


QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

The CM has been telling the lie that the government will establish an industrial corridor in Lagacharla. The government released a gazette on July 19 stating that it is going to establish Pharma City in Lagacharla. However, the CM changed his stand after the people opposed it. The CM should accept realities and withdraw the old gazette. The people would believe the government only if a new gazette is released. The CM should talk to the people of Lagacharla. The people will not tolerate the filing of false cases by the police

- T. Harish Rao, senior BRS MLA P4



Guv invites Soren to form govt in Jharkhand
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IIFCL SEEKS INFRA TAG FOR THE SPACE SECTOR
 8



Telugu's Own Marvel Mutant SAGA!
 P12



WINTER SESSION OF PARLIAMENT FROM TODAY

Adani, Manipur issues likely to dominate

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid demands from the opposition to discuss bribery charges against the Adani group, the government on Sunday said the business advisory committees of both Houses will decide on matters to be discussed in the Winter session and appealed to parties to ensure smooth functioning of Parliament.

Ruling party leaders met floor leaders of political parties ahead of the start of the Winter session on Monday.

After the meeting, Parliamentary Affairs minister Kiren Rijiju told reporters that the government appealed to all parties to ensure smooth running of Parliament.

Responding to a question on opposition's demand for taking up the Adani issue, he said the respective Business Advisory Committees of the Houses will decide on matters to be discussed in Parliament with consent from Lok Sabha speaker and Rajya Sabha chairperson.

At the meeting, Congress members raised the issue of bribery charges against the Adani group as well as the situation in Manipur.

Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi said the party wants discussion on Adani as well as ethnic strife in

◆ **Oppn may insist on immediate discussion**
 ◆ **Govt appeals for smooth running of the session**
 ◆ **16 Bills awaiting consideration**



Manipur. He said while the chief minister of Jharkhand was arrested, the government still had confidence in the chief minister of Manipur despite bouts of ethnic violence. The opposition party also sought a discussion on the issue of rising pollution in north India and train accidents.

Congress leader Pramod Tiwari said his party wanted the issue of Adani to be taken up in Parliament as the first thing when it meets on Monday.

It is a grave issue involving the country's economic and security interests as over Rs 2,300 crore were allegedly paid by the company to politicians and bureaucrats to get favourable deal for its solar energy projects, the Rajya Sabha MP said.

US prosecutors have charged billionaire Gautam Adani for allegedly being part of a scheme to pay USD 265 million (about Rs 2,200 crore) bribe to Indian officials in exchange of favourable terms for solar power contracts. The group has denied the charges.

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TDP seeks discussion on AP issues in Parl

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA


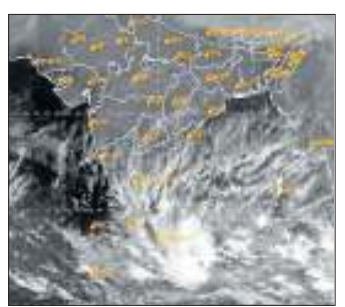
Telugu Desam Party (TDP) Parliamentary Party leader Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu has urged the Union government to discuss key issues concerning Andhra Pradesh in the ongoing winter session of Parliament. The MP participated in an all-party meeting held in Delhi on Sunday, ahead of the session's commencement on Monday.

Addressing the media later, Krishna Devarayalu said, "We have requested Parliament to deliberate on critical issues affecting Andhra Pradesh, including the Polavaram project and the Kadapa steel plant."

He pointed out that the Polavaram project has regressed to its initial stages and called for a discussion in Parliament to examine the reasons behind this setback. He also highlighted delays in establishing organisations mandated by the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, such as the oil refinery and Kadapa steel plant.

He pointed out that the Polavaram project has regressed to its initial stages and called for a discussion in Parliament to examine the reasons behind this setback. He also highlighted delays in establishing organisations mandated by the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, such as the oil refinery and Kadapa steel plant. Referring to the recent floods in Vijayawada, he said, "The devastating floods have severely impacted the public. We sought a debate on disaster management measures and the proper utilisation of allocated funds."

Devarayalu also stressed the need to expedite the Godavari-Penna River Linking project, which could irrigate 10 lakh acres of farmland.

Low pressure may trigger heavy rains in Andhra

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Heavy rain is expected at isolated places in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh on November 27, 28, and 29, and in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh on November 29 and 30.

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are likely in some areas of South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema over the next seven days. In North Coastal Andhra Pradesh, similar weather is expected from November 26 to 30.

A low pressure area formed over the East Equatorial Indian Ocean and the adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal on Saturday. By 8:30 am on Sunday, it became well-marked and was located over the Southeast East Equatorial Indian Ocean.

The system is expected to move west-northwest and intensify into a depression over the central parts of the South Bay of Bengal by November 25.

DON'T MISS...

Fight for justice and equality: BSP

State coordinator for the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and a retired DGP, Dr Jujjavarapu Purnachandra Rao, has called upon Bahujan lawyers to actively contribute to the fight for justice and equality. Addressing the Bahujan Lawyers Forum in Vijayawada on Sunday, Dr Rao underlined the BSP's commitment to addressing key issues affecting Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Backward Classes (BC), and Minorities at both state and national levels. Dr Rao criticised the country's governance, claiming it is prioritising...

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Toll rises to 8 in auto-bus mishap

The death toll in the tragic road accident at Talagaspali village in Garladinne mandal rose to eight on Sunday, as one of the injured succumbed to injuries while undergoing treatment at a private hospital. The accident victims are currently being treated at KIMS Savera Hospital. District Collector Vinod Kumar visited the hospital to enquire about their condition and interacted with the doctors regarding their treatment. The accident occurred on Saturday when an APSRTC bus collided with an auto-rickshaw...

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Sabarimala witnesses surge of devotees

The Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) announced on Sunday that over six lakh devotees have visited the Sabarimala Lord Ayyappa temple, within the first nine days of the Mandalam-Makaravilakku pilgrimage season. TDB President P S Prasanth said the temple, which opened on November 16 (Vrischikam 1), witnessed 6,12,290 pilgrims during this period. This marks a significant increase compared to the 3,03,501 devotees who visited during the same timeframe last year. The revenue collected during...

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Pant becomes most expensive IPL buy

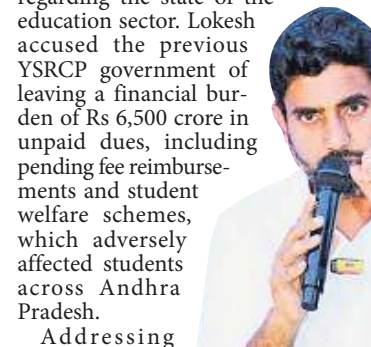
Rishabh Pant became the most expensive player in the history of IPL as Lucknow Super Giants splurged a humongous Rs 27 crore to buy the flamboyant India keeper-batter in the tournament's mega auction here on Sunday. The amount LSG spent for Pant ensured Shreyas Iyer's record of being the tournament's costliest player lasted barely a few minutes after Punjab Kings broke the bank to buy the India batter for Rs 26.75 crore. Moments before Pant emerged as the most expensive player, Iyer...

-SPORTS

Lokesh slams Jagan over edu sector lapses

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Education and IT, Nara Lokesh, has strongly rebutted allegations made by former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy regarding the state of the education sector. Lokesh accused the previous YSRCP government of leaving a financial burden of Rs 6,500 crore in unpaid dues, including pending fee reimbursements and student welfare schemes, which adversely affected students across Andhra Pradesh.



Addressing the media, Lokesh stated, "It is ironic that Jagan, who could not even ensure basic fee payments for school children's snacks, is now attempting to take credit for reforms. The previous government left Rs 6,500 crore in dues, jeopardising the future of students with ill-conceived changes to the fee reimbursement scheme."

He alleged that thousands of

students were left without certificates during Jagan's tenure, creating uncertainty. "During my Yuvagalam padayatra, students brought these issues to my attention. After forming our government, we immediately directed colleges to clear dues and provide certificates. We also streamlined the fee reimbursement system, ensuring direct payments to colleges," Lokesh said.

Highlighting a decline in government school enrolments, he claimed, "Under Jagan's leadership, student strength dropped by 4 lakh in five years. The abrupt introduction of CBSE exams without proper preparation led to a 90% failure rate among students."

Lokesh criticised the implementation of initiatives like TOEFL and IB training programmes, stating, "These were introduced without groundwork, leading to chaos."

Continued on Page 2

SCoR Zone moves closer to reality

Tender issued for GM's office in Visakhapatnam
PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The long-awaited South Coast Railway (SCoR) Zone, with its headquarters in Visakhapatnam, is making steady progress. In a significant development, the East Coast Railway (ECOR) has issued an e-tender for constructing the General Manager's Office Complex in the city.

The project, estimated at Rs 149.16 crore, will feature a modern complex with two basements, a ground floor, and nine upper floors. The bidding process will begin on December 13, 2024, and the deadline for tender submissions is December 27, 2024. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw shared



"The SCoR Zone will drive economic growth in the region. These developments give hope that the project will soon materialise."

the tender announcement on social media, sparking enthusiasm across Andhra Pradesh.

An RTI response dated November 19, 2024, revealed that the Detailed Project Report (DPR)

expressed optimism, saying, "The tender is a crucial step towards operationalising the SCoR Zone. This project has been in discussion for years, and the latest developments reflect the railways' commitment to making it a reality. It will greatly enhance Visakhapatnam's role as a key rail hub."

Local leaders and industry representatives have welcomed the progress. A Visakhapatnam-based industrialist said, "The SCoR Zone will drive economic growth in the region. These developments give hope that the project will soon materialise."

With the tender notice and land allocation finalised, residents of Visakhapatnam are hopeful that the SCoR Zone will soon transform the city into a strategic railway hub in southern India.

