress of the ongoing development work.

Speaking to the media, Ramesh said, "As part of the Viksit Bharat programme, we are committed to improving the facilities at Anakapalli railway station to better serve the passengers. This station will be transformed into a model railway station, setting a standard for others in the region."

During the inspection, Ramesh instructed the contractors involved in the ongoing work to expedite the process. He emphasised that delays would not be tolerated. "I have clearly told the contractors to speed up the work. If there is any negligence, strict



action will be taken," he warned. Ramesh also addressed the development of other railway stations in the Anakapalli Parliament constituency. "All railway stations under this constituency will be developed, and Anakapalli will lead the way by becoming a model station," he assured.

The MP also referred to the funds allocated for the Lakshmidivipet overpass works between 2014-19. "During the previous regime, Rs. 7.50 crore was allocated for the Lakshmidivipet overpass,

but it is alleged that these funds were diverted under the Vaikapa regime led by Jagan Mohan Reddy," Ramesh claimed. He promised to ensure that the stalled works would be completed, saying, "We will not let the projects languish. The stalled works will be completed at the earliest." Ramesh's visit to the Anakapalli railway station marks a step forward in the development efforts for the region, with a focus on better infrastructure and services for the public.

## Gulbenkian Foundation's Rs 1 cr aid for ryots' body

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government's Rythu Sadhikara Samstha has received ₹1 crore, one-third of the total prize money of ₹3 crore from Portugal's Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (CGF). Chief Minister, Nara Chandrababu Naidu, has directed RySS to use the funds to promote natural farming on a global scale.

Budithi Rajsekhar, Special Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, said that Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF) has jointly won the ₹1 million (Rs 9 crore) prize along with Dr Rattan Lal, noted soil scientist from the USA, and SEKEM, an Egyptian network enabling farmers to work on biodynamic farming.

Rajsekhar stated that the APCNF model has attracted global attention because it offers increased yields, zero economic losses and improved health benefits for farmers within the first season of transition. He further said that the USP of the APCNF model is that it is a scal-

**Budithi Rajsekhar, Special Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, said that Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF) has jointly won the ₹1 million (Rs 9 crore) prize along with Dr Rattan Lal, noted soil scientist from the USA, and SEKEM, an Egyptian network enabling farmers to work on biodynamic farming**

able, do-it-yourself (DIY), low-cost solution and can be easily replicated by smallholder farmers across different geographies and contexts.

Rajsekhar stated, "APCNF is currently supporting Sri Lanka and Zambia in the transition to natural farming. In the coming year, the APCNF model and approach will be taken to Mexico, Rwanda, Malawi, Kenya, Zambia, Egypt, and UAE Sharjah in collaboration with farmer organisations, civil society and National Agricultural Research Institutions."

Budithi Rajsekhar said that natural farming is scientifically based and has the potential to improve planetary health. He expressed excitement about shar-

ing their expertise with farmers across different regions.

Executive Vice-Chairman Vijay Kumar Thallam (IAS, retired) stated that delegations from 45 countries have visited the APCNF programme areas over the past three years, underscoring its success in promoting natural farming.

The Rythu Sadhikara Samstha intends to allocate the Gulbenkian prize money toward farmer exposure visits, training, implementing the breakthrough Pre-Monsoon Dry Sowing technology developed by APCNF, and sharing knowledge on natural farming models tailored to specific local agro climatic conditions of the host countries.

## Scribes urged to maintain integrity

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Noted journalist and well-known literary writer, K Srinivas, was felicitated by the Andhra Pradesh Union of Working Journalists (APUWJ) at an event held by the Vijayawada Press Club. During his speech, Srinivas emphasised the equal importance of responsible journalism and ownership policies. He urged journalists to maintain integrity and serve society impartially, without being influenced by caste, religion, or regional biases.

Reflecting on his career, Srinivas shared how his dedication to responsible journalism earned him respect even from those who were initially critical of his work. He also spoke about his early days as a sub-editor in Vijayawada, a city where he was closely connected to the literary community, which helped nurture his love for literature.

Srinivas recalled the challenges he faced during the



APUWJ leaders felicitating senior journalist K Srinivas and his wife at the Press Club in Vijayawada on Sunday

bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh when his role as the editor for both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana led to questions about his impartiality. However, he stressed that development has benefited both states, and his field vis-

its with rural reporters gave him a closer understanding of the lives of people in rural areas.

The programme was presided over by APUWJ president IV Subba Rao. Other dignitaries who attended the

event included Srinivas' wife Sudha, IJU member Shaik Babu, Union Vijayawada Urban president Chava Ravi, secretary Daram Venkateswara Rao, Press Club president K Jaya Raju, secretary Dasari Nagaraju, and others.

## YSRCP should attend Assembly sessions: CPI

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

CPI State secretary K Ramakrishna has demanded that YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy attend the upcoming Assembly budget sessions. He emphasised that this will be an opportunity for the Opposition party to address various public issues. Ramakrishna expressed concern that if the Opposition chose to boycott the sessions, no other member would question the government regarding the problems faced by the people.

In a press release on Sunday, Ramakrishna noted that unfortunately, there is no representation from the Left or Congress in the legislature. Among the four political parties having members in the Assembly, the TDP, BJP, and JSPare in alliance, while the YSRCP is in the Opposition.

## Children's Eye Care Week: Awareness walk organised

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

J Venkat Ramana, Circle Inspector - Penamaluru, flagged off the Children's Eye Care Week Awareness Walk on the Kode Venkatadri Chowdary campus in Vijayawada. Children and parents participated in the walk carrying placards to create awareness about childhood cataracts. Venkat Ramana expressed his pleasure at being made a part of this important awareness event and urged parents to "catch early, act early to ensure their children see clearly."

Childhood cataract can result in irreversible vision loss, if left untreated, said Dr Krishna Priya, Consultant - Pediatrics Ophthalmologist at the L V Prasad Eye Institute in Vijayawada. Children's Eye Care Awareness Week is observed every year across the LV Prasad Eye Institute network, to raise



public awareness about various eye diseases in children. This year it is being observed across the network from November 7-14.

This year, the theme is "Childhood Cataract." An awareness walk was organised across the network on Sunday. The walk aims to raise awareness on childhood cataracts, their impact on children's vision, and the importance of early detection

and treatment and encourage parents to seek timely medical advice.

Several competitions and fun activities are being organised across the LVPEI network during November 7-14 - painting, fancy dress, elocution, clay modelling, Braille reading, and pottery sessions. The activities are also open to children of employees. Please find attached activity flyers for each campus.

# Centre has no intention to privatise VSP: Union Minister

PNS ■ ELURU

Union Minister of State for Steel and Heavy Industries Bhupatiraju Srinivasa Varma has asserted that the Central government has no plans to privatise the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP).

Speaking to the media during his visit to Jangareddygudem on Sunday, the Union Minister stated that the government is focused on strengthening the VSP by addressing its current challenges. "The Centre aims to keep VSP as a public sector unit and is committed to resolving all obstacles," he reiterated. He emphasised that safeguarding the VSP is a collective responsibility.

Bhupatiraju Srinivasa Varma also announced that the construction of the Bhadrachalam-Kovvur railway line has been completed up to Sattupalli, with the remaining work to be completed promptly.

The Union Minister further acknowledged that the Centre



has released Rs 15,000 crore and is prepared to provide additional funds for various

development projects in Andhra Pradesh. "Both the Centre and the State govern-

ment are determined to expedite the completion of the Polavaram project," he added.



## 2 teenagers drowned in irrigation tank

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Two teenagers drowned in an irrigation tank at Annambaka village in Chillakuru mandal on Sunday.

Police said that the deceased Srikanth (18) and Anand (18) entered the tank for a bath. They slipped and drowned in the tank. The bodies were fished out from the tank and shifted to the GGH for postmortem.

The Chillakuru police registered a case. A pall of gloom descended on Annambaka village with the death of two teenage boys. The police asked the villagers not to allow their children to enter irrigation tanks and canals to have fun and joy during holidays as drowning incidents are increasing.

# Mahila Rakshak Dalam swings into action



PNS ■ ELURU

Superintendent of Police K Pratap Siva Kishore has set up 'Abhaya Mahila Rakshak Dalam' especially to provide protection to the girls and women in the district.

The Abhaya Mahila Rakshak Dalam team was seen patrolling crowded places including railway sta-

tions, bus stations and parks on Sunday. The Mahila Rakshak team members interacted with girls and women at various places and inquired whether they were facing any problems.

The girls and women could take the help of Mahila Rakshak Dalam personnel if they face any problem including eve teasing. The girls and

women can get Mahila Rakshak's help by calling toll-free number 112 or by calling 95503 51100.

The Mahila Rakshak team members would reach the place in 10 minutes and provide protection. The Mahila Rakshak team will certainly help to curb crimes, atrocities and even teasing against girls and women, the SP said.

# Social media activists treated like terrorists: Roja

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

YSRCP senior leader and former minister RK Roja has alleged that social media activists are being treated like terrorists, with false cases registered against them.

In a video message on Sunday, Roja expressed dismay over an incident involving a woman social activist, Peddireddy Sudha Rani, who reportedly informed a judge that she was subjected to police torture and that false cases were filed against her.

"To divert attention from the government's failures, social media activists are being booked and harassed. These activists are simply highlighting the government's shortcomings," Roja remarked.

She also criticised the government's failure to address crimes against women, citing an incident where Tirupati police allegedly pressured a rape victim's parents to deny the assault on their daughter. She accused the police of shielding offenders and claimed that the government is attempting to silence activists who expose its failures.

Roja further condemned



**She also criticised the government's failure to address crimes against women, citing an incident where Tirupati police allegedly pressured a rape victim's parents to deny the assault on their daughter. She accused the police of shielding offenders and claimed that the government is attempting to silence activists who expose its failures**

the authorities for failing to curb the spread of ganja, pointing to its cultivation behind a ladies' hostel in Visakhapatnam and in Kuppam, which she said reflects the police's ineffectiveness in tackling the issue. Demanding an end to false

cases against social media activists, Roja warned of a large-scale protest if the harassment continues. She defended former CM Jagan Mohan Reddy's stance, stating that police officials responsible for filing false cases would be held accountable.

# '104' ambulance staffers rally for salary and increment



PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

The staff of the '104' ambulance service held a rally on Sunday, demanding that the government release their pending salaries and provide due increments. The rally began at Chowk Centre and culminated in a dharna in front of the Collector's office.

Carrying placards and raising slogans, the 104 Ambulance staff took part in the protest. The State president of the 104 Employees Union told the media that the Aurobindo Company has failed to pay their salaries regularly for the last two years. He also alleged that the company has not been remitting their Provident Fund (PF)

and Employee Deposit Linked Insurance (EDLI) contributions to the respective organisations.

In addition, the employees claimed that their salary increments have been stopped for the past three years. They also called for the third-party system maintaining the 104 ambulance services to be replaced and demanded that the government issue a Government Order (GO) 7 to ensure the timely payment of their salaries.

The union leaders appealed to the government to take over the management of 104 Ambulance services. They further stated that the rally was organised as part of the union's call for statewide protests.

# Walkers stage protest in front of Andhra Loyola College

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Loyola College Walkers Association protested in front of the college's main gate against the management's decision to restrict walkers from entering the college premises for their Sunday walking activities. Post-COVID, the college management did not allow walkers to continue their walking activities except for IAS and IPS officials, which caused the walkers' association members' agitation. Even though the college management did not allow them, these members finally broke the main gate lock and entered the college premises.

According to the members, they have been walking on the Andhra Loyola College grounds for the past 25 years in the name of the Loyola College Walkers Association. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the college management closed the gates and did not allow them, they said.

# Vizianagaram District Court to get new building complex



Justice CH Manavendra Nath Roy inaugurating the felicitation ceremony

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

The vision of a modern judicial facility for the district will soon become a reality, as the new building complex for the Vizianagaram district court is on the horizon. This milestone, regarded as a first in the State, was celebrated during a felicitation ceremony organised by the Vizianagaram Bar Association on Sunday.

During the event, High Court judges took the opportunity to acknowledge the crucial role played by the Bar Association in securing

approval for the project. They emphasised that this achievement was due to the collective dedication of the association rather than individual efforts.

The special gathering, hosted by the District Bar Association, honoured several judges, including those from Gujarat, Allahabad, and other High Courts, who gathered to celebrate this landmark development. Among the speakers was Justice Chikati Manvendranath Roy, who reflected on the state of the previous court buildings, which had been in use for over 30 years on unsuitable land.

# Guru Ravi Shankar to attend 'Unity in Diversity' meet

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Minority Hakkula Parirakshana Samiti (Minority Rights Protection Committee) has announced that renowned spiritual leader and founder of the Art of Living Foundation, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, will be the chief guest for religious harmony meeting, "Unity in Diversity," scheduled on November 13. Farooq Shibli, the State president of the Minority Rights Protection Committee, said that the event will be held at the Minority Rights Protection Committee's State office in Vijayawada.

Farooq said the MHPS extended invitations to Guru Ravi Shankar and Seeta Peddinti, Kona Falguni Rao, and Poturaju Ravikiran, apex members of the Art of Living Andhra Pradesh, confirmed the presence. Farooq Shibli expressed his gratitude, stating that Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's visit is a matter of great honour for the people of the State. He explained that the event will also be graced by the presence of several dignitaries, including AP Legislative Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu, Minister for Law and Minority Welfare NMD Farooq, and Telugu Desam Politburo member TD Janardhan.

Farooq added the event aims to foster unity and harmony among diverse communities and will feature discussions on various social issues.

# CPI alleges 'One Nation-One Election' concept is unconstitutional

PNS ■ KAKINADA

CPI State joint secretary Muppalla Nageswara Rao has reiterated the BJP's 'one nation-one election' concept is unconstitutional.

The CPI senior leader called upon the people to oppose the central government's move to hold combined elections to both Parliament and Assemblies in the name of 'One Nation-One Election' policy.

The CPI told media persons here on Sunday that holding elections to parliament and Assemblies at a time was against

the constitution and should be opposed tooth and nail.

He alleged that the Central Government had miserably failed in controlling the prices of essential commodities, adding that the prices of petrol and diesel were going up unabated. He said everyone has to fight out the anti-people policies of Narendra Modi and Amit Shah and save the nation.

The CPI leader lashed out at the alliance Government in the State for its complacency in taking firm action against the sand mafia resulting in free sand availability becoming a myth.



# Khadi Board Chief Choudhary meets Minister Savitha

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The newly appointed Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Khadi and Village Industries Board, KK Choudhary, paid a courtesy visit to State BC, EWS, Handloom, and Textile Minister S. Savita at her camp office in Tadepalli on Sunday. During the meeting, Choudhary expressed his gratitude to Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, Minister Nara Lokesh, and Minister Savita for his appointment to the position.

KK Choudhary felicitated Savita by draping her with a shawl. The two leaders also discussed various initiatives and schemes being implemented under the Khadi Board, focusing on the promotion of handloom and village industries in the State. Several TDP leaders and party activists attended the meeting, lending their support to the ongoing efforts to boost Khadi and related industries in Andhra Pradesh.

