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FREIGHT CORRIDOR IS JEWEL OF INDIAN RAILWAYS'

'Working with 3 music directors for lone film is not healthy situation' **THAMAN**



the pioneer KT Rama Rao and T. Harish Rao will not remain in the same party in the coming days. We have information that there are differences between them. The Congress and the BJP will remain in the fray in Telangana. But the BRS will disappear. The BRS may merge with the BJP or most leaders of the BRS may join the BJP

QUOTE OF THE DAY

— Mahesh Kumar Goud, TPCC Chief P4

IIT Madras praises RTGS in public service

The Real-Time Governance System (RTGS) implemented by the State government was praised by IIT Madras officials for its groundbreaking technological approach to public service. Prof V Kamakoti, Director of IIT Madras, hailed the system's integration into the public sector as an example of innovative thinking and technological excellence. A team from IIT Madras recently visited the RTGS Central Command Control Centre located at the Secretariat, where they were briefed by Chief Minister's Secretary Pradyumna and RTGS CEO K Dinesh Kumar...

'Deepam 2' scheme successful: Manohar

Minister for Civil Supplies, Nadendla Manohar, announced on Friday that the state government's "free gas cylinder" scheme is being successfully implemented. Responding to a question raised by MLCs V. Kalyani and S. Mangamma in the Legislative Council, Manohar informed that over the past 15 days, a total of 35,77,566 beneficiaries have booked gas cylinders under the Deepam-2 scheme. Of these, 25,64,951 gas cylinders have already been delivered to the beneficiaries

ED seizes Rs 8.8 cr from 'lottery king'

The Enforcement Directorate on Friday seized Rs 8.8 crore in cash from the corporate office of Chennai-based 'lottery king' Santiago Martin, officials said. Martin was the single biggest donor to political parties with over Rs 1 300 crore in now-scran electoral bonds. The searches were carried out in multiple states as part of a money laundering investigation against the 'lottery king', officials said. The action comes after the Madras High Court recently allowed the ED to proceed against Martin as the Tamil Nadu Police had decided...

-PAGE: 5

Rahul aim is to get back into T20 team

The beleaguered KL Rahul is seeking to use the next IPL as a vehicle to stage a comeback to the Indian T20I side as he wants to remain involved in all three formats of the game. The 32-yearold is in line to open the innings if skipper Rohit Sharma does not play in the first Test of the upcoming five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy series at Perth. Rahul's form has been a cause of concern for the Indian team as he was recently dropped for the last two Tests against New Zealand at home with Sarfaraz..

CM vows to revive AP on 'ventilator'

Blames previous govt for financial mismanagement

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday accused the previous government of leaving Andhra Pradesh in ruins, alleging that its inefficiency, corruption, and antidevelopment policies had pushed the State into a severe financial and administrative crisis. Addressing the Assembly, he said the heavy debts, crimes, and scams of the earlier regime were now a "curse" for the State.

'The State was on the ventilator, but with the Centre's support, we have stabilised it and are rebuilding brick by brick," Naidu said. He criticised the earlier government for exploiting public resources, introducing schemes to perpetrate scams, and burdening citizens with heavy taxes. He also lamented the misinformation campaigns regarding Amaravati and Polavaram, noting that such projects could have been completed had his government been re-elected in 2019.

Naidu highlighted his government's achievements during the previous term, including completing 72 per cent of Polavaram works and ensuring no power tariff hikes. "Farmers voluntarily donated 33,000 acres for the capital, yet the previous regime failed to utilise surplus land effectively," he added.

Focusing on future plans, the Chief Minister assured the House of



Chief Minister highlights heavy debts, scams, and antidevelopment policies.

Says Centre's assistance has stabilised AP post-bifurcation. neglect of Amaravati and Polavaram projects by the earlier govt.

He assures fulfilment of the "Super Six" promises and additional welfare schemes.

hub, railway zone, and housewarming for one lakh homes.

Stresses the importance of wealth creation and equitable distribution to revive the State.

Proposes legislation to curb objectionable social media content.

delivering on the "Super Six" promises alongside additional welfare schemes. He announced the allocation of 300 acres for a drone hub, land for a railway zone, and housewarming ceremonies for one lakh homes in December. Urban and rural house sites will also be distrib-

uted to eligible beneficiaries.

Naidu took a firm stand on addressing social media misuse, proposing legislation to curb objectionable posts. He vowed to prioritise wealth creation and equitable distribution, ensuring Andhra Pradesh's resurgence.

Centre okays Naidu's key proposals

 Revival of Singapore's involvement in the construction of Amaravati supported by Centre.

 Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman pledges support for the completion of the Polavaram project.

 Chief Minister Naidu urges External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar to attract investment to AP.

HEAVY RAÎNS IN VIJAYAWADA GRANTED BY UNION GOVT

NAIDU'S REQUEST FOR GST RELAXATION FOR STATE DUE TO

• The Centre has approved the interlinking of the Godavari and Pennar rivers for Rayalaseema's

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Centre has given its full backing to the proposals put forward by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday, agreeing to crucial initiatives aimed at enhancing the State's development. These include the interlinking of the Godavari and Pennar rivers, the revival of Singapore's involvement in the construction of Amaravati, and speeding up the completion of the Polavaram project.

During his visit to the national capital on Friday evening, Chief Minister Naidu met with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and External Affairs

Minister Dr S Jaishankar, where he presented these key proposals. Both Union Ministers responded positively, assuring their support for the initiatives.

TDP MP Lavu Krishnadevarayalu briefed the media on the discussions, stating that the interlinking of the Godavari and Pennar rivers is a vital project for the development of the backward regions of Rayalaseema and Prakasam districts. The Centre has now given the green signal for this project, and Finance Minister Sitharaman pledged her full cooperation in ensuring its success, along with the speedy completion of the Polavaram project.

CID to probe Excise irregularities during Jagan rule: Kollu

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Excise, Mines, and Geology, Kollu Ravindra, has announced that the CID will investigate allegations of irregularities in the excise policy under the YSRCP government. Speaking in the State Legislative Council on Friday, Ravindra clarified that the vigilance and enforcement inquiry into the Excise department's past actions had been completed, and the CID would now carry out further investigations.

Ravindra stressed that the current NDA alliance government would not tolerate any misconduct related to liquor sales and would take strict action against those found guilty. His comments came in response to questions raised by YSRCP MLCs Duvvada Srinivas, R. Ramesh Yadav, and T. Madhava Rao, who had questioned the government's excise policy and prac-

Continued on Page 2

All vacant teacher posts will be filled by next academic year: Nara Lokesh

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Government posts across the State by the beginning of the next academic year, according to Minister for Education, IT and Electronics, Nara Lokesh. Speaking to the Assembly on Friday, Lokesh assured that the Chief Minister, N. Chandrababu Naidu, had cleared the DSC (District Selection Committee) file immediately after taking office, as promised earlier. He stated that the government's objective is to fill all teacher vacancies smoothly and without any legal hurdles.

Responding to queries raised by MLAs Lokam Madhavi, Kakarla Suresh, and Palla Srinivasa Rao, Lokesh revealed that the state has collected details of all pending cases related to teacher recruitment dating back to 1994. He further emphasized that the state government is committed to issuing the DSC notification without any further delays or obstacles.

On the issue of age relaxation for DSC aspirants, Lokesh informed the House that the file is currently with the Chief Minister for approval. He added that once the file is cleared, a decision will be made regarding the relaxation of the age limit for candidates applying for teacher posts.

Continued on Page 2

AP govt partners with IIT Madras for tech expertise

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has entered into a series of agreements with IIT Madras, aiming to bring advanced technological expertise and research into various sectors across the State. The initiatives, announced on Friday, are expected to drive innovation, boost infrastructure development, and enhance the quality of education and skill development.

IT Minister Nara Lokesh presided over the discussions, which saw participation from Ministers P Narayana, M Ramprasad Reddy, BC Janardhan Reddy, Chief Minister's Secretary Pradyumna, and senior officials from both the state government and IIT Madras.

The collaboration includes the

establishment of an International Deep Tech Research, Design, Innovation, and Incubation Park in Amaravati. IIT Madras will provide technical advisory services to transform Amaravati into a global city of international standards. In the maritime sector, the agreements focus on research in marine technologies, coastal energy harvesting, and maritime training, with the AP Maritime Board benefiting from consultancy and capacity-building initiatives.

The State's skill development initiatives will also receive a boost, with platforms like Swamy Plus and the IIT Madras Pravartak Digital Skill Academy enhancing employability through improved skilling pro-

LAND TO INSTITUTIONS IN AMARAVATI

House panel discusses allocations

PNS VIJAYAWADA

A meeting of the sub-committee on land allotment to institutions in Amaravati concluded, focusing on the allocation of land to various organisations. Senior officials, as as Ministers P Payyavula Keshav, attended the

Minister Narayana provided an update on the proceedings, explainthe land allocations made to differ-



ing that the committee had reviewed ed to each. He highlighted that the committee had instructed CRDA ent institutions in the past and (Capital Region Development assessed the extent of land provid- Authority) officials to engage with

organizations that had previously been allotted land. The Minister noted that many

organisations which had been allocated land during the previous government's tenure had not commenced construction.

the new coalition government, trust has been restored, and these organisations are now committed to progressing with their plans.

He further mentioned that several stalled construction projects would be revived.

Continued on Page 2

India wins series with SA



India beat South Africa by 135 runs in the fourth and final T20 International to clinch series 3-1 here on Friday. Opting to bat, India posted a massive 283 for 1, thanks to unbeaten centuries from Tilak Varma (120 not out off 47 balls) and Sanju Samson (109 not out off 56 balls), and then bowled South Africa out for 148 in 18.2 overs. Tristan Stubbs top-scored for South Africa with 46 while David Miller contributed 36. For India, pacer Arshdeep Singh was the most successful bowler with figures of 3/20 while Varun Chakravarthy (2/42) and Axar Patel (2/6) got two wickets each. Hardik Pandya, Ramandeep Singh and Ravi Bishnoi got a wicket each. Brief Scores: INDIA: 283 for 1 in 20 overs (Saniu Samson 109 not out, Tilak Varma 120 not out: Lutho Sipamla 1/58). SOUTH AFRICA: 148 all out in 18.2 overs (Tristan Stubbs 46, David Miller 36; Arshdeep Singh 3/20).

Unilateral climate action steps 'discriminatory,

India will be \$30 trillion economy by 2047: NITI Aayog CEO

PNS TIRUPATI

CEO of the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog, BVR Subrahmanyam, has reiterated the organisation's commitment to supporting industrial clusters like Sri City, which play a crucial role in job creation, regional development, and sustainable economic growth.

Subrahmanyam, who visited Sri City in Tirupati district on Friday, praised the integrated business city and special economic zone for its significant contribution to India's economic progress. He projected that India is on course to become a \$30 trillion economy by 2047, driven by a youthful workforce and visionary leadership.

Encouraging entrepreneurs to "stay ambitious and keep dreaming, Subrahmanyam highlighted Sri City

as an exemplary model of the entrepreneurial spirit propelling India's growth. He urged CXOs to share any challenges they face and welcomed suggestions to enhance regional development.

During the discussion, CXOs raised concerns about skill development, talent retention, and housing facilities for industrial workers. Subrahmanyam acknowledged these challenges as crucial areas for collaborative improvement.

He emphasised that transforming Andhra Pradesh and similar regions into industrial powerhouses would be key to India's future. Subrahmanyam also praised Sri City for its pristine environment, which includes preserved lakes that act as natural reservoirs and help prevent flooding.

Continued on Page 2

Araku coffee finds a global ally in Tata Group

PNS ■ PADERU

Tribal farmers of Araku Valley are set to experience a new chapter of growth as the Tata Group steps in to market their prized Araku coffee. This landmark collaboration promises to uplift the region's coffee market access. industry and provide a transparent platform for the tribal community.

During a meeting at the ITDA video conference hall, District Collector AS Dinesh Kumar highlighted the transformative potential of this partnership.

"Tata's involvement is timely and crucial. By adhering to strict grading specifications and segregating organic and inorganic beans, they will ensure Araku coffee meets the highest standards," he stated. The Collector also stressed the

importance of branding efforts,

announcing plans for a dedicat-

ed coffee logo to safeguard Araku

Tribal farmers, often at the mercy of middlemen, face numerous challenges, including improper marketing. The Tata Group's direct engagement aims to eliminate these hurdles, offering fair pricing and greater

Amit Pant, Executive vice president of Tata Group, lauded the quality of Araku coffee during his recent visit to the region. "Araku coffee is organically exceptional and globally recognised. Our goal is to amplify its reach and value," Pant said. He also shared Tata's strategy



of working with ITDA, GCC, the Coffee Board, and farmers to enhance cultivation practices and branding efforts.

To further the initiative, Tata plans to procure coffee on behalf of ÎTDA and GCC and provide training for farmers. Site visits to plantations in Bheesupuram and Sunkara Metta are also on the agenda to ensure quality standards.

The meeting brought together key stakeholders, including Tata Marketing Lead Manager Venkatesh Babu, ITDA APO (PTG) M. Venkateswara Rao, Coffee Board officials, and GCC representatives, underscoring a collective commitment to elevate Araku coffee to global prominence.

This partnership marks a pivotal moment for the tribal farmers of Araku, paving the way for sustainable growth and international

harm global pact': India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Friday said unilateral trade measures in the name of climate action are "discriminatory, harm multilateral cooperation and go against the principles of the

UN climate change convention. Making an intervention in the presidential consultations on 'unilateral measures' at COP29 in Baku, India said this is a matter of global concern that needs urgent consideration to ensure the development pathways of developing countries are not constricted.

Other groups of developing countries, including the G77, the largest bloc representing over 130 nations at the UN climate talks, and Like-Minded Developing Countries also registered their strong opposition on

Is it right time for new ideas on representation?

weeks away from celebrating the 75th anniversary of our Republic. On 26th January 1950, we, the People of India, adopted the Constitution that gave every Indian the right to vote and made us the masters of our destiny. Being familiar with the British system, we chose a multi-party Parliamentary form of democracy with a bicameral Legislature, wherein parties enjoying a majori-ty in the lower house - House of People or the Lok Sabha form the Executive with members from either House of the Legislature. By 2027, when we celebrate the 75th anniversary of completing our first-ever elections to the lower houses of our Parliament and State legislatures, we will, in all likelihood, either complete or be in the middle of an exercise

that will recast our legislatures.

These changes, especially for latures - Lok Sabha and State Assemblies - could include synchronised elections and increased number of constituencies with new boundaries, with one-third of the final expanded count reserved exclusively for women.

A national debate about these possible changes is currently underway, making it an excellent time to discuss at least a few more ideas that could strengthen our democracy. Currently, all the members of the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies are elected directly through the firstpast-the-post system, with contestants fighting independently or representing a party. Among many, this system of electing members to the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies is one aspect that can benefit An electoral system that still relies on the current first-past-the-post system to elect members with the ability to nominate a small additional percentage of members to the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies through nomination by the political parties based on their vote share in the General Election seems worthy of our consideration.

In the first-past-the-post system, the candidate winning the most votes wins the election automatically, even if they do not win a majority of the votes polled. In practice, the number of independents winning elections has been minimal and diminishing by the day, making our elections mainly a fight among parties. At the same time, parties that win a considerable share of votes across the state or nation could end up with only a few or even zero seats, based on

how geographically concentrated or dispersed their support is. For example, in the recent Lok Sabha elections, the Bharata Rashtra Samiti (BRS) could not win a single seat from the seventeen Lok Sabha contests from Telangana, even though they won a substantial 16.68% of the votes across the state. On the contrary, the AIMIM party won one seat, securing only 3% of the votes polled in the state.

One idea often raised is the possibility of moving to a



proportional representation wherein parties get to nominate members based on the share of votes they receive in the election. This idea has gained little traction because it introduces an entirely new system of voting and also because of the complex voting process for some of its forms.

Additionally, it could disadvantage independent candidates and small regional parties who have acceptability only in focused geographies limited to only a few seats or a small sub-section of society.

On the other hand, a system

that still relies on the current first-past-the-post system to elect members with the ability to nominate a small additional percentage of members to the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies through nomination by the political parties based on the vote share they receive in the general election seems worthy of our consideration. This idea has the benefit of not introducing a process that the voters are unfamiliar with and also recognising the importance of the popular vote. In the current Lok Sabha, the Congress would benefit more than the BJP because the Congress

converted less of its vote share into seats than the BJP.

Firstly, it could provide seats for parties receiving support from many voters, but their voters are dispersed geographically across constituencies. It could help many states get representation in the party ruling at the Center and not feel left out from the dispensation ruling the nation. Tamil Nadu is a classic example. Though the ruling party at the Center, the Bharatiya Janata Party, received a substantial 11.24% of the vote share, it has no elected member from the state.

Secondly, unlike in the Presidential form, in our Prime Ministerial form of Democracy, Citizens who either could not be elected or are disinterested in electoral politics cannot serve the nation as members of the Executive. Today, parties use upper-house membership to achieve this. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is a classic example; the Congress made him a Rajya Sabha member from Assam based on its strength in the state Assembly. Similarly, every major party in the country sent leaders to the Rajva Sabha to be able to use their services for the nation - many a time from states where they never lived or even understood the local language. With the proposed change, parties can send such leaders to the Lok Sabha and leave the Rajya Sabha to really represent the States.

Finally, given the role of religion, caste, and economics in today's elections, the proposal could provide a way for parties to nominate worthy people from sections that are considered electorally weak.

> (The author is BJP TS spokesperson)

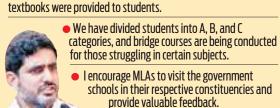
Several reforms underway in Inter education: Lokesh

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Education, IT and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, announced on Friday that significant reforms are being introduced in the State's Intermediate education sector following the TDP-led NDA government coming to power. Speaking in the Assembly, Lokesh highlighted the failures of the previous government, pointing out that textbooks had not been supplied to students for five years. "For the first time, after I became the Minister for Education, textbooks were provided to students," he stated.

In response to a query raised by MLA Ganta Srinivasa Rao, Lokesh expressed concern over the sharp decline in student enrolment in government junior colleges. He attributed this to a shortage of staff, particularly teachers, in these colleges.

However, Lokesh also noted a positive trend since the formation of the current government, revealing that junior college admissions have increased by over 15,000, which he described as a welcome development. "We For the first time, after I became the Minister for Education,



 We are now formulating plans to make government degree colleges more industry-centric and improve their overall infrastructure.

have divided students into A, B, and C categories, and bridge courses are being conducted for those struggling in certain subjects," he added. He stressed that the government's efforts are focused on ensuring that government colleges can compete with private institutions like the Narayana Group of Institutions.