US SEC has no jurisdiction to summon foreign national

PNS ■ NEW YORK

US SEC will have to serve the summons on Adani Group Founder and Chairman Gautam Adani and his nephew Sagar in the alleged USD 265 million (Rs 2,200 crore) payoffs through proper diplomatic channels as it has no jurisdiction to summon a foreign national directly, according to sources.

US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) wants Adanis to explain their stand on allegations of paying bribes to secure lucrative solar power contracts but that request will have to follow the established protocol of routing it through the Indian Embassy in the US and following other diplomatic formalities, two sources aware of the matter said.

The US SEC has no jurisdiction over foreign nationals and cannot send anything by post to them.

ADANI NOTICE TO GO VIA 'PROPER CHANNEL'

The 1965 Hague Convention and the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty between India and the US governs such matters. These clearly lay out the established procedure to be followed in such requests.

The summons, which is part of the legal docket that SEC filed before a New York court, will take some time before it can actually be served on the Adanis, they said.

No summons has been served on Adanis so far.

"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 the US SEC notice of November 21 notice being set through 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 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

unchanged.

The then YSRCP government had requested the Centre to split the



Thousands throng Srisaileam shrine

Vehicles stuck in traffic jams over 5 km stretch

PNS ■ KURNOOL

Thousands of devotees flocked to the famous hill shrine of Srisaileam on the occasion of the auspicious Karthika Masam. With Saturday and Sunday being holidays, a large number of pilgrims visited the temple, leading to severe traffic congestion.

The ghat road was clogged with vehicles, resulting in a traffic jam that stretched for over 5 km on both sides of the road. Vehicles were stuck in a long queue from Sakshi Ganapathi to Hatakeswaram.

The One Town police faced significant challenges in managing the traffic and regulating the flow of vehicles, as the roads were completely jammed due to the heavy rush of devotees.

Fight for justice and equality: BSP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State coordinator for the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and a retired DGP, Dr Jujavarapu Purnachandra Rao, has called upon Bahujan lawyers to actively contribute to the fight for justice and equality. Addressing the Bahujan Lawyers Forum in Vijayawada on Sunday, Dr Rao underlined the BSP's commitment to addressing key issues affecting Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Backward Classes (BC), and Minorities at both state and national levels.

Dr Rao criticised the country's governance, claiming it is prioritising caste-based rule over lawful administration. He emphasised the BSP's focus on tackling socio-economic challenges faced by marginalised communities and urged lawyers to draw inspiration from Dr B.R. Ambedkar, a lawyer and a steadfast advocate for justice.

Highlighting local issues, he alleged the illegal occupation of Dalit lands in Yadavalli for granite mining during the previous YSR Congress Party government. "The BSP demands that these lands be returned to Dalits and will intensify protests to achieve this," he declared.



Andhra Pradesh coordinator of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and former DGP J Purnachandra Rao addressing a meeting in Vijayawada on Sunday.

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Dr Rao also raised concerns over the privatisation of Vizag Steel Plant and medical colleges, warning that such moves would deprive the poor of access to essential services and medical education. "The BC Coordination Committee will play a crucial role in this movement, and the legal fraternity's involvement is vital to strengthening our cause," he added.

Questioning the Chief Minister's claims of widespread happiness in the state, Dr Rao asked, "How can there be happiness when Dalit lands are encroached upon, public assets are privatised, and the poor are denied medical education?" The forum, organised by the BSP, witnessed participation from prominent lawyers and party leaders, including BSP State President B. Paramjyoti, who pledged their support for the ongoing struggles.

Steps in full swing for PM's visit

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Preparations are underway for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's highly anticipated visit to Visakhapatnam on November 29. District Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad convened a high-level meeting on Sunday to finalise the arrangements. "The Prime Minister's visit is a significant event, and we must ensure that every detail is meticulously planned," he said.

The visit will include foundation stone-laying ceremonies for major projects and the inauguration of completed ones. The Prime Minister will arrive at INS Dega at 3.40 PM and proceed to AU Engineering College either by road or air. A 500-

The PM's visit will include foundation stone-laying ceremonies for major projects and the inauguration of completed ones

meter roadshow is planned from Tycoon Junction to SP Bungalow if the Prime Minister opts for the road route.

MP M. Sriharat highlighted the significance of the roadshow. "The roadshow is an opportunity for the public to connect with the Prime Minister and witness firsthand the vision he brings for Visakhapatnam and Uttaraandhra," he said. The public meeting at AU

Engineering College grounds will feature the foundation stone-laying for development projects and speeches by the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Ministers, culminating in the Prime Minister's address to the people.

"It is our collective responsibility to ensure a seamless programme," MLA Gana Babu said. Police Commissioner Shankabrata Bagchi assured that adequate measures are being taken to manage traffic and ensure the safety of VIPs and the public.

The event will include speeches and the inauguration of various projects from 4.45 to 5.43 PM, with the Prime Minister's departure to the airport set for 5.45 PM.

Minister attends Mega Medical Camp

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BC Janardhan Reddy, Minister for Roads and Buildings, has praised the services of Timmareddy Charitable Trust and said that they are exemplary for everyone. On Sunday, the Minister participated in the 50th Free Mega Medical Camp organised by the Peddireddy Thimma Reddy Memorial Charitable Trust at Mangapalle in Sanjamala mandal.

The Minister lauded the services provided to the people by Dr Pedireddy Dastagiri Reddy, who is the chairman of the Charitable Trust. The Minister highlighted the remarkable initiative of conducting free medical camps every fourth Sunday of the month, benefiting thousands of people. He appreciated the effort to provide quality medical services locally for those who cannot afford to go to private hospitals in distant areas and also suggested providing food services during these camps.

Strict action against institutions harassing students: Collector

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector M.N. Harendhira Prasad has issued a strong warning to educational institutions in the district against harassing students over fee payments. He emphasised that strict legal action will be taken against any institution found guilty of such practices.

In a statement released on Sunday, the Collector clarified that the State government is currently formulating a comprehensive policy regarding fee payments and related matters. "The State government will soon announce a policy decision on the payment of dues. Additionally, necessary arrangements for fee reimbursement have already been made," he assured.

Expressing deep concern over reports of students being denied access to classes, hall tickets, and exams due to unpaid fees, the Collector stated, "Strict action will be taken against any educational institution that prevents students from attending classes, issuing hall

State Govt formulating comprehensive policy regarding fee payments

tickets, or permitting them to write exams solely because of unpaid fees." The Collector stressed the importance of ensuring that no student is deprived of their fundamental right to education. "Educational institutions must provide every student with the opportunity to write exams. We must ensure that the academic year is not wasted," he asserted.

The Collector's directive applies to all educational institutions in the district, including government, private, aided, and corporate establishments. He instructed officials from all education-related departments to closely monitor the situation and take appropriate action to prevent any violations. "All education-related departments need to exercise vigilance and conduct thorough monitoring,"

'Koil Alwar Tirumanjanam' at Tiruchanoor tomorrow

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Koil Alwar Tirumanjanam, in connection with the annual Brahmotsavam of Sri Padmavati Ammavaru temple at Tiruchanoor, will be held on November 26. The TTD has announced the cancellation of all Arjita Sevams in the temple from November 26 to December 8 due to the ongoing Brahmotsavams.

On November 27, the 'Laksha Kumkumarchana' will be performed at the temple from 8 am to 12 noon. The TTD has made elaborate arrangements for the Navahnika Kartika Brahmotsavams of Padmavati Ammavaru in Tiruchanoor.

Schedule for 'Vahana Sevams'
November 28, 2024: Dhvajrohanam from 9 am to 9:30 am; Chinna Sesha Vahanam from 7 pm to 9 pm.
November 29, 2024: Peddasesha Vahanam from 8 am to 10 am; Hamsa Vahanam from 7 pm to 9 pm.

November 30, 2024: Mutyapu Pandiri from 8 am to 10 am; Simha Vahanam from 7 pm to 9 pm.

December 1, 2024: Kalpavriksha Vahanam from 8 am to 10 am; Hanumanta Vahanam from 7 pm to 9 pm.

December 2, 2024: Pallaki Vahanam from 8 am to 10 am; Gaja Vahanam from 7 pm to 9 pm.

December 3, 2024: Sarvabhupala Vahanam from 8 am to 10 pm; Golden Chariot from 4:20 pm to 5:20 pm; Garuda Vahanam from 7 pm to 9 pm.

December 4, 2024: Surya Prabha Vahanam from 8 am to 10 am; Chandraprabha Vahanam from 7 pm to 9 pm.

December 5, 2024: Rathotsavam from 8 am to 10 am; Aswa Vahanam from 7 pm to 9 pm.

December 6, 2024: Pallaki Utsavam from 7 am to 8 am; Panchami Theertham from 12:15 pm to 12:20 pm.

December 7, 2024: Evening - Pushpayagam.

'Atom on Wheels' campaign launched in Srikakulam

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

To bolster public awareness efforts, the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) inaugurated the 'Atom on Wheels' exhibition campaign at the Government College for Women, Srikakulam. The initiative was launched by Principal N Krishnaveni in the presence of Ravi Kumar Balla from NPCIL's Kovvada Project and Amrithesh Srivastava, Deputy General Manager, Corporate Communications, NPCIL, Mumbai.

The campaign, part of NPCIL's pan-India awareness drive, aims to educate the public on the benefits and

Initiative to create awareness about benefits of nuclear energy

societal uses of nuclear energy while highlighting the safety measures in the operation of nuclear power plants.

Addressing the gathering, Amrithesh Srivastava briefed students about key aspects of nuclear power, including radiation, nuclear waste management, and defence-in-depth strategies. He also explained the process of generating electricity through various sources, particularly nuclear power, emphasising its clean, green, and sustainable nature. Principal N Krishnaveni

lauded NPCIL's efforts to raise awareness about nuclear energy among the residents of Srikakulam and surrounding areas.