# 'Delay in paddy purchase to deny bonus to farmers'

Bandi slams TG, says Centre is giving money for the same

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress Government is adopting delaying tactics while procuring paddy to avoid paying 'bonus' to farmers, the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, said.

Addressing the media after visiting the paddy procurement centre in the Kothagattu village of Shankarapatnam mandal in Karimnagar district on Sunday, Sanjay asked the Congress Government whether it would scapagoat farmers to get commissions from brokers.

"The Centre is giving the money for procuring paddy including 'interest.' The Centre is bearing the entire cost of paddy procurement. What is the problem for the Telangana Congress government in procuring paddy? What have you achieved by conducting Praja Vijayotsavalu? It is better if the Congress government conducts celebrations for betraying the people as it came to power by deceiving the public," Sanjay said.

He said that there is no comparison between the Congress Government's action plan to procure paddy and the reality at paddy procurement centres. The Congress Government has failed to open procurement centres in some places, Sanjay added.

He said the Congress Government had targeted to procure 95 lakh tons of paddy



in the Kharif season and had announced that it would procure paddy from October 1 onwards and opened 7,572 procurement centres.

The government also announced that it will procure eight lakh tons of paddy in October. The action plan is good but there is no action, he pointed out.

Sanjay said that 40 days have gone by after the opening of procurement centres. "The government should reveal how much paddy it procured so far and how much money it gave to farmers, he said and added that the government was expected to procure 20 lakh

tons of paddy as per its action plan but it procured only 95,140 tons of paddy by November 5," he said.

The government was supposed to pay Rs 220.72 crore to farmers. However, it paid only Rs 6.44 crore. It is shameful that the Congress government could open only 6,017 procurement centres till now. It has to open another 1,724 procurement centres, he said.

Last year by this time, the BRS government had procured two lakh tons of paddy. This time the Congress government could not even procure one lakh tons of paddy, he said. Sanjay said that farmers had

waited for a month with 30 lakh tons of paddy on the roads. Disappointed by the attitude of the TG government, the farmers sold their paddy cheaply to brokers and millers, he said.

"The Centre is paying Rs 2,320 for a quintal of paddy and the TG government announced a bonus of Rs 500 per quintal. However, the Congress government has not paid a single Rupee as bonus so far. The farmers sold their paddy for Rs 1,800, Rs 1,850 and Rs 1,900. Is this the so-called Indiramma Rajyam? Is troubling farmers Praja Palana," he said.

ACROSS THE STATES



Indian submarine INS Vela visits Sri Lanka

Indian submarine INS Vela arrived in Sri Lanka on Sunday on a three-day visit to the island nation, the Indian High Commission said. INS Vela is a 67.5m long submarine with a crew of 53 and it is commanded by Commander Kapil Kumar. The submarine is an indigenous Kalvari-class diesel-electric submarine and it was commissioned into the Indian Navy on November 25, 2021. During the submarine's stay in Colombo, its crew is expected to participate in activities organised by the Sri Lanka Navy to strengthen camaraderie between the two navies, the Sri Lankan Navy said in a statement. In addition, personnel of the Sri Lanka Navy are expected to visit the submarine to take part in an awareness programme on its operational features. Moreover, the crew members of the submarine are expected to explore some of the tourist attractions in the country, it said. Concluding the official visit, INS Vela will depart the island on November 13.



Dedicated bus routes for school children in Delhi

The Delhi government on Sunday introduced two bus routes and increased the frequency of an existing one in a bid to improve public transportation, particularly in underserved areas. Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot, in the presence of Bijwasan MLA Bhupinder Singh Joon, flagged off the 892 SPL -- a dedicated service for schoolchildren. It will run two services each in the morning and the afternoon to align with school schedules, covering a 6.5-kilometre stretch from Dhoolisiras Village to Chhawla School, a statement said. The other new route, 892 STL, is aimed at connecting villages such as Nanak Heri to urban hubs, including Dwarka Sector-10. The service will span approximately 19 kilometres, linking key stops such as Dwarka Sector-21 metro station, Chhawla Village, and the BSF camp, and aims to offer a reliable transport option for daily commuters, the statement said.



Tension in Mandya village as Dalits enter temple

Tension prevailed in a village in Mandya on Sunday after the district authorities made way for the Dalits to enter the temple and worship the deity 'Kalabhairaveshwara' for the first time. The upper caste people, mostly Vokkaligas, allegedly took away the 'Utsava Murthy', the metallic festival idol of the deity for performing rituals outside the temple in Hanakere village. Heavy police force has been deployed in Hanakere in view of the prevailing tension. According to sources, there was an old Kalabhairaveshwara Swamy temple in the village and Dalits were never allowed to enter it. About three years ago, the old dilapidated structure was demolished and a new temple was built. Recently, the shrine came under the control of the Religious Endowment Department of the state government. Soon, Dalits decided to enter the temple but the members of the upper caste communities did not agree. The Dalits complained to the district administration about the discrimination done against them. Subsequently, two peace meetings were conducted but they failed.



'Congress hell-bent on breaking OBC-ST-SC unity'

PNS ■ GUMLA (JHARKHAND)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday attacked the Congress, accusing that its 'shahi parivar' (royal family) is hell-bent on breaking the ST-SC-OBC unity to 'snatch reservations under an evil design'. Addressing an election rally at Gumla, he accused the JMM-led coalition of looting the state's rich resources such as minerals, forest, sand and coal, putting 'Roti-Beti-Mati' (bread, land and daughter) at grave threat. He also accused the ruling dispensation of facilitating illegal immigration. "The Congress knows that if

STs, SCs and OBCs are united, they will pose a threat to the party's existence. This is the

reason the Congress 'shahi parivar' is hell-bent on breaking their unity... They want to snatch reservations. "The Congress is trying to pit



one tribal community against another... Munda against Oraon, Lohra against Kharia, Kharwar against Korwa etc. with an agenda to break the tribal society's strength," he said. The Congress cannot tolerate tribals in higher posts, which is why it opposes Droopadi Murmu's elevation (to the post of President) and continues to insult her, the PM said, adding former Jharkhand chief minister Champai Soren was also insulted.

The BJP is committed to restoring tribal pride and 'Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh' will be celebrated for one year from November 15 across the country to honour tribal icon Birsa Munda, he said.

Shah slams MVA's 'appeasement politics'



PNS ■ JALGAON/BULDHANA

Union Home Minister and senior BJP leader Amit Shah on Sunday said the Congress-led Maha Vikas Aghadi could stoop to any level for the sake of appeasement and vote bank politics.

He further said Maharashtra Congress chief Nana Patole had agreed to the Ulema Council's demand for Muslim reservations.

Addressing rallies in Raver assembly constituency in Jalgaon and Malkapur seat in Buldhana, Shah pointed out to a recent memorandum submitted by the Ulema Council to the opposition Congress seeking 10 per cent reservation in jobs and education for the Muslim community. "Patole has agreed to end reservations for SCs, STs and

OBCs and give it to Muslims as demanded by the Ulema Council," Shah said in Buldhana.

The demand for 10 per cent quota for the Muslim community would eat into the benefits of Dalits, tribals and Other Backward Classes, since there is a 50 per cent cap on quota and any increase will come at the cost of existing ones, he told the gathering.

"Maha Vikas Aghadi leaders' lust for power has blinded them to long-term consequences of their actions on marginalised communities. The BJP is firmly committed to welfare of all communities but is strictly against any form of reservations for Muslims. As long as there is even one BJP MP or MLA, we will oppose religion-based reservation. This is our commitment," he asserted.

'India faces threat from RSS, Modi, and Amit Shah'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday criticised the "Ek Hai to Safe Hai" and "Batenge to Katenge" slogans, claiming threat to India from the RSS, BJP, PM Narendra Modi, and Home Minister Amit Shah.

Addressing a 'Save Constitution' conference in Mumbai, Kharge targeted the prime minister, alleging discussions and debate are not allowed in Parliament.

"The prime minister says 'Ek Hai to Safe Hai' while other leaders (of BJP) talk about 'Batenge to Katenge' (divided we fall). Who is threatened? Is there any

Kharge on 'Ek Hai to Safe Hai'



problem? In fact, the country faces threat from RSS, BJP, Modi, and (Union home minister Amit) Shah," Kharge said. Launching BJP's campaign for the November 20 Maharashtra assembly polls, Modi had mentioned 'Ek Hai

to Safe Hai' while accusing the Congress of trying to divide OBCs, SCs and STs.

Yogi Adityanath's 'Batenge to Katenge' slogan, viewed as a call for Hindus to stay united, is also gaining traction.

BJP to be uprooted from Jharkhand, claims Lalu

PNS ■ KODERMA (JHARKHAND)

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) president Lalu Prasad Yadav on Sunday claimed that the ruling INDIA bloc would uproot the BJP from Jharkhand in the upcoming assembly elections.

He also alleged that the BJP had become a powerless political force in comparison to the INDIA bloc, of which his RJD is a constituent.

"We will uproot the BJP and it will never return. The BJP is powerless before our strength," Yadav said addressing an election rally in Jharkhand's Koderma district.



The former Bihar chief minister said that he helped form the INDIA bloc, which emerged as a strong force against the BJP in the country.

"I have contributed to the development of Koderma. So, do not forget to vote for our

candidate Subhash Yadav and ensure his victory," the RJD chief said while addressing the rally.

The Koderma assembly segment was a stronghold of RJD till 2014.

BJP's Neera Yadav is contesting from the seat for the third time after two consecutive wins since 2014.

RJD's Subhash Yadav is in the fray as an INDIA bloc candidate this time.

Subhash, who is considered to be one of the close aides of Lalu Prasad, was recently granted bail by the Supreme Court in a money laundering case.



'Even originating point' of Ganga is polluted by STP discharge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal has been informed that according to an Uttarakhand government's report on pollution in Ganga, even the "originating point" of the pious river is polluted by sewage treatment plant (STP) discharge.

The submission was made during the proceedings about the prevention and control of pollution in Ganga in Uttarakhand. The tribunal had earlier sought a report from the state and others.

A bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava noted the submissions of the advocate of one of the intervening applicants, who referring to the state's report, pointed out that a faecal coliform having the

most probable number (MPN) of 540/100 ml was found in the sample collected from the 1 million litres per day (MLD) capacity sewage treatment plant (STP) at Gangotri.

Faecal coliform (FC) levels show pollution from the microbes from the excreta of humans and animals. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) water quality criteria, a MPN of less than 500/100 ml is desirable for "organised outdoor bathing".

In the order passed on November 5, the NGT bench also comprising judicial member Justice Sudhir Agarwal and expert member A Senthil Vel noted, "She (the advocate) has submitted that even the originating point of the pious river Ganga is polluted by the STP discharge."

SP a production house of rioters, criminals: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday gave a new definition for Samajwadi Party's coinage 'PDA', terming it as "Production house of Dangai (rioters) and Apradhi (Criminals)."

He also said that the 'CEO' of this production house is Akhilesh Yadav and its "trainer" Shivpal Yadav, with all criminals "business partners" in the party.

"PDA was an acronym coined during the 2022 assembly polls by SP Chief Akhilesh Yadav for the 'Pichhde' (backwards), Dalits and 'Alpsakhyak' (minorities).



Addressing an election rally in Katehari (Ambedkar Nagar) for the November 20 bypolls, Adityanath said, "SP talks of PDA... But tell you what their PDA is. It is the Production House of Dangai (rioters) and Apradhi (criminals). I am giving you this new definition..."

"Remember any big criminal, mafia or rioters... They are party of the production house of SP... Every dreaded criminal, every dreaded mafia, every dreaded rapist is born here (production house). Its CEO (Chief Executive Officer) is Akhilesh Yadav. The trainer is Shivpal

Yadav," he said. He alleged that the very sight of an SP worker is enough to strike fear in the women of the state. "Dekh Sapai, Bitiya ghabrai," he said.

Adityanath also alleged the SP tried to save the man accused in the Ayodhya rape case.

BJP 'disconnected' from people: Priyanka

PNS ■ WAYANAD

Congress general secretary and UDF candidate for the Wayanad LS by-poll, Priyanka Gandhi intensified her criticism of the BJP-led Centre on Sunday, alleging its leaders were 'disconnected' from the people.

"Those of you who are older may



remember my grandmother Indira Gandhiji and the deep respect and connection she had with the tribal people of India," she said. Priyanka added that Indira had always emphasised the tribal people's connection to the forest, land, water, and earth.

"It was with this understanding that Indira Gandhi did so much for the rights of tribal people," she said. She further highlighted the UPA government's initiatives, such as the Forest Rights Act, MNREGA, and the Right to Education, stating that these aimed to help the poorest.

Gunfire rattles forests, shatters peace in J-K

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

In the first such incident in the past two decades, terrorists exchanged fire with security forces in the dense forests of the Zabarwan range here on Sunday, forcing residents to flee in panic as additional forces were mobilised to strengthen the cordon.

The encounter in the vicinity of Nishat on the banks of the Dal Lake comes close on the heels of a day-long encounter in the Khanyar locality of downtown Srinagar early this month which left a top Pakistani commander of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) dead.

The encounter in Zabarwan lasted several hours before the guns fell silent but the terrorists managed to flee taking advantage of the thick foliage. However, the search for the fleeing terrorists was continuing when the last reports were received, the officials said.

Eyewitnesses said that the forest area resonated with gunshots shortly after a contingent of Army, police and CRPF personnel appeared there and launched a search operation around 9 am. The forested area has a cluster of over a dozen houses and many residents fled the locality due to panic. This forest area serves



the locals in grazing their cattle and also womenfolk bring firewood from the woods to save themselves from the bone-chilling winter of Kashmir.

"I heard a few gunshots in the morning but I did not know it was happening in the neighbourhood. I have been living here for the past two

decades and never witnessed such an incident," Abdul Khaliq, a local resident, said.

"I, along with my wife, immediately left our house and ran for safety. There are at least two dozen houses in this forest area," he added.

Abdul Rashid, another resident of Ishber, has been a frequent visitor to the forest area for quite a long time. This morning, he left his cattle in the forest area and was returning when the encounter started.

Today, I also took my cow and a few sheep into the woods. While I was coming down, I heard some gunshots.

CPI(M) Facebook Page hacked, UDF candidate's video posted

PNS ■ PATHANAMTHITTA (KERALA)

With crucial bypolls in Kerala, the ruling CPI(M) faced embarrassment on Sunday after its official Facebook page briefly featured a campaign video of opposition UDF candidate Rahul Mamkootthil, running for the Palakkad Assembly constituency.

Initially, the district leadership claimed it was not the official page of the party, but later clarified that the page had

been "hacked" to post the video and incite controversy. CPI(M) Pathanamthitta dis-

tributed secretary KP Udayabhanu issued a statement saying the



party came to know about the video posted following media reports.

"Upon detailed examination, it was found that someone hacked the page, deliberately posted the video to create controversy, took a screenshot, and shared it with the media," Udayabhanu stated.