The Minister also mentioned that the government has sought inputs from Narayana, the head of the Narayana Institutions, who had attended a workshop as the chief guest on Thursday.

"He made several valuable suggestions that we are considering for the betterment of our edu-

cation system," Lokesh said. Emphasising that the government is focused on improving infrastructure, faculty, and educational material, Lokesh stated that meetings are being held with senior officers of the Secondary and Intermediate Education Boards to develop necessary improvements. He promised to introduce ranking mechanisms in government

schools to help measure progress.

In addition, the Minister outlined plans to regularly review academic results and to keep parents informed. He announced that mega Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) will be held across the state in the first week of December, urging all MLAs to participate. "I encourage MLAs to visit the government schools in their respective constituencies and provide valuable feedback," he added.

Addressing infrastructure concerns, Lokesh said that the government degree college at Tagarapuvalasa is currently being run on the KGBV school campus, but an alternative solution will be found soon. He also informed the House that construction of the school building at Simhachalam will be completed within the next six months.

Expressing concern over the low admission rate in government degree colleges, which currently stands at only 50%, Lokesh attributed this to the poor condition of the college buildings and inadequate faculty. "We are now formulating plans to make government degree colleges more industry-centric and improve their overall infrastructure," he said.

Reddy highlighted the

government's silence on cre-

ating a separate corpora-

tion for pensioners and its

failure to fulfil promises

such as the recruitment of 20

lakh jobs and the payment of

He also stressed the need

to reduce workloads on vil-

lage and ward secretariat

employees, allot land to gov-

ernment employees, and

save the Visakhapatnam

Steel Plant to protect the

livelihoods of over one lakh

the government to act

responsibly and deliver on its

electoral commitments to

employees and pensioners.

He concluded by urging

unemployment allowances.

Minister Savita to launch free DSC coaching for BC candidates today

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government is set to launch a major initiative on Saturday to provide free coaching for candidates from backward classes (BC) preparing for the DSC exams. BC Welfare Minister S. Savita announced on Friday that the coaching would be conducted through BC Study Circles across all 26 district headquarters.

Highlighting the government's commitment to empowering backward communities, the Minister noted that Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu had earlier approved the recruitment



of 16,347 teaching posts through DSC. To support aspirants, the BC Welfare for Scheduled Castes (SC), Department has introduced 14% for Scheduled Tribes (ST), this free coaching programme, and 10% for those from ecowhich also extends to other nomically weaker sections (EWS). The coaching will span

Eligible candidates must hold a B.Ed qualification and have cleared the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET). Seats are allocated as follows: 66% for BC candidates, 20%

study materials. The government is also rolling out online coaching to benefit those unable to attend physical sessions. A dedicated website will provide expert-led classes, past question papers,

and model papers for practice.

Eligible candidates must hold

two months, with candidates receiving a monthly stipend of Rs 1,500 and Rs 1,000 for

a B.Ed qualification and have cleared the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET). This initiative aims to ensure equal opportunities for backward and marginalised communities, enhancing their chances of securing teaching

YSRCP slams Naidu for ignoring Rayalaseema interests

PNS KADAPA/ANANTAPUR/ **KURNOOL**

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leaders from Ravalaseema have lashed out at Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for relo-Human Rights Commission offices from Kurnool to Amaravati. Terming the move an injustice to the region, they called for collective action from all political parties to safeguard Rayalaseema's interests.

YSRCP district president P. Ravindranath Reddy, addressing the media in Kadapa, accused Naidu of neglecting Rayalaseema and disregarding the Sribagh Pact, which recommended setting up the High

Court in the region. He lauded former Chief Ministers YS Rajasekhara Reddy and YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for initiating projects beneficial to Rayalaseema, such as establishing the Wakf Tribunal, CBI Court, and Human Rights Commission in Kurnool. Criticising the shift of the MSME Technology Centre and other projects to Amaravati, he

Kalyan, to oppose the move. Former MLA Y. Visweswara Reddy, speaking in Anantapur, called Chandrababu a "betrayer" of Rayalaseema and warned that centralising development in Amaravati would deepen regional disparities. He

urged political leaders, includ-

ing Jana Sena Chief Pawan

stressed the importance of decentralisation initiatives by YS Jagan, including declaring Kurnool as the judicial capital and allocating funds for the region's second Law University.

Kurnool Mayor BY Ramaiah neglecting Rayalaseema's development. He praised YS Jagan's efforts to make Kurnool the judicial capital and criticised the silence of opposition parties, including TDP, BJP, and Jana Sena, on the issue. Ramaiah vowed to organise protests and hunger strikes if necessary, asserting that Rayalaseema residents would not tolerate injustice and reaffirming faith in Jagan's leadership to ensure the region's progress.

House panel.

Continued from Page 1

that the sub-committee would submit a report on the cancellation of tenders for projects abandoned midway under the previous administration. This report will be presented for approval at the upcoming Cabinet meeting. After Cabinet reissue tenders for these projects.

Minister Narayana confirmed

Minister Payyavula Keshav also addressed the meeting, emphasizing the government's focus on expediting the construction of projects in Amaravati. He said that the government is committed to accelerating the progress of these projects and will hold discussions with the organizations that were allocated land to ensure they begin construction at the earliest.

CID to probe...

Continued from Page 1

The Minister explained that under the new excise policy, the government had earned Rs 1,800 crore in application fees and reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring the supply of high-quality liquor to consumers. He assured that the number of liquor shops had not been increased, and strict rules would be enforced regarding their operating hours. Ravindra emphasised that any violations would result in penalties or more severe action.

In response to allegations from YSRCP MLCs that local MLAs were taking commissions from liquor shops and that "belt shops" had been set up to increase liquor sales, Ravindra denied the accusations.

TODAY **ALMANAC** Month & Paksham Tithi: Pratipada: Nov 16 02:58 AM Nov 16 11:50 PM to Nov 17 09:06 PM Nakshatram: Nov 15 09:55 PM Krithika: to Nov 16 07:28 PM Rohini: to Nov 17 05:22 PM 9:13 AM to 10:37 AM Rahukalam 1:24 PM to 2:48 PM Yamagandam: 10:04 AM to 11:32 AM Varjyam. 6:25 AM to 7:49 AM 05:18 PM to 06:45 PM Amritakalam: Abhiiit Muhurtham: 11:38 AM to 12:23 PM VIJAYAWADA WEATHER Forecast: Mostly Sunny Temp: 32° Humidity: 69% Sunrise: 6:12 AM Sunset: 5:33 PM Updated: November 15, 2024 5:00 PM

YSRCP slams govt for not fulfilling promises to employees, pensioners

PNS VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP State Employees and Pensioners Wing president N. Chandrasekhar Reddy has criticised the coalition government for failing to address key issues faced by employees and pensioners in its budget. He alleged that the budget lacks allocations for pending DA arrears, PRC dues, and GPF settlements amounting to Rs 25,000

Addressing the media at the party's Central office on Friday, Chandrasekhar Reddy demanded the immediate implementation of the Pay Revision Commission (PRC) with at least a 30%

Continued from Page 1

Krishnadevarayalu

tribute to the capital city's growth.

Centre okays Naidu's key...

The Chief Minister also made a request to Dr.

Jaishankar to revive Singapore's participation in the devel-

opment of Amaravati. The Union Minister expressed his

agreement to the proposal, which could significantly con-

Additionally, Naidu discussed the economic impact of the

newly-elected administration in the United States, partic-

ularly its effect on students from Andhra Pradesh pursu-

ing further studies there. He also highlighted the state's new

"Speed of Doing Business" initiative, which is aimed at attract-

ing more investment. The Union Minister showed full sup-

port for this approach, with Naidu assuring that Andhra

Pradesh would offer a business-friendly environment to

investors. In light of the recent heavy rains that caused sig-

nificant damage in Vijayawada, Naidu also appealed to

Sitharaman for a one per cent GST relaxation, which she

The Centre's response to the Chief Minister's appeals

has been overwhelmingly positive, according to MP

consented to, offering much-needed relief to the state.

hike and the restoration of the Old Pension Scheme. He accused the government of reneging on its promises to grant promotions, fill vacancies, and regularise contract employees.

He also called for clearing pending retirement benefits, enhancing pensions for senior citizens, and providing Rs10,000 monthly honorariums to volunteers. Additionally, he urged reforms in the Employee Health Scheme (EHS) to cover all medical treatments, higher salaries for outsourcing staff, and immediate payment of salaries pending for AP Corporation employ-

India will be...

workers.

Continued from Page 1

He noted that the city, with 220 units representing 30 nationalities and employing 65,000 people, is truly one of India's premier industrial hubs, blending global diversity in a welcoming and inclusive setting. Earlier, Sri City Managing Director Dr. Sannareddy, along with Chairman Srini Raju, showcased the city's unique features and growth potential, while requesting NITI Aayog's continued support to further strengthen Sri City's contributions to India's industrial landscape.

AP govt partners... Continued from Page 1 The Department of Education

will partner with IIT Madras to offer technical training aligned with industrial requirements for students and teachers, spanning from primary education to intermediate levels.

In infrastructure development, the partnership aims to transform airports in Kuppam and Puttaparthi into logistics and maintenance hubs, creating new business opportunities and fostering regional growth. Visakhapatnam is set to be developed as an Internet gateway to enhance global data connectivity, supported by advanced inter-

national technologies. The collaboration will also strengthen Andhra Pradesh's digital ecosystem by improving software infrastructure in Artificial Intelligence and Data Science through a partnership with the RTGS Department. In sports, the agreement envisions a Smart Tech-enabled Sports City in Amaravati with world-class facilities. These agreements highlight Andhra Pradesh's commitment to integrating state-of-the-art technology into governance and development, ensuring substantial benefits for its citizens through education, research, and infrastructure advancements.

TTD E0 visits Sringeri Sarada Peetham



PNS TIRUPATI

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Executive Officer Syamala Rao paid a courtesy visit to Sri Vidhu Shekhara Bharathi Theertha Swami, the Uttaradhikari of Sringeri Sharada Peetham, on Friday evening. During his visit to the Sringeri Sankara Peetham in Tirupati, the EO was warmly felicitated by Swamiji, who extended his blessings.

Swamiji also discussed with the EO various initiatives planned by the TTD to promote Sanatana Dharma, preserve Vedic traditions, and enhance the dissemination of Vedic education.

All vacant teacher posts will be filled by...

Continued from Page 1

Lokesh also shed light on the history of teacher recruitment in the state, noting that before 1994, teacher appointments were conducted by the respective Zilla Parishads. He pointed out that under the TDP government, 15 DSCs were held to fill a total of 1.8 lakh teacher vacancies.

Criticising the previous YSRCP government, Lokesh claimed that it had failed to fill any teacher vacancies during

fication on February 12, 2024, merely two months before the Assembly elections, without any intention of actually advancing the recruitment process.

The Minister also took a swipe at the YSRCP government's controversial GO 117, which he said had caused significant problems for both students and teachers. Under this order, a number of schools were merged, leading to operational diffiits tenure. He accused the culties. Lokesh reiterated

YSRCP of issuing a DSC noti- the need to involve teachers as key partners in improving the education system and reaffirmed his commitment to enhancing the quality of education in government schools.

He assured the Assembly that the Commissioner of School Education is in discussions with teachers' unions regarding the impacts of GO 117 and that the government is working on an alternative to the order to prevent any further harassment of teachers.

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IIT Madras lauds AP's RTGS for exemplary performance

RTGS, designed to monitor and respond to citizens' requests in real-time, connects all government departments

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Real-Time Governance System (RTGS) implemented by the State government was praised by IIT Madras officials for its groundbreaking technological approach to public service. Prof V Kamakoti, Director of IIT Madras, hailed the system's integration into the public sector as an example $\bar{o}f$ innovative thinking and technological excellence.

A team from IIT Madras recently visited the RTGS Central Command Control Centre located at the Secretariat, where they were briefed by Chief Minister's Secretary Pradyumna and RTGS CÉO K Dinesh Kumar. The officials elaborated on the system's objectives, its impact on governance, and the services it offers to the public.

The RTGS, designed to monitor and respond to citizens' requests in real-time, connects all government departments, ensuring a seamless flow of information and services. The system's ability to track and address public griev-

CP issues

guidelines for safer online

environment

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a bold move to curb the rising tide of harmful content and

online harassment, Police Commissioner Dr Shanka

Brata Bagchi has introduced a

comprehensive set of guidelines

aimed at fostering a safer online

platforms should not be a place

for spreading hatred or divi-

sion," Bagchi asserted. "We are

committed to curbing the

spread of harmful content and

ensuring that these platforms

remain spaces for constructive

The newly implemented

guidelines target a range of

harmful behaviours, includ-

ing the dissemination of hate

speech, the creation of fake pro-

files, and the sharing of mis-

"Pornographic, violent, or mor-

phed images will not be toler-

ated," Dr. Bagchi stated firmly.

"Sharing false information is

equally unacceptable, as it can

mislead and harm entire com-

information.

dialogue.

leading

munities



ances as they arise represents a significant leap in the State's efforts to provide more responsive and efficient governance.

According to officials, the Chief Minister's vision was to harness cutting-edge technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance public service delivery. RTGS uses AI, along with other advanced technologies, to oversee the implementation of various government schemes and ensure that citizens receive timely and effective services.

Professor Kamakoti commended the State government's initiative, describing the RTGS platform as a trailblazer in integrating real-time governance within a governmental framework. He emphasised that IIT Madras is eager to collaborate

with the RTGS team for future enhancements to the system.

"This is a remarkable step forward in using technology for public governance," said Prof Kamakoti. "RTGS represents a new paradigm in how technology can transform government services and make them more accessible to citi-

Tributes paid to Birsa Munda on Janjatiya Gaurav Divas

PNS PARVATHIPURAM

The vibrant Janjatiya Gaurav Divas celebrations brought honour the heroic legacy of tribal leader Birsa Munda. The event, held at Parvathipuram ITDA, highlighted Munda's contributions to tribal society and the nation.

Dr. DVG Sankara Rao, Chairman of the State ST Commission, emphasised the importance of education in achieving progress and empowerment for tribal communities. He urged the community to follow Munda's legacy of courage and resilience. Dr Rao also expressed concern over student deaths in educational institutions and called for immediate solutions to protect students' well-being.

District Collector A Shyam To address the issue of online Prasad reaffirmed the disharassment, the guidelines trict's dedication to prioritisemphasise the importance of ing education and health, respectful interactions. particularly in tribal areas. He "Deliberately provoking difoutlined ongoing efforts to ferences or spreading misinforimprove hostel infrastrucmation does more harm than ture, healthcare services, and we can imagine," Dr. Bagchi warned. "Trolling and other disskill development opportunities for unemployed youth. The JANAM programme, with a focus on PVTG vilruptive behaviours will not be tolerated." Account managelages, has allocated Rs. 15.25 ment practices are also under crore to strengthen Van Dhan



Dr. DVG Sankara Rao. Chairman of the State ST Commission, emphasised the importance of education in achieving progress and empowerment for tribal communities. He urged the community to follow Munda's legacy of courage and resilience. Dr Rao also expressed concern over student deaths in educational institutions and called for immediate solutions to protect students' well-being

Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) for economic uplift.

The celebrations included vibrant cultural performances by students from various schools, showcasing the rich tribal heritage and artistry of the region. To support local farmers and fishermen, cheques worth Rs. 15 lakh were distributed to farmers for sprinkler units, part of a

Rs. 45 lakh cashew rejuvenation initiative. Additionally, five mopeds equipped with ice boxes and Aadhaar cards were distributed to fishermen to enhance their liveli-

The event was attended by the Superintendent of Police, Municipal Chairman, Sub-Collector, and ITDA Project

Minister arrives late in **Assembly**

PNS VIJAYAWADA

AP Legislative Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu has said that ministers should be present in the Assembly to give answers to MLAs. Minister for Labour V Subhash arrived late in the Assembly on Friday. He was supposed to answer a question at the start of the question and answer session. However, in the Minister's absence, the question was initially postponed. When he arrived, members asked the question again. Minister Subhash apologised

for being late.
Ayyanna Patrudu spoke to the Minister regarding the issue. He urged the Minister to take the question and answer session seriously. He questioned how it would be acceptable if ministers themselves arrive late.

Suresh slams govt on education

Says it has failed to allocate adequate funds for programmes like Gorumudda and Vidya Kanuka

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Slamming the coalition government for its failure to prioritise the education system, Former Minister Adimulapu Suresh pointed out that its policies have left key educational schemes in disarray, negatively impacting the future of students. Speaking to the media at

the party central office here on Friday, Suresh highlighted the failure of the coalition government to allocate adequate funds for flagship programmes like Gorumudda and Vidya Kanuka, which were introduced under YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's tenure. He revealed that schemes like Vidya Deevena and Vasathi Deevena are pending payments of over Rs 5,000 crore, depriving students of essential



He condemned the budget allocations, saying they do not align with the promises made

during the elections He flayed the coalition government for dismantling initiatives like Nadu-Nedu, which modernised 45,000 government schools and provided digital boards, clean drinking water, and Byju's

content-loaded tablets. Suresh also criticised the failure of the Talliki Vandanam scheme, pointing out that it has received less than half of the promised Rs

12,450 crore funding.

He warned that the coalition's mismanagement is causing government schools to deteriorate, affecting marginalised communities like SCs, STs, BCs, and minorities who depend on these institu-

The former minister reminded the public of the YSRCP's successful reforms, including the recruitment of over 21,000 teachers, comprehensive support under Amma Vodi, and improved infrastructure.

He urged the coalition to stop punishing students and parents due to political vendettas.



Jharkhand Day celebrated at Raj Bhavan

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Governor of Andhra Pradesh S Abdul Nazeer was chief guest at the Jharkhand State Formation Day celebrations held in Durbar Hall in Raj Bhavan here on Friday, under the 'Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat'

Speaking on the occasion,

Jharkhand is a popular destination of travel and adventure because of its unique topography and the natural landscape, lush forests, waterfalls, and the State is a leading producer of mineral wealth in the country. The Governor said that the 'Ek Bharat Shresth Bharat' programme aims to forge a strong

Abdul Nazeer has said that relationship and bonding among all the people of the country, and promote mutual understanding between different States and Union Territories, through the concept

> The programme commenced with a video message of Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Governor of Jharkhand, fol

lowed by Jharkhand traditional folk dance performed by students of Icon public school, Vijayawada. Students from Jharkhand studying in educational institutions in and around Vijayawada attended the programme. Dr M Hari Jawaharlal, Secretary to Governor, officers and staff members of Rai

APSRTC staff plan protests on Nov 19, 20

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) Employees Union has announced a two-day to be held across all 129 depots in the state and four zone workshops. Employees will wear red badges and stage protests during lunch breaks, including sit-ins and gate meetings, to demand solutions to their longstanding grievances. The union leaders submitted a letter to the Executive Director (Admin) of APSRTC on Friday, informing the management about the planned protests.

