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QUOTE OF THE DAY the pioneer

KTR did not meet Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar. The BJP leader met KTR in New Delhi and KTR was not even given an appointment. He met Congress leaders in New Delhi. Telangana Congress leaders are interested in

> arresting KTR but the party's national leaders are preventing the **Congress** government from arresting KTR.

- Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, BJP MP P4

Previous govt flayed over TIDCO houses

Government Chief Whip and Vinukonda MLA GV Anjaneyulu criticised the YSRCP government for allegedly betraying low-income families through the TIDCO housing scheme. He accused Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy of living in luxury while the poor struggle for homes on one-cent plots. Speaking in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly on Saturday, Anjaneyulu claimed the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) had initiated efforts to provide housing for the underprivileged, but the YSRCP government..

Trivial issue drives Inter girl to suicide

A trivial dispute over a pen with a co-student forced an Intermediate girl student to commit suicide by jumping off from the hostel building here on Saturday. Police said that the deceased girl Jetti Anusha (17) was studying Intermediate first year at a private institution and she was staying in the hostel. Anusha had a dispute with her friend over pen and they quarrelled on the issue. Disgusted with the dispute with her friend over a pen, Anusha jumped off from the fourth floor of the hostel building. She was immediately taken to a hospital..



BJP fulfils what it guarantees: Shah

Taking potshots at the Congress Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday claimed that the party's leader Rahul Gandhi believes in flying abroad after making promises, while it is only the R.IP that fulfils what it guarantees. Addressing a rally at Madhupur in Deoghar district, the Union Home Minister said that while terrorists not only attacked India but also enjoyed biryani after killing people during the UPA rule, Prime Minister Narendra Modi wiped out terrorists through surgical and air strikes. "Rahul baba makes.. -PAGE: 5

'Delhi-NCR 6th most expensive office mkt

Delhi-NCR is the sixth most expensive office location in the Asia Pacific region, with an average monthly rental of Rs 340 per sq ft, while Mumbai ranked eighth in the list, according to Knight Frank India Real estate consultant Knight Frank, in its latest edition of the Asia-Pacific Prime Office Rental Index for Q3 (July-September) 2024, said Delhi-NCR is the 6th most expensive office space rental market across the APAC region. Hong Kong SAR continues to be APAC's most expensive office market during the third quarter of this calendar year. Prime rents in the NCR remained stable in Q3 2024, while Mumbai and Bengaluru saw year-on-year (YoY) increases of 5 per cent and 3 per cent, respectively, driven by strong demand from corporate.

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Naidu calls his arrest a career turning point

Attributes TDP's success in AP to public frustration with previous govt

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief and Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu described his recent arrest as a pivotal moment in his political journey. Speaking at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit in Delhi on Saturday, he said the incident had strengthened his resolve and focus. "I was arrested without notice, but this experience has only reinforced my determination to serve the people," he remarked. Naidu highlighted his commitment

to public policies and decorum throughout his career. He attributed the TDP's recent success in Andhra Pradesh to growing public dissatisfaction with the previous government, which paved the way for a coalition with the BJP and Pawan Kalyan's Jana Sena Party.

Reflecting on his party's role in national politics, Naidu recalled TDP's support for governments led by VP Singh and Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He emphasised the importance of consensus in coalition governments and reaffirmed the TDP's commitment to fostering unity among diverse political per-

Naidu praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "strong and progressive leader" and lauded his gover-



 Naidu highlights TDP's legacy in national coalition governments under VP Singh and Vajpayee.

 He praises PM Narendra Modi for India's 7.58% growth and global transformation.

his role in telecom deregulation, which boosted India's IT

He notes that 30% of Naidu recalls top global tech achievers from India are from AP.

> Naidu calls for regulation of social media to curb misinformation and online harassment.

nance for achieving a 7.58% growth rate and bolstering India's global reputation. He also reminisced about his efforts during Vajpayee's tenure to deregulate the telecom sector, laying the foundation for India's IT boom.

Highlighting the success of Telugu professionals globally, Naidu noted that 30% of India's top tech achievers hail from

Andhra Pradesh, underscoring the region's leadership in the sector. The TDP chief also raised concerns over the misuse of social media, calling for a debate on accountability and regulation to prevent misinformation, harassment, and targeted attacks. "Social media has become highly vulnerable, and safeguarding its use is crucial," he asserted.

DEROGATORY POSTS ON VIVEKA'S DAUGHTER

Cops search for Kadapa MP's PA

YSRCP social media activist Varra Ravinder Reddy has reportedly mentioned in his statement to the police supporting the allegations against Raghava Reddy, the Personal Assistant of Kadapa MP YS Avinash Reddy.

PNS KADAPA

The Pulivendula police are conducting an intensive search for YS Avinash Reddy's Personal Assistant, Raghava Reddy. A search warrant has been issued, and a notice has been posted at his residence at Ambakapalli in Lingala mandal of YSR district. The police have confirmed they are authorised to search the premises at any time and seize items, digital documents, or other suspicious materials.

Raghava Reddy, who has been absconding for the past one week,

has filed an anticipatory bail petition in the Kadapa court. He is accused of posting derogatory content on social media about YS Vivekananda Reddy's daughter, Sunitha Reddy, allegedly under the direction of MP YS Avinash Reddy. Varra Ravinder Reddy, a YSRCP social media activist, has reportedly mentioned in his statement to the police supporting these allegations. Police have intensified surveillance

in Raghava Reddy's native village, Ambakapalli, as well as in Pulivendula and Lingala mandals, to locate him. In a related case, the police



Raghava Reddy

issued 41-A notices to YSRCP's district social media convenor Vivekananda Reddy. Cases under the IT Act, BNS Act, and SC/ST Atrocity Act were registered on November 8 against YSRCP social media activists V Ravinder Reddy. Sajjala Bharghav Reddy, and Arjun

Varra made statement under duress, says wife

KADAPA: Varra Kalyani, wife of Varra Ravindra Reddy, has accused the police of torturing her husband following his alleged arrest on November 8 at the Kurnool toll plaza, contrary to claims of arrest on November 11. Addressing the media, Kalyani alleged that her husband was masked, taken to multiple locations, and coerced into making false statements under threats of an encounter.

mistreatment to the magistrate and displayed injuries on his arms and legs as evidence. Kalvani also asserted that he was targeted for questioning TDP leaders and denied involvement in any objectionable social media posts, suggesting they were falsely attributed to him. Expressing trust in the judiciary, Kalyani

appealed for justice, alleging that the police acted under higher orders without personal



Varra Kalyani addressing a press meet in Kadapa

Ex-MLA Nara Ramamurthy Naidu passes away

CM Naidu rushes to Hvd from Delhi upon receiving news of his younger brother's death

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Ramamurthy Naidu, the younger brother of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, passed away at the age of 72. He had been battling a prolonged illness and was admitted to a hospital three days ago. He passed away at 12:45 pm in Hyderabad while on a ventilator.

AIG Hospital in Gachibowli, Hyderabad, on November 14 after suffering a cardiac arrest.

Arrangements are being made for his last rites in his native village, Naravari Palli, in the apure heart.

Chandragiri constituency of Tirupati district, which will be held on Sunday.

Ramamurthy Naidu served as an MLA for the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) from 1994 to 1999. Later, he joined the Congress Party in 2002 but returned to TDP before stepping away from active politics due to health issues. He is survived by his two sons, Nara Girish and actor Nara Rohit.

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, who was on a Delhi tour, rushed to Hyderabad, after receiving news of his younger brother's death. Education Minister Nara Naidu was initially brought to Lokesh immediately left for Hyderabad when Naidu's health worsened. On Twitter, Chandrababu Naidu expressed his grief, describing his brother as a leader who served the people with

TIDCO HOUSING PROJECT DURING PREVIOUS GOVT

Probe to be ordered into irregularities: Min

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister, P Narayana, has criticised the previous ing an Assembly session, government for the issues faced by involved in the TIDCO (Township launched into the irregularities and Infrastructure Development surrounding the selection of Corporation) housing projects, beneficiaries and the pay-

decisions" made during the previous In a statement on Saturday dur-

Minister Narayana announced that an investigation would be

The minister's remarks came in response to concerns raised by 18 MLAs, who brought up issues regarding TIDCO housing projects in their constituencies, particularly focusing on the hardships faced by the people.

attributing them to the "ill-advised" ment of Demand Drafts (DDs) to cant efforts to provide homes to the banks during the tenure of the previous government. The minister's remarks came in

ng projects in their constituencies, particularly focusing on the hardships faced by the people. Narayana explained

that the TDP government, led by former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, had made signifi-

poor by adopting the concept of gated community housing. He stated that under the guidance of Naidu, response to concerns raised by 18 the state government had studied MLAs, who brought up issues housing models from across the and implemented the best practices in Andhra Pradesh.

As a result, the state secured approval for the construction of 7,14,481 houses, with the central government contributing ₹1.5 lakh per house, and the state government matching this contribution along with an additional ?90,000 per house for infrastructure development.

Air India Express expands operations in AP, TG

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Air India Express has announced a major expansion of its flight operations from Hyderabad, Vijayawada, and Visakhapatnam as part of its winter schedule.

The airline is increasing the number of weekly flights from 173 last winter to approximately 250 this season, marking a remarkable 45% rise in services.

This expansion includes new direct routes connecting Hyderabad with Gwalior and Visakhapatnam Vijayawada.

As part of a new initiative,

Commissioner Babu introduced the

'Astram' app, which has been devel-

oped to streamline the process of

event registration. He urged all func-

tion halls, wedding venues, and other

event spaces to register their events

Continued on Page 2

20L jobs in 5 years: Minister Savitha

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister for BC and EWS Welfare S Savitha announced plans to generate 20 lakh jobs over the next five years, highlighting the government's commitment to employment creation.

Inaugurating a free DSC coaching centre alongside MLA Md. Nazeer on Saturday, the Minister assured that the DSC recruitment process and appointments would be completed by the next academic year. She recalled that the government, under Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, initiated efforts to fill 16,347 posts through DSC exams. Free coaching centres are being established for aspirants, with a stipend of ?1,500 and ?1,000 for books to support candidates.



First-ever tech delegation from UK to visit Kolkata: P8



'Astram' app to ease traffic snarls during events in city

organisers to provide essential details

such as the event's date, time, expect-

ed number of participants, and vehi-

unable to take necessary precautions to

avoid traffic issues," Commissioner

"Without prior information, we are

cle information.

PNS VIJAYAWADA

To tackle traffic congestion during large events in the city, NTR District Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhar Babu convened a coordination meeting with the management of function halls, 'kalyana mandapams', and hotels on Saturday at the Police Command Control Room.

The aim of the meeting was to address growing concerns over traffic disruptions caused by a lack of communication from event venues.

Speaking at the meeting, Commissioner Babu highlighted that the absence of prior notice from event organisers about their schedules and expected crowds has been a major contributor to traffic jams. He emphasised that timely information from venues would allow the traffic police to better plan and manage roads, ensuring smoother traffic flow and less inconvenience to the public. on the app. The app allows event Babu explained. "The app will help us

FUNCTION / CONVENTION HALL MANAGEMENT TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SOLUTION AYAWADA CIT

CO-ORDINATION MEETING WITH

NTR district CP Rajasekhar Babu highlighted that the absence of prior notice from event organisers about their schedules and expected crowds has been a major contributor to traffic jams. He emphasised that timely information from venues would allow the traffic police to better plan and manage roads, ensuring smoother traffic flow and less inconvenience to the public.

coordinate with event venues in real-time

and ensure better traffic management.'

ments to take adequate security measures to prevent online fraud or cybercrimes during their events. The meeting, which was attended by senior police officers including NTR District DCP (Law & Order) Gowthami Shali, Traffic DCP Krishna Murthy Naidu, and Additional DCP AVL Prasanna Kumar, marked the first step in a

This will allow the police to take extra

precautions if needed and better

Apart from traffic-related con-

cerns, Commissioner Babu also

addressed the rising issue of cyber-

crime. He advised the venue manage-

regulate traffic around the event.

fic management during major events in Vijayawada. This new system promises to ease the traffic burden in the city, especially on days when large gatherings are expected, and ensure that public

more coordinated approach to traf-

In addition to the online registration, the Commissioner also advised venue managements to send important updates, such as the attendance of prominent guests or dignitaries, directly to the police via WhatsApp. safety remains a top priority.



BRS and Congress spar over graft charges, giving BJP leverage in TG

he ruling Congress and the opposition Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) parties in Telangana are embroiled in a political battle, each attempting to corner the other with allegations of corruption. The irony lies in how both parties, in their zealous pursuit of power, have inadvertently given the Bharatiya Janata Party significant leverage over them. These developments have created a scenario where the BJP, both at the state level through the Governor's office and at the national level through central ministries, has become an influential player in determining the outcomes of these high-stakes political confrontations.

Congress goes after BRS over Formula E race allegations Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy of the Congress has initiated a series of probes aimed squarely at the alleged financial misdeeds and administrative irregularities of the previous BRS administration, particu-

Chandrasekhar Rao, the BRS leader, and his son, KT Rama Rao (KTR). One of the most significant accusations involves the 2024 Formula E race, proposed to be hosted in Hyderabad by the previous BRS government. This ambitious project became a symbol of Telangana's drive to establish itself on the global sports map. However, the alleged payment of Rs. 55 crore to the race organizers by the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA), authorized solely by KTR in his capacity as the then Municipal Administration minister, has now become a focal point of controversy.

The Congress government contends that KTR sanctioned this substantial payment without cabinet approval, bypassing necessary procedural checks. It accuses KTR of misusing public funds and violating administrative protocols to facilitate the deal, allegedly benefiting

The Congress government contends that KTR sanctioned this substantial payment without cabinet approval, bypassing necessary procedural checks. It accuses KTR of misusing public funds and violating administrative protocols to facilitate the deal, allegedly benefiting private parties

private parties. Telangana's Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), tasked with investigating the case, has since approached Governor Jishnu Dev Varma for approval to register a formal case against

Under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 2018, the Governor's consent is required to proceed with a corruption case against a serving or former public official for actions taken during their official capacity. The Governor, a BJP appointee, has sent the ACB's request for legal review. Many now see the Governor's eventual decision as a key indicator of how the BJP may approach its role in this unfolding drama

Ĭn response, BRS has retaliated with its own corruption allegations against Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, focusing on the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) scheme. The central government-sponsored initiative seeks to revamp urban infrastructure, improve sewage sys-



Chief Editor Swatantra TV and author

tems, and enhance drinking water supply in urban local bodies. KTR has alleged that Revanth Reddy manipulated the tender process to award a substantial contract to Shodha Infrastructure, a company owned by Revanth's brother-inlaw, S. Srujan Reddy. To bolster his case, KTR recently visited Delhi, where he presented a memorandum to Ûnion Urban Development Minister

the central government to investigate the alleged misconduct. The demand for a central inquiry is a calculated move, as the BJP-led government at the Center now holds the power to decide whether to investigate Congress's chief minister, bringing the BJP back into a position of strategic control.

The BJP's role: A balancing act with strategic leverage These accusations have, in a

twist of political irony, handed the BJP considerable influence over both Telangana's Congress and BRS parties. With the ACB's request pending approval from the BJPappointed Governor and the plea to initiate a probe into Revanth's actions awaiting a decision from the BJP's central administration, the Congress and BRS have unwittingly left their fates partially in the hands of their common political opponent. BJP's strategic leverage is further augmented tion probes play well with its national narrative of rooting out corruption. Any action the BJP takes in these matters could be spun as an effort to cleanse Telangana politics, contrasting with what it may portray as the corruption-ridden administrations of the Congress and the BRS.

Both Congress and BRS have historically locked horns in Telangana, each vying for the influential urban voter base and the powerful rural constituencies. However, the present corruption allegations may tarnish their public images, diluting their respective appeals and creating a space for the BJP to enter Telangana's political mainstream.

The Congress and the BRS find themselves caught in an endless cycle of one-upmanship, aiming to expose each other's administrative failings while risking their credibility. However, these recent developments highlight how vulneracountermeasures. Any misstep or further escalation could allow the BJP to drive a wedge between the Congress and the BRS, potentially drawing disillusioned voters away from both parties.

For now, it remains to be seen whether the BJP will leverage its newfound influence to escalate these investigations or adopt a wait-and-watch approach to further observe how the two Telangana rivals weaken each other. What is certain, however, is that the tit-for-tat political game has now entered a new stage where the ruling Congress and opposition BRS no longer have the autonomy to resolve their disputes solely within the state's jurisdiction. They are now at the mercy of national politics and the strategic calculations of the BJP, a reminder of how political battles at the state level can have far-reaching implications in the broader landscape

Revanth uniting divided BRS house

gests that Joginapally Santosh Kumar, once a visible and prominent figure in

The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has contrasting sides to it. When it was in power; it looked more like a divided house, with its key leaders not tolerating one another's presence in the same room. Today, adverse circumstances have brought in the bonding factor to keep it remarkably united, say insiders who have tracked the party from its heyday. As times have changed, so has their camaraderie. Ever since Revanth Reddy became the Chief Minister, the top leaders of BRS seem to have buried their hatchet, at least for public consumption. It took nearly eleven months of political turbulence and promptings for compromise for these leaders to stand shoulder to shoulder. What caused this miraculous turnaround? Some say it is not just the charm of opposition politics but also the looming specter of raids and arrests. The raid on the house of the brother-in-law of BRS working president KT Rama Rao was apparently the final straw for the party circles as well as the cadre, who realized that the heat was directed not just at a few individuals but the extended Kalvakuntla family. The constant threat of 'arresting' KTR in various 'scams' under lens has had the unintended consequence of forging a unity among even reluctant big rivals, let alone the rank and file. However, the Congress continues to pitch chinks in the armour by claiming that power struggle between Harish Rao

and KTR is still on in BRS. So, at least for the sake of galleries, both the leaders are referring to each other in their

to tone down the narrative. Politics, after all, makes strange bedfellows.

BJP and Congress: Allies in tango against BRS

In the intricate web of Telangana politics, an intriguing dynamic has emerged between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress. Despite their longstanding rivalry, both parties see a common adversary in the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS). This shared opposition has resulted in instances of alignment in their actions. Within Congress circles, there is a jest that the BJP often articulates the Congress's stance more effectively than Congress leaders themselves. This sentiment is exemplified by BJP MPs, who, at times, seems to champion Congress viewpoints with greater clarity. Such observations highlight the nuanced interplay between the two parties as they navigate their mutual opposition to the BRS. However, the BJP is not without its internal challenges. The party has faced criticism, with members occasionally adopting divergent positions. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has pointedly referred to certain BJP factions as "nakili BJP" (fake BJP), underscoring perceived inconsistencies within the party. Despite these complexities, the core supporters of both the BJP and Congress remain steadfast in their belief that the two parties are not in collusion. The political tango continues, with each party striving to assert its dominance while contending with both internal dynamics and external alliances.

Is Santosh santusht in BRS?