The social media team recovered the page and removed the video promptly. A complaint has been lodged with the cyber police and Facebook authorities.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## A rich legacy

Chief Justice DY Chandrachud's tenure leaves a legacy marked by bold decisions, though not without controversies

As Chief Justice DY Chandrachud's tenure concludes on November 10, his impactful decisions will be closely scrutinised for the lasting mark they have left on India's journey toward progress and development. He became the 50th CJI on November 8, 2022. During his tenure as a judge and as CJI, Chandrachud has been involved in more than 700 judgements including constitution bench judgements, many of which he has authored, dissented and concurred with. His tenure stands as one of the most impactful in recent years, marked by bold judicial reforms, significant rulings, and an enduring commitment to upholding constitutional rights. His time in office was characterised by an effort to reshape the judiciary to make it more accessible, transparent, and technologically adept. However, this legacy was not without its share of controversies, reflecting both the high expectations and challenges that come with the nation's highest judicial role. His approach to jurisprudence was firmly rooted in constitutional principles and a progressive interpretation of the law.



His tenure is defined by landmark rulings that addressed some of India's most pressing social and political issues. The free speech and right to dissent that are fundamental to any democracy were close to his heart. Under his leadership, the apex court repeatedly affirmed the rights of individuals to dissent and question authority, especially in cases where government overreach was alleged. His rulings in cases challenging sedition laws and other colonial-era restrictions reflected a judicial commitment to curbing censorship. Chandrachud introduced significant technological advancements within the judiciary to make it more accessible and efficient. His commitment to digitalisation and virtual court proceedings made it accessible to all. His efforts to streamline case backlogs, prioritise the rights of underprivileged communities and modernise the judicial system have left a lasting impact. He championed judicial independence and frequently emphasised the need for an apolitical judiciary. These reforms have set a foundation for future chief justices to build on. However, Chandrachud faced criticism over his handling of certain high-profile political cases, especially those involving state surveillance and alleged misuse of power. His reluctance to prioritise some of these cases was interpreted by some as an unwillingness to confront the government, casting a shadow on his otherwise steadfast stance on judicial independence. His attempts to bring transparency to the controversial collegium system were met with mixed reactions. Indeed, Chief Justice DY Chandrachud's tenure will be remembered as one marked by significant contributions to the evolution of Indian jurisprudence and judicial processes. DY Chandrachud commitment to rights-based judgements, technological modernisation and accessibility reforms represents his enduring contributions to the judiciary.

### PICTALK



People take part in a boating competition, in Nadia

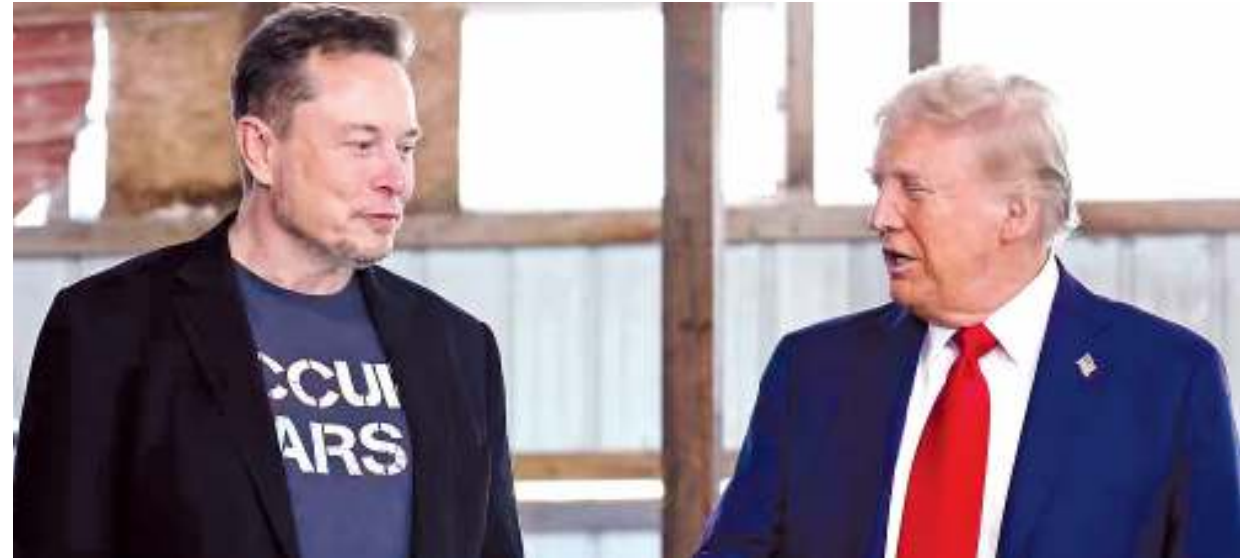
## The business of power and the politics of loyalty



SANTOSH MATHEW

As history has shown, when influential businessmen back controversial leaders, the consequences reach far beyond politics—impacting nations and the global landscape

In the world of investment banking, there's an adage: "Insult is an investment." The idea is simple—those who are underestimated and ignored often end up making the most successful moves, purchasing stocks at a lower price before the crowd catches on. In political terms, this strategy mirrors how Donald Trump, after being insulted and sidelined following the 2020 election, has managed to turn his defeat into a powerful comeback. But Trump's resurgence isn't just a matter of political savvy—it's also about alliances, the kind that transcend national borders and redefine power structures. One such alliance is his relationship with Vladimir Putin, which, when examined through a historical lens, resembles the complex political alliances of the past. Trump's approach to Putin could be seen as a Trump card of sorts. A new world order under autocratic rule, with Putin at the helm, is a scenario that increasingly seems possible.



Ford once supported, albeit in a different era and context. Ford, the founder of the Ford Motor Company, became infamous for his admiration of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis. Ford's business interests aligned with the Nazi regime, including lucrative contracts that benefitted Ford's German subsidiary, Ford-Werke. While Ford's connection to Hitler was ideological, it was also financial, a pragmatic alliance that offered both political and economic rewards. Fast forward to today, and we see a striking similarity between Ford's support for Hitler and Musk's endorsement of Trump. Elon Musk, a tech magnate with enormous influence, has embraced Trump's populist message, praising him for his policies on deregulation and free markets. Musk's relationship with Trump may not be rooted in ideology to the same extent that Ford's was with Hitler, but the political and business calculations are eerily similar. Like Ford, Musk sees in Trump an opportunity to align his business interests with a powerful political figure. Musk's recent purchase of Twitter, his vocal support for Trump, and his willingness to use his platform to reshape public discourse are strategic moves, not just personal convictions. At the heart of this dynamic is



AMID THESE SHIFTING GLOBAL TIDES, THERE'S ONE GROUP THAT TRUMP HAS PROMISED TO "SAVE": THE HINDUS. WHILE INDIA'S PRIME MINISTER MODI MAY CLAIM TO BE THEIR PROTECTOR, TRUMP'S DIWALI PLEDGE TO SAFEGUARD HINDUS WORLDWIDE PAINTS A DIFFERENT PICTURE

a simple truth: both Ford and Musk, at their respective times, recognised the value of political alignment in securing economic and business power. Ford saw his admiration for Hitler as a path to financial gain in a fractured Europe. Musk, meanwhile, sees his support for Trump as a means to ensure policies favourable to his empire, such as deregulation, low taxes, and the prioritisation of business over social welfare. Just as Ford's relationship with the Nazi regime was instrumental in expanding his company's reach in Europe, Musk's ties to Trump could bolster his business interests in the current global economy. Musk's approach to Trump is also a form of personal branding. Both men have cultivated larger-than-life personas, largely through social media, and both understand the power of controversy. Just as Ford was able to influence public perception through his business prowess and his political affiliations, Musk uses his platform—Twitter, now X—to shape political discourse. Musk's support for Trump also mirrors Ford's early 20th-century nationalist rhetoric. While Ford's nationalism was overtly racial, Musk's alignment with Trump echoes a modern brand of populism, focused on

nationalism, "America First" policies, and anti-establishment rhetoric. However, the ultimate question remains: What happens when business and politics intertwine in such a way that it threatens the very fabric of democratic institutions? Ford's support for Hitler contributed to the global rise of fascism, and Trump's alliances with figures like Putin raised concerns about the future of democracy and global stability. Musk's role in this political theatre could either be a footnote in history or a major chapter in the ongoing struggle between corporate power and political freedom. The rise of populism, the fracturing of traditional alliances, and the unpredictable actions of powerful business figures like Musk and Trump all point to a future where global stability could be at risk. The future is uncertain, but one thing is clear: as history has shown when powerful businessmen like Ford or Musk align themselves with controversial political figures, the consequences can be far-reaching and transformative. Whether for good or ill, their influence is undeniable, and their alliances, however pragmatic, will shape the world for years to come. (The writer is an associate professor; views are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### CHANDRACHUD'S LANDMARK VERDICTS

Madam — Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud, overall, an eminent, very erudite and well-mannered CJI. Even though he was a woke, liberal, let's give him the credit where he truly deserves. He was completely impartial. He was on the bench for the Ram Mandir verdict which ruled unanimously in favour of the temple. He withheld Article 370, he ruled in the favour of government for demonetisation, granted bail to Arnab Goswami, ruled against MVA in Maharashtra, accepted SEBI report on Adani against Hindenburg allegations, approved Central Vista project, upheld government powers pertaining to ED, CBI and PMLA, left same sex marriage decision on parliament or interpretation of Article on private ownership of resources, Assam Citizenship Amendment Act. Some of the judgements may not align with our preference, but not everything can work in our favour. But my one regret is the Ganapati Aarti he shared with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his house. No doubt Modi Bhakts forgave him for this sole act. Side by side who forget his overlooking Bhima Koregaon undertrials and Umar Khalid's politically motivated jail. Whatsoever, a judge's task is to interpret the law and he did very creditably. Law making is the function of Parliament and not the Supreme Court. We will miss you a lot, Your Lordship.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

#### FOCUS ON DEVELOPMENT

Madam— Apropos of the front page news 'Ruckus continues in J and K Assembly' (Nov 8), CM Omar Abdullah should himself evaluate how development and infrastructure have been made priority by the Union Government in comparison to the other states after the abrogation of Article 370 and security preparedness has been enhanced in the state. Jammu & Kashmir has top priority for the country both from a strategic, economic and social perspective. People of the state responded positively to the repeal of Article 370 and have voted for the National

## Stop political blame game



Rape, gangrape and murder are social crimes continuing since the dawn of 'civilisation' all across the world and which seem to have no end, proving that human beings are still left with several miles to go before turning truly humane. So whenever any such crime happens any-

where, the real culprits should be nabbed as early as possible, with the judiciary awarding exemplary punishment to the convicted. And if any influential person or persons are found to be protecting the criminals or diluting their crime, he/she/they must also be handed severe punishment. But character-assassinating the ruling party or government of the region along with the administrative head of the concerned region wherever such an unpardonable offence takes place is nothing but cheap, heartless politics within which the BJP and its leaders have scandalously immersed themselves, revolving around the Kolkata hospital case since early August. Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

#### SAMOSAS CONTROVERSY

Madam — It is full of political crises as general security staff ate away elitist samosas ordered from a 5-star hotel by the CM of Himachal Pradesh. CID has been called in for investigation as to how these staff could not understand that not all samosas are for everyone. This transgression needs Byomkesh Bakshi, RAW, IB, and CBI to find out how dare some poor guy thought he could get away eating Sukku ke samose. Also, the five-star hotel that supplied those Samose might have to be penalised for not writing a caution note on each samosa by writing, Only for Italians, and those Indians whose income is more than 50 lakh per month, etc. What Jalebi was to Haryana, Samosas will be to Himachal Pradesh. Also, Maharashtra elections are just 10 days away, and Pappu has not yet talked about the Vada Pav factory. It is concerning for Mahayuti. Congress is a complete mess on edibles. A Subramaniam Krishnan | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## Creating a workplace culture that truly supports mental health



ASHA IYER KUMAR

In a workplace where mental health is prioritised, employees would feel confident, heard, valued and supported

The theme for Mental Health Day 2024, which was observed on October 10, was "mental health in the workplace". Although a month has passed since then, it is a theme that will remain relevant at all times of the year, given the rising incidents of burnouts and crashes in the professional sphere. The race has never been this fierce to corner the best bargains in life and in the process of touching the finish line first, we are disintegrating as family, workers and society. Our workspaces are turning into ticking time bombs with a multitude of nerves waiting to snap. The deadlines in front of us are turning into death lines. As someone who has gone through a mental health condition and someone who has been through the trials of having to perform well at work during the ailment, and in the end been let off, I can say this much with certainty: We talk more and walk less. The active discussions that we are having on mental health in offices are not translating into workable actions and responses. Whether we use the word toxic or hostile, or



politics to describe inclement work conditions, there is an amount of disquiet hovering over workstations and cabins. Employees still struggle to define their boundaries and raise concerns without fear of judgment or retaliation. This lack of open communication creates a festering environment where mental well-being takes a back seat to competition, productivity, and ambition. To bridge this gap, I believe every organisation needs a Chief Emotional Intelligence Officer—a dedicated professional to prioritise the mental wellness of employees. This individual would serve as an accessible resource for emotional guidance, creating a safe harbour where employees can speak candidly about their mental and

emotional challenges without fear of repercussions. Why is this crucial? Because mental health issues in the workplace are seldom isolated incidents—they are deeply intertwined with how individuals interact, collaborate, and handle the pressures of their roles. The CEO would not only provide direct support but also foster a culture that values empathy, resilience, and open dialogue. They could organise workshops on emotional intelligence, manage peer support networks, and act as a mediator in times of conflict. By equipping employees with emotional tools and safe channels to address their struggles, companies can create a more harmonious and productive environment. A psychologist or therapist in the workspace would be invaluable in addressing the employees issues. Think about the quiet suffering: employees with anxiety disorders who fear speaking up during meetings, those with depression who find it challenging to meet deadlines or those enduring chronic stress due to workplace politics. When left unaddressed,

these issues don't just impact the individual—they disrupt team dynamics, reduce overall productivity, and lead to higher attrition. By bringing mental health resources in-house, organisations send a powerful message: We care about you as a whole person, not just as a worker. In workplaces that still stigmatise open communication, a CEO can lead by example, showing that seeking help is a strength, not a weakness. Imagine an office where an employee overwhelmed by stress could have a confidential conversation with a professional trained to listen and offer support. Or where tensions between coworkers could be resolved through mediation rather than letting resentment fester. This isn't just about providing a "quick fix" for mental health—it's about creating a sustainable, nurturing workplace culture. If we genuinely wish to prioritise mental health in the workplace, then it's time to go beyond well-meaning words and take actionable steps. (The author is a columnist and writing coach based in Dubai; Views are personal)



## FIRST COLUMN

## SHARENTING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Only with awareness and proactive choices, parents can create a positive digital experience



SHAINY SHARMA

In the digital age, social media has become an integral part of everyday life, allowing people to connect, share, and communicate across vast distances. Of recent, in one of the studies, it was estimated that over 90 per cent of American children have a social media presence by the time they reach age 2. Today, many parents feel a sense of pride in their children's achievements and milestones and want to celebrate these moments with friends and family. They believe that social media offers an easy, instant way to share updates and receive supportive feedback.