In a statement, union president Palishetty Damodar Rao and general secretary GV Narasayya revealed that they had submitted a memorandum to senior RTC officials on November 7, highlighting critical issues affecting the employees. Despite ongoing efforts to address these concerns at the district and zonal levels, no resolution has been reached, and the problems continue to esca-

The union leaders criticised the attitude of some lower-level Depot Managers, who they claimed were dismissive of employees' concerns, with some reportedly saying, "We will do things as we please, and no one has the right to question us."

NEP will revolutionise education: MP Sribharath

Collector praises Red Cross Society's humanitarian services

District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad lauded the efforts of the Indian Red Cross Society for its signifithrough initiatives such as the timely supply of blood, free blood transfusions, and the distribution of medicines to the underprivileged, including children with thalassemia.

Speaking at the inauguration of a blood donation camp organised by Round Table India at the Red Cross Blood Bank in Maharanipeta on Friday, the Collector expressed his admiration for the impactful services provided by the organisation. He also visited the thalassemia centre housed in the same building, where he interacted with children affected by the disease and their families, offering them words of encouragement and carefully listening to their concerns.

"The Red Cross Society has set an example through its unwavering commitment to humanitarian services. It is inspiring to see the dedication of the volunteers and donors who are the backbone of such impactful programmes," said the Collector, acknowledging the donors who actively participated in the camp.



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Dr. YS Shiva Nagendra Reddy, Chairman of the Indian Red Cross Society, echoed the sentiments of the District Collector. "We are deeply committed to serving those in need and are grateful for the support from initiatives like Round Table India, which amplify our ability to reach more people," he said. TR Maqsood Ahmed, Area Chairman of Round Table

India, emphasised the impor-

tance of collaborative efforts. Blood donation is a life-saving act, and partnerships like this ensure we can provide help where it is needed most," he noted. The event also witnessed the participation of Red Cross Managing Committee members, representatives of Round Table India, and numerous donors, all of whom contributed to making the initiative a suc-

Heavy rain likely in AP

PNS ■ GUNTUR

strict scrutiny.

Heavy rain is expected at isolated places in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema over the next 24 hours, according to the Meteorological Centre on Friday. In its daily weather update, the centre forecasted thunderstorms accompanied by lightning at isolated locations in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema over the next 48 hours, and in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next 24 hours.

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are also likely at a few places in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next four days, and in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam dur-



ing the next 48 hours. Dry weather is expected to prevail in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh from November 17 to 21, and in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema from November 19 to 21. The report also mentioned that rain had occurred at a few places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and at most places in Rayalaseema

over the past 24 hours.

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

Visakhapatnam MP and GITAM Deemed to be University President, M Sribharath, expressed optimism about the potential of the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Addressing the Regional Children's Congress 2024 on Friday, he emphasised the policy's role in enhancing both the quality and accessibility of education across

"India's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education is currently a mere 30 per cent, highlighting the urgent need for increased participation," said Sribharath. He further pointed out the significant



employability gap in the field of engineering, with about 90

challenges in securing jobs due advocated for governmentto a lack of relevant skills. To per cent of graduates facing bridge this gap, Sribharath tify employment needs and

led skill assessments to iden-

tailor educational programmes accordingly.

Responding to a student's query about reservations, Sribharath explained their role in creating equitable opportunities for various communities. He also stressed the importance of bilingualism, encouraging students to mas-ter both English and their mother tongue. "Proficiency in both languages is crucial for success," he said, adding that

AI advancements will help bridge language barriers and foster cultural understanding. Addressing India's "brain drain" challenge, Sribharath emphasised the need for attracting investments, creating better opportunities, and

offering competitive pay to retain skilled professionals within the country. "The government is committed to developing strategies to ensure India's brightest minds contribute to the nation's progress," he said.

The event, chaired by GITAM In-Charge Vice-Chancellor Prof. Y Gowtham Rao, was attended by students who engaged in discussions about the future of education and employment in India. Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti Deputy Commissioner

T Gopalakrishna, GITAM School of Science Dean Prof. KS Krishna, Principal Prof. K Vedavathi, and other dignitaries were also present.



'Deepam 2' implementation successful, says Manohar

Minister for Civil Supplies, Manohar, Nadendla announced on Friday that the state government's "free gas cylinder" scheme is being suc-

cessfully implemented.

Responding to a question raised by MLCs V. Kalyani and S. Mangamma in the Legislative Council, Manohar informed that over the past 15 days, a total of 35,77,566 beneficiaries have booked gas cylinders under the Deepam-2 scheme. Of these, 25,64,951 gas cylinders have already been delivered to the benefi-

"The government has so far credited Rs 141.18 crore into the bank accounts of the beneficiaries under this free gas cylinder scheme. However, some opposition leaders are spreading false propaganda regarding its implementation," the Minister remarked.

Despite the state facing significant financial constraints,



'The government has so far credited Rs 141.18 crore into the bank accounts of the beneficiaries under this free gas cylinder scheme. However, some opposition leaders are spreading false propaganda regarding its implementation," the Minister remarked.

Manohar reiterated that the implementing the Deepam-2 Chandrababu Naidu-led gov-

scheme, as promised to the ernment is fully committed to people. He recalled that the

Chief Minister officially launched the free gas cylinder scheme on October 31, 2024, in Srikakulam district.

The Minister explained that there are 1.55 crore gas connections in the state, and the government has taken steps to link these connections with ration cards in order to deliver free cylinders and credit the corresponding amount into the beneficiaries' bank accounts. As many as 1.55 crore gas consumers will benefit from the scheme, he added.

The government has allocated Rs 2,684 crore for the implementation of the free gas cylinder scheme under Deepam-2 in the current financial year. Of this, Rs 894 crore is earmarked for the first phase of implementation, the Minister disclosed. He further clarified that only those who hold an LPG connection, a ration card, and an Aadhaar card are eligible for the free gas cylinders under the scheme.

WG Collector asks probationary civil service officers to work with dedication

PNS BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani has exhorted the probationary civil service officers to work with diligence, dedication and be accessible to the people.

As many as 10 probationary civil service officers as part of their study tour met the District Collector in the Collectorate on Friday. The probationary civil service officers had toured the district for

the five days.

The probationary officers were selected to the civil services and are undergoing training at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration at Mussoorie. As part of their training, they visited various places under the 'field study and research pro-

They studied the implementation of the bank linkage of Self-Help groups, the management of NDPs, the implementation of education and health schemes. They also studied the functioning of the DRDA, Revenue, Engineering,

The probationary officers were selected to the civil services and are undergoing training at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration at Mussoorie. As part of their training, they visited various places under the 'field study and research programme'

Public Health, Town Planning and the MEPMA.

The officers of the respective departments explained to the under training civil service officers about the functioning of the departments and implementation of schemes.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Nagarani told them that West Godavari is an agriculture and aquaculture rich district. She explained to them the implementation of welfare schemes and the functioning of government departments.

The Collector encouraged them to understand the functioning style of all departments and provide the best services to the people. She conveyed her best wishes to the probationary officers. Joint Collector T Rahul Kumar Reddy and RDO K Pravin Reddy were among those who were present.

Payyavula says YSRCP govt mismanaged finances

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav criticised the previous government for its alleged financial mismanagement over the past five years calling them "economic terrorists". Speaking in the Assembly on budget, the Minister accused the previous regime of creating severe financial chaos in the State, leaving the current government struggling to restore financial stabil-

Keshav pointed out that the State had faced big challenges in getting back on track, with the new government unable to present a full-fledged budget due to the mess left by the previous administration. He expressed confusion over how to handle the massive debts incurred by the earlier government, adding that the financial records were poorly maintained, with no clear accounting or proper expenditure

He said that over the past five years, there was financial The previous government created confusion with numbers, destabilising all systems. They misled Central government agencies, and now, they are again trying to deceive the public with a game of numbers.

The Minister also highlighted the issue of pending bills, particularly the non-payment of contractors' dues, which he



that industrialists had fled the State during the YSRCP rule, but many had returned after the TDP's leadership under Chandrababu took over. He pointed out that the CM's efforts, such as his recent visit to the United States where he met with 90 industrialists, were bringing in new industries to the State

Keshav also mentioned

claimed had led to several suicides among contractors.

He said the previous government neglected irrigation projects, with Polavaram work stalled and contributing to the damage of the diaphragm wall. The Minister further referred to a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), which stated that the previous government had spent ?634 crore without legislative approval. He questioned the motives behind such unauthorised expenditures and who benefited from them.

During his speech, Keshav

The Congress and the BJP

Working President KT Rama

Rao and his cousin T. Harish

also mentioned that industrialists had fled the State during the YSRCP rule, but many had returned after the TDP's leadership under Chandrababu took over. He pointed out that the CM's efforts, such as his nt visit to the United where he met with 90 industrialists, were bringing in new industries to the State.

He accused the previous government of damaging the Amaravati capital project and engaging in land grabbing in Visakhapatnam, further alleging that these actions were part of their mismanagement and

Collector directs officials to expedite construction of houses



PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District Collector A Thameem Ansariva has directed the officials to complete the construction of houses expedi-

The Collector on Friday

construction of houses at ParchurIvaripalem Ponnaluru mandal in Kondapi constituency. Housing PD Srinivasa Prasad explained to the Collector that a total number of 40 houses were sanctioned to the village of which 12 beneficiaries were constructing the house on their

He told the Collector that construction of 20 houses had been completed and the construction of three houses was under the basement stage and the construction of 13 houses at the roof stage. The Collector directed the Housing PD to

The officials should take special care to sanction DWCRA loans of Rs 35,000 to each beneficiary in the selfhelp group. If the housing beneficiaries are not in the DWCRA group, they should form a new group and ensure

houses every day and ensure

the progress of the construc-

that everyone is in the group, the Collector told the officials.

District Collector Thameem Ansariya directed the officials to pay special attention to the construction of houses, providing them electricity, drainage system, drinking water, roads the colonies.

On the occasion, the District Collector spoke face-to-face with some of the beneficiaries of the houses and knew their problems. RDO Keshavardhan Reddy, MPDO Sujata and Tahsildar Pulla Rao and Housing DE Satyanarayana were among those who accompanied the Collector.



Speed up road repair works: Guntur DC

PNS ■ GUNTUR

District Collector Nagalakshmi has directed Roads and Buildings (R&B) officials to expedite road repair works and complete them within the stipulated

In a meeting with R&B engineers, officials, and contractors on Friday, the Collector reviewed progress on the ongoing roadworks. She informed that 49 repair metres of roads are being undertaken at an estimated cost of Rs 1,336.8 lakh, with

16 works already in progress. The Collector instructed officials to finalise agreements with contractors for completed tenders and ensure work begins without delay. For tenders still in process, she emphasised

completing the procedures promptly and starting the

Highlighting priorities, the Collector stressed the need to focus on main roads in towns and those connecting national highways. She set a target to complete 40% of sanctioned works by November 30 and directed officials to upload completed project details online for bill sanc-

Assuring contractors that processed without delay, the Collector urged them to deploy adequate manpower and equipment to accelerate repairs. She also advised contractors to report any issues to the R&B Division for resolution.

R&B SE Srinivasa Murthy and EE Viswanath Reddy were present at the meeting.

Karthika **Pournami** celebrated with religious fervour



The auspicious Karthika Pournami was celebrated with immense religious fervour at the renowned Harihara Kshetram in Chimakurthi on Friday.

Thousands of devotees gathered at the temple, forming long serpentine queues from early morning. The entire temple premises were filled with a deep sense of devotion, and the atmosphere was charged with spiritual ecstasy, echoing with the chants of "Om Namah Shivaya."

Former Minister Sidda Raghava Rao, along with his wife Lakshmi Padmavati, son Sudheer Kumar, daughterin-law Sruthi, and their children, actively participated in the poojas at the temple. The priests of the temple blessed the family, marking the occasion with spiritual signifi-

In the evening, the sacred Jwalathoranam was conducted, adding to the spiritual fervour of the day.

BRS may merge with BJP, says Mahesh KTR & Harish Rao will not remain in same party **PNS** ■ HYDERABAD



Rao will not remain in the same party in future as there are serious differences between them. He reiterated that many BRS MLAs are going to join the Congress soon as they are

added.

Mahesh reiterated that many BRS MLAs are going to join the Congress soon as they are showing interest to join the Congress. However, the Congress has not yet taken

Congress. However, the Congress has not yet taken a final decision, Mahesh

Addressing the media on Friday, he said that KTR is repeatedly saying that he will go to jail as he has commit-ted offences. Mahesh asked KTR to reveal why KCR is not coming out and said that KTR has detained KCR due

to his politics. Mahesh said the party will give posts to its senior leaders even though BRS MLAs have joined the Congress. He said that the followers of BRS MLAs who joined the Congress will have to wait for

some time to get posts. He said that consultations have been completed regard-

ing cabinet expansion.

He said that it is those who had no land in Lagacharla village who had attacked the officials and so KTR thinks that he had made a mistake. KTR also knows that he committed offences in the Formula E-Car race and so he is saying that he will go to

He said that people are asking the Congress government to explain why it is not sending KTR to jail. However, the government will act as per law, he said.

a final decision, he added showing interest to join the 15 kg of ganja seized at railway station

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) has launched Operation Narcos to curb the smuggling of narcotic substances.

As part of this drive, which commenced at 8:00 AM on Friday, security agencies RPF and GRP at Tirupati Railway Station conducted intensive checks at luggage counters, the parcel office, trains, and platforms.

During the checks, Dog Vayu of RPF, a specially trained canine adept at detecting narcotics, identified banned sub-



stances in an unclaimed trolley bag and a college bag left and 5 of Tirupati Railway

unattended on Platforms No. 4

Tirupati Urban MRO Peddireddy Bhagyalakshmi joined the operation and supervised the seizure of 15.124 kg of cannabis, valued at approximately Rs 3,78,100. She lauded the remarkable talent of Dog Vayu and emphasized the need for such continued efforts to prevent the smuggling of cannabis and other narcotic substances. The drive highlights the Security agencies (RPF & GRP) commitment to safeguarding public spaces and ensuring a drugfree environment.

1.5 kg ganja, 16 kg copper wire, 17 bikes seized; 7 arrested



PNS ONGOLE

The police arrested seven notorious thieves in two separate cases and recovered 1.5 kg of ganja, 6 kg of copper wire and 17 motorcycles from them.

SP AR Damodar told the media here on Friday that a police team arrested three notorious thieves Pola Johnson, Kunchala Lingesh, Gurunatham Lasar when the trio were moving suspiciously at Kurichedu the police arrested them.

They used to steal electric transformers and extract copper wire from them and sell

them. Tripurantakam CI Asan and Talluru SI Mallikharjun arrested the trio and registered cases u/s 20(b) r/w 8(c) NDPS Act-1985.

The SP said that the arrested thieves committed many offences of stealing transformers, breaking it to extract copper wire. Pola Johnson was involved in 13 offences. The trio got addicted to vices and funded their vices they started breaking electric transformers, extracting copper wire from them and selling them. The SP appreciated CI Asan, SI Mallikharjun and ASI Mohan Rao for arresting the notorious thieves. Meanwhile, the Darshi

police in the district arrested four bike lifters and recovered 17 motorcycles from their possession. SP Damodar told the media that a police team led by Darshi DSP Lakshminarayana and CI Rama Rao conducted checking of vehicles on the outskirts.

They noticed the four bike lifters going on two bikes in a suspicious manner. When the police questioned them they confessed to the crimes. On the information provided by them, the police recovered 17 motorcycles worth Rs 12 lakh.



ACROSS THE STATES



100 underprivileged kids given solar lanterns

ne hundred underprivileged children were given solar lanterns as part of a public awareness drive about the use of green energy at a programme by Science City, a unit of the National Council of Science Museums. The children got hands-on experience and fabrication of solar lanterns at the programme and acquired a new skill, organisers said in a statement on Friday. Science City, Kolkata Director Anurag Kumar said, "This event has provided us with an opportunity to engage the community in discovering the potential of solar energy, equipping participants with the skills and insights needed to embrace green energy solutions." The solar lanterns were distributed to the little ones on November 14 on the occasion of the Children's Day at the programme themed 'Green Energy, Clean Energy'. The 100 underprivileged children, hailing from different parts of West Bengal, were brought by civil society



'SIT formed to probe into tab fund diversion scam'

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday said that her government has formed a Special Investigating Team (SIT) to probe into a fraud in which government funds sent to bank accounts of students for purchasing tabs or mobile phones were diverted elsewhere. Six people were arrested in this connection, she said while speaking to journalists at the Bagdogra airport in the northern part of the state before flying back to Kolkata. The government had sent Rs 10,000 to the bank accounts of each higher secondary student of government schools to purchase a tablet or mobile, but several of them did not receive the money due to alleged malpractices. "An SIT has been formed. Our administration is very strong. They have already arrested six people and will do whatever is required. The group (involved in the case) is from Maharashtra and Rajasthan



Women voters outnumber men in Jharkhand polls

omen voters outnumbered men in phase 1 of the Jharkhand assembly elections with 37 of 43 seats recording a higher women turnout, Election Commission said on Friday. The phase 1 of polls held on November 13 also saw a voter turnout of 66.65 per cent, which was 2.75 per cent higher than the turnout recorded in the 2019 assembly polls in these 43 seats. "Women voters participated enthusiastically, surpassing the overall male turnout by 4.8 per cent, underscoring their increasing involvement in shaping the democratic process," EC said. Jharkhand chief electoral officer has confirmed that all polling parties have returned safely and scrutiny has been completed in the presence of the candidates or their authorised agents. Final votes polled will be available postcounting with the counting of postal ballots. Postal ballots include those given to service voters, absentee voters -those above 85 years of age, persons with disability, those deployed in essential services and voters on election duty.

Parivarvaad: Oppn on kin of VIPs packed in UP House

PNS LUCKNOW

Following an expose by a leading English daily, according to which one fifth of the vacancies in Uttar Pradesh Assembly and Council were filled with kin of VIPs, the opposition parties have accused the BJP of 'parivarvaad (dynastic politics)', a charge that the ruling party has often hurled at the opposition.

According to an expose by The Indian Express at a time when aspirantss of the Provincial Civil Services and Review Officers (ROs) and Assistant Review Officers (AROs) preliminary exams, of the 186 vacancies for the posts of ROs and AROs, 38 candidates who were selected had links with officials and politi-

An estimated 2.5 lakh aspirants had applied for the post. Their tests were held in two rounds in 2020-2021 to fill up administrative posts in the UP Legislative Assembly and UP Legislative Council.