Continued from Page 1

Narayana further elaborat-

ed that between 2014 and

2019, the TDP government

had initiated the construction

of high-quality homes through

TIDČO, with plans for 5 lakh

houses. Of these, tenders were

issued for 4,54,706 houses,

The political buzz in Telangana sug-

BRS, might be losing ground in the party with party supremo K Chandrasekhar Rao, who had been his pillar of support, largely confined to his residence and keeping a low profile these days. Whatever it be, Santosh's absence from key activities has raised eyebrows. Adding to the intrigue, Armoor ex-MLA Jeevan Reddy is rumored to be acting as a point of contact for KCR, sparking speculation about shifts in party dynamics. Although the reasons for this perceived sidelining remain unclear, some insiders hint that KCR might be reconsidering past actions associated with nephew. Among rumors that fly fast and thick, the wildest one about Santosh Kumar is that he has amicable ties with Revanth Reddy. However, not all BRS leaders are convinced of any significant fallout. They argue that, with KCR stayng out of the spotlight, Santosh's reduced risibility might simply be consequential. For that matter, Santosh hasn't entirely stepped away from public initiatives, going by his occasional travels on plantation drives. BRS social media wing's

dichotomy on Eatala Rajender

The recent dynamics within the Bharat

Rashtra Samithi (BRS) reflect significant

inconsistency with regard to Eatala Rajender. Once a trusted Health Minister, Rajender was dismissed by party president K Chandrasekhar Rao during the COVID-19 pandemic—a decision that many believe was based solely on KCR's insights. Past is past. Now, following Rajender's statement supporting former BRS MLA Patnam Narender Reddy's arrest, the BRS's social media factions have been vocal about wanting him back in the party. This shift is perplexing, especially since these same voices previousopposed the inclusion of 'defectors'. Rajender's victory in the by-election against BRS was anchored on the principle of 'atma gouravam' (self-respect). If BRS's social media wing now suggests that KCR perhaps erred in dropping Rajender, it is tantamount to acknowledging that their leader is fallible. That would be far-fetched for KCR, who maintains that the electorate would eventually accept their misjudgment, often saying: "People will realize" or "People have realized what they lost." This scenario pits leadership decisions against sentiments at the base level of the party. Insiders admit it is difficult to control the social

From a rallying cry to a jarring song

media wing.

and by May 2019, 77,370

houses had been fully com-

pleted. However, Narayana

criticized the YSRCP govern-

ment for drastically reducing

the number of houses to

2,62,216 without any justifi-

No doubt the song "Moodu rangula jenda patti singamole vachinaadu..." sung by Nalgonda Gaddar created a record on YouTube with 300K views and became a rallying cry during the TG Assembly elections. During that period, it was played everywhere across the state i.e.wherever then TPCC president A Revanth Reddy participated, be it public meetings or rallies. However, the song

Probe to be ordered into...

The overall cost of the hous-

ing project was Rs 38,265

crore, with Rs 7,500 crore

provided by the Central gov-

ernment and Rs 17,730 crore

by the State. The minister said

is still played at high decibel levels by overenthusiastic officials at official events and functions in which Chief Minister Revanth Reddy participates. This sounds irritating to those participants who are not exactly the Chief Minister's fans or officials who curry favour with him. At times, people wonder whether the ongoing programme is official or a party show with an official tag. "It has been creating irritable sound syndrome", commented one of the participants at a programme organized at RTA office recently for 'handing over AMVI appointment orders'. Others, particularly journalists, say they have been experiencing 'misophonia or hyperacusis' due to the frequent playing of the song that sounds jarring for them. Another journalist commented: "It is unethical to play the song in official programmes."

Driverless car and untracked issues

Does a driverless car have anything to do with discussions in the Assembly? Apparently not, but with artificial intelligence breathing down the necks of human beings, maybe parallels can be drawn if the discussion in the House takes members nowhere. A driverless car is a vehicle that uses a combination of sensors, cameras, radar and artificial intelligence to travel between destinations

without a human operator. But, during a Zero Hour debate in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly,

Ravi Kumar likened the session to a 'driverless car'. For, he claimed, the Ministers were unaware of the issues being raised and that they were not taking responsibility for addressing the problems. In response, Minister Atchannaidu, defending the government, stated that he was personally keeping track of the issues and that members' concerns would be addressed. As if on autopilot, Speaker Ch Ayyanapatrudu then chipped in, saying that the MLA, being seated in the last row, was not in a position to understand what was happening in the session.

Quality food eludes even MLAs

Food safety authorities in various states are conducting raids to regulate standards in hotels, restaurants and other eateries with promising results. Still, contractors preparing food that is served to members of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly seem to be befikar. After the Assembly session began on November 11, there have been several complaints regarding the quality of food served to the members. Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu expressed his concern after reports emerged that the food served to the legislators was of poor taste and quality. Mentioning that food being served to MLAs must meet certain standards, he warned the food contractors to improve the quality of food served or face consequences. Noticeably, even the food served to scribes during the session has been of poor quality. Understandably, it was not specifically addressed.

> (With inputs from Naveena Ghanate, K Venkateshwarlu and Pradeep Kumar)

> > that while the Central government had initially planned for 300 square feet houses, some beneficiaries had requested larger units, with 360 and 430 square feet homes. The cost of these homes varied from Rs 5.65 lakh for 300 square feet units to Rs 7.65

lakh for the larger units.

Relocation of judicial institutions from Kurnool to Amaravati opposed

PNS KURNOOL

YSRCP leaders from Kurnool and Nandyal, including district presidents SV Mohan Reddy and Katasani Rambhupal Reddy, Kurnool Mayor BY Ramaiah and several advocates, have strongly condemned the TDP government's decision to relocate judicial institutions from Kurnool to Amaravati.

During a media briefing after submitting a memorandum to Kurnool District Collector Ranjith Basha, YSRCP leaders called the move a grave injustice to the backward Rayalaseema region. They

highlighted that under YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's leadership, Kurnool was declared the judicial capital, and institutions like the HRC, Lokayukta, Wakf Tribunal, and CBI Court were established, along with

the foundation for the National Law University. However, the TDP government's affidavit in the High Court seeking to shift these institutions violates the Sribagh Pact and disregards the sacrifices made by the people of Kurnool, who provided prime land for the university.

YSRCP leaders called the move a grave injustice to the already backward

institutions like the HRC, Lokayukta, Wakf Tribunal, and CBI Court were

established, along with the foundation for the National Law University.

Rayalaseema region. They highlighted that under YS Jagan Mohan

Reddy's leadership, Kurnool was declared the judicial capital, and

The leaders vowed to explore legal options and go sion is not reversed and called on all political parties and public organizations to unite or the cause.

They warned coalition leaders of being labelled as betrayers of Rayalaseema if they fail to act and reaffirmed their commitment to protecting the

TDP leaders pay homage to Nara Ramamurthy Naidu

PNS VIJAYAWADA

TDP leaders expressed deep grief over the sudden demise of Nara Ramamurthy Naidu, pion of the poor. On Saturday, party leaders gathered at the TDP's central office to offer condolences and pay their respects by placing flowers on the portrait of Ramamurthy Naidu. The leader spoke about his commitment to the welfare of the people, particularly the underprivileged, and his tireless efforts to build a better government for

TDP State president Palla Srinivasa Rao and Politburo member Varla Ramaiah, during the condolence meeting, described Ramamurthy Naidu as a humanitarian who worked relentlessly to unite people. They recalled how he always remained in close

touch with the masses, voic-

Ramamurthy Naidu may no ing their concerns and advo-

cating for their needs. His devotion to the success of the TDP and his continuous efforts for the party's growth were also highlighted.

The leaders also remembered his vision of a 'Ram Rajyam'—a just society where evil forces would be defeated and justice would prevail. They spoke of his goodness and kindness, which ensured he would always remain in the hearts of the people. They added that such individuals are rare, and although longer be with them, his legacy would live on in the memories of the people. TDP leaders including P.

Govind Satyanarayana, Svavala Devadath, Gurumurthi, Sajja Hemlatha, Dharapaneni Narendra Babu, Buchhi Ramprasad, Patarla Ramesh, Haji Hassan Basha, Chappidi Rajasekhar, Shankar Naidu, Ravi Yadav, Mulak Satyavani, Peery Subhashini, and others were present at the tribute meeting.

Bhumana accuses Naidu of adopting deceptive tactics

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Former MLA Bhumana Karunakar Reddy has strongly criticised TDP leader Chandrababu Naidu for using diversionary tactics to cover up his failure to implement welfare schemes. Speaking to the media on Saturday, Reddy accused ing notoria tion while deceiving the public.

Reddy claimed that Naidu's coalition government has made impractical promises to mislead the people and that Naidu has been working to win over YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) sympathisers, which he believes is beyond Naidu's capacity. "Naidu has been trying to rebuild his image through his friendly media, which has turned into his mouthpiece," Reddy said. He also criticised Naidu for exaggerating the figures related to loans and debt. "The actual loan figure was inflated many times, and when it came to the budget presentation, it was reduced to over Rs 6 lakh crore, which reflects the recklessness of his coalition partners," Reddy added.

Reddy urged the public to read the book 'Oka Charitra, Konni Nijalu' written by Daggubati Venkateswara Rao, Naidu's co-brother, which exposes the darker side of Chandrababu Naidu's political career.

TODAY

ALMANAC

20L jobs in 5...

Continued from Page 1

Minister Savitha credited IT Minister Nara Lokesh for his efforts to attract investments and industries to Andhra Pradesh, emphasising the potential for large-scale job creation through industrial development.

She encouraged BC candidates to utilise the free coaching facilities and revealed plans to offer online DSC coaching for those unable to attend in-person classes. The online platform will provide lessons, question papers, and test materials. Additionally, free coaching for civil services will begin soon, with 100 candidates being trained in the first phase.

Addressing the media, the Minister warned of strict action against those posting abusive content on social media. She also highlighted the allocation of ?39,000 crore for BC welfare in the 2024-25 budget.

Air India Express expands...

Continued from Page 1

In addition, the airline has increased frequencies on existing routes, including those from Hyderabad to Bengaluru and Cochin. Dr Ankur Garg, Chief Commercial Officer of Air India Express, highlighted the airline's strengthened commitment to the Telangana and Andhra Pradesh regions. "With nearly 200 weekly flights, Hyderabad is now our third-largest station. We are proud to offer direct flights from Hyderabad to 17 domestic destinations, alongside connections to all three major airports in Saudi Arabia," he stated. From Vijayawada, Air India Express operates 23 weekly flights, connecting directly to Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam, and Sharjah, with one-stop connectivity to 15 domestic destinations, including Delhi, Chennai, Goa, and Mumbai

Ex-MLA Nara Ramamurthy...

Continued from Page 1

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and others, including former Chief Justice of India NV Ramana and Union Minister Pemmasani Chandrasekhar, extended their condolences to the family. Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath also expressed his sorrow, calling Naidu's death a great loss to the family and the public.

Krishna Paksha Nov 16 11:50 PM to Nov 17 09:06 PM Dwitiya: Nov 17 09:06 PM to Nov 18 06:56 PM Nakshatram: Nov 16 07:28 PM to Nov 17 05:22 PM Nov 17 05:22 PM Mrigashirsha: to Nov 18 03:48 PM 4:12 PM to 5:36 PM Rahukalam 12:01 PM to 1:24 PM Yamagandam: 10:36 PM to 12:06 AM Varjyam:

2:48 PM to 4:12 PM

02:27 PM to 03:55 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER Forecast: Partly Cloudy

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:37 AM to 12:22 PM

Temp: 32°° Humidity: 65% Sunrise: 6:12 AM Sunset: 5:32 PM

Gulika:

Amritakalam:

Updated: November 16, 2024 5:00 PM

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Congress demands expulsion of YSRCP leader **Gautham Reddy**

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Congress vice-pesident Kolanukonda Sivaji on Saturday called for the immediate expulsion of YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leader and former Fibernet Corporation president Gautham Reddy. Sivaji accused Reddy of exploiting public property and being involved in seri-ous criminal activities, with 42 cases filed against him, including charges of attempted murder and illegal land dealings.

Shivaji also urged the government to invoke the Revenue Recovery Act to seize Reddy's assets, alleging they were acquired unlawfully. He further called for Reddy's disqualification from practising law due to his criminal record and suggested the introduction of the Goonda Act against him.

The Congress leader criticised YSRCP spokesperson Ambati Rambabu and other party members for defending Reddy despite the serious charges against him, questioning the party's ethical stance.

Sivaji also praised the police for taking action against YSRCP's "social media activists" spreading harmful content but expressed disappointment at party chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's support for them. "The government must take firm action against those spreading defamatory posts and their supporters, Shivaji said.

Rs 156 cr sought for irrigation projects in Annamayya dist

State Transport, Youth and Sports Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy on Saturday met Water Resources Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu at the latter's camp office in Vijayawada and submitted a request for Rs 156.60 crore to complete pending works on the HNSS Main Canal in the Pileru Mandipalle Nagireddy Srinivasapuram Reservoir and Adivapille Reservoir. These irrigation projects are expected to significantly benefit farmers and the public in Annamayya district by improving the region's irrigation and water supply systems.

During the meeting, Minister Ramprasad Reddy highlighted the urgent need to address various water-related



issues in the Rayachoti constituency, which includes the six mandals of Rayachoti,

Galiveedu, Sambepalle, Lakkireddipalli, Ramapuram, and Chinnamandem. He menwork of tanks and ponds in these areas and stressed the growing concerns over drinking water shortages. He also called for measures to resolve irrigation challenges faced by local farmers.

Additionally, the Minister requested the completion of the HNSS Main Canal works to ensure a reliable water supply to the Adivapille Reservoir. He urged Minister Ramanaidu to take steps that would help increase water storage in the district, addressing long-term water scarcity issues. Ramprasad Reddy emphasized that coordinated efforts between various state departments are vital for solving the district's water problems and ensuring sustainable water resources in the future.

CR Foundation expands to AP with V'wada as new hqs

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The CR Foundation, founded in honour of the legendary Communist leader Chandra Raieswara Rao (CR), has announced its expansion into Andhra Pradesh, with Vijayawada set to be its new headquarters. The foundation, known for its work promoting national unity and social cohesion, aims to extend its outreach and further its mission of progressive development, aligned with the ideals of its founder.

During the Silver Jubilee

celebrations held on Saturday at the Sri Rama Function Hall in Vijayawada, Dr. K. Narayana, National Secretary of the CPI and Honorary President of the CR Foundation, made the official announcement. He highlighted that the foundation's charitable initiatives, including women's empowerment, cultural programs, and library activities, would continue under a Charitable Trust, separate from the Communist Party's influence.

The event was graced by Chief Guest, retired Andhra



Pradesh High Court Judge Akula Venkata Sesha Sai, who spoke fondly of CR's legacy. He praised the leader for promoting national unity beyond political differences and recalled CR's remarkable gesture of supporting the Indian Army during the India-Pakistan war, visiting the bor-

ders to boost morale.

Avanigadda MLA Mandali Buddha Prasad, who also addressed the gathering, emphasized the importance of sacrifice and simplicity in today's world, values he said were exemplified by CR. He shared that his family had a close relationship with

Concern over difficulty in obtaining disability certificates

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

A growing number of disabled people in Visakhapatnam are facing problems in getting their disability certificates because of limited appointment slots on the SADAREM portal. Visakhapatnam West MLA Ganababu recently raised this issue in the Assembly, pointing out that many disabled individuals are being forced to travel to nearby districts just to secure appointments. "Disabled persons already face many challenges," he said. "It's sad to see al travel stress just for a simple certificate

The SADAREM portal, a government initiative aimed at



simplifying the process of issuable appointments. ing disability certificates, opercreated more problems. Now, slots are released for two months at a time, leading to higher demand and fewer avail-

While less serious cases, such ates on a monthly slot system. as ENT-related disabilities, can While this system was effective usually be handled in conditions require specialised medical assessments. Due to the limited number of slots, many people are being forced to seek

initiative aimed at simplifying the process of issuing disability certificates, operates on a monthly slot system. While this system was effective in the past, recent changes have created more problems. Now, slots are released for two months at a time, leading to higher demand and fewer available appointments in other districts.

The SADAREM portal, a government

This is especially difficult for individuals with severe disabilities who need assistance from careong-distance travel can be physically and emotionally draining, and it may delay important medical treatment.

A local resident from Daba

Gardens recently faced this issue. Though she lives in Visakhapatnam, she was told to go to a hospital in Anakapalle because there were no available slots at King George Hospital (KGH).

While the government's aim is to make the process easier, the current system is not meeting the needs of disabled people. MLA Ganababu stressed the need for a solution, saying, We need to find a way to respect the dignity of disabled individuals. This issue requires immediate attention and effective solutions." With the numing, it is crucial to find ways to make the disability certificate application process more accessible and efficient.

City roads to go smart

Drone survey conducted for planning

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Following the instructions of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC), under the leadership of Commissioner HM Dhyanachandra, carried out a drone survey on Saturday morning to plan the develop-ment of smart roads in the city.

C o m m i s s i o n e r Dhyanachandra explained that the survey covered a total distance of 17 kilometres, spanning three circles within the city's jurisdiction. This survey is part of a larger initiative to build smart roads under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. The survey focused on key factors such as potholes, road dividers, paver blocks, footpaths, and underground drainage systems, which are essential for the development of the roads.

The Commissioner also highlighted that the smart roads project would not only improve infrastructure quality but also explore potential revenue generation through the PPP model. Moreover, the construction agency selected for the project will be responsible for maintaining these roads for one year after completion, he added.



The smart roads project will cover a total of 17 kilometres across three circles of the city. In Circle 1, 7.3 kilometres of roads will be developed, including key routes like BRP Road, KT Road, Nehru Road, Kummaripalem Center, and Sitara Center. Circle 2 will see 6.2 kilometres of development along BRTS Road, Sambamurthy Road, GS Raju

Road, and Kandrika Junction. In Circle 3, 4.14 kilometres will be developed, covering roads such as HT Line, Gurunanak Colony Main Road, and Pinnamaneni Polyclinic Road.

With these developments, Vijayawada is set to enhance its road infrastructure and move towards becoming a smarter, more modern city.

10 red sanders logs seized, smuggler Held

PNS TIRUPATI

The Red sanders Anti-Smuggling Task Force (RSASTF) seized 10 red sanders logs and arrested a smuggler at Bhakarapet village in Chandragiri mandal on Saturday.

Addressing the media, DSP G Balireddy stated that the operation was carried out under the supervision of District SP L Subba Rayudu and Task Force SP P Srinivas. A team led by RI Suresh Kumar Reddy and RSI Vishnuvirdhar Kumar conducted combing operations in the forest area.

The task force team spotted a group of woodcutters carrying red sanders logs. On being approached, the woodcutters abandoned the forest. However, the team managed to apprehend one individual.

APCC demands probe into delay of Rahul's chopper takeoff

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) vice-president Kolanukonda Sivaji has demanded that the Election Commission of India (ECI) conduct an inquiry into the delay in granting permission for the helicopter takeoff of Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, at Godda in Jharkhand.

Addressing a press conference in Vijayawada on Saturday, Shivaji said that Rahul Gandhi was participating in an election campaign in Jharkhand when the Air Traffic Control (ATC) at Godda delayed the helicopter's takeoff, citing "protocol" as the reason. He called on the ECI to investigate the matter and take action against those responsible for the delay.

Shivaii also raised concerns about Ándhra Pradesh Chief 'handrababu Naidu's request to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for permission to impose a 1 per cent surcharge on GST in the

state. He pointed out that the total GST collection in Andhra Pradesh is around Rs 5,000 crore, and a 1 per cent surcharge would amount to an additional Rs 500 crore.