This practice of parents sharing photos, videos and details about their children on social media is termed 'Sharenting' and is becoming a buzz in town. This practice may include baby photos, milestones, family activities, humorous incidents and personal achievements. Sharenting often begins as early as pregnancy announcements and continues through the child's growth, school events and sometimes even into adolescence.

Practicing sharing offers numerous ways to bridge physical distance and bring family members into the child's life virtually by creating family bonding for families separated by geography and maintaining close relations with extended family members; building online support communities where sharing can bring camaraderie and guidance from other parents experiencing similar challenges and preserve memories that can later be revisited by both the parents and potentially the children themselves but on the contrary, sharing faces substantial criticism, primarily concerning privacy, consent and ethical issues. Studies suggest that children who discover their lives



have been publicly documented without their consent may experience trust issues with their parents and may feel a loss of control over their personal stories.

As children grow up in a digital world, having a documented online presence from a young age can influence their self-perception, social development and relationships. Being exposed to a wide audience might increase the likelihood that children develop feelings of shame or insecurity about how they are portrayed online.

The word 'Sharenting' is a double-edged sword, offering benefits in the form of connection and memory preservation but carrying significant ethical and privacy implications. It becomes of utmost importance for the parents to strike a balance and adopt responsible sharing practices such as seeking consent from their child when possible; avoiding sharing sensitive information such as full name, school, location, etc and periodically reviewing and removing older posts, thereby reducing their child's digital footprint and enabling them to control their online presence as they grow.

Only with awareness and proactive choices, parents can create a positive digital experience for their families while protecting their children's future in an increasingly connected world. Today's generation needs to create a new normal and prioritise a child's right to privacy, informed content as well and digital safety over the 'posting dopamine cycle.' Remember, the digital footprint of the child will last a lifetime, and privacy will give them power. Ultimately, responsible sharing will require mindfulness, ethical consideration, and the willingness to prioritise the child's well-being above the immediate gratification of social media validation.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

## Nutrient-based subsidy: Support and scrutiny balance



UTTAM GUPTA

While companies have the flexibility to set their MRP, these prices remain under close government scrutiny, ensuring affordability without undermining competition



Just around the time when the Rabi Crops season (October 2024 - March 2025) has commenced, there was a shortage of di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) in many parts of the country.

DAP is a widely used complex fertiliser that supplies 46 per cent Phosphate or 'P' nutrients besides 18 per cent Nitrogen or 'N' (a ton of DAP contains 180 kg 'N' and 460 kg 'P'). The annual consumption of DAP is around 10 to 11 million tons. Against this, domestic production is less than half at around 4.5 - 4.8 million tonnes. The deficit is made up of imports from countries such as Russia, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt and China. According to the Department of Fertilisers (DoF), the requirement of DAP during the current Rabi season is assessed to be 5.5 million tonnes. Out of this, 60 per cent or 3.3 million tonnes was to be imported.

This much material should have been purchased, transported and placed nearer the consumption areas before the commencement of the season. But, that was not to be. According to the Fertiliser Association of India (FAI), during April-September 2024, DAP imports were 1.96 million tons down from 3.45 million tons during the same period in 2023-24. The domestic production of DAP was 2.15 million tons down from 2.31 million tons during the same period last year. So, there was a reduction in supply of around 1.65 million tons compared to last year. This is the prime reason behind the shortage of DAP.

A plausible explanation could be that many countries from where DAP comes are in the middle east and the crisis due to the war involving Israel and others has led to disruption in the normal Red Sea route forcing the re-routing of ships through the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa. That involves much longer distance hence, taking additional time of up to 45 days for the consignment to reach Indian ports. But, it isn't simply a case of delay. It has more to do with policy issues. Under the existing policy, the Union Government asks manufacturers or importers to sell fertilisers to farmers at a low maximum retail price (MRP) unrelated to



THE ANNUAL CONSUMPTION OF DAP IS AROUND 10 TO 11 MILLION TONNES. AGAINST THIS, DOMESTIC PRODUCTION IS LESS THAN HALF AT AROUND 4.5 - 4.8 MILLION TONNES. THE DEFICIT IS MADE UP OF IMPORTS FROM COUNTRIES SUCH AS RUSSIA, MOROCCO, SAUDI ARABIA, JORDAN, EGYPT AND CHINA

the cost of production/import and distribution (or cost of supply) which is higher. The excess cost of supply over MRP is reimbursed as a subsidy to the manufacturer/importer.

In the case of urea, MRP is under 'statutory' control and subsidy varies from unit to unit (importer in case of import) depending on the cost. For non-urea fertilisers (there are 25 grades of such fertilisers including DAP) which are de jure decontrolled, the MRP is 'indirectly' controlled.

The government gives a 'uniform' subsidy on a per-nutrient basis to all manufacturers and importers under the Nutrient Based Scheme (NBS). Although they are free to fix the MRP, this is subject to scrutiny by the authorities. In an office memorandum dated January 17, 2024, the DoF has issued detailed guidelines for the evaluation of the "reasonableness" of the MRPs for all non-urea fertilisers covered under the NBS. To be effective from April 1, 2023, the guidelines prescribe maximum profit margins that will be allowed for fertiliser companies - 8 per cent for importers, 10 per cent for manufacturers and 12 per cent for integrated manufacturers (those producing finished fertilisers as well as intermediates such as phosphoric acid and ammonia).

The admissible profit margins are calculated as a percentage of their "total cost of sales", which covers the cost of production (landed cost in case of import), administrative/selling and distribution overheads, net interest and financing charges. Dealer's margin is allowed to the extent of 2 per cent of the MRP for DAP and muriate of potash (MOP), and 4 per cent for all other fertilisers covered under NBS. Companies earning "unreasonable profit", i.e. over and above the stipulated per-

centages, in a financial year (April-March) or FY will have to refund the same to the DoF by October 10 of the following FY. If they don't return the money within the said time limit, "an interest @12 per cent per annum is charged on a pro-rata basis on the refund amount from the next day of end of FY (i.e. in case of FY 2023-24, the interest would be charged from April 1, 2024)". The guidelines require fertiliser companies to "self-assess" unreasonable profits, based on the cost auditor's report along with audited cost data approved by their board of directors. This report and data have to be furnished to the DoF by October 10 of the following fiscal year. The DoF will then scrutinise the "reasonability of MRPs", as submitted by the companies, "for each completed previous FY (i.e. for FY 2023-24) by February 28, 2025". Following this scrutiny, the DoF will finalise a report on unreasonable profits earned, if any, to be recovered from the companies.

Such detailed regulations to the point of 'micro-managing' a firm by itself act as a deterrent to smooth and effective conduct of its operations. It is completely out of sync with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's emphasis on policy reforms and liberalisation. It makes a mockery of the decontrol of all non-urea fertilisers announced way back in 1992 under the economic reforms unleashed by the then government under PV Narasimha Rao. From the perspective of the manufacturer/importer, the 'reasonable' MRP allowed to it by the DoF plus the subsidy also fixed by the government (it is notified twice a year before the commencement of each season Kharif and Rabi) should fully cover the cost of supply. If it doesn't, the manufacturer's/importer's operations will be rendered eco-

nomic unviable. This is precisely what has happened with importers of DAP during the current year. For the Rabi season, the government has announced a subsidy of Rs 21,911 per ton along with the MRP of Rs 27,000. These two add up to Rs 48,911 per ton. Against this, the current landed cost of DAP in the country is US \$ 645 per ton or around Rs 54,000 per ton. Add to this, the cost of movement from the port to the consumption point and distribution cost, and the cost of supply to the farmer would be more than Rs 60,000 per ton. A firm won't go for such import only to incur a substantial loss of over Rs 10,000 per ton. The crux of the problem is the government doesn't want farmers to pay more. So, it has kept MRP unchanged at the level it was three years ago. At the same time, it is hesitant to increase subsidies as it will upset its fiscal budget. Its subsidy allocation for non-urea fertilisers has gone down from Rs 112,875 crore during 2022-23 to Rs 60,303 crore during 2023-24 and further down to Rs 48,894 crore during 2024-25 (it includes Rs 24,474 crore for Rabi season). In the process, it ends up impacting supplies as importers don't find it economical to import. During the previous two years, there wasn't any shortage as during 2022-23, the government was pretty liberal in spending and during 2023-24, the decline in global prices helped. But, during the current FY, none of these reliefs are available. So, there is stress on the supply front. The government can get out of the logjam only when it stops micro-managing the fertiliser business and leaves it to the market forces. As for subsidies, they should be given directly to farmers.

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

## Israel, Palestine and a divided Africa: Seeking a path forward

African nations, with their unique histories, alliances and economic interests, find themselves divided over the Israel-Palestine issue

The ongoing conflict in Gaza between Israel and Palestine, which began on October 7, 2023, marks a significant military engagement in the region, being the largest confrontation since the 1973 Yom Kippur War. This conflict has global ramifications, with the African continent likely to feel its effects profoundly. Africa, with its 55 countries and diverse political landscape, is particularly vulnerable to such geopolitical divides.

**Africa's Divided Stance on Israel-Palestine:** African countries vary widely in their stance on the Israel-Palestine issue, often shaped by historical, ideological, and economic factors. Pro-Palestinian countries like Algeria, Tunisia, South Africa, Senegal, Mali,



MANISH KARMWAR

Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Libya support Palestine, often viewing the Palestinian struggle through the lens of their anti-colonial histories. In contrast, several nations, including Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, Morocco, and Chad, have established close relations with Israel, motivated by economic, technological, and security interests. Additionally,

neutral countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Egypt, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sudan maintain diplomatic ties with both Israel and Palestine, typically refraining from favoring one side over the other.

At the continental level, the African Union (AU) has traditionally supported Palestine's statehood and criticised Israeli policies.

**A Deeper Look at Africa's Reactions:** African responses to the Gaza conflict highlight the continent's fractured stance on foreign policy issues. In South Africa, for instance, public protests have likened the Palestinian struggle to the country's anti-apartheid movement. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has voiced strong support for Palestine,

and his government filed a lawsuit against Israel at the International Court of Justice. Algeria's Foreign Minister similarly condemned Israeli actions, citing international law, while Comoros President Azali Assoumani labeled Israeli actions as genocidal. On the other hand, several sub-Saharan nations, including South Sudan, Cameroon, Togo, and Cape Verde, chose not to support the recent United Nations resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Even Muslim-majority countries like Morocco, Chad, and Sudan have limited their response to public condemnations without altering diplomatic ties. Malawi and Kenya recently agreed to send laborers to Israel following a halt in work permits for Palestinians,



further signaling the complexities in Africa's stance. Africa and Israel share a complex, long-standing relationship that dates back to before Israel's founding. Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement, expressed support for African liberation, envisioning solidarity between Jews and Africans in their quests for self-determination. This vision gained trac-

tion in the 1960s, with Israel maintaining a strong presence in Africa, including 33 embassies across the continent. Israel's model of decolonisation and development attracted the admiration of African leaders who saw parallels in their own struggles for independence.

However, following the 1973 Yom Kippur War, pressure from Arab countries led many African states to sever ties with Israel. This led to a period of estrangement, with African leaders feeling frustrated by unmet promises from Arab allies, particularly in the realm of energy cooperation. Gradually, ties began to thaw, and by the early 21st century, Israel was once again seeking partnerships in Africa, with diplomatic and economic col-

laborations resuming. In recent years, Israel's outreach has intensified. In 2016, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited East Africa, and a year later, he addressed the Economic Community of West African States. In 2022, Israel and several African nations agreed to expand cooperation in renewable energy, trade, and technology. Kenya's President William Ruto visited Israel in 2023, further strengthening ties in agriculture, climate change, security, and other sectors. These relationships are essential for African nations, many of which aim to modernise infrastructure and boost economic growth through partnerships with technologically advanced countries like Israel. Given the historical context

and current diplomatic landscape, it appears unlikely that the Gaza conflict will irreparably divide Africa. While opinions on the Israel-Palestine issue are undoubtedly polarized, African nations often prioritise pragmatic interests over ideological alignment. The Gaza conflict may not permanently alter Africa's alliances, but it does highlight the need for more cohesive foreign policy coordination on the continent.

Africa's relationships with Israel have historically ebbed and flowed, often dictated by external pressures and internal priorities rather than a single, unified stance.

(The writer is faculty, department of African Studies faculty of social sciences University of Delhi; views are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

# In 17 years, 5 Indian full service carriers bid adieu

## Air India to be alone in the league

PNS ■ MUMBAI/NEW DELHI

When Vistara folds up into the Air India Group on Monday, the number of full service carriers in the fast-growing Indian aviation space will come down to just one from five in a span of over 17 years.

Also, the merger -- that will see Vistara's 49 per cent owner Singapore Airlines holding 25.1 per cent stake in Air India post the merger -- will mark the sunset of another Indian airline jointly owned by an overseas carrier after the liberalisation of foreign direct investment norms.

In 2012, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh-led UPA government allowed foreign airlines to buy up to 49 per cent in a domestic carrier, which later resulted in the now defunct Jet Airways securing 24 per cent stake from Gulf carrier Etihad besides the birth of AirAsia India and Vistara.

Vistara is also the only full-service carrier to start operations in the last 10 years.

Since the merger of full-service carrier (FSC) Indian Airlines with Air India in 2007, at least five FSCs dotted the Indian skies.

As years passed by, Kingfisher and Air Sahara faded away while Vistara took flight in January 2015. Kingfisher went belly up in 2012 while Air Sahara, which was acquired by Jet Airways and renamed as JetLite, sank with Jet Airways in



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2019. FSC Jet Airways that flew for 25 years before getting grounded in April 2019 due to financial turbulence is set to be liquidated.

From November 12, the enlarged Air India will remain the country's lone full-service player.

Coming to Indian carriers with foreign ownership, the first was Jet Airways where Abu

Dhabi's Etihad Airways snapped up 24 per cent stake.

Then came AirAsia India -- 49 per cent owned by Malaysia's AirAsia and the rest was with Tatas -- followed by Vistara -- where Singapore Airlines holds 49 per cent stake and 51 per cent is with Tata Group.

With rising air traffic and changing travel patterns, many no-frills airlines are dominating the skies worldwide and India's

dominant carrier is IndiGo.

According to a senior airline official, the line differentiating a full service and a low-cost carrier is somewhat blurred.

For instance, some of the budget airlines also offer business class seats.

Among others, FSCs strive to provide more comfort to passengers during travel and the services, including meals, are included in the ticket price.

Also, they mostly operate different types of aircraft and broadly, these airlines focus more on overall network profitability.

In the case of low-cost carriers route-specific profitability, ancillary revenues and mostly single type of planes are among the key elements that help in ensuring cost-effective operations.



## Fraud detection system saves public assets worth Rs 2,500 cr: Scindia

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The technical system deployed by the government is blocking 1.35 crore fraud calls daily and has helped save people's assets worth Rs 2,500 crore till date, Union Minister for Communications Jyotiraditya Scindia has said.

The minister said most of the spam calls originate from servers outside the country, and the systems have been able to block the majority of such fraudulent calls.

"In terms of the number of marketing calls you get on your phone and the number of fraud calls that come in, we have put in place a full system to tackle that. Our DoT fraud detection network has saved close to about Rs 2,500 crore of people's assets today, as we speak, through Sanchar Sathi and Chakshu," Scindia said.

The systems have led to the disconnection of close to about 2.9 lakh phones and blocked close to about 1.8

million headers that were used for sending out messages, he added.

"Along with that, (there) was another vicious method through which people would use servers outside India, which would masquerade themselves as a +91 number (Indian number). We have put into place software that stops these calls that are blocking an average of 1.35 crore such calls per day," the minister said.

"The government has put in a new software where it is integrating law enforcement agencies as well as banks, he said, adding that "520 agencies have been onboarded".

While charting out his priorities, Scindia said that rolling out of Atmanirbhar (self-reliant) BSNL 5G by May and 4G for all under the saturation scheme by April are among his top priorities, along with notifying all rules left under the Telecommunications Act 2023 by December.



## Govt gets Rs 3,449 cr from HZL OFS

The government has raised Rs 3,449 crore through an offer-for-sale (OFS) in Hindustan Zinc Ltd. by selling a 1.6 per cent stake. Through the two-day OFS on November 6-7, the government had proposed to sell over 5.28 crore shares, or 1.25 per cent stake, with a greenshoe option to retain additional subscriptions of a similar amount. As per the official data, the government has raised Rs 3,449.18 crore from the OFS. On the first day of the share sale offer on November 6, the institutional investors had placed bids for close to Rs 3,400 crore shares or about 1.58 per cent stake. Retail investors' demand was somewhat muted on November 7. The government, which held a 29.54 per cent stake in HZL before the OFS, is the largest minority shareholder in the Vedanta Group firm. The proceeds from the HZL stake sale helped to increase the disinvestment coffers of the government. In the current fiscal so far, Rs 8,625 crore has been mopped up through minority stake sales by the government.



## Odisha startup launches logistics drone service

An Odisha-based startup Bon V Aero has launched a fully autonomous logistics drone service called Air Orca. The launch of the drone service was made in the presence of venture capitalist Tim Draper. "Today's launch of Air Orca marks an important advancement for India's logistics sector and for us as an Odisha-based company," said Satyabrata Sathapathy, CEO of Bon V Aero said on Saturday. "Developing and manufacturing this drone indigenously has allowed us to tailor it for India's specific needs. Tim Draper's support strengthens the impact of this launch, and we are grateful for his involvement as we aim to extend Air Orca's benefits to both civilian and defence applications across India," Sathapathy said. Tim Draper said: "It's exciting to witness the launch of Air Orca here in Odisha. Autonomous drones like Air Orca provide practical solutions for modern logistics by expanding reach, flexibility and reliability with myriad use cases from disaster response to high-altitude operations for the defence forces. With the recent hurricanes in the US fresh in my mind, I anticipate that BonV Aero's innovation can be an effective tool for disaster response in India and globally."



## SBI says its business as usual in Canada

State Bank of India (SBI) has not seen any impact in Canada despite the ongoing tensions between New Delhi and Ottawa, a top bank official has said. The Indian government-run lender, which has been present in Canada since 1982, is considered as a "local bank" by all stakeholders in the North American country, its chairman C S Setty said. "We have not seen any change in approach either among the regulators or the customers, it is business as usual," Setty said. SBI operates eight branches through a wholly owned subsidiary in Canada, including in Toronto, Brampton, and Vancouver. "I think we are considered as one of the local banks there -- our engagement in business, banking business is with the local environment there," he said. India-Canada relationship has been frosty for over a year now, ever since the North American country accused India of plotting assassinations of its citizens and the relationship hit a new low last month with the expulsion of diplomats. Meanwhile, Setty said the bank will focus on expanding its core interest income through efforts, including pushing yields on advances by having the right product mix.



## Infinx to create 700 jobs

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Infinx, which provides AI-driven solutions to healthcare providers, has set up a state-of-the-art delivery centre in Madurai, marking a significant milestone in the history of the company, a top official said.

The facility in Madurai is expected to create around 700 jobs over the next five years and would support the company's mission of optimising revenue cycle processes for US-based healthcare providers.

The Madurai centre would leverage advanced AI and automation technologies to streamline revenue cycle operations for its customers, further solidifying the company's position as an industry leader, Infinx backed by global invest-

ment firms -- Norwest Venture Partners and KKR, said in a company statement on Sunday.

Infinx facility in Madurai is in addition to the similar delivery centres in Mumbai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

"The opening of our new delivery centre in Madurai marks a significant milestone in our journey towards transforming healthcare RCM (Revenue Cycle Management) through innovation and talent development. By investing in advanced AI-driven solutions and leveraging the immense potential of the local workforce, we aim to deliver unparalleled value to our clients while contributing to the technological growth in the country," Infinx managing director Sudeep Tandon said.

# Macroeconomic data, FIIs trading to guide markets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A host of macroeconomic data announcements, the last batch of September quarter earnings, global trends, and trading activity of foreign investors will be the major driving factors for the equity market this week, according to analysts.

Equity markets would remain closed on Friday for Guru Nanak Jayanti.

"India is set to release CPI and IIP data on November 12, with WPI data expected on November 14. Globally, the US inflation report on November 13 will be critical, as it may influence the Federal Reserve's upcoming policy stance," Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd, said.

With major global events and Q2 earnings (of blue-chip companies) behind, the market focus will shift to key macroeconomic data and the last round of results, Meena said.

Bank of India, BEML, Hindalco Industries, ONGC, Apollo Tyres, and Brainbees Solutions -- the parent firm of online e-commerce platform



FirstCry -- among others will announce their quarterly earnings this week.

"The performance of US bond yields and the dollar index will be pivotal for emerging markets like India, as both have surged since the US election outcome. Given this backdrop, FIIs (Foreign Institutional Investors) activity will remain a crucial driver for the Indian equity market in the near term," Meena added.

Movement in global oil benchmark Brent crude and the rupee-dollar trend would also guide markets this week, analysts said.

"The outlook for the market will be guided by the major domestic and global econom-

ic data such as India's CPI, industrial production, manufacturing output, WPI inflation, US CPI, core CPI, initial jobless claims, UK GDP and China industrial production data," Palka Arora Chopra, Director of Master Capital Services Ltd, said.

Last week, the BSE benchmark declined 237.8 points, or 0.29 per cent, and the Nifty went lower by 156.15 points, or 0.64 per cent.

"The weakness in the Indian market can be attributed largely to the relentless selling by FIIs which continue this month, too," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

## India's coal import rises 8% to 140.60 MT

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's coal import rose by 7.8 per cent to 140.60 million tonne (MT) in the April-September period of the ongoing financial year.

The country's coal import was 130.34 MT in the year-ago period, according to data compiled by B2B e-commerce company mjunction services Ltd.

Overall, coal import demand is likely to remain modest due to the healthy stock position and high volumes being offered through spot e-auctions in the domestic market, mjunction MD and CEO Vinaya Varma said.

Coal import in September dropped by 10.09 per cent to 19.42 MT from 21.60 MT in the corresponding month of previous fiscal.

Of the total imports in September, non-coking coal volume was 13.24 MT, against 14.88 MT in the year-ago month. Coking coal import stood at 3.39 MT, against 4.59 MT a year ago.

During the April-September period, non-coking coal import was at 91.92 MT, higher than 83.45 MT imported during the same period last year.

# Exploration, monetisation of natural gas to benefit Northeast

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Exploration and monetisation of natural gas deposits in the northeastern region can help cut down its import, while also boosting the local economy and providing more trade opportunities, a top official of the Indian Gas Exchange (IGX) said.

Rajesh K Mediratta, Managing Director and CEO of IGX, the country's first automated national level gas exchange, maintained that the region can supply the surplus

gas not only to other parts of the country, but also to neighbouring Bangladesh and earn significant revenue.

"The Northeast has tremendous potential in the production of natural gas. As the Northeast Gas Grid is likely to become operational by 2026, the deposit of 6 million MMSCMD of natural gas can be monetised by the existing producers," Mediratta said.

"This will add to the country's energy security as IGX will help gas producers sell the surplus gas to the other

regions," he said, while speaking at a seminar on 'Gas Market Development for North East' here on Friday.

Highlighting the potential of natural gas from the Northeast in support to India's energy security, the official said, "India is currently importing about 50 per cent of its consumption, around 100 MMSCMD to meet the total demand of 200 MMSCMD. With the effective gas pipelines in the region, the existing petroleum companies can unearth 6 MMSCMD."



## FPIs withdraw nearly Rs 20,000 cr from equities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The exodus of foreign investments from Indian equity markets continued unabated, with FPIs pulling out nearly Rs 20,000 crore in the last five trading sessions on higher valuations of domestic stocks and shifting their allocation to China.

As a result, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have turned net sellers in the equity market, with total outflows reaching Rs 13,401 crore for 2024 so far.

Going ahead, the FPI selling trend is likely to continue in the near term till data indicate the possibility of a trend reversal. If the Q3 results and leading indicators reflect a recovery in earnings, the scenario can change with FPIs reducing selling and even turning buyers. Investors will have to wait and watch for the data, VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

# 'Confident of achieving USD 31 bn chemical export target'



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The export target of USD 31 billion for 2024-25 will be achieved, as there is a healthy demand for 'made in India' chemicals in countries like Brazil, the US, Japan and Saudi Arabia, CHEMEXCIL Director General Raghuvveer Kini said.

The Basic Chemicals, Cosmetics and Dyes Export Promotion Council (CHEMEXCIL) is set by the commerce ministry to promote exports of these goods.

Kini said that the total exports of chemicals during April-September rose by 4.57

per cent to USD 14.1 billion. "So far, we are registering good growth, and we are confident of achieving the USD 31 billion target this fiscal. Last year, it was around USD 30 billion," he added.

During the second half of this year, the exports will grow at a faster pace, he noted. "Last year, because of drought in Brazil, which is the key market for us, exports were down. But this year, the situation is good, and we expect high growth," Kini said.

India exports these goods worth about USD one billion annually to the South American nation.

# 'India emerging as good market for Sony's gaming biz'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is emerging as a "good opportunity market" in the gaming business for the consumer electronic major Sony, its India Managing Director Sunil Nayyar said.

The company has reported "phenomenal growth" in the gaming business in FY24, with the robust performance of PlayStation 5 and its software peripherals.

Sony India's PlayStation

dominates the console operating gaming system market here with around 95 per cent market share and has almost doubled its revenue in FY 2023-24 from the segment. However, now, it expects a moderation in the growth rates because of the high base, Nayyar said.

"Now, the base is very high because we almost achieved the double business last year. So this year, we intend to have modest growth, but we are developing the gaming business



market in the country, including software development and peripherals etc," the Sony India MD told PTI.

Sony India last week filed its annual returns to report over 50.1 per cent growth from its

'other business' segment at Rs 1,363.54 crore, which houses its gaming and B2B business.

"This is largely led by the gaming business. It gave us a phenomenal growth. There is no doubt about it. PlayStation 5 and our software peripherals, everything did very well.

"So, India is now becoming a very good opportunity market for gaming for Sony... We have 95 per cent in the market today as far as PS5 is concerned. We have a very strong brand

here for the gaming business," Nayyar said.

Besides, Sony is also doing well in some other niche segments such as medical equipment and its sports business, where it sells Hawk-Eye systems, used in all major sporting events, including cricket, tennis, football, badminton, rugby and volleyball to visually track the trajectory of a ball and display a profile of its statistically most likely path as a moving image.





## AJAY AND AAMIR HINT AT THE ISHQ SEQUEL AMID NOSTALGIC REUNION

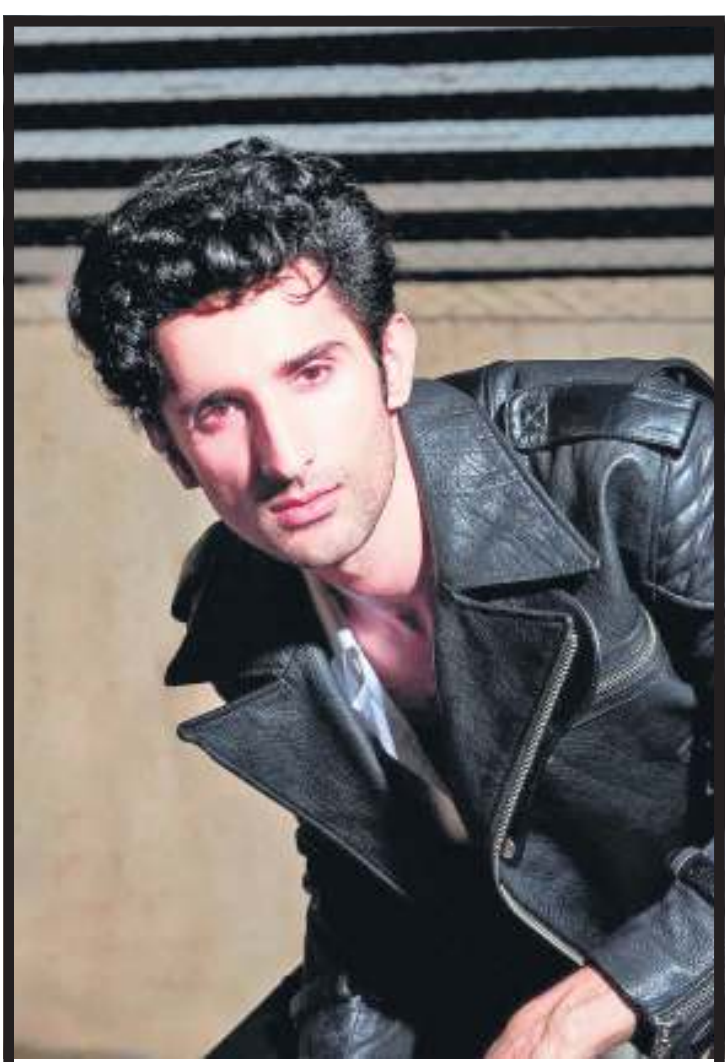
Bollywood icons Ajay Devgn and Aamir Khan recently hinted at the possibility of a sequel to their 1997 blockbuster *Ishq*. The two actors, who reunited for the mahurat ceremony of *Tera Yaar Hoon Main*, were all smiles and shared warm memories from their past collaboration. "I always enjoy meeting Ajay," said Khan, reflecting on their bond. Devgn, buoyed by the success of his latest hit

*Singham Again*, expressed, "We had such a blast making *Ishq*—let's do it again!" Khan recounted a memorable mishap from the *Ishq* set when Devgn saved him from a chimpanzee attack. "It was all Aamir's fault," Devgn joked. "He sprayed water at the chimp, then ran around yelling 'bachao bachao!' like a kid." The event celebrated the acting debut of Aman, son of *Ishq* director Indra

Kumar, with the movie *Tera Yaar Hoon Main*, helmed by Milap Milan Zaveri. Stars like Aruna Irani, Javed Jaffery, Boney Kapoor and Rajkumar Santoshi attended, while actors Anil Kapoor, Ranveer Singh, and Riteish Deshmukh sent well wishes through video messages. Aman, grateful for the presence of his idols, expressed his excitement for the journey ahead.