The newspaper report claimed that those who successfully made it to the coveted list included the then UP Speaker's



PRO and his brother, a former minister's nephew, son of Legislative Council secretariat in-charge, four relatives of Legislative Assembly secretariat in-charge, son of Deputy Lokayukta, son and daughter of Department of Parliamentary

mer OSD to two chief ministers. When contacted, the then Speaker of the UP Assembly Hriday Narayan Dixit told PTÍ,

Affairs in-charge and son of for-

"The matter is pending in the court and hence, it would not be appropriate for me to comment on this."

Principal Secretary to the UP Assembly Pradeep Dubey could not be contacted for comments despite repeated efforts.

Member of UP Legislative Council (MLC) of the Samajwadi Party (SP), Ashutosh Sinha told PTI, "The matter is

pending in the court and it is all a matter of probe. But it seems that the BJP indulges in 'parivaarvad' (dynastic politics) when it comes to distribution of tickets during elections or when selecting candidates for jobs.'

UP Congress leader Ashok Singh said, "The matter is pending in court and it should be fairly probed. All those guilty must be identified and given befitting punishment.'



ED seizes Rs 8.8 cr from 'lottery king'

PNS CHENNAI

The Enforcement Directorate on Friday seized Rs 8.8 crore in cash from the corporate office of Chennai-based 'lottery king' Santiago Martin, officials said.

Martin was the single biggest donor to political parties with over Rs 1,300 crore in nowscrapped electoral bonds.

The searches were carried out in multiple states as part of a money laundering investiga-tion against the 'lottery king', officials said.

The action comes after the Madras High Court recently allowed the ED to proceed against Martin as the Tamil Nadu Police had decided to close the predicate or primary FIR against him and a few others and

The searches were carried out in multiple states as part of a money laundering investigation against the 'lottery king', officials said

a lower court accepted this

Officials said at least 20 premises linked to Martin, his son-in-law Aadhav Arjun and associates in Chennai and Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu, Faridabad in Haryana, Ludhiana in Punjab and Kolkata in West Bengal were being searched as part of a "comprehensive" action against his business empire.

Prez, PM, leaders pay tributes to tribal icon Birsa Munda

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and leaders across political parties on Friday paid tributes to tribal icon Birsa Munda on his 150th birth anniversary, which is celebrated as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas.

Birsa Munda, known as 'Dharti Aba' (father of the land), was born in Jharkhand on November 15, 1875. He had led the tribal uprising against the British and died at the age of 25 while in custody.

Modi took to social media, describing Munda as a national hero who sacrificed everything to protect the honour of the motherland. "Bhagwan Birsa Munda ji

sacrificed everything to protect the honour and glory of the motherland. My deepest respects to him on the auspianniversary," Modi posted on The PM also greeted the

people of Jharkhand on the state's foundation day, acknowledging the sacrifices of the tribal community in shaping the state and its develop-

In another post on X, Modi said, "Many best wishes to all my brothers and sisters of Jharkhand on the foundation munity never got its due.



day of the state. This land irrigated by the struggles and sacrifices of the tribal community has always made the country proud. I wish that this state, full of natural resources, moves ahead at a fast pace on the path of development."

Addressing a rally in Bihar's Jamui, Modi charged previous Congress governments in the undermine the contributions of tribal leaders to the freedom movement "so that only one party and one family got away with the credit".

Modi asserted that he worshipped the 'Adivasi Samaj' and his government took the decision to celebrate Munda's birth anniversary as 'Janjaatiya Gaurav Divas' (the day of glory for tribals) because the com-

"Tribals have played their role in preserving the country's cultural heritage since times immemorial. It was the 'Adivasi Samaj' that helped the evolu-tion of Lord Rama from a prince to a god," the PM said.
"Tribals also played a signif-

icant role in the struggle for Independence. But the previous governments deliberately that all credit was given to one party and one family," alleged Modi, who spoke in the presence of BJP allies like Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and

Union minister Chirag Paswan. President Murmu, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla offered floral tributes at the statue of Birsa Munda at the Prerna Sthal in Parliament

BIHAR BRIDGE COLLAPSE INCIDENTS

PIL petitioner seeks to bring on SC records news reports

PNS NEW DELHI

A PIL petitioner has moved the Supreme Court seeking its nod to bring on record various news reports and additional documents to highlight dilapidated conditions of bridges in Bihar.

A bench comprising the then Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, since retired, and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra had on July 29 this year sought responses from the Bihar government and others, including the National Highway Authorities of India (NHAI), on the PIL filed by lawyer Brajesh

On November 4, the top court agreed to consider listing for hearing the PIL that raised concerns about the safety and longevity of bridges in Bihar after several of them collapsed

The plea is likely to be heard

on November 18. Singh on November 14 filed an interim application in his pending PILs seeking to bring on record as many as 15 news reports relating to poor condi-

tions of bridges in the state. "I have filed an IA (interim application) for placing additional documents before the concerned bench as in the state of Bihar the bridges and culverts



idated conditions and they are collapsing on a routine basis," Singh said. or demolished based on its He referred to a recent inci-

dent of Bihar's Nalanda district where one 18-year-old boy died after falling into the river from a dilapidated bridge.

The lawyer said the state overnment and the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) have not filed their responses till date despite the top court issuing the notices in

He claimed recently on November 3 one under-construction bridge collapsed in Darbhanga district and the company concerned was seen removing that debris in the night secretly.

The PIL sought directions for

a structural audit and setting up of an expert panel to

identify bridges that can be either strengthened

findings.
Besides the state and the NHAI, the top court had also issued notices to the road construction department's addi-Rajya Pul Nirman Nigam Limited chairperson and rural works department's additional chief secretary.

Ten incidents of bridge collapse have been reported in Bihar's Siwan, Saran, Madhubani, Araria, East Champaran and Kishanganj districts during May, June and July this year. Many claimed that heavy rainfall might have led to the incidents.

Punjab Police bust narco smuggling, arms cartel

PNS CHANDIGARH

The Amritsar police have busted trans-border narco smuggling and arms cartel with the arrest of two persons.

Police have seized over 8 kg heroin, 6 kg opium, 13.1 kg chemical and four pistols along with 17 cartridges from their possession, said Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav on Friday.

Those arrested have been identified as Aditya Pratap alias Kaka (23), a resident of Bhalla Colony in Chheharta, Amritsar and Shambhu Kabir (35), a resident of Prem Nagar, Tarn Taran Road in Amritsar, he said.

DGP Yadav said that both the accused have criminal history as cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act and Arms Act are registered against them, while, accused Shambhu Kabir is also wanted in a murder case, according to an official statement.

He said that further investigations are going on to establish backward and forward linkages in this case. Meanwhile, Commissioner of

Police, Amritsar, Gurpreet Singh Bhullar said that following reliable inputs about the involvement of



accused Aditya alias Kaka in police station laid a trap and smuggling of weapons, police arrested him from Band Bhatha teams from Islamabad (Amritsar) at Prem Nagar Road in Kot

Khalsa, Amritsar and recovered two pistols,? including .32 bore and .30 bore, and 13 live cartridges from his possession.

He said that during follow-up investigations in this case, name of other accused Shambhu Kabir was also cropped up, following which an operation was launched to nab him.

Kabir was arrested from Old Gas Godown at Guru Ki Wadali Road in Kot Khalsa, Amritsar.

Police teams have recovered 275 gm heroin, 11.1 kg chemical (used to mix with heroin) and one .32 bore pistol from his possession, Bhullar said.



first all-women battalion in CISF

PNS CHANDIGARH

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has approved the establishment of the first all-women battalion of CISF, aimed at enhancing women's role in the central forces.

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has been a preferred choice for women who wish to serve the nation, constituting over seven per cent of the force at present.

The addition of a "Mahila Battalion" would encourage more aspiring young women across the country to join the force and serve the nation, a CISF official said on Friday. It will give a new identity to women in CISF.

The CISF headquarters has started preparations for the early recruitment, training and selection of locations for the headquarters of the new Battalion.

The training is being specially designed to create an elite Battalion capable of performing multifarious roles as commanders in VIP security and also security of airports and Delhi Metro Rail duties.

BONE OF CONTENTION IN MARITAL DISPUTE

1951 Rolls Royce ordered by Nehru for Baroda 'maharani'

PNS NEW DELHI

A 1951 model antique handmade classic Rolls Royce car, a single model till date valuing more than Rs 2.5 crore at present and ordered by first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru for the erstwhile 'maharani' of Baroda, has become a major bone of contention in a matrimonial dispute

in the Supreme Court. The dispute of the estranged couple has reached the apex court after the Gwalior bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court quashed a case lodged by the woman against her husband for

alleged dowry demand and cru-

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan, which on Wednesday heard the plea of the woman through senior advocate Vibha Datta Makhija, asked both the parties to explore the possibility of settlement through mediation.

"If both settle the dispute amicably then there is nothing like that," Justice Kant observed, and asked the parties to give one more try to settle the dispute.

noted, counsel/counsel for the parties jointly state that though media-



ferent forums, however, it is worth trying under the aegis of the Supreme Court Mediation Centre to give one more opportunity to the parties for amicable resolution of their dispute."

Considering Makhija's request, which was agreed to by the other side, the bench appointed senior advocate R Basant as a mediator.

"We, accordingly, appoint R Basant, senior advocate and former judge of the High Court of Kerala to be the mediator. The parties may contact R Basant to fix a date for interaction, as may be convenient to all sides," the bench ordered and posted the matter for further hearing on

December 18. The woman, who is a permanent resident of Gwalior, claimed that she belongs to a highly reputed family whose ancestor was admiral in the navy of Chhatarpati Shivaji Maharaj and was declared ruler of Konkan region.

The husband belongs to a family which has an Army background and runs an educational institution in Madhya Pradesh.

The woman claimed that her estranged husband and his family had continuously harassed her with dowry demands of Rolls Royce car and a flat in Mumbai, a charge denied by the man.

Irked barking dog, man attacks mother-daughter duo

PNS ■ THANE

Angry over his neighbour's pet dog barking at him, a man allegedly molested a woman by tearing her dress and also thrashed her along with her elderly mother in Thane city of Maharashtra, police said. The incident took place on Wednesday around 4.30 pm at Takarda in Kasarvadavli locality of the city, they said. As per the complaint lodged by the 39-year-old victim, her pet dog barked at her neighbour, Gautam, when he was passing by

25, picked up a stone to attack

"The victim woman's 64-vear-old mother reprimanded him over his act. On seeing this, Gautam's mother and another woman started arguing with the victims The three accused beat up the mother-daughter duo and molested them by tearing the complainant's dress." he said. Based on the complaint, a case was registered against Gautam, his mother Maya (50) and one Nayana Thapar (40) under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) sections 74 (assault or use of criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), her house. Angry over it, the man, 115(2) and 352 he said.

the animal, an official said.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Right to breathe

As Delhi air turns toxic, Delhiites face severe health risks; the capital needs long-term solutions, not knee-jerk reactions

elhi's air quality has plummeted to hazardous levels, with the city's Air Quality Index (AQI) soaring to a staggering 428, marking the worst pollution levels in the country. As a result, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has announced the enforcement of stringent Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)-3 restrictions starting at 8 AM on Friday. On Thursday, the 24-hour AQI for the city reached 428, signaling a "severe" air quality category, which poses serious health risks to the population, especially children, the elderly and those with pre-existing respiratory conditions. The current AQI level of 428 puts Delhi in the "Severe" category, indicating that the air is dangerously polluted and immediate action is required to prevent further deterioration of public health. In response to the deteriorating air quality, the CAQM has imposed the following GRAP-3 restrictions to mitigate the pollution levels: All non-essential construction and demolition activities in Delhi and the surrounding National Capital Region



(NCR) are suspended to prevent dust and particulate matter from exacerbating the pollution. Vehicles that do not meet the latest emission norms are banned from the roads. Specifically, petrol vehicles that do not comply with BS-III (Bharat Stage III) standards and diesel vehicles that fall under BS-IV norms are prohibited from operating within Delhi and parts of NCR.

These measures are expected to significantly reduce the amount of pollutants being emitted into the air, especially from construction sites and older vehicles, which are major contributors to air pollution. The current spike in pollution levels to a combination of factors. The calm winds and a sharp drop in temperature have trapped

pollutants in the air, preventing them from dispersing. The weather conditions have created a 'smog blanket' over the city, intensifying the effects of vehicular emissions, industrial pollution, and the burning of crop stubble in neighbouring states. The Supreme Court of India has taken note of the deteriorating air quality and has scheduled a hearing on November 18 to discuss further enforcement measures. The court has emphasised that every citizen has the fundamental right to breathe clean air, as protected under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. Delhi's pollution crisis has now drawn significant national and international attention. While the immediate focus is on enforcing short-term measures like the GRAP-3 restrictions, experts argue that lasting solutions require systemic changes, including stricter emissions standards, better waste management, and a push for cleaner public transportation options. As the city continues to grapple with the toxic smog, Delhi residents are urged to stay indoors as much as possible, avoid strenuous outdoor activities, and wear N95 masks to protect themselves from the harmful effects of the air pollution. In the coming days, it is hoped that both weather conditions and Govt interventions will bring some relief, but the long-term health of the city's residents depends on sustained efforts to curb the sources of pollution.



Devotees take a holy dip in the Ganga river at a ghat on the occasion of 'Kartik Purnima' festival, in Varanasi

US-Iran tensions: War clouds over West Asia



With regional stability hanging in the balance, the world watches anxiously as West Asia braces for the potential fallout of escalating hostilities

n July 3, 1988, the US Navy's USS Vincennes, in an act of brazen military overreach, shot down Iran Air Flight 655, a civilian airliner carrying 290 passengers, over the Persian Gulf. The Navy's justification-that this was an "unintentional error"- belies the harsh reality: this was not a mistake, but rather an emblematic instance of Western indifference to the lives of those deemed expendable.

The Navy mistook a commercial flight for an enemy fighter jet, launching two surface-to-air missiles and killing all aboard. Yet, the US response was not to acknowledge a moral failing, but to double down on its denial, offering neither a genuine apology nor reparations to the victims' families. This tragedy was a grim reminder of the West's longstanding practice of dehumanising the peoples of West Asia in its relentless pursuit of geopolitical dominance. For the Iranian people, it was not merely a military blunder; it was a stark dismissal of their humanity, reinforcing the deeply entrenched belief in Western circles that the lives of those beyond its borders are, at best, collateral damage in the pursuit of power.

The echoes of this tragedy persist today, amplified by the volatile relationship between the US and Iran. Just days after Donald Trump's re-election, the US government claimed to have uncovered a plot by Iran to assassinate the president. Iran vehemently rejected these allegations, with Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi dismissing them as a "third-rate comedy" and accusing the US of fabricating a narrative to justify further aggression. Araqchi's deri-sion-mocking the absurdity of an assassin "sitting in Iran and talking online to the FBI"-renewed the deep mistrust that defines the US-Iran relationship.

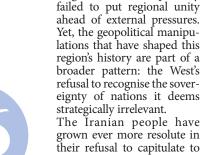
w that Trump has second term and will become the 47th President of the USA, it is clear that his foreign policy, especially towards Iran, could become far more aggressive, with disastrous consequences. His planned appointments of hawkish figures



This looming disaster cannot be divorced from the historical legacy of Western interference in West Asia. Iran's relationship with the West has been shaped by centuries of betrayal and manipulation. A defining moment in this fraught history was the CIAbacked coup of 1953, which ousted Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh after he sought to nationalise Iran's oil industry.

This act, orchestrated by Western powers, reinstated the Shah's brutal regime, sowing the seeds for the 1979 Islamic Revolution. This history of intervention, driven by oil and geopolitics, instilled deep sense of betrayal in the Iranian consciousness a sentiment that still defines Iran's foreign policy today.

Divided along sectarian lines and often opportunistic in their foreign policy, Iran's



neighbours have repeatedly

external demands. This isolation, initially born of necessity, has also transformed into a profound existential struggle. DIVIDED ALONG In response, Iran has sought SECTARIAN LINES alliances with nations like China and Russia and forged AND OFTEN relationships with non-state actors in the region. These OPPORTUNISTIC IN alliances-born not of ideology, THEIR FOREIGN but of pragmatic necessityhave allowed Iran to exert POLICY, IRAN'S regional influence, shifting the balance of power in ways the **NEIGHBOURS HAVE** West never anticipated. REPEATEDLY FAILED In his first term, Trump used TO PUT REGIONAL

a two-pronged strategy to weaken Iran: connecting other Arab nations in favour of Israel through the Abraham Accords, a treaty engineered by his Jewish-origin son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and secondly, targeting key personalities who and particularly the nations of enabled Iran's influence in the West Asia, must strive to find region while funding efforts by Iranians living abroad working against Iran.

In his second term, which could be more refined and sharpened by the experiences he earned in the last eight years-both in office and outside the White House-his actions could become far more unpredictable. Consequently, the potential for war against Iran is no longer a distant fear; it is a rapidly approaching reality. It would affirm the West's view that the lives of Iranians, like those across the Global South, are expendable in pursuit of geopolitical dominance, making this a war of choice, not necessity, with existential stakes for Iran.

In this context, the responsibility to avoid war does not lie solely with the U.S. or Iran, but with all the nations of the region, including those of the Arab world.

Despite their differing beliefs, histories, and alliances, it is incumbent upon Arab nations to take a united stand against the spectre of war. The voices of Arab leaders, particularly those who have long been caught in the geopolitical crossfire of the US-Iran conflict, must rise in defence of regional peace and stability. Divisions must be set aside in favour of collective action that prioritises the preservation of life and sovereignty over ideological differences. The world, a path of diplomacy and dia logue, to avoid yet another destructive war that will further tear apart the very fabric of the region.

(The writer is a journalist and author; Views are personal)

Wooden pallets: Turning timber into treasure



Circular economy practices are changing the future of wooden pallets, from innovative recycling methods to tech-driven solutions

700den pallets are indispensable in modern logistics, widely used to support the transportation and storage of goods across various industries, including fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), pharmaceuticals, automotive, chemicals and more.

These durable platforms are designed to handle heavy loads and protect products during shipping, simplifying the process of storage and handling. The demand for wooden pallets is immense, with countries like India requiring an estimated 207.8 million units. With such extensive use, an important question arises: what happens to these pallets when they reach the end of their lifecy-

By giving new life to old pallets, industries can reduce waste, conserve resources, and promote economic growth while protecting the environment. There are numerous innovative ways to repurpose and recycle wooden pallets, which contribute to building a more sustainable and efficient supply

Repair and Refurbishment:

One of the most effective ways to enhance sustainability in the wooden pallet industry is through repair and refurbishment. While pallets generally have a lifespan of 12 to 18 months, many can be used longer with regular maintenance.

Instead of discarding damaged pallets, companies can inspect and repair them by replacing broken slats and restoring their structural integrity. This process helps conserve raw materials and lowers the carbon footprint associated with manufacturing new pallets. Adopting repair programmes also reduces the demand for fresh timber, which helps prevent deforestation and minimises

Repurposing, Upcycling, and Recycling

When wooden pallets are no longer fit for their primary responsible forest managepurpose, they can still serve a wide range of functions through repurposing, upcycling, or recycling. Repurposing transforms discarded pallets into furniture, decor, or art, extending their lifespan and keeping them out of landfills. This also supports local economies by providing artisans with reclaimed wood to create unique, eco-friendly products. When repurposing or upcycling are no longer options, recycling can turn pallets into products like particleboard or mulch, which conserves resources and reduces the need for new timber. Together, these strategies help minimise waste and lower environmental impact, encouraging responsible use of resources. Sustainable Sourcing as a

Foundation for Circularity To fully align with circular economy principles, the wood used in pallet manufacturing should be sustainably sourced. Certification programs, such as the Forest Štewardship Council (FSC[®]) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), play a

ment. These certifications verify that forests are managed sustainably, protecting biodiversity, preventing illegal logging, and minimising environmental impact. The Role of Technology in

Enhancing Circularity

Technology is increasingly central to the transformation of wooden pallets, with advancements like the Internet of Things and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) improving pallet management. These technologies allow pallets to be embedded with sensors, which enable real-time tracking of location, condition, and usage. This visibility optimises inventory management and reduces losses. By tracking pallets through their entire lifecycle, businesses can maximise reuse, ensuring

that pallets are returned,

repaired, and repurposed effi-

ciently. Such technology-dri-

ven strategies extend the lifes-

pan of pallets, ensuring they remain in the supply chain as long as possible (The wrier is CEO & MD at Jay Wood Industry; views are personal)

SIMPLIFY TAX SYSTEM

Madam — The article on simplifying tax structures presents an acceptable argument (14-11-24). The successive governments seem to be under utter confusion and all the changes are found to be further complicating the tax structure rather than making it simple to understand and comply with. GST is further a complicated one in every aspect. The government is not clear even in a matter like what is to be taxed. Essentials are taxed; condoms and bangles are exempted. Falling sick is taxed. Medicines, diagnostic devices and insurance premiums are taxed as if falling sick is a matter of comfort and luxury. Even in the case of direct tax, the government's sense of vengeance over the salaried section is clearly displayed. This section is earning money

to spend and save. Both are good and help build a better economy of the country. But they are made to pay not less than 30 per cent that he was the been charged culprit health risks. The factory is releasing as income tax besides GST on every spending. Besides forgoing a huge part of salary, they have to manage the hardships caused by untamed inflation also. There is no answer on the relevance of toll collections. A road is laid and its expenses are met with one year of toll collection. But collections are carried on for decades and they are never closed. It is this confusion in the mind of the government that drives earners to seek ways and means to avoid tax and accumulate black money. It is high time for the government to overhaul the entire tax system and make it people-

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

STOP ILLEGAL DEMOLITIONS

Madam— The Supreme Court intervened that no government is allowed to rule with a bulldozer, by blazing the houses of the miscreants and culprits

Ensure doctors' safety

UNITY AHEAD OF

EXTERNAL

PRESSURES

iolence against doctors and medical staff by patients' relatives is a serious issue that has been on the rise. Hospitals often deal with life-and-death situations, leading to heightened emotions; for example, when a patient's health condition worsens or dies, relatives may react violently out of grief and frustration. This can be avoided by informing the patient's condition when it wors-

under some legal allegations. So far, the UP government has been popularising itself with the Buldozer Raaj.

The use of bulldozers to demolish the house of the culprits, to give them a lesson, is turning into the way of governance in Uttar Pradesh. The demolishing of the houses and illegal land encroachment must be followed by a legal procedure of waving official legal notice at least 15 days prior and with full opportunity to appeal by the affected party. The move by the apex court will add more transparency to the justice mechanism, and this intervention by the judiciary will assist the innocent to save the sweet home from the red tape bureaucrats and political leaders, who many times hurt the innocent to show their political status and power.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

POLLUTION FROM WASTE

like this. The Supreme Court guidelines Madam — Instead of resolving environpace respect to the dreams of the mental problems, Delhi's ambition to home of every single individual, despite convert garbage into energy is creating

uation. Sometimes families believe that adequate and proper treatment was not provided, which can be cleared by informing them about the disease and line of treatment being provided. Clear and compassionate communication is crucial to satisfying and pacifying

Some patients or their relatives may have mental health issues or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, which can lead to violent tendencies, which need to be noticed and taken care of by the attending medical staff. Overcrowded hospitals, long waiting times, and inadequate basic facilities add to the frustration of patients and their families, resulting in violence. Hence, a multifaceted approach is required to tackle violence against medical professionals in hospitals

O Prasada Rao | Hyderabad

harmful smoke and ash into the surrounding neighborhoods, despite its goal of reducing landfill waste through rubbish incineration. Significant pollution has resulted, exposing locals to dangerously high concentrations of heavy metals like lead, cadmium, manganese, and arsenic-up to 19 times higher than what the EPA recommends.

Cardiovascular and respiratory disorders, as well as developmental hazards for children, are among the health effects. The absence of crucial safety measures at the plant is criticised by experts. Respiratory problems are common among the locals, and ash contamination has reached neighboring residences, schools, and parks. The intended "green" solution might make Delhi's pollution problem worse if regulatory action is not taken.

Divyansh Pal | Ujjain

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FIRST COLUMN

THE RISE AND **FALL OF EGO**

True success lies not in fame or power but in humility and understanding one's purpose of life



RAVI VALLURI

challenging task or an idea normally releases endorphins, which stimulate the number of the side. We become attached which stimulate the human mind to think out of the box, and and reach the summit. But there is a flip side. We become attached to the product or the activity flow; consequently, the mind gets entrapped by the adulation. A vivacious model with gravitas, known for scorching the ramp, was chosen for a cinematic role. She executed the role with aplomb and was soon nominated for several awards and managed to win some of them, including the Best New Face award.

The actress was bestowed with several honours and in the process bagged prestigious roles. It was indeed a heady feeling. She was feted at various parties and became a celebrity overnight. However, there was no end to her avarice as her mind and body craved more attention. The "I, Me" syndrome dominated her mind and she spent hours before the mirror, taking selfies, adoring her ravishing beauty and success. At her peril, she ignored the alarm bells, the death knell knocking at her door. She got hooked on alcohol, money, drugs and sex. The talented artiste lost her equanimity, equipoise and equilibrium in a state of feverishness and in the process attracted opprobrium.

The meteoric rise of the artiste was short-lived and her obnoxious behaviour was not acceptable to the industry she was soon stripped of meaty roles and sure enough, lost power and fame. Tragedy struck



in a cruel form as her life was snuffed out at a tender age when she succumbed after a car crash in an inebriated state. Who was to be blamed for this irrational behaviour? False egos play havoc on human minds when the power of discrimination gets obfuscated in the razzmatazz and dazzle of "doership". The breed of such people extends among politicians, entrepreneurs and seekers as they are entrapped by doership and cannot let go and remain hum-

They focus on certain immediate outcomes and in the bargain, lose the plot and larger picture. In the political sphere too, parties become dependent on the success and megalomania of an individual and lose their core strengths of inner democracy and grassroots contact. The spiritual world is not spared either. Seekers, to begin with, tread the path with great courage and conviction and have immense faith in the Master and the path. They unfailingly participate in sadhana, seva, Satsang, meditation and other activities of the organisation. The Master (Guru) in his magnanimity encourages all his followers. Some progress on the path and others fall aside as the rigour and regimen of spirituality are arduous and crammed with disturbances before the seeker obtains peace of mind. Soon the feverish mind of the seeker feels proximity to the Master and in the process, rubs fellow seekers the wrong way. Some seekers 'like' these photographs on Facebook to ingratiate themselves with those purportedly "close", in anticipation that it could act as a passport to have a glimpse of the Guru. A true spiritual leader or Master cautions the faithful not to be trapped in the quagmire of Guru Mandal. "Under the influence of false ego, one thinks himself to be the doer of activities, while all the activities are carried out by nature as a natural process," expounds Lord Krishna to Arjuna. A genuine seeker should realise that we are infinitesimal in this vast universe. Our acts and deeds, if truly positive and humble, will automatically draw us closer to the Guru and the Laws of the Universe.

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

Bangladesh: A nation's press under pressure



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

Attacks on media houses and journalists continue notwithstanding the interim Govt's claim that it is committed to upholding media freedom

he media's independence is under severe attack in Bangladesh under the interim government headed by chief advisor Muhammad Yunus. The attack is two-pronged. One of these is directed against media houses and journalists perceived to have been supporters of the Awami League and the government when Sheikh Hasina headed both. The second targets non-aligned media establishments, editors and journalists, including those known for standing up to the Awami League government's repressive media regime. The objective is to pressure them into toeing the line laid down by the young sparks dominating the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement (ADSM) and rabidly anti-Awami League and fundamentalist Islamist elements in sections of the media and the interim govern-

Coming to media houses, eight channels were attacked on August 5, 2024, itself, when Sheikh Hasina left for India. Among them was Ekattor TV's office in Baridhara, Dhaka, which was vandalised and burnt down; also attacked on the same day in Dhaka were the premises of Samay TV, and ATN Bangla. On August 19, an armed mob attacked and severely damaged the establishment of East West Media group, which runs Kaler Kantha (Voice of the times) Bangladesh Pratidin (Bangladesh daily), both Bengali-language newspapers, Daily Sun, an English-language daily, News24BD, a television news channel, Radio Capital, a radio station, and Banglanews24, an online Bengali daily. The mob assaulted journalists, injured a woman journalist and harassed women employees.

As for journalists, according to Reporters Without Borders, a globally-respected international NGO headquartered in Paris, "baseless accusations of killing protesters have been brought against nearly 140 journalists. Twenty-five have been charged with "crimes against humanity. Many of them have gone into hiding because they fear being arrested and jailed.

A number of journalists have been arrested and jailed. Their ranks include Shakil Ahmed, former head of news at television channel Ekattor TV, and Farzana Rupa, its former chief correspondent, who were arrested from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Dhaka, on August 21, 2024, when they were about to board a Turkish Airlines flight to Paris via Istanbul, along with their daughter. The two of them remain in prison, as do Mozammel Haque Babu, chief executive officer of Ekattor TV and Shyamal Datta, editor of Bhorer Kagaz (Paper at Dawn) who were arrested on September 15. In a letter emailed recently to Muhammad Yunus, Jodie Ginsburg, chief executive officer of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), a respected NGO promoting press freedom and defending the rights of journalists worldwide, urged him to ensure, among other things, respect for the "procedural rights of four incarcerated pro-Awami League journalists: Farzana Rupa, Shakil ATTACKED ON THE Ahmed, Mozammel Babu and Shyamal Dutta, including their right to a free trial." The arrests are hardly surprising. According to a report in the Dhaka Tribune dated September 19, 2024, the ADSM leader, Nahid Islam who, besides his other hats, is advisor in charge of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, thundered at a press conference on the previous day that the "instigators" of the July-August massacre





EIGHT CHANNELS WERE ATTACKED ON AUGUST 5, 2024, ITSELF, WHEN SHEIKH HASINA LEFT FOR INDIA. AMONG THEM WAS EKATTOR TV'S OFFICE IN BARIDHARA, DHAKA, WHICH WAS VANDALIZED AND BURNT DOWN: ALSO SAME DAY IN PREMISES OF SAMAY TV, AND ATN BANGLA

[of protesters] would be brought to justice no matter whether they identified themselves as journalists, writers and artists. Doubtless, the interim government was to decide as to who were to be brought to jus-

Just two examples would show how utterly arbitrary and vindictive such decisions have been. The one is the continued incarceration of Shahriar Kabir, an internationallyrespected human rights activist, champion of secular humanism, advocate of the bringing war criminals of 1971 to justice, author and journalist. The second is the arrest. on November 6, 2024, of the noted television actor, Shomi Kaiser, daughter of Shahidullah and Panna Kaiser. Shahidullah, a noted writer and journalists, disappeared after being abducted by Pakistani army personnel and their collaborators from the ranks of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami and allied organisations like al-Badr, al-Shams and Razakars. His brother, Zaheer Raihan, also disappeared while looking for him. Panna Kaiser was an Awami League Member of Parliament (1996-2001) who worked in the area of youth welfare. Apart from arrests on false charges, the cancellation of accreditation cards, which has reached a total of 167 at the time of writing, is being used as a weapon against journalists. Such cards are important for identifying oneself as a journalist, and securing entry into restricted areas, government offices and meetings. Referring to the matter, Celia Mercier, Head of South Asia Office

of Reporters Without Borders,

another globally-respected NGO whose mission is to act for freedom, pluralism and independence of journalism, and defend those who embody these ideals, has said,

"The decision to rescind the accreditation cards of journalists considered close to the previous government is politically-motivated and punitive, and has the effect of intimidating the press. It encourages self-censorship and threatens the very existence of opposition media. This decision by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry [of Bangladesh] is incomprehensible, a climate in which channels and coming just a week after it took a positive step by establishing a mechanism for reporting cases of harassment against journalists. We urge the ministry to return to this more constructive path by establishing a regulated procedure for issuing and rescinding press cards, by ensuring that cases of harassment are examined impartially, and by putting a final stop to political reprisals against media professionals."

As for pressures on independent media establishments, editors and journalists, the aim is to make them toe the line laid down by the young sparks dominating the ADSM, and rabidly anti-Awami League and fundamentalist Islamist elements in sections of the media and the interim government. The weapons are threats and harangues. At a meeting to discuss "Role of Media in Creating Fascist Narrative: A Review," Mahmudur Rahman, editor of Amar Desh (My Country) criticized two national newspapers, Prothom Alo and The Daily Star, for their coverage and com-

mentary on Sheikh Mujib and Sheikh Hasina, suggesting that these outlets are paving the way for fascism by creating contrasting narratives. He further said that the media had fostered hatred towards Islam, misrepresented societal divisions, and perpetuated a narrative of eternal gratitude towards India for its role in Bangladesh's liberation. Significantly, Mahmudur Rahman said this in the presence of Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus' press secretary, Shafiqul Alam.

Events like this have been creating publications, including the two of Bangladesh's leading paper which Rahman criticised, are sought to be put under compulsion to conform to the kind of reportage and com-ment the interim government expects of them.

All this makes a mockery of the interim government's assertions that it is for the freedom of the press and its moves like the setting up of a commission for hearing allegations of harassment by journalists. An editorial in The Daily Star, datelined November 7, 2024, delivered a damning indictment of the situation and the interim government's role when it said, "In our pursuit of fair, anti-discriminatory Bangladesh, few values are as vital as press freedom. We are, therefore, concerned by the persistent intimidation, harassment, and censorship faced by journalists, which shows how the media landscape remains fraught with obstacles."

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer; the views expressed

Punjab by-elections: A Stage for dynastic politics, defections and defamatory rhetoric In the run-up to the Punjab Assembly by-elections 2024, political leaders seem to have sidestepped pro-people issues

Plections are usually a good opportunity for political leaders to make public statements and seek public feedback on their propeople works and policies. But the scene in the Punjab Assembly by-elections 2024 eludes the expectation.

Along with other states in India, there are by-elections in four Assembly constituencies of Punjab for which voting is to be held on November 20, 2024. In the absence of any public-interest manifestos, political parties rely on the candidate-winnability supporting political apostasy and dynastic politics. Most political leaders in the campaign are relying on defamatory garru-



SUKHDEV SINGH

cal parties and the confidence deficit in their leaders is so high that the oldest and traditionally strongest political party of the state, Shiromani Akali Dal, has preferred to not contest the elections.

A conglomeration of its disgruntled leaders, the Akali Dal Reform Movement, is also out of the election contest. The lous speeches and irresponsi- contest is triangular among the ble false claims. The trust ruling party in the state- Aam

in the centre-Bharatiya Janata Party and the Indian National Congress. In one constituency, the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate is a cousin of the Akali Dal chief and has been a minister in the Akali and the Congress governments. He has apostatised three political tastes before joining the Bharatiya Janata Party, while the Aam Aadmi Party candidate left the Akali Dal shortly before the current by-elec-

The Congress party candidate is the wife of the Congress State party president and a 2024-elected Member of Parliament. In another constituency, the Aam Aadmi Party candidate is the son of a 2024-elected Member of Parliament from the same deficit of the people in politi- Aadmi Party, the ruling party party; the MP had defected

from the Congress just before the 2024 parliamentary elections to contest and win as an Aam Aadmi Party candidate, while the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate has defected Shrimoni Akali Dal; he has been a minister in the SAD government. In the third constituency, the

Congress party candidate is the wife of its party MP and a former Deputy Chief Minister. In contrast, the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate is a former Akali MLA and the son of a Punjab Assembly speaker in the SAD government. In the fourth constituency, the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate has been a former senior Vice –President of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee and a Congress MLA before



the Bharatiya Janata Party, while the Aam Aadmi Party favourite of an MP and a former minister, ignoring its former district chief who is contesting as a rebel.

The four vacancies arose because the MLAs in all four contested and won parliamentary elections held in June deserting the Congress to join 2024. In three of the four, the

immediate family members of the 2024-elected MPs. As the family members of the MPs, they are assumed to be the 'winning' candidates because their mentors have already proved it by winning the Assembly and then parliamentary elections sequential-

The question arises whether the political parties do not have any other members from any other section of society who can be 'winning' candidates or if some leaders have turned electoral politics into a family monopoly aka 'nepotism', in which there is no room for other party workers, however sincere and hard-working they

may be. The current situation is so ridiculous that these leaders

contesting candidates are the and the political parties criticize each other for dynastic politics, nepotism and party defection. Still, when the opportunity arises, they play the game and present their spouses, children and relatives as the only 'winning' candidates and strengthen political dynasticism justifying

it in various ways. Claiming himself the next Chief Minister of the state during his campaign for the BJP candidate, a Government of India Minister compared 'the peasant leaders in protest' with Talibans' and threatened action against them after the elections. Not only his threat is defamatory and against the spirit of a democracy, but also an unbecoming rambling coercing votes for the candidate of his party.

Addressing an election meeting in favour of an Aam Aadmi Party candidate, its supremo dubs the sitting Congress MP as "corrupt Randhawa" inviting defamatory threat from him. Further he charges him with 'dynastic politics' ignoring the similar practice by AAP in another constituency where he has campaigned for the candidate

on the same day. Thus the Punjab 2024 By-elections are riddled with defection, dynasticism, defamatory rhetoric, irresponsible rambling, bringing with it a sense of deterioration in democracy which both the people and political parties must address.