He expressed worry that such a surcharge would severely affect small and marginal traders in the state. "Instead of demanding Special Category Status (SCS) and other key projects for the state, Chandrababu Naidu is asking for permission to impose a urged the Chief Minister to consult with traders and industry leaders before moving forward with this proposal

GVMC uses drones to control mosquito-borne diseases

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Visakhapatnam has made history by becoming the first city in Andhra Pradesh to use drones to control mosquitoborne diseases. In a 10-day operation, drones sprayed insecticides over 209 acres of 64 water bodies. This new approach, led by the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC), will be expanded to other major cities like Vijayawada, Rajamahen dravaram, Tirupati, Guntur, Kakinada, Kurnool, and Nellore under the guidance of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu.

The project involved a private drone operator using malathion, an insecticide, for spraying over 10 days. Dr. ENV Naresh Kumar, the Chief Medical Officer of GVMC, shared his excitement about the project's success in an interview with The Pioneer. He said, "We covered 209 acres of ponds at 64 different locations The project involved a private drone operator using malathion, an insecticide, for spraying over 10 days. Dr. ENV Naresh Kumar, the Chief Medical Officer of GVMC, shared his excitement about the project's success in an interview with The Pioneer

in just 10 days. Normally, this would take four months using manual methods. The total cost was about Rs 2.17 lakh, including drone services and materials.

Unlike traditional manual praying, which can only cover the edges of water bodies, drones ensure full coverage. Dr Kumar explained, "Though the cost is similar to manual spraying, drones give better results. They cover the entire water surface, reduce chemical waste, and make the spraying more accurate." Each drone used in opera-

tion can carry 10 litres of insecticide and can fly for about one hour on a single charge. The use of drones makes the operation more efficient, reducing labour, fuel, and equipment costs. GVMC officials have confirmed that drones will be used for future spraying, as they help in using larvicide more efficiently while also protecting the environment.

Dr Kumar also noted the positive response to the initiative, saying, "The feedback has been very good. There has been a significant reduction in mosquito breeding areas, and the spraying has had a strong impact. We plan to continue this program every year, starting in June, with the next phase planned for mid-

School students set new world record in folk dance

PNS VIJAYAWADA

In a remarkable display of unity and cultural heritage, over 400 school students from across India set a new world record with a spectacular traditional folk dance performance at Icon Public School on Saturday. The event saw students from 28 states come together to form the map of India in just 40 seconds, creating a historic moment that was officially recognized by the Champions Book of World Records and Asian World Records.

The performance, which highlighted the rich cultural diversity of India, was witnessed by representatives from the two prestigious recordkeeping organizations, who



verified the achievement.

The event was graced by notable dignitaries, including Narendra A. Patil, Divisional Railway Manager of South Central Railway (Vijayawada Division), who served as the chief guest, and J. Surya Prakash, Joint Secretary to the Governor of Andhra Pradesh (Raj Bhavan, Vijayawada), who attended as the special guest.

The event was organised by the leadership of Icon Educational Institutions, with participation from the institution's founder K. Rajendra and Director Yadla Parthasaradhi, along with other esteemed faculty and staff members.

Previous govt put my Rs 87 cr bills pending: BJP MLA

PNS VIJAYAWADA

BJP MLA P Vishnukumar Raju criticised the previous YSRCP government, alleging that Rs 87 crore worth of bills owed to him as a contractor were left pending. Speaking in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly on Saturday, Raju accused the Jagan Mohan Reddy government of neglecting contractors and claimed that 43 individuals had committed suicide during its tenure due to nonpayment of bills.

Raju highlighted the financial hardships faced by contractors, stating that banks

refused loans, leaving them burdened by debts. "I have been in contracting since 1983. The YSRCP government's rule from 2019-24 was oppressive. I am a five-time heart attack survivor, and the suffering caused by Jagan's administration has been unbearable," he

He added that despite his seniority and long-standing career as a contractor, he was also a victim of the government's alleged apathy. Raju expressed his frustration, saving he was waiting for Jagan Mohan Reddy to attend the Assembly and address the

Vizag's tourism hopes dip amid CM's optimism

vhich were cancelled under previous rucial for local tourism, appears ledicated resources, organizing these events will be impossible.

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

While Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has extolled tourism as the future of Andhra Pradesh's economy, the reality on the ground in Visakhapatnam, the state's 'destination city,' paints a starkly different picture. "The future lies in tourism. The



the sector's potential for job creation and development. However, the city's tourism industry, once a vibrant hub, is now grappling with numerous challenges, including abandoned projects, deteriorating infrastructure, and

a lack of government support. The YŠRCP's previous administration is widely blamed for significant setbacks in the tourism, transport, and hospitality sectors, leading to widespread job losses. Even after the coalition government took power, the recovery has been slow and inconsistent.

A source close to the Visakhapatnam Tourism department expressed deep concern: The tourism sector here seems to be moving in the opposite direction to what CM Naidu has

The Port City struggles to reclaim its past glory

envisioned. Instead of growth, we're witnessing neglect and deteriorating conditions.

The Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC), which heavily relies on Visakhapatnam for revenue, has been adversely affected by the leadership vacuum within the city's tourism department. Key positions, including the Regional Director and Divisional Manager, remain vacant, hindering operations and project oversight.

The much-anticipated return of the 'Visakha Utsav' and other festivals, which were cancelled under previous administrations, is uncertain. With no concrete plans or dedicated officials in place, the revival of these events, crucial for local tourism, appears unlikely. A senior Tourism

department official expressed frustration: "The festivals are key for local tourism. Without immediate planning and dedicated resources, organizing these events will be impossible.

As Visakhapatnam's tourism sector faces these challenges, residents and stakeholders alike are calling for urgent government intervention to revitalize this once-thriving industry. Local businesses, hoteliers, and tour operators are worried about the future of the sector and are urging the government to take immediate action. "We need strong leadership and concrete plans to revive our tourism industry," said a local hotelier. "The government's vision for tourism should be backed by action and investment.



TDP MLA slams previous govt over TIDCO housing scheme

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Government Chief Whip and Vinukonda MLA Anjaneyulu criticised the YSRCP government for allegedly betraying low-income families through the TIDCO housing scheme. He accused Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy of living in luxury while the poor struggle for

ury while the poor struggle tor homes on one-cent plots. Speaking in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly on Saturday, Anjaneyulu claimed the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) had initiated efforts to provide housing for the underprivileged, but the YSRCP government dismantled these plans. He alleged that the Jagan administration, which had promised to construct 25 lakh houses at five lakh houses per year, failed to complete 90% of homes initiated by the TDP.



sunday pioneer

In Vinukonda, he said, 4,096 TIDCO houses were promised, but construction of 1,200 houses—80% complete under the previous government—remains unfinished. Anjaneyulu criticised the government for misleading the public with promises of one-cent housing plots, calling it a betrayal of the poor.

He urged Minister P

Narayana to ensure the completion and distribution of TIDCO houses to the needy within the next two years, emphasising the importance of fulfilling commitments to the state's most vulnerable citi-



AP's first 'container hospital' for remote healthcare rolls on

PNS PARVATIPURAM

As part of its initiative to ensure healthcare access in remote tribal hamlets and hilltop areas, the state government has developed its first prefabricated health sub-centre, termed a 'container hospital. This innovative medical facility, constructed from shipping containers, is set to address healthcare challenges

in inaccessible regions. The first-of-its-kind container hospital has been established at Karadavalasa panchayat, nestled in the hilltops under the Tonam Primary

Health Centre (PHC) in Saluru mandal, Parvathipuram Manyam district. Scheduled to be inaugurated later this month, this facility will serve as a pilot project designed to assess its impact on local healthcare delivery.

"This container hospital is a significant step forward for the healthcare needs of over 2,000 residents from surrounding villages, including Bellapaka Boddapadu, Narinjapadu, Karadavalasa, and Karadakottavalasa in Saluru mandal, as well as Chakirevuvalasa, Kankanapalli, Aajuru, and Kumbivalasa in Pachipenta mandal," explained a gov-

RENOVATION OF KAMAKSHI TEMPLE

Sringeri Peetham Seer, Anam perform 'Bhoomi Pooja'

In his spiritual address, lagadguru Sri Sri Sri Vidhushekhara Bharati Mahaswamiji reflected on the efforts of Adi Shankaracharya, who revitalised Hinduism 1,200 years ago, and called upon people to follow his teachings and protect Hindu dharma. He emphasised that the essence of Hinduism, which includes devotion and selfless service, should be embraced by all

PNS NELLORE

The 'Bhoomi Pooja' for the renovation of the renowned Sri Kamakshi Sameta Someswarlyam



Temple was conducted here on

Minister for Endowments Anam Ramanarayana Reddy and Jagadguru Sri Sri Sri Vidhushekhara Mahaswamiji of the Sringeri Peeth performed the ritual at the temple in Somasila, located in the Atmakur constituency.

The renovation of the Kamakshi Sameta Someswa riyam Temple is being undertaken at an estimated cost of Rs 8.40 crore. Both the Minister and the Seer unveiled a plaque during the ceremony, which was accompanied by Vedic hymns recited by priests.

In his spiritual address, Jagadguru Sri Sri Sri Vidhu

shekhara Bharati Mahaswamiji reflected on the efforts of Adi Shankaracharya, who revitalised Hinduism 1,200 years ago, and called upon people to follow his teachings and protect Hindu dharma. He emphasised that the essence of Hinduism, which includes devotion and selfless service, should be embraced by all. The Seer also appreciated Minister Ramanarayana Reddy's efforts in initiating the temple's renovation.

Minister Ramanarayana Reddy, in his address, stated that the Kamakshi Sameta Someswarlyam Temple had been damaged during floods, and the previous YSRCP government had not undertaken renovation efforts. However, after bringing the matter to the attention of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, immediate approval was granted for the renovation. The temple will be reconstructed using traditional Agamaseshtra methods and granite stone to make it a grand structure, the



Trivial issue drives Inter girl to suicide

PNS NARASARAOPET

A trivial dispute over a 'pen' with a co-student, forced an Intermediate girl student to commit suicide by jumping off from the hostel building here on Saturday.
Police said that the

deceased girl Jetti Anusha (17) was studying Intermediate first year at a private institution and she was staying in the hostel. Anusha had a dispute with her friend over pen and

they quarrelled on the issue.
Disgusted with a dispute with her friend over a pen, Anusha jumped off from the fourth floor of the hostel building. She was immediately taken to a hospital where the doctors declared her brought dead.

Narasaraopet RDO Hemalatha and Tahsildar Venugopal visited the college and the hostel and inquired with the principal and faculty members. The Narasaraopet rural police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH for postmortem. The deceased girl belonged to Vellaturu village in Bollapalli mandal of the district.

Meanwhile, the parents of the deceased girl, along with a large number of family members, friends and students staged a dharna on the main road in front of the hostel. The parents raised doubts over the death of their daughter. The parents alleged that the college management did not respond properly to the suspicious death of a female student.

RINL trade unions begin postcard movement

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

The trade unions of RINL-Visakhapatnam Steel Plant have launched a massive postcard movement to draw attention to their long-pending demands and protest against the government's indifference. The campaign, spearheaded by various unions, aims to highlight the pressing issues faced by the iconic steel plant and urge immediate intervention from the

central government.

J Ayodhyaram, a prominent trade union leader affiliated with CITU-Visakhapatnam, revealed that the unions are sending postcards to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, appealing for action to safeguard the future of the steel plant. "We aim to send 10 lakh postcards to the Prime Minister, emphasizing the urgency of protecting Visakhapatnam

and the pride of Andhra Pradesh," he said.

The unions have been advocating for financial restructuring, procurement of captive mines, and safeguarding jobs at the plant. They accuse the government of failing to address these critical issues, pushing the steel plant towards a precarious situation.

The postcard movement has garnered significant and ensure its revival and

a symbol of self-reliance local communities, and political leaders extending support. "This is not just a fight for the workers but for the economic stability of the region," Ayodhyaram added, calling for solidarity from all stakeholders. As the movement gains momentum, the unions hope to compel the central government to prioritize the issues of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant

2 children drowned in irrigation canal



PNS TIRUPATI

In a tragic incident, two children drowned in an irrigation canal at Yeruru village in Chillakuru mandal on Saturday. According to the police, the victims, Kudumula Nagendramma (11) and Kandukuru Chintalaiah (10), had gone to the Sona irrigation canal to wash clothes. While near the canal, they reportedly slipped and fell into the

The bodies were later retrieved from the canal by rescue teams. The police have registered a case and sent the bodies to the Government General Hospital (GGH) for postmortem. Authorities are investigating the incident further.



Collector inaugurates free DSC training in Vizag

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad inaugurated free DSC training classes at the MVP Colony BC Study Circle, urging candidates to focus on consistent preparation and hard work to succeed in competitive exams.

Organised by the District

BC Welfare Department, the training is aimed at candidates from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward (BC), Classes Economically Backward Classes (EBC). The Collector announced a stipend of ?1,500 per month and ?1,000 for DSP materials for those maintaining at least 75% attendance

during the programme. He advised aspirants to avoid distractions like social media and to prioritise sys-

tematic study. "Set clear goals dedicated. Preparation should continue even when notifications are not issued. Staying updated with current affairs is crucial," he said. He also encouraged managing stress through yoga, meditation, and physical exer-

The Collector interacted with candidates during his visit to the BC Study Circle and described the programme as a valuable opportunity provided by the Government. "Make the most of this platform and work towards your goals," he told the students.

BC Welfare Officer Sridevi, Social Welfare Department DD Rama Rao, and other officials were present, offering guidance and support to the

KTR did not meet Union Minister Khattar: Vishweshwar

PNS HYDERABAD

Steel Plant, which stands as

Making it clear that BRS Working President KT Rama Rao did not meet Union Power and Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, the BJP's Chevella MP, Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, asked where are the photos of KTR



Addressing the media on Saturday, Vishweshwar said that KTR had taken an appointment to meet Khattar. He said that no BJP leader met KTR in New Delhi or gave an appointment to KTR. He added that he had gone to Khattar's office and enquired with his assistant.

KTR met Congress leaders

Congress leaders are interested in arresting KTR but Congress's top leaders are preventing the Telangana Congress government from arresting KTR," Vishweshwar said. It may be recalled that KTR went to New Delhi recently to file a complaint with Manohar Lal Khattar alleging that corruption took place while allotting Amrut

PNS BHIMAVARAM

The new blood bank of the Indian Red Cross Society will be inaugurated on November 18 at Rayalam village, near Bhimavaram.

Red Cross Blood Bank to

be Inaugurated on Nov 18

West Godavari District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani confirmed that all arrangements are in place for the inauguration of the blood bank.

The construction of the blood bank building was funded with Rs 1.50 crore from the International Federation of Red Cross, alongside contributions from various sources, including donations from employees and the public.

The facility is equipped with advanced technology

The Red Cross Society plans to organise regular blood donation camps and distribute

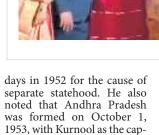
'AP Tourism to be developed significantly'

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDČ) Chairman Nukasani Balaji has assured that tourism in the state will see tremendous development in the coming days and the sector will emerge as a leading force.

Nukasani Balaji participated in the Andhra Pradesh Formation Day celebrations held in Qatar, organised by NRIs and TDP supporters. The event was attended by the Ambassador of India to Qatar, HE Viphul, alongside the APTDC Chairman.

Speaking at the event, Nukasani Balaji emphasised the special significance of Andhra Pradesh Formation Day for Telugu people. He recalled the sacrifice of Potti Sriramulu, who fasted for 56



capital on November 1, 1956. Balaji praised Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao (NTR) for launching the Telugu Desam Party, which upheld the selfital, and later reorganised as a respect of the Telugu people. He state with Hyderabad as the also acknowledged the leader-

Vizag cops intensify vigil, target crime hotspots

ship of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, who has guided the state towards a digital and technological future. He urged the Telugu community to excel in all fields and bring further recognition to the state.

for blood collection, testing, processing, and storage, ensuring the highest safety and quality standards. The blood collected will undergo testing and be preserved for use in emergencies, surgeries, and medical treatments.

blood to those in need.

Naidu went back on poll promises: Ex-MP Margani

PNS RAJAHMUNDRY

Former MP Margani Bharat has strongly criticised TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu for going back on his election promises and imposing additional financial burdens on the public, particularly through surcharges.

Speaking to the media on Saturday, Bharat pointed out that there was no budgetary allocation for the much-touted "Super Six" schemes, which were promised during the election campaign. In contrast, he praised Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for his timely welfare measures, citing the government's "welfare calendar" that ensured payments



were made promptly to benefit various sections of society. Bharthi alleged that while

the social welfare pension amount had been increased, the number of beneficiaries had been reduced, and there had been no proper allocation for other welfare schemes, indicating the government's lack of sincerity in fulfilling its election commitments.

He further pointed out that several schemes, such as free

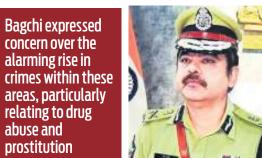
bus services, were not mentioned in the budget, and the government seemed to be covering up these failures by engaging in social media activism. "Some of the social media posts were highly demeaning and sought to tarnish the image of YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's family," Bharat remarked, adding that despite the allegations, no action had been taken against those

spreading such posts. The former MP also criticized the imposition of a one percent sur-charge for flood relief in Vijayawada, which, according to him, was putting an additional strain on the common people already burdened by rising prices of essential com-

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM In a proactive initiative aimed at improving public safety,

Visakhapatnam Police are intensifying surveillance around the city following the results of a recent survey that identified nearly 500 "dark spots"—areas plagued by poor lighting and limited CCTV coverage. These zones have unfortunately become hotspots for various criminal activities, prompting urgent action from law enforcement.

In an exclusive interview with The Pioneer, Police Commi ssioner Dr. Shankhabrata Bagchi provided insights into the police's strategic response. "We have divided these hotspots into two categories: law and order and crime," he explained. "One



team will concentrate on combating anti-social activities, while the other will focus on property crimes.

Bagchi expressed concern over the alarming rise in crimes within these areas, particularly relating to drug abuse and prostitution. "We're concerned about the increasing number of crimes in these areas," he stated. "By increasing surveillance and improving lighting, we can significantly reduce crime rates.

To promote community involvement in these safety

efforts, the police are encouraging residents and business owners to install CCTV cameras under the Public Safety Act. Bagchi noted, "We're also working closely with the GVMC to improve street lighting and increase CCTV installations." Emphasizing the use of modern technology, Bagchi added, "We're planning to use modern technology like facial recognition and number plate recognition to enhance our surveillance capabilities. We believe that this will help us identify and apprehend crim-

inals more efficiently."

The collaboration between the police and local government is evident, as the police commissioner has met with the GVMC commissioner to discuss strategies for bolstering

public safety infrastructure. Regarding funding, Bagchi mentioned the possibility of utilizing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contributions for CCTV installations, stating, "We're committed to working with the local government and community to make Visakhapatnam a safer city." With the New Year fast

approaching, the police have prioritized the improvement of lighting, especially on busy thoroughfares such as Beach Road, which are critical in deterring criminal activity and fostering a safer atmosphere for both residents and tourists alike. "By taking these proactive steps, we aim to make the city a safer place and send a strong message to criminals that their actions will not be tolerated," Bagchi emphasised.

VIJAYAWADA | SUNDAY | NOVEMBER 17, 2024

ACROSS THE STATES



Badal resigns as SAD chief amid party setbacks

Sukhbir Singh Badal, who had been declared 'tankhaiya' (guilty of religious misconduct) by the Akal Takht, tendered his resignation on Saturday as the Shiromani Akali Dal president, a position he held since 2008. Badal's resignation paves the way for the election of the new party chief. The resignation of Badal (62), who is the son of fivetime Punjab chief minister late Parkash Singh Badal, came amid vociferous demand by several rebel party leaders including former MP Prem Singh Chandumajra, former SGPC chief Bibi Jagir Kaur who wanted him to step down for the party's consistent dismal performance in the state assembly as well as parliamentary elections. Badal submitted his resignation to the party's working committee, said party leader Daljit Singh Cheema



Army chief to visit Nepal to boost military ties

rmy chief General Upendra Dwivedi will embark on a A four-day visit to Nepal starting November 20 to explore ways to further expand the already close defence and strategic ties between the two countries and review the evolving regional security situation. In Kathmandu, Gen. Dwivedi will be conferred the honorary rank of "General of the Nepal Army" by Nepalese President Ramchandra Paudel in continuation of an age-old tradition that first started in 1950, reflecting the strong ties between the two militaries. The Army chief's visit to Nepal from November 20 to November 24 will mark another significant chapter in the evolving military diplomacy between the two neighbouring countries, sources in the defence establishment said. It is expected to strengthen the defence ties, paving the way for continued collaboration on multiple fronts, including military exercises, training programmes and strategic discussions on regional security concerns, they said.



Will expose BJP on Wagf issue: DK Shivakumar

arnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Saturday said his party would expose the BJP on the Waqf issue as changes in revenue records favouring the Waqf Board were effected only during the Saffron party's regime. While the BJP is all set to mount pressure on the Congress government by holding a mega protest and a month long march on the Waqf issue, Shivakumar claimed that during its tenure, the BJP regime started changing the revenue records of rights, tenancy and crops in favour of the Waqf Board and many properties also were transferred in the name of that board. The BJP's opposition on the matter was "foolishness" as the government had all the related documents to pin them down, the Deputy CM told reporters. "We will expose them," he asserted and added that they came to know such aspects only later. Also, the issue did not get into public domain as everyone was busy with the recent elections.

'Focus should be on de-escalation'

EAM Jaishankar on eastern Ladakh row with China

PNS NEW DELHI

The disengagement part of the "problem" with China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh has been put at rest and the focus should now be on de-escalation, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday.

Jaishankar said it is "reasonable" to expect some improvement in the relations between India and China following the final round of disengagement but hesitated to say that there could be a reset of the ties.

"I see disengagement as disengagement; nothing more, nothing less. If you look at our current situation with China, we have an issue where our troops are uncomfortably close along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) which required us to disengage," he said at the HT Leadership Summit.

India and China on October 21 was the last of the disengagement agreements, Jaishankar "So that with its implemen-

The understanding between

tation, the disengagement part of the problem is at rest," he

"I see disengagement as disengagement; nothing more, nothing less. If you look at our current situation with China, we have an

issue where our troops are uncomfortably

close along the Line of Actual Control (LAC)

which required us to disengage," he said at

Jaishankar's remarks came in response to a question on whether the disengagement of troops by the two sides last month was the beginning of a reset of the Sino-Indian ties.

the HT Leadership Summit

The external affairs minister said the current situation of the relationship does not warrant such a conclusion.

Indian and Chinese militaries completed the disengagement exercise in Demchok and Depsang in eastern Ladakh along the LAC last month after the two sides reached an agreement to resolve the festering border row.

The two sides also resumed patrolling activities in the two areas after a gap of almost four-and-a-half years.

In his remarks, Jaishankar

said de-escalation should be the next step following the comple-tion of the disengagement

process.

"Where the disengagement will lead us, it is a reasonable supposition that there will be some improvement in the ties," he said.

On the overall India-China ties, Jaishankar delved into various factors and said it is a "complicated" relationship.

To another question on whether the economic and security wings of the government have divergent views on China as this year's Economic Survey appeared to pitch for greater economic engagement with the neighbouring country, Jaishankar said there could be different points of view but overall relationship is guided by a policy decision.

'Modi eliminated 'freedom of speech'

Jails those who point out his mistakes: Kharge

PNS RANCHI

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge launched a fresh attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of "eliminating freedom of speech" and imprisoning those who speak

out against his mistakes.

Kharge also labelled former
Jharkhand Chief Minister Champai Soren, who joined the BJP from JMM, a "traitor," claiming there were many such people who betrayed those who nurtured them.

"PM Modi has eliminated 'freedom of speech' from the country; he jails those who point out his mistakes. You are snatching people's rights. Is this democracy that you jail a tribal CM? They want to crush us, but we will keep raising our heads," Kharge said while addressing a rally in Ranchi's Ormanjhi.

He alleged that Modi maintains silence when Dalits, tribals and minorities are oppressed in the country.



Kharge also criticised the arrogance of BJP leaders, saying, "Rahul and I hold cabinet ranks, but we don't enjoy the privileges of leaders like Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan or Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma."

Kharge said, "There are many traitors like Champai Soren who proved unfaithful to those who nurtured them" and warned the people of Jharkhand being cautious alleging that "Modiji will betray you, hand over your 'Jal, Jungle, Jameen' to industrialists.

'Strength lies in unity, Cong indulging in divisive politics'

PNS MUMBAI

Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Saturday said saints in India have for 1,000 years spoken about the power and strength in unity, accusing Congress of indulging in divisive politics. Shekhawat, who is in the state to canvas for candidates of the Mahayuti ahead of the Nov 20 Mahaassembly elections, said from the time of Independence, the grand old party committed a sin of dividing people on religious, economic, and caste lines.

The Union minister for culture and tourism said leaders from the ruling Mahayuti who have distanced themselves from the BJP's "batoge toh katoge" (if divided, we will perish) and "ek hai toh safe hai" (we are safe if we are united) rhetoric have the right to do so.



Modi, Shah spreading anti-reservation lie against Rahul: Priyanka

PNS ■ SHIRDI/KOLHAPUR

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah of spreading lies that Rahul Gandhi is against reservations.

Modi and Shah are scared of Rahul Gandhi because he wants a caste census to be conducted, she alleged while can-vassing for MVA for the November 20 Maharashtra assembly elections.

Priyanka addressed rallies in Shirdi and Kolhapur. She claimed projects of Rs 10 lakh crore were snatched from Maharashtra, which caused loss of 8 lakh jobs and shutting down of 6,000 businesses.

The statue of Shivaji Maharaj outside Parliament was removed. The statue installed in Sindhudurg, collapsed as corruption took place in its construction.

Tribals being sweet talked into changing faith: Dhankhar

PNS ■ UDAIPUR

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday said "malicious" attempts were being made to convert the tribals with blandishments.

"There is an attempt to change the faith (of tribes) by talking with them sweetly, pretending to be well-wishers, luring and tempting. I consider this a malicious attempt," he said.

"I am seeing a systematic, conspiratorial and alluring process in the country that needs to be curbed," he said.

Dhankhar was addressing a function on the 150th birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda at Vanvasi Kalvan Ashram Vidyalaya premises in Udaipur. He said that tribal culture should be respected at the national and international levels.

"Our cultural heritage is



our foundation. When the foundation is shaken, no building is safe," he said. Dhankhar said that today India is changing and the right people are getting a place in India.

"Droupadi Murmu becoming the President is a symbol of tribal pride. Murmu is the President, a farmer's son is the

Vice President, and the prime minister is from the Other Backward Classes," he said, adding that such a balance was also there in the PM's cabinet. On Bhagwan Birsa Munda, Dhankhar said, "What Bhagwan Birsa Munda did for the freedom of the country, for the tribe, for the soil is unimaginable.

BJP fulfils what it guarantees: Shah

Alleges Rahul makes promises, flies abroad

PNS ■ MADHUPUR (JHARKHAND)

Taking potshots at the Congress, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday claimed that the party's leader Rahul Gandhi believes in flying abroad after making promises, while it is only the BJP that fulfils what its guarantees.

Addressing a rally at Madhupur in Deoghar district, the Union Home Minister said that while terrorists not only attacked India but also enjoyed biryani after killing people during the

UPA rule, Prime Minister Narendra Modi wiped out terrorists through surgical and air

"Rahul baba makes promises one after another, but after

abroad... But on the other hand, PM Modi's promise is like one etched on stone (patthar ki lakeer). He fulfils what he promises. BJP fulfils its



guarantees and only we can shape Jharkhand. The Congress, JMM and RJD can never work in the interest of the state," he said.

Alleging that the ruling

making promises he flies JMM-led coalition has turned infiltrators into its 'vote-bank', Shah declared that illegal immigration will be checked once the BJP is voted to power



Shah said that the Iharkhand elections are not to change MLAs, the chief minister or the government but to shape the future of youth and poor and to check corruption.



PNS NEW DELHI

Students across all disciplines at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), including engineering and management, will study traditional Indian knowledge as part of a newly introduced elective course, according to varsity sources.

The course will be offered across all schools and centres, with each department customising the content to suit its specific field.

Knowledge 'Indian Traditions' refer to indigenous systems of knowledge developed in India over cen-

PNS ■ BIJNOR (UP)

Seven people, including a

newly-wed couple, returning

from Jharkhand died while

cle, police said on Saturday.

turies, covering areas like Vedic sciences, ancient engineering, traditional medicine and philosophical texts.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has been advocating for the inclusion of IKT in academic curricula as part of its efforts to acquaint students with India's intellectual heritage and values.

At JNU, engineering stu-dents will study traditional practices of engineering, while management students may delve into ancient economic and administrative systems under the new course, the source said

Those dreaming of J-K's independence unaware of ground realities: Faroog

PNS ■ JAMMU

Asserting that Jammu and Kashmir will remain an integral part of India, National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Saturday said those nurturing illogical dreams of independence should shun it as they are unaware of the ground realities.

The veteran politician said the fact that the Indian cricket team is not likely to visit Pakistan for the Champions Trophy early next year shows the strained relations between the two countries. Talking to reporters on the sidelines of a private function here, Abdullah also expressed grief over the death of children in a fire at a medical college in Uttar Pradesh's Jhansi district

DELHI POLLUTION

Old age homes intensify measures to protect residents

PNS NEW DELHI

In response to the city's deteriorating air quality, Delhi's old age homes are prioritising the safety of their most vulnerable residents by imposing strict restrictions on outdoor activities during peak pollution hours, mandating mask use, and keeping oxygen cylinders on standby for

emergencies. As Delhi's air quality index (AQI) oscillates between the "very poor" and "severe" categories, it poses serious health risks, including respiratory illnesses from prolonged exposure, to the residents of the city, especially the elderly.

While healthy individuals are affected, those with preexisting conditions face severe



impacts, according to the Central Pollution Control

Old age homes across the city are intensifying measures to protect their residents who are most vulnerable to respiratory and cardiovascular

General Bhupendra Singh, Chairman of Aashirwad Old Age Home, said, "We do not

allow anyone to step outside

the premises due to the toxic

air quality. The elderly, being

the worst affected group, are

As Delhi's air quality index (AQI) oscillates between the "very poor" and "severe" categories, it poses serious health risks, including respiratory illnesses from prolonged exposure, to the residents of the city, especially the elderly

strictly prohibited from venturing out during peak pollution hours, especially in the morning and evening.

"If they must go out for medical appointments, they are instructed to minimise outdoor time and wear masks

Rajeshwari, a caregiver at the Sai Sahara old age home highlighted the additional precautions being taken. "We are focusing on maintaining a healthy diet for the

for protection," he added.

residents and have restricted outdoor activities, including morning walks, due to the severe air quality," she said.
As viral infections are prevalent due to the changing

weather, the residents' interaction with outsiders has been minimised to prevent the spread of infections, she said. "Given the vulnerability of this age group, even a minor viral infection could have

severe

consequences. Therefore, we are taking extra including the bride and groom died on the spot while the precautions to ensure their safety," she added.

Abhishek said.

The tempo passengers were thrown on the ground by the impact of the accident, he Jha said that all six people

tempo driver Ajab Singh died been sent for post-mortem while being taken for treat-

Seven people die in road

accident in UP's Bijnor

Two persons who were



moving in the car have been injured, police said, adding the bodies of the deceased have

Khurshid (65) of Tewari village of Dhampur was returning with his daughter-in-law Khushi (22) after getting his son Visal (25) married in Jharkhand. Khurshid's brother-in-law Mumtaz (45), Mumtaz's wife Ruby (32) and daughter Bushra (10) were also with them, the police said.

The SP said these people had come to Moradabad by train. From there they were going back to the village by a

Other passengers, Sohail and Aman, were badly injured and they are being treated. According to the police,

prima facie the cause of the incident was dense fog.

EATING IS NOT MERELY A MATERIAL PLEASURE.
EATING WELL GIVES A SPECTACULAR JOY TO LIFE
AND CONTRIBUTES IMMENSELY TO GOODWILL
AND HAPPY COMPANIONSHIP. IT IS OF GREAT
IMPORTANCE TO THE MORALE

— ELSA SCHIAPARELLI

Chef Pillai takes you to experience Kerala's rich flavours with modern twists at his first-ever North India pop-up at The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi, writes ABHI SINGHAL

SAVOURING KERALA'S RICH L'I A VOI ID



ispelling the long-held notion that South Indian cuisine revolves solely around idli, dosa, and sambar, 21 Michelin-star Chef Suresh Pillai brought a culinary extravaganza to North India with his first-ever pop-up at The Westin Gurgaon. New Delhi.

Michelin-star Chef Suresh Pillai brought a culinary extravaganza to North India with his first-ever pop-up at The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi.

The experience was a symphony of Kerala's authentic flavours, masterfully infused with Chef Pillai's signature modern tweaks and twists. From the aromatic embrace of the South spices to the delicate finesse of seafood delicacies, the pop-up menu was an ode to South India's rich gastronomic heritage taste.

The extraordinary culinary journey took the eaters through the vibrant flavours of Kerala, in collaboration with renowned *Restaurant Chef Pillai* (RCP). The mouthwatering dishes were a presentation through an exclusive 10-course tasting menu curated by *Chef Pillai*.

menu curated by *Chef Pillat*. It all started with the welcome drink of the season, *Aarambam*, a bit of a sour drink. The meticulously curated vegetarian and non-vegetarian menus transported guests straight to the heart of Kerala, offering a true taste of the region's culinary treasures. Each dish was crafted with precision and passion, showcasing the soul of Kerala's

cuisine, from its spices blending to its delicate yet robust flavours.

For the Hors d'oeuvres, there was the mouth watery Sambharam Kadumanga, blending the Kerala summer butter milk & pickled mango inside paani poori. One sitting in North India would never imagine blending paani poori with a South Indian twist, which stole the show.

"We created a menu from the Kerala essence, for example, our pani poori, one of the starters, actually, it's a North Indian pani poori out of it's a buttermilk we used to serve in Kerala along with a mango pickle. So the puri, we stuff with the mango and the cold buttermilk generally you say chach." explained *Chef Suresh Pillai*, excited about his first pop up in the north side.

As guests savoured the thoughtfully crafted hors doeuvres, the starters gracefully took center stage, led by the *Pazham Pori Chaat*. This Keralainspired masterpiece featured golden, batter-fried banana fritters a bit crispy on the outside, tender within, elevated by a drizzle of honey-yogurt blend that perfectly balanced sweetness and creaminess. Following this, guests were treated to *Cauliflower Porippu*, a dish that beautifully showcased Kerala's rich spicy taste. Crispy, marinated cauliflower florets were deep-fried to golden perfection and then stirfried with *thenga porippu*—an aromatic blend of grated coconut, fragrant curry leaves, and a hint of chili powder.

The starters in both the vegetarian and the non-vegetarian segments were a delightful interplay of textures and flavours, with the crunch of the cauliflower perfectly complementing the earthy, spicy-

sweet coconut mixture.
The main course featured Chef Suresh Pillai's signature dishes recommended by himself, offering both vegetarian and non-vegetarian options that embodied the essence of Kerala's culinary artistry.

THE METICULOUSLY CURATED

VEGETARIAN AND

NON-VEGETARIAN

MENUS

TRANSPORTED GUESTS STRAIGHT

TO THE HEART OF

KERALA, OFFERING A TRUE TASTE OF

THE REGION'S

CULINARY

TREASURES

For vegetarians, there was *Paneer Nirvana*: tender marinated cottage cheese, pan-fried to perfection, and then slow-cooked in creamy coconut milk. The dish was elevated with the earthy flavours of ginger, green chilies, and aromatic curry leaves, all beautifully encased in a banana leaf for a touch of traditional authenticity. For non-



vegetarians, the highlight was the Neymeen Nirvana, Chef Pillai's iconic creation.

The main course also offered a rich tapestry of Kerala's culinary heritage, featuring dishes like *Ulli Theeyal*, a dark, flavourful curry of slow-roasted coconut, shallots, and tamarind, and *Baby Corn Vendaka Manga Muringa Charu*, an Alleppey-style coconut

Alleppey-style coconut mango curry with baby corn, okra, and tender drumsticks. Kathrikai Thakkali Roast brought tangy and spicy South Indian flavours to life with marinated brinjal and tomatoes in a rich onion-tomato gravy. Accompaniments included the

delicate, lacy-edged *Appams*, perfect for mopping up curries, and the soft, flaky *Malabar Nool Porotta*, rounding out a meal that celebrated Kerala's diverse and bold flavours. For dessert, the menu delighted both vegetarian and non-vegetarian guests with indulgent creations. Vegetarians savoured the *Tender*

Coconut Pudding, a light and fluffy treat infused with the delicate flavour and soft flesh of the tender coconut, alongside the Coco Nutty Choco Brownie, a decadent eggless chocolate dessert enriched with crunchy nuts and fragrant coconut, served with a scoop of creamy ice cream. Non-vegetarian diners were treated to the Palada Cheesecake, a unique fusion dessert layering the traditional Kerala Palada (rice flakes) flavour atop a crisp, crusty base, offering a delightful blend of tradition and sophistication to end the meal on a sweet note.

The evening was further elevated by a curated selection of handcrafted cocktails, each a testament to artistry in mixology.

cocktails, each a testament to artistry in mixology. Highlights included the refreshing Toki Highball, blending Toki Suntory Whisky with soda water and a grapefruit twist, and the zesty Toki Orchard Sour, featuring green apple, lemon, and a silky egg white foam. Gin enthusiasts indulged in the crisp Roku Gin & Tonic with ginger accents and the floral Roku Hibiscus Highball with hibiscus cordial and fizz. Whiskey lovers relished the bold Jim

Whiskey lovers relished the bold *Jim Beam Orange Fashioned* with aromatic bitters, while the indulgent *Haku Caramel Espresso Martini*, combining Haku Japanese Craft Vodka with caramel and espresso, provided a decadent finish to the cocktail lineup.

cocktail lineup. Chef Suresh Pillai's pop-up at The Westin Gurgaon, New Delhi was an experience that will redefine the perception of South Indian cuisine. With his signature modern twists on Kerala's rich culinary traditions, Chef Pillai transported guests on a culinary journey that celebrated both the simplicity and complexity of Kerala's vibrant flavours.

The Vibrant Flavours OF KOREA

Le Meridien brings Korea's rich flavours, authentic dishes, and timeless traditions to the heart of New Delhi

TEAM **AGENDA**

orean food is a vibrant and flavourful cuisine celebrated for its unique balance of colors, textures, and tastes. Rooted in centuries-old traditions, it emphasises fresh, seasonal ingredients, often fermented, to create deep, savoury flavours and nutritional richness. The Korean dining experience is distinctive, with meals commonly featuring a variety of side dishes, or banchan, that range from spicy kimchi to delicate pickled vegetables. Key staples like rice, vegetables, and meats are skilfully combined with ingredients like gochujang (a spicysweet red pepper paste) and doenjang (fermented soybean paste) to create dishes that are as visually stunning as they are delicious. From the sizzling sounds of bulgogi on a grill to the comforting warmth of a bubbling jjigae stew, Korean food offers a sensory journey into a culture that values harmony, balance, and bold, memorable flavours.

Food lovers in New Delhi had a culinary treat from Korea right in New Delhi as Le Meridien celebrated the unique flavours of Korean cuisine with its muchanticipated Korean Food Festival. Running till November 17th, 2024, this gastronomic event was an immersive dining experience, highlighting traditional and contemporary Korean dishes at its 'The One' restaurant. The festival is a feature of Le Meridien New Delhi's annual '+1 Celebrating Flavours of the Globe' initiative under the '+1 for the Leap Year' campaign, bringing exotic, authentic global flavours to the heart of

India.
The Korean Food Festival's dinner buffet had been meticulously curated by Chef Young-Hwan Jang, Chef de Partie at AC Hotel by Marriott Seoul Gangnam. With over two decades of culinary expertise and a deep-rooted passion for Korean cuisine, Chef Jang has flown in from Seoul to offer guests an authentic taste of his homeland, blending





FOOD LOVERS IN NEW DELHI HAD A CULINARY TREAT FROM KOREA RIGHT IN NEW DELHI AS LE MERIDIEN CELEBRATED THE UNIQUE FLAVOURS OF KOREAN CUISINE WITH ITS MUCH-ANTICIPATED KOREAN FOOD FESTIVAL

traditional Korean staples with innovative techniques to appeal to a global palate. "We are thrilled to showcase the

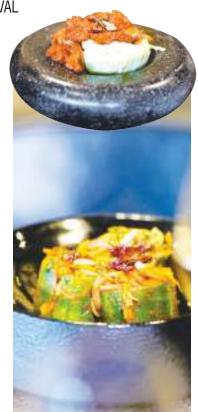
We are timed to showcase the diverse and flavourful cuisine of Korea through this festival," said Meena Bhatia, Vice President and General Manager of Le Meridien New Delhi. "This event aligns perfectly with our +1 Celebrating Flavours of the Globe initiative, a highlight of our annual '+1 for the Leap Year' initiative, and we believe it will offer our guests a truly unforgettable dining experience," she added The menu showcased a range of

traditional Korean dishes, crafted to deliver the distinctive flavours and textures that define this cuisine. Guests can look forward to sampling dishes like Acorn Salad, a refreshing and nutritious delicacy; Gimbap Avocado, Korea's beloved seaweed rice rolls with a modern twist; Spring Onion Pancake, a savoury delight that's perfect for

sharing; the spicy and comforting Stir-fried Rice Cake (Tteokbokki); and a cooling Chilled Seafood Salad, perfect for Delhi's warm evenings. Each dish on the buffet spread has been carefully prepared by Chef Jang to ensure an authentic taste of Korea.

"I am excited to bring the vibrant flavours of Korea to Le Meridien New Delhi," shared Chef Young-Hwan Jang. "Through this festival, we aim to introduce guests to the diverse range of Korean dishes, from classic comfort foods to innovative culinary creations," he quips with a smile.

This unique dining experience went beyond just food—it invited guests to embark on a journey through Korea's rich culinary heritage. From the spicy and savoury flavours that Korean cuisine is known for, to innovative twists on traditional dishes, the festival offers a deep and delicious dive into Korean culture and flavours.





A Meal Worth Revisiting

Located in Sector 66, Gurugram, Poiz is an inviting dining destination that combines a vibrant atmosphere with a diverse menu. After three visits, it's evident that Poiz offers a delightful experience for food enthusiasts and social diners alike, writes **PAWAN SONI**

T's rare for me to visit a restaurant multiple times before writing a review, but Poiz, a beautiful new addition to the dining scene, compelled me to return three times to fully capture its essence. *Poiz* boasts an artistic, expansive interior, blending elegant indoor seating with a spacious patio featuring its own bar and an inviting open dining area. While many restaurants of this size tend to cater heavily to the nightlife crowd, Poiz strikes a perfect balance: a well-curated bar selection with inventive cocktails for the social set, and a menu that delights families and party goers alike. Certain dishes have become my goorders, each offering

that delights families and party goers alike.
Certain dishes have become my goto orders, each offering something special. The Lychee Chaat, a Thai-inspired creation, is an absolute must-try. Bits of lychee and avocado sit atop a crispy rice puff base, accompanied by a flavourful Nam Jim sauce one bite, and you won't want to stop. The Chicken Chilli Dim Sum features a delicate wrapper and pairs perfectly with the accompanying sauces. Another standout is the Taiwanese Mushrooms, crisp-coated and served with pickled chilli and a sweet-sour

sauce, accented by crunchy peanuts for extra texture.

Not every dish was flawless. The nachos were slightly too salty for my taste. However, the ramen from their global menu made up for it with its rich, layered flavours. It's a generous portion, perfect for a hearty appetite or sharing with friends.

My companions thoroughly enjoyed

the Lamb Adana Kebab as much as they did the sushi. While Poiz has a wide range of Indian dishes, I found myself drawn to the global offerings, including their expertly crafted Neapolitan pizza.

A meal here would be incomplete without the Belgian

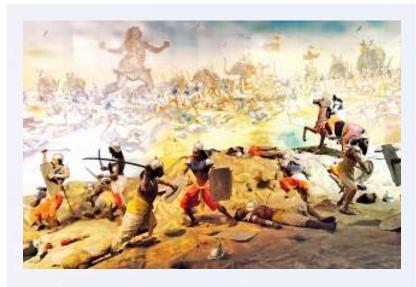
Nutella Chocolate. This dessert not only excels in taste but also impresses in presentation. The smooth Belgian chocolate and Nutella sweetness are cleverly balanced with blueberries and hazelnuts, creating a perfect finale.

For those in the area, Poiz is well worth a visit. Ratings: (Out of 5) Food: 4.25 Ambience: 4.25 Service: 4.0 Drinks: 4.0

Overall: 4.25 Address: Poiz, 2nd Floor, AIPL Joy Street, Sector 66, Gurugram



I HAVE PLACED MY FAITH IN HUMANITY, BUT FAITH IN THE UNIVERSAL BECOMES MEANINGLESS WITHOUT FAITH IN THE INDIVIDUAL - PANCHALI DRAUPADI



GETAWAY

Kurukshetra, one of Hinduism's most revered pilgrimage destinations, is where ancient spirituality converges with modern comforts, writes **SANTANU GANGULY**

hough Kurukshetra is a significant pilgrimage site for Hindus and is located close to Delhi, it has not always attracted large numbers of visitors. Mentioned in various Hindu scriptures, particularly the Mahabharata, Kurukshetra holds the Mahabharata, Kurukshetra holds great spiritual importance. According to Acharya Some Nath Gautam, priest at the Katyayani Temple, visiting all the ancient temples here would require at least a year. This journey, known as the Kurukshetra 84 Kos Parikrama, encompasses numerous sacred and historical sites. However, modern pilgrims often focus on the most important temples, holy places, and archaeological monuments due to and archaeological monuments due to

time constraints.

The city offers a variety of accommodation options, from budget-friendly 2- and 3- star hotels to numerous dharamshalas. For those seeking luxury, the *Noormahal Palace* in *Varial standa out as Harwang's only* in Karnal stands out as Haryana's only 5-star hotel, offering exceptional amenities such as a spa, jacuzzi, modern gym, and fine dining. Blending heritage with modern comforts, this ultra-luxurious hotel features the Frontier Mail restaurant, housed in a life-sized train compartment from the historic Frontier Mail. The restaurant's ambience evokes the 19th century, with interiors reflecting the Mumbai-Peshawar route.

A visit to Kurukshetra typically begins at Brahma Sarovar, Asia's largest at Branma Sarovar, Asias largest man-made water body, stretching 3,600 feet long, 1,500 feet wide, and 45 feet deep. According to Hindu mythology, the lake was created by Lord Brahma at the dawn of the Brahma universe. Sarovar, along with the nearby Sannihit Sarovar, is fed by underground channels from the Bhakra Nangal Dam. ancient Shiva Temple here is believed o have been established by Lord

himself

Between

the two



A VISIT TO KURUKSHETRA TYPICALLY BEGINS AT BRAHMA SAROVAR, ASIA'S LARGEST MAN-MADÉ WATER BODY, STRETCHING 3,600 FEET LONG, 1,500 FEET WIDE, AND 45 FEET DEEP. ACCORDING TO HINDU MYTHOLOGY, THE LAKE WAS CREATED BY LORD BRAHMA AT THE DAWN OF THE UNIVERSE.

Mata Katyayani Temple, which features an impressive bronze sculpture of Arjuna and Lord Krishna on a chariot, crafted by renowned sculptor Ram Vanji Sutar. This sculpture has become a popular photography spot. Another notable site is the ancient *Chandra Kup*, a well where, according to legend, water turns into milk during a lunar eclipse. It is also said to be the place where Draupadi washed her hair after the infamous bloodshed by

The Kali Kamli Temple, built by Kali Kamli Baba of Bengal in the 19th century, is a siddha peeth located near *Brahma Sarovar*. *Devi Kup*, also known as the BhadraKali Temple, is one of the 51 Shakti Peethas and Haryana's only such temple. Pandit Satpal Sharma explains that the temple holds significance for Lord Krishna and Balarama, who visited before the Kurukshetra War. Devotees continue to donate clay, ceramic, or silver horses here, a tradition rooted in sacred history. Special pujas for Maa Kali and Lord Shani are held

every Saturday.
The Sthanu Mahadev Temple is another important site, where Lord Krishna and the Pandavas sought Lord Shiva's blessings before the war. Nearby, the historical Harsh ka Tilla and Sheikh Chilli's Tomb offer fascinating insights into the region's past. History enthusiasts can also explore the Sri Krishna Museum and Kurukshetra Panorama, which showcases key artifacts. For children and astronomy lovers, the Kalpana Chawla Planetarium provides a fun and educational experience.

In the coming years, the *ISKCON Temple*, currently under construction and expected to be completed by 2026, will be a must-visit site. At Jyotisar, where Lord Krishna delivered the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna, visitors can enjoy an impressive light and sound show, which reflects on the water of a fountain, creating an unforgettable experience. Additionally, the 50-foot *Vishwarup* Darshan statue of Lord Krishna, designed by Ram V. Sutar comes alive

every evening for visitors. For a 2-3 day weekend trip, Kurukshetra offers the perfect blend of spiritual significance, historical landmarks, and modern luxury, making it an ideal destination for

travellers.



EXPLORING

A Coastal Escape with Cultural Riches

Nestled between Gujarat and Maharashtra, Daman enchants travellers with its unique blend of colonial allure, scenic beaches, and relaxed vibe, writes **NEETA LAL**

he lovely city of Daman, an erstwhile Portuguese colony, offers a unique blend of colonial charm with a laid-back vibe. The administrative capital of the union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, it is located between Gujarat and Maharashtra and attracts high footfall from a diverse set of travellers.

Peppered with colonial buildings showcasing a rich syncretic culture, the city's stately Nani Daman Fort and the Church of Bom Jesus give one a taste of history, while Jampore Beach and Devka Beach make for Instagramfriendly settings for a day of relaxation.

interconnecting motorways, expansive gardens. buzzy restaurants, and good As the Deltin Daman, the city's only five-star the hotel. Known for its stellar service architectural metros. A world-class spa, memorable stay.

as corporate conferences and weddings commendable,



But perhaps what makes Daman procedures in place to prevent such a terrific destination for water waste in kitchens, guest weekend getaways is its tourism rooms, and laundry, along with infrastructure, including smooth recycling used water for its

hotels. Our abode for a staycation synonymous with world-class is the award-winning The Deltin casinos, the theme is reflected in hotel's design elements. and facilities, it mercifully comes stunning lobby flaunts a without the high tariff of upscale chandelier featuring hearts, hotels in Mumbai and other spades, diamonds, and clubs (the four suits in a deck of cards) gourmet cuisine at its multiple strung together. This theme is also restaurants, a large swimming reflected in the glass walls pool, health club, gym, and plush accommodation ticked all the ergonomic and well-furnished boxes for a fabulous and rooms are equipped with HD TVs, HD satellite programming, For business travellers, the hotel houses 30,000 sq ft of business connectivity, in-room safes, 24x7 space catering to large events such room service, and early check-in options, among others.

hotel's Our Presidential Suite also came sustainability efforts are also with an efficient butler who took with strict care of our every need, including





restaurant and spa bookings as well as sightseeing tours. Close proximity to Jampore Beach, Mirasol Water Park, Devka Beach, Dominican Monastery, and Moti Daman Fort made our local explorations seamless pleasurable.



What's a good vacation without good food? Indeed, for gastronomes like us, the hotel turned out to be a delight with three award-winning restaurants to explore. One of our lunches was at the Emperor restaurant, which features an extensive menu with Korean, Chinese, Thai, and Middle Japanese offerings. Interestingly, the chefs here have reinvented many dishes to offer an

imaginative take on classics. Thus, our fusion lunch featured pillowy soft lotus stem and chicken Chettinad baos as well as black sesame chicken tikka baos. The prawn and chicken dim sums were

similarly delicious, while the garlic-infused noodles and chicken in Hainanese sauce transported us to China, sans passports and air tickets! Another lunch at The Vegas all-

day dining was also a treat for the taste buds. The spacious eatery offers multi-cuisine buffets with a vast selection of salads, Indian and continental dishes, desserts, and more. The buffet includes a separate section for Jain food – so unabashed carnivores, we dug rejuvenating body massage and

into flavour-packed laal maas, piping hot breads, gobhi and bhindi sabzi, raita, and salad. Dessert was the *creamiest ras malai* on this side of the Daman Ganga river, garnished with a silver varq and

date syrup! Semi-comatose from so much good food, we pledged to skip dinner. But that was not to be, as we were informed that the chefs had prepared choice delicacies for us at the poolside Mediterraneaninspired BBQ and grill restaurant, Sky High. After eyeing the selection of inventive dips with Eastern snacks, empanadas, and pizzas with innovative toppings, our pledge to "go easy" on food went out

the window! To slake our thirst, we visited Whiskys Bar, which offers exclusive collection of single malts. Poolside Bar and Juice Bar kept us refreshed with health drinks and fresh juices.

There's no shortage of entertainment at the hotel either. *The Den* – an atmospheric indoor family space - features foosball, billiards, carom, chess, and more. There's even a creche for young parents who want to leave their little ones under supervised care while they unwind.

The property's three azure swimming pools (including a kids' pool) are a major attraction. After a quick swim on day two, we vegetarians can rejoice too. Being headed to the spa, where a

facial left us feeling reborn! After spending three wonderful days at *The Deltin Daman*, we're led to wonder how, in today's fiercely competitive hospitality landscape, the hotel consistently maintains such high standards. "As ours is the only five-star hotel in Daman, our top-notch service and facilities are unmatched by any other hotel in the area," says the hotel's dynamic general manager, Akarsh Mathur. "We cater to all requirements, whether it's a weekend getaway or an ideal wedding, by customising our services to suit all needs. Our spacious rooms are the largest in their category, and our ample indoor and outdoor event spaces, as well as our large river-shaped swimming pool, are among the features that make our hotel a top choice for discerning guests. Our F&B has also received rave

reviews. Mathur believes that with higher disposable incomes and "revenge travel," Indian guests are prepared to pay competitive rates for excellent services. "The demand for upscale local tourism destinations destinations has grown exponentially, and hotels no longer have to rely on foreign tourists from overseas to fill their rooms. If you provide great service and pay attention to guests' needs, the property will always be buzzing," he adds. Indeed, who can fault that flawless

> Neeta Lal is an international award-nominated, Delhi-based editor and senior journalist.

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IN BRIEF



Okta India to hire over 200 new employees

uthentication solutions provider Okta on Saturday said the company is planning to hire more than 200 people Aover the next year mainly for engineering and developing solutions. The company has tripled its workforce to 300 over the past year and is planning to increase the number to more than 500 employees over the next year, Okta said in a statement. "India is a key element of our growth and innovation strategy. Over the past year, we've tripled our workforce and now we're launching a new Innovation Centre in Bengaluru. We're excited by the impact Okta is having on India and India is having on Okta," said Ben Goodman, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Asia Pacific and Japan at Okta. Okta India is helping develop the next wave of secure identity innovations and solving top-of-mind cybersecurity challenges for businesses in India and globally, Shekar Koppula, Site Lead for Okta India said.



Cedar-IBSi Capital to fund startups in fintech sector

edar-IBSi Capital on Saturday said it is looking to invest in 10-15 startups working in the banking and insurance technology segment to expand its footprint in the country. "The fund plans to build a portfolio of the companies, allocating a budget within the range of Rs 4-10 crore, with an intensified focus on financially strengthening 8 to 10 highperforming companies," it said. The fund has already gathered commitments in the range of Rs 50-75 crore from its Rs 240 crore early-stage fund launched in 2023, it added. "We are focusing on investing in startups which offer unique products and innovative tech to help improve efficiency at financial institutions. We have made our first investment in Cogniquest, an intelligent document processing tech company and are looking forward to announcing our second investment shortly," Sahil Anand, Founder and Managing Partner, Cedar-IBSi



DVC signs PPA with GUVNL, to supply 559 MW of electricity

amodar Valley Corporation (DVC) on Saturday said it has inked a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Limited (GUVNL) for 559 MW to meet the rising electricity demand in Gujarat. DVC in a statement said the agreement, approved by the Ministry of Power, will facilitate the supply of 359 MW from DVC's upcoming Durgapur Thermal Power Station (1x800 MW) in West Bengal and 200 MW from its Koderma Thermal Power Station Phase II in Jharkhand. The signing ceremony was attended by DVC Chairman S Suresh Kumar. Member (Finance) Arup Sarkar along with key officials from both companies. DVC said the agreement was formalised during DVC's Consumer Meet 2024, a two-day event (Nov 15-16) bringing together representatives from DVC's nationwide beneficiaries. These include DISCOMs in states such as Kerala, Punjab, Karnataka, Haryana, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and West Bengal, as well as critical infrastructure clients like Indian Railways.

'Think out of the box, adapt to changing tech landscape'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Girish Chandra Murmu on Saturday urged officers to think out of the box, experiment with new techniques, and adapt to the changing technological and governance environment.

With the increasing use of AI and emerging technologies to provide services, he said there are numerous risks, ranging from privacy breaches and algorithmic biases to social exclusion.

...as an organisation, we are deeply cognisant of these developments and are engaging closely with emerging technological trends for enhancing the effectiveness of auditing and accounting practices in such a landscape," he said at the 4th Audit Diwas celebrations

Murmu emphasised that in



the quest for strengthening auditing and accounting practices, "all offices of the CAG's organisation are encouraged to think out-of-the-box and adapt to changing technological and governance environment" by experimenting with new techniques, which help in nurturing creativity in methodologies, economy in operations and result in better execution of

functions.

Inaugurating the 4th Audit Diwas celebrations, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla lauded the CAG's rich legacy, highlighting its evolution into a globally recognised institution known for its distinctiveness and cred-

He also praised the CAG's proactive adoption of emerging technologies, including

Artificial Intelligence, which has strengthened its audit processes and enhanced trans-

The speaker stressed that auditing has transformed over the years and become a guiding force in improving finan-cial discipline, transparency and governance.

Birla also highlighted the critical role of parliamentary committees, chaired by senior opposition members, in scrutinising audit reports, fostering constructive discussions and ensuring financial account-

In his speech, Murmu elaborated on the institution's focus on audits of social relevance that have a bearing on people's lives and livelihoods.

He also mentioned the institutional mechanism, which was set up to synchronise the audit efforts right through the audit process.

Candidates partly responsible for falling prey to job scams: Report

Over 75 per cent of respondents feel that candidates are partly responsible for falling prey to scams due to their failure to verify company's credentials before mak-

ing payments or sharing sensitive personal information, a report said on Saturday. A substantial 75

per cent of surveyed employees indicated that many job seekers fail to exercise the necessary caution when

engaging with potential frauds posing as employers or recruiters, the report by work-force staffing and HR services provider Genius Consultants said.The report by Genius Consultants is based on a survey of 1,427 employees across sectors including FMCG, Technology, Manufacturing,

Telecom, E-Commerce, Logistics, Real Estate, and BFSI (Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance).

Further, the report revealed that while 28 per cent of respondents believed that

there have been serious steps taken by the government or regulatory bodies to curb such frauds, a significant 55 per cent disagreed saying there has been inadequate efforts and a lack of strin-

gent measures. Over 87 per cent respondents believe that job frauds are largely perpetrated by scammers who exploit the job market for their financial gain, while only 7 per cent pointed to hackers as the primary source of fraud, highlighting the difference between traditional scams and cybercrimes,

Ramoji group launches millet products

PNS CHANDIGARH

Ramoji Group on Saturday announced the launch of a range of millets products under the Sabala brand.

Sabala represents the wholesomeness of millets and a commitment to healthier living.

It is bridging the gap between traditional Indian grains and modern recipes through innovation. It characterises our steadfast resolve to blend balanced nutrition with great flavour,"

Sahari Cherukuri, Director of Sabala Millets, said.

In its first phase, 45 products and variants have been launched from khichdi of various states to milletbased cookies, health bars, munchies and noodles, enriching the food category in India, the company said.

The products range under the Sabala Millets - Bharat Ka Super Food. has been launched on the 88th birth anniversary of the Ramoji Group's founder Ramoji Rao Garu, it added.



Vedanta group to increase production across segments, says Anil Agarwal



PNS NEW DELHI

Vedanta Chairman Anil Agarwal on Saturday said the metal and mining conglomerate looks to increase production across segments including crude oil and zinc.

"We are going to produce five hundred thousand barrels of oil and gas...so many other things they are doing, but these are the major thing for me to do..." Agarwal said at the HT Leadership Summit 2024 here.

He also termed the closure of Tuticorin copper plant in Tamil Nadu as one of his smallest failures as a businessman. "Tuticorin is one of the smallest failures. More failure you have, the more success

UNDECLARED FOREIGN ASSETS IN ITR

CBDT launches campaign to intimate taxpayers

PNS NEW DELHI

The income tax department on Saturday said it has launched a campaign to send messages to taxpayers who have not disclosed high-value foreign income or assets in their ITRs for AY 2024-25.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has launched a Compliance-Cum-Awareness Campaign for Assessment Year (AY) 2024-25 to assist taxpayers in accurately completing Schedule Foreign Assets (Schedule FA) and reporting income from foreign sources (Schedule FSI) in their income tax returns

In a statement, CBDT said informational messages will be sent via SMS and email to resident taxpayers who have already submitted their ITRs for AY 2024-25. These messages are intended for individuals identified through information received under bilateral and multilateral agreements, suggesting that they may hold foreign accounts or assets, or have received

income from foreign jurisdictions. The purpose is to remind and guide those who may not have fully completed Schedule Foreign Assets in their submitted ITR for AY 2024-25, especially in cases involving high-value foreign

assets, it added. By using technology and leveraging data obtained through the Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI), the department is working to create a more efficient, taxpayer-friendly system, CBDT said.

Airlines to start new flights from Bhubaneswar, Jharsuguda

PNS BHUBANESWAR

In a boost to the economic development of Odisha, some airlines have agreed to introduce new flights from airports in Bhubaneswar and Jharsuguda, the Chief Minister's Office said on Friday. The new flights are expected from Biju Patnaik International Airport in Bhubaneswar and Vir Surendra Sai Airport in Jharsuguda. "The

communication system is being strengthened. The path of progress is widening. Direct flights will start from Bhubaneswar Biju Patnaik International Airport to Indore, Dehradun, Kochi, Jaipur, Lucknow and Jharsuguda Vir Surendra Sai Airport to Hyderabad, Raipur. Lucknow, Mumbai, It will give a new direction to the economic development of the state," the CMO said in a post on X

Aditya Ultra Steel to set up 5 MW solar plant

PNS NEW DELHI

Rolled steel products manufacturer Aditya Ultra Steel Ltd has reported a net profit of Rs 5.87 crore for April-September period of 2024-25 and also announced setting up a 5 MW solar plant at Rajkot in Gujarat.

The company in a statement on Saturday said its revenue from operations stood at Rs 312.39 crore in the first six months of 2024-25. Operating profit stood at Rs 10.50 crore in the period under review.

The rolled steel products maker, which sells products under the Kamdhenu brand, listed on NSE SME platform in September following its around Rs 46 crore IPO. The company had reported revenue of Rs 587.80 crore in FY24 while profit was Rs 7.69 crore in the fiscal.

SPH Aviation, GDX Security partner to boost drone-based aviation security

PNS NEW DELHI

SPH Aviation, a subsidiary of AVPL International, has signed a partnership agreement with security firm GDX Security Solutions to integrate drone technology into aviation security operations and establish training programmes for drone pilots in India.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) between SPH Aviation and GDX Security, which has an annual revenue of Rs 2,000 crore, aims to set up remote pilot training organisations and launch drone-as-a-service solutions.

SPH Aviation will train GDX security personnel as certified drone pilots under Indian aviation regulator DGCA guidelines and help establish training facilities. The companies will also collaborate on research and development projects for custom



drone security solutions, a statement said.

This initiative not only strengthens expertise within our industry but also addresses the growing need for skilled drone operators," said Preeti Sharma, director at SPH Aviation.

Founded in 2022, SPH Aviation operates three DGCA-approved drone train-

ing centres and has trained

over 500 pilots. GDX Security, established in 1987, provides security services to govern-ment bodies, banks and indus-

trial firms across India. The partnership comes as

India's drone sector sees rapid growth with increasing demand for trained operators and advanced security applica-

economy continues to attract

strong global corporate inter-

est as reflected in the sus-

tained demand across India's

He said the quarterly trans-

action volumes have reached

record highs and are likely to

exceed annual benchmarks in

2024 while rental rates remain

"This positive outlook, supported by consistent physical

major office markets".

stable.

ductors. It is the first-ever tech team from the European country,

British Deputy High Commissioner to East and North-East India Andrew Fleming said, "I am delighted to welcome a trade delegation from the UK focussed exclu-

This visit underscores the growing relationship between the UK and India in the tech space and specifically the existing and emerging opportuni-ties in East and Northeast India, he said.

These engagements are designed to identify new opportunities for collaboration, research, innovation and investment, paving the way for future joint ventures and expanding the tech partnership between the two nations, the statement said.

and semiconductor indus-

tries," the senior diplomat

The British Deputy High

Commission Kolkata, in col-

laboration with IT industry

body National Association of

Software and Service

Companies (NASSCOM) and

city-based firm Asterix

Innovations which gives con-

sultancy inputs to Indian and

overseas companies, will host a series of high-level activities,

including roundtable discus-

sions, business-to-business

(B2B) meetings and network-

ing sessions with Indian stake-

holders.

"We aim to forge strategic partnerships between the UK companies and Indian stakeholders...The visit will provide al governments and industry

'Delhi-NCR 6th most expensive office market in Asia Pacific'

PNS NEW DELHI

Delhi-NCR is the sixth most expensive office location in the Asia Pacific region, with an average monthly rental of Rs 340 per sq ft, while Mumbai ranked eighth in the list, according to Knight Frank

Real estate consultant Knight Frank, in its latest edition of the Asia-Pacific Prime Office Rental Index for Q3 (July-September) 2024, said Delhi-NCR is the 6th most expensive office space rental market across the APAC region.

Hong Kong SAR continues to be APAC's most expensive office market during the third

Prime rents in the NCR remained stable in Q3 2024, while Mumbai and Bengaluru saw year-on-year (YoY) increases of 5 per cent and 3 per cent, respectively, driven by strong demand from corporates and limited new supply.

The prime office market of Delhi-NCR continued to see rental values maintain levels seen in the past four quarters.

The prime office rent of the region was recorded at Rs 340 per sq ft per month, making it the 6th most expensive office market in the APAC zone.

The prime office rent of Mumbai was recorded at Rs 317 per sq a month and stood



at the 8th most expensive commercial market in the APAC

Bengaluru ranked 18th on

the list and is one of the least ft per month. expensive prime office markets. The prime office rent of the city was recorded at Rs 138 per sq

Knight Frank India Chairman and Managing Director Shishir Baijal said,

occupancy, steady rent levels since 2022, and rising demand in 2024, underscores our confidence in the sustained strength of the Indian office market in the near to medium term," Baijal said.

First-ever tech delegation from UK to visit Kolkata

PNS KOLKATA

A trade delegation from the UK, focussed exclusively on the technology sector, will visit Kolkata on November 18-19 for the first time, the British Deputy High Commission here said in a statement on Friday.

The tech delegation comprises 17 leading UK organisations, all of which are at the forefront of technological innovation in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and semicon-

the statement said.

sively on the technology sec-

"I believe interactions with state governments and industry will foster new partnerships and strengthen our collaboration, especially in the AI

a platform for the UK businesses to engage with regionleaders, creating the potential for collaboration in areas such as AI, semiconductor research, development, and manufacturing," it added.



ART, CUTREAD NATURE COALESC ATJEHANGRART GALLERY



The timeless spirit of the Narmada River, flowing through the heart of Madhya Pradesh, is brought to life in the REVA exhibition at Jehangir Art Gallery. Curated by four talented artists—Anurag Jadia, Trapti Gupta, Vandita Shrivastava and Praveen Khare—the exhibition explored their deep-rooted personal, cultural and spiritual connections with the sacred river. Through diverse artistic expressions, the artists celebrated the Narmada's profound influence on landscape, folklore, spirituality and daily life, inviting viewers on a journey to reconnect with an ancient heritage that continues to shape India's identity today. With each piece, the exhibition not only honoured the river's legacy but also spoke to the urgent need to preserve our cultural roots for future generations

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rt, culture and the whispers of a river older than the Ganga flow through the REVA exhibition, where four artists, Anurag Jadia, Trapti Gupta, Vandita Shrivastava and Praveen Khare, have come together to celebrate the life and lega-

cy of the sacred Narmada River. This exhibition, held at the Jehangir Art Gallery, showcased works that delved into the personal, cultural and spiritual connections these artists hold with Madhya Pradesh and its timeless river, the Narmada. While each artist is united by a deep-

rooted connection to Madhya Pradesh, not all have painted the Narmada directly on canvas before. "The theme of the Narmada felt natural and fitting for our collective work," says Anurag Jadia, whose previous pieces were inspired by landscapes more broadly but now channel the essence of the Narmada's flow and presence.

Anurag's work is inspired by landscapes where mountains and rivers coalesce, such as those in Uttarakhand. These landscapes reveal shapes hidden in the stones and clouds—a face here, an animal's outline there. He captures this interplay of imagination and natural beauty in his paintings, combining recognisable land-scapes with scenes drawn from his mind's eye. His art is both familiar and ethereal, a testimony to his journeys into the wild, where nature and creativity meet. For Anurag, REVA has been a unique chance to honour the Narmada and the civilisa-tions that thrived along its banks, despite it not being a direct subject in his previ-

Vandita Shrivastava, an artist from Indore, brings a different but equally profound approach with her creation of "Mandita," a form blending Indian folk traditions and her own artistic signature. A fusion of the traditional 'Mandna' style with her name, Vandita's Mandita features bold line work and textures inspired by folk art and a harmonious palette that draws









from daily life—birds, nature and even the changing moods of the moon. In her pieces, the moon takes on various personas, embodying the richness of Indian folklore and spirituality. "The Narmada, as an ancestral river, car-

ries with it generations of our stories," Vandita explains. While she had previously painted broader themes of folklore and culture, the Narmada has become a new focal point in this exhibition, giving her work fresh layers of cultural depth. Her pieces invite viewers to reconnect with heritage and tradition, encouraging a sense of belonging that feels increasingly rare today.

Praveen Khare, a botanical artist with a background in science, brought a unique lens to REVA, bridging botany and narrative art. Known for his precise line work, his ink-and-paper pieces are a tribute to Kalidasa, the legendary poet of Ujjain, whose tales also draw from the inspiration of rivers. Though his art has long celebrated nature, she acknowledges that working on a Narmada-inspired theme was a fresh exploration. His pieces reflect the river's cultural essence but also embrace ecological and mythological themes that connect deeply with Indian history. Trapti Gupta, captures the innocence and

camaraderie of youth in her work, with scenes depicting friends and siblings in black and white. "The theme of continuity is central to my work, as it is with the Narmada," Trapti says, describing her evolving journey as an artist. Her previous work hadn't directly focused on the Narmada, but for REVA, she used the river as a metaphor for the purity and joy of childhood, bringing a fresh angle to her usual ink-and-pencil depictions.

For these artists, REVA is not just an exhibition; it's a mission to remind future generations of their roots. "In cities, we've become so detached from our soil, our seeds," Vandita reflects. "Through art, we can reconnect with the values and traditions that are embedded in our past." Each artist feels the urgency to preserve this cultural wealth, with this exhibition serving as a bridge for viewers, especially young visitors, to rediscover India's ancient heritage.

INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY SPECIAL

Every year on November 19th, International Men's Day is observed to acknowledge and celebrate the accomplishments, contributions and general well-being of men worldwide. What better way to express gratitude than with a well-considered gift? This year, let's honour the men who motivate us by selecting presents that highlight their accomplishments, speak to their passions and promote their wellbeing!

CELEBRATE MEN'S DAY WITH STYLE

As International Men's Day approaches, it's the perfect opportunity to celebrate the men who inspire us. For the pair that loves thrill and precision, the Pitstop Collection is a unique gift choice. Inspired by the energy of motorsports, it includes India's first racing chronograph, powered by the Seiko Mecaquartz VK63-a blend of quartz accuracy with mechanical chronograph features.

Starting at Rs. 15,900

PERFECT GIFT FOR SPECIAL **MEN IN YOUR LIFE**

Show your appreciation with a thoughtful gift from thinKitchen®. Elevate Men's day with the Dartington Wine Bar White Wine Glasses Set of 2. Celebrated for their exquisite British craftsmanship since 1967, its elegant design and exceptional artistry make these glasses a perfect gift. Handcrafted in the picturesque North Devon hills, this set embodies sophistication and warmth, making it an ideal addition to gatherings or a thoughtful gesture for INR 3,699 loved ones.

MIX IT UP THIS MEN'S DAY

Elevate his mixology skills with the BarCraft 6 Pc Cocktail Set. This set includes six essential cocktail tools and a recipe booklet, perfect for making gourmet cocktails at home. With a stylish wood and brass look, it adds a vintage touch to any home bar. Packaged in an attractive gift box, it's an ideal Men's Day gift for any cocktail enthusiast.

Price: INR 7,799





PERFECT POUR FOR **INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY**

For a standout gift this International Men's Day, Nicobar Gin brings both craftsmanship and distinct flavour, making it perfect for gin enthusiasts and connoisseurs alike. This premium gin balances floral notes of elderflower and hibiscus with the spice of grains of paradise, while the infusion of three distinct types of juniper gives it a robust, layered profile. It is ideal for savouring neat or in refined cocktails, making it a memorable gift that celebrates the artistry of fine

Available for

INR 2,360

GIVE HIS WARDROBE WINTER **MAKEOVER**



Give your partner wardrobe a fashion makeover with timeless pieces from AGTHEXCEPTIONAL AW'24 winter collection Glint. The collection embraces a new experience with a diverse range of hoodies and jackets with rich autumn earthy hues that compliments Indian winter. The impeccable tailoring, timeless styles and plush fabrics of design pieces make a perfect gift choice for the men vou adore.

GIVE HIM GIFT OF CARE

Whether it's the brother who's been your lifelong confidant, the husband who fills your days with love and companionship, or the father whose wisdom has guided you, this day is a chance to celebrate their unique qualities and unwavering presence. The O3+ D-tan pack makes an ideal choice for your friends, brothers, husband, or any loved ones who enjoy looking and feeling their best.

This innovative skincare solution is expertly crafted to remove tan and reveal a brighter. healthier complexion. Packed with natural ingredients, it gently fades sunspots and evens out skin tone. helping to restore a natural, vibrant glow.

Price: Rs. 830

TRAVEL WITH PURPOSE

This International Men's Day, uppercase empowers today's modern man to travel with purpose, combining style, sustainability and functionality. It is redefining the travel gear experience by offering a range of eco-friendly products designed for the conscious traveller! From GRS-certified laptop bags to versatile backpacks and durable duffels, each product is thoughtfully crafted with high-performance materials that support a greener planet without compromising on style or durability.

GIFT ESSENCE OF ADVENTURE THIS MEN'S DAY

This Men's Day, surprise the special men in your life with the Mamaearth perfume gift set for men – a perfect duo for those who

seek both elegance and adventure. Into the Woods offers a rich, earthy blend of geranium, rose and oud wood, capturing the essence of nature's allure. Into the Waves infuses invigorating notes of bergamot, aqua and musk, bringing the freshness of the ocean to every day. Safe



for skin and clothes, this set is a meaningful way to remind the men in your life to embrace their unique journey, wherever it takes them.

HOROSCOPE

ARIES Your ambition will be boosted by supportive siblings and favourable conditions. Face family issues with resilience and thoughtful planning to ensure success. Focus on growth.

TAURUS



Your humour and energy will win hearts. Love shines brightly and family brings happiness. Embrace travel, relaxation and new challenges to enhance vitality and ease uncertainty.

You may develop a deep bond with a close someone. Family and romance bring happiness, but busy schedules might get in the way. Be gentle with loved ones, and do not be arrogant.

CANCER

GEMINI



Manage emotions thoughtfully. Balance professional and personal risks with priority to the family. Use your energy well, and welcome positive changes and

joyful moments in life.



Your drive and resilience power your success. Rely

on trusted friends and seek support when making decisions. Family ties may seem distant. So make sure to balance work with family.



VIRGO

Stay optimistic and focused to enhance success. Siblings will support you to reach your goals. Avoid being overly critical to prevent delays and be open to

changes and new projects.

LIBRA



SCORPIO

Maintain a positive impression. Cherish promising love prospects and embrace family time for renewal. Balance reliability with your eccentricities and face challenges calmly.

SAGITTARIUS

Embrace charm and confidence as you tackle challenges, but avoid pride. Seek security guidance, and focus your energy on work and family harmony. Sibling clashes may occur.

CAPRICORN

Balance humility with pride for personal growth. Loyalty and generosity will strengthen friendships. Nurture family bonds and be open to heartfelt pleas. Unexpected expenses may arise.

AQUARIUS

Rely on trusted support and stay calm under pressure. Joy will come through introspection. Encourage discipline for personal growth, balance drive with patience, and offer support to family.

PISCES

Focus on health and

studies during this crucial time. Manage your emotions, and embrace your confident nature. Stay calm under pressure. Nostalgia abounds as siblings reconcile.

the pioneer Car 17, 2024 Car 17, 2024 Car 17, 2024

"Hum Dono' was accepted in a very big way. It was the official entry at the 1962 Berlin Film Festival"



n the enchanting Coastal city of Goa, where the sea whispers the dream and the sand carries the tale, the grand curtains would be raised for the *International Film Festival of India* (IFFI) for the world. The IFFI is the only South Asian festival accredited by the *International Federation of Film Producers'* Associations (FIAPF).

Now, being held in Goa since 2004, IFFI is not only the grand festival for the films showcase but it's a platform, where Indian cinema interacts with world cinema, where filmmakers connect with audiences, and where the magic of storytelling is truly celebrated.

This year, IFFI has received 1,676 submissions from 101 countries, highlighting its expanding global influence after all these years. *The International Film Festival of India* 2024 will showcase over 180 international films from 81 countries, including 15 world premieres, 3 international premieres, 40 Asian premieres, and 106 Indian premieres. Featuring celebrated titles and award-winning films from around the world, this year's festival promises to make a powerful impression on audiences and on the world of cinema.

Talking about the past, the journey of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) dates back to 1952 when India was struggling to find its cinematic voice post-independence. The Government of India had organised the first IFFI which was held in Mumbai, and it showcased 40 films from 23 countries. The IFFI 1952 marked the first time India had its own international film festival, bringing global cinema to Indian shores. The initial editions of IFFI were held across various Indian cities, including Delhi, Chennai, and Kolkata, with the festival traveling from one city to another to reach a broader audience. The past 20 years spent by IFFI in Goa, contributed to Goa being the official place for the IFFI keeping in mind the advantage of its cultural vibrancy and scenic beauty. IFFI is a unique one distinct from other film festivals worldwide. Known as the "Film Festival of Goa," IFFI blends seamlessly with Goa's local culture, attracting an international audience to India's favourite tourist destination. Goa's vibrant art scene, beach culture,

and heritage architecture complement the festival's spirit, creating an inviting space where cinema lovers from all corners of the world can gather for a shared celebration. The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, in collaboration with the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) and the Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG), is set to host the 55th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa from 20th to 28th November 2024.

With IFFI continuously taking place

in Goa, has helped the state develop a thriving ecosystem that supports film tourism. Local businesses, artists, and artisans benefit from the influx of visitors, and the festival has become a key driver of economic and cultural growth in the region. During the curtain raiser event for the IFFI in New Delhi, *Dr. L. Murugan*, highlighted the festival's prestigious role on the global stage. He said, "IFFI has become a landmark event, not just for India but internationally, comparable to global festivals such as Cannes."

stage. He said, "IFFI has become a landmark event, not just for India but internationally, comparable to global festivals such as Cannes,".

The 55th edition of IFFI in 2024 will showcase the theme of 'Young Filmmakers' – "The Future is Now". The theme asks to

embrace the timeless and the young talent in our country and recognising their potential in shaping the future of creativity. The initiative of the *Creative Minds of Tomorrow* platform has been enhanced to support 100 young talents from 75 in the previous editions. 400 young film students, from Film Schools across the country, are being facilitated by the Ministry to attend IFFI.

The festival will give tributes to cinema legends, and retrospectives on iconic careers. The Country Focus section will allow viewers to experience the best of international cinema, linking to cultural exchange. The Country of Focus for IFFI 2024 will be Australia. This will be made sure by a dedicated package of Australian films giving a strong presence at the festival. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed between Screen Australia ජ NFDC, for participation by leading Australian filmmakers in the festival and the Film Bazaar, and a showcase by AusFilm, promoting Australia's unique filming locations & co-productions.

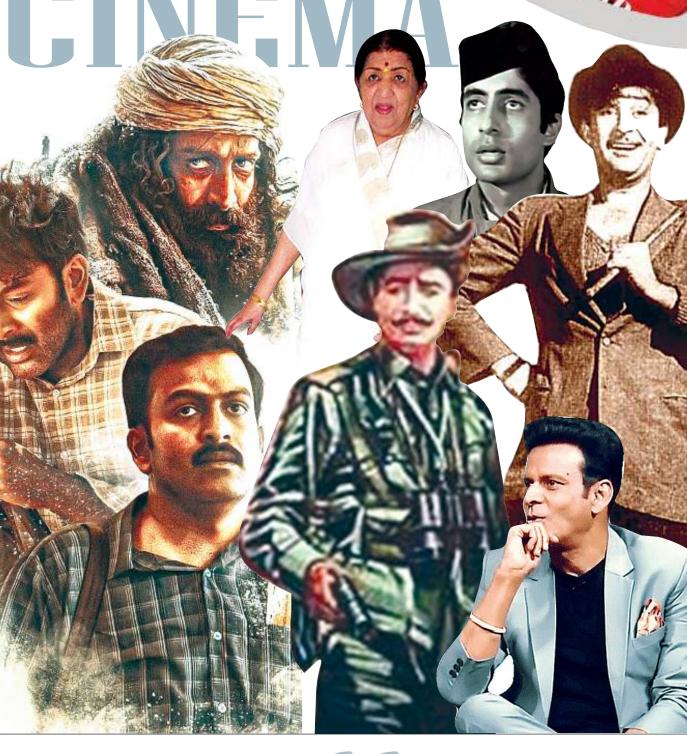
Apart from Australia, in partnership with the *British Film Institute*, the *United Kingdom* will be showcased as the "Treaty Country," presenting British cinema through a carefully crafted package.

Celebration of the pioneers is very important to lead the way, give examples, and keep the generations inspired by looking over to the people who have done it no others. Like every other year, the stars of the cinema, keeping up with the entertainment industry would be facilitated by awards at the IFFI 2024. The IFFI's prestigious *Golden Peacock Award*,

storytellers, the International Film Festival of India 2024, is an allure and will transform Goa into a vibrant heaven for film enthusiasts, cinema pioneers, and aspiring young talents, writes ABHI SINGHAL

As every year, uniting global

GRAND CELEBRATION OF



granted for Best Film will remain one of the most revered honours, while the Silver Peacock Awards for Best Director, Actor, and Actress highlight individual excellence. In recent years, IFFI has expanded its awards to reflect evolving cinematic trends. A new award of Best Debut Indian Director has been an addition this year to recognise young filmmaking talent across India.

The ICFT UNESCO Gandhi Medal honours

The ICFT UNESCO Gandhi Medal honours films promoting peace and tolerance, and the Special Jury Award highlights outstanding narrative and technical achievements, often bringing unique works

into the spotlight. The festival's commitment to fresh talent shines through the *Best Debut Feature Film* award, which encourages bold new voices, while the Indian Panorama section fosters Indian cinematic diversity. To embrace modern storytelling forms, IFFI introduced awards for animation, VR, and documentaries, alongside the "Excellence in Film Craft" award for behind-the-scenes talent. The *Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award* will be awarded to the *Philip Noyce* of Australia.

This year, new categories—such as the "Innovative Use of Technology" and a sustainability-focused award—honour advancements like CGI and address global issues, positioning IFFI as a festival at the



RESTORED CLASSICS OF THEIR ICONIC FILMS, INCLUDING AWARA (1951), HUM DONO (1961), DEVADASU (1953), DADASAHEB PHALKE'S KALIYA MARDAN (1919), AMITABH BACHCHAN'S DEBUT MOVIE SAAT HINDUSTANI (1969), AND SEEMABADDHA (1971) WILL BE SCREENED AT THE FESTIVAL.



forefront of positive change.
Screenings, as usual, will remain a core attraction, with highly anticipated films like the world premiere of *Zero Se Restart* on 21st November 2024 in INOX Panjim, *Jab Khuli Kitaab* by *Saurabh Shukla* on 26th November 2024 in INOX Panjim, Asia premiere of *Hazaar Vela Sholay Pehlila Manus* on 24th November 2024 in INOX Panjim, Asia premiere of *The Mehta Boys*, directed by *Boman Irani* on 25th November 2024 in INOX Panjim.

Michael Gracey's Better Man, an Australian film that provides an engrossing look at the life of music artist Robbie Williams, who is played as a chimpanzee by Jonno Davies in a ground-breaking motion-capture performance, will have its Asia premiere to kick off the festival.

The honours of the opening feature film of the 55th edition of the IFFI will be done by Swatantrya Veer Savarkar, directed by Randeep Hooda, a powerful portrayal of a revolutionary figure. Adding to that the opening non-feature film will be Ghar Jaisa Kuch directed by Harsh Sangani.

Restored classics of their iconic films, including Awara (1951), Hum Dono (1961), Devadasu (1953), Dadasaheb Phalke's Kaliya Mardan (1919), Amitabh Bachchan's debut movie Saat Hindustani (1969), and Seemabaddha (1971) will be screened at the

workshops,
masterclasses, panel
discussions, and
networking events, IFFI
2024 will provide a learning
platform for aspiring filmmakers,
creating an inclusive space for cinematic
celebration and growth.
Panel Discussions like Women Safety and
Cinema with renowned panelists Imtiaz Ali,
Suhasini Manirathnam, Kushboo Sundar,
Bhumi Pednekar; Stories that

festival.

Also,

through

Travel, a panel that
would explore the art
of storytelling that
travels beyond its
origins, addressing the
themes, techniques, and
emotional core that allow
films to reach and impact
diverse audiences worldwide
with Farrukh Dhondy, Anna Saura,
Tanishta Chatterjee, Vani Tripathi

Tikoo and Lucy Walker. Each panel discussion would be a new learning for all present at the festival. Culture As Context for Cinematic Storytelling with panelist Dr. Sacchidanad Joshi, Amish Tripathi, Bharat Bala will be a major learning

experience for the audience. Sunil Srinivasan; Centenary Special: ANR -Celebrating the Life and Works of Akkineni Nageswara Rao. This centenary special will celebrate the legendary actor & producer Akkineni Nageswara Rao (ANR), whose contributions to Indian cinema have been unparalleled, with celebrated actor and his son Nagarjuna being the speaker; From Big Screen to Streaming in conversation with Manisha Koirala and Vikramaditya Motwane; Celebrating the Life and Works of Raj Kapoor -'The Greatest Showman' with Ranbir Kapoor; Empowering Change: Women Leading the Way in Cinema with giving women led hits Kriti Sanon and Rudrani Chattoraj. Addition will be Lata Mangeshkar Memorial Talk: Musical Theatre in India with A R

Rahman. Masterclasses by the pioneers in the cinema industry, giving insights about the highs and lows will be conducted every year on all the days of the 7-day festival. Power of Failure, a masterclass by Anupam Kher will be sharing his journey, highlighting how failures acted as the catalyst for his growth and success. Another one by Philip Noyce on How to Succeed in New Hollywood. To all this will be the addition of Stephen Woolley an English filmmaker giving a masterclass on Film Production and its Stages will be valuable. The National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) will also be hosting the muchanticipated Film Bazaar from November 20 to 24, transforming Goa into a bustling hub for filmmakers, producers, distributors, and cinema enthusiasts from across the globe. Since its inception, Film Bazaar has established itself as South Asia's premier film market, providing a platform for fresh voices and unique cinematic narratives from the region to take the global stage. The Film Bazaar has since grown to become the international film market for South Asia. It serves as a meeting place for prospective creative and financial cooperation between South Asian and foreign filmmakers, producers, sales representatives, and festival

the international film market for South Asia. It serves as a meeting place for prospective creative and financial cooperation between South Asian and foreign filmmakers, producers, sales representatives, and festival programmers. From November 20 to 24, 2024, the 18th Film Bazaar at IFFI 2024 will take place at the Marriott Resort in Goa. This year, the IFFI promises not just a cinematic showcase but a festival brimming with cultural exchange, artistic celebration, and an unwavering commitment to the future of films in the country and globally. From illuminating conversations to inspiring mentorship and unforgettable screenings, IFFI 2024 is set to transcend expectations, offering a truly transformative experience for

film lovers worldwide.



CHAT-O-CINO

'ITWASMY SONGS THAT CPENED DOORS TO HINDI FILMS'

TEJAL SINHA

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assie Gill is a name that needs no introduction. With a string of hit songs and films under his belt, he has become a force to be reckoned with in the entertainment industry. But despite all the fame and adoration, Gill remains humble and grounded, still driven by the passion that first led him to pursue a career in music.

With his mesmerising voice, captivating stage presence and undeniable charm, he has emerged as a powerhouse in the Punjabi entertainment industry. His artistic journey commenced with his debut album, *Batchmate*, in 2011, which paved the way for blockbuster hits like Bapu Zimidar, Guitar Sikhda, Panga, Attt Karti and Laden. Jassie's successful foray into acting has seen him deliver memorable performances in films like *Mr. & Mrs. 420, Dildariyan* and *Panga*, alongside Bollywood stalwarts like Kangana Ranaut and the Salman Khan-starrer Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan.

Reflecting on his remarkable career, in this chat with *The Pioneer*, he expresses his gratitude and passion, which was also palpable in his tude and passion, which was also palpable in his voice. "The journey has been nearly 14 incredible years and I'm grateful to be part of this industry," he began, his eyes lighting up with excitement. "From starting in music to stepping into acting and now exploring new horizons in music production, every moment has been a learning experience. I truly love what I do and it's been an amazing ride so far!" Initially, music wasn't the *Mundeyan Ton Bachke Rahin* star's first choice. He considered alternative career paths, like driving a taxi or truck in Canada, due to the daunting task of navigating the music industry. Yes, dear readers, you read that right! As he recounted the early days of his career, his voice was filled with a mix of nostalgia and determination. "When I first started out, the music industry was a vastly different landscape. Creating an album seemed overwhelming and costly, especially since single tracks weren't really a thing—artists needed to produce a full 10-track album." He paused, reflecting on the uncertainty of those times. "I always kept a backup plan in mind, like driving a taxi or truck in Canada." But of course his passion for music ultimately won out. "But as they say, when you truly want something and work hard for it, doors eventually open," he said with a smile. "So, I moved to Canada and spent three months washing cars, saving every dollar I could. I poured everything I earned into my music—and that's where the journey truly began." He attributed his success to trusting his instincts. "When I was new to the industry, I had no idea what would work or what wouldn't, but I trusted myself and made my own choices. I don't seek a lot of advice mination. "When I first started out, the music made my own choices. I don't seek a lot of advice or second-guess my path—I lead with my instincts. No matter the outcome, I stay true to my vision and thankfully, it has always brought

The seeds of Gill's remarkable music career were sown in the unlikeliest of places—his colege classroom. "During my graduation, I chose music as a subject because of my deep interest, even though I wasn't a particularly studious student. I didn't know what the course would cover when I opted for it, but it turned out to be a great foundation for my career." His eyes lit up as he recalled the impact of his college days on his music journey. "The basic knowledge I gained proved invaluable in my early years as a singer. It all started in college—I began singing, built confidence and received appreciation from others.

With a discography boasting blockbuster hits and a filmography

featuring critically acclaimed performances, Jassie Gill is the epitome of artistic versatility.

Jassie Gill, the name synonymous with **Punjabi entertainment's** finest, sits down with **The Pioneer for a heart-**



That encouragement pushed me to keep performing, and that's how my journey truly began."
The *Panga* fame's versatility as an artist is unde-

niable, with a massive following that adores him equally for his music and acting. When asked about his acting career, Jassie revealed that it was about his acting career, Jassie revealed that it was a completely new territory for him. "Music was always something I felt confident about—I knew how to navigate that space. But acting was a completely new territory for me; I had no idea where to start or how it would unfold."

However, his experience in creating music videos proved to be a valuable stepping stone. "Many of them, like *Bapu Zimidar* and *Vich Pardesa*, had strong storylines. We began incorporating short narratives into these videos to give the songs more meaning. Through these roles,

the songs more meaning. Through these roles, I gained acting experience, which eventually led to my first offer for a Punjabi movie."

Continuing to hone his craft, he found himself growing more passionate about acting. "Over time, I found myself truly enjoying acting and the audience's appreciation motivated me even more. When people love your work, you can't help but give it your all. With dedication and God's blessings, I reached Mumbai and ventured into Hindi films too. Now, acting is something I genuinely love doing."

The Punjabi entertainment industry has

witnessed a significant surge in popularity over the years, with talented artists like Diljit Dosanjh, B Praak and Gurnazar gaining widespread recognition. As someone who has successfully navigated both the singing and acting worlds, he offered his

thoughts on this phenomenon. 'When I first started singing, my goal was simply to become known as a singer in my village," he humbly recalled, his voice filled with gratitude. "I never imagined

that my music would become so popular, not just across India but globally. I'm truly grateful to God for giving me this opportunity and the privilege to be part of this industry. I began at a time when both I and the industry grew together, step by step. Today, Punjabi music is recognised everywhere and even people from the South know Punjabi singers. It makes me proud to come from here and to have contributed to the industry with music that's been heard far beyond Punjab—it's truly amazing."

When asked to pinpoint the turning point in his illustrious career, the *Channo Kamli Yaar Di* star's response was refreshingly candid. Despite having worked in notable films like *Happy Phir* having worked in notable films like Happy Phir Bhaag Jaayegi, Panga and Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan, he attributed his true turning point to his music rather than his film career. "Honestly, the true turning point in my career has always been my music, not the films," he confessed. "It was my songs that opened doors to Hindi films." Going ahead, he elaborated on how his music videos paved the way for film opportunities, citing the example of Happy Phir Bhag Jayegi, which was offered to him after the films director. Mudassar Aziz, saw him play a similar character in one of his music videos. "After that came Panga and several other film opportunities," he added. "So, it's clear—music has always been the key turning point in my journey."

For our star of the day, creativity is a continuous journey, not a destination. As he navigates the ever-changing landscapes of music and film, he remains committed to innovation and experimentation. He delved into his creative process, making it clear that innovation and experimentation are at the forefront of his artistic endeavours. "Music is constantly evolving and I make it a point to evolve with it. I enjoy experimenting with new things, like music production and creating unique sounds. In the beginning, I mostly composed my own songs and I still do for some of my projects today. I'm always striving to enhance and innovate in my music. I love

ing to enhance and innovate in my music. I love exploring and experimenting with sound, coming up with fresh ideas, arranging new elements, and collaborating with music producers to bring it all to life," sighs the *Marjawaan* singer.

Jassie's commitment to pushing boundaries extends beyond music to his acting career as well. "In acting, I take a similar approach, challenging myself continually," he explained. Despite never having formal acting training, Jassie has honed his craft through hands-on experience and collaborations with esteemed actors and directors. "I've had the privilege of actors and directors. "I've had the privilege of working with almost everyone in Punjab and collaborating with seasoned actors like Salman Khan, Kangana Ranaut and top-tier directors in Bollywood," he shared. These experiences have not only boosted his confidence but also fueled his passion for continuous improvement. With a slew of exciting projects on the horizon, including the threequel of a Punjabi movie in which he played a female character, Jassie is more motivated than ever to keep exploring and growing as an artist.

As the curtains close on this interview, Jassie Fill looks to the future: he's excited about the prospects ahead. "I'm currently focused on my music, experimenting and striving to create something unique and special. One of the great things today is that we don't have to approach labels to release our tracks—we have our own label and the freedom to create whatever we want. That's exactly what I'm doing right now. I also have some exciting Bollywood opportunities in the works, which I'm really looking forward to," he signed off.

TULSI GABBARD



Tulsi Gabbard, a former Democratic congresswoman, was selected by U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on Wednesday, November 13, 2024, to be the head of national intelligence in his cabinet.

MIKE TYSON SLAPPED JAKE PAUL



At their final weigh-in before their eagerly awaited heavyweight bout at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, legendary boxer Mike Tyson smacked Jake Paul.

I WANT TO TALK



With his next movie, I Want To Talk, which was directed by Soojit Sircar, Abhishek is having a lot of success in his career. Even while he hasn't commented on the personal rumours, Abhishek just made his first public statement at the movie's music launch.

SONG

Sahiba

This periodthemed music video features Vijay Deverakonda and Radhikka Madan opposite each other. The nearly 45-second clip begins with a black-and-white shot of Vijay riding a horse along the beach



PAUL AND ANDREW SHARED TOUCHING REUNION



Actors Paul Mescal and Andrew Scott experienced a beautiful reunion on the red carpet during the Gladiator 2 premiere, in which Mescal plays the lead.

Revisiting history with authentic accents and emotional depth



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ony LIV's Freedom at Midnight brings to life the intense final chapters of India's freedom struggle, diving deep into the conflicts, ambitions and monumental decisions that shaped the nation. Set in the pre-independence era, the show offers a riveting portrayal of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Abul Kalam Azad, Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Lord Mountbatten, unraveling their powerful, often contradictory roles in the fight for independence.

The narrative goes beyond historical events to capture the raw emotions and political dynamics within the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, exposing the internal conflicts and manipulations that arose as partition loomed closer. Mountbatten's controversial partition plan, which eventually reshaped the subcontinent, is presented with a critical eye, shedding light on the sacrifices, resilience, and horrors faced by ordinary Indians.

The series digs into how key figures, from Congress leaders to Muslim League representatives, wrestled with their visions for India's future amidst communal tensions and ideological divides. With dramatic depictions of behind-the-scenes strategies, intense debates, and unforeseen betrayals, Freedom at Midnight gives a balanced yet compelling view of the price paid for independence. The series draws inspiration from the highly regarded book Freedom at Midnight by Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins, offering a nuanced depiction that delves deeper than mere historical events. It captures the emotional weight and ideological conflicts of the time. Produced by Applause Entertainment and Emmay Entertainment, with Quais Wasiq's cinematography, the show aspires to authentic storytelling and



quality production, making it a standout in the Indian OTT historical drama genre.

Highlights

The show's depiction of Jawaharlal Nehru's first address as Prime Minister captures the weight of the moment; it gave me goosebumps, complete with authentic accents and period-appropriate gravitas that make it feel as if history is unfolding right before your eyes. The dialogues between Nehru and Gandhi are portrayed with intensity and depth, reflect-ing their ideological debates and personal bonds. These interactions lend authenticity to the series, emphasising the complexity of their relationship and the divergent yet overlapping visions they held for India's future. The background music is immersive and evocative, enhancing the emotional highs and lows of the story. The BGM is subtle yet impactful, setting the tone for significant moments like Gandhi's charkha scene and the tense build-up to the announcement of independence. The series includes stunningly symmetrical frames and artistic lighting, which accentuates the historical weight of pivotal scenes. The scenes depicting atrocities, such as the Direct Action Day sequence and the Indigo farmers' protest, capture the painful realities faced by ordinary citizens with haunting clarity. The show's choice to portray the Rawalpindi riots in black-and-white adds a nostalgic yet somber feel, immersing the viewer in the gravity of the situation while also

providing a stylistic nod to historical archives. With scenes like the Durga Puja celebration, the show faithfully represents the diversity of experiences and sentiments across India during the independence struggle. These cultural nuances add richness to the narrative. The show also seamlessly blends real-life photographs of Gandhi with dramatized sequences, such as his time in jail, making the

portrayal both educational and authentic.

Creator: Nikhhil Advani

Produced by: Monisha Advani, Madhu Bhojwani

Cinematography: Malay Prakash

Cast: Arif Zakaria, Chirag Vohra, Sidhant gupta,

Ira dubey, RJ Malishka, Rajendra Chawla, Luke

McGibney

Streaming on: Sony LIV

Rating: 3.5

rawbacks

While Freedom at Midnight delivers a richly detailed narrative, the slow pacing might not appeal to all viewers. Its meticulous approach to historical events means it often lingers on certain scenes, potentially losing momentum for those who prefer a more fastpaced viewing experience. Additionally, some sequences seem to overly idealise figures like Nehru and Gandhi, casting them in an almost heroic light that may feel exaggerated to some. This portrayal could come across as a somewhat one-sided depiction, potentially oversimplifying the complex and often conflicting ideologies of the time.

Performances

In Freedom at Midnight, the cast delivers powerful performances that bring India's independence era to life. Chirag Vohra as Gandhi and Arif Zakaria as Jinnah are standouts, fully embodying the essence of these iconic leaders. Vohra's portrayal of Gandhi, from the precise cadence of his accent to his mannerisms, is incredibly authentic, evoking the Mahatma's resilience and unwavering spirit. Zakaria as Jinnah is equally compelling, capturing the political complexities and personal struggles of the leader with striking realism.

Sidhant Gupta as Nehru brings warmth and dignity, blending Nehru's idealism with his deep-rooted concern for India's future. Ira Dubey's portrayal of Fatima Jinnah offers a nuanced perspective on the familial and political aspects of the independence struggle, while RJ Malishka and Luke McGibnev add depth to the cast, representing various facets of the era's intense negotiations and emotional turbulence.

However, Rajendra Chawla's portrayal of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is truly the standout. His expressions, tone, and powerful presence elevate the show, portraying Patel's grit and unwavering commitment to a united India. His performance captures Patel's subtle emotional depth and iron-willed resolve, making him the undeniable star of the series.

The visual authenticity of the sets and costumes transports viewers to 1940s India. Each frame is a meticulous recreation of the era, from the political chambers to the crowded streets, enhancing the historical experience. The attention to period-accurate details, from attire to body language, makes it feel like witnessing India's freedom strug-gle unfold firsthand. The thoughtful representation of each leader's unique speech patterns, physical presence, and dialect completes this immersive portrayal of history.

Technical Aspects

Freedom at Midnight excels in its technical craftsmanship, creating an immersive experience through visual storytelling and meticulous cinematography. The use of color psychology stands out, with warm, earthy tones capturing the gravitas of the pre-independence era and cooler shades during moments of tension, creating a sense of historic authenticity. Shadow and lighting are used masterfully to evoke emotion; the cinematographer plays with silhouettes, especially in scenes with Gandhi, enhancing the symbolic weight of these characters and making the sequences feel lifelike.

Moving shots are well executed, adding a sense of fluidity that draws viewers into the narrative's ebb and flow. The camera work is precise, creating symmetry within the frames that feels both deliberate and visually satisfying. This symmetry, coupled with thoughtful blocking, gives scenes a painterly quality that's rare in historical dramas. Symbolism through visuals is also handled with finesse, reinforcing themes without feeling heavy-handed; for example, scenes with Gandhi at the charkha evoke resilience, while the court scene with farmers protesting with indigo-stained hands speaks volumes about colonial exploitation. These technical elements come together beautifully to transport the audience into the 1940s, making the historical drama not just a story to watch but a sensory journey into the era itself. Malay Prakash needs to be applauded for the amazing job!

Freedom at Midnight is a meticulously crafted historical drama that brings India's independence struggle to life with rich detail and stunning visuals. Though it may feel slowpaced for some viewers, the show excels in authenticity and technical finesse, making it a worthwhile watch for those interested in a deep, evocative portrayal of this pivotal era.

























































































BORN AMIDST TURMOIL

I was born in 1948 in the

(and repression of its affiliated organisations). Since

my father was a Communist

leader, the police and gov-ernment authorities put

pressure on my mother to

hospital nearby at that time

and my mother told me that she had to run from one

place to another when she

was carrying me. After I was born, we lived at

Vidvavanam, near Vijayawada and then went

to Madras (now Chennai) for a couple

shifted to Hyderabad and joined Wesley

of years. I studied till second class in Madras (now called Chennai) and then

AUNT'S LOVE AND TAJ MAHAL HOTEL TREATS

At school, I was a bright student. During the initial years in Hyderabad, I used to stay

at my aunt's house. She was then working as a teacher near the Paradise circle. Upon

receiving her salary every month, she used

to take us to the Taj Mahal Hotel by rick-

shaw for treats. On those days we used

to eat dosa, idli and sweet such as gulab

and guided us in many ways. When I

entered the sixth grade, my mother

came to Hyderabad and then we

shifted to Yellareddyguda. From 1955 to 2022, we lived there; it is

only now that I have shifted to

iamun. She used to iron our clothes

School for studies.

know his whereabouts! There was no maternity

aftermath of the (1934

British) ban on the Communist Party of India

EXTENDINGYOTHFUL

ACTIVISM CREATIVELY

FORBIGSCRE



Thammareddy Bharadwaj's life reflects a saga of activism and resilience that had a profound impact on the political and cultural landscapes of his community during his formative years. Born in 1948, amid the tumultuous period following the then British ban on the Communist Party, his childhood was turbulent with his mother shielding him from the political turmoil surrounding his father's activism. A gifted student with an early fascination for cinema, Bharadwaj's connection to the industry deepened as he witnessed his father's work in production at the Sarathi Studios. While doing engineering from Osmania University, his leadership traits drew him to student politics, as part of which he championed causes with lasting benefits for the student community. In a conversation with *The Pionee*r's SURESH KAVIRAYANI, he shares vignettes of his efforts for student welfare and social justice and

how he got involved in the initial Telangana movement. One of the most poignant events in his life was the murder of his close friend and fellow activist George Reddy in 1972. Hid contributions to academia and cinema over the following years has cemented Bharadwaja's legacy as an influential figure who skillfully blended art and activism with dedication for the big screen. Known for his meaningful storytelling in Tollywood, he has produced multiple films covering diverse themes such as human values, societal issues, and the complexity of human relationships. His productions, particularly Alajadi (1990) and Pacha Thoranam (1994), reflect a deep engagement with social issues and explore the struggles of the common man in a rapidly evolving world. Alajadi, for instance, sheds light on caste dynamics and social injustice, while Pacha Thoranam dives into the challenges of marginalised communities, advocating the need for empathy and social reforms. His film Pellaina Kothalo (2006), which takes a

lighter, comedic look at the intricacies of married life,

adds diversity to his portfolio, showing his

films and directed 20 films in the

industry

versatility in producing films across different

genres. He is known to have produced 15 **GROWING UP IN SECUNDERABAD'S CINEMA HUB**

I have always liked watching movies since my childhood. I don't know how many times I watched Lavakusa. Tivoli, Dreamland, Plaza, Minerva, Manohar, Alankar, Ajanta, Rajeshwari and Kalpana theaters were among the popular theatres in Secunderabad at that time. I still remember Rojulu Marayi ran for 100 days in Rajeshwari theatre and they arranged a big function there. My father was the production manager for that film. He was the general manager for Sarathi Studios that was built at Ameerpet later. We are talking about 1955!

FIGHTING FOR UNIVERSITY'S AUTONOMY

When I was studying at Osmania University, the then government removed Vice-Chancellor DS Reddy. They appointed a person from Andhra and then we protested the government's decision and sought autonomy for universities. We asked the government not to get involved in universioffairs and saw to it that DS Redd reinstated as Vice Chancellor. Before that, we had gone on a nearly 15- to 20-day strike. We had closed the two approach roads to Osmania University. We barricaded the entire university, staying up at nights and sleeping on the Arts College steps. The government bowed down and re-instated DS Reddy as Vice-Chancellor and later we called off our strike.

'JAILED' IN 1969 DURING TELANGANA MOVEMENT

In 1969, during the peak of the initial Telangana movement, many students participated and I, along with some others, fought for integration and we all attacked the Secretariat and demanded the then Chief Minister's resignation. The police arrested us and put us in a jail of sorts. At that time, the jails were completely full; so they put us in a government school near SR Nagar! We (both Telangana agitators and those fight for integration) used to sing songs and play games in the 'jail'. Nearly 500 people were there in that school and our batch comprised 20 students. My mother used to get breakfast and lunch for all of us.



USHERING SEMESTER SYSTEM IN OSMANIA UNIVERSITY

While I was in college, I joined the Hyderabad Students Union and became its vice president. I was also active in the Students Federation of India. They used to call me naih-sadr (vice president) in Urd Because of my laziness and overconfidence, I failed in my first year. They gave me paper carrying 100 marks, but I only wrote for 50 marks. So, I completed my exam in just half an hour and went to the movies. At that time, engineering was five years' term. Louis Thomas was the Secretary of the university then. I told him that it was very difficult to write all the examinations at once; so, I gave the idea that exams should be held as per the semester system elsewhere, two times in one year. He liked the idea, but when it took time to implement, we announced an immediate strike; so, they adopted the semester and also the carry-on system. The semester system is still continuing and I can proudly say that I actually started the idea at



DARK CONNECTION BEHIND GEORGE REDDY'S MURDER

George Reddy, student leader and social activist, was a friend of mine and he was a gold medalist. George Reddy was a science student; his brother Cyril Reddy was my classmate. When George Reddy was debarred for three months, he stayed in my house only! There is a Dhoolpet connection to George Reddy's murder. There was Lakhan Singh, who was a very close friend of George and his brother Cyril. He introduced Lakhan to me and at that time they put Lakhan Singh in my hostel room. I don't know what happened among Lakhan, George and Cyril, but Lakhan became enemies with the brothers. Thereafter, the rivalry started and they stabbed George once, but he survived at that time! Lakhan Singh happened to be from Dhoolpet; so, unofficially he kept nearly 30 people from Dhoolpet in the hostel (I too was in the hostel at that time). I started my campaign and went to all the classrooms and these 30 people also followed me. I don't know why, but that day I kept silent and did my campaign, though these 30 people indirectly commented on me. This happened on the last day of the campaign. That day I still remember, after the campaign ended, the next day I met George at college and he took a big class. 'Why did you campaign alone last night; you should have called me,' George told me. After some chitchat, I was hungry and told the same to George, but he wanted me to drop him off at the library. So, I dropped him off and I went to Taj for lunch and then went for the Somaripothu movie, which was released on that day. Cyril Reddy, Mahipal, Koora Rajannna and their batch went somewhere. The movie was not good, so I came out in the interval and came towards OU. At Andhra Mahila Sabha, students were running in a hurry. I asked them what happened. "George ni vesesaru, ninnu kuda vesestaru, vellaku (They have murdered George and they will target you also; don't go to the university). But I went to the university, though by then they had shifted his body to Gandhi Hospital. I went to the hospital, saw the body and I roughed up a police official there and told him, 'George ni mere champaru'. This was the first murder in OU. Lakhan Singh and nine others were arrested, but later, I think the case was not proved and they were freed. George used the knuckle duster at that time and he easily managed 10 people. He was just five feet six inches, but he was a fighter! Had Cyril or Mahipal been with him during the attack, George might have survived. The University remained closed for four months and there were no elections for a few years.





UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES SHOOTING KOTHALARAYUDU WITH CHIRANJEEVI

In 1975, my father made a film Chinnanati Kalalu with Krishnam Raju in my name and the shooting happened one month in Mysore. Many other Telugu films, like Dasari Narayana Rao's *Tirupathi*, Kranthi Kumar's *Sarada* and *Yashoda Krishna* in which Sridevi plays young Krishna, were also shot there. Apart from Telugu films, stars from other industries like MGR, Ambarish and Vishnuvardhan also shot their films at the same location. The reason for many films shooting in Mysore was that they announced some subsidies! So everyone stayed in the guest houses and spoke to one another. I got close to producer Kranthi Kumar at that time. In 1979, I watched a Malayalam film and wanted to remake it in Telugu. He asked me to produce myself with Chiranjeevi as the lead actor. Kranthi Kumar made two films *Pranam Khareedu* and Punadirallu with Chiranjeevi at that time. So, it was easy for me to get Chiranjeevi. My first film as producer was Kothalarayudu; it became a huge success and it also gave Chiranjeevi the first commercial hit as a solo lead actor! My next film was Mogudu Kavali which was another blockbuster for Chiranjeevi. I shot all those films in



CRASHED HER ENGAGEMENT. STOLE HER HEART

I got married to Vani when I was 21. Vani used to live next to our house at Yellareddyguda and her brother was doing medicine. He was my close friend. Her father was a retired executive engineer and she had graduated from Reddy College, Narayanaguda. Her engagement was going on and I did the arrangements! Her friends came and told me, 'Vani is crying.' Then I went to her father and told him that I wanted to marry her. A nice gentleman, he told me that I should have told him before the engagement was fixed. He then can-celled the engagement and we got married in 1972 at Shapurvadi function hall, opposite the Secretariat. Now, there is a hospital in that place. Many of the film personalities, politicians, ministers and governors attended the marriage. I took leave and worked for films, but after some time, I left my job in 1985 and concentrated on films thereafter.







Minister. I, along with a few others, worked and got recognition for the Andhra Pradesh Film Employees Federation from the All India Film Employees Confederation.

Earlier, they gave recognition to Madras (now Chennai), Karnataka, West Bengal, and Bombay. Today I can proudly say that our Telugu employees are getting more than other industry employees. I, along with a few others, set the wages and timings for all the employees and today we have corrected the system because we did a lot of work at that time. At that time, 18 unions were there and now there are 24 unions. I not only got recognition but also became the president of the All India Film Employees Confederation. This was definitely a landmark for the Telugu film industry. Today, the Telugu film employees like choreographers and action directors are working in Chennai, Mumbai, Kannada and everywhere. Our people have now won National Awards too, for which I felt very proud of myself.

UNITED TFI

Actor Prabhakar Reddy made me the president of the Directors Association and

secretary of the Film Federation of

Employees. After the film industry shift-

ed to Hyderabad, in 1993 there was big agi-

tation from the South Indian Film

Employees Federation (SIFEF). In Hyderabad, we started the Andhra Pradesh



RAPID FIRE

YOUR PINCH ME MOMENT OF LIFE: When Hyderabad film industry shifted here

THE LATEST THING YOU'VE

DISCOVERED ABOUT YOURSELF: I don't fit into present situation

A SINGER WHO INSPIRES YOU: Mohammed Rafi and Ghantasala

PROUDEST MOMENT OF YOUR CAREER: Getting semester system in college

FAVOURITE CITY/COUNTRY TO STAY IN: Hyderabad