## 'The Sabarmati Report will go beyond headlines,' points up Ektaa Kapoor

The trailer for *The Sabarmati Report* has captivated audiences with its raw portrayal of a lesser-known but deeply impactful event in Indian history. A project helmed by Ektaa R Kapoor, the film sets out to spotlight the origins of a tragedy that, until now, has received limited representation on screen. At the trailer launch, Kapoor discussed the vision behind the film and shed light on why lead actor Vikrant Massey decided to step into such an intense role. Kapoor highlighted that *The Sabarmati Report* presents only "the first facet" of a complex narrative, offering an entry point into a much broader, layered story. "This isn't just one viewpoint, but the beginning of a deeper story," Kapoor explained. "We're shedding light on how it all started, an aspect that's rarely discussed in mainstream media, without downplaying the other perspectives involved." The film's intention is to bring audiences into the emotional and historical depth of the tragedy while respecting the multiplicity of perspectives surrounding it. *The Sabarmati Report* is produced by Balaji Motion Pictures in collaboration with Vikir Films and directed by Dheeraj Sarma. It stars a powerful ensemble cast, including Vikrant Massey, Raashii Khanna and Ridhi Dogra, each of whom brings intensity to a film designed to evoke both reflection and dialogue. Set to be distributed worldwide by Zee Studios, the film is scheduled for release on November 15, 2024, and aims to leave a significant impact on its viewers.



## Sidhant Gupta embodies Jawaharlal Nehru in Freedom at Midnight

The unveiling of the trailer for *Freedom at Midnight* has stirred excitement as audiences get their first look at Sidhant Gupta's remarkable portrayal of Jawaharlal Nehru. Gupta's transformation into the iconic leader captures Nehru's essence, from his signature walk to his nuanced mannerisms, bringing depth to one of history's pivotal figures. His impressive performance has already drawn widespread praise for its authenticity and powerful delivery.

The series, produced by Emmy Entertainment and StudioNext, is led by Nikkhil Advani as showrunner and director. It takes inspiration from the book by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, delving into the tumultuous final years of British rule and India's journey to independence.

With a standout cast that includes Chirag Vohra as Mahatma Gandhi, Rajendra Chawla as Sardar Patel, Arif Zakaria as Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Ira Dubey as Fatima Jinnah, the series brings together a team of talented actors to portray key figures in India's independence movement. *Freedom at Midnight* promises to explore the complex historical and personal moments that defined a nation on the brink of freedom.

## Sam Wilson's high-stakes challenge unveiled in Captain America: Brave New World trailer



Marvel Studios has finally dropped the first trailer for *Captain America: Brave New World*, giving fans an exhilarating preview of Sam Wilson (Anthony Mackie) stepping fully into the role of Captain America. The over-two-minute teaser showcases intense action, global intrigue and a high-stakes showdown with Red Hulk, formerly U.S. President Thaddeus "Thunderbolt" Ross, played by Harrison Ford.

In this latest installment, releasing on February 14, 2025, Wilson faces not only personal battles but also an international crisis that threatens global stability. As the trailer hints, Wilson must uncover the mastermind behind a mysterious plot threatening to plunge the world into chaos—a mission complicated by Ross's transformation into the powerful Red Hulk, making him a daunting new adversary. The trailer highlights several returning characters, including Danny Ramirez as the new Falcon, Joaquin Torres, as well as Shira Haas, Xosha Roquemore and fan favourites like Liv Tyler and Tim Blake Nelson. Directed by Julius Onah and produced by Kevin Feige, the film brings a fresh chapter to the *Captain America* saga while expanding Marvel's ambitious *Phase Five* lineup, which includes *Thunderbolts*, *Daredevil: Born Again*, and new seasons of *Loki* and *What If...?*

As the MCU continues to unfold, *Captain America: Brave New World* promises fans an action-packed, suspenseful thrill ride when it debuts in theaters.

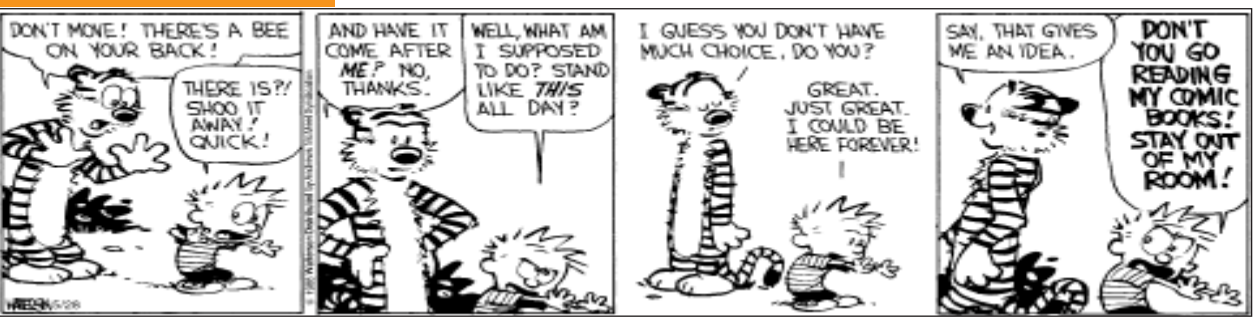


### FUN

#### ARCHIE



#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### GARFIELD



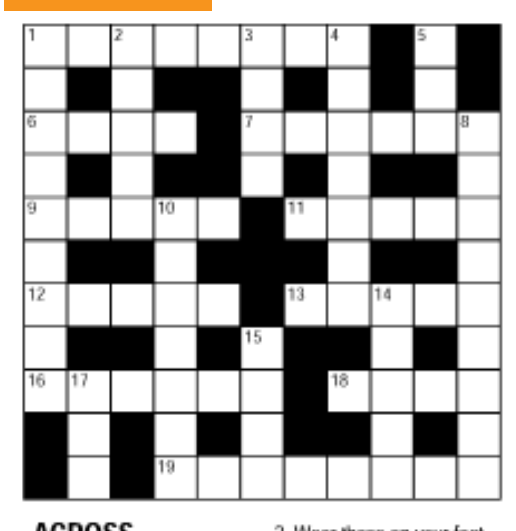
#### REALITY CHECK



#### SPEED BUMP



#### CROSSWORD



#### NANCY



#### SUDOKU



**Yesterday's solution**

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

**Rules**

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

#### GINGER MEGGS



**ACROSS**

- A game with a bat and ball
- Wear these on your feet
- A large group of soldiers
- School classes
- A very large bird
- A small sharp nail
- See old stuff on display here
- These are a kind of fungus that people eat
- A stand for holding an artist's painting
- World's highest mountain
- Metal money
- Opposite of outer
- A person who shows you to your theatre seat
- 14 A greeting
- 15 The tiniest particle
- 17 We breathe this

**DOWN**

- These make a torch work from these

**SOLUTION**

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

EXCLUSIVE

## PRATEEK KUHAD'S MUSICAL MAGIC IN HYDERABAD AND BEYOND!

SHIKHA DUGGAL  
 shikhaduggalwork@gmail.com

The crowd was enthralled by Prateek Kuhad's captivating performance in Hyderabad, where the singer-songwriter's heartfelt lyrics and beautiful voice created an emotional tapestry. Kuhad's eerie melodies reverberated through the night as he took the audience to a world of love and longing with his distinctive fusion of folk, rock and pop.

Kuhad's position as one of India's most adored and highly regarded musicians was cemented when he performed a compelling setlist that highlighted his skillful storytelling and sonic exploration of human emotions, as the city's thriving music culture embraced him with open arms! But isn't it incredible that we were able to secure a few minutes of his time for an exclusive telephone conversation before all of this could occur? But isn't it incredible that we were able to secure a few minutes of his time for an exclusive telephone conversation before all of this could occur? Yes, indeed!

"Hyderabad, which has always had a particular place in my heart, was a great place to start the journey. I've given multiple performances here on my past tours. Love abounds among the fans here! Every place I go offers something different. I feel like I can engage with the audience more deeply and personally in more private situations. It's exhilarating and

**PRATEEK KUHAD, THE MAESTRO OF EMOTIONAL RESONANCE, SITS DOWN WITH THE PIONEER FOR A HEARTFELT CONVERSATION ABOUT HIS LIFE, MUSIC AND PASSIONS. WITH HIS RECENT HYDERABAD CONCERT CLEALED SILHOUETTES TOUR LEAVING FANS SPELLBOUND, KUHAD SHARES HIS INSIGHTS ON THE POWER OF MUSIC, HIS CREATIVE PROCESS AND THE PERSONAL CONNECTIONS THAT MAKE HIS PERFORMANCES TRULY UNFORGETTABLE!**

the energy levels are rather high in bigger cities. I make an effort to connect with the vibe that each show, regardless of location," he shares on the impact of the city's distinct ambiance. It was an amazing opening week of the tour, with performances at Hitex in Hyderabad and Bharatiya City in Bangalore. He is excited for the remainder of the tour!

A wide variety of Hindi and English songs from Prateek's varied musical repertoire appeal to listeners with a wide range of musical preferences. Popular songs that frequently explore themes of love and self-discovery include *Kho Gaye Hum Kaha*, *Kasoor*, *Khone Do*, *Cold-Mess and CO2!* "I just try to write what feels authentic to me at the time, without trying to over-think or filter my thoughts. Even if they can't relate to every detail, I believe that people can still feel the feelings. It all boils down to the song writing's honesty, in my opinion," the singer admits.

Although the concert was undoubtedly a symphony of emotions, his soul-stirring voice also left us speechless during the phone chat. Particularly when he informed us that, "I want the audience to experience something personal but private, as if they were sharing a moment with me. A highly skilled group of lighting designers, sound engineers and visual artists have been col-

laborating with me to ensure that we realise this vision. We've been practicing for months and the show's ambiance and graphics are just as important as the music! In my opinion, it's ideal for this tour because it allows the music to flourish and allows listeners to experience a sense of presence."

He always showcases his development as a singer-songwriter by fusing pop, rock and folk to produce a distinctive sound. We are always astonished by his soaring vocals and meaningful lyrics! "Because of human psychology and several situations I've had in recent years, it's a very personal subject for me. The outlines of our souls are symbolised by silhouettes, which might occasionally leave us feeling empty. At other times, it can truly bring you to the forefront and make you stand out. It's a kind of dichotomy," he shares. "I have never really claimed to be a storyteller and I don't consider myself to be one. My music ultimately conjures up images and moods that are tangible, visceral and poignant. I'm a huge music fan! Thus, that is how I convey my ideas to the audience."

On the call, we sang along to a few of Prateek Kuhad's songs, moved to the beat and yearned for more as the singer-songwriter brought his varied style to life. "I've always concentrated on creating music that is true to who I am. The Indian music industry is changing. Since there are so many live music events taking place this year, people are going out to see them. For all artists, that is a fantastic situation!"

## Divyanka Tripathi: Family-friendly content, always my goal

TEJAL SINHA  
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**As *The Magic of Shiri* prepares to cast its spell on audiences, Divyanka Tripathi Dahiya shares the story behind her latest web series in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer***

Divyanka Tripathi, India's sweetheart, has woven a two-decade-long tapestry of unforgettable characters, mesmerising performances and countless accolades. From her humble beginnings as Vidya in *Banoo Main Teri Dulhann* (2006-2009) to her iconic, award-winning portrayal of Dr. Ishita Bhalla in *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein* (2013-2019), Divyanka's remarkable journey showcases her incredible range, vulnerability and dedication. With multiple Indian Television Academy Awards, Indian Telly Awards and Asian Viewers Television Awards under her belt, she's cemented her status as a leading lady. Now, she's set to enchant audiences in *The Magic of Shiri*, inspiring millions with her talent, grace, and unforgettable smile!

Get ready to be spellbound by *The Magic of Shiri*, an upcoming web series starring the talented Divyanka Tripathi as Shiri Shah. Directed by Birs Dasgupta and produced by Jio Studios, this captivating show follows Shiri's transformative journey. Defying societal norms, Shiri embarks on an unconventional path, chasing her passion for magic. Blending comedy, drama and adventure, *The Magic of Shiri* whisks viewers away to Delhi's vibrant Paharganj neighbourhood in the mid-1990s.

"Since you began with my journey, I've always tried to take up a different kind of character, something that I haven't done before; otherwise, it would become boring for me. Also, *koi bhi cheez repeat mai karri hoon toh*," the Mrs. and Mr. Sharma Allahabadwale star reveals, highlighting her passion for diverse roles. The storyline and character graph of *The Magic of Shiri* left Divyanka impressed. "The storyline and the character graph—that was just insane—the character graph, especially because it was difficult to conceive and execute. In fact, I was also thinking about how the director is even managing because of the character's journey in the episodes; in every episode, the emotional graph, the character graph and many times even the costume graph, I've seen it changing."

To fully immerse herself in the character, the *Jhalak Dikhla Jaa* star embarked on extensive research. "*Bakaidia maine baithke padhai ki*. I did a lot of homework so that I could understand Shiri perfectly. Her emotions were so beautifully portrayed and were changing so rapidly, which for me was interesting yet challenging."

She was drawn to the relatable aspects of Shiri's character. Her character, she says, Shiri Shroff, has been beautifully made. Talking of how much she connected with it, "I would say

every woman would connect with it. In fact, not just women but every person." She emphasises the show's universal appeal: "Thankfully, the show caters to all age groups. It's a good thing that it's a family-watching show. Anyone who has seen my journey knows that my motive has always been and even today, that for every project that I pick up, the whole family should sit together and watch it. That's an Indian thing that every time we sit and eat with our family, there's some show that goes on and we love to spend time with each other together. It's a slice-of-life kind of show, so it's like you are watching your own house activities. There are also certain comic elements; *drama toh hai hi*, then there's magic for kids."

Also, the *Crime Patrol* presenter notes that the struggles portrayed in the show are universally relatable. "Coming to the struggles, be it a man or woman would relate to it. Somewhere or the other, everybody struggles in one way or the other for their families. So this is a story of these sacrifices only and how with them they achieve their

dreams. This is a story of how every individual makes sacrifices for their families. It's absolutely relatable for everybody who watches it."

"There weren't any sort of my personal experiences but mere mummy ke they (she giggles). This is a very 90s story. The first time when I read my character, I was like, 'Yeh toh meri maa jaisa hai', *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein* fame says, as she draws parallels between her mother's life and Shiri's journey. "Just like how as soon as my mom got married, *unke bhi mummy ke armaan* they and we are like, *aap hotae tab apna B.ED pursue karke aap principal hotae kahin ke*. She really has that in her! Today, she teaches Bharatanatyam free for students who cannot afford it because she loves doing it. It's now that she's been achieving her passion. And somewhere I could see my mom in the character. We are three siblings and all of us are doing well in our work. It's after settling all of us that she learned Bharatanatyam and later became a master and started teaching students."

Meanwhile, to prepare for her role, Divyanka sought inspiration from women around her. "I had certain reference points. I always try to find references for my characters in my surroundings. So there's this Bhabhi of mine; she's also similarly enterprising, fun-loving, *mastikhor*, but *business ke liye alag alag avenues dhundhna* and similarly, taking care of the kids with all the love, so I had taken a few nuances from her."

Then came the Punjabi vibes of her character. "I am very far away from being Punjabi. I have never even seen a 'Punjabi parivesh'. So I hired a Punjabi teacher; he was a theatre person. So I used to interact with him so that I could catch up with the language with fluency."

She further paid close attention to the costumes and magic aspects of her character. "The best thing is that even the costumes—how back then there used to be these fully tailored outfits. I took them up. I had requested the team take reference to what my mom used to wear. I had a lot of old pictures of my *chaachi*, and Mummy's those garden-floral print sarees, so that's what I chose. I also did workshops so that 'haathon ki jaadukari'; I wanted a finesse in it so that it looks all-natural. Even in the show, Shiri's growth and journey have been shown, where initially she didn't know anything and just by learning, she's learned all of it. *Divyanka ke saath bhi wahin chakra hai*. I too didn't know anything when it came to magic tricks and later, I came up to Shiri's level when I practiced all of it in my house. I took a few ballet classes so that I can get that grace of a magician."

She proudly declares *The Magic of Shiri* as one of her finest projects to date. "I would say this (*The Magic of Shiri*) is one of the best and the finest I've done. One is where you enjoy the actor's character and then there is how the audience is receiving it."

Tripathi humbly recognises the role of luck in garnering audience love. "Sometimes we just do our work and if the audience loves it, it is like a 'lucky draw'. I hope I get lucky enough to get people's love. When it comes to the character, I really enjoyed it so much; there was so much variety to it. Every episode has Shiri going through so much. I am just talking about one episode, but when we talk of 10 episodes, we do location-based shooting. So it happens that Shiri's character graph in the first episode is in one place and then in the tenth episode, it is somewhere else only. There's *zameen-aasman ka antar*."

As we come to an end, Divyanka acknowledges the challenges and thrill of portraying Shiri. "Preparing this character was incredibly challenging yet very exciting."



## Heartbeats of hope

What started with an aim of bringing the most advanced cardiac care, has now become a mission to make affordable and modern heart treatment available for all in the country!

Founded in 1994 by a leading cardiologist late Dr AK Thakur, Heart Hospital Patna has not only treated over 3 lakh patients so far, but now under the leadership of its chairman and director Rajan Thakur, it is serving as a leading tertiary heart care facility for patients from Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Nepal and neighbouring areas. Dr Rajan, who takes his inspiration from his father adds that his mission is to make advanced cardiac care that meet global standards, affordable for all in the country.

He believes that best medical practices with latest technology at affordable prices are the medicines for India's health challenges such as poor infrastructure, lack of resources, trained staff, burden on hospitals in metropolises and others. After filling his father's shoes, he continued the best practices of the hospital. Taking the legacy forward and opening the doors for modern technology and global practices, he started regular CME workshops for cardiologists and conferences attended by renowned doctors across India and the globe to give maximum exposure to doctors and its peripheral areas.

The migration of patients from India's tier-2,3 cities to major metropolises to avail better healthcare facilities is a common phenomenon. Today, when the need for super-specialty hospitals in smaller cities is at an all-time high, it is fast emerging as a nerve centre for patients from Bihar, Jharkhand, UP, Assam, Nepal, etc for its modern yet economically viable facilities.

"We are taking steps to make sure the best cardiac care that meets global benchmarks and best practices are available and affordable for the masses. Lifestyle diseases, stress and unhealthy work life has increased the risks of heart problems even in the young population and that makes it important to make quality heart care available for all. We never focus on numbers but on value-based services. We want to infuse modern technology and affordability to find a solution to the existing health challenges and make healthcare accessible. We would continue treating needy patients or those who cannot afford treatments. We don't get any donations or grants from any organisation, but



we have several tie-ups with the state and central government to help the poor," he added.

Earlier, medical facilities in Bihar were so meagre that heart patients had to go to other cities like Vellore, Delhi, Kolkata, etc in the hope of getting a new lease of life. Realising this, they initially took small footsteps and began as an indoor nursing home. Now, the hospital has become a pioneer in primary and normal angioplasty. Today, it has introduced a new method of pacemaker implantation which is only 3 years old in the world along with very complex and critical angioplasties like CTO and ROTA.

The hospital regularly holds several workshops on ROTA—a complex angioplasty technique and the staff regularly attend conferences in various parts of India and abroad to keep themselves informed of the latest practices in modern cardiology. Many renowned cardiologists of the country and abroad regularly hold workshops for many years now.

"This success is a result of the combined efforts of our team of duty doctors, well trained & experienced consultants, nurses & paramedical, other medical staff and most importantly our patients," he added. Going ahead, the hospital is boosting its infrastructure by adding more staff and beds in departments of pulmonology, nephrology and others, to meet the demands due to the rising number of patients as well as to provide best-in-class and affordable medical facilities to patients.

# Indian women's hockey team resets, targets World Cup 2026, Olympics 2028

PTI ■ RAJGIR (BIHAR)

Indian women's hockey team has overcome recent setbacks and is set to start a new journey with World Cup and Olympics in mind, chief coach Harendra Singh asserted on Sunday, saying that the performance in Asian Champions Trophy will serve as base for future. The Indian women's team has endured a very rough and long patch since its historic fourth-place finish at the Tokyo Games. It could not qualify for the Paris Olympics and lost 13 of the 16 FIH Pro League matches. Coach Harendra said his team has worked hard to shrug off the lean run and is preparing for a good show at the 2026 World Cup in Netherlands and the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. "This tournament is a base for our future planning, ACT as on our calendar, what we want to achieve in terms of results. It will be start of journey for mission 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympics," Harendra said ahead of India's ACT tournament-opener against

Malaysia on Monday. "We have overcome all the setbacks, worked on our mistakes. Everyone realised their role and know their role and understands that. ACT is one of the biggest platforms for the girls to showcase their skill and excel and show that the team is on the right path." Harendra reiterated that fitness is an area which impacted the women's team adversely. "Whatever has happened in the Pro League is a past, we can't keep crying on that. Yes, we know we lost 13 games but there are reasons behind. The reasons are not technical, but tactical, it's about fitness and that's why I took them to Indian Naval Academy. "I am looking at the results, I am looking at the progress they are making day after day," he said. Harendra said together with fitness, mental aspect of the game is also very important. "Modern hockey doesn't compromise on fitness, if you slightly stray you are going to pay the price. Once you are fit you are mentally strong because you know if you lose



the ball you know you have said. the past, that is history for present and the present is Champions Trophy to defend the gas to regain the ball," he "I am not willing to look at me. Always live in the that we have Asian which can get the entire

country out of that setback." "Deepika and Manisha Chauhan I am working their dragflicks and I am confident about them. I am confident they will deliver." The coach said he his pinning his eyes on young dragflickers Deepika and Manisha Chauhan to deliver the goods in the tournament. "Deepika and Manisha Chauhan, I am working their dragflicks and I am confident about them. I am confident they will deliver," Harendra said. India captain Salima Tete said Olympic silver medallist China is the biggest threat in their title defence. "China is the biggest threat for us but we are not underestimating any side. Every team can upset another on the given day," she said. Salima said leading the side at such a young age of 22 is definitely a challenge but she is up for it. "It's a challenge for me and I accept that, very few people get that honour. But my focus is on my own performance which will definitely motivate others," she said.

# Palak-Amit pair strikes air pistol mixed team gold in World University Championship

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The air pistol mixed team of Palak Gulia and Amit Sharma struck gold with a commanding performance against their compatriots as India won five medals, including three silver, on day 2 of the World University Shooting Championship here on Sunday. The duo of Palak and Amit defeated the pair of Sainyam and Samrat Rana 16-12 as India grabbed the top-two podium spots in the event at the Karni Singh Range. The Hungarian pair of Sara Rahel Fabian and Redcesi Mate took the bronze defeating Chinese-Taipei 16-12. Earlier, in the qualification round, Sainyam (289) and Samrat (290) had emerged toppers with an aggregate score of 579, while Palak (285) and



Amit (293) were placed second with a combined score of 578. In women's trap, Neeru and Kirti Gupta clinched silver and bronze respectively shooting 43 and 32

out of 125, while Neeru entered the six-shooter final with a score of 115. Olympian and winner of three gold medals at the 2021 World University Games in China, Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar added another silver to India's tally in 50m rifle 3-positions with a score of 458.2 in the final. Czech Republic's Jiri Privratsky secured the gold medal with a score of 462.9. Aishwary, who could not make an impact at the Paris Olympics, earlier shot a superb 592 in the qualification to be placed third going into the eight-shooter final. As many as 220 shooters from across 23 countries are competing in the championship. The event is being hosted by Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies.



# McSweeney to open, Inglis also handed maiden Test call up for BGT opener

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Uncapped Nathan McSweeney won the race to open the batting alongside Usman Khawaja in the first Test against India while Australia also handed a maiden Test call up to Josh Inglis on Sunday. These two are the new faces in an otherwise expected 13-member squad announced by Cricket Australia just for the series opener starting in Perth on November 22. The South Australian had emerged as a strong contender for the opener's spot, earning backing from the likes of David Warner and Ricky Ponting. He has been picked ahead of specialist openers Marcus Harris, Cameron Bancroft and Sam Konstas for the spot. "We are just really thrilled with Nathan's game. I think over the last 12 to 15 months, we have seen a player whose growth is on a great trajectory," Chairman of selectors George Bailey said. "He is a very organised, composed player at the crease and he's got a game that will really suit Test cricket. He can probably speak more to that but I don't think it's a huge adjustment to go from three

to opening," Bailey said. "I think in the 15 or so games that he's been batting three for South Australia, he's been in before the 10th over about 20 times, so he's had plenty of experience. And as I said, his game and the way he plays, I don't think the adjustment will be too much." The 25-year-old has been rewarded for his consistent performances in the Sheffield Shield over the past couple of years, as well as his role as captain and batter during the recently concluded A tour matches against India. "Nathan has displayed the attributes we believe will equip him well for Test cricket along with a strong recent record in domestic cricket." "His performances for South Australia and Australia A weighed in his favour and supports our view he is ready for the opportunity at Test level." Inglis, whose family emigrated to Perth from Leeds at the age of 14, has been named as backup keeper to Alex Carey. The in-form wicketkeeper batter, who is leading Australia for the first time in the third ODI against Pakistan, has also been rewarded for a fine domestic

season that included two hundreds in the Sheffield Shield. "Similarly, Josh has been in great touch in the Sheffield Shield competition and deserves his place in his first Test squad," Bailey added. The pace unit will be led by skipper Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood and Scot Boland takes up the reserve quick's spot, while Nathan Lyon is the lone specialist spin option. Australia squad for 1st Test: Pat Cummins (capt), Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Mitchell Marsh, Nathan McSweeney, Steven Smith, and Mitchell Starc. ANOTHER BAD INJURY A tearful Ilias Akhometiev also had to be taken off on a stretcher after he hurt his right leg following his opening goal in Villarreal's 3-0 win over Alaves. Villarreal, which is in the northern part of the Valencia region, honored the flood victims by having players from both teams wear T-shirts saying "Stay Strong Valencia" before kickoff.

# Former top polo player HS Sodhi dies

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Leading former Indian polo player and Arjuna Awardee Harinder Singh Sodhi, who during his peak achieved a handicap of plus-five, has died due to age-related illnesses. He was 86 and is survived by his wife and two daughters. Popular in polo circles as 'Billy' Sodhi, he died here late on Saturday. Sodhi played polo alongside the likes of Hanut Singh, Sawai Man Singh (Maharaja of Jaipur) and later with his son Bhawani Singh. His younger brother, renowned polo player Ravinder Singh Sodhi, is also an Arjuna Award recipient. Harinder was the manager of the Indian equestrian team during the 1980 Moscow Olympics.

# Coco Gauff wins WTA Finals for the first time by rallying to beat Zheng Qinwen

AP ■ RIYADH

Coco Gauff won the WTA Finals for the first time by rallying to beat Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen 3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (2) in the final. The 20-year-old American came from 2-0 and 5-3 down in the final set and was two points from defeat at one stage. Yet she took the set to a tiebreaker and won the first six points. Zheng threatened a comeback but Gauff took the victory off her third match point with a forehand winner as she came into the net. She is the first American to win the Finals since Serena Williams in 2014, and received \$4.8 million in prize money. She also is the youngest player to win it since Maria Sharapova in 2004, the year Gauff was born. Gauff beat the world's top two



players - Aryna Sabalenka and Iga Swiatek - on her run to the final at the season-ending event in Riyadh. She felt vindicated after that and appeared to take a swipe at observers who wrote her off. "I just love to say I'm right. Specifically today, I got comments about how I was going to lose badly, so I was just like, 'OK, we'll see,'" Gauff explained. "It's honestly just

liking the idea of just proving people wrong and, and letting your racket do the talking. And so, yeah, I use it as motivation." Zheng was looking to complete a season in which she reached a grand slam final for the first time at the Australian Open and delivered China's first Olympic tennis singles gold medal. "The match today, it's just a couple of important points," Zheng said. "The match was very close." Gauff edged the three-hour final which included 26 break points. Gauff also won their only previous meeting, in the Rome quarterfinals on clay in May. Gauff beat Sabalenka at age 19 in last year's U.S. Open final to win her only major in singles to date. She teamed with Katerina Siniakova to win the French Open doubles this year. In the WTA doubles final, Gabriela Dabrowski of Canada and Erin Routliffe of New Zealand beat Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic and Taylor Townsend of the United States 7-5, 6-3. They are the first players from Canada and New Zealand to win the doubles title.

# Messi and Inter Miami ousted from MLS playoffs by Atlanta United

AP ■ FORT LAUDERDALE (US)

There will be no MLS Cup for Lionel Messi and Inter Miami this year. Atlanta United saw to that with a massive upset, sending the game's most decorated player and biggest-spending team home earlier than anyone imagined. Jamal Thiare scored twice, Bartosz Slisz's header in the 76th minute was the winner, and Atlanta United stunned Inter Miami 3-2 on Saturday night to win their best-of-three first round MLS Cup playoff series in three games. Two free kicks by Messi in the final minutes hit the wall of Atlanta defenders, and time eventually ran out. Messi's header - yes, header - in the 65th minute tied the match at 2-2, but the hosts never reclaimed the lead and Brad Guzan stopped almost everything that came his way in the Atlanta net to seal the upset. It was the fifth win-or-else victory for Atlanta United this season - starting with two must-win matches to keep hope alive at the end of the regular season against the New York Red Bulls and

Orlando City, then a wild-card match at Montreal, Game 2 of this series at home and then Saturday's stunner. And the East is suddenly wide open. Ninth-seeded Atlanta United will play No. 4 Orlando City in the Eastern Conference semifinal, while sixth-seeded New York City FC will face the seventh-seeded New York Red Bulls in the other East semifinal. No. 2 Columbus was already gone. No. 3 Cincinnati was ousted Saturday. And then came the biggest surprise of all - No. 1 Inter Miami's season is over. The team with the best record won the MLS Cup four times in the league's first seven seasons. In the 22 seasons since, the top overall seed has gone on to win the title only four more times. And on paper, there may never have been a bigger upset than this one - a No. 9 seed vs. a No. 1 seed, and not just that, a No. 1 seed with Messi in the lineup. Messi's \$20,446,667 in total compensation from Inter Miami this season was about \$5 million more than the entire Atlanta



payroll, and Inter Miami spent a record \$41.7 million on payroll this season. It got Inter Miami the Supporters' Shield, the best regular-season record in MLS history and an invitation to next year's Club World Cup, which came as no surprise. But it didn't even get the club into Round 2 of the playoffs, which will be remembered as a massive flop. And Atlanta fully believed it was going to pull this off. For whatever reason, Atlanta was a matchup nightmare for Inter Miami this season. It beat Inter Miami three times, all of them with Messi in the lineup; every other MLS team combined to get three wins over Inter Miami. A five-minute, three-goal barrage in the first half set the tone. Inter Miami opened the scoring and Atlanta United punched right back - twice. Thiare was denied by the goalpost 14 minutes into the contest, when his deflection of a flick into the box narrowly missed opening the scoring. And Inter Miami grabbed a 1-0 lead about two minutes later - Messi was stopped

by a diving Guzan, but Diego Gómez was there to lift the rebound into the net from a tight angle near the right post. The lead didn't last long. Thiare saw to that. He took a pass and was completely unmarked, firing into the upper right corner to beat Inter Miami goalkeeper Drake Callender - who had no chance - to tie the match in the 19th minute. And not even two minutes later, Alexey Miranchuk tapped a pass to Thiare who went over Callender for a 2-1 Atlanta lead. Just like that, the best team in MLS regular-season history - and the best player in the sport's history - was in big, big trouble. Inter Miami thought it tied the match in the 25th minute, only for Gómez to be called offside. And the hosts argued wildly for a penalty kick later in the half, arguing that there was a handball in the box (replay suggested they had a case), but they still went into the half down 2-1. Messi tied it, one last hurrah on the season. But it ended about a half-hour later, leaving the Inter Miami side in stunned disbelief.

# 'MATKA HAS NO CONNECTION WITH MUMBAI'S MATKA KING'

**VARUN TEJ GEARS UP FOR HIS UPCOMING HISTORICAL DRAMA, MATKA, DIRECTED BY KARUNA KUMAR OF PALASA FAME, SET TO RELEASE ON NOVEMBER 14. AS THE FILM NEARS ITS RELEASE, VARUN TEJ SHEDS LIGHT ON THE FILM'S INSPIRATION, CLARIFYING THAT IT'S NOT A BIOPIC OF RATAN KHATRI, HIS SELECTION OF SCRIPTS AND MORE**

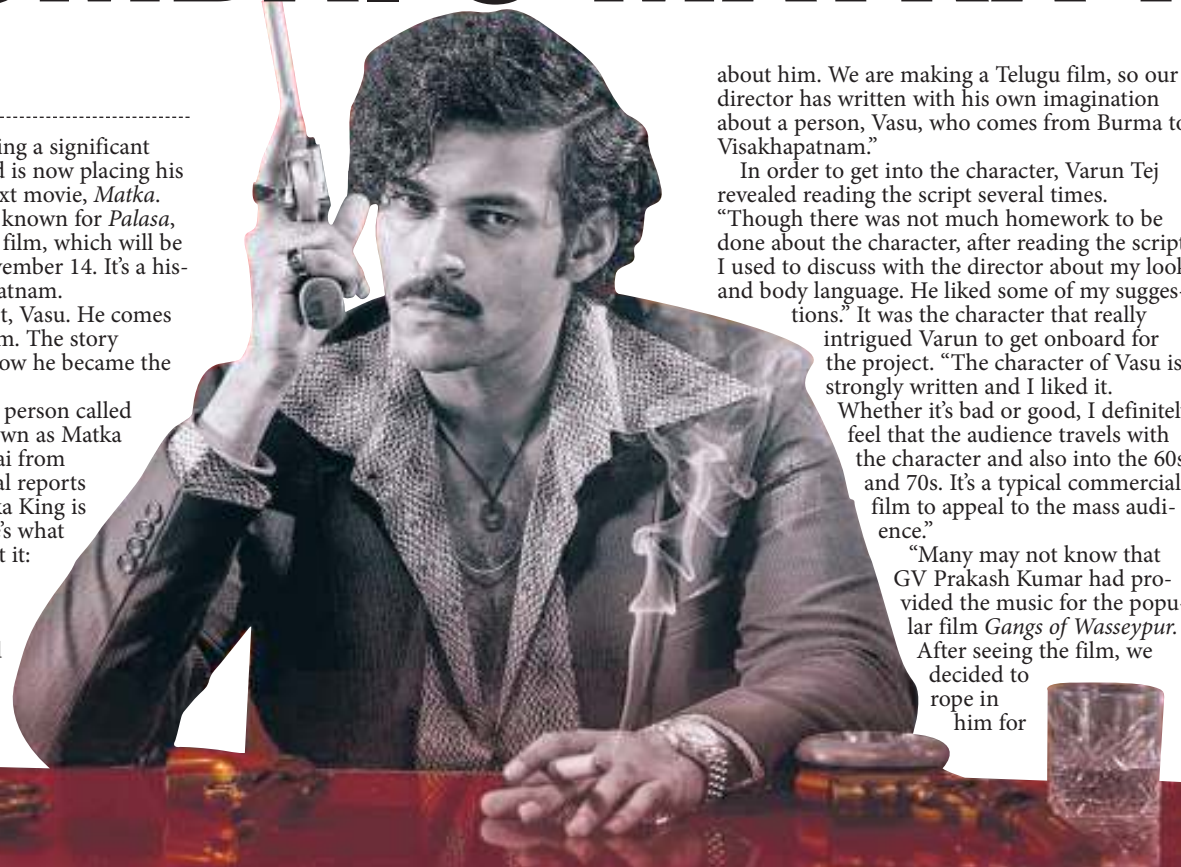
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**V**arun Tej is seeking a significant opportunity and is now placing his hopes on his next movie, *Matka*. Karuna Kumar, known for *Palasa*, is directing this film, which will be released on November 14. It's a historical drama set in Visakhapatnam.

"I play the main protagonist, Vasu. He comes from Burma to Visakhapatnam. The story revolves around his life and how he became the Matka King," said Varun Tej.

In Mumbai, there's another person called Ratan Khatri, who is also known as Matka King. He had reached Mumbai from Pakistan. Rumours and several reports claimed that Varun Tej's *Matka King* is a story or biopic of him! Here's what the lead actor has to say about it:

"If the story revolved around him, we would have shot in Mumbai or the surroundings nearby, or would have erected the Mumbai sets of that time. We haven't done any of the above. There are many rumours about him and not any evidential reports



about him. We are making a Telugu film, so our director has written with his own imagination about a person, Vasu, who comes from Burma to Visakhapatnam."

In order to get into the character, Varun Tej revealed reading the script several times. "Though there was not much homework to be done about the character, after reading the script, I used to discuss with the director about my look and body language. He liked some of my suggestions." It was the character that really intrigued Varun to get onboard for the project. "The character of Vasu is strongly written and I liked it. Whether it's bad or good, I definitely feel that the audience travels with the character and also into the 60s and 70s. It's a typical commercial film to appeal to the mass audience."

"Many may not know that GV Prakash Kumar had provided the music for the popular film *Gangs of Wasseyapur*. After seeing the film, we decided to rope in him for

our film too and his music is definitely a big plus point for our film," said Varun.

Meanwhile, coming to the old characters, the makers took the AI references for the age. "I maintain a special diet to maintain the body language for the old character and at the same time, it looks mass and I feel it came out well," said the actor. He added that there are a few emotional scenes that definitely come out well. "Why Vasu stepped into this 'matka' business tells in the second half to his daughter, and those are emotional ones," said Varun.

"Regardless of the situation, it is a tough decision to select a script. Audiences taste also changes like the season; sometimes many love stories become hits, sometimes mass films or romantic stories; it's like a cycle," said Varun Tej. He added that he is still thinking about whether to stick to a film for a long time or do films in a faster way. Going further, he praises his co-star Meenakshi Chaudhary for her role in the film. "Her role is also travelled with me in the film and she did well. I hope she brings her luck to our film also. Nora Fatehi also did a fine job," said Varun.

Talking about his wife Lavanya, he said that she is definitely working. "The mindset changed now and she is going to work and looking for better scripts. If you look at her career, her journey is different and now she is in a comfortable position where she doesn't want to do films in a hurry. Two stories are with her and she is listening to many. She will definitely do a film in the coming days," said Varun about his wife.



## Ram & Kiara electrify Lucknow with *Game Changer* teaser

The crowd in Lucknow City has observed that this could be the first occasion a Telugu superstar like Ram Charan has come to the city and interacted with them. Numerous Telugu individuals in Lucknow flocked to the Prabhath theater to watch their beloved actor Ram Charan along with Kiara Advani, Anjali and SJ Suryah. The film's teaser was unveiled on with great celebration! The teaser showcases Ram Charan's charisma, flair and attitude in abundance, promising to make the film his most intense action spectacle.

The majority of the audience arrived with placards of Ram Charan and felt delighted to see him up close. Ram Charan and Kiara Advani climbed atop a bus and waved to everyone present at the event. At first, Kiara felt afraid to ascend the ladder, but Ram Charan and producer Dil Raju assist her in reaching the bus' roof. Subsequently, they presented the teaser at the cinema, where Ram Charan viewed it alongside the large audience. The adrenaline-fueled action scenes and captivating plot make *Game Changer* appear to be a sort of event film.

It highlights Ram Charan's two roles: that of a strong bureaucrat (IAS officer) and that of an enthusiastic individual aiming to make a difference in society. Renowned for his remarkable ability to craft grand cinematic experiences, Shanmugam Shankar is ready to present Ram Charan in a part that will transform his persona and fame. The action scenes have been vividly filmed, and the adrenaline-fueled spectacle showcases Shankar's distinctive style.

"I am unpredictable..." The teaser's dialogue by Ram intrigues the audience and makes them want to learn more. Once the teaser came out, fans couldn't contain their enthusiasm! Supporters are going wild to witness their beloved star Ram Charan in a unique new look. Dil Raju and Sirish are the producers and it is scheduled for a worldwide release on January 10, 2025, in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi. This movie is set to be the most significant film of Ram Charan's career and its enormous scale is clear after AA Films secured the North India distribution rights for an unprecedented price.



## Kissik: Don't blink or you'll miss Sreeleela's uff-worthy grooves!

South sensation Sreeleela is all set to make a special appearance in a special song sequence in the highly anticipated *Pushpa 2: The Rule*. The sequel to the blockbuster *Pushpa: The Rise*, starring National Award winner Allu Arjun as the fierce red sandalwood smuggler Pushpa Raj and his love interest played by Rashmika Mandanna, Srivalli, is already creating massive buzz across the country. This new addition to the special song featuring Sreeleela is sure to elevate the excitement.

The makers have announced Sreeleela's entry in *Pushpa 2: The Rule* in a special song with an amazing poster, "Team #Pushpa2TheRule welcomes The Dancing Queen @sreeleela14 on board for the #Kissik Song of the Year icon star Allu Arjun and Dancing QUEEN Sreeleela's Dance Extravaganza"

This special song is being filmed on both

stars and an official poster related to it was recently released by the makers. Directed by the brilliant Sukumar, Allu Arjun plays the lead role in this prestigious Indian project produced by Naveen Yeneni and Yalamanchili Ravi Shankar under the Mythri Movie Makers banner in association with Sukumar Writings.

The *Kissik* song will showcase Allu Arjun's superb dance moves and swag, promising to leave his fans and audiences thrilled. Promotions for the film are planned on a grand scale in cities such as Patna, Kolkata, Chennai, Kochi, Bengaluru, Mumbai and Hyderabad. Currently, the film is in its final stages of shooting and post-production work. *Pushpa 2: The Rule*, with Allu Arjun and Sukumar's powerful collaboration, is shaping up to be a spectacular film, ready to break box office records and create a collection storm across India.

## JUST FRIENDS?

PNSJ HYDERABAD

Tollywood fans are buzzing after a captivating photograph surfaced from the recent wedding of Shrivya Varma and Srikanth Kidambi, showing Rashmika Mandanna seated beside Vijay Deverakonda's mother, Madhavi Deverakonda.

With a joyful smile, Rashmika appeared to hold Madhavi in a warm embrace, a moment that many think speaks louder than words! This affectionate scene has stirred up fresh rounds of speculation about Rashmika's closeness to Vijay's family and rekindled rumours of a romantic relationship between the two actors. Rashmika and Vijay have shared undeniable chemistry on-screen in films like *Geetha Govindam* and *Dear Comrade*, leading to years of romance rumours and hopeful whispers from fans.

However, both stars have always managed to keep their personal lives private, never officially confirming a relationship. Yet, this photo of Rashmika and Madhavi has added a new layer to the mystery; could there be something more than just friendship here?

## Cinematic legend Delhi Ganesh bows out!

Veteran actor Delhi Ganesh, a beloved figure in Tamil cinema, has passed away at the age of 80, leaving a profound mark on Indian film history. Known for his depth and versatility, he began his



career in the mid-1970s and quickly became a mainstay in the industry, appearing in over 400 films across Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam languages. Delhi Ganesh's roles in films like *Sindhu Bhairavi*, *Nayakan* and *Iruvar* showcased his ability to embody a wide range of characters, from heartwarming to intense, captivating audiences with his nuanced portrayals. A favorite among directors and co-actors, Ganesh brought authenticity to the screen, often infusing his roles with subtle humor, wisdom, and emotional complexity that resonated with audiences. His performances enriched many films and left an indelible imprint on Indian cinema. As tributes pour in from all corners of the film industry, his legacy as an artist who effortlessly bridged commercial and character-driven cinema continues to inspire both fans and aspiring actors. His loss leaves a void, but his timeless contributions ensure he will be remembered for generations to come.



## LOOKBOOK

Celebrity stylist Shrivya Varma and celebrated badminton player Srikanth Kidambi tied the knot in a wedding that radiated both elegance and tradition. Surrounded by tollywood celebrities close family, friends and a select few from the world of sports and entertainment, the couple's wedding was a heartfelt celebration.