(The writer is retired professor, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar; views are personal) VIJAYAWADA | SATURDAY | NOVEMBER 16, 2024

IN BRIEF



Setco Automotive logs consolidated Q2 net loss

etco Automotive Ltd, a manufacturer of medium and heavy commercial vehicle clutches, reported a Consolidated net loss of Rs 34.83 crore for the July-September 2024 quarter, the company announced on Friday. This marks an improvement compared to the consolidated net loss of Rs 40.62 crore recorded during the same quarter of the previous financial year. For the half-year ending September 30, 2024, the company reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 70.09 crore, down from Rs 77.48 crore in the corresponding period last year. Revenue from operations for the quarter stood at Rs 159.9 crore, up from Rs 145.7 crore in the same quarter last year, driven by higher volumes in the Original Equipment Suppliers (OES) and Independent Aftermarket (IAM) segments. The consolidated total income for the six months ending September 30, 2024, increased to Rs 329.55 crore, compared to Rs 292.18 crore in the yearago period



230 weekly flights from Kolkata, Bagdogra announced

ir India Express on Friday announced expansion of its services from West Bengal's Kolkata and Bagdogra, increasing the number of weekly flights to over 230 this winter, from 168 in the same season last year. The growth includes new direct routes connecting Kolkata with Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair) and Indore, and Bagdogra with Chennai, the airline said. "Our new winter schedule, featuring over 230 weekly flights from Kolkata and Bagdogra, underscores our dedication to fostering trade and tourism in the region," Dr Ankur Garg, Chief Commercial Officer of Air India Express, said in a statement. "We are thrilled to introduce a new Kolkata-Port Blair flight next month, just in time for the holiday season, offering our guests more travel options," he said. Additionally, two brand new aircraft, with liveries inspired by "Jamdani" and "Kantha" designs, invite quests to experience the rich cultural heritage of West Bengal, the statement said. Jamdani is a renowned pattern from Bengal, known for its delicate handloom creations, typically featuring intricate floral, vine, leaf, and geometric motifs, Kantha. also from Bengal, originated as a method of repurposing old saris and clothes into guilts and blankets



HCLTech, ServiceNow inaugurate Al lab in Noida

T company HCLTech in collaboration with American software firm ServiceNow on Friday inaugurated a dedicated Al lab at its Noida campus. Customers can test, navigate and expand innovative solutions tailored to specific challenges within their industry at the facility, a company statement said. The company will introduce the same experiences at the existing HCLTech AI & Cloud Native Lab located in London, it said. "Our expanded partnership with HCLTech will help us to accelerate Al adoption for more customers in the UK and India These Labs will help empower customers to take control of their Al investments and unlock new levels of productivity and profitability across the enterprise," said Michael Park, SVP and Global Head of AI GTM at ServiceNow. The labs use HCLTech's top-tier and established methodologies to assist clients in their journeys through generative AI (GenAI) and agentic AI with ServiceNow, enhancing efficiencies in enterprise service management and various industry sectors, the statement said.

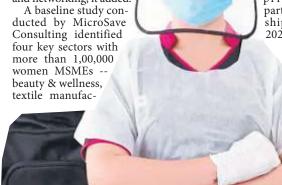
Niti Aayog's WEP partners with Urban Company to empower women

PNS NEW DELHI

Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) has partnered with Urban Company to empower women salon and beauty parlour owners, an official statement said on Friday.

According to the state-ment, WEP, under its awardto-reward initiative, launched the pilot to support women MSMEs to scale up their businesses in the beauty and wellness sector.

Women entrepreneurs will be offered training across six key ecosystem needs, including skilling, legal and compliance, access to finance, market, and business development services, along with mentorship and networking, it added. A baseline study conducted by MicroSave Consulting identified four key sectors with more than 1,00,000



turing, retail trade and food & beverages.

The statement said this pilot initiative aims to develop process templates by leveraging insights and learnings gathered through the programme and upscaling women MSMEs nationwide.

Urban Company will spearhead the programme, collaborating with other key stakeholders to identify women working in micro-units and support their business growth, it noted.

WEP, incubated in Niti Aayog in 2018 as an aggregator platform, transitioned into publicprivate partnership in 2022.

Bharat Mandapam here.

Expressing hope that DFC would continue to serve the country, Vaishnaw said that a good integration has taken place in the network of the . Indian Railways.

"We have to take it further so that DFC can serve the

'Dedicated freight corridor is jewel of Indian Railways'

Dedicated freight corridor is a very important infrastructure project of the Indian Railways which has made a positive impact on the country's logistics sector, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Thursday calling it "the jewel of Indian Railways".

Congratulating the office bearers of DFCCIL on the occasion of its 19th Foundation day, Vaishnaw said more than 350 goods trains are $\,$ being operated on the corridor at present and this has improved the efficiency of logistics transportation in the

"The timings of cargo transportation have been reduced to half as compared to earlier. The speed of freight trains has made significant improvement. In every way, the DFC has played a crucial role to reduce the logistics cost in the country," Vaishnaw said in a video message that was played during the celebration at



country better," he added.

The Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd. (DFCCIL) commemorated its 19th Foundation Day celebrating nearly two decades of its service and initiatives for the country's rail freight infrastructure.

Railway Board Chairman and CEO Satish Kumar, DFC-CIL Managing Director Prayeen Kumar and important representatives from the Railway Board, Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and other stakeholders were present on the occasion.

"DFCCIL has advanced its mission as one of Independent

India's largest infrastructure projects. The corporation has taken monumental strides toward its goal of increasing the railways' share in India's freight landscape, aiming to lower logistics costs from 15%

to below 9% and to bolster

India's economic growth by

stimulating both domestic and

international trade," said a

press statement issued by

DFCCIL on the occasion. "Today, DFCCIL operates across seven states — Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra — positively impacting various industries along its routes, promoting generating jobs for the youth,"

According to DFCCIL, its two major corridors -- the Eastern and Western Dedicated Freight Corridors -- are transforming the transportation in India by linking the hinterland with the consumer centres and overseas markets.

The 1,337-km Eastern DFC connects Ludhiana in Punjab with Sonnagar in Bihar and the 1,506-km Western DFC runs from Dadri in Uttar Pradesh to the JNPT Port in Navi Mumbai.

"Both corridors boast cutting-edge rail infrastructure, managed efficiently through state-of-the-art Operation Control Centres (OCCs) in Prayagraj and Ahmedabad. In 2024, DFCCIL reached a significant milestone with over 96% of its project completed & commissioned." the DFCCIL

"Moving from construction to full-scale operations, DFC-CIL has already taken on over 13% of Indian Railways' total freight load, despite covering just 4% of the rail network. The daily movement of more than 350 trains across DFCCIL's network marks a new phase of operational excellence," it added.

Imports from UAE up 70 pc in October to USD 7.2 bn: Comm min data

PNS NEW DELHI

India's imports from its free trade agreement partner UAE have jumped by 70.37 per cent year-on-year to USD 7.2 billion in October, leaving a trade deficit of about USD 3.5 billion during that month, according to the commerce ministry

The deficit, the difference between imports and exports, was USD 2.47 billion in September.

Cumulatively also, the imports from the UAE during April-October rose by 55.12 per cent to USD 38.64 billion against USD 24.91 billion in the same period previous fiscal, while exports were up by 15.86 per cent year-on-year to USD 20.93 billion compared to USD 18 billion in October 2023-24.

The trade deficit during the seven-month period has widened to USD 17.71 billion



from USD 6.85 billion in the same period a year ago.

The FTA between India and the UAE came into effect in

According to the data, India's imports from UAE rose by 49.22 per cent to USD 5.38 billion in September and 72.7 per cent to USD 6.38 billion in August.

increased by 23.75 per cent to USD 2.91 billion in September and 3.16 per cent to USD 2.84 billion in August.

In a recent meeting last month, India raised its concerns over the jump in imports

of silver products, platinum

alloy, and dry dates from the UAE and urged the country to

ensure that the rules are not

circumvented under the Free

Trade Agreement (FTA). The Emirates has agreed to examine concerns raised by the

The UAE is the third-largest trading partner of India with USD 83.65 billion bilateral trade in 2023-24.

E.I.D. Parry logs consolidated Q2 PAT at Rs 591.66 cr

PNS CHENNAI

Sugar manufacturer E.I.D. Parry India Ltd has recorded a consolidated profit after tax for the July-September 2024 quarter at Rs 591.66 crore, the company The city-head-

quartered Murugappa Group company had registered a consolidated profit after tax of Rs 781.85 crore in the corresponding

quarter of last financial year. For the six months period ending September 30, 2024, the consolidated profit after tax fell to Rs 817.53 crore from Rs 1,106.75 crore registered year ago. The total income during the quarter under review went up to Rs 9 399 73 crore from R crore registered in the year ago period. For the half year ending September 30, 2024, the consolidated total income stood at Rs

16,206.71 crore, as against Rs 16,225.58 crore registered during the corresponding period of last financial year. Commenting on the financial

performance, company Whole-Time Director and Chief Executive Officer Muthiah

> "the standalone profit of sugar segment was lower in Q2 2024-25 as compared to the corresponding quarter of previous year on account of

Murugappan said,

lower cane volume, a drop in recovery from cane, higher input costs in distillery segment and lower sales volume in sugar on account of lower release quota.

The sugar operations including refinery business reported a 38 crore as compared to profits of Rs 24 crore registered in the same quarter of last financial

posts net loss of Rs 99 lakh in Q2

Realty firm Shriram Properties

Shriram Properties

PNS NEW DELHI

has posted a consolidated net loss of Rs 99 lakh in the September quarter. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 20.15 crore in the year-ago period. Total income declined to Rs 155.1 crore in the July-September period of 2024-25 from Rs 231.24 crore in the corresponding period of the preceding year, according to a regulatory filing on Thursday. Shriram Properties CMD Murali M said, "Q2, FY25 is short-term aberration for the sector that witnessed reduced launches. Long-term prospects for the sector remains positive and our strong market presence and success of our strategic maintaining growth and delivering on promises even in the coming years."

Unifi Asset Management receives SEBI nod to launch mutual fund operations

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Unifi Asset Management Pvt Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Unifi Capital, has received approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to launch its mutual fund operations, a senior official announced on Friday.

Established in 2001 as a portfolio manager, Unifi Capital manages assets worth Rs 27,000 crore as of October 31, 2024, across equity and debt through its Portfolio Management Services (PMS) and Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) platforms in India and abroad. "After 23 years as a portfolio manager, this is a logical milestone in our journey to establish a mutual fund that complements our time-tested services.

IAC pushes for adoption of auto LPG as 'Net Zero Hero'

PNS NEW DELHI

Indian Auto LPG Coalition (IAC), a nodal body for the promotion of LPG as an auto fuel in the country, has urged the government and OEMs to adopt auto LPG as a 'net zero hero' as it is cleaner and ore economical fuel alternative.

With LPG Week 2024 organised by the World Liquid Gas Association (WLGA) in Cape Town, South Africa, fast approaching, Suyash Gupta, Director General of the IAC, highlighted the transformative environmental and economic benefits of auto LPG, describing it as a 'Net Zero Hero' in the journey toward a cleaner energy landscape in the automotive sector, according to a statement issued by the asso-



18-22 in Cape Town, LPG Week 2024, hosted by WLGA, will gather global industry leaders to discuss key advancements and regulatory trends in LPG and

Representing over 300 companies across 125 countries, WLGA promotes Liquid Gas as a sustainable energy

Running from November solution through global partnerships

Highlighting its potential, Gupta said, "Auto LPG emits 20 per cent less CO2 than petrol, 60 per cent less than diesel, and produces minimal particulate matter (PM) with significantly lower NOx emissions, making it a powerful tool to reduce air pollution and public health issues.

projects in Delhi-NCR jumps over 2-fold since 2019-end: PropEquity PNS NEW DELHI

Weighted avg rate of new housing

The weighted average price of new residential projects launched in Gurugram, Noida, Greater Noida and Ghaziabad have more than doubled in the last five years, according to PropEquity.

In a statement on Friday, real estate data analytic firm PropEquity said that "between 2019 and September 2024, Noida saw the highest rise at 152 per cent to Rs 14,946 per sq ft from Rs 5,910 per sq ft. In Ghaziabad, the weighted

average rate has risen 139 per cent from Rs 3,691 per sq ft to

Rs 8,823 per sq ft. Gurugram has seen 135 per cent increase in weighted average price of new projects to Rs 19,535 per sq ft in September 2024 from Rs 8,299 per sq ft in 2019. In Greater Noida, the rates quoted by developers for new projects rose 121 per cent to Rs 8,601 per sq ft from Rs 3,900 per sq ft. Samir Jasuja, Founder and CEO of PropEquity, said: "The NCR is witness

ing an infrastructural metamorphosis

never seen in decades with developments like Noida International Airport, Dwarka Expressway, Delhi-Meerut expressway, Rapid rail, metro expansion among others providing the much-needed fillip to all segments of real estate."

The pandemic further gravitated investors' money and homebuyers' sentiments towards real estate, he added.

Gurugram-based property consulting firm InfraMantra founder Shiwang Suraj said the return on investment from real estate has surpassed returns from all other investment tools.

"Demand continues to be robust even at elevated price points as is evident from the fall in property conversion time," he added. Abhishek Trehan, Executive Director of Trehan Iris, said, "The significant rise in housing prices across NCR since 2019, reflects the region's growing appeal and evolving real estate landscape.'

As demand continues to outpace supply, he said, "We have witnessed a surge in homebuyers who are increasingly looking for long-term investments in robust, well-connected loca-



Matrimony.com offers wedding loans

PNS CHENNAI

Matchmaking service provider Matrimony.com has launched its financial technology platform weddingloans.com aimed at providing financial assistance for marriages, the company said on Friday. The company has partnered with leading financial institutions such as IDFC, Tata Capital, Larsen and Toubro Finance, to offer a comprehensive loan solution. "This platform will go beyond selling loans, it will help customers make the right decision with special focus on their financial well-being,"



Matrimony.com said in a company statement on Friday. "Matrimony has been a gateway for happy marriages for over two decades now. We are the trusted partners for millions who

wish to find the right match. With WeddingLoan.com, we wish to extend our services to make the process of wedding planning, budgeting and execution simpler," company CEO

Murugavel Janakiraman said. According to WeddingLoans website, many couples are opting for personal loans for their marriages as wedding prices have continued to rise over the past decade and social media has popularised elaborate weddings.

These wedding loans are unsecured personal loans that are structured for a couple to receive the funds in a single lump sum and then make fixed payments to repay the wedding loan over time, it said. "Our transparent advisory led processes will ensure we protect consumer interests fully," Janakiraman added.

Mumbai Airport's Oct passenger traffic rises 4 pc

PNS MUMBAI

Mumbai Airport's total passenger traffic increased 4 per cent year-on-year to over 4.42 million in October, helped by festive travel demand, Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL) said on Friday.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj nternational Airport International (CSMIA), the country's second busiest airport -- 74 per cent-owned by Adani Group and the remaining 26 per cent by the state-run airports operator AAI -- had handled a total of 4.25 million passengers in October 2023 Significantly, this year, three

major festivals -- Dussehra, Dhanteras and Diwali -- fell in October. "CSMIA facilitated travel for over 4.42 million passengers -- 3.16 million domestic and over 1.25 million international -- in October. This festive season saw a marked surge in both domestic and international traffic, as travellers flocked to celebrate the festival of lights," the private airport operator said in a statement.

what's brewing?

Blackpink's Lisa takes centre stage, embraces solo success

lackpink's Lisa is currently experiencing a series of successes! The Thai K-pop star, famous for her confident performance style and irresistible charm, is bringing her solo career to a whole new level. The *Blackpink* member spoke about the excitement of going solo, confessing she initially experienced fear and anxiety. And what about now? She is enjoying herself immensely. For those curious about the group, Lisa shared some thrilling updates: the group is already preparing for a significant return in 2025. "At first, I was scared and nervous because I never really came out here to do my own stuff," she told Billboard, before lowering her voice as if sharing a secret, "And now I'm having fun," she whispered, adding that fan reactions have been her biggest confidence boost yet. "When [my singles] came out, the reaction from the fans—it's healing me. It's like, 'Oh, my God.

Yeah—I did a great job!"

In 2021, Lisa started her solo career with

popular songs Lalisa and Money and in June 2024, she raised the bar with a rock-'n'-roll track titled Rockstar. This debut signalled the beginning of a fresh solo chapter with RCA Records. By partnering with her company, LLOUD, Lisa was able to obtain ownership of her master recordings, a significant advancement in her career. She released two additional singles, collaborating with Rosalía on New Woman in August and releasing Moonlit *Floor* in October.

The Celine ambassador made it clear that she does not intend to create a business empire or represent other artists through her recently established agency, a trajectory commonly linked to celebrities like Rihanna or Beyoncé. Instead of viewing her company as a business, she considers it her personal sanctuary designed to solely support her artistic growth. She is currently concentrating on creating new music and reaching her goals gradually, one



When Shraddha Kapoor 'jumped' onboard for Naagin

revive the iconic folklore with his new project *Naagin*, casting Shraddha Kapoor as the legendary character. During a recent chat, Dwivedi shared that Shraddha was his initial preference for the role in the movie. Nikhil discussed his highly avaited movie and preference for the role in the movie. cussed his highly awaited movie and pro-

vided an update.

He said, "Finally, the script is ready now.

It has taken us three years to script it. We have redone the entire script three times, and now I can say that it's finally ready."

Further speaking about why he decided to make *Naagin*, he said, "Firstly, it's a completely brand-new subject. It has no connection with previous films. The reason for me making this film is that Indian folklore is actually very rich in ideas. We get very excited when a spider bites a man and he becomes 'Spider-Man'. But we kind of look down upon a woman turning into a snake. Give us a chance and we'll turn it on its head and you will see quite a supernatural and different film."

When asked about his casting decision, Dwivedi said that Shraddha's versatility and screen presence made her an ideal choice for *Naagin*. "It was decided from the beginning that only Shraddha Kapoor would play Naagin. We're thrilled that she's on board. She has an ethereal quality about her," Dwivedi said.

Talking about her reaction to the film, Dwivedi said, "She jumped at it. She was the first one to come on board. I approached her first with the idea and she was sold. She can't wait to start the shoot, now that the script is ready! We are just figuring out how to take it on floors as soon as possible. It will most likely go on floors next year."

Naagin was announced a while ago but was said to have been delayed. Shraddha achieved great success with Stree 2, breaking numerous records upon its launch and establishing her place in the industry.



Cameron Diaz and Jamie Foxx, Back in Action





ctors Jamie Foxx and Cameron Diaz are all set to share screen space in the high-energy espionage comedy, *Back in Action*. Netflix dropped the teaser trailer of Back in Action, which shows Foxx and Diaz on a thrilling ride as a married couple forced back into their old jobs as spies. "Years after giving up life as CIA spies to start a family, Emily and Matt find themselves dragged back into the world of espionage when their cover is blown," a synopsis reads.

The Seth Gordon-helmed action comedy stars Diaz and Jamie Foxx as Emily and Matt. Glenn Close, Kyle Chandler, Andrew Scott, McKenna Roberts, Rylan Jackson and Jamie Demetriou also star in Back in Action. Seth Gordon, known for Horrible Bosses, has directed the film, which he co-wrote with Brendan

"Back in Action stands out as Diaz's first movie role since 2014's Annie,

which Foxx also starred in. Diaz's return to acting was first announced in June 2022 and she and Foxx were later seen filming the action comedy as soon as December of that year. Production on the movie continued through January 2024. The film's production made headlines in April 2023 when Foxx had a medical emergency that interrupted filming for a period of time," according to reports. Foxx returned to set in January after being hospitalised and assuring supporters that he was "on his way to recovery" in May 2023.

Back in Action marks the third time Foxx and Diaz have collaborated onscreen together after 1999's Any Given Sunday and Annie. Diaz will follow up the role with a part in Jonah Hill's upcoming film Outcome, reported People. Back in Action will start streming on Netflix on January 17, 2025.

Taapsee says Haseen Dillruba's narrative didn't rely on Vikrant playing quintessential hero!

Prior to the launch of *The Sabarmati Report*, Vikrant Massey is present in various locations promoting the film in which have promoting the film in which he is the main star. This is the first movie he has released in theaters since the huge success of 12th Fail. During an interview, he was questioned about

the discussions regarding the film 12th Fail, which reportedly did not have a big star leading the cast. In an intriguing manner, Taapsee Pannu also mentioned before Haseen Dillruba that the actor

playing the hero was not important in the movie. "Honestly, I don't take offence to these things," said Vikrant, adding, "It is true that 12th Fail didn't have a massive star." Clarifying that he did receive positive feedback for his acting, it didn't really translate

into box-office numbers. "On the commercial angle, I didn't even have a strong solo film hit the theatres before 12th Fail. So, I understand that such statements weren't made in a condescending sense," said the actor, who shares that such healthy arguments are an important aspect of conversations. "We should healthily agree to disagree. Unfortunately, in social media, and in life, we are seeing how friendships are being broken due to differing political ideologies and tolerance capacities. You just can't seem to agree to disagree anymore. That is disturbing."



ARCHIE





AND FASCINATING CONVERSATION?



HUH? IS THERE?



HOW SHOULD I KNOW?

0

CALVIN AND HOBBES

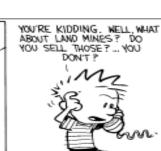


REALITY CHECK

I MEAN, WHAT'S THE POINT OF BEING SO SUPER



SPEED BUMP





GARFIELD







ALL THE TIME IF NO ONE EVEN KNOWS MY IDENTITY?



SUDOKU

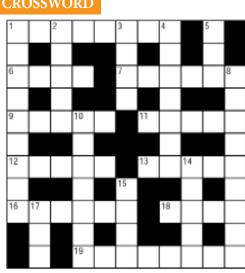


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CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Train stops 6 Tumble over and over
- 7 Young cows
- 9 A tall type of building 11 A feeling of rage
- 12 Bees make this
- 13 One third of twenty-one
- 15 A type of blood vessel 16 Instructions for cake making 17 Pixie 18 The part along the side or
- end of something 19 Always ready to give away or share what you have
- DOWN A thing with handles for

carrying an injured person

3 Say this when you get hurt



4 Complete quiet

8 People unknown to you 10 The late part of the day

14 A machine that can

record television

programmes

5 Tell a fib



YOU'VE GOT

GINGER MEGGS







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Saturday November 16, 2024

'Hyderabad dreams with you and grows with you'

AARTI SREENATH aarti.sreenath9@gmail.com

> Then Appalla Saikiran, founder and of SCOPE, speaks about Hyderabad, he doesn't just recount memories; he shares a deep-rooted connection that has shaped both his personal and professional journey. Growing up here, Saikiran was profoundly influenced by his father, A.V. Prabhakar, who works as the group head in clinical data acquisition management at Novartis.

"My family has always been based here and seeing my father's dedication to his work in Hyderabad inspired my own

GROWING UP IN HYDERABAD, APPALLA SAIKIRAN DIŚCOVERED THE PERFECT BLEND **OF TRADITION AND INNOVATION THAT WOULD SHAPE HIS FUTURE. TODAY, HE SHARES HIS HEARTFELT** CONNECTION WITH THE CITY!

path," he says. For him, Hyderabad isn't just a hometown; it's the foundation of his entrepreneurial drive and

sense of belonging.

He acknowledges that Hyderabad has been incredibly supportive of his ambitions. "The city offers an unmatched blend of culture and technomiations." nology, making it the ideal environment for growth and innovation," he says. He feels Hyderabad has opened doors for him in unexpected ways, providing access to a vibrant ecosystem filled with talent, opportunities and

mentorship that have fueled

his progress.
Although he never needed to migrate elsewhere, he understands why Hyderabad is so attractive for others. "I've travelled to many cities, but Hyderabad combines a unique warmth with ambition," he reflects. He admires how the city welcomes dreamers with open arms, offering a nurturing ground for anyone looking to build something meaningful.
"Hyderabad is forwardthinking yet deeply rooted in tradition making it a per-fect balance of past and future?

For him, Hyderabad's biryani is more than a dish; it's a reminder of the city's harmonious blend of tradition and flavour. "It represents Hyderabad's ability to keep heritage alive even as it embraces modernity, he explains, capturing the cultural richness that defines his hometown.

Reflecting on his younger years, one of his fondest memories is walking

through the campus of his old school. "My childhood was filled with exploration, ambition and big dreams," he recalls. Growing up in Hyderabad, with a family that always supported his curiosity and passion, he found the seeds of his love for technology and entrepreneurship early on.

Hyderabad's rapidly advancing tech infrastructure and business-friendly government policies have played a key role in the company's expansion. "The talent pool here, especially in tech, is exceptional," he says proudly. Building a team that understands both global trends and local dynamics has allowed his company to thrive and grow.

The city's advanced healthcare infrastructure is another point of pride for him. It's one of the reasons his father's career in clinical data and healthcare has prospered in Hyderabad. "We have top-tier hospitals, research facilities and a strong network of healthcare professionals," he notes, adding that the city's healthcare

resources are a great reassurance to anyone living here. When asked what he loves about Hyderabad, he points to the city's openness and diversity. "It has a charm that's both welcoming and aspirational," he says. However, as Hyderabad continues to expand, he hopes it will develop more green spaces to balance urban growth with natural beauty.

As a native, he has seen Hyderabad evolve from his childhood to today. "I didn't move here; I grew up here and that's why I've seen the city transform firsthand." From exploring as a child to returning with fresh perspectives as an entrepreneur, he's witnessed Hyderabad flourish as both a tech and startup hub, all while preserving its soul.

When friends and family come to visit, he enjoys showing them the two sides of Hyderabad. "Everyone wants to bring back Hyderabad's famous biryani and pearls," he says with a smile. "Charminar is always a must-see and they love the contrast between the old city's charm and HITEC City's energy." His guests experience Hyderabad as a place where traditional and modern worlds coexist seamlessly.

To him, Hyderabad is more than just a city; it's his partner in dreams. "Hyderabad is a nurturing ground for ideas," he says warmly. "It's where I started my entrepreneurial journey, supported by my family and where I learned that no dream is too big. This city dreams with you and grows with you.

Breathe easy! Combating India's smog crisis with preventive measures



s the seasons change in India, a familiar haze begins to settle over the cities, especially in the northern region. This smog, a blend of smoke and fog, intensifies as winter approaches, posing a serious health risk to millions. The rise in pollution levels and the associated respiratory hazards has become a recurring issue, triggering concerns among health professionals and residents alike.

Speaking on the issue, Dr. Piyush Goel, Consultant, Pulmonology, Hospital, Manipal highlights, "Respiratory infections are surging as winter arrives, coinciding with increased levels of air pollutants, especially in North India. There are several contributing factors to it, high pollen counts, low humidity, which stagnates the air, causing its inability to disperse pollutants and, therefore, results in the formation of smog. Elevated levels of PM2.5 and PM10 particles are very porous as well as deeply penetrating the lungs, which aggravates existing lung conditions. Breathing in polluted air can irritate the airways, resulting in shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing, asthma attacks and chest pain. Excessive exposure to air pollution is linked to several acute and chronic respiratory illnesses, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, respiratory allergies, and in extreme cases even lung cancer. Additionally, it can contribute to the rapid progression of chronic illnesses as well."

Dr. Goel advises having a prepared plan of action beforehand, an inhalator one can refer to, especially in patients with asthma and regular inhalation therapy; monitoring your lung condition through a peak flow meter can be another step in maintaining care for your condition better as well.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES TO MINIMISE SMOG **EXPOSURE**

aking precautions against smog is essential for everyone, particularly for

those in urban areas where pollution levels reach alarming heights. Here are some effective strategies to protect yourself and reduce your exposure to polluted air:

• Limit outdoor activities: Avoid going outdoors when pollutants are in high concentration, usually during peak hours, in the early morning and late evening. Avoid strenuous exercises like jogging or cycling since exercising causes one to breathe faster and take in more of pollutants. If outdoor activity is required, schedule it for the afternoon, when the air quality may improve slightly.

Improve indoor air quality: Use HEPA filters in air purifiers and HVAC systems to remove pollutants from the air. Do not burn candles, incense, or use a wood-burning fireplace since all those can increase indoor air pollutants. It is advised to keep the windows open for ventilation if the outdoor air quality is acceptable.

Monitoring your health: It is of utmost importance to observe your respiratory health. If you notice some symptoms, such as coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, or irritation in your eyes, visit your doctor. Patients with other underlying respiratory diseases, such as asthma or COPD, must be more vigilant about this condition and strictly adhere to recommended treatment plans.

Wear N95 masks: If you need to go outside, wearing an N95 mask can help filter out some of the pollutants, offering a protective barrier. Unlike regular masks, N95 masks are designed to capture fine particles in the air, which can be particularly harmful. It protects your respiratory system entirely since N95 respirators filter at least 95 percent of airborne particles as small as 0.3 microns, which is significantly more than regular cloth masks.

Stay hydrated: Drinking plenty of water helps to keep your respiratory system moist and can aid in clearing out pollutants. Hydration is crucial for overall health and can support your body's natural

• Portable air purifier: As advised by doctors, a few precautions can be taken for people with an already infected lung disorder. It is advisable to carry a portable air purifier - this can help reduce the amount of polluted air inhaled, especially in



Trishna Ray's rise to Miss Teen **Universe 2024**

With her dazzling smile, infectious confidence and a heart full of passion, Miss Teen Universe 2024 Trishna Ray sits down with The Pioneer as she opens up about her incredible journey, from her humble beginnings to her triumphant win, personal struggles and her vision for a brighter future.

TEJAL SINHA

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epresenting the vibrant spirit of youth and excellence, Trishna Ray, Miss Teen Universe 2024, is a talented and driven individual who has captured the hearts of millions. As she embarks on her reign as Miss Teen Universe, she aims to inspire positive change, promote cultural exchange and empower young women to pursue their dreams, leaving a lasting legacy for generations to come.

Trishna, the newly crowned Miss Teen Universe 2024, is still basking in the glory of her historic win. In an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, she opens up about her incredible journey, from her army background to her passion for fashion technology and shares valuable advice for future contestants.

Her win is an attestation to her dedication and perseverance. When asked about her initial reaction to being crowned Miss Teen Universe 2024, she exclaimed, "It feels like a dream I've been working towards for a very long time. Achieving it now is surreal and it's taking time to sink in." She recalled the

moment her name was announced, saying, "My first thought was, 'Did I hear it right?' I was praying to God and my heart dropped. It was a moment I had been waiting for so long, and my parents had been waiting for. It was surreal when they announced India."

Born into an Army family, she has

moved every two years, adapting to new environments and learning new skills along the way. "I come from an army background and I'm from Cuttack, Orissa," she shared. "I've kept moving every two years, and every place I went to, I started to learn something new. All those skills added up to this one moment." Trishna is also pursuing a degree in fashion technology, which she believes helped her in the pageant. "Everything that I've been working on has helped me to this moment in life."

Her journey to the crown wasn't without its challenges. She faced difficulties obtaining a visa to participate in the competition. After being rejected once, she chose to work twice as hard and eventually made it to the pageant. "I think that's what got me here," she said. "I didn't give up, and I made sure that when I did go, I would bring it home." Her determination and resilience are an inspiration to many.
One of the most memorable moments for

her was when she was announced as the win-

ner and her fellow contestants, who had become like family, were overjoyed. "They started crying, and when I went back, they all came to hug me," she recalled. "It made me feel like I truly won. I didn't have anyone else from India there, no team or parents. That moment made it feel like I was still

at home." How overwhelming!
Going ahead, she credits her mentor, Ritika Ramtri, from the Tiara Pageant Studio, for her success. "She has been my mentor for two years and has taught me everything from walking to conducting interviews and etiquette. She stuck by me through all my times, and I couldn't have asked for a better mentor." Of course, her training and preparation played a significant role in her win.

As the new Miss Teen Universe, her plan is to focus on body positivity and teaching dance to underprivileged children. "I want to help teenage girls overcome unrealistic beauty standards and focus on their inner potential," she emphasised, also stressing the importance of self-positivity, sharing how she used to stand in front of the mirror and tell herself positive affirmations to combat criticism. "I used to receive criticism about my weight, but I trained my mind to make

everything into a positive notion," she said.
Participating in the pageant has helped the teen beauty queen grow as a person, gaining skills she wouldn't have otherwise acquired. "I completed my foundation course at Anupam Kher's institute, started freelance modeling and pursued my interest in dance again," she said. "I became more conscious about my health and well-being. I started paying attention to my academics and eating healthily. These are things I probably wouldn't have done if it weren't for the

Representing India on the global stage is an honour Ray cherishes deeply. "It's a feeling I don't think I'll ever be able to describe," she said. "When I put on the sash with India's name, I had tears in my eyes. It gave me the motivation to work harder and bring the crown home." She believes that people outside of India celebrate the country's diversity and culture more than Indians themselves. "I was happy to see that my fellow contestants wished me a Happy Diwali," she

Her experience at the pageant was enriching, and she has valuable advice for future contestants. "Never give up and always try to convince your parents to support your dreams. If you have your parents' support, there's no force that can stop you from achieving your dreams. My parents left no stone unturned in sending me to South Africa and that's why I'm here today."

My aim is to get back into T20 team: KL Rahul

The beleaguered KL Rahul is seeking to use the next IPL as a vehicle the next IPL as a vehicle to stage a comeback to the Indian T20I side as he wants to remain involved in all three formats of the game.

The 32-year-old is in line to open the innings if skipper Rohit Sharma does not play in the first Test of the upcoming five-match. Border-Gayaskar

five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy series at Perth.

Rahul's form has been a cause of concern for the Indian team as he was recently dropped for the last two Tests against New Zealand at home with Sarfaraz Khan replacing

But the batter, who is pleasing to watch when in full flow, remains unperturbed by his lean run of form.

"My aim is to obviously get back into the T20 team. I've always wanted to be an allformat player, and that desire and drive haven't changed over the years. I want to still play for India in all three



for many years," Rahul told Star Sports.

"I've been out of the T20 team formats and have done that for a while, and I know where

I stand as a player and what I need to do to get back. So, I look forward to this IPL season to give me that

platform to enjoy my cricket and play the way I want to," he Since 2022, he has scored 514 (21 innings) at an average of 25.7, having registered three half-centuries and a century. During the interaction, Rahul emphasised on always keeping the team ahead of his individual conjections.

keeping the team ahead of his individual aspirations.

"All of us as players want to play with freedom, and everyone would think that the way I batted, I'm enjoying playing that. But like I said, my thought process and motivation have always been team first. It doesn't matter what I want to do or what my natural game is.

"We play a team sport. If I played tennis, it would be different; I could stick to saying, 'This is my natural game.' But in a team sport, it's very different. Each game, you'll have a different role and responsibility given to you to responsibility given to you to find a way to deliver for the team," he said.

The Bengaluru man's last Test hundred was against South Africa at Centurion in December 2023 and since then made just two fifties in

Prajnesh Gunneswaran announces retirement from professional tennis

Asian Games bronze medal Winner Prajnesh Gunneswaran on Friday announced his retirement from professional tennis. The 35-year-old Indian, who

won singles bronze in the 2018 Jakarta Asian Games, wrote on his Instagram account:
"Hanging up my racquet.
Thank you."
Gunneswaran, who rose to world No.75 in the ATP rankings in 2019, expressed his

deep gratitude for being able to compete at the top level for several years.

"As I write this, my heart swells with gratitude, pride, and a touch of nostalgia. Today, I step off the competitive tennis court for the last time.

"For over three decades, this game has been my sanctuary, my greatest teacher, and my most faithful companion. most faithful companion. From the first swing of my racquet to representing India on the grandest stages, the journey has been nothing short of extraordinary," he wrote. The Chennai-born player, who turned pro in 2010, finished with a single record of 11.28

with a singles record of 11–28 and a doubles record of 1-1. His highest doubles ranking was 248 which he attained in

Gunneswaran also competed



in all four Grand Slams, bowing out in the opening round in all instances. The Australian Open was the only Slam in which he competed on multiple occasions -- 2019 and

"Every drop of sweat, every victory, every setback - it's all woven into the fabric of who I am. Tennis taught me discipline, resilience, and the

discipline, resilience, and the power of dreaming big," he further wrote in his post.
"It gave me friendships that transcend borders and memories that will last a lifetime. It challenged me to dig deep to grow and to be dig deep, to grow, and to be better - not just as a player but as a human being," he noted. He had success in the ATP Challenger Tour and in ITF Futures Tour, possessing a record of 2-7 and 9-9

respectively in the singles

category.

He won only a title in the doubles -- Egypt F25, Sharm El Sheikh (ITF Futures Tour) -- in 2018 with his Egyptian partner Issam Haitham Taweel.

Gunneswaran's biggest win against a top-20 player came in 2019 when he beat the then-18th-ranked Basilashvili of Georgia during the Indian Wells Masters in the second round.

"To my coaches, teammates, and most of all, my family -you have been my backbone. To my fans who cheered me on through the highs and lows-I'm deeply grateful.

"And to the sport that gave me everything - I owe you my heart. Thank you, tennis, for the ride of a lifetime," he



Ajaz Patel, hero of New Zealand's clean sweep in India, dropped for England series

option.

AP ■ WELLINGTON

Spinner Ajaz Patel, whose 11 wickets in the third Test against India this month helped New Zealand to an unprecedented clean sweep of that series, has been After taking 10/119 in an omitted from the Black Caps innings against India in squad for the upcoming Test eries against England

Patel had match figures of 11/160 as New Zealand won the third Test by 25 runs to become the first team to missed the India series with sweep India in a three-match Test series at home.

The selectors have found no place for him in a 14-man squad named Friday for the three-Test series against

England. Mitchell Santner, who took 13-157 in the second Test against India, is the only frontline spinner in the squad, though he will play only in the second and third

"Mitch has performed superbly since his recall to the Test team last year and I am sure he will take a lot of confidence out of his matchwinning performance in the Pune Test," selector Sam Wells said.

Wells said it was difficult to had been preferred for his and Will Young.

recent form and all-round ability while Glenn Phillips provides another

has often been Patel overlooked for Test series in New Zealand conditions. innings against India in 2021, he also was left out of the following home series

a groin injury, returns, but Tom Latham retains the captaincy, and uncapped all-rounder Nathan Harris has been called in.

"Nathan is an exciting talent with a proven first-class record," Wells said.

The opening Test at Christchurch begins on November 28. The second Test is scheduled for December 6 in Wellington and the third from December 14 in Hamilton.

New Zealand squad for England Tests: Tom Latham (c), Tom Blundell, Devon Conway, Jacob Duffy, Matt Henry, Daryl Mitchell, Will O'Rourke, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Nathan Smith, Tim leave out Patel but Santner Southee, Kane Williamson

Slovakia beats United States to advance in Billie Jean King Cup Finals, Japan defeats Romania

AP MALAGA (SPAIN)

shlyn Krueger and Taylor Townsend A shlyn Krueger and Taylor Townsend saved six match points but ultimately lost the decisive doubles match as the United States was defeated 6-3, 3-6, 10-8 by Slovakia and was eliminated 2-1 in the first round of the Billie Jean King Cup Finals early Friday.

Krueger and Townsend lost after rallying from 9-2 down in the third set against against Tereza Mihalikova and Viktoria Hruncakova in a match that ended close to 1 a.M. In Spain.

Townsend have given the U.S. The first point by defeating 17-year-old Renata Jamrichova 7-5 6-4, but Rebecca Sramkova evened the tie with a 6-2, 7-5 win over Danielle Collins in the second singles match.

Slovakia will face Australia in the quarterfinals on Sunday. Japan reached the quarterfinals for the first time since 2013 after rallying to

defeat Romania 2-1. Japan advanced when Eri Hozumi and Shuko Aoyama defeated Monica



Niculescu and Elena Ruse 6-1, 7-5 in the deciding doubles match.

Ana Bogdan had put Romania ahead with a 6-2, 6-4 win over Nao Hibino in the first singles match of the day but Ena Shibahara pulled Japan level with a 6-4, 7-6 (2) victory over Jaqueline Cristian. Japan will face Italy in the quarterfinals.

The first match between Japan and Romania had been moved back two hours because of a severe weather alert that was in effect in the Malaga region until early in the day.

The weather alert had already forced the opening meeting between Spain and Poland to be pushed back from Wednesday to Friday, when Germany is

wednesday to Friday, when Germany is also facing Britain.

The Billie Jean King Cup Finals is taking place about two weeks after a powerful storm caused flash floods that killed more than 200 people in the Valencia region, east of Malaga.

The International Tennis Federation appropried a donation to the Spanish

announced a donation to the Spanish Red Cross to support relief and recovery efforts in the region, and Spanish player Paula Badosa said she will donate half of

her prize money to help the victims.

Both the Billie Jean King Cup Finals and the Davis Cup Finals are taking place in the southern Spanish city, with the men's competition beginning next week, also at the Palacio de Deportes. It is the first time that the women's team

tournament is taking place at the same venue as the Davis Cup and with overlapping dates. And for the second venue is a row it will offer acquirelest price. year in a row, it will offer equivalent prize money to the men's competition.



Snooker player Mark King banned for five years for fixing match, providing inside information

AP ■ SHEFFIELD (ENGLAND)

five-vear ban on Friday after being found guilty of match-fixing and providing inside information in the latest corruption scandal to blight the sport.

The punishment for the 50-year-old King, who reached a career-high ranking of No. 11 in 2003, related to a match against Joe Perry at the Welsh Open played on Feb. 13 last year that was flagged following suspicious betting patterns.

King was suspended by snooker's world governing body a month later and an independent disciplinary commission has ruled that he fixed the result of the match, while giving information to others about that match for betting purposes. He had denied the charges.

His ban ends after March 17, 2028, and King was also ordered to pay more than accused of any m 68,000 pounds (\$86,000) in related to the case.

King's suspension comes English snooker player after Chinese players Liang Wenbo and Li Hang were handed lifetime bank snooker last year for their role in a match-fixing scandal involving eight more of their countrymen. "I have known Mark King

since he was very young, he is a very experienced player who has enjoyed great success, and I am deeply saddened to read the finding in this case," said Jason Ferguson, a former player who is now chairman of the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association. "However, the integrity of this sport will always be our No. 1 priority."

King had also been charged with fixing the outcome of a match against John Higgins played on Dec. 13, 2022, and for providing inside information on it. Those charges were dismissed.

The governing body said Perry and Higgins were not accused of any misconduct

France coach says Mbappé's dip in form is due to both psychological and physical reasons

AP ■ PARIS

 $F_{ ext{Deschamps}}^{ ext{rance}}$ coach Didier are both physical and psychological reasons for Kylian Mbappé's rough patch of form.

After France drew 0-0 with Israel in the Nations League, Deschamps was again asked about the reasons behind the Real Madrid striker's absence from his squad.

"It's a fact that he is in a difficult situation," Deschamps told broadcaster

"Obviously, he is going through a period which is not the happiest of his career."



Mbappé was not included in Deschamps' list for the match against Israel and a game in Italy later this this week.

Mbappé was also absent from the previous France gathering because of a minor thigh injury. This time he is not

injured. Deschamps said.

"He wanted to come."

"I think it's better for him (not to be selected) at the moment. Everybody can go through a difficult period. There is a physical element, and a

club games and hasn't added to his 48 goals for France since June. Deschamps last week did not elaborate about his choice to do without Mbappé but said it was not related to recent reports in Swedish media that

psychological one." Mbappé's performances have been below par in recent weeks after he joined Madrid

from PSG this summer. He has one goal in his last seven

the former Paris Saint-Germain star was the subject of a rape investigation in Stockholm.

Mbappé's representatives have rejected the reports as "false and irresponsible.

Messi, Vinicius have frustrating nights as Argentina loses, Brazil draws in World Cup qualifying American World Cup qualifying will continue on Friday with second-place Colombia visiting with a bicycle kick by Antonio Sanabria in the 19th minute, we have to look forward." Vinicius Júnior is still without a shortly after defender Gustavo goal in six matches of World Cup

AP ■ **ASUNCION** (PARAGUAY)

Argentina's Lionel Messi and Brazil's Vinicius Júnior had frustrating nights in South American World Cup qualifying. While Messi could not help his team avoid a 2-1 defeat at Paraguay, Vinicius Junior missed a second-half penalty as Brazil was held to a 1-1 draw at Venezuela on Thursday.

Argentina will remain on the top of the 10-team round robin competition with a 22 points in 11 matches, Brazil is provisionally in third place in the standings with 17 points.

Also on Thursday, Ecuador beat Bolivia 4-0. The Ecuadorians remain in fifth position with 16 points, while Bolivia is in eighth place with 12 points. The 11th round of South Uruguay and the bottom two teams in the standings, Peru and Chile, facing off in Lima.

Argentina played at Paraguay with the hosts having banned local fans from wearing any Messi shirts in the home crowd. TV footage of the match in Asuncion showed that the vast majority of the local crowd was wearing Paraguay's red and white colours, with no Messi shirts visible in the local broadcasts.

Messi had few opportunities to touch the ball during the first half, but saw Lautaro Martínez open the scoring in the 11th minute with a crossed shot. The goal was allowed after a video

Paraguay scored the equalizer

Gómez hit the bar with a header. The hosts continued to apply pressure, and gave the Argentine star some heavy marking. Messi showed he was upset with Brazilian referee Anderson Daronco for not sending off Paraguay's Omar Alderete for his aggressive tackles.

It was Alderete who scored Paraguay's winner with a header in the 47th minute, which puts Paraguay back in contention for a spot in the next World Cup. "We came to a hard place where the national team always

struggled," said Martínez. "We have to correct a lot of things we did wrong in this match, but generally speaking we are playing well. We are still in the lead, and qualifying. He had the chance to score a

potential winner after he earned the penalty in the 67th minute but his low spot kick was saved by goalkeeper Rafael Romo and the Brazil forward then shot wide from the rebound.

Brazil had the best chances in the first half, with Vinicius hitting the post once after dribbling three Venezuelans and shooting from the edge of the box. But it was Raphinha who opened the scoring from a free kick in the 43rd minute.

Venezuela brought on 21-year-old Telasco Segovia at half time and the substitution had an immediate effect as he equalised in the 46th minute with a powerful shot from



Venezuela went down to 10 men in the 89th minute after Alexander Gonzalez was sent off for hitting both Gabriel Martinelli and Vinicius Júnior in the face.

The irrigation system then came on two minutes before the final whistle at the Monumental Stadium in the city of Maturin, 500 kilometers (310 miles) west of the capital Caracas, which angered Brazil players.

"When we don't win I leave the pitch a bit disappointed, we deserved to win this one," Raphinha said after the match. "But it is an important point

playing away, we are working hard to win the next one at home." Ecuador beat Bolivia with goals by Enner Valencia (26th minute), Gonzalo Plata (28th and 49th) and Alan Minda (61st).

Balakrishna didn't use body double; everything you see is real'

andamuri Balakrishna and director Bobby Kolli have teamed up for a new film and the makers have officially announced the title and release date. On Friday, they revealed the film's title as Daaku Maharaj and released an actionpacked teaser. The teaser showcases Balakrishna in a complete massappeal avatar, delivering intense action sequences and punch dialogues. Director Bobby promised to present Balakrishna in a stylish, rugged and massy avatar like never before and he has kept his word. "Whatever you see on the screen is real; there's no body

The film features challenging action scenes, including one where Balakrishna rides a horse. "He didn't want to use a body double for any of the action sequences. He insisted on doing everything himself," shared the director. He recalled an incident during a late-night shoot: "We were working at 2 a.m. and I had arranged for a body double to ride the horse for a stunt. But Balakrishna immediately asked why someone else was doing it. He said, 'I should be there. I don't like using a body double. That shows his stamina and dedication to cinema." Director Bobby also praised Balakrishna for his respect towards double," he filmmakers. "I read an interview where Balakrishna said he treats his respect on the sets," said Bobby.

"This is Balakrishna's most stylish avatar in recent times," the makers stated. Thaman's powerful background score enhances the teaser and is expected to be a major highlight in the film. Bollywood actor Bobby Deol plays

the antagonist in Daaku Maharai, which is produced by Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya. The film is set to hit theatres on January 12, 2025, just in time for the Sankranti festival. "There are many more surprises waiting for fans in theatres. I'm proud to be directing such a big star," concluded Bobby. Meanwhile, Telugu cinema fans have reason to celebrate as Pragya Jaiswal joins Nandamuri Balakrishna for another much-anticipated release, NBK 109, now titled Daaku Maharaj. Following their blockbuster collaboration in Akhanda, which captivated audiences and broke box office records, this film marks their second venture together, stirring excitement for fans eager to see them on screen again.



Working with three music directors for lone film is not healthy situation'

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usic director SS Thaman is one of the most sought-after personalities in Tollywood, collaborating with top stars like Pawan Kalyan, Prabhas, Ram Charan, Allu Arjun and Balakrishna, while also working with younger talents like Siddhu Jonnalagadda. "With stories spanning different genres, it's not difficult for me to adapt," says Thaman.

Reflecting on his journey, Thaman admits to

a period of routine compositions. "Around 2013-2014, I was criticised for doing stereotypical music. That made me more selective now," he shares. He is particularly proud of his work in Pawan Kalyan's OG. "Many criticise Telugu films and their music, but OG will stand as proof of what we can achieve musically," he asserts.

Thaman draws inspiration from the stories he

scores. "When directors narrate their stories, that becomes my starting point. Later, the film's visuals guide me in crafting the background score," he explains.

For the upcoming Sankranthi, two of Thaman's projects—Daaku Maharaj and Game Changer—are slated for the release. Working with director Shankar on Game Changer was a dream come true for Thaman. "At the the Vakeel Saab event, producer Dil Raju shared the news of me meeting Shankar in Chennai. I was initially scared—it took me 20 years to work with him. He introduced me as an actor in Boys, but my dream was always to compose music for him," he recounts.

Thaman describes Game Changer as a milestone in his career. "It's the fastest composition I've done. We are planning a major event in the USA, releasing songs in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil and English," he reveals.

Thaman also worked on Pushpa 2 by composing background music for specific portions. "Due to my friendship with Bunny (Allu Arjun), I agreed. Although working with multiple composers isn't ideal, it was necessary here. We coordinated well, but the timeline was tight—I had just 15 days to complete my part," he says.

Having completed 160 films over 29 years, Thaman is now focusing on tak-

ing Telugu cinema to global audiences. "For Prabhas' upcoming film, we're collaborating with Korean artists to promote it internationally," he reveals.

Thaman credits AR Rahman as his biggest inspiration. "At 57, Rahman sir competes with young composers like Anirudh. It amazes me how he connects with audiences even now," he says. Thaman candidly admits to early career missteps, including being trolled as a "copycat." "I wasn't mature then. People trolled me because I wasn't smart enough to hide it. Now, I've learned and grown," he admits.

Unlike many top composers, Thaman prefers working from Hyderabad. "I want to stay close to directors and producers. Hyderabad also has great cricket facilities, which I love," he says. His passion for cricket doubles as his stress buster, often inspiring fresh tunes after matches.

Thaman's vision for Hyderabad includes building a world-class studio and establishing an affordable music school. "I'm in talks with the government for affiliation. Music spaces reduce crime

rates drastically," he says.

On a personal note, Thaman's son is studying at IIT Chennai and his wife manages his accounts while pursuing her musical interests. They plan to shift to Hyderabad next year. Celebrating his birthday on Saturday, Thaman plans to spend the day in Tirupati, reflecting on his remarkable journey and future



Music director Thaman talks about his **upcoming** projects, stress busters, love for Hyderabad and plans for a world-class

'Unscripted & unedited,' contends Rana

Rana Daggubati is coming up with a talk show called *The Rana Daggubati Show* which is going to stream on Amazon Prime from November 23, with each episode being telecast on every Saturday. Talking about the show, Rana said that his show is completely different from many talk shows. "This is unscripted and unedited and an

authentic show," he said. There are many celebrities sharing their views with Rana in this show, including Rajamouli, Nani, Sreeleela, Siddhu Jonnalagadda,



Dulquer Salmaan, Rishabh Shetty and Rana's wife Miheeka. A glimpse of this show was released on Friday at an event. In that glimpse, Naga Chaitanya's answer to a question is interesting. When Rana asked Chaitanya about how he wants his family, Chaitana replied, "I wanted to get married and then have children."

"Four kids like Venky Mama," asked Rana and then Naga Chaitanya laughed. Rana Daggubati and Naga Chaitanya are real cousins and Chaitanya is getting married to Sobhita Dhulipa

on December 4. Venkatesh is Naga Chaitanva's uncle (mother's brother). So, Naga Chaitanya's answer is now going viral everywhere.

The 'difficult interview was with Rishabh Shetty, reveals Rana. "He doesn't know Telugu and I know only a little bit of Hindi, so we managed in Tamil," said Rana. He added that the celebrities who appeared on this show were his friends. Asked about his wife Miheeka, who is also there in the show, he said, "Some of the answers she gave were edited because of me."

Rajamouli and Ram Gopal Varma are also there in the talk show. "I went to Rajamouli's place to shoot the episode. Sometimes it is good to travel to their place and talk with them," he said.

Kubera teaser: The wait ends, anticipation begins

he wait is over! The first glimpse of *Kubera*, featuring the power-house trio of Nagarjuna Akkineni, Dhanush and Rashmika Mandanna, has struck like a bolt of lightning, creating a thunderstorm of anticipation nationwide. Directed by the National Award-winning Sekhar Kammula, Kubera is shaping up to be

rugged, beggar-like look, complete with long hair and a beard. But the teaser revealed a striking transformation: Dhanush appears in a clean-shaven, polished avatar, exuding wealth and mystery. This unexpected shift has left fans eager to uncover the story's layers. an unforgettable cinematic spectacle. The teaser released by Mahesh

Meanwhile, Nagarjuna Akkineni takes on a complex role, bringing a fresh dynamic to the narrative. Rashmika Mandanna's involvement

previously depicted Dhanush with a ing Kubera a true cinematic juggernaut. Crafted as a Pan-India film, Kubera

will release simultaneously in Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada and Hindi. This socio-drama, with its ambitious narrative and compelling characters, is set to transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries. Adding to the cinematic storm is Devi Sri Prasad's electrifying soundtrack, which will undoubtedly amplify the



VD recalls initially sidestepping Sahiba!

videos are commonplace, Vijay Deverakonda has long been an outlier—until now. The Arjun Reddy star has teamed up with singer-composer Jasleen Royal for the song Sahiba, marking his first foray into this popular medi-um. In an interview, Deverakonda shares how his initial reluctance was no match for Royal's determination and

the song's undeniable appeal. "From the moment I heard it, I knew it was something special," he says, admitting he recognised *Sahiba* as a hit right away. However, appreciation didn't mean he was ready to jump in. "I usually don't like doing music videos, but Jasleen is this persistent, stub-born girl who wouldn't take no for an answer," he laughs, sharing how Royal's hit *Heeriye* had already become a household favourite, played daily at his home.

VD has yet again showcased his lover-boy charm on screen, and it's absolutely captivating.

However, Deverakonda recounts how he initially tried to sidestep the project, even cutting his hair to avoid fitting Royal's vision. "But she just wouldn't let up. At some point, I gave in," he recalls with a chuckle.

It was ultimately the passion of Royal and director Sudanshu Saria that won him over. "They were so genuinely excited—it reminded me of how I feel when working on a film," Deverakonda reflects. Their enthusiasm made him realise that sometimes, step-ping out of one's comfort zone is the best choice.

As for romancing on camera in a music video? Deverakonda found it easier

n an industry where music than expected. "With a clear script, a director and a storyline, it was actually pretty simple," he explains. Sahiba, he concludes, was a chance worth taking, and he hopes fans feel the same.