The exhibition will travel to nearly 250 villages over the next four months, educating locals, students, youth, and Panchayat members through animated films, banners, and posters. Designed to present complex information only, the campaign seeks to foster a better understanding of nuclear energy's role in a sustainable future.

Healing through stories

South African storyteller Bongiswa Kotta captivates hearts at Vizag Junior Literature Fest-2024

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Storytelling is a profound art that transcends boundaries, cultures, and emotions, offering healing not just to listeners but also to narrators. "It infuses a sense of gratitude, growth, and joy, connecting people and inspiring change," says Bongiswa Kotta Ramushwana, an acclaimed storyteller from South Africa. Bongiswa is back in Visakhapatnam to weave her magic at the two-day 'Vizag Junior Literature Fest-2024', organised by the Lit Lantern Culture and Literature Welfare Society at Hawa Mahal. With her animated narratives and evocative props, she captivates audiences, sharing tales that delve into hidden pain and bottled-up emotions. "I often compare my struggles to a ripe pimple, about to burst, symbolising the weight of unresolved pain and the healing that comes when we finally let go," she explains in an interview with The Pioneer.



Bongiswa is back in Visakhapatnam to weave her magic at the two-day 'Vizag Junior Literature Fest-2024', organised by the Lit Lantern Culture and Literature Welfare Society at Hawa Mahal. With her animated narratives and evocative props, she captivates audiences, sharing tales that delve into hidden pain and bottled-up emotions

Hailing from the Xhosa tribe in South Africa, Bongiswa's childhood was marked by trauma, including sexual assaults and a turbulent family life. Yet, she finds strength in these experiences. "Growing up amid such challenges eventually shaped me into a better person. They taught me resilience and gratitude, enabling me to appreciate the journey and the growth," she adds.

Bongiswa's connection to India, and Visakhapatnam in particular, runs deep. "I love the cuisine here. I even make chicken and paneer curries I first relished in Visakhapatnam back home in Pretoria," she says with a warm smile.

Having observed storytelling

traditions globally, Bongiswa is particularly drawn to India's commitment to preserving the art form. "Indian culture shares similarities with my own, rooted in tradition. It feels like home every time I visit. If storytelling becomes a formal part of school curricula in India, it could bring about a significant change in education," she notes.

In South Africa, where many young individuals silently battle emotional struggles, Bongiswa uses her platform to encourage self-expression. "Some tragedies like suicide stem from silence. Through storytelling, I help others uncover solutions to their pain." Her efforts extend to the

corporate world, where her storytelling workshops are hailed for reducing stress and enhancing productivity. "In today's competitive world, stress and anxiety are rampant. My stories aim to provide solace and foster growth," Bongiswa shares.

Beyond her workshops and storytelling ventures, Bongiswa is working on several creative projects. She is eagerly awaiting the launch of three children's books currently in the illustration phase. As the Vizag Junior Literature Fest continues to enthral audiences, Bongiswa's heartfelt stories remind us of the power of storytelling—a tool to heal, inspire, and connect.

Treatment aid: Speaker distributes CMRF cheques

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

Andhra Pradesh State Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu distributed cheques from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) to individuals requiring financial assistance for medical treatment in the Narsipatnam constituency. The event took place at the Speaker's Camp Office.

The assistance has brought much-needed relief to the constituency's residents.

In the five months since the coalition government's



formation, 11 beneficiaries have received financial aid through the CMRF.

Among the recipients, Panchada Sudhakar from Narsipatnam municipality was granted Rs 2,50,869, Sreenu received Rs 1,35,343, Addala Loveraju from Ballihattam was allocated Rs 1,49,538, Tamarana Vamsi from Mallavaram in Makavarapalem mandal received Rs 1,43,013, and Ganisetty Hemanya from Thutupal in Makavarapalem mandal was granted Rs 1,50,000.

Addressing the gathering, the Speaker highlighted the

government's commitment to supporting families in distress. "When one member of a family falls ill, the entire household endures both financial and emotional hardships. The assistance from the CM's Relief Fund aims to alleviate some of that burden. I hope these funds will help the beneficiaries regain their health and return to a happy and fulfilling life with their families," he said.

Ward 10 Councillor Rajula Naidu, Jana Sena in-charge Rajana Veerasuryachandra, and others.

Police conduct counselling for criminals

'Exhibit good conduct and refrain from engaging in any illegal activities'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In order to maintain law and order and to prevent unlawful activities, Krishna district SP R Gangadhar Rao has directed the police to take special measures. Subsequently, the police are conducting counselling sessions for individuals with criminal background, such as rowdy elements, DCs (Dossier Criminal), KDs (Known Depredator), and those on the suspect sheet, within the jurisdiction of various police stations in the district.

During these counselling sessions, individuals with criminal backgrounds were warned to exhibit good conduct and refrain from engaging in any illegal activities. The authorities made it clear that strict action will be taken against those who repeatedly commit crimes. In addition to encouraging a change in behaviour, the police stressed the importance of



contributing positively to society in the future.

District police officers also took the opportunity to explain the responsibilities of each individual involved in the programme, providing them with guidance on necessary actions

to prevent crimes, along with various suggestions and advice.

The SP stressed that the primary goal of such initiatives is to improve law and order in the district, prevent social unrest, and curb unlawful activities.

Resolve legal issues of '108' service contract staff: Malladi

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) Central Constituency Coordinator and former MLA Malladi Vishnu has assured that the party will pressurise the state government to address the legal issues faced by 108 ambulance service contract employees. Speaking to the media on Sunday after a meeting with union leaders, Vishnu said the union representatives had submitted a memorandum outlining their grievances.

Highlighting the legacy of the 108 free ambulance services, initiated in 2005 by the late Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy during undivided Andhra Pradesh, Vishnu noted their significant expansion across the country. He emphasised the crucial role played by the staff in delivering round-the-clock emergency medical services and saving lives by ensuring timely transportation of patients to hospitals.



Vishnu particularly appreciated the contributions of 108 employees during critical situations like the Covid-19 pandemic. He underlined the need to acknowledge their efforts by addressing their demands, including the payment of gratuity and earned leave dues, and their recognition as employees of the Health and Medical Department. Assuring his support, Vishnu reaffirmed that the YSR Congress Party would stand by workers' unions and back their legitimate causes.

Minister distributes financial aid from CM Relief Fund



PNS ■ ONGOLE

Minister for Social Welfare and Senior Citizen Welfare, Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy, distributed financial assistance to 30 beneficiaries at his residence in Turpunaidupalem village on Sunday.

An amount of ₹38.78 lakh was sanctioned from the Chief Minister Relief Fund (CMRF) for 30 individuals, and the Minister personally handed over the cheques. Speaking on the occasion, he reaffirmed his commitment to supporting the poor and addressing their issues.

Highlighting his recommendation for the sanctioned amount, the Minister lauded Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, describ-

ing him as a compassionate leader who prioritises helping those in need. He recalled that during Naidu's earlier tenure from 2014-19, numerous people received financial aid through the CMRF.

Despite the State's challenging financial situation, the Minister assured that the government remains dedicated to extending assistance to those in distress. He also announced plans to provide comprehensive health insurance to the underprivileged shortly.

The Minister emphasised that the government has taken steps to ensure that every poor family benefits from welfare schemes. The beneficiaries expressed their gratitude to the Minister and the Chief Minister for addressing their health-related needs through the CMRF.

Payyavula hands over ex gratia aid to kin of victims

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Finance and Planning, Payyavula Keshav, on Sunday visited the families of those who were killed in the APSRTC bus-auto-rickshaw collision in Ellutla village of Puttur mandal in Anantapur district to offer his condolences and support.

Accompanied by District Collector Dr. Vinod Kumar V, Singanamala MLA Bandaru Sravani Sri, District SP P Jagadeesh, and other officials, the Minister personally consoled the family members of the deceased and assured them of government assistance.

Following the instructions of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, the Minister handed over compensation cheques of Rs. 5 lakh each to the families of the victims.

Minister Keshav assured the families that the government would provide job opportunities through outsourcing and empha-



sized that while their grief was immeasurable, the government would stand by them during this challenging time.

RDO Keshava Naidu, DSP Venkateswarlu, local elected representatives, various department officials, and Tahsildar were also present during the visit.

Balineni signed SECI agreement papers: Chevireddy

PNS ■ ONGOLE

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leader Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy has criticised former minister Balineni Srinivas Reddy on Sunday, accusing him of making baseless remarks seemingly intended to appease others. He asserted that Balineni had indeed signed the SECI agreement papers.

Addressing the media, Chevireddy stated that the SECI proposal reached the Cabinet only after Balineni signed the relevant documents. He pointed out that on September 15, 2021, the government received a letter from SECI, and officials explained the details to the Cabinet.

The Cabinet approved the SECI proposal in principle after Balineni's signature, following which a committee was formed by the previous government to study the issue. The expert committee submitted its report after a month, which was presented to the Cabinet by officials. Based on this report, the Cabinet agreed to the deal with SECI, he said, adding that Balineni's involvement in the process undermines his current allegations.

Textile Park to come up in Yemmiganur: Minister Savitha

PNS ■ KURNOOL

Minister for BC Welfare and Handloom and Textiles, S Savitha, announced the establishment of a Textile Park at Yemmiganur. Accompanied by local officials and MP B Nagaraju, the Minister inspected the site allocated for the project on the outskirts of Yemmiganur town on Sunday.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Savitha highlighted that the Textile Park would generate direct and indirect employment opportunities for up to 10,000 people. Criticising the previous YSR Congress Party regime, she alleged that handloom workers were neglected during its tenure. She noted that while 100 acres were allocated for the Textile Park between 2014 and 2019 by the then Telugu Desam Party government, the project was abandoned, and the land was later allocated for housing for the poor by Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, whom she termed a "betrayer" of handloom workers.

The Minister praised former Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for initiating efforts to establish the park and announcing the project in the Legislative Assembly. She stated that the



government had earmarked Rs 3.75 crore for developing basic infrastructure at the park site.

MLA Jaya Nageswar Reddy lamented that the earlier government's decisions had deprived thousands of employment opportunities in the textile sector by reallocating the land meant for the project.

The matter, he said, was discussed during the Assembly's budget sessions.

Minister Savitha directed the district Collector to reallocate the same land for the Textile Park to ensure its swift establishment. MP B Nagaraju and other officials were also present during the visit.



Accused in double murder case arrested within 48 hours

PNS ■ ELURU

The police made swift progress in the shocking double murder of an elderly woman and her son by arresting the accused within 48 hours.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Srevan Kumar informed the media on Sunday that a team led by Kaikaluru Rural CI and Mandavalli SI apprehended the accused, Royyuru Nagesh Babu, near the Sai Baba temple in Mandavalli. The police

recovered a sword and a knife used in the crime. A case has been registered under Crime No. 206/2004 U/s 103 (1) BNS at the Mandavalli police station.

The accused reportedly attacked and killed R. Bramarambha (65) and her son R. Suresh over a property dispute. Suresh was known to be a TDP activist.

The police presented the arrested accused before the media and reaffirmed their commitment to resolving such cases promptly.

RTC bus falls off Krishna River bund, 32 passengers escape unhurt



PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

In a miraculous incident, 32 passengers travelling in an APSRTC Super Luxury bus escaped unhurt after the vehicle fell off the Krishna River bund (karakatta) at Inapur village in Thotavalluru mandal on Sunday.

According to the police, the bus was en route to Vijayawada from Avanigadda when the accident occurred. The road at the spot was reportedly uneven, causing the driver to lose control of the steering. The bus veered off the road and plunged about 20 feet down from the bund.

The front portion of the bus was damaged in the mishap, but all passengers emerged unscathed. Following the incident, the stranded passengers were transported to their destination in another bus.

The police have registered a case and are investigating the cause of the accident.

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Two killed in car collision

PNS ■ NANDYAL

Two persons, including a retired Assistant Sub-Inspector, were killed and two others injured when two cars collided at Govindapalli village in Sirivella mandal on Sunday.

According to the police, the tyre of one car, which was travelling from Nandyal, burst, causing the driver to lose control. The car mounted the road divider and veered into the opposite lane.

At that moment, a speeding car coming from the opposite direction collided with the out-of-control vehicle, resulting in the deaths of retired ASI Chandrasekhar and Sk. Khadar. The injured persons were rushed to the Government General Hospital (GGH) in Nandyal. Police said that overspeeding by both vehicles was the cause of the accident.

Death toll rises to 8 in auto-bus collision



PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

The death toll in the tragic road accident at Talagasipali village in Garladinne mandal rose to eight on Sunday, as one of the injured succumbed to injuries while undergoing treatment at a private hospital.

The accident victims are currently being treated at KIMS Saveria Hospital. District Collector Vinod Kumar visited the hospital to enquire about their condition and interacted with the doctors regarding their treatment.

The accident occurred on Saturday when an APSRTC

bus collided with an auto-rickshaw carrying agricultural workers returning from the fields. Seven workers lost their lives on the spot, while five others were injured. Initially admitted to the GGH, the injured were later shifted to KIMS Saveria Hospital for advanced treatment.

The Collector revealed that two couples were among the deceased and assured that their families would be provided employment. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu announced an ex gratia payment of Rs 5 lakh to the kin of each victim.

Officials reported that 13 agricultural labourers, after completing harvesting work at a plantain orchard in Thimmampet, were heading to their native village Yellutla when the accident occurred on the Hyderabad-Bangalore highway.

Police confirmed that the auto-rickshaw, designed to accommodate five passengers, was overloaded with 13 individuals at the time of the crash. District Medical and Health Officer (DMHO) Dr E. Devi and NTR Seva Trust district coordinator Kiran Kumar Reddy accompanied the Collector during his visit.

Do not deny hall tickets, colleges told

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District Collector A. Thameem Ansariya has directed college managements not to deny hall tickets to students on the grounds of non-payment of fees.

In a statement issued on Sunday, Collector Ansariya emphasized that no student should be refused hall tickets or prevented from attending classes or practical examinations due to issues related to fee reimbursement.

She warned that strict action would be taken against any degree or intermediate college in the district found denying hall tickets or barring students from attending classes or practical exams.

The Collector mentioned that she had received reports of



some college principals withholding certificates and preventing students from sitting for exams due to non-payment of fees.

Ansariya reiterated that the government has issued clear guidelines prohibiting the withholding of students' certificates. She further warned that any college found in vio-

lation of these directives would be blacklisted, with stringent action taken against the authorities concerned.

She also clarified that student fees would be credited directly into the accounts of the respective colleges, and a Government Order (GO) regarding this has already been issued.

Two boys drowned in canal, bodies retrieved

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

Two boys drowned in the Eluru canal at A Sitarapuram in Bapulapadu mandal on Sunday. Police said that the deceased Reddy Ajay (12) and Pola Yashwant (10) entered the canal for a bath. They slipped and fell into the canal and drowned. The bodies were fished out from the canal.

Veeravalli police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH for post-mortem.

Case booked against Aghori Naga sadhu for sacrificing hen

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Law students Kashireddy Rohan Reddy and Soumith Patel have filed a complaint at the Mammoor police station in the Warangal Police Commission jurisdiction regarding a case of animal sacrifice. The complaint follows the widespread circulation of a video on social media, showing an Aghori Naga Sadhu performing a hen sacrifice at

the Besta Cheruvu cremation ground in Rangasaipeta.

This Aghori has been making reels and giving interviews to regional media on Hinduism. Animal sacrifice is considered an illegal act under the following laws of Telangana Animals and Birds Sacrifice Prohibition Act, 1950. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, Section 11(1)(e) Indian Penal Code Section 325.

Students neglected by coalition Govt: Jagan

Fee reimbursement dues not paid for the last three quarters, forcing students to quit education

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has flayed the coalition government for its neglect of all sectors and not paying the fee reimbursement, which has badly affected the students.



Taking to X, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy said, the coalition is playing with the lives of students and fees reimbursement was not paid for the last three quarters forcing the students to quit education. "I am deeply saddened by the news that a student of J Ponguluru of Ongole district has turned into a labourer as he was unable to pay the fee."

"As soon as Chandrababu Naidu took office, all sectors appear to have taken the regressive path. Prominently the education sector is badly hit with Amma Vodi, English medium, Tofel from third standard, subject teachers, CBSE to IB, tabs to Class VIII students, Byju's content, Nadu Nedu and many more being abolished badly affecting the students and their parents. Vasathi Deevana, Vidya Deevana were stopped, and students of professional courses are being deeply troubled," he alleged.

assuming office in June. From then on, they did not pay any amount. Vasathi Deevana also has met the same fate. Thereafter there has been no response for the April-June and July-September quarters. Now, the October-December quarter is also coming to a close. With this an amount of Rs 2,800 crore is due as fees reimbursement. For Vasathi Devena Rs 1,100 crore is due for hostel fee which is also pending. The total amount due by December would touch Rs 3,900 crores. But this government is high on talk and nil on deeds.

"For those who completed their studies, they are not getting certificates until they clear the dues. About 11 lakh students are affected by the neglect of the coalition government forcing the parents to go for loans or sell their properties. If they have no resources, they are sending their children to work. This is the situation in the State which was once an education hub."

"After this government assumed office there have been scams in sand, liquor besides gambling dens being opened, mafia dealings and medical colleges and ports are being privatized but there is no concern for education. We demand that Ammaku Vandanam, fees reimbursement along with Vasathi Devena dues to be released immediately. We condemn the negligence of Chandrababu which is adversely affecting the students," he said in the post.

BRS will win local body polls, declares Harish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The people of Telangana would certainly ensure the victory of the BRS in local body elections, senior BRS leader T. Harish Rao said.

He asked Congress to change its outlook at least now as it had lost badly in the Maharashtra Assembly elections.

Addressing the media at Huzurabad on Sunday, Harish said that there is no democracy in Telangana as the government is not allowing anyone to visit Lagacharla village in Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's own constituency.

"The CM has been telling lies saying that the government will establish an industrial corridor in Lagacharla. The government released a gazette on July 19 stating that it is going to establish a Pharma City in Lagacharla. However, the CM changed his stand after the people opposed it. The CM should accept the truth bravely and withdraw the old gazette. The people would believe the government only if a new gazette is released. The CM should talk to the people of Lagacharla. No one will tolerate the filing of

false cases using the police," Harish said.

He said that the CM spread Goebbalian lies about the Kaleshwaram Project. However, the same CM is now saying that 20 TMCs of water will be pumped from Mallanna Sagar and Ranganayaka Sagar to Hyderabad city and has ordered the floating of tenders. How will the government bring 20 TMCs of water if the Kaleshwaram Project is destroyed," he said.

Harish said that the CM can get a doctorate in speaking lies. But it is not always possible to deceive everyone. The Congress deceived the people of Karnataka and Telangana in the name of guarantees. But the people of Maharashtra rejected the lies of the Congress, he said.

He said the CM and his Ministers should learn a lesson and start implementing their election promises. He demanded that the CM should stop making bogus claims and sending money bags to his New Delhi bosses.

Harish said the Congress lost wherever Revanth and his Ministers campaigned in Maharashtra.

ACROSS THE STATES



Manipur CM pledges action against poppy growers

Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on Sunday said action will be taken against poppy planters and their accomplices following an ultimatum by a Naga village authority. Singh's assurance came after a police team, led by an additional SP, and village volunteers were allegedly targeted by armed planters when they attempted to destroy poppy cultivation in Kangpokpi district recently. In a post on X, Singh said, "I appreciate the Makhon Village Authority for taking a strong stand against poppy cultivation in their villages. Let me assure you that central security forces and state police are always on standby, ready to take necessary action against poppy cultivation and its accomplices." He also urged everyone to "come forward and join this movement to eliminate drugs from Manipur." On Saturday, the Makhon Village Authority issued an ultimatum to the Manipur government, demanding action within four days against poppy planters in Kangpokpi district.



BJD rally demands withdrawal of Waqf Bill

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) held a rally here on Sunday demanding the withdrawal of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill. The rally organised by BJD Minority cell was held near the Raj Bhavan here where protesters raised slogans demanding the withdrawal of the bill as they claimed it would affect harmony among the community. The government has listed 16 bills, including the Waqf Amendment Bill, for consideration in the Winter Session of Parliament beginning on Monday. The protestors also submitted a memorandum to President of India through the District Collector of Khurda where they made certain suggestions and expressed concerns regarding the proposed amendments to the Waqf Act, 1995. "We urge that this proposed bill be withdrawn and that comprehensive consultations be held with stakeholders to address their concerns before any amendments are introduced in Parliament.



Union minister Jitendra holds 'public durbar'

Union minister Jitendra Singh on Sunday held a nearly two-hour 'Public Durbar' (public meeting) in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, asserting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi led government is committed to resolve public issues at their doorsteps. Singh, who won Udhampur parliamentary constituency for third term in a row, held the public durbar at Marheen block of Hiranagar sector near the International border. It was a part of his ongoing spree to reach out to the public directly to listen to their issues and concerns. Several issues raised by individual citizens and delegations were resolved on-the-spot. Instructions for immediate action were issued in several other cases, an official said. He said the entire district administration led by Deputy Commissioner Rakesh Minhas and senior officers from various departments were also present for instant intervention and follow-up. This is the third such Public Durbar in different parts of Kathua district in recent months.

Protest over Sambhal mosque survey turns violent

3 killed, 20 cops among injured

PNS ■ SAMBHAL (UP)

Three people were killed and scores of others, including around 20 security personnel, were injured as protesters opposing a court-ordered survey of a Mughal-era mosque here clashed with police on Sunday.

The protesters torched vehicles and pelted stones at the police, who used tear gas and batons to disperse the mob. "Shots were fired by the miscreants... the PRO of the



superintendent of police suffered a gunshot to the leg, the police circle officer was

hit by pellets and 15 to 20 security personnel were injured in the violence,"

Moradabad Divisional Commissioner Aunjaneya Kumar Singh said.

He said that a constable also suffered a serious head injury while the deputy collector fractured his leg.

Tension has been brewing in Sambhal since Tuesday when the Jama Masjid was surveyed on the orders of a local court following a petition that claimed that a Harihar temple stood at the site.

"Three people, identified as Naeem, Bilal and Nauman, have been killed," Singh said, adding that preparations were underway for their post-mortem examination.

Akhilesh claims BJP, gov't behind violence

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday alleged the violence in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal district over the survey of a mosque was orchestrated by the BJP, the government and the administration "to divert attention from electoral malpractice". The former Uttar Pradesh



chief minister also alleged "electronic booth capturing" during the just-concluded bypolls to nine assembly seats in the state

and said it would be clear if the Election Commission could conduct a forensic examination of the EVMs.

Yadav made the allegations a day after the UP by-poll results, in which his party managed to win only two seats, while the BJP and its ally RLD bagged the other seven, including the Muslim-dominated Kundarki.

Will establish 'Samrasta Virasat Kendras' in major cities: Haryana CM

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Haryana government will establish 'Samrasta Virasat Kendras' in major cities to propagate the thoughts of great saints like Maharishi Valmiki, Saint Kabir, Guru Ravidas and the architect of the Constitution Dr B R Ambedkar, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini said on Sunday.

Saini said the government is celebrating their birth anniversaries at the state level to spread the message of Maharishi Valmiki and other saints among the new generation.

The government has started the Sant-Mahapurush Vichar Samman and Prasar Yojana for this. Under this scheme, the birth anniversaries of saints and great men are being celebrated at the state level.

'Ladki scheme, religious polarisation may have played role'

Pawar on Mahayuti victory

PNS ■ KARAD (MAHARASHTRA)

NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday said the Ladki Bahin scheme, women's participation in voting in large numbers, and religious polarisation may have played a role in Mahayuti's victory in Maharashtra assembly polls.

He said the election results, declared on Saturday, are not on the expected lines but he would revitalise the party.

Responding to a query on his retirement from active politics, Pawar tersely said he and his party colleagues will decide.

Speaking to reporters in Karad city in Satara district, Pawar acknowledged that the NCP led by his nephew and Deputy CM Ajit Pawar

secured more seats than the NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar), adding "Everyone knows who founded the NCP".

"The Ladki Bahin scheme and religious polarisation played a role. Women's participation in large numbers could be the reason for the Mahayuti sweep in Maharashtra. We will study the reasons for the debacle and take necessary steps," he said.

Pawar asserted that the NCP (SP) would go to people by re-energising the new leadership.

Responding to a query on EVMs, a day after Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut expressed doubts over the massive verdict in Mahayuti's favour, Pawar said he would speak about EVMs only if he has official data.

Furious India rejects 'unfair' climate finance deal

PNS ■ BAKU (AZERBAIJAN)

India on Sunday fiercely rejected the paltry US\$ 300 billion climate finance package for the Global South and said the COP29 presidency and the UN climate change office forced through the deal before allowing it to voice its objections.

Making a strong statement on behalf of India at the closing plenary of the UN climate conference here, Chandni Raina, Adviser, Department of Economic Affairs, termed the adoption process "unfair" and "stage-managed" and said it reflected the troubling lack of trust in the UN system.

The UN climate conference adopted a new climate finance package of a meagre US\$ 300 billion annually by 2035, replacing the US\$ 100 billion pledge made in 2009.

The US\$ 300 billion figure is a far cry from the US\$ 1.3 trillion the Global South has



been demanding over the past three years of talks to tackle climate change.

India said its request to speak before the adoption of the climate finance package was ignored.

"We had informed the pres-

idency and the secretariat that we wanted to make a statement before any decision on the adoption. However, and this is for everyone to see, this has been stage-managed, and we are extremely disappointed with this incident," Raina said.

Assam to form SIT to probe Gorajan murders

PNS ■ NAGAON (ASSAM)

Assam Police will form a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the murder of four persons, including three of the same family, at Gorajan village in Nagaon district, a senior officer said on Sunday.

Special Director General of Police Harmeet Singh, who visited the house where the murders were committed on Friday night, said that the CID and forensic science experts have already collected evidence from the crime spot.

Speaking to reporters, Singh said, "A SIT will be formed under the leadership of Nagaon Superintendent of Police Swapnaneel Deka to take forward the probe. CID and forensic teams visited the spot on

Saturday and collected vital evidence, including blood samples and finger prints." Singh said the crime will be investigated from all angles.

The four persons were killed by unknown assailants with sharp weapons in the residence of Gunadhar Sarkar Sarkar, his wife Sarojini and their youngest daughter Jayasmrita, and a youth from Nagaon, Anupam Sutradhar, were killed in the attack. Two other members of Sarkar family, a daughter whose marriage was scheduled next Wednesday and her brother, were away in Nagaon shopping for the wedding.

Autopsy of the bodies was conducted at the Nagaon Civil Hospital on Saturday and handed over to the families later.

Delhi air quality fluctuates between 'Very Poor' and 'Severe'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The air quality index continued to fluctuate between the "severe" and "very poor" categories in Delhi.

The city's 24-hour average air quality index, recorded until 4 pm on Sunday, was 318 (very poor), improving from the severe category recorded the previous day when it was 412, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

None of the 38 monitoring stations in Delhi recorded AQI in the severe category on Sunday, compared to 20 stations that recorded severe air quality the previous day, according to the SAMEER app, which provides hourly updates on the



National Air Quality Index.

An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered "good," 51-100 "satisfactory," 101-200 "moderate," 201-300 "poor," 301-400 "very poor," 401-450 "severe," and above 450 "severe plus."

CPCB data identified PM_{2.5} as the primary pollutant, with its levels recorded at 138 at 3 pm. PM_{2.5} particles, measuring 2.5 micrometers or smaller (approximately the width of a human hair), pose significant

health risks as they can penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the bloodstream, according to the CPCB.

The Centre's Decision Support System (DSS) for Air Quality Management estimated that vehicular emissions contributed 18.1 per cent to Delhi's pollution on Sunday. Stubble burning, another major factor, accounted for 19 per cent of Delhi's pollution on Saturday. The DSS provides daily estimates for vehicular emissions, while data on stubble burning is typically released the following day.

Delhi's air quality plunged into the hazardous category last Sunday morning, with the AQI crossing 450 for the first time this season.

Never claimed BJP would win Jharkhand polls: Himanta

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

A day after the BJP bit the dust in Jharkhand, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday said he had never claimed that the party would win the assembly polls in the eastern state.

Hemant Soren's JMM-led alliance stormed to power in Jharkhand for a second consecutive term, winning 56 seats in the 81-member House, despite an all-out blitz by the BJP-led NDA which managed only 24 seats. Sarma was the BJP's co-in-charge for the Jharkhand polls.

The Assam CM stressed the urgency for the JMM-led alliance to perform its constitutional duty of identifying and



deporting infiltrators from the eastern state. Addressing a press confer-

ence here, Sarma said, "Whenever you (media) had asked me here about Jharkhand, I had said that it is a difficult state. I never claimed that we would win. It was a tough job for our party to fight there but we did a good job under the given circumstances."

Sarma, who had practically camped in Jharkhand to campaign for the party ahead of the assembly elections and claimed that infiltrators were posing a threat to the eastern state, reiterated the need for the government to act against them.

Sabarimala witnesses surge of devotees

PNS ■ SABARIMALA

The Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) announced on Sunday that over six lakh devotees have visited the Sabarimala Lord Ayyappa temple, within the first nine days of the Mandalam-Makaravilakku pilgrimage season.

TDB President P S Prasanth said the temple, which opened on November 16 (Vrischikam 1), witnessed 6,12,290 pilgrims during this period. This marks a significant increase compared to the 3,03,501 devotees who visited during the same timeframe last year.

The revenue collected during this period has also risen significantly to Rs 41.64 crore,

Revenue touches Rs 41crore



reflecting an increase of Rs 13.33 crore compared to the previous season. Addressing the media at Sannidhanam,

Prasanth attributed the rise to "effective management and improved facilities for devotees."

To facilitate a smooth darshan experience, three spot online booking centers have been established at Vandiperiyar Sathram, Erumeli, and Pamba. Elaborate arrangements have been made at the Manappuram online booking center in Pamba to handle the growing influx of devotees, said Prasanth.

"There is no situation where devotees will have to return without darshan," Prasanth assured, emphasising that the online booking system is equipped to manage the increasing number of pilgrims.

He also advised devotees to carry their Aadhaar card or a copy for spot bookings.

The TDB president also urged pilgrims to support the temple's environmental efforts by avoiding plastics at Sabarimala Poomkavanam.

"Tantri Kandararu Rajeevaru (priest) has directed devotees not to include plastics in their 'irumudikkattu' (sacred offerings). However, some devotees are still bringing plastics, which goes against the temple's aim of becoming a plastic-free zone," he said.

Further, Prasanth stressed that leaving clothes in the holy Pamba River is not a part of any ritual and insisted devotees to avoid "polluting the river."



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Mixed bag

Ruling JMM retains Jharkhand and the BJP-led Mahayuti, Maharashtra, indicating anti-incumbency is not at play right now

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), alongside its allies, achieved significant electoral victory in Maharashtra while the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) fought its way to victory in Jharkhand despite many handicaps proving once again that it is difficult to read the voters' mind. In Maharashtra, the BJP-led Mahayuti coalition, including factions of the Shiv Sena and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), secured a decisive majority, capitalising on effective consolidation of OBC votes and strategic welfare schemes like direct cash transfers for women. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and grassroots outreach programmes further bolstered their appeal. Meanwhile, in Jharkhand, the BJP failed to wrest power from the ruling alliance of JMM. It could not emphasise governance issues and leverage dissatisfaction with the Hemant Soren-led coalition. The JMM's success was amplified by strong voter mobilisation in tribal areas and development-focused messaging. In Maharashtra, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance, comprising the Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT), and the original NCP, struggled with internal divisions and a lack of clarity on critical issues such as reservations for the Maratha community.



In Jharkhand, the BJP's limited reach and failure to address rural distress effectively diminished its appeal. The electoral outcome in Maharashtra underlines the BJP's ability to adapt and dominate state politics. All this while the Opposition struggled to regain voter trust. The NDA led by the BJP, achieved notable success in Maharashtra due to a combination of strategic alliances, effective voter outreach and targeted welfare initiatives. In Maharashtra, the BJP presented itself

as a cohesive force with Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena faction and Ajit Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) group, ensuring a consolidated voter base. The party's focus on OBC consolidation, welfare schemes such as direct cash transfers for women, and the influence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership resonated strongly with voters. But it was different story in Jharkhand where the BJP could not harness dissatisfaction with the governance of the Hemant Soren-led coalition and failed to highlight local issues like unemployment and tribal welfare and banked more on its national agenda. The JMM also benefited from a grassroots campaign that addressed tribal and rural voter concerns, further solidifying its position. Similarly, in Maharashtra the opposition failed to effectively capitalise on the BJP's perceived shortcomings, such as economic challenges and allegations of governance lapses. In Maharashtra, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition, comprising the Congress, Shiv Sena (Uddhav), and Sharad Pawar's NCP, struggled with internal divisions and inconsistent messaging, particularly on sensitive issues like Maratha reservations. In Jharkhand, JMM and Congress were able to counter the BJP's narrative and present a compelling vision for change. These results indeed underscore the innate acumen of the voters to vote on the issues they deem important.

PICTALK



Artists dressed as clowns perform during the International Clown Festival, in Chennai

Emerging contours of artificial intelligence



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

The interplay between AI and human intelligence offers both challenges and opportunities, heralding a future where adaptability and innovation are key

The foundation of understanding an organisation lies in understanding the role relationships within it. An individual may even, lose their identity in living up to the requirements of his organisational role. Illustratively, the President of an organisation is no longer just an individual who occupies that position. The person who occupies that position becomes the President of the organisation with the President's characteristics, the President's traits, and the President's attributes.

Being a true President may often require his acting in denial of his inclinations in favour of the role requirement. This issue has usually constituted the foundation of organisation analysis and operations. The theoretical basis of this thinking was laid out in 1952 by Elliott Jaques in his classical book "Changing Culture of a Factory." This was a report of 1948 and 1950 of a Glacier Metal Company, London. The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations was the sponsor.

The significance of the book lies, among other things, in the theoretical and operational implications of the research findings. The study went back to 1938. That is another story. Since then, few things have so fundamentally affected organisations understanding till the coming of artificial intelligence (AI). These are indeed seminal times in terms of understanding organisations. AI has affected how one looks at manufacturing, finance, logistics, and more. The expressions of job design have changed. If the basis of job design has changed, the understanding of organisational structure stands to change. The key issue is whether the fundamental changes through the new model of business products for increasing profit have impacted organisational operations. And how they have affected pricing, job market changes, and created or altered new revenue streams. Currently, the world of products and academia is dealing with a lot of jargonise. The popular references are two models, one is the platform-based model, other is the subscription model.



There may be several others but are yet to acquire significance. Many of them who would survive, would get modified, and much of them would evolve into something totally different. Time can tell. For the present, efforts are being made to understand business models and their impact on work conduct. An obvious outcome of AI is the redundancy of many tasks. As the character of tasks changes, the character of organizational models is open to change.

The whole approach of aggregation of organizational tasks into job designs has undergone a fundamental change. Many humanly rendered tasks have become redundant, and they have then been replaced either by machines or machine-led aggregation of skills. This whole process is akin to a major revolution in the understanding of the work. It needs to be realized that once such forces are generated, there is no reversal that can take place in its entirety. It also impacts job designs, which for whatever reason may not change. Put simply, the nature of the task itself has revolutionized organizations. Practically everyone needs to understand AI because there is nothing that can be quite untouched by that process. The overlapping jobs



THE WHOLE APPROACH OF ORGANISATIONAL TASKS INTO JOB DESIGNS HAS UNDERGONE A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE. MANY HUMANLY RENDERED TASKS HAVE BECOME REDUNDANT, AND THEY HAVE THEN BEEN REPLACED EITHER BY MACHINES OR MACHINE-LED AGGREGATION OF SKILLS

would disappear, skill shifts would take place, and reskilling and upskilling would become the order of the day as never before. When such fundamental changes are let loose, job displacement is not just job displacement but the seedbed of new forms of job creation. The interesting thing is that AI acquires some human characteristics that are still in the domain of documentation, understanding, and interpretation. The bias in AI would have been the act of abbreviation and one might say, even the dispensation of organization fair play. Privacy and security are concepts that change, and nothing stays quite what it was even a quarter of a century ago. The upshot of all these is the creation of a paradigm of organization management, whether the top management may not be necessary at the top but acquire primacy even while imbibed in the heart of an organization. This would happen because of the ability of the AI specialist to affect the nature of the work itself. The chances are clear that AI as a service is on the way to acquiring a character of its own. For some AI will be the first language, and they will affect the running of the organization in a very critical manner. For the

rest, AI would be a second language, and everyone would need to understand a little bit of the nature of AI. Put simply, the future of work will be a diligent factor in many ways, which might be an outcome of the revolution of AI. The fascinating thing is to observe how the character of AI affects other functions of the organization like finance, marketing, the functioning of ports, and more. The above is not to say that pathways are clear and the shift in organisational nature is irrevocable. The AI is a job in progress. It's a work in progress that is still taking shape and a character that remains in service of organization management, will only gradually become clear. How this will roll out is difficult to predict, but one thing is clear: AI is here to stay. All in all, it will be interesting to observe how AI and human intelligence deal with each other and create an amalgam of human efforts for organizational growth. The future is here, and over time, it will take shape with better clarity and hopefully some predictability. (The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

Grey divorce: The new reality of modern relationships

Far from a rash dissolution of vows, grey divorce is reshaping societal views on commitment, showcasing that it can lead to new beginnings

The entertainment media is abuzz with news of AR Rahman's separation from his wife of many years, Saira Banu. It is not the first time that famous couples, married for several years, have called it quits. What was once anathema in the old scheme of things—namely, a marriage breakup—has now become a lot more common, giving rise to a new term in the nuptial dictionary: grey divorce.

All cases of middle-aged separation have been well-thought-out decisions, taken after life has given the couples all their due during their togetherness. The best of relationships can fray, the pristine love that couples vouched for can gather moss, and what seemed like a lifetime's vow can wither after many winters of frozen emotions. What was once considered unthinkable becomes inevitable in the narrative of two people who once thought they would grow old together and be each other's crutch when their feet faltered. What had been held sacred and secure slowly gives way, and couples arrive at a decision that is ironic, painful, and lib-



erating at the same time. We have now entered a new era of human relationships, where binding and breaking look like two sides of the same coin. While separation at a younger age is more common than parting at twilight or thereabouts, even long-standing unions are no longer immune to the reconfigurations of modern relationships. Grey divorce has come to symbolise not just the unravelling of a marriage but the assertion of individuality—a reclaiming of one's universe after years of compromise and shared existence. For couples who part ways after decades together, it is not a rash decision taken in the heat of conflict but the culmination of deep reflection and an honest appraisal of their shared journey. It is not about undoing the years they spent together or

dismissing the love they once held; rather, it is about recognising that their paths have diverged, their goals have shifted, and their needs have evolved in ways that no longer align. Marriage, in its ideal form, is a partnership where two people grow together while allowing each other room to flourish individually. But as life unfolds with its relentless demands and shifting priorities, it is not uncommon for this delicate balance to tilt. What once felt like a harmonious duet may start to sound discordant, not out of malice or neglect, but simply because human beings are not static.

Divorce in later years, though heart-wrenching, is often an act of self-preservation—a decision to honour the person each has become rather than clinging to a version of themselves that no longer exists. It is a painful shedding of skin that no longer fits, and like all transformations, it comes with its share of sorrow and scars. Yet, it is also an opportunity for renewal, a chance to readjust one's life with one's inner truth. Couples who choose to separate after years together are not betraying the

sanctity of marriage; they are embracing the courage to let go of something that no longer serves their mutual wellbeing.

It is a quiet revolution in the way society views commitment—not as an unyielding contract but as a partnership rooted in growth, love, and respect, even when that means stepping away. While the process is undeniably painful, it also holds the promise of freedom and self-discovery. It allows individuals to reclaim their lives, find joy in their own company, and pursue paths that were perhaps once abandoned for the sake of togetherness. Grey divorce is not the undoing of a life lived together; it is the rewriting of two lives that are still unfolding. It reminds us that while love may not always last in its original form, the lessons it imparts and the growth it inspires are eternal. And in that, there is hope—a hope that even in endings, there can be beginnings. As Rahman said, they will eventually find meaning in the shattering. (The author is a columnist and children's writing coach based in Dubai; Views are personal)



ASHA IYER KUMAR

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ADANI GROUP CONTROVERSY

Madam— Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani, his nephew Sagar Adani and six others were indicted by US prosecutors in New York on Wednesday (November 20) in an alleged Rs 2,029 crore bribery case that could be a much bigger blow for business than the Hindenburg report. Side by side, it could upset the group's global expansion ambitions, hinder capital-raising and tarnish the fundraising abilities of other Indian firms by association. Though the White House expressed confidence in the resilience of India-US ties despite allegations against industrialist Gautam Adani and his associates of orchestrating a \$265 million bribery scheme to secure state energy contracts.

Even after all this, citizens of the country strongly believe that whether Adani paid the bribe or not is to be probed by the agencies. When Indian agencies failed, US court indicted him for the bribery. Let Adani & his companies defend themselves in the US courts. If Adani has invested in the minerals, forests, lands and other resources of those states. Where Indian compromised agencies failed, the US caught him on the wrong foot. Let him and his other conspirators face the music. Remember, the US laws are very strict in the cases of bribery or anti-competition laws. Let Adani face the music in the US courts and international financiers or hawala money suppliers. Whatsoever, for the clean image of the country, India must also set up a probe into this matter and be prepared to go by the evidence presented to the US regulators and courts to determine if there has been wrongdoing on our soil.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Delhi

MAHAYUTI WINS MAHARASHTRA

Madam— The Mahayuti alliance in Maharashtra has won the Assembly elections 2024 is a double booster for BJP after its recent surprise win in Haryana. It's a celebration time for the CM and Shiv Sena

Women's hockey team wins ACT



The Indian women's hockey team has created history once again by retaining the Asian Champions Trophy title after beating China. It would always be a moment of pride seeing Indian women securing victory in India's national sport, hockey. The title is extremely prestigious for all of us, and our women players deserve this victo-

ry due to their constant hard work of managing seven victories in the seven matches. India beat China with 3-0 and holds the ACT (Asian Champion Trophy) crown once again, for the third time now, after securing the same in 2016 and 2023.

The team under Harendra Kaur is collecting worldwide appreciation for their high-quality, victorious performance and hopefully, if Team India continues the same magic in the upcoming Los Angeles session in 2028, we all back at home will be in the epitome of cheers for our girls. Meanwhile, it's time for Indian women's hockey to enjoy and dip into the victory celebration. The nation extends heartfelt congratulations to them for their success.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

leader Eknath Shinde.

The magic wand of Sharad Pawar had lost its power while his breakup factions of Sena and NCP led by Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar, had seen the downside quite significantly. The Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray termed the victory as note-jihad by attacking the BJP leader Vinod Tawde and alleged that cash for votes marred the end results. While all parties facilitate cash for votes, it's not that how much one bribe matters and, at the end, how much of welfare the party extends to the people that brings such a huge victory need to be respected. The BJP has used their arm of RSS to campaign to target women, farmers and OBCs in the last six months and has gained momentum by a constructive approach to focus on this landmark victory.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

LONG-TERM PLANNING NEEDED

Madam— This refers to the editorial, 'Cars the Main Culprit', wherein it was observed that the real culprit behind Delhi's toxic air is not stubble burning but the city's over-

whelming vehicular emissions. The Supreme Court, concerned about the health of the residents of the capital and commuters, has taken a commendable initiative to close schools up to class 12 and implement all the necessary restrictions of the Graded Response Action Plan-Stage 4. A section of the society is praising the commendable effort of the judiciary wholeheartedly.

The Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi has come under fire over the deteriorating air quality in the national capital. But instead of controlling the worsening conditions, the Aam Aadmi Party is bent on criticising the Modi government at the Centre. Before the upcoming Assembly elections, the Atishi government will have to show its work on the ground in Delhi. The Central and State governments should together take practical steps on a concrete action plan to reduce pollution and improve the environment in Delhi.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

ONLINE PREDATORS

They exploit the anonymity and reach of digital platforms to target vulnerable individuals, particularly children



SHAINY SHARMA

The emergence of the internet has revolutionised the way an individual connects, communicates and accesses information. However, alongside its numerous benefits, this emergence has also given rise to various dangers, one of the most concerning being the presence of online predators - someone who uses the internet to exploit others for personal gain, often engaging in deceptive and manipulative behaviour. These individuals exploit digital platforms to manipulate, exploit and harm unsuspecting victims, often targeting vulnerable populations such as children and teenagers.

Social media platforms, online gaming environments, chat rooms and even educational forums provide predators with access to potential victims. The motives range from financial fraud and identity theft to emotional manipulation, sexual exploitation and many more. The anonymity of the internet emboldens these individuals, allowing them to craft fake personas and deceive others without immediate risk of detection.

Online predators employ various strategies to target and exploit their victims. One of the most common is grooming, a process in which predators build trust and emotional connections over time. This tactic often begins with flattery, attention or shared interests making the victim feel valued and understood. Once the trust is established, the predator isolates the victim by discouraging contact with family or friends, making the victim more dependent on them. Not only this, but these predators also exploit vulnerabilities, such as low self-esteem, loneliness or a desire for acceptance. They use threats, blackmail or promises of love or gifts to control their victims. In some cases, the



predators coerce victims into sharing sensitive information or explicit content, which can later be used as leverage. Victims falling prey to an online predator can be devastating. They may experience emotional trauma, anxiety, depression and a loss of trust in others and if it's a minor then the outcomes are even worse affecting their development and relationships.

A combination of education, vigilance and robust digital safeguards and awareness campaigns can teach individuals, especially young people, about the risks of interacting with strangers online for they tend to put up in place as younger influencers who will share their lives on camera. And the importance of protecting personal information.

Technological solutions, such as parental controls, advanced privacy settings and reporting mechanisms, can also help deter predators. There is no denying that the threat of online predators is a sobering reminder of the darker side of the digital age. While the internet offers incredible opportunities for connection and growth, it also demands vigilance and responsibility from all users.

By understanding the tactics of online predators and implementing protective measures, individuals can work toward a safer online environment. Only when education, communication and technology unite to combat this pervasive issue, can society ensure that the Internet remains a tool for empowerment rather than exploitation.

If you suspect someone is being targeted by an online predator, report it to the authorities or an organisation like NCMEC (National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children) through their CyberTipline. (The writer is an educator; views are personal)



DIVYA BHATIA

Goa has long been a dream destination for both domestic and international travelers. Its blend of scenic beauty and cultural richness has earned it a prominent place on the global tourism map. But is the charm of Goa fading? Is it losing its allure? Certainly not. In fact, anyone visiting Goa would find its flights fully booked well in advance, its hotels packed, and its beaches bustling with lively crowds. However, some media reports have suggested a decline in its popularity, which seems at odds with the reality and the figures.

For decades, Goa has been synonymous with sun-kissed beaches, lively shacks, and a carefree lifestyle that has charmed travellers from

around the world. Beyond its picturesque coastlines lies a treasure trove of history, culture, and tradition waiting to be discovered. Ironically, a report from the CEIC (China Economic Information Centre) claimed a drastic drop in foreign tourist arrivals to Goa, alleging a fall from 8.5 million in 2019 to just 1.5 million in 2023. This nar-

rative suggested that Goa was losing its allure to international competitors like Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. Interestingly report is bereft of the details of the sources and how they were collected. Casting aspersions on the motive of the report in first place. These claims have been contested by Goa's Tourism Department, which points out significant discrepancies in the data. Official figures indicated approximately 450,000 foreign arrivals in 2023—a notable recovery post-pandemic-while domestic tourism surged to 8.17 million in 2023, surpassing the 7.12 million recorded in 2019. Altogether, Goa welcomed 8.62 million tourists in 2023, exceeding pre-pandemic levels. Addressing these concerns,

Tourism Minister Rohan A Khaunte has criticised the report, describing it as a deliberate attempt to misrepresent Goa's standing. "The numbers are manipulated to present a false narrative," he stated. "In 2023, we recorded 4.5 million international tourists and about 9 million domestic tourists. It's not just about quantity but the quality of tourism and the revenue it generates. Domestic tourists are now spending more, opting for premium accommodations." To further boost the international Khaunte stresses the importance of improving Goa's international connectivity, particularly with emerging markets in Southeast Asia, the West Asia and Europe. He revealed ongoing efforts to establish direct flight routes to



key destinations such as the UAE, Malaysia and South Korea. "These regions hold immense potential for quality tourism," he noted. In fact, Goa has gone notch up to promote tourism that is both sustainable and rejuvenating. In 2023, Goa launched a pioneering regenerative tourism campaign, emphasising sustainability across the pillars of economy, environment, and society. This initiative aims to go beyond sustainable prac-

tices, creating tourism models that leave a positive impact on local communities while offering unique, meaningful experiences for travelers. "Regenerative tourism is about ensuring that tourism not only sustains but enriches the local culture, economy, and environment," Khaunte explains. Despite its many strengths, Goa faces ongoing challenges. The lack of app-based taxi services and disputes among taxi operators have been longstanding grievances for visitors, often resulting in complaints about high fares. Additionally, while Goa offers accommodations catering to all budgets, from luxury to backpacker-friendly, the state has been criticised for expensive lodging options. Khaunte acknowledged these concerns,

emphasising the need for improved public transportation and better policies to enhance the tourist experience. Indeed the 'Unverified data without revealing the methodology employed and source makes the data suspect and report motivated. What sets Goa apart is its versatility. Whether you're seeking beach parties, adventure sports, spiritual retreats, or cultural festivities, Goa caters to a wide range of interests. This adaptability has been the cornerstone of its enduring appeal. Goa's enchanting landscapes and vibrant culture have long served as a cinematic muse, making it a favored backdrop for filmmakers worldwide. From Bollywood blockbusters to Hollywood thrillers, Goa's charm has been

immortalised on screen. Iconic films like *Ek Duje Ke Liye* (1981) was all about love in the Goan air, while *Dil Chahta Hai* (2001) redefined the idea of weekend getaways, inspiring a generation to explore its idyllic beaches. *Dear Zindagi* (2016) captured its serene vibe, while the *Golmaal* series (2006-2010) added a playful twist to its allure as a honeymoon destination. Even international cinema embraced its beauty, with *The Bourne Supremacy* (2004) using Goa as a stunning backdrop for its high-stakes drama. Whether on screen or off, the magic of Goa continues to captivate and mesmerise, unaffected by reports or negative propaganda. (The author is travel writer and influencer; views are personal)

Trump 2.0: Stark challenges for the climate and global stability



B K SINGH

With promises to overhaul bureaucracy, impose steep tariffs and retreat from climate commitments, Trump's policies are set to reshape the US and the world

Donald Trump will take over as US President on January, 2025 and his pre-election promises would have economic and environmental consequences. On the economic front, countries worldwide would face still stronger dollars sucking money out of emerging markets, high protectionist tariffs imposed and consequent trade war slowing the growth and increasing inflation globally. His regime is not only committed to sacking thousands of bureaucrats and replaced by his supporters but has also announced a new department named the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to be headed by Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy to slash the bureaucracy. No doubt it would disrupt the continuity of the functioning of government, and it would also lead to job losses. Nationwide federal government employs nearly 3 million people. Trump says Musk and Ramaswamy would dismantle government bureaucracy, slash excess regulations, cut wasteful expenditure and restructure federal agencies. While Musk has announced to cut \$2 trillion from the federal budget, Ramaswamy has proposed to eliminate the education department and FBI.

Internal Revenue Service as well as cutting the federal workforce by 75 per cent in a mass layoff. Trump has consistently maintained to levy a 10 per cent tariff on all imports in the US, 60 per cent on imports from China and 100 per cent on cars imported from China. This would mean cutting imports from many countries which may even result in trade wars. Capacities created in countries like China would be rendered unutilised. With limited domestic consumption in China, the country would face a backlash. If all countries take action to cut on imports, it certainly boomerangs somewhere and exports would be adversely impacted in most cases. A 10 per cent tariff on imports would increase US prices of goods by at least 3 per cent and a continued trade war may even further raise the prices. While domestic producers in the US would welcome it, the consumers will have to pay more. Tariff is not the solution to all problems. Trump's idea to shift manufacturing back to the US may be hit by supply chain disruption on account of higher tariffs.

The job creation in the US may be impacted. In his first term, Trump increased tariffs on Aluminum and Steel to bring its manufacturing back to the US, but the goal was not achieved. His acceptance of higher prices to be paid by consumers, while protecting producers had also made consumers pay 18 per cent extra on Washing machines in 2018. Later some of Trump's tariff was increased by Biden too. It went up to 100 per cent on electric vehicles, 50 per cent on solar cells and 25 per cent on batteries from China. It had its impact on climate action too - the transition to cleaner energy was slowed down. Herbert Hoover, a Republican, US President nearly a century ago had similarly announced the imposition of tariffs, which ultimately culminated in the adoption of the Smoot-Hawley Act, of 1930 and increased tariffs by 40 to 60 per cent.

It led to a trade war and the US faced retaliation from its trade partners too. It triggered the great depression and the



IN HIS FIRST TERM, TRUMP INCREASED TARIFFS ON ALUMINUM AND STEEL TO BRING ITS MANUFACTURING BACK TO THE US, BUT THE GOAL WAS NOT ACHIEVED

worst economic crisis humankind has ever experienced. Presently global economy is already facing considerable headwinds, any trade war can have disastrous consequences. US's technological advancement for decades has placed it as the leading powerhouse in the world.

Its investment in research and development has been quite rewarding as evident from the fact that there have been more Nobel laureates in the last five or six years than the rest of the world put together have produced. With its technological superiority, the rest of the world is dependent on it economically too and the tariff policy would leave them behind in the trade war. So far China's growth has been manufacturing followed by exports. With the slowdown in exports, it is dealing with the problem of overcapacity of its industries and making efforts to boost domestic consumption. There has been budget constraint in Europe - money is spent on subsidies in several countries, causing growth retardation. Germany, to continue producing in the country has to match the US subsidy offering 900 million euros to Swedish battery makers Northvolt, which is experiencing sluggish growth of the economy. Subsidies continue to slow the growth globally.

As the growth suffers, climate action also suffers. For instance, countries in the African subcontinent have vast potential for solar and wind energy, which has remained untapped so far. China's interest in Africa is going up through its belt and Road initiatives; it has an eye on the natural resources of the continent. It is

to be seen whether Trump 2.0 can counter China in Africa.

In his election speeches, Trump has already sought to restore US manufacturing and has targeted to end the Chinese dominance in sectors like advanced information technology, high-end numerical control machinery, robotics, aviation equipment, maritime engineering technology, sophisticated rail equipment, energy-saving vehicles, electrical equipment, medical devices and agriculture machinery etc.

European business finds it now difficult to continue investing in China and India should try to leverage the churn to its advantage. President-elect has already announced Immigration hardliner Tom Homan for the deposition of illegal immigrants. He said that there is nobody better in policing and controlling US borders and there is no doubt that Homan will do a fantastic job which has been long awaited.

Homan also spoke to the press supporting the deportation of even US-born children of undocumented immigrants. Another Immigration hardliner Stephen Miller has been announced to be deputy Chief of Policy in the new administration. Unprecedented deportation is around the corner, which is bound to impact the labour force. What will happen to manufacturing? Also, his tax cut promise would lead to a fiscal deficit; the US has one of the highest fiscal deficits 22 per cent of GDP, more than four times as high as India.

The country is already under heavy debt and indebtedness would further increase the deficit. Despite a good chemistry between Trump and Modi, India

may not be spared of 10 per cent tariff, which may impact our imports. By 2028, when Trump's term ends, not only the US, but many other countries will be reeling under high inflation and poor growth. UN is also reconciled to accept a cut in US funding in Trump 2.0. A US retreat at the UN is likely to open the door for China, which has been building influence in global diplomacy. The best part of Trump's promises is that he would stop funding war. The end of war in West Asia and Ukraine is expected soon. The re-election of Trump has cast a shadow on the ongoing world climate summit in Baku, Azerbaijan. His withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in his first term and halting climate funding has slowed down the progress globally.

Trump in his election campaign has vowed to ignore any climate emergency. He has been categorical in his election speeches - abandon climate, drill, baby, drill. He has also joked in speeches that if the sea level rises, we will have more properties facing the sea. In some other speeches, he said that why should we be concerned if the sea level rises by a thousandth of an inch after thousands of years? Global leaders at Baku perceive the inaction and obstructions from the US and debate whether they can afford such inaction for four more years. They must work out the strategy and pursue advanced climate actions and goals. Barbados PM has invited Trump for a face-to-face meeting on climate.

(The writer is retired principal chief conservator of forests -head of Forests Force- Karnataka; views are personal)

Goa's timeless allure: Ultimate destination despite misleading claims

Recent reports claiming a decline in its popularity seem at odds with the reality on the ground

Goa has long been a dream destination for both domestic and international travelers. Its blend of scenic beauty and cultural richness has earned it a prominent place on the global tourism map. But is the charm of Goa fading? Is it losing its allure? Certainly not. In fact, anyone visiting Goa would find its flights fully booked well in advance, its hotels packed, and its beaches bustling with lively crowds. However, some media reports have suggested a decline in its popularity, which seems at odds with the reality and the figures.

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DIVYA BHATIA

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MONEY MATTERS



Assam to host business summit in February

Assam will be hosting a two-day business summit in February next year with a focus on attracting investment and developing the state's infrastructure...



NCL-aided project lights up lives of tribal women

The Singrauli Women Small Holders' Poultry Project -- the CSR initiative of Coal India subsidiary Northern Coalfields Ltd (NCL) -- has benefited 750 tribal families...



Air India Express increases flight operations from NE

Low-cost airline Air India Express has announced an increase in flight operations from three major destinations in the northeast -- Guwