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A set back to fake **well-wishers** of Constitution 5

'Music's power to evoke emotions **REFLECTS** in my performance' 11

A standout **SHUTTLER** Dil se

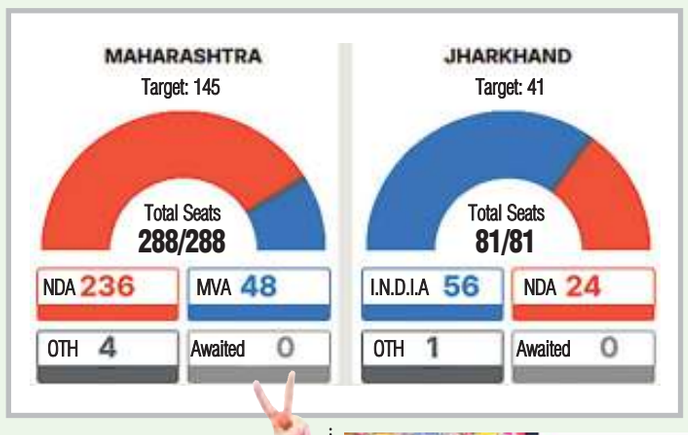
QUOTE OF THE DAY the pioneer

The government should take over the lands of farmers only if they agree. The farmers who gave their land for the Mallanna Sagar Project have not got justice till now. The Congress Government must change its policy towards land losers and should give them land. I appeal to the government to announce a new policy regarding this during the next Assembly session

— Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao, CPI MLA & State Secretary P4

BJP's Maha 'tsunami', INDIA retains J'khand

A CELEBRATION IN MAHARASTRA



AN ECSTATIC MOOD FOR INDIA

PNS ■ MUMBAI/RANCHI

The BJP on Saturday pulled off a stunning performance in Maharashtra winning a record number of seats to propel the party-led ruling Mahayuti alliance to a landslide victory while the INDIA bloc stormed back to power in Jharkhand on the back of a spectacular showing by the JMM.

As speculation mounted on who would be the next CM face from the Mahayuti alliance--which also includes the Shiv Sena faction of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and the NCP (Ajit Pawar)--and the three allies put up a united front after the "historic" victory, the focus quickly shifted to Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who is being seen as a strong contender to occupy the top post for the third time.

Such was the BJP's dominance that helped the Mahayuti alliance to get a three-fourths majority and continue the winning momentum after its recent historic hat-trick in Haryana, 128 of the 149 candidates fielded by the saffron party won. Four BJP candidates were also leading.

"Maharashtra has broken all records, it is the biggest win for any party or pre-poll alliance in the last 50 years," Prime Minister Narendra Modi told BJP workers at party headquarters to a thunderous applause late in the evening.

Continued on Page 2

Message of development endorsed: Modi

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the latest round of elections has endorsed the message of development and defeated the politics of lies and betrayal propounded by the Congress and its allies. Addressing a gathering at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) headquarters here, Modi said divisive forces, negative politics and dynasticism have been defeated in the Maharashtra election and bypolls in various states. He said the people of Maharashtra have voted for stability and taught a lesson to those who tried to create instability. The prime minister asserted that the message from the Maharashtra election is that of unity and it is also an endorsement of the "ek hai toh safe hai" slogan.

Continued on Page 2

BYPOLLS: CONGRESS SWEEPS SOUTH 5

Priyanka bags Wayanad

Wins with a margin of 4.1 lakh votes

WAYANAD(KERALA): Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi on Saturday cruised to her maiden electoral victory, from the Wayanad Lok Sabha seat in Kerala, with a margin of over 4.1 lakh votes against CPI(M)-led LDF's Sathyan Mokeri, according to figures released by the Election Commission. Priyanka got 6,22,338 votes which was less than the 6,47,445 votes received by her brother Rahul Gandhi in the Lok Sabha polls in Wayanad in April this year, but her victory margin of 4,10,931 was more than his lead of 3,64,422 votes, despite the decline in turnout in the Wayanad bypoll. The LS poll turnout in Wayanad, which has over 14 lakh registered voters, was close to 74 per cent in April, but had declined to 65 per cent in the by-election in November.

Continued on Page 2

DON'T MISS...

Pawan makes a mark in Maha polls

In the recent Maharashtra elections, Andhra Pradesh's Deputy Chief Minister, Pawan Kalyan, proved his political acumen as a key campaigner for the BJP. He actively participated in electioneering across five constituencies, and in every constituency where he campaigned, the BJP emerged victorious. His influence, however, was not limited to these areas. Pawan Kalyan's advocacy for Sanatan Dharma resonated across Maharashtra, marking a significant shift beyond the...

-PAGE: 2

WUA elections rescheduled

The Andhra Pradesh government has announced a revised schedule for elections to the Water Users' Associations (WUAs). The Water Resources Department (WRD) will issue the election notification across the 13 erstwhile districts on December 5. According to the new schedule, elections for the members of the Territorial Constituencies (TCs) and for the positions of President and Vice President of WUAs will be held on December 8. Elections for Distributary Committees (DCs) will follow on December 11, while elections for the...

-PAGE: 3

Maha win boosts BJP's RS prospects

The BJP on Saturday snatched one Lok Sabha seat from the Congress, lowering the opposition party's tally to 98, while a runaway victory in Maharashtra will also boost the ruling alliance's prospects in the Rajya Sabha where the western state sends the second-highest number of members. The BJP had won 240 seats in the Lok Sabha elections held earlier this year. After its win in the Nanded Lok Sabha bypoll on Saturday, the party's tally in the 543-member Lower House has gone up to 241...

-PAGE: 5

Breather for Adani's Dharavi project

The landslide victory for ruling BJP-led Mahayuti in Maharashtra will bolster billionaire Gautam Adani-led group's USD 3-billion project to redevelop Mumbai slum of Dharavi into a "world-class" district. Opposition Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) had pledged to reclaim all land given to the Adani group for redeveloping Asia's largest slum and promised to scrap the project altogether, if voted to power. For Adani, who is facing bribery charges in a US court, the scrapping of his pet Dharavi project would have been a big setback. With election results showing the BJP and its allies Shiv Sena and Nationalist Congress Party factions led by Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, winning more than...

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Amaravati land pooling process completed

E-lottery held for returnable plots to left-over farmers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The land pooling process for the construction of the people's capital, Amaravati, has been successfully completed with the cooperation of farmers, said M. Naveen, Additional Commissioner of the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA). He noted that farmers voluntarily contributed their lands to the APCRDA under the land pooling scheme, marking a positive development for the State's capital city.

Speaking at an event held at the APCRDA headquarters in Vijayawada on Saturday, Naveen explained that an e-lottery was conducted for farmers who had not yet received returnable plots. The event was organised under the direction of APCRDA Commissioner Katamneni Bhaskar.

Naveen praised the farmers' cooperation as vital to the successful completion of the land pooling process, which is expected to drive the development of the Amaravati region and improve the living standards of the farmers.

He also highlighted that the state government has set up nine registration centres in Amaravati to facilitate a smooth registration process for farmers who received returnable plots.

Continued on Page 2

Seven killed as APSRTC bus rams auto

CM announces Rs 5L ex gratia to kin of victims

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A pall of gloom enveloped Ellutla village in Anantapur district following a road accident that claimed seven lives. The incident occurred near Thalegachipalli Cross in Garladinne Mandal when an RTC bus rammed an auto-rickshaw carrying agricultural labourers.

The victims, who were returning home after a day's work in the fields, were travelling in the auto when the collision occurred. While two people died on the spot, five others succumbed to their injuries during treatment at a hospital. Six more passengers sustained critical injuries and are undergoing treatment, with some reported to be in serious condition.

The deceased have been identified as Tataiah (55), Ramajanamma (48), Chinna Nagamma (48), Pedda Nagamma (60), Jayaramudu, Chinna Naganna, and Kondagamma, all residents of Ellutla village in Putlur Mandal.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday expressed shock and deep regret over a tragic road accident in Anantapur district, which claimed the lives of seven daily wage earners.

Announcing Rs 5 lakh as ex gratia for each bereaved family, the Chief Minister assured them of the State government's support. He directed district officials to ensure that the injured receive the best possible medical care.

State Transport, Youth, and Sports Minister Mandipalli Rampasad Reddy has expressed grief over the road accident.

Jayamangala quits YSRCP membership, MLC post

PNS ■ ELURU

In a setback for the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) in Eluru district, former MLA Jayamangala Venkataramana has resigned from both the party membership and his MLC post. He submitted his resignation in the prescribed Speaker format on Saturday. Addressing the media at his residence in Atapaka village, Kaikaluru mandal, Venkataramana expressed his dissatisfaction with the party's functioning and his inability to serve the public effectively while holding the MLC position.

"I have always been committed to serving the people, even when I held no position. If I cannot serve while in office, there is no point in continuing. Public service is my ultimate goal," he said.

Venkataramana criticised Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, alleging that despite raising public issues with the government during his tenure, he was not even granted an appointment, leaving him feeling humiliated. He also accused party leaders of ignoring public welfare during their time in the opposition and failing to address people's issues adequately.

Continued on Page 2

BRIBERY CASE

US SEC summons Gautam Adani, nephew

PNS ■ NEW YORK

Adani group founder and chairman Gautam Adani and his nephew Sagar have been summoned to explain their stand on the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) allegation of paying USD 265 million (Rs 2,200 crore) in bribes to secure lucrative solar power contracts.

Summons have been sent to Adani's Shantivan Farm residence in Ahmedabad and his nephew Sagar's Bodakdev residence in the same city for a reply to SEC within 21 days.

"Within 21 days after service of this summons on you (not counting the day you received it)...you must serve on the plaintiff (SEC) an answer to the attached complaint or a motion under Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure," said a November 21 notice sent through the New York Eastern District Court.

"If you fail to respond, judgment by default will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint. You also must file your answer or motion with the court," it added.

Gautam Adani, 62, and seven other defendants, including his nephew Sagar, who is a director at the group's renewable energy unit Adani Green Energy Ltd, allegedly agreed to pay about USD 265 million in bribes to Indian government officials between approximately 2020 and 2024 to obtain lucrative solar energy supply contracts on terms that expected to yield USD 2 billion of profit over 20 years, according to an indictment unsealed in a New York court on Wednesday.

Separate from the indictment brought by the US Department of Justice, the US SEC has also charged the two and Cyril Cabanes, an executive of Azure Power Global, for "conduct arising out of a massive bribery scheme.

Continued on Page 2

AP, TG & K'taka okay change of Tungabhadra dam gates

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The governments of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana have accepted the Tungabhadra Board's proposal to change the gates of the Tungabhadra Dam.

The Board has also accepted Telangana proposal to ensure that the storage capacity of the dam does not increase after increasing the height of the gates.

Member Secretary ORK Reddy presented the report of the expert committee on installing new gates at the Board meeting.

The authorities of the three states approved this, and they decided to change the gates in a phased manner.

DESPITE AVAILABILITY OF ADEQUATE WATER....

Farmers in Krishna Delta advised against Rabi paddy

Unexpected rains or water shortages during growing season behind recommendation

DASARI SRINIVASA RAO
ds0456@gmail.com
■ VIJAYAWADA

The final decision on water allocations and the feasibility of cultivating paddy will depend on the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) meeting scheduled for November 27. The board will review water availability in Krishna River reservoirs and assess quotas for AP and Telangana. Despite the current adequate water levels in reservoirs and irrigation tanks, WRD officials remain firm that alternative crops are the best option for farmers this Rabi season.

The Water Resources Department (WRD) has advised farmers along the Krishna River to grow alternative crops like maize, green gram, black gram, red gram, and jowar during the Rabi season, instead of paddy. Officials said that this recommendation aims to prevent potential losses caused by unexpected rains or water shortages during the growing season.

The final decision on water allocations and the feasibility of cultivating paddy will depend on the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) meeting scheduled for November 27. The board will review water availability in Krishna River reservoirs and assess quotas for Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Meanwhile, farmers in the Krishna Delta have already begun preparations for Rabi paddy cultivation, hoping to recover from the losses caused by unexpected floods during the Kharif season.

WRD officials stated that while around 250 TMCs of water are available in the Srisailam and Nagarjuna Sagar reservoirs, only 114 TMCs can be used. This will be allocated to late Kharif paddy, seedbed preparation for the next Kharif season, and drinking water needs in the Krishna Delta. As a result, they clarified that there would be no water for Rabi paddy.

The Pulichintala Project has 43 TMCs of water. Hence, WRD has urged farmers in Krishna, Guntur, West Godavari, and Prakasam districts to avoid Rabi paddy cultivation to avoid water shortages.

Farmers, however, have appealed to the government, pointing out the significant damage to lakhs of acres of Kharif paddy due to floods. They argue that allowing Rabi paddy cultivation could help them recover from these losses.

During this water year, 127.36 TMCs of water have been utilised in the Krishna Delta, compared to 103.86 TMCs last year. Heavy floods caused 868.36 TMCs of surplus water to flow into the sea.

Despite the current adequate water levels in reservoirs and irrigation tanks, WRD officials remain firm that alternative crops are the best option for farmers this Rabi season.

OBTUSE ANGLE

People *bindaas* amid political rumbles

REPORTERS' DIARY

Even as the Congress government in Telangana is set to complete one year shortly, the ongoing pitched battle between the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) and the ruling party continues to heat up the political scene with both parties striving to dominate each other with competitive political narratives. While BRS relentlessly highlights new issues and the Congress makes attempts to counter them, the ground reality tells a different story. For the common people, politics seems to be the least of their concerns. They are *bindaas*. Only a few topics spurred interest and that too among impacted sections of the public, such as HYDRAA operations, introduction of free bus services, and the revisiting of restrictions on alcohol following raids in Janwada. Beyond these, life in Telangana moves on unhindered with affected sections deterred. Whether it's business along the banks of the Musi River or other bustling areas of the Telangana, daily routines remain unchanged. Reports from intelligence wings, mirroring observations on the ground, suggest that the public has had their fill of politics after last year's intense campaigning. Conversations among aam janata have shifted away from political debates, with most preferring to focus on issues concerning everyday life that outweigh sparring between the parties. It looks like only political heavyweights are boxing in the ring with hardly any spectators, let alone seekers of ringside view.

Kalvakuntlas in awe of media-savvy Kavitha

When it comes to media management, no one in the Kalvakuntla family can hold a candle to Bharat Rashtra Samithi MLC K Kavitha. With a strong grip on both national and state media networks, Kavitha is said to be the go-to person whenever the family needs to polish any fading side of its public image. It is an open secret that whenever party working president KT Rama Rao visits Delhi, he latches on to Kavitha's well-oiled media networks to ensure seamless coverage. The buzz is that Kavitha doesn't just understand what clicks with the media but also commands its respect. Her courteous and professional approach with journalists has earned her goodwill that the rest of the family could only dream of. "The rest of the Kalvakuntlas should probably enrol in Kavitha's school of how to treat journalists. She has figured out that they're just doing their job," observed a senior scribe chuckling. Kavitha stands out in the family as one who knows how to handle media gingerly without ruffling any feathers.

When scribes bomb(ard)ed Ponguleti with questions!

Revenue, Housing, Information and Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, having claimed quite tantalizingly much before Diwali that Telangana will witness some 'political bombs', has now become the butt of banter with Secretariat beat reporters calling him 'Bombs Minister'. That is not all. Every time he interacts with the media, the question that is at the top of the mind of every scribe is: "When will it (political bomb) go off?" At a recent presser, when scribes bombarded him with loaded questions, the Minister, aware that Diwali has passed without any major political fireworks, sheepishly countered: "Are you not seeing 'political bombs' these days?" When newshounds denied seeing anything other than the less appealing Diwali bombs, Srinivas Reddy said that the political bombs will certainly go off at an appropriate time, and added a teaser again: "most probably within a week". Tired of the 'impending' political bombs, one of the scribes asked him: 'Why did your old friend (KTR) go to Delhi sir?' Caught off-guard, the Minister replied: "I don't know why he (KTR) went to Delhi; perhaps, to protect himself from police arrest". Then scribes together asked the Minister to tell when 'it' will happen. Srinivas Reddy reiterated "at an appropriate time". One of the scribes responded, saying: "We have to write on walls saying 'very soon'."

Bhatti outshines Revanth: Is AICC watching?

Following victories in elections, 'star' campaigners of political parties twinkle brightest in the blaze of glory that envelops winning parties. It is a different matter whether the star campaigner of the winning party did it or the star campaigner of the losing party did not do it. Whatever it be, Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka has just emerged as a star performer within the state unit of the Congress after his campaigning efforts in Jharkhand, where INDIA bloc has registered a resounding victory. His active role in steering the campaign there is factored for the much-needed boost that the alliance got in the state against odds. In 'striking' contrast, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, who had jumped on the campaign bandwagon in Maharashtra, has nothing to crow about, since the Maha Vikas Aghadi is licking its wounds. The differing stellar pulsation of the 'star campaigners' from Telangana has not gone unnoticed, especially within media and political circles. Amid whispers of a rekindled leadership tussle, all eyes are on the party's high command which tracks performance metrics. Whether the high command will factor in performance beyond the state's borders to disturb the dangerously delicate equation within Telangana is another question that only time will answer.

(With inputs from Naveena Ghanate and K Venkateshwarlu)

Restore AP's ties with Singapore: CM to officials

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu directed officials to resume engagement with the Singapore government with confidence-building measures and restore severed ties, which he alleged were broken during the YSRCP regime.

The chief minister directed the bureaucrats to meet the officials of the Southeast Asian city-state to explain what transpired between 2019 and 2024 and to 'revive the lost goodwill'.

"Meet Singapore government to restore faith, explain what happened, take action to correct the course for building mutual trust and revive earlier engagement," said an official press release, quoting the CM. According to Naidu, the southern state lost respect at the international level and its brand image was hurt due to the alleged arbitrary annulment of agreements by the erstwhile YSRCP regime headed by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Voters' special camps successful: CEO

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Vivek Yadav has expressed satisfaction with the successful organisation of Voters' Special Camps as part of the Special Summary Revision (SSR) 2025. He emphasised the Election Commission of India's (ECI) commitment to ensuring accurate and transparent voter lists in the State.

Addressing the media, the CEO stated that the draft voter list was published on October 29, and the process for objections, corrections, and new registrations would continue until November 28. As part of this initiative, special camps are being held on November 23 and 24.

On Saturday, Vivek Yadav visited camps in the Vijayawada East and Central Assembly constituencies, including those at Bishop Azariah Girls' High School and Montessori Degree College. During his inspection, he reviewed online voter registration processes and guided Booth Level Officers (BLOs), supervisors, and Assistant Electoral Officers.

Speaking on the occasion, he encouraged youths aged 18 and 19 to register as voters and urged political party leaders and booth-level agents to actively motivate young citizens to enrol.

He further stated that all submissions, including objections and new applications, would be thoroughly verified, with the final electoral roll set to be published on January 6, 2025. Changes and objections would be addressed by December 24, he added.

Vijayawada Municipal Commissioner H.M. Dhyanachandra, Vijayawada Divisional Revenue Officer (RDO) K. Chaitanya, and other officials were present during the inspections.

Coalition govt accused of 'vindictive politics'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) has accused the coalition government of indulging in "vindictive politics" by targeting social media activists and their families. The party alleged that the ruling government is misusing the police to harass critics of its policies.

Addressing the media on Saturday, YSRCP Legal Cell president M Manohar Reddy claimed that police were acting under political directives, filing multiple cases against social media activists and detaining their family members without proper access to jails. He referred to the police's actions as a "special drive" and alleged that activists were being arrested and detained illegally, bypassing due legal procedures.Manohar Reddy stated that activists were being booked under serious charges, with some facing up to 30 cases each.

He added that nearly 300 activists had been detained, many with cases registered in multiple police stations.

He also criticised the lack of transparency, alleging that activists were not being provided copies of FIRs or remand reports and were frequently moved between police stations.He further accused the police of leniency towards objectionable posts from the Telugu Desam Party's (TDP) IT wing, claiming no action was taken in such cases. Reddy alleged that individuals who had filed cases against TDP members during the previous regime were now being coerced to withdraw their complaints.

The YSRCP leader charged the coalition government with attempting to silence dissent and evade accountability for unfulfilled election promises. He warned that continued harassment of social media activists could lead to political repercussions for the ruling coalition.

These allegations underscore the widening political rift, with law enforcement allegedly being weaponised to target opponents, party leaders observed.

Pawan's 'Sanatana Dharma' campaign impacts Maha polls

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In the recent Maharashtra elections, Andhra Pradesh's Deputy Chief Minister, Pawan Kalyan, proved his political acumen as a key campaigner for the BJP. He actively participated in electioneering across five constituencies, and in every constituency where he campaigned, the BJP emerged victorious. His influence, however, was not limited to these areas. Pawan Kalyan's advocacy for Sanatan Dharma resonated across Maharashtra, marking a significant shift beyond the Telugu-speaking states. His efforts garnered national attention, with discussions in the media throughout the weekend on his impact in Maharashtra.

Pawan Kalyan's influence was instrumental in the success of the NDA (National Democratic Alliance), which includes the BJP, Shiv Sena, and NCP (Ajit Pawar faction). In the Maharashtra assembly elections, the NDA coalition comfortably surpassed the 215-seat mark, while the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), comprising Congress, Shiv Sena, and NCP (Sharad Pawar faction), was restricted to a lead in just 58 constituencies. By evening, the final results confirmed the NDA's victory, securing 224 seats— a remarkable improvement over the BJP's 105 seats in the 2019 elections. Political analysts have attributed this shift to Pawan Kalyan's strategic campaigning and influence.

After the success of the BJP-TDP-Jana Sena alliance in Andhra Pradesh, Pawan Kalyan has increasingly positioned himself as a strong advocate of Sanatan Dharma, especially following his involvement in the Tirupati Laddu controversy. His Maharashtra election campaign focused on the protection of Hinduism, the importance of Dharma, and a call for national pride.

Pawan Kalyan has never hesitated to voice his views on critical national issues, often without waiting for directives. He brought up topics like the abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir, the significance of Sanatan Dharma, and the Ram Mandir issue, which were less emphasised by BJP leaders. In Maharashtra, he also drew parallels between the region and the legacy of Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji, urging the Marathi populace to support the BJP for a brighter future. He expressed deep admiration for Bal Thackeray and highlighted the ideological similarities between Shiv Sena and Jana Sena.

His statements regarding the political climate in Telangana and Hyderabad also created a stir, particularly his caution about provocative remarks from certain leaders in Hyderabad. These speeches generated widespread discussion across the political spectrum, solidifying Pawan Kalyan's position as a key national leader.0

Jayamangala...

Continued from Page 1

Recalling his earlier struggles, Venkataramana alleged that he was even attacked by YSRCP leaders when they were in opposition. However, he chose to join the party, hoping for positive change, but claimed that he was never treated fairly.

Highlighting his efforts to address the problems of the Kolleru region, he stated, "I tirelessly tried to bring Kolleru's issues to the attention of the Chief Minister. Despite repeated attempts, I was denied an audience and was instead told to approach others like Dharmana Krishna Das and Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy, who never resolved my concerns."

AU-based space-tech startup Taramandal shines on 'Forbes Select-200 List'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Taramandal Technologies, a pioneering space-tech startup from Visakhapatnam, has earned a spot on the prestigious Forbes India and D-Globalist #Select-200 list for 2024. This international recognition celebrates startups with exceptional global business potential, innovation, and prospects for expansion.

Out of thousands of nominations worldwide, only 200 startups made the cut, and Taramandal Technologies stands out as the sole representative from Andhra Pradesh. It is also the only startup focused on satellite technology to feature on this elite list.

The recognition underscores Taramandal's trailblazing efforts in developing sustainable satellite technologies aimed at achieving net-zero orbits while addressing the global challenge of space debris.

Speaking about this milestone, A. Vineel Judson, Founder & CEO of Taramandal Technologies, said: "Being featured among Forbes India D-Globalist Entrepreneur Mobility Summit (DGEMS) 2024 Select 200 Entrepreneurs is both a privilege and a responsibility. This recognition reinforces our vision to create sustainable, accessible, and futuristic solutions for space missions. It is not just a milestone for Taramandal but a moment of pride for Andhra Pradesh. As we say, 'Make in Vizag for the World.'"

Taramandal's inclusion highlights its relentless commitment to innovation and excellence in satellite technology. Co-founder Dr. D. Rajesh emphasized the startup's goal of fostering global collaborations: "This accolade motivates us to push the boundaries of what's possible in space technology while positioning Andhra Pradesh as a hub for cutting-edge space innovations."

Founded in 2023 by a team of alumni from Andhra University, including A. Vineel Judson, Dr. D. Rajesh, N. Ramajayalakshmi, Dr. M. Goutham, and T. Neelakanteswara Reddy, Taramandal is mentored by Prof. P. Mallikarjuna Rao. The team has been working on revolutionary satellite solutions, placing sustainability and global scalability at the forefront of their mission.

The Forbes India DGEMS Select 200 Entrepreneurs list celebrates individuals and teams with extraordinary vision and perseverance. For Taramandal Technologies, this honour marks the beginning of a new chapter. The startup plans to leverage this recognition to accelerate its international collaborations and expand operations globally, attracting talent and investment to Andhra Pradesh.

US SEC summons...

Continued from Page 1

The ports-to-energy conglomerate has denied the allegations and said it will seek all possible legal resources. "The Adani Group has always upheld and is steadfastly committed to maintaining the highest standards of governance, transparency and regulatory compliance across all jurisdictions of its operations. We assure our stakeholders, partners and employees that we are a law-abiding organisation fully compliant with all laws."

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Sukla Paksha
Tithi:	
Chaturthi:	Nov 23 07:25 PM to Nov 24 09:22 PM
Panchami:	Nov 24 09:22 PM to Nov 25 10:57 PM
Nakshatram:	
Purva Ashadha:	Nov 23 07:27 PM to Nov 24 09:53 PM
Uttara Ashadha:	Nov 24 09:53 PM to Nov 25 11:57 PM
Rahukalam:	7:53 AM to 9:16 AM
Yamagandam:	10:39 AM to 12:02 PM
Varjyam:	06:34 AM to 08:19 AM
Gulika:	1:26 PM to 2:49 PM
Amritakalam:	04:36 PM to 06:22 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	11:40 AM to 12:25 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy
Temp: 32°C
Humidity: 60%
Sunrise: 6:16 AM
Sunset: 5:32 PM

Updated: November 23, 2024 5:00 PM

Amaravati...

Continued from Page 1

Farmers who won the lottery and received provisional certificates were advised to visit the relevant registration centres within a week to complete their registration. Naveen assured that land allocation to farmers would be carried out in phases, as per the land pooling scheme.

The e-lottery was conducted through an online random system, with a trial run for residential and commercial plots before the actual lottery. APCRDA also appointed GIS staff and village surveyors to help farmers understand the geographical location of their allotted plots.

Narasapur lace gets GI status

PNS ■ NARASAPUR

In a proud moment for the artisans of West Godavari district, the renowned Narasapur crochet lace products have been awarded the coveted Geographical Indication (GI) status. This recognition not only highlights the intricate craftsmanship of the region but also secures a brighter future for thousands of handloom workers who have dedicated their lives to preserving this traditional art.

District Collector Ch Nagarani, sharing the news, announced that a grand event would be held in New Delhi on November 25 to promote GI-certified products. Organised by the Ministry of Textiles, this event will showcase the finest creations, including Narasapur Lace, as part of India's efforts to support indigenous crafts.

"Narasapur Lace is now one of only eight handloom products in the country to achieve this honour," the Collector stated, adding that the recognition is expected to boost market opportunities and provide stable support for artisans.

The upcoming event in New Delhi, held in collaboration with the Handloom Export Promotion Council (HEPC), includes a one-day international conference featuring over 70 GI-tagged products. A special workshop will highlight handicrafts, and discussions will focus on post-GI strategies and plans for the future development of these unique products.

Dignitaries, exporters, and representatives from various organisations, including the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), are expected to attend. The event promises to spotlight the significance of GI certification in preserving traditional arts and fostering economic growth for artisans.

BJP's Maha 'tsunami', INDIA...

Continued from Page 1

The prime minister also asserted that the message from the Maharashtra elections is that of unity and it is also an endorsement of the "ek hai toh safe hai" (united we are safe) slogan.

The BJP's stellar showing also came just months after it was written off in Maharashtra by some political pundits owing to its poor showing in the politically significant state in the Lok Sabha polls.

In the first assembly elections in Maharashtra since the split in the Shiv Sena and the NCP, Shiv Sena(Shinde) bagged 56 and led in one and the NCP(Ajit Pawar) 40 and ahead in one. The majority mark in the 288-member Assembly is 145. The Shiv Sena(Shinde) fought from 81 seats and the Ajit Pawar-led NCP in 59 constituencies.

The BJP's highest tally in Assembly elections in Maharashtra was in 2014 when it bagged 122 seats after which Fadnavis became the chief minister for the first time. In 2019, it got 105 seats.

The extent of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) decimation can be gauged from the fact that the Congress won just 13 and was ahead in three, the Shiv Sena(UBT) in 20 and the NCP(Sharad Pawar) in 10.

Message of development...

Continued from Page 1

Modi also said he bows down before the people of Jharkhand and that the BJP will work more zealously for the development of the state.

"'Ek hai toh safe hai' has become the 'maha-mantra' for the entire nation and it has punished those who wanted to divide the country on caste and religious lines," he said, adding that all sections of the society have voted for the BJP.

"The Congress and its ecosystem had thought that by spreading lies in the name of the Constitution, they could divide the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) in small groups. This is a solid slap on their faces," he said.

"People have made divisive forces bite the dust. The Congress and its allies have failed to grasp the changed realities of the country's mood," the prime minister added.

Priyanka bags Wayanad...

Continued from Page 1

In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls in Wayanad, CPI's Annie Raja had secured second place with 2,83,023 votes, while BJP's K. Surendran finished third with 1,41,045 votes.

However, both fronts were unable to replicate their performance in the bypoll, despite a reduced voter turnout in the hill constituency. Mokeri got 2,11,407 and BJP-led NDA's Navya Haridas came third with 1,09,939 votes.

Close to the announcement of the final counting results, Priyanka, in a post on social media platform X, thanked the people of Wayanad for electing her as their representative to the Parliament. "My dearest sisters and brothers of Wayanad, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the trust you have placed in me. I will make sure that over time, you truly feel this victory has been your victory and the person you chose to represent you understands your hopes and dreams and fights for you as one of your own.

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Elections to WUAs rescheduled

Notification to be issued on December 5

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has announced a revised schedule for elections to the Water Users' Associations (WUAs). The Water Resources Department (WRD) will issue the election notification across the 13 erstwhile districts on December 5.

According to the new schedule, elections for the members of the Territorial Constituencies (TCs) and for the positions of President and Vice President of WUAs will be held on December 8. Elections for Distributary Committees (DCs) will follow on December 11, while elections for the Project Committees (PCs) are scheduled for December 14.

As per WRD officials, the elections will cover 6,149 WUAs, 245 Distributary Committees, and 53 Project Committees across the state. Of these, 1,755 WUAs fall under Major Irrigation, comprising 21,060 TCs. Additionally, 266 WUAs under Medium Irrigation account for 3,192 TCs, while Minor Irrigation includes 4,128 WUAs with 24,768 TCs. The state has an Ayacut area of 71.11 lakh acres, under which the WRD has formed a total of 49,020 Territorial Constituencies.

Officials also confirmed that 18 Project Committees under Major Irrigation and 35 under Medium Irrigation will be covered in the elections, which will be concluded by December 14.

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Vizag Junior Literary Fest off to an enthusiastic start

MP Sribharat inaugurates the two-day celebration of creativity and storytelling, encourages young minds to embrace the joy of reading

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The fifth edition of the Vizag Junior Literary Festival kicked off on Saturday at Hawa Mahal, with Member of Parliament M Sribharat inaugurating the event amidst an eager audience of children, parents, authors, and storytellers. This two-day festival, a celebrated event in the city, seeks to promote literary culture among young minds with an impressive line-up of over 80 sessions, including creative writing workshops, storytelling performances, theatre presentations, illustrator workshops, and book signings by renowned authors.

Addressing the audience during the inauguration, MP Sribharat shared a personal anecdote about his journey with books. "My love for reading began when I was 12, with Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. That book sparked a lifelong love for stories, opening doors to new worlds, keeping me company in solitude, and significantly improving my communication and language skills," he said.

He further encouraged parents and children to make reading a daily priority. "Books foster imagination, improve focus, and provide an excellent avenue for quality parent-child interaction, all while helping reduce overexposure to screens," he noted, stressing the transformative power of books in shaping young minds.

The festival brings together celebrated storytellers, authors, and illustrators from across India to inspire creativity and nurture the next generation of readers and writers in Visakhapatnam. Organizers aim to create an environment where young literary enthusiasts can explore and grow through interactive and engaging sessions.

MP Sribharat congratulated the festival organizers for their unwavering commitment to making literature accessible and enjoyable for young audiences. Taking a moment to interact with the children and authors present, he encouraged them to immerse themselves in the rich world of stories and cultivate a lifelong reading habit. The Vizag Junior Literary Festival continues tomorrow with a range of exciting activities and promises to leave a lasting impact on Visakhapatnam's young readers and aspiring storytellers.

AP Chambers Business Expo 2024 from Nov 29, CM to Inaugurate

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry Federation (AP Chambers) will organise the AP Chambers Business Expo 2024 from November 29 to December 1 at SS Convention in Vijayawada. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu will inaugurate the event, while Minister for HRD, IT, Communications, and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, will attend the valedictory session on December 1.

AP Chambers President P Bhaskar Rao announced that the Expo will feature stalls from leading corporate companies, MSMEs, and government departments, showcasing a multi-sectoral representation. "All stalls have been fully booked, reflecting the enthusiastic response from participants. Key corporate sponsors such as Nexgen Feeds Pvt. Ltd., SBI, Kumar Pumps, AM Green Ammonia (I) Pvt. Ltd., SLV Group, Krishna Milk Union, Sri City, and Continental Coffee have extended their support," he said.

With the theme Connect, Build, Grow, the Expo is expected to attract around 20,000 visitors over three days, serving as a platform for networking, partnerships, and showcasing Andhra Pradesh's potential as a business hub.

General Secretary B Rajasekhar highlighted that the event will include sector-specific seminars, cultural programmes, and competitions to engage visitors. A lucky draw will be held thrice daily, offering attendees the chance to win exciting prizes. Evening performances will feature local talent and competitions.

Government participation will include key departments like the AP Food Processing Society, AP Girijan Cooperative Corporation, APTDC, SIDBI, and NABARD, highlighting state and central government initiatives for business and entrepreneurship. Former Presidents M Murali Krishna and KVS Prakash Rao, along with Business Expo Committee members Tarun Kakani, B Phani Chandra, G Radhika, D Aparna, and A Satyanarayana, were present at the briefing.

Rs 2.02 cr donated for TTD Trusts

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

Vardhaman Jain, a devotee from Chennai donated Rs 1.01 crore each to TTD SV Prasadam Trust and SV Annaprasadam Trust on Saturday.

To that extent, the donor handed over the DDs to TTD Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdary in the presence of Vyasaraja Mutt Pontiff Sri Sri Vidyasrisha Theertha Swamiji at Srivari Temple.

MAHA POLL VICTORY

Purandeswari congratulates PM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BJP State president and MP Daggubati Purandeswari expressed happiness over the NDA victory in the Maharashtra elections. On arrival at the Gannavaram International Airport, she spoke to the media persons on Saturday and congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the NDA alliance for their resounding victory in the Maharashtra elections. She said the party would review the reasons behind the BJP alliance's narrow defeat in Jharkhand.

Purandeswari also addressed the pre-election speculations that the NDA coalition, including BJP, would lose in Maharashtra. She said that the people of Maharashtra have blessed the BJP-led NDA government, which stands in contrast to the "divide and rule" policy of the Congress-led INDIA alliance. She further stated that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country would not only develop but also remain secure.

Advocates stage massive protest against law student's gang-rape

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a resounding display of unity and outrage, the Visakhapatnam Bar Association, led by its president Bevara Satyanarayana, staged a massive dharna in front of the court gate on Saturday. The protest was organized to demand strict and immediate action against the accused in the recent gang-rape of a law student, an incident that has sparked widespread condemnation.

The advocates, deeply moved by the brutality of the crime, raised slogans and took a firm stance, declaring they would not represent the accused in court. Addressing the gathering, Bevara Satyanarayana expressed profound anguish over the incident, stating: "It is extremely unfortunate that a law student, who represents the future of justice in our country, was subjected to such brutality. We demand that the government and police ensure such incidents do not happen to any woman in the future."

He further called for a thorough investigation and swift justice for the victim, emphasizing the Association's resolve to support the victim's family. "On behalf of the Bar Association, we will extend full legal assistance to the victim's family. We also resolve to ensure no lawyer defends or files a bail petition for the accused," he asserted.

Senior advocate J. Prithviraj echoed these sentiments, stressing the need for stringent punishment. "Women deserve respect and safety in society. Those responsible for this act should face the harshest punishment without delay," he said. The protest witnessed active participation from prominent advocates, including T. Srirama Murthy, Ramanjaneyulu, D. Padma Rani, and B. Lakshmi Rambabu, all of whom expressed their collective outrage and pledged unwavering support to the victim. The Visakhapatnam Bar Associa tion's resolute stand sends a powerful message about the legal fraternity's zero-tolerance stance on crimes against women and its commitment to justice.

The advocates, deeply moved by the brutality of the crime, raised slogans and took a firm stance, declaring they would not represent the accused in court

'Bal Vivah Mukt Bharat' initiative to eradicate child marriage

PNS ■ PARVATHIPURAM

District Collector A Shyam Prasad has announced the large-scale implementation of the Bal Vivah Mukt Bharat (Child Marriage Free India) initiative in the district. The programme, aimed at creating awareness and eradicating child marriage, will be launched on November 27 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, by the Union Minister for Women and Child Development.

In a statement issued on Saturday, Collector Shyam Prasad described child marriage as a grave violation of human rights. He emphasised the government's commitment to a 'whole government' and 'whole society' approach in addressing the issue, which is seen as a major barrier to achieving the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India) outlined by the Prime Minister.

The initiative will be implemented under the Andhra Pradesh Child Marriage Prohibition Rules, 2023, which mandate the appointment of Child Marriage Prevention Officers at various administrative levels. The District Collector will serve as the District Child Marriage Prevention Officer, supported by officers at divisional, mandal, village, and municipal levels.

Child Welfare Police Officers, as per the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, will oversee enforcement within their jurisdictions. Local enforcement will be handled by Panchayat Secretaries, Village Revenue Officers, and Municipal Ward Administrative Secretaries.

The Collector also announced the formation of Village/Ward Child Marriage Prohibition and Monitoring Committees, comprising local leaders, school officials, self-help group members, Panchayat representatives, NGOs, and youth organisations. Highlighting the importance of community involvement, the Collector called on women self-help groups, Anganwadi and ASHA workers, police, health professionals, and community leaders to actively support the campaign. "Parents, adolescent girls, religious heads, and all child marriage prevention officers must take a pledge to eliminate child marriage from society," he urged.

The district's formal launch of the programme is scheduled for 2:30 pm on November 27, with hopes of fostering widespread awareness and ensuring a society free from child marriages.

Entrepreneurship Bootcamp 2.0 held at SRM-AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

SRM University-AP successfully concluded its Entrepreneurship Bootcamp 2.0 with an energetic Demo Day at its Amaravati campus. The ten-week programme, aimed at nurturing innovation among students, ended with participants presenting their creative business ideas and strategies.

Participants showcased their innovative business models and go-to-market plans to a panel of mentors and investors, who provided valuable feedback to help refine their ideas. Addressing the budding entrepreneurs, Sreedevi praised their efforts, saying, "You have shown the drive and passion of true start-ups. Keep that fire alive."

The boot camp, curated by Prof Sidharth Tripathy, a Harvard alumnus and Director of Entrepreneurship & Innovation at SRM-AP, trained 85 participants selected from over 356 applicants. It featured 14 interactive sessions covering key aspects such as ideation, business modelling, and market strategy, with guidance from global experts and real-world case studies.

The Demo Day panel included notable figures such as Cyrus Choi from Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Lalith Mitra Reddy Kolli from Hyderabad Angels, Samridh Seth from Black Komodo Investments, and Udayan Bakshi, Associate Director of Entrepreneurship & Innovation. Other mentors included Dr Krovi Raja Sekhar, CEO of Hatchlab Research Centre, and Pankaj Belwariar, Director of Communications at SRM-AP. The event highlighted the university's commitment to fostering entrepreneurial talent.

Srikakulam Police deploy drones to tackle ganja menace and crime

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

In a bid to combat the rising menace of ganja transportation and other criminal activities, Srikakulam police have launched drone surveillance across the city and surrounding areas. This proactive measure comes in response to the alarming increase in ganja-related offences during the previous regime, as well as the surge in cases following the formation of the NDA government in the state.

Senior police officials revealed that organised gangs were operating in hotspots like the Nagavali River, nearby rivulets, canals, open spaces, and bridges, turning these areas into hubs for illegal ganja trade. These activities posed a significant risk, particularly to the youth of the region.

"The ganja menace is not just about illegal transportation; it is claiming lives and destroying the future of our youth. Preventing it is crucial, and drone technology is proving to be a game-changer in this fight," said a senior officer leading the operation. Equipped to monitor suspicious activities in real time, the drones enable swift action to apprehend offenders. The initiative has already resulted in a significant increase in ganja seizures, highlighting the effectiveness of the new measures.

The police have expanded the use of drones to address a variety of issues, including preventing thefts, group clashes, illegal sand storage, monitoring heavy vehicles on narrow roads, streamlining traffic to reduce road encroachments, tackling bike thefts and ATM break-ins, and managing the movement of stray animals on busy roads.

"With the introduction of drones, we can maintain real-time monitoring and address offences more efficiently. This will not only curb illegal activities but also enhance the overall safety and quality of life in Srikakulam," added another senior officer.

This initiative reflects the police department's commitment to community safety and its zero-tolerance approach to the ganja menace. Authorities are determined to protect the region's youth and create a crime-free environment through technology-driven policing. "Our focus is not just enforcement but prevention. Drones give us the edge to act decisively and protect vulnerable sections of society," said a top police official.

Strict action against colleges withholding hall tickets

PNS ■ ELURU

Eluru District Collector K Vetriselvi has warned all district Intermediate, degree, and professional college managements and principals against withholding hall tickets or original certificates from students. She stated that any complaints of such practices, or excessive fee collection, would result in strict legal action against the institutions involved. Additionally, the recognition of such colleges could be revoked.

The Collector emphasised that all students who have applied on the 'Jnanabhumi' portal are entitled to fee reimbursement (RTF) and mess charges (MTF). College management and principals were instructed to immediately provide hall tickets and original certificates to students without subjecting them to harassment. Students facing issues with hall tickets or certificates can lodge complaints by contacting the District Collector's grievance cell at 9491041188, the Collector added.

Jagan condoles death of 7 persons in road mishap

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP President and former Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has expressed grief over the tragic road accident in Anantapur district, which resulted in the loss of seven lives. The incident took place near Talagasipalle village in Garladinne mandal, when an RTC bus collided with an auto rickshaw carrying daily wage workers on their way to work.

In his heartfelt message, YS Jagan described the accident as a devastating tragedy for the affected families. He called for immediate intervention from the government to provide financial assistance and ensure the welfare of the bereaved families.

YS Jagan also emphasised the importance of delivering prompt and high-quality medical care to those injured in the accident.

'Kishori Vikas' training programme inaugurated

Focus on empowering adolescent girls by embracing awareness of constitutional rights

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

The district-level 'Kishori Vikas' training programme aimed at empowering adolescent girls was inaugurated at the Prakash Nagar Dharma Chara Community Hall here on Saturday. The event witnessed participation from prominent dignitaries, including District Principal Judge Gandham Sunitha, District Collector P Prasanti, and SP D Narasimha Kishore.

In her address, Principal Judge Gandham Sunitha highlighted the programme's role in educating girls about their constitutional rights and responsibilities. She stressed the importance of creating awareness about legal and welfare initiatives for women, especially for those from poor backgrounds. She assured that the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) would ensure access to appropriate legal aid for those in need.

Collector P Prasanti emphasised the programme's potential to lay a foundation for a bright and healthy future for adolescent girls. She urged officials to work collaboratively to make the initiative successful, ensuring the holistic development and economic independence of young women.

SP D Narasimha Kishore noted the importance of equipping adolescent girls with the awareness to avoid exploitation. He also detailed the district's "Mahila Rakshak" initiative, which provides robust support for women and has received a positive response.

The programme aims to create awareness about social issues such as dowry deaths, child marriages, and domestic violence, helping young women tackle these challenges effectively. Training sessions will educate girls on recognising "good touch" and "bad touch" and instil confidence and courage. The training will also engage village-level groups, each comprising 10 to 15 girls, guided by master trainers. Weekly reviews of issues reported through the grievance redressal system (PGRS) will be coordinated with the police for swift resolution.

Officials, including DLSA secretary K Prakash Babu, ICDS Project Officer K Vijayalakshmi, DEO K Vasudev Rao, and DMHO Dr K. Venkateswara Rao, shared insights on the initiative. The event also saw active participation from ICDS officers, child protection officials, students, and women from across the district.

This initiative underscores the commitment to fostering awareness, empowerment, and safety among adolescent girls in East Godavari district.

'Woman, son murdered'

Property dispute suspected to be the motive behind the double murder

PNS ■ MADDAVALLI

A gruesome double murder has sent shockwaves through Gannavaram village in Mandavalli mandal of, Eluru district. A 60-year-old woman and her 21-year-old son were found murdered near their residence early on Saturday.

The deceased have been identified as Royyuru Bhramaramba and her son Suresh, both residents of Gannavaram. According to locals, the two were found dead outside their home, prompting them to alert the police.

Mandavalli Sub-Inspector Ramachandra Rao arrived at the scene to initiate an investigation. Eluru DSP Sravan Kumar and CI Ravi Kumar, along with a clues team, conducted a detailed examination. Preliminary findings suggest that the duo was brutally murdered with a knife late on Thursday night.

DSP Sravan Kumar stated that property disputes within the family are suspected to be the motive behind the crime. The bodies were sent to the government hospital in Kaikaluru for post-mortem examination after completing formalities.

The chilling incident has left Gannavaram village in a state of fear and unrest. Police, assisted by sniffer dogs, conducted searches across the village to gather evidence, intensifying the sense of unease among residents. An investigation is going on, and police are working on leads to apprehend the culprits.

2 held with red sanders logs; car seized

PNS ■ KADAPA

Task Force police arrested two smugglers near Muddanur in Kadapa district on Saturday morning and seized 30 red sanders logs along with a car. The arrests were made as part of an operation directed by Tirupati district SP L Subbarayudu and supervised by Task Force SP P. Srinivas, informed DSP G Balireddy.

During a routine inspection near the Shettivaripalli Forest Beat in Muddanur mandal, a team led by RSI K Alli Basha and APBO P Supraja spotted persons loading red sanders logs into a car near abandoned houses. When the officers surrounded the suspects, several managed to flee, but two were apprehended.

The arrested smugglers have been identified as residents of the Kadapa district. The seized logs and the vehicle were handed over to the Tirupati Task Force police station, where an FIR was registered by SI Ch. Rafi, who has begun an investigation.

The Task Force is intensifying its vigilance against red sanders smuggling, which continues to pose a a big challenge in the region.

Vishnu terms CM's '2047 Vision' a fantasy

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP leader and former MLA Malladi Vishnu has sharply criticised Chandrababu Naidu's "Swarna Andhra 2047 Vision," calling it nothing more than a fantasy. Vishnu stated that the people of Andhra Pradesh were given power for just five years, and Naidu's focus on plans for 2047 is an irresponsible diversion from his current responsibilities. He accused Naidu's government of failing to provide essential services like education and healthcare and claimed that schemes such as Aarogyasri have lost their effectiveness under his leadership.

Vishnu further attacked Naidu's approach to poverty alleviation, accusing him of prioritising long-term goals over addressing immediate issues. He pointed out that under Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's leadership, poverty in the state had fallen from 11.77% in 2016 to 6.06%, thanks to welfare initiatives like Navaratnalu. He condemned Naidu for scrapping these programmes and harming the poor in the process.

Vishnu also criticised Naidu for dismissing 2.65 lakh volunteers after taking office, and for neglecting crucial projects such as the Polavaram dam. He accused Naidu of misleading the public with false promises, including his assurances of reducing electricity charges.

On the issue of waste management, Vishnu pointed out the government's failure to address the poor state of sanitation, questioning the focus on technology while the basic needs of the people, such as food, remain unmet. He concluded by saying that the people of Andhra Pradesh have grown disillusioned with Naidu's empty promises and are no longer willing to trust his leadership, recalling the failure of the Vision 2020 plan.

TTD EO asks officials to clear decade-old garbage in 3 months

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

TTD Executive Officer (EO) J Syamala Rao, accompanied by Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chaudhary, conducted a detailed inspection of several areas in Tirumala on Friday.

During their visit to the dumping yard at Kakulmanu Dibba near Gogarbham Reservoir, the EO directed officials to clear the decade-old accumulated garbage within three months. Speaking to the media, the EO revealed plans to remove one lakh metric tonnes of garbage that has accumulated in Tirumala over the past 30 years. Steps will also be taken to manage odour issues and ensure compliance with solid waste management regulations. Discussions have been held with Tirupati Municipal officials to facilitate the removal of garbage from the Tirumala dumping yard, with municipal teams already inspecting the site.

The EO assured that all garbage would be cleared within three to four months, and a scientific waste disposal system would be implemented thereafter. He added that the Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) biogas plant would help reduce wet waste, with 20,000 tonnes of compost already prepared from existing wet waste.

At Papavinasanam, the EO inspected facilities, including toilets, changing rooms, and parking areas, offering suggestions for improvements. He instructed forest officials to enhance parks and repaint signboards in the area. Toll receipts at the Papavinasanam toll gate were also reviewed.

Additionally, the EO inspected Akashganga Tirtha and directed the removal of shop encroachments on the stairway to facilitate smooth movement for devotees.

Key officials, including TTD Chief Engineer Satyanarayana, Executive Engineer Sudhakar, Transport GM Sesha Reddy, Deputy CFO Srinivas, Deputy EO Asha Jyoti, and VGO Surendra, were present during the inspections.

66th annual IMA meet stresses importance of knowledge updation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr NV Sundarachary, Principal of Guntur Medical College, stressed the importance for medical professionals to continually update their knowledge regarding modern diagnostic and treatment methods in the rapidly advancing field of medicine. Dr. Sundarachary delivered his remarks as the chief guest at the inauguration of the 66th annual Indian Medical Association (IMA) conference held at the GMCANA Auditorium, Guntur Medical College, in Guntur on Friday.

The conference was presided over by Dr Ch Visweshwara Rao, Scientific Committee Chairman. In his address, he lauded the efforts of the IMA Guntur branch for organising the annual event, highlighting the burgeoning research opportunities in the medical field and encouraging young doctors to engage in research on disease diagnosis and treatment methodologies.

During the session, Dr Ramana Yasaswi, Superin tendent of Guntur Government Hospital, emphasised the mandatory participation of doctors in Continuing Medical Education (CME) programmes to enhance patient care. He underscored the need to diagnose and treat diseases at early stages to prevent hospital admissions.

Dr M Varnikumar, a representative of the Andhra Pradesh Medical Council, remarked that physicians must earn 30 credit hours over five years, with six credits each year, for registration renewal.

Dr P Phanidar, IMA State secretary; Dr G Nanda Kishore, organising committee chairman; Dr T Sevakumar, organising secretary; Dr Y Subbarayudu, President of the Guntur IMA Branch; and Dr B Saikrishna, Secretary, among others.

Left asks CM not to take over lands forcibly from farmers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Left leaders Thammineni Veerabhadram and Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had responded positively to their request not to acquire lands forcibly in Lagacharla.

They said the Chief Minister responded positively when they requested him to remove police camps from Lagacharla. The CM made a phone call on the spot and directed the police to remove their camps from Lagacharla.

Speaking to the media after submitting a memorandum to the Chief Minister asking him to stop land acquisition in Lagacharla and to withdraw the cases filed against the farmers of Lagacharla, CPM state Secretary Thammineni Veerabhadram said they had explained facts to the Chief Minister and had told him that the government should not seize the lands of farmers forcibly. Thammineni said the CM told them that the government is going to set up an Industrial Park in Lagacharla and not Pharma City as it pollutes the environment.

"However, we appealed to the CM not to seize lands forcibly. The government should take over only excess lands or use government lands. The Chief Minister responded positively to that. We will visit Lagacharla again to infuse confidence among the villagers," Thammineni said.

61 YO cancer patient treated successfully

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A 61-year-old woman diagnosed with synchronous primary dual cancer affecting both the breast and uterus was successfully treated at the American Oncology Institute (AOI) in Mangalagiri. The rare case required a multidisciplinary approach, led by Dr N Subba Rao, Dr Kalyan Polavarapu, and Dr S Mani Kumar, with international tumour board consultation. Dr Polavarapu said that while both cancers are common individually, their simultaneous occurrence is extremely rare. The patient's successful recovery highlights the effectiveness of modern oncology, combining surgical, chemotherapy, and radiation therapies for a life-changing outcome.

Harish Trivedi, CEO of CTSI-South Asia, praised the role of precision medicine and AOI's expert care.

Ministers conduct surprise inspection at Gurukul school

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Social Welfare Minister DBV Swamy and Energy Minister G Ravi Kumar conducted a surprise inspection at the Girls' Gurukul School in Singarayakonda. The ministers reviewed the sanitary conditions, as well as the accommodation and dining facilities provided to the students.

During the inspection, they interacted with the students residing in the hostel, enquiring about the quality of food and accommodations. The ministers also asked the hostel authorities about the number of students staying in the hostel and their places of origin. Following their interactions, the ministers shared a meal with the students.

The ministers stressed the need to ensure robust accommodation facilities in the hostel and directed the authorities to implement the menu prescribed by the government for the students. They also assured that efforts would be made to provide water supply to the hostel from the Gundlakamma reservoir.

Furthermore, the ministers announced plans to build a separate building where parents could meet their children face-to-face. Taking into consideration the upcoming winter season, the ministers instructed the principal to take immediate action to provide hot water for the students.

Zipline, sky cycling, glass skywalk to come up at Kailasagiri

VMRDA has conducted trial runs for zipline and sky cycling

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority (VMRDA) is gearing up to revamp Kailasagiri Hill, introducing three new adventure attractions: a zipline, a sky cycling facility, and a glass skywalk bridge. These projects aim to enhance the hill's appeal as a top-tier tourist destination, offering thrilling experiences and unparalleled views of Visakhapatnam's coastline.

VMRDA has already conducted trial runs for the zipline and sky cycling, both developed under a public-private partnership (PPP) model at an estimated cost of Rs 5 crore. The urban authority will receive a monthly revenue share as part of the agreement. While the zipline and sky cycling are slated to open in the coming weeks, the glass skywalk bridge is expected to be completed within six months.

A senior VMRDA official said, "These initiatives are designed to offer a unique and adventurous experience to visitors, transforming Kailasagiri into a must-visit destination for families, adventure enthusiasts, and nature lovers alike."

In addition to these adventure facilities, VMRDA has proposed a high-end project featuring nature cottages, a revolving restaurant, and a beach-view café. The Rs 18-crore initiative, also under the PPP model, includes 20 eco-friendly nature cottages with landscaped surroundings, a 650-square-metre infinity pool, two exclusive view decks, and a multi-purpose meeting hall for up to 200 guests. The crown jewel will be a revolving fine-dining restaurant with seating for 100 and a beach-view café accommodating 60 guests.

A VMRDA representative added, "The aim is to combine adventure with luxury, providing tourists with the best of both worlds. The nature cottages and revolving restaurant will offer unique experiences that elevate the tourism potential of the region." The project is expected to be completed within 18 months after finalisation of tenders, with the financial bid currently under evaluation.

Kailasagiri, once a top tourist destination, saw its charm diminish following the devastation caused by Cyclone Hudhud in 2014. Although developmental works worth Rs 50 crore were initiated in 2019-20 under the Andhra Pradesh Disaster Recovery Project, progress was stalled due to various challenges.

VMRDA officials believe these state-of-the-art facilities will encourage longer stays by tourists and stimulate the local economy. As one official remarked, "Kailasagiri is not just a place of natural beauty, but also a significant contributor to the tourism-driven economy of the region. These projects will ensure it regains its place as a premier destination."

ACROSS THE STATES

Woman kills her child to marry another man

A woman allegedly strangled her five-year-old daughter to death in northwest Delhi to marry a man she met on Instagram, police said on Saturday. The woman also told the police that she lived with a relative in Himachal Pradesh before coming to Delhi where her child was sexually assaulted, they said. Police received information from Deep Chand Bandhu Hospital on Friday about a child being brought dead. Inquiries revealed strangulation marks on the child's neck, they said. A case was was registered and the child's relatives, including her mother, was interrogated, the Delhi Police said in a statement. After sustained interrogation, the mother broke down and revealed that she had strangulated her daughter, the statement said.

Himachal govt to consider ranking colleges: CM

Himachal Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Saturday said that the government is considering ranking the colleges of the state and a formula is also being prepared for it. Presiding over a programme of the Alumni Association at Government Degree College in Sanjauli, he said that there are about 138 colleges in the state. He said, "We want to strengthen the facilities in the colleges and all other government educational institutions. The state government is emphasising providing quality education to the students and there is no dearth of funds for this work." He said that an arts block, girls hostel and parking will be built in the college complex in two years. He also announced Rs 50 lakh to the Alumni Association.

'Raise voice for release of Engineer Rashid'

The Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) Saturday appealed to the Members of the Parliament to raise their voice for the release of fellow parliamentarian and party chief Sheikh Abdul Rashid. Addressing a press conference here, AIP vice president G N Shaheen said Rashid alias Engineer Rashid "was summoned to Delhi and detained under false and baseless charges" on August 5, 2019, the day Article 370 was abrogated. "Despite being held in custody, he contested the parliamentary elections, won with a massive mandate and became the elected voice of the Baramulla constituency. However, since taking his oath as a Member of Parliament, he has not been allowed to attend even a single session of the Lok Sabha," Shaheen said. He said the Baramulla constituency consists of 18 assembly segments and accounts for nearly 40 per cent of Jammu and Kashmir's population, and from 2008 to 2018, Rashid "fearlessly served" his people, voicing their concerns and aspirations without compromise.

AGRI DISTRESS

Cost and debt rising, yield stagnant: SC panel

Suggests examining MPS, other measures

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Supreme Court-appointed panel on farmers' grievances and protests has filed its interim report, listing reasons for agrarian distress which among others include stagnant yield, rising costs and debts and inadequate marketing system.

The high-powered committee, constituted on September 2 under former Punjab and Haryana High Court judge Nawab Singh to resolve the grievances of farmers agitating at the Shambhu border, also suggested solutions including examining the possibility of giving legal sanctity to Minimum Support Price and offering direct income support.

While forming the committee, the SC had observed farmers' protest should not be politicised. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan on Friday took the interim report on record and praised the committee for its efforts and framing of the issues to be examined and defuse the agitation.

In its 11-page interim report, the panel said, "It is a well-known fact that the farming community in the country in general and that of Punjab and Haryana in particular has been facing an ever-increasing crisis over the last more than two decades."

The stagnation in yield and production growth since the mid-1990s, after the initial higher gains of the the Green Revolution, marked the beginning of the crisis, said the report.

The panel said the debt on farmers and farm workers increased manifold in recent decades.

"In 2022-23, institutional debt of farmers in Punjab was Rs 73,673 crore, while in Haryana it was even higher at Rs 76,630 crore as per National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD, 2023). In addition, there is a significant burden of non-institutional debt on farmers, which is estimated to be 21.3 per cent of total outstanding debt on farmers in Punjab and 32 percent in Haryana, according to National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO, 2019)," the committee flagged.

The committee also comprised retired IPS officer B S Sandhu, Mohali resident Devinder Sharma, professor Ranjit Singh Ghuman and Punjab Agriculture University agricultural economist Dr Sukhpal Singh.

The stagnation in yield and production growth since the mid-1990s, after the initial higher gains of the the Green Revolution, marked the beginning of the crisis, said the report

A setback to fake well-wishers of Constitution

Amit Shah on Maha poll results

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday expressed gratitude to the people of Maharashtra for the "historic victory" of the Mahayuti alliance in the state polls and said that by giving such a huge mandate to the NDA, people have shut shops of "fake well-wishers of the Constitution".

Shah also thanked the people of Jharkhand for blessing the BJP with the highest percentage of votes.

"Jai Maharashtra! Heartfelt gratitude to the people of Maharashtra for this historic mandate," the Union minister said in a post on X in Hindi and Marathi.

Maharashtra, the holy land of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Babasaheb Ambedkar, Jyotiba Phule and Veer Savarkar, has always kept culture and nation supreme along with development, the senior BJP leader said.

"By giving such a huge mandate to the Mahayuti alliance amidst illusion and lies, the people have closed the shops of those who are fake well-wishers of the Constitution. This victory is the victory of every Maharashtra resident," he said.

Jharkhand results victory for Constitution: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi hailed the INDIA bloc's victory in the Jharkhand Assembly polls on Saturday as one for the protection of the Constitution as well as of water, forest and land, even as he described the Maharashtra poll results as "unexpected" and said his party will analyse the election outcome in the state in detail.

In a post in Hindi on X, the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha thanked the voters of Jharkhand as well as those who voted for the INDIA opposition bloc in Maharashtra.

NDA DEBACLE IN JHARKHAND

No CM face, focus only on infiltration cost BJP dear

PNS ■ RANCHI

Despite the BJP-led NDA throwing all its weight to snatch Jharkhand from the hands of a JMM-headed coalition, the saffron camp suffered a debacle leaving the party's rank and file wondering what had gone wrong.

Top BJP leaders such as Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma canvassed aggressively, but the NDA did not project any CM candidate, as its campaigns mainly focused on "infiltration from Bangladesh" and "corruption" of the Hemant Soren regime.

About 200 rallies were addressed by BJP leaders including about two dozen by Shah and PM Modi who also held mega road shows including one in Jharkhand's capital Ranchi drawing huge crowds.

The NDA was leading barely in 24 of the 81 seats it contested. The BJP contested in 68 seats while it ally AJSU Party which contested on 10 seats is almost wiped out.

Contradicting exit polls, Hemant Soren's Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) is heading towards a major victory by winning or establishing lead in 34 seats of the total 43 it contested.

Bypolls: Cong sweeps south

PNS ■ WAYANAD/BENGALURU

Southern electors overwhelmingly supported Congress nominees as the grand old party swept the Lok Sabha and Assembly by-polls held in Karnataka and Left-ruled Kerala on Saturday. Besides, the party retained the Palakkad Assembly seat. The CPI (M) retained Chelakkara, a left stronghold.

In neighbouring Karnataka, it was Congress all the way, with the party winning all the three Assembly seats where bypolls were held.

The Mallikarjuna Kharge-led party wrested Shiggaon and Channapatna from the opposition BJP-led bloc which had put up a spirited fight and the electoral victory was being seen as an endorsement of the leadership of Congress Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy D K Shivakumar, also the party's state unit chief.

The elections were a litmus test of sorts for the two leaders. While Siddaramaiah is embroiled in the MUDA land allotment case, Shivakumar had invested a lot of pride in ensuring his party's good show in the elections, particularly in Channapatna, coming under his home district Ramanagara, a Vokkaliga-dominated region.

The Congress retained its stronghold of Sandur, but the success in the rest of the seats must have counted more sweet to the ruling party.

'NCC will touch strength of 20 lakh in coming years'

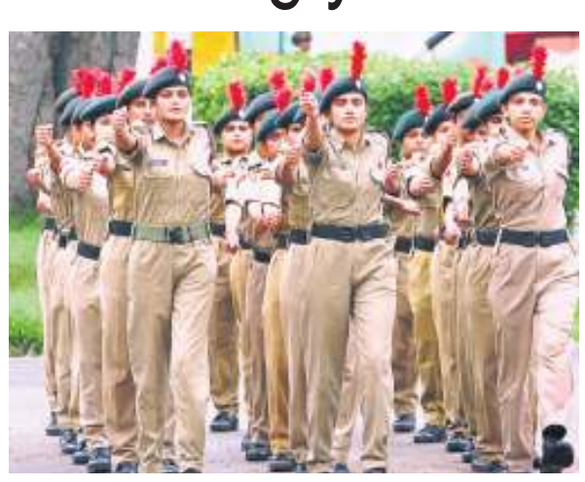
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Cadet Corps has competed 76 years of its existence and made commendable efforts in increasing the strength of cadets, the defence ministry said on Saturday asserting that the Corps will touch the strength of 20 lakh in coming years.

The largest uniformed youth organisation in the world, the NCC was raised in 1948.

The Corps will celebrating its 76th Raising Day on Sunday, the ministry said in a statement.

The NCC has made "commendable efforts in increasing the strength of cadets by 3 lakh and will be touching the strength of 20 lakh in coming years", Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh was quoted as saying in the statement.



He laid a wreath and paid homage to the fallen heroes on behalf of the entire NCC fraternity at the National War Memorial here.

Singh emphasised the role of the NCC in the 'Viksit Bharat' campaign, a pivotal initiative by the Government of India.

HC TO CENTRE

Nominate panel members to examine deepfake menace

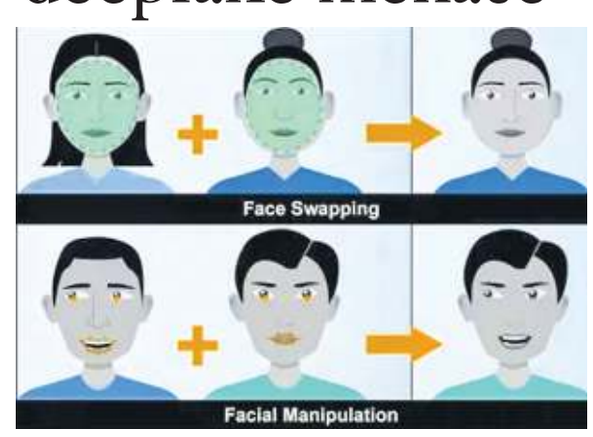
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has directed the Centre to nominate members for a committee constituted to examine the issue of deepfakes.

The high court's direction came after it was informed by the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) that a committee had been formed on November 20 on deepfake matters.

The Centre submitted that it was actively taking measures to address and mitigate the issues related to deepfake technology.

A bench of Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela directed the central government to nominate the members within a week.



"The committee shall examine and take into consideration the suggestions filed by the petitioners. The committee shall also consider the regulations as well as statutory framework in foreign countries like the European Union," the bench said in an order passed on November 21.

Maha win boosts BJP's RS majority prospects

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday snatched one Lok Sabha seat from the Congress, lowering the opposition party's tally to 98, while a runaway victory in Maharashtra will also boost the ruling alliance's prospects in the Rajya Sabha where the western state sends the second-highest number of members.

The BJP had won 240 seats in the Lok Sabha elections held earlier this year. After its win in the Nanded Lok Sabha bypoll on Saturday, the party's tally in the 543-member Lower House has gone up to 241.

The Nanded bypoll was necessitated by the death of Congress MP Vasantrao Chavan on August 26.

The Congress had won 99 seats in the Lok Sabha elections with party leader Rahul Gandhi winning from Rae Bareli and Wayanad. He vacated his Wayanad seat from where his sibling Priyanka Gandhi Vadra won on Saturday.

After winning Wayanad and losing Nanded, the Congress' tally in the Lok Sabha now stands at 98.

The Basirhat seat in West Bengal is now the lone vacancy in the Lok Sabha.

Trinamool Congress MP SK Nurul Islam died on September 25. However, a bypoll could not be held in the seat as an election petition is pending against Islam in Calcutta High Court.

The BJP-led alliance's landslide victory in Maharashtra has also boosted its prospects in the Rajya Sabha and could help it get a majority in the Upper House.

Maharashtra sends 19 members to the Rajya Sabha.

'Pollution in Delhi aggravating respiratory ailments'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bad air in Delhi has aggravated respiratory ailments, especially for patients with pre-existing lung diseases, doctors say.

Dr Ankita Gupta, Assistant Professor in the Department of Respiratory Medicine said that air pollution aggravates respiratory diseases by introducing particulate matter into the lungs. This can lead to symptoms like shortness of breath, sore throat, and in some cases, secondary infections.

"Patients with pre-existing lung diseases are often on regular medication throughout the year. However, during periods of severe pollution, their usual dosage may not be effective," Dr Gupta said.

"Patients with pre-existing lung diseases are often on regular medication throughout the year. However, during periods of severe pollution, their usual dosage may not be effective," Dr Gupta said

Dr Ujjwal Parakh, Senior Consultant, Department of Chest Medicine at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital said, "Prolonged exposure to pollutants can trigger inflammation, airway constriction, and reduced lung function, making routine management of conditions like asthma, COPD, or chronic bronchitis far more challenging."

"In such cases, we often need to increase the dosage or frequency of medications, such as inhalers, bronchodilators, or corticosteroids. Rescue inhalers might also be required more frequently to manage acute symptoms," Dr Parakh said.

Patients with coexisting conditions, such as diabetes, face longer recovery times because of weakened immunity, Dr Gupta said.

Another doctor from the Lok Nayak Hospital's Department of Respiratory Medicine said that emergency cases of respiratory distress are also being observed during this period.

FOOD, IN THE END, IN OUR OWN TRADITION, IS SOMETHING HOLY. IT'S NOT ABOUT NUTRIENTS AND CALORIES. IT'S ABOUT SHARING. IT'S ABOUT HONESTY. IT'S ABOUT IDENTITY
— LOUISE FRESCO

A COZY ESCAPE IN GK

Step into Melt House for a warm ambiance with culinary delights, from cheesy grilled sandwiches to delightful desserts, writes **ABHI SINGHAL**

Tucked on a road full of café's and eateries, between the streets of Greater Kailash II, *the Melt House* café invites you to step inside and have the essence of a cozy vibes like you feel on the mountains while enjoying inside.
The warm yellow colour mixed with brown, with bulbs hanging above the wooden tables, while the aroma of fresh ground coffee and wine mingles with the soft humming of acoustic music. *Melt House* is the kind of place where time seems to slow, promising a cozy experience with posters of coffee and scenic beauty giving you a beautiful time.
From the dishes to the bar menu to *malted milkshakes the Melt House* caters everyone for a quality time and quality treat.
Beginning with the grilled cheese speciality of the café, *the Piri Piri Cottage Cheese Grilled Cheese sandwich* is zesty containing pulled *cottage cheese with onions, peppers, cheddar, mozzarella* and *American cheese. The Piri Piri Cottage Cheese Grilled Cheese sandwich* gave a texture of firm and crunchy on the outside but the cheese enhanced the taste of the same.
After the mouth-watering sandwich, you can embrace yourself and order the flavourful *Smoky Cajun Penne Alfredo* under the Big Plates menu. Indulged with a luscious blend of butter, heavy cream, and freshly grated Parmesan for that perfect creamy Alfredo sauce, *the pasta* with *garlic bread* will activate your taste buds.
If you are a pizza lover and a vegetarian, trying *Burrata Margherita* will be a delicious one. Bursting with vibrant, tangy flavour, balancing richness with just the right amount of acidity, *Burrata Margherita* is filled with Burrata cheese, red and yellow cherry tomato and fresh basil which will not be very visually appealing but is tasty and soft.
Jumping into the small plates menu, *Pink Garlic Aioli Parmesan Truffle Fries* with *russet potatoes* cut into matchsticks with freshly grated Parmesan cheese, black truffle oil and mayonnaise for the aioli are moreish.
Reflecting on the history and the aura of the café Chef *Rohit Negi* said, "The Melt House basically started from Gurugram itself as an artisanal sandwich shop and then we have opened to big places having the speciality of cheese. There is the melted cheese concept we infuse in our dishes. Now, after we have all the totally cheesy flavours in our food, and we have differentiated it from any other restaurant you get on to. We have some Italian cuisine in it, and we have mixed it with cheese for the cheese lovers."
The café also has different offerings in *Vodka, Tequila, Red Wines, White Wines, Gin* and more. For the milkshake enthusiasts and the

hot chocolate connoisseurs, the Classic Hot Chocolate at *the Melt House* is a must try beverage. The *Cold coffee* at *the Melt House* is a refreshing blend of smooth, chilled coffee, served with ice for an invigorating lift. Its rich, bold flavour comes alive with each sip, perfectly balanced between the sweetness and the robust, aromatic essence of freshly brewed coffee for the caffeine kick.
This signals a shift towards indulgence, setting the stage for dessert as the grand finale. So, Nutella lovers assemble as the *Chocochip Walnut Nutela* is a treat that combines the richness of Nutella with the satisfying crunch of toasted walnuts and the delight of chocolate chips. Each bite bursts with soft and nutty layers of flavour, balanced perfectly by the sugar content.
The ones looking for mouth watery chocolate and high sugar *Melt's Matilda Cake* is a decadent masterpiece that promises to satisfy even the most discerning sweet tooth. With its spongy layers of chocolate sponge, every bite melts effortlessly in your mouth, leaving behind a trail of luxurious sweetness.
In conclusion, *the Melt House* Café offers more than just a meal; it provides an experience. Whether you're seeking a cozy corner to unwind with a cup of freshly brewed coffee, wanting the cheesy delights, or treating yourself to decadent desserts, *Melt House* promises to deliver warmth and comfort with every visit.

REVIVING TELANGANA'S CULINARY HERITAGE

From terrain to table, Terrai presents the evolution of Telangana Cuisine, says **SHARMILA CHAND**

Terrai attributes its inception to the *terrain* and rich historical culture and culinary legacy of the State of Telangana. Situated in the southern-central part of the Indian peninsula on the high *Deccan Plateau*, cuisine of *Telangana* is influenced by the region's rich history of Deccan and Telugu culture. Nizam culture is a blend of opulent traditions, art, and cuisine that reflects the historical grandeur and diverse heritage of *Telangana.*
Founded by the visionary restaurateur, *Rohit Kasuganti* and the creative powerhouse, *Anisha Deevakonda*, *Terrai* derives its name from terrain defining the topography of the young-historical State. Reinventing traditional cuisine, propagating the culture and community is the ethos of this new restaurant, *Terrai.*

THE VISION

The objective of *Terrai* is simple - it aims to propagate the deeply rooted culinary culture of the State, becoming synonymous with it. *Terrai* is a glorious homage to the rich heritage, culture and culinary prowess of *Telangana.* At *Terrai,* every dish serves as a resplendent tribute to the land, celebrating local women farmers and tribal chefs who utilise time-honoured techniques and ingredients.
Rohit Kasuganti, Founder and CEO, TSK Food Works, says, "Telangana food has been overshadowed by the popularity of its neighbouring cousin. Taking immense pride in our roots, our thought and vision behind Terrai is to simply showcase the tradition and history behind the food from our State, designed for the modern diner. We want Terrai to lead a revolution, of sorts and to propagate Telangana cuisine to the World and enlighten our colleagues and guests to the rich legacy that it represents."

ELEGANT WITH LOCAL CRAFTS

Sprawling in 12000 sq. ft., here is the dining destination, offering a luxurious experience with seating for 250 guests across four distinct dining halls, each designed to provide a unique ambiance. As you step in *Terrai*, you are

enveloped in an ambiance that exudes sophistication and warmth. Influenced by and representing the rich crafts of the State, the terracotta walls, adorned with intricate Ikkat mouldings and exquisite Dokra art, radiate an earthy elegance, while the captivating Bathukamma-inspired ceiling lights create a mesmerising glow throughout the space. Crafted by the renowned *Sona Reddy Studio*, every detail - from the repurposed traditional doors to the stunning original artworks by *Narahari* invites guests on an enchanting journey through Telangana's rich cultural tapestry.
"Terrai is a creative canvas where we weave the rich cultural and artistic elements of Telangana into every detail. From collaborating with local artisans on the stunning Dokra art to sourcing textiles for our Ikat-inspired decor, every partnership reflects the soul of Telangana, bringing its stories to life. Our mission is to ensure that every guest experiences the essence of our heritage through innovative and traditional cuisine", adds Anisha Deevakonda, Creative Head and Partner, Terrai.

THE COMMUNITY

NARRATIVE

Community is integral to the Terrai experience. The founders prioritise partnerships with local women farmers, artisans, and home cooks, ensuring that every ingredient is fresh, ethically sourced and imbued with the spirit of Telangana. This commitment to collaboration extends beyond the kitchen, celebrating the invaluable contributions these communities make to the state's culinary legacy, transforming each meal into a traditional story of connection.
Terrai aspires to elevate Telangana's cuisine to its rightful place on the global gastronomic stage, offering a dining experience that transcends mere nourishment. It embodies a modern renaissance, a movement dedicated to establishing a distinctive identity for Telangana's culinary traditions, free from the shadows of other Indian influences. Guests are invited to embark on a glorious culinary adventure, reconnecting with the land through an exquisite array of flavours.

A MELANGE OF FLAVOURS & TEXTURES

Picture indulging in the *Karim Nagar Fried Chicken Wings*, a fiery sensation complemented by tangy pickled onions, or experiencing the opulence of *Terai Mutton Curry* paired with *spiced Masala Pooris. The Golichina Mamsum*, crowned with crispy fried curry leaves, is a flavour explosion, while the refreshing *Not So Mirchi Cocktail* adds a zesty flourish. Round off your culinary adventure on a sweet note with the delectable *Saffron Cheesecake, Kandha Doodh*, adorned with delicate saffron pearls, each a testament to the glory of Telangana's rich culinary heritage.
Terrai is more than just a celebration of exquisite flavours; it is a cultural sanctuary where the stories of Telangana come alive. Each dish encapsulates the region's unique traditions and customs, inviting diners to embark on a journey that honours the past while embracing contemporary flair. Here, every bite is a narrative, woven from the intricate tapestry of spices and age-old recipes passed down through generations, all set against a backdrop that resonates with the soul of the Deccan.
In a world brimming with dining options, *Terrai* emerges as a splendid celebration of Telangana's heritage, inviting food enthusiasts to partake in an unforgettable journey that captures the very essence of the region. It's not merely a meal; it's a resplendent experience that delights the senses and nourishes the soul.

— *Sharmila Chand is an author, columnist and journalist who writes on Food, Travel, Culture and Lifestyle*

ADDRESS:
Terrai, Sattva Knowledge Park, Silpa Gram Craft Village, HiTECH CITY, Hyderabad

THE ART AND SPIRIT OF CAKE MIXING

TEAM **AGENDA**

AT CROWN PLAZA, MAYUR VIHAR

The *Crowne Plaza Mayur Vihar* recently hosted its annual *Cake Mixing* Ceremony, embracing the charming theme of an *English Country Christmas.* This delightful event transformed the hotel into a festive wonderland, inviting guests to partake in a time-honoured tradition that has brought people together for centuries.
The roots of cake mixing trace back to 17th-century Britain, where this delightful ceremony marked the end of the harvest season. Farmers would gather to soak fruits and nuts in spirits, preserving them for the rich Christmas cakes that would grace tables during the cold winter months. This joyful gathering symbolised abundance, gratitude and the spirit of community, a celebration of nature's bounty and the warmth of togetherness.
At the *Crowne Plaza*, the atmosphere was filled with excitement and laughter as guests rolled up their sleeves and joined in the festive fun. The delightful aromas of dried fruits, fragrant spices and rich spirits filled the air, creating an inviting and warm environment.This year's theme of an 'English Countryside Christmas' was beautifully reflected in the décor, featuring the traditional red, white and green colours that evoke feelings of warmth and festivity. The venue was adorned with charming elements reminiscent of the British countryside, where cosy cottages and snow-covered landscapes create a magical setting for the holiday season. This theme perfectly encapsulated the simplicity of nature, celebrating the spirit of family and community gatherings that are central to the festive season.
As guests stirred the mixture, they shared stories and laughter, reinforcing the bonds of friendship and family. This camaraderie mirrored the gatherings of the past, where communities would unite to prepare for the joyous celebrations ahead. Once the mixing was complete, the cakes created during the ceremony would be set aside to mature in their rich blend of flavours, ready to be enjoyed during the Christmas festivities. The sharing of these cakes with the wider community reflects the

essence of the occasion, joy is amplified when shared with others.
The *Cake Mixing Ceremony* at *Crowne Plaza* embodies the essence of tradition, community and connection. In our fast-paced world, such events encourage us to pause, reflect and appreciate the simple pleasures that life offers. As attendees departed, they left not only with a sense of festivity but also with cherished memories of laughter and connection.

AT LE MERIDIEN, NEW DELHI

In recent years, *cake mixing* has become a much-anticipated ritual in the culinary calendar, where the joy of the holiday season is brought to life through the vibrant mixing of ingredients that will eventually turn into Christmas cakes. Traditionally marking the beginning of Christmas preparations, cake-mixing ceremonies have their roots in the mediaeval custom of feeding the Christmas cake with spirits and fruits, infusing it with rich flavours that are synonymous with the festive season. In hotels, restaurants and homes around the world, cake mixing symbolises warmth, joy, and a shared experience of holiday spirit.
The *cake mixing* ceremony serves as a festive kick-off, celebrating togetherness and the joy of giving. This tradition often includes the blending of dried fruits, such as raisins, cherries, apricots, and nuts, along with a blend of warming spices and a generous pour of spirits. The ingredients are then left to mature, allowing the fruits to soak in flavours, adding depth and complexity to the Christmas cakes and other holiday treats that will be shared with family and friends.
Each year, *Le Meridien New Delhi* joins in this timeless tradition, creating a unique and memorable experience for guests and locals alike. This year,the hotel launched its '#WinterOfJoy' celebration with a magical cake mixing ceremony at their elegant venue, Longitude.
The event drew food enthusiasts, media, and hotel guests together, where they witnessed the rhythmic blending of exotic fruits, spices, and luxurious ingredients, building anticipation for the holiday treats that await. *Meena Bhatia,* Vice President and General Manager of *Le Meridien New Delhi,* remarked on the occasion, "We are thrilled to embark on our '#WinterOfJoy' celebration with this heart-warming timeless tradition. We invite everyone to join us in experiencing a symphony of flavours, sights, and sounds as we embark on a festive journey."
The cake-mixing ceremony at *Le Meridien New Delhi* symbolises more than just the beginning of Christmas preparations; it represents a celebration of life, tradition and community.

LUXURY CONVERGE AT HONG KONG

Experience an unparalleled luxury at the prestigious harbour front 'Four Seasons' hotel in Hong Kong, where elegance meets world-class amenities and panoramic views of Victoria Harbour, writes **AKANKSHA DEAN**

Envision a captivating tale of luxury and sophistication in the heart of *Hong Kong*: This exquisite *five-star harbour* front gem has been a beacon of elegance since its inception over a decade ago, hosting a prestigious clientele of celebrities, dignitaries, and CEOs. Its allure knows no bounds, boasting flawless service, state-of-the-art amenities, and a culinary experience that is simply unparalleled.

HARBOUR VIEWS, URBAN VIBES

Nestled against the stunning backdrop of *Victoria Harbour*, with the vibrant pulse of *Hong Kong* Island at its core, *Four Seasons Hong Kong* effortlessly combines opulence with convenience. Step outside to breath-taking views of the harbour, while being seamlessly connected to the glamour of the *IFC mall* via air-conditioned walkways. Stroll along these pathways to access the *Central Ferry* and *Star Ferry piers*, the bustling Central business district, the *Macau ferry* terminal, as well as the Airport Express and Central MTR subway station. A flawless fusion of luxury and accessibility awaits at this unforgettable destination. As I approach the hotel's majestic entrance, I am immediately enveloped by the brilliance of its gleaming surfaces and soaring three-story windows, illuminated by the warm embrace of the sunlight. It feels as though I am stepping directly into the vibrant heart of the harbour itself. I find the hustle and bustle of people-watching utterly delightful—there are elegantly attired billionaires in Ferragamos gliding gracefully across the polished marble, while men in dark suits engage in hushed, intense negotiations, their powerful presence palpable. The air is rich with accents from around the globe, creating a symphony of cultures converging in this one place. Settling into

the *Glass Room* lobby lounge with a steaming cup of coffee in hand, I immerse myself in the spectacle of *Hong Kong* at its glamorous, cosmopolitan best.

INDULGE IN LUXURY

Stepping into my superior *harbour front* suite feels like entering a serene sanctuary bathed in natural light. The elegance of the space is unmistakable, with its clean, contemporary lines and a harmonious palette of neutral tones. I am instantly drawn to the inviting textures—the pale gold lozenge-patterned headboard, the sleek glossy lacquer cabinetry, and the softly striped carpeting that added warmth beneath my feet. The sumptuous bed beckons, flanked by high-tech panels equipped with sockets, USB ports, and intuitive touch-button controls for lighting and curtains, making it easy to transition from day to night. The bathroom is a lavish escape, adorned in rich honey marble that tempted me to

indulge in long, relaxing soaks. As a guest with access to a suite, I also enjoy the privilege of the *Four Seasons* remarkable 45th-floor *Executive Club Lounge*. It is an absolute delight, offering complimentary breakfast and afternoon tea, along with all-day refreshments, including beer, wine, soft drinks, and hot beverages. As evening approaches, the lounge transforms into a vibrant social space, serving champagne, cocktails, and a delightful array of both hot and cold buffet options—truly one of the city's best-kept secrets.

SIP, SAVOUR, CELEBRATE

The *Four Seasons* is an extraordinary culinary haven, boasting an impressive eight Michelin stars spread across three of its exceptional restaurants. I am fortunate enough to indulge in *Lung King Heen*, the first three-Michelin-star Chinese restaurant, delivering exceptional Cantonese cuisine through teamwork, quality ingredients, and outstanding hospitality, presenting each dish as a masterpiece. *Caprice*, under Chef *Guillaume Galliot*, masterfully blends classic French cuisine with global influences, showcasing fresh ingredients, inventive techniques, and an exceptional wine and cheese selection for a remarkable dining experience. The French fine dining restaurant mesmerises me with a stunning visual and culinary symphony, also graced with three stars. Then there is the renowned *Sushi Saito*, where the expertise of Japanese seafood truly shines, earning its well-deserved two stars. Each morning, I savour a *sumptuous international breakfast* served in The Lounge on the ground floor. The offerings are nothing short of delightful: a vibrant selection of tropical fruits, delicate *dim sum, eggs* cooked to order, and an endless array of *breads* and *pastries* that set a luxurious tone for the day ahead. In the evenings, I discovered cocktail bar *Argo*, one of the world's best bars, presenting a new cocktail menu featuring 12 creations that celebrate familiar *Hong Kong fruits* and *botanicals,* showcasing their versatility. Its deco-inspired interior of glass and mirrors creates an enchanting atmosphere as I relish some sensational mixology. The *Silver Fox*, a remarkable concoction featuring *Havana Club rum, fig leaf, oak lactone cordial*, preserved lemon, and tonka, feels like drinking a piece of bliss. Each moment at The Four Seasons *Hong Kong* is a celebration of the finest flavours and experiences.

— The author is an independent food & travel writer, a chef and a catalyst and is the first Indian to have trained at Osteria Francescana, in Modena, Italy, rated as the world's best restaurant in the World's 50 Best Restaurants, in 2016 and 2018 and currently in the Best of The Best Category

Discovering the World's True Essence

In a landmark celebration, Mercure Hotels recently unveiled its 1,000th address worldwide at Mercure Dubai Deira last month. This flagship location introduced the innovative '1,000-Hours of Local Flavours,' a 42-day culinary experience designed to showcase the rich tapestry of local food and beverages. This initiative underscores Mercure's commitment to unveiling the authentic tastes of each destination.

By **RUPALI DEAN**

Since its inception in 1973, *Mercure* has been a champion of wanderlust, inviting globetrotters to embrace their inner local in every corner of the world. With a footprint spanning 65 countries and boasting 1,000 distinctive addresses, *Mercure* is dedicated to enveloping guests in a tapestry of local charm while upholding the highest hospitality standards.

EMBRACING COMMUNITY THROUGH CUISINE: I was absolutely delighted to join the celebration at *Mercure Dubai Deira* for the grand occasion of their 1,000th hotel opening worldwide. With 1,000 locations under its belt, *Mercure's* mid-scale brand truly excels in forging authentic connections to local cultures around the globe. The evening's theme, 'Discover Local Elements,' set the stage for an exquisite culinary experience brimming with dishes crafted from locally sourced ingredients. The standout moment for me was savouring the cinnamon-infused UAE rack of lamb, clay-cooked to perfection, delivering unmatched tenderness and flavour. For dessert, we indulged in a delicious *pistachio honey cake* — a refreshing take on the beloved pistachio chocolate trend. To heighten the excitement, we got a sneak peek at the '1,000 Local Flavours' menu, launched on 1st November and delighting taste buds for 42 days. A highlight was

the desert salad, featuring the iconic ghaf leaves of the UAE, a beautiful homage to local culture and heritage. This gathering not only celebrated *Mercure's* unwavering commitment to showcasing local flavours but also strengthened community connections in a vibrant and fulfilling way. *Paul Stevens*, the chief operating wizard at *Accor* for the premium, midscale, and economy realms across the Middle East, Africa, and Türkiye, exclaimed, "Hitting the 1,000-address mark isn't just a number; it's a vibrant badge of Mercure's unwavering commitment to authentic, locally-inspired hospitality around the globe! The "1,000-Hours of Local Flavours" is a delightful dive into cultural richness and community bonds, whisking guests away on a culinary

adventure that truly captures the heart and soul of each destination. And the excitement doesn't stop there — Mercure is rolling out the welcome mat for over 200 new hotels by 2028!"

SUSTAINABLE LUXURY REDEFINED: *Julia Schamne,* cluster general manager, has truly transformed *Mercure Dubai Deira* into a beacon of sustainability since its January opening. With an unwavering commitment to eco-friendly practices, the hotel has embraced compostable materials, bid farewell to plastics, and ensures guests enjoy unlimited, filtered water right in their rooms. The garden-to-table concept in the main restaurant beautifully showcases partnerships with local suppliers, including *Hatta's Honeybee Farm*, emphasising our dedication to sustainability. Nearly half of the menu is dedicated to delightful plant-based options, underlining our focus on health and environmental care. Moreover, *Mercure's* diverse team, representing 31 nationalities, embodies the 'heartist' spirit, highlighted by strong female leadership in critical roles such as HR and rooms management. The changes instigated under *Julia's* guidance reflect a holistic approach to hospitality, integrating sustainability and inclusivity at every level.

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN FUTURE AHEAD: Having learned about the hotel's future plans, I am truly excited about what lies ahead! The focus remains firmly on members, ensuring their needs are never overlooked. "The fantastic feedback we've received from our loyal Accor members speaks volumes about our robust loyalty programme. In fact, we rank among the top contributors in terms of member stays and direct bookings, thanks to Mercure's well-recognised and widespread brand. As one of the largest and fastest-growing mid-scale brands, we thrive on strong storytelling and high standards. Looking forward, we're committed to enhancing our personalised approach for members, providing them with dedicated attention and individual spaces," shares *Julia Schamne*. *Accor* is also eager to increase their community contributions, which is essential for them as a group. Additionally, they are exploring ways to deepen their involvement in charity work, allowing them to give back in significant ways. Their vision is to become the go-to spot for the community, whether it's for a cosy cup of coffee or laundry services. They want to be a place where neighbours can comfortably connect to Wi-Fi or hold quick meetings. Ultimately, the goal is to be the neighbourhood hub where everyone feels at home, capturing the essence of 'Discover Local' for the community.

— Awarded the "Best food writer in the country" by the Indian culinary forum, WACS and the Ministry of Tourism, Rupali Dean writes on food and travel

India, EU firm up extensive roadmap for green hydrogen

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and the European Union (EU) have finalised an extensive roadmap for the green hydrogen sector that includes development of infrastructure, technology cooperation and boosting supply chains.

The two sides deliberated on ways to enhance cooperation in the sector at the 10th meeting of the India-EU Energy Panel held on Thursday in Brussels.

At the meeting, a "work plan" was adopted for the third phase of the India-EU Clean Energy and Climate Partnership 2025-28, which will focus on deeper cooperation in five priority areas, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

The priority areas are green hydrogen, offshore wind energy, regional connectivity, electricity market integration and smart grids, energy efficiency, and energy and climate diplomacy.

"The two sides have set out an extensive agenda for green hydrogen cooperation, which includes assessing infrastructure development feasibility, regulatory and technology cooperation, and strengthening of supply chains," the MEA said on Saturday.

It said the energy panel focused on the energy transition priorities of the two sides and took stock of the achievements of the second phase of the India-EU Clean Energy and Climate Partnership 2021-2024.

The two sides undertook and completed joint initiatives involving technical cooperation in 51 activities divided into nine sectors, it added.

"The two sides have also charted out the framework for green hydrogen cooperation, which includes cooperation on green hydrogen policies of India and the EU," the MEA said.

The EU and EU member states participated in the international conference on green hydrogen this year in India.

On its part, India joined as an exclusive country partner of European Hydrogen Week 2024. "India and the EU also entered into long-term research commitments to jointly support research in clean energy projects as part of the India-EU trade and technology council working group on clean and green technologies, which was established in January 2023," the MEA said.

Next round of India-Asean trade pact review talks in Feb

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The next round of talks for the review meeting of the India-Asean free trade agreement in goods will be held in February next year, an official statement said on Saturday.

The fourth round of the negotiations was concluded here this month.

The review of AITIGA (Asean India Trade in Goods Agreement) will be a step forward in enhancing trade with the ASEAN region in a sustainable manner, the commerce ministry said.

"The next meeting of the AITIGA Joint Committee is scheduled in February 2025 in Jakarta, Indonesia," it said.

There are 8 Sub-Committees under the AITIGA Joint Committee to negotiate aspects related to market access, rules of origin, standards and technical regulations, customs procedures, economic and technical cooperation, trade remedies, and legal and institutional provisions.

Asean as a group is one of the major trade partners of India with about 11 per cent share in India's global trade.

The bilateral trade in 2023-24 was USD 121 billion and reached USD 73 billion during April-October this year with a 5.2 per cent growth.

The AITIGA was signed in 2009. The review of the AITIGA was a long-standing demand of Indian businesses.

India is asking for a review of the agreement to eliminate barriers and misuse of the trade pact.

IN BRIEF

Bansal steps down from board of PhonePe

Flipkart's co-founder Binny Bansal has stepped down from the board of PhonePe, the fintech company said on Friday. PhonePe also announced the appointment of Manish Sabharwal as an Independent Director and Chair of its Audit Committee. In this role, Sabharwal will be instrumental in upholding the integrity and effectiveness of PhonePe's financial reporting, internal controls, and risk management practices, he company said in a release. "PhonePe also announced that Flipkart's co-founder, Binny Bansal has stepped down from its Board of Directors. Binny acquired PhonePe in 2016 and has been on its Board since then," the release said. Commenting on the board rejig, Sameer Nigam, CEO and Founder of PhonePe said, "I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Binny Bansal for being one of PhonePe's earliest and staunchest supporters.

Myntra pilots foray into quick commerce

Flipkart-backed lifestyle e-commerce platform Myntra is piloting a quick delivery service that guarantees delivery within two hours in select areas of Bengaluru. The pilot project, "M-Now," is operational in a few pin codes in Bengaluru and offers a limited selection of products "to see how it works", according to a source. The service will be rolled out to additional locations based on the learnings from the pilot, the source added. In 2022, the Bengaluru-based firm launched an express delivery service called M-Express in metro cities, aiming to deliver products within 24-48 hours of order placement. "We launched M-Express earlier, towards enhancing the customer-experience with regard to speed and have been experimenting with a pilot for faster delivery in a select few pincodes. We will look at expanding it further based on the insights gained, before launching it formally," a Myntra spokesperson said.

Aurobindo joins hands with global pharma

Aurobindo Pharma on Saturday said its US-based subsidiary has inked a licensing agreement with a global pharma major for development of respiratory products. Aurobindo Pharma USA Inc has entered into a collaboration and licence agreement with a global pharma major for development and commercialisation of products, the Hyderabad-based drug firm said in a regulatory filing. The partnership is for an initial estimated development duration of three-five years, it added. As per the pact, both parties will co-exclusively commercialise the products. The products, once commercialised, will be manufactured at Partner's facility and will be marketed by both parties, Aurobindo Pharma said. Besides a cost-sharing arrangement has been agreed by both the parties with each of them contributing 50 per cent of the cost incurred with an overall cap of USD 90 million for Aurobindo over the development period, it said.

Commerce Secy visits Norway for implementation of trade pact

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal has visited Norway to discuss the possibility of an early implementation of a free trade agreement between India and the four-nation European bloc EFTA, an official statement said on Saturday.

The agreement, officially dubbed as Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA), was inked in March. The implementation date has not yet been finalised.

The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) members are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.

"The visit was aimed at furthering the objectives of and unlocking the large market in EFTA countries for Indian exports of goods and services and push for early implementation of USD 100 billion investment," the commerce ministry said

Barthwal met Tomas Norvoll, State Secretary of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Fisheries of Norway for discussions on promoting trade and investments, mobility for Indian professionals, re-energising existing institutional mechanisms and the next steps for the TEPA ratification.

In a separate statement, the ministry said over the past decade, India's seafood exports have doubled to USD 7.3 billion in value and 17.81 lakh metric tonnes in volume terms.

'Avg construction cost for housing projs up 39 pc in 4 yrs'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The average cost of construction for housing projects in big cities has increased by 39 per cent in the last four years to Rs 2,780 per sq ft, with building materials and labour becoming expensive, according to Colliers India.

Real estate consultant Colliers India data shows that the average construction cost for premium housing projects stood at Rs 2,000 per square feet in October 2020.

The construction cost rose to Rs 2,200 per square feet in October 2021, Rs 2,300 per sq ft in October 2022, Rs 2,500 per sq ft in October 2023 and Rs 2,780 per square feet in October 2024.

Colliers India said these are average costs for a Grade A residential building of 15 floors. The data pertains to tier-I cities.

Over the last one year, the consultant said the average cost of construction of housing projects rose 11 per cent due to a significant surge in labour costs coupled with a moderate price increase in construction materials like sand, brick, glass, wood etc. Notably, the cumulative effect of a rise in the prices of four key construction materials, including cement, steel, copper and aluminium, has been relatively low.

Average cement prices have seen a steep decline of 15 per cent, while average steel prices have witnessed a marginal 1 per cent decrease over the last 12 months.

However, the consultant pointed out that the labour cost rose 25 per cent in the last one year.

The average rate of copper and aluminium increased by 19 per cent and 5 per cent, respectively. Badal Yagnik, Chief Executive Officer, Colliers India, said, "While the rise in prices of key construction materials was relatively modest over the last year, labour costs have been driving the overall cost of construction upward". "With labour accounting for more than one-fourth of overall construction cost, a 25 per cent annual rise in labour costs has stretched construction budgets and impacted operational expenses." Moreover, Yagnik said the need for skilled labour and the associated costs for training, safety and regulatory compliance further add to spiralling labour costs.

To navigate the steady rise in overall construction costs and associated challenges, Colliers India said that developers are optimising costs by reassessing budgets. Real estate developers are also looking at improving supply chain management by diversifying suppliers and opting for localised sourcing of key construction materials, the consultant added.

Additionally, realty firms are increasingly making investments in training and automation to address challenges related to volatilities in the availability of skilled manpower, which in turn can potentially facilitate better project scheduling.

KJGF aims to expand Bengal's role in national market

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The 5th edition of the Kolkata Jewellery & Gem Fair (KJGF), which commenced on Saturday, highlighted East India's rich jewellery heritage and its evolution in a globalised market, aiming to help the region maintain a critical market share in the over USD 43 billion national industry, growing at a 17 per cent CAGR.

The three-day event, unveiled by West Bengal Chief Secretary Manoj Pant and West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC) Managing Director Vandana Yadav runs until November 25.

It brings together over 60 exhibitors, 200 plus renowned brands and a dazzling array of jewellery innovations.

Sebi mulls diversifying ownership of clearing corporations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Friday proposed diversifying and widening the ownership of the clearing corporations, which are at present wholly-owned subsidiaries of stock exchanges.

Sebi rules prohibit clearing corporations (CCs) from listing publicly but allow stock exchanges (their parent entities) to list, indirectly exposing CCs to market pressures.

"While looking to broad base and diversify the ownership of CCs, it is important to ensure that such a transition is fair to all stakeholders (including to the current shareholders of the parent exchange) and causes minimal disruption to the capital markets ecosystem," Sebi said in its consultation paper.

Considering this, one approach could be a pro-rata distribution of 49 per cent of shareholding of a CC to the existing shareholders of the parent exchange and the balance 51 per cent of shareholding would remain with the parent exchange to start with.

The parent exchange could then be given 5 years to bring down this holding to 15 per cent or lower, by selling down their stake to other exchanges. This approach would mean that CCs would remain majority-owned by exchanges in line with the SECC norms.

"Alternatively, the entire shareholding of a CC could be allotted to the existing shareholders of exchanges, who would then be free to trade their shares in the CC. This would allow for a clean break of the CC from its parent exchange, in a manner that is fair to the existing shareholders of the parent exchange," Sebi has proposed.

Further, it has been suggested that CCs will continue to be prohibited from listing.

Jyoti Prakash Gadia - Managing Director at Resurgent India, a Sebi-registered merchant bank, said the discussion paper correctly highlights the fact that with the widening and steep growth of the capital markets, the role of clearing corporations should be to function independently without any conflict of interest or bias in favour of the parent stock exchange.

BJP WIN IN MAHARASHTRA

Breather for Adani's Dharavi project

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The landslide victory for ruling BJP-led Mahayuti in Maharashtra will bolster billionaire Gautam Adani-led group's USD 3-billion project to redevelop Mumbai slum of Dharavi into a "world-class" district.

Opposition Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) had pledged to reclaim all land given to the Adani group for redeveloping Asia's largest slum and promised to scrap the project altogether, if voted to power.

For Adani, who is facing bribery charges in a US court, the scrapping of his pet Dharavi project would have been a big setback.

With election results showing the BJP and its allies Shiv Sena and Nationalist Congress Party factions led by Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, winning more than three-fourths of the 288 seats in the Maharashtra assembly, those anxieties have now been set to rest.

Adani plans to turn 620 acres of prime land, about three quarters of the size of New York's Central Park, into a glitzy urban hub. About seven lakh living in rickety shanties with open sewers and shared toilets in the densely populated slums located close to Mumbai's international airport, are to be given flats of up to 350 sq ft free of cost.

The redevelopment had become a political hot potato with the opposition alleging that that group received undue favours from the state government in awarding the contract. The group has denied benefiting from the government's favouritism.

Congress leader and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi had repeatedly raised the award of Dharavi redevelopment, accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his party BJP of enriching cronies such as Adani.

Project supporters in the ruling dispensation say the project holds out promise to make it a global model for slum redevelopment.

While an estimated 1 million (10 lakh) reside in Dharavi, about 700,000 are thought to be eligible because of the resident definition of ones having proof of living in the area prior to January 1, 2000.

The rest will get homes in other parts of the city, a proposal some locals opposed as they want no resident or business owner to be uprooted.

Adani had in 2022 won a contract to remake the slum, which sits on prime real estate in the overcrowded financial capital, in seven years.

Weeks before the poll, the Maharashtra government had approved the acquisition of 256 acres of salt-pan land for the Dharavi redevelopment. The salt-pan land is to be acquired from the central government and leased to the government of Maharashtra, which is redeveloping the 620-acre slum, the largest in Asia.

1,400 Japanese companies operating in India

PNS ■ KOLKATA

On Saturday, Japan's consul general in Kolkata, Nakagawa Koichi, said that around 1,400 Japanese companies operating in India are a testimony of the close economic ties between the two countries.

He also said the two nations were working on various global issues, including security and climate change.

"As far as economic relations are concerned, about 1,400 Japanese companies are currently operating in India," Koichi said, speaking at an international conclave here.

He said that Japan is the fifth largest foreign investor in India, with a foreign direct investment (FDI) of nearly USD 42 billion between 2000 and 2024.

Koichi said modern Japan-India relationship began taking shape in the early 20th century through cultural and intellectual exchanges among prominent figures from both countries like Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Rashbehari Bose.

The diplomat was speaking at the conclave on 'Justice Radhabinod Pal and Quest for Justice: Historical Perspective and Contemporary Implications'.

Pal, an Indian jurist, had given a dissenting opinion at the International Military Tribunal of the Far East, in 1948, where trials of several Japanese soldiers were held following World War II, and had questioned the legitimacy of the tribunal.

Koichi said Justice Pal played a key role in building the solid relationship the two countries enjoy.

Speaking on the occasion, Supreme Court judge Justice P S Narshimha said a dissent offers counter-narratives, holding up a mirror to the trial and serving as a "reminder of the limitations of the legal processes".

He said Justice Pal's dissent decision lays the foundation to mend the disparity among nations by demonstrating to the third world that its concerns must be voiced, and they must unite in their needs.

"What the dissenting judge is doing is giving an absolutely new alternative view of the entire matter," said Justice Dipankar Datta, another Supreme Court judge.

He said when there are multiple judges in a bench, differences may come up, and that it all depends on how one interprets the law and how the law is applied in the given facts and circumstances.

REVIEW

WAACK GIRLS : WAACKING ITS WAY WITH HEART-PUMPING & FOOT-STOMPING DRAMA

TEJAL SINHA
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PLOT

Waack Girls is a dance drama film that revolves around a group of young dancers who come together to form a dance crew. The movie follows their journey as they prepare to compete in a prestigious dance competition. Along the way, they face various challenges, including personal conflicts, financial struggles, and self-doubt. *Waack Girls* follows Ishani (played by Mekhola Bose), a talented Math student from Kolkata, who gains a new passion for life after finding the energetic dance style of waacking. With her diverse team found throughout The City Of Joy, along with new manager Lopa (played by Rytasha Rathore), she explores the underground dance world, moving closer to becoming well-known. Spanning nine episodes, the show delves into the search for self-identity through dance, yet struggles to uphold a cohesive level of storytelling. Ishani's grandfather (played by actor Barun Chanda), is the central focus of her personal life as he struggles with the initial symptoms of dementia. The show also explores the backgrounds of Ishani's team members, but only briefly touches on their pasts. Tess (played by Chrisann Pereira) faces challenges with her mother's (played by Lillete Dubey) gambling addiction, Michke (played by Priyam Saha) deals with her mother's constant nagging and Anumita (played by Ruby Sah) wrestles with being a gymnast aspiring to dance. Ishani's friend LP (played by Anasua Chowdhury), who is a fashion designer struggling with financial difficulties, brings some moments of joy, but their storylines are hurried, making viewers want more depth.

HIGHLIGHTS

The *Waack Girls* series is a captivating and energetic show that showcases the journey of a vibrant dance crew. The series follows these girls as they navigate their passion for dance, overcome challenges, and pursue their dreams. With its inspirational storyline, the show is able to motivate and uplift its viewers. The show features high-energy dance performances that blend elements of waacking, voguing, and hip-hop. They are a talented and dynamic group of young women who embody empowerment, self-expression and body positivity. Their strong female leads and authentic portrayal of friendships make the show relatable and engaging. Throughout the series, they face various obstacles and challenges, but they consistently demonstrate resilience, determination, and teamwork. Their ability to overcome adversity is a testament to the power of friendship and perseverance.

DRAWBACKS

Despite its impressive style, the series sometimes struggles, becoming weak in certain areas by depending on familiar emotional patterns instead of originality, and featuring some repetitive storylines. The editing and cinematography, while visually appealing, sometimes feel inconsistent and lacking in polish, here and there. However, Taraporevala's directing skillfully juggles light-hearted moments with the show's deeper themes, showcasing subtlety and strength in handling the six interconnected lives.

PERFORMANCES

Mekhola Bose gives a sincere and genuine portrayal of Ishani, exuding a genuine charm that feels new and real. She depicts the character's complex challenges well - juggling intelligence, money problems and the emotional burden of looking after her grandfather - all while craving the liberation of waacking. Mekhola, granddaughter of the iconic Soumitra Chatterjee, effectively portrays Ishani's experiences, allowing the audience to connect with her happiness and sorrows. Her interactions with the incomparable Barun Chanda evoke a warm feeling and stay with you. Rytasha Rathore, in the role of Lopa, effectively embodies her character on screen. She effortlessly maneuvers through periods of self-doubt, surges of confidence and emotional breakdowns. No matter if she is struggling with inner doubts or exuding a confident and unapologetic vibe, her performance comes across as authentic and easy to connect with. Barun Chanda and Lillete Dubey are consistently excellent, just like Chrisann Pereira and Priyam Saha.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

The girls experience has its moments of peak performance. The problems have always been present, yet there is a certain novelty in how they are presented. A show about females, created by a female....Director Sooni Taraporevala has done a good job. The depiction of Kolkata shines in the series. The cinematography beautifully showcases the city's character, from its lively streets to the charming Bow Barracks. Yet, a few Bengali figures succumb to overused stereotypes, diminishing the genuineness of the otherwise vibrant backdrop. The show also incorporates various subplots alongside its main storyline, with some being successful while others are not as engaging. They do add some humorous moments, but ultimately do not effectively connect to the overall story.

VERDICT

Waack Girls is a vibrant and captivating series showcasing dance's beauty and the strength of female friendships. With its inspiring storyline, talented cast and stunning cinematography, the show is a compelling watch. However, it's not without its flaws, as it sometimes relies on familiar emotional patterns and repetitive storylines, preventing it from reaching its full potential. Despite these drawbacks, the series remains a heartwarming and engaging exploration of female empowerment, self-expression and the power of dance. With some refinement in its narrative and technical aspects, *Waack Girls* could have been a truly unforgettable viewing experience. Nevertheless, it's still a worthwhile watch for anyone looking for a uplifting and energetic drama.

CREATED & DIRECTED BY: Padma Shri awardee Sooni Taraporevala

CO-WRITTEN BY: Sooni, Iyanah Bativala and Ronny Sen

PRODUCED BY: Caleb Franklin, Vikesh Bhutani and Sooni Taraporevala

CAST: Mekhola Bose, Rytasha Rathore, Anasua Chowdhury, Chrisann Pereira, Priyam Saha, Ruby Sah, Achintya Bose, Barun Chanda, Lillete Dubey and the late Nitesh Pandey.

RATING: 3.5/5

WHAT'S NEW

LONG-LASTING, MOISTURISING FRUITY SQUEEZE TINTS

INNISFREE introduces the all-new Fruity Squeeze Tints, designed to give your lips a glossy, hydrating glow with each application. Infused with the innovative Shine Coating System, these tints boast 30% added moisture content, ensuring your lips stay hydrated, soft and luminous, throughout the day.

BROW PERFECTION MADE EASY

The Anastasia Beverly Hills Brow Definer is your go-to all-in-one tool for perfectly sculpted brows. Its triangular tip offers three edge sizes for defining, filling and detailing with ease, while the wax-pigment formula ensures smooth application and seamless blending. Featuring a soft, custom spoolie for precise finishing, it comes in shades like soft brown, medium brown, dark brown, chocolate, ash brown, ebony and granite, catering to a variety of brow tones.

Price: INR 2700

SHIELD YOUR LIPS WITH WINTER CHILLS

As winter approaches, many of us start to feel the effects of colder temperatures on our skin—dryness, flakiness and that tight, uncomfortable feeling. TNW Lip Serum is enriched with a highly nourishing formula. This lip care product has a smooth texture that easily gets absorbed into your lips, making them soft and moisturised for a long time.

Price: Rs 420

HAND-CRAFTED EYEWEAR COLLECTION

Coco Leni's collection features frames for glasses and sunglasses handmade by women artisans from Goa. Made from sustainable materials like bio-acetate, ethically sourced buffalo horns and eco-friendly alternatives to traditional plastics.

5-IN-1 HAIR CARE

The Dreame AirStyle 5-in-1 Hair Care and Styling System is a versatile hair care tool with attachments for drying, smoothing, curling and volumising. Its advanced technology minimises heat damage while ensuring sleek results. This product is ideal for individuals looking for professional-grade styling tools at an affordable price during the sale.

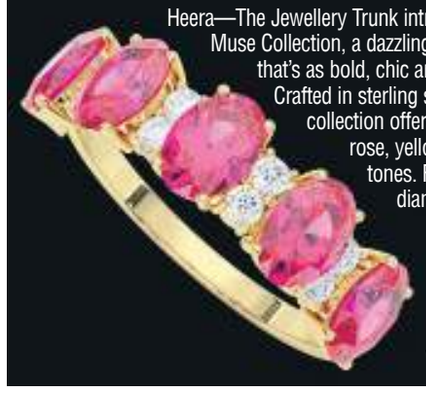
Sale price: 18,999/-

READY TO SMELL LIKE A DREAM?

The ultimate pocket perfume by Blur India are compact babies that can be carried wherever you go and glide on effortlessly, making them perfect for on-the-go touchups. They last longer than traditional perfumes and their lasting power further increases in the winters, making these a perfect.

SYMPHONY OF STYLE AND SPARKLE

Heera—The Jewellery Trunk introduced the Modern Muse Collection, a dazzling lineup of jewellery that's as bold, chic and versatile as you are. Crafted in sterling silver and 14k gold, this collection offers stunning options in rose, yellow, and white gold tones. Featuring lab-grown diamonds of D-F colour and VVS-VS clarity, these pieces brings effortless elegance to parties, gatherings and all the moments worth celebrating.



MINI MASABA

Amid pregnancy cravings and late-night hustle, Masaba Gupta's little one was about to make her official debut—and so was Mini Masaba! Between snacking on pomegranate and dahi and using her own belly jelly, Masaba prepped for a brand launch while juggling a growing bump. She says, Mini Masaba will be a celebration of motherhood, creativity and the beautiful chaos that comes with it.

HOROSCOPE

ARIES

Stay calm in critical situations, focus on health and work, avoid overexertion, and embrace new friendships. Be mindful of relationships, and decisions. Success follows organised efforts.

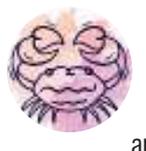
TAURUS

Seek harmony and emotional support while addressing family needs. Overcome insecurities and communicate openly. Your efforts will bring relief, stability and final success in ventures.

GEMINI

Embrace love, loyalty and job success. Overcome confusion by gaining perspective. Balance pressure with gentleness, and nurture relationships to achieve stability and fulfilment in life.

CANCER



Focus on self-improvement, rely on trusted support, and stay determined. Manage family conflicts calmly and embrace new friendships. Success and recognition will follow your hard work.

LEO

Focus on health, work organisation, and refreshing your mind. Embrace unexpected love and career opportunities. Stay firm amid changes and adapt to new environments for success.

VIRGO

Embrace setbacks, remain bold and harness creative energy. Overcome distress with positivity and succeed in business. Get independence from your family to tide over future challenges.

LIBRA

Balance relationships with gentleness and humility. Embrace love and foster family happiness. Overcome challenges with confidence. New career shifts will bring stability and security.

SCORPIO

Stay calm amidst mental strain. Focus on moneymaking, take up fruitful projects and enjoy rejuvenation. Adapt to new changes, seek expert advice and cherish travel opportunities.

SAGITTARIUS

Embrace harmony, nurture family bonds, and stay persistent with projects. Your optimism, love and cooperation ensure relationship stability. Let generosity guide joyful experiences.

CAPRICORN

There will be unexpected connections and beauty. Overcome setbacks with willpower and family support. Balance emotions, and secure career success through persistence for growth.

AQUARIUS

Stay open to others' ideas, balance energy and emotions, and seek advice before making changes. Patience will bring appreciation, while hard work leads to success and growth.

PISCES

Stay calm in critical situations, communicate openly and embrace love and support. Control unhealthy habits, offer guidance to others, and think carefully before making changes.

sunday magazine
VIJAYAWADA, November 24, 2024

the pioneer
agenda

"A recipe has no soul. You, as the cook, must bring soul to the recipe"
– **Thomas Keller**

LOBSTERS TAKE CENTRE STAGE AT GRAPPA POP-UP

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR

(Left to right): Abhishek Sadhoo, General Manager, Shangri-La Eros New Delhi; Chef Brian Chang, Corporate Development Chef, Burger and Lobster and Chef Gagandeep Singh Sawhney, Executive Chef, Shangri-La Eros New Delhi

FOODFREAK

Pawan Soni
Food critic and founder of the Big F Awards

Exciting culinary happenings continue to enrich NCR's food scene, with innovative pop-ups and eateries introducing diverse menus. The latest buzz? The celebrated London-based chain *Burger & Lobster* has brought its famous flavours to Delhi with an exclusive pop-up at *Grappa, Shangri-La Eros Hotel.*

As a seafood enthusiast, I couldn't resist the allure of this pop-up, and I'm thrilled to say it didn't disappoint. These aren't the usual *lobsters* found locally, which primarily offer meat in the tail. Instead, these are exquisite *Atlantic lobsters flown* in from Canada, boasting sweet, chunky meat in both the claws and the tail. For the uninitiated, their texture and flavour might even be mistaken for crab—but one bite will make their unique charm unmistakable.

Served steamed or grilled, these *lobsters* are paired with a delightful *lemon butter garlic sauce* that compliments their natural sweetness without overpowering it. Every bite was pure indulgence. Priced at ₹5,800, they're a luxurious yet fairly priced treat, especially given the five-star ambiance. The European-style patio seating overlooking lush greenery further elevates the experience.

For those who crave a pasta twist, the *Lobster Mac & Cheese* is a must-try. Even as someone who typically steers clear of pasta, I found it irresistible. Rich with *lobster meat* and coated in a decadent three-cheese sauce blended with *lobster bisque*, the dish is creamy and perfectly balanced. At ₹1,800, it's a satisfying portion worth every rupee.

The menu also offers a variety of burgers. I shared the *Waffle Chicken Burger* with a friend, and it was a delightful surprise. A crispy *fried chicken* thigh nestled in a Belgian waffle and drizzled with ranch sauce, simple yet satisfying.

If you're intrigued, don't wait too long. Book your slot before this pop-up ends, or you might find yourself chasing these lobsters all the way to London!

CHAT-O-CINO

'MUSIC'S POWER TO EVOKE EMOTIONS REFLECTS IN MY PERFORMANCE'

With every note, he touches hearts; with every lyric, he speaks directly to the soul. Step into the symphony of B Praak's world, where every melody tells a story and every note resonates with the human experience. *The Pioneer* presents a heart-to-heart chat with India's beloved singer-composer, unraveling the threads of his musical genius and the heart that beats behind it

TEJAL SINHA
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With a voice that tugs at heartstrings and compositions that resonate deeply, B Praak has established himself as one of India's most celebrated singers and music composers. His soulful voice has become synonymous with emotional depth, effortlessly conveying the complexities of the human heart through his music. With every rendition, he breathes life into lyrics, transcending mere melody and speaking directly to the soul. As a gifted singer and music composer, his distinctive sound has captivated audiences, earning him a revered place in the Indian music industry. With a remarkable discography that spans chart-topping Punjabi hits and iconic Bollywood playback singles including *Mann Bharrya, Filhaal, Baarish Ki Jaaye, Kesari, Maana Dil, Heer Aasmani* and *Saari Duniya Jalaa Denge*, to name a few out of many from the endless list, is enough for one to get pretty much engrossed into the song.

His journey, the *Mukke Paye Si* singer says, has been nothing short of blessed. "I'm overwhelmed with gratitude and feel humbled by the opportunities that have come my way." From composing music for films to lending his voice to soul-stirring tracks, his growth has been remarkable.

His songs are a masterclass in emotional storytelling, weaving a sonic tapestry that wraps around the heart, squeezing tightly, and releasing a cascade of feelings. His soulful voice, infused with vulnerability and depth, has an uncanny ability to tap into the human experience, resonating with the joys, sorrows and triumphs that make us uniquely human. With each note, he skillfully excavates the complexities of love, loss and longing, crafting melodies that echo the whispers of our own hearts.

Well, to prove this is the S*aari Duniya Jalaa Denge*, the climax song from the Ranbir Kapoor starrer *Animal*. While it was all action, punches and kicks, his voice certainly made the climax so compelling that it would be wrong to say that anyone would have not been in tears.

His music career has been earnest to his passion and dedication. With a voice that resonates deeply with audiences, he has successfully transitioned from being a music composer and producer to a playback singer. And here, we have the star of the day here with us, as he reflects, "I've always believed that music has the power to evoke emotions and my performances are a testament to that. Every song I've sung carries an emotional element that resonates deeply with my audience, regardless of whether it's a love ballad or a melancholic tune."

Whether you're rejoicing or grieving, B Praak's songs have an unparalleled power to evoke emotions, validate feelings and provide solace – a testament to the transformative magic of music that transcends words, speaks directly to the soul and connects us all in ways both seen and unseen.

For the *Maana Dil Da* crooner, spirituality plays a pivotal role in his life. "I firmly believe in maintaining a strong connection with God. It provides solace amidst life's uncertainties." He stresses the importance of unwavering faith and devotion, believing that positivity and sincere prayers yield blessings.

As a singer, he is extremely selective about the projects he takes on. "My team and I prioritise content above all, ensuring that the song has longevity," he explains. He admires individuals from various industries who strive for excellence and in fact, he is particularly fond of South Indian music. "Growing up, I've been enamored with South Indian music and I still cherish it," he shares. When he received the opportunity to sing a Telugu track, he was immediately captivated. "Recording it was challenging yet enjoyable, taking eight hours to perfect every word." Well, for the unaware, our B Praak paaji was the voice behind *Suryudivo Chandrudivo* from *Sarileru Neekevvaru*. Oh! And also, he lent his voice for the Hindi version *Kanguva's Fire Song*

The *Filhaal* singer' gratitude knows no bounds when he speaks of his Akshay Paaji, who has been instrumental in his career. "He's more than just a mentor – he's a blessing from God. His love and affection for me and the Punjabi community are unparalleled. He promotes talent and encourages me at every turn. His presence in my life is a testament to the power of people's blessings."

Well, getting back to his music, authenticity remains key to his music-making process. "I strive to craft songs that are real, relatable and raw," he shares. "I believe honesty and vulnerability resonate deeply with people." His ultimate goal is to create music that connects profoundly with his audience.

As he looks back on his journey, the *Kesari* artist attributes his success to a combination of blessings, hard work and loved ones' support. "I'm committed to staying true to my art and spreading love and positivity through my music," he affirms.

With his soulful voice and heartfelt compositions, he continues to captivate audiences worldwide. His dedication to his craft and his faith serves as an inspiration to many, cementing his position as one of Bollywood's most beloved singers.

"EVERY SONG I'VE SUNG CARRIES AN EMOTIONAL ELEMENT THAT RESONATES DEEPLY WITH MY AUDIENCE, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER IT'S A LOVE BALLAD OR A MELANCHOLIC TUNE"

TRENDING

LIONEL MESSI

PERSON

Kerala Sports Minister V Abdurahiman on Wednesday (November 20, 2024) revealed that the Argentina football team, including legendary player Lionel Messi, will visit Kerala next year (2025) for an international match.

A HEART-WARMING MEET

VIDEO

For the first time ever, the world's shortest woman, Jyoti Amge, meets the tallest woman, Rumeysa Gelgi, in an inspiring encounter that has captivated audiences globally.

THE SABARMATI REPORT

MOVIE

The much-anticipated film *The Sabarmati Report* has sparked considerable discussion following its release. The Uttar Pradesh government, Haryana and many other states declared it tax-free due to its controversial connection with the 2002 Godhra riots, further fueling its national conversation.

PAYAL

SONG

This week, the vibrant track *Payal* has been making waves with its energetic beats. Composed by the renowned Yo Yo Honey Singh and featuring poignant lyrics by Paradox, the music video, directed by Mihir Gulati, has become a fan favourite.

ONE DIRECTION'S EMOTIONAL REUNION

PICTURE

A heart-wrenching final farewell was given to Liam Payne, the British artist, at a private funeral attended by his family and bandmates.

Silent menace: Unmasking the rising threat of stomach cancer in India

AARTI SREENATH
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HEALTH TALK

The rise in stomach cancer highlights the urgent need to address lifestyle habits, dietary choices, and chronic stress. As *The Pioneer* connects with experts, they emphasise early detection, personalised treatments and awareness as key to combating this formidable disease.

Imagine feeling a nagging discomfort after meals—bloating, heartburn, or a stubborn bout of indigestion. You brush it off, thinking it's something you ate. But what if these everyday nuisances are whispers of something far more sinister? Stomach cancer, often called the "silent killer," hides in plain sight, its symptoms blending seamlessly with common digestive woes. Early warning signs like unexplained weight loss, nausea, fatigue, or even a persistent loss of appetite can be easy to ignore. Why does this disease stay so well-hidden, and what can we do to catch it in time?

Stomach cancer remains one of the most challenging cancers to diagnose and treat, often because its symptoms mimic common digestive issues. Dr. Prathyusha, associate consultant in medical oncology at Sparsh Hospital, sheds light on its complexities, from the most prevalent types to groundbreaking treatment options and the role of stress in its progression. The majority of stomach cancer cases are adenocarcinomas, but they're not all the same.

"Adenocarcinoma comes in two primary forms—intestinal and diffuse," explains Dr. Prathyusha.

The intestinal type is closely tied to environmental factors, such as Helicobacter pylori infection and dietary choices. "When detected early, it offers a better prognosis due to its slower progression," she adds. "This type progresses rapidly and is harder to manage, resulting in a poorer prognosis."

Less common types, such as gastrointestinal stromal tumors (GISTs) and lymphomas, require specialised treatments and can have varying outcomes depending on how early they are diagnosed. Surgery remains the cornerstone of treatment for early-stage stomach cancer, but techniques like laparoscopy and robotic surgery are transforming recovery times and outcomes. "For advanced stages, perioperative chemotherapy has become standard, improving survival rates," says Dr. Prathyusha.

Survival Rates by Stage:

Stage I (Early-stage):
Five-year survival rates are around 60-70%, often with curative surgery alone.

Stage II & III (Locally advanced): These stages see survival rates drop to 30-50%, with a combination of surgery and chemotherapy being key.

Stage IV (Metastatic): Survival is less than 10%, as treatment focuses on extending life and improving quality. "Early detection through routine screenings and increased awareness is crucial to improving these outcomes," she emphasises. Though stress doesn't directly cause stomach cancer, it can significantly influence its progression. "Chronic stress weakens the immune system and promotes inflammation, creating a favorable environment for cancer growth," explains Dr. Prathyusha.

Dr. Mansi Khanderia, lead consultant in medical oncology at SS Sparsh Hospital, further delves into the overlooked symptoms, contributing factors and the role of genetics in understanding and addressing this formidable disease.

Persistent indigestion, mild abdominal discomfort, bloating and feeling full quickly are some early warning signs. Unexplained weight loss and fatigue from anemia caused by chronic blood loss are other indicators. Unfortunately, these symptoms are frequently overlooked, especially in older adults or individuals with risk factors. "Patient awareness and routine check-ups are crucial," says Dr Mansi, adding that timely evaluation can lead to early detection and significantly improve treatment outcomes. Dr. Khanderia explains that one major culprit is Helicobacter pylori infection, which exacerbates mucosal damage over time. Compounding factors like smoking, alcohol consumption and prolonged NSAID use amplify this risk. "Treating the underlying causes of chronic gastritis or ulcers and regular monitoring, especially in older adults, are essential to prevent progression to stomach cancer," she advises

As a Group 1 carcinogen identified by the World Health Organisation, H. pylori infection is a significant contributor to gastric cancer. "It causes chronic inflammation, disrupts the stomach lining and induces precancerous changes," Dr. Khanderia explains. The infection is particularly risky for individuals with a genetic predisposition or additional factors such as poor diet or chronic gastritis. Prevention strategies include routine screening in high-risk populations, timely eradication therapy using antibiotics and improved hygiene to reduce transmission.

"High-risk individuals, such as those with a family history of gastric cancer or chronic gastritis, should undergo regular endoscopic surveillance," she advises. Additional diagnostic methods include testing for H. pylori, checking serum pepsinogen levels and using CT scans for staging. The role of genetics in stomach cancer is profound. "A family history of stomach cancer significantly increases risk, especially with inherited genetic mutations like those in the CDH1 gene," explains Dr. Khanderia. Hereditary diffuse gastric cancer (HDGC) and syndromes like Lynch syndrome or familial adenomatous polyposis further elevate the likelihood of developing the disease. Genetic counseling and early screening are crucial for individuals with a strong family history. Preventive strategies include regular endoscopies, dietary modifications and H. pylori eradication. "For those with a genetic predisposition, vigilance is key to catching the disease early or preventing its onset altogether," she concludes.

Priya Paliwal, chief dietician at Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute, sheds light on how dietary habits influence stomach cancer risk, what to eat to lower it, and how to navigate nutrition during treatment. High salt intake and processed foods are two of the biggest dietary offenders when it comes to stomach cancer risk. "Excessive salt damages the stomach lining, making it more vulnerable to H. pylori infection, a major risk factor for gastric cancer," explains Paliwal.

Processed foods, often laden with nitrates and nitrites, convert into carcinogenic compounds during digestion. These diets are also deficient in protective antioxidants and fiber. "The solution lies in fresh, unprocessed foods, moderate sodium levels, and staying hydrated," she advises.

She highlights cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, vitamin C-packed fruits and foods rich in selenium and beta-carotene as particularly protective due to their antioxidant properties. Fermented foods such as yogurt and kimchi help maintain a healthy gut microbiome. "Red and processed meats, as well as smoked or pickled foods, should be limited," she warns. Anti-inflammatory ingredients like turmeric and ginger can also soothe gastric irritation. The journey through stomach cancer treatment comes with its own nutritional challenges.

"High-protein foods like eggs, legumes and lean meats aid in tissue repair and energy recovery," she says. Ginger and peppermint are natural remedies for nausea, while small, frequent meals ease digestive strain. Antioxidant-rich foods like berries, spinach and nuts help combat oxidative stress from chemotherapy. Probiotics such as yogurt and kefir support gut health, which is often disrupted during treatment. "Hydration is crucial," she adds, suggesting soups, smoothies and herbal teas as easy-to-consume options. From a nutritional standpoint, alcohol and smoking exacerbate the risk of stomach cancer. "Alcohol irritates the stomach lining and amplifies the carcinogenic effects of nitrosamines in smoked and processed foods," Paliwal explains.

Smoking not only reduces stomach acid production, disrupting digestion, but also decreases the bioavailability of nutrients like vitamin C, further compounding the risk. "Quitting both habits and adopting a nutrient-rich diet is crucial to reduce gastric damage and overall cancer risk," she emphasises. Fasting and detox diets are often touted as miracle solutions, but their role in stomach cancer prevention or management is limited. "While intermittent fasting may reduce inflammation and support cellular repair, extreme fasting or detox diets can deprive the body of essential nutrients," Paliwal warns.

For those managing stomach cancer, nutritional stability is key. "Malnutrition can worsen outcomes, so rather than restrictive diets, focus on a balanced diet rich in antioxidants, whole foods, and adequate hydration," she suggests. Always consult a healthcare professional before making significant dietary changes. Your plate is a powerful tool in the fight against stomach cancer.

Meanwhile, according to Dr. Aravind Badiger, Technical Director, BDR Pharmaceuticals, as the urbanisation accelerates, so do sedentary lifestyles. Long working hours, limited physical activity and growing reliance on fast and processed foods have become common, particularly in urban areas. "These foods are often high in refined sugars, unhealthy fats and preservatives, all of which are linked to cancer due to their carcinogenic potential," notes Dr. Badiger.

Modern, fast-paced lifestyles come with a toll—chronic stress. Beyond its psychological impact, stress triggers physiological changes like increased inflammation and weakened immunity, both of which can contribute to cancer development. "Stress often drives unhealthy coping mechanisms like overeating or consuming convenience foods, which are low in nutritional value and high in cancer risks," says Dr. Badiger. "Routine screenings and preventive check-ups are scarce, leading to late-stage diagnoses and poorer outcomes," Dr. Badiger emphasises.

The rise in stomach cancer in India underscores the urgent need to address modern lifestyle habits, dietary practices, and chronic stress.. "By adopting healthier choices and fostering awareness, we can reduce the burden of stomach cancer and improve quality of life," concludes Dr. Badiger.

A STANDOUT SHUTTLER

In the high-flying, feather-light world of Indian badminton, H S Prannoy stands out as a player to watch and celebrate. Born Haseena Sunil Kumar in Thiruvananthapuram, he not only battled his way to a career-high ranking of World No. 6 in 2023 but has shown resilience through ups and downs on the international stage. With a career punctuated by some thrilling wins and a fair share of heartbreaks, the champion has emerged as one of India's steadiest hands in badminton. In a conversation with **Aarti Sreenath** of ***The Pioneer***, he shares how he tasted success quite early on, first making waves with a silver at the 2010 Summer Youth Olympics and more recently with bronze medals at the 2023 World Championships and 2022 Asian Games. But his journey has been as much about grit as glory: for every victory, there's been a setback, including an injury-ridden phase that saw him clawing his way back to form. Now training at the Gopichand Badminton Academy in Hyderabad, he is gearing up for yet another challenge on the horizon: the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, where he's primed to carry India's hopes once again.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS IN BADMINTON

For me, badminton wasn't always about a career path or an ambitious goal; it was more of a family inheritance, passed down by my father. Dad used to play badminton. In my growing hears, I would play, not so much to secure a future in sports, but to secure a spot on my classmates' radar. Upon winning tournament after tournament, my photographs would show up in the papers, giving me the perfect excuse to flaunt a bit. It was fun back then (laughs). After that, I developed an interest in the sport and began playing with Dad whenever he went out to play with his pals. I attended a summer camp for the first time when I was ten years old and I picked up the fundamentals quickly. I was able to participate in tournaments over the first six months, which provided me the courage to continue playing the game.

MY FATHER IS MY MENTOR

Since there wasn't much exposure when I was growing up in Thiruvananthapuram, I didn't have any role models. However, my dad used to send me a lot of CDs when I was a kid so I could watch the best musicians. I used to imitate those early role models, such as Indonesian Taufiq Hidayat. Apart from that, everything was patterned after my dad's ways because, to me, he was the only person who had any knowledge of badminton at that time. Aside from that, I had no idea what was going on in the nation, and until I was around 15 or 16, I had no idea who Pullela Gopichand and Prakash Padukone were. My father, throughout his 20 years in the Air Force, maintained a pretty strict lifestyle. Since teaching discipline can be very difficult and is simpler if one learns by observing others, I could learn a lot from him. And my father would just advise me to avoid cheating. He would warn me that cheating wouldn't benefit me in the long term and would simply make me happy for a short time. You will always be exposed if you cheat a few months or years later. I've always been able to do it since I was younger.

HIS UNFULFILLED CRICKET DREAM

But I wasn't just limited to one court. I was the quintessential sports enthusiast. Cricket almost stole my heart. If I hadn't played badminton, I'd probably be a bowler by now. Outdoors was my natural habitat, always out of the house, always swinging a bat or a racquet and never the 'good kid' sitting obediently indoors.

HISTORIC THOMAS CUP WIN!

For me, the Thomas Cup holds an irreplaceable spot in my heart. Reflecting on my journey, I rank my tournaments not by medals or prestige but by the pure, unfiltered joy they brought me. And nothing quite measured up to the thrill of winning the Thomas Cup with my teammates. No one thought India could win a team event. People used to say, 'India doesn't play as a team.' Proving everyone wrong that day-that was one of my best moments.

SHIFT FROM SCHOOL TO OPEN LEARNING

My schooling had its moment in the sun until my ninth grade. But as my interest in the game deepened and I moved to Hyderabad to train, it became clear that juggling textbooks and shuttlecocks wasn't going to be sustainable. By 11th grade, I transitioned to open schooling -- a practical solution for a young athlete balancing sport and studies, though academics weren't exactly on the podium at this point.

WEATHERING STORMS

As for those teenage challenges; injuries and setbacks impacted me differently at each stage of my career. At 18, every injury felt like a personal tragedy; I was restless, with a singular drive to bounce back and play. But by my mid-20s, wisdom began to set in: 'treatment, discipline, patience' -they became my tools as much as my racquet. And now, as a veteran of the court in my late 20s, I embraced the roller-coaster of professional sports with maturity. In sports, downfalls are more frequent than success stories and you have to be prepared to come back swinging each time. For me, the journey through the ups and downs of badminton has been one of constant evolution. When I first faced setbacks in my late teens, every injury felt like a crisis. At 18 or 19, patience wasn't my strong suit. The restless urge to recover quickly and return to the game often clouded my judgment, leaving me grappling with the uncertainty of how to handle the lows. At that age, you don't know what to do; you're just restless.

HIS DAILY GRIND

Even though the excitement of childhood blurs into a haze, I can fondly recall the thrill of state tournaments. National tournaments? Those were tough. But state tournaments were a blast! Winning those gave you bragging rights. Yet, it was never just about fun; it was laying the groundwork for the rigorous routine that now defines my life. Fast forward to today, my days are finely tuned for peak performance. A typical morning starts at 7:00, followed by a rigorous prep and training session from 9 to nearly noon. Then, after a break for lunch, I am back on the court by 3:30 for another round, often stretching, treating injuries and prepping until evening. Evenings are my only real downtime, as the rest of my schedule is packed with training, recovery and travel. I get the most 'free' time when I am on the road for tournaments. A few hours of training mean I can recharge mentally before hitting the court. I should be completely happy with what I accomplished after I retire from the sport. I've tried everything for that reason, including physiotherapists, trainers, mental health specialists, dietitians and breathing exercises. You don't know what's best for you, so I keep trying all those things. One thing may occasionally be the one that works for you. However, until you give someone that chance, you won't know.

CHERISHED FAMILY CONNECTIONS

For me, family is an anchor, despite the distance my career demands. I share a close, albeit unconventional, bond with my elder sister. She's completely different, no interest in sports. Though our lives rarely intersect, we maintain a unique connection, mostly through my niece, who brings me daily joy as a 'constant conversation' and a perfect stress buster. Off the court, I am as down-to-earth as they come. My off-duty days in Hyderabad are spent enjoying movies, chilling at cafes over coffee, or grabbing the rare chance for a holiday.

OLYMPICS HEARTBREAK

Yet, like any athlete, my journey hasn't been without heartbreak. As for the most crushing blow, it was catching chikungunya just 20 days before the Paris Olympics - an event for which I had trained my entire life. It was brutal. To have worked so hard for years and then have something like that happen; it's hard to absorb. But instead of letting it break me, I channelled that disappointment as fuel. I told myself, I need to come back and win something big. I needed that redemption. During the 2018 World Championships, I received a diagnosis of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) - a chronic condition that manifests as inflammation of the vocal cords, chest and abdominal pain and heartburn. The same problem hindered my training and performance in 2019-2020, but I bounced back from it and the COVID-19 aftereffects to gradually and steadily reclaim my position in the top men's singles rankings.

LEARNING FROM A SLIP

I had a lot going on in my thoughts at the time I slipped, so it was challenging. I was down 4-11 and things were not going well to start. I was a little bewildered for the next five to ten minutes. Which motions should I stay away from? Will it be a terrible experience? I quickly realised that things might not get too bad because I didn't twist my ankle. I felt like I kind of slipped and that jerk happened behind my ankle and Achilles. After the slip, I didn't want the team to think that this match is gone. I was more worried about the game than I was about getting hurt. I needed to give the painkiller time to start working because I knew the agony was there. Being in the finals of such a significant event made me aware of how huge this could get. Some lunges were very difficult and it goes without saying that jumping behind was difficult as well. After that, I believe I gained some insight into what I could do differently. At the beginning of the game, I was playing pretty quickly, but after the slip, I decided to try playing more slowly due to the movements. I felt that my opponent was uncomfortable when I played slowly, so I thought it would assist me today. That day, the injury sort of provided me that chance. I would say that the 2018 Commonwealth Games were one of the most difficult days for me. When I finished without a medal after losing two matches in a single day, I can vividly recall that day; I was simply lost. At that point, Bhaiya gave me a call and I believe we chatted for almost three hours at the food court. 'You have made the effort that you truly need to,' he remarked. Simply put, sometimes the victory arrives when you least expect it and not when you wish for it. Because you fervently hoped that you would receive this medal, but you never did. Many factors led to your encounter with Lee Chong Wei at the semifinals. Sometimes, people are unaware of how remarkable he is.

RELOCATING TO HYDERABAD FOR STARDOM

My love for badminton transformed into a serious pursuit when I was about 16 or 17 years -- an age when dreams often feel bigger than reality. It was then that I had a talk with my parents. I wasn't great at it then, but I wasn't bad either. I knew I could get better. With that fond hope, I packed my bags and moved to Hyderabad for what I thought would be a two-year trial. As it turned out, I wasn't just 'not bad'; I was set on the path to become one of India's badminton stars.

SECRETS TO MANAGING SUCCESS AND STRESS

I credit Hyderabad's renowned Gopichand Academy, which shaped me into the player I am today. Like anyone navigating a demanding career, I rely on stress relievers to recharge. Music, catching up with friends and exploring new places help me decompress. Especially now, at 28-29, you don't always want excitement. Sometimes you just want to sit, talk and unwind.

VICTORIES AND DEFEATS ARE EQUAL TEACHERS

By my mid-20s though, experience began to temper that impatience. With a bit more maturity under my belt, I learned that bouncing back meant more than simply rushing to the court. Rehab routines, precise recovery strategies and a clearer understanding of my physical limits started to become part of my toolkit. I was still itching to get back to the game, but now I understood the importance of doing it right, of preparing myself to return stronger rather than sooner. But it was in my late 20s that I had come to see the sport in its truest light. By 28 or 29, you're mature enough to know that this is just how life works in sports. I learned to accept that while the highs are exhilarating, they're rare -- a moment in the spotlight amid long stretches spent under the radar. In the world of competitive sports, triumphs are fleeting, and the grind can often be relentless. You might win a big tournament once in a year or two, but most of the time, you're behind the scenes, working hard, staying steady. For me, the lows have become as much a part of the game as the victories and I have come to appreciate the journey itself, the rhythm of wins and losses, and finding purpose in perseverance.

CREDITS SAINA NEHWAL AND PV SINDHU FOR BADMINTON'S RISE

In my opinion, badminton has changed significantly over the past ten or so years. And since I believe they were the flag bearers, I would like to thank Saina (Nehwal) and PV (Sindhu). Saina, in particular, in my opinion, made the sport more well-known in the beginning when she sort of won those large medals that no one else could at the time. Furthermore, I believe that Sindhu was able to regularly execute performances after that. This, in my opinion, caused a significant shift in perception, particularly within the system, as people began to believe that badminton as a sport could actually accomplish this. Due to all of these two's significant victories, there was a lot of assistance in badminton. And to be honest, I believe that's why we've received a lot of support over the past 10 years, particularly from the government and other corporations. There is a lot of belief that there is potential in the sport for us to compete and win medals in the Olympics and the World Championship.

RAPID FIRE

Describe yourself: Hard worker
Favorite travel spot: Turkey
Next travel spot on wishlist: New York
Favourite colour: Blue
Favourite cuisine: Japanese
Sports idol: Messi
Biggest fear: Fear of losing
Life mantra: Just go with the flow
Five-year vision: Playing the sport I love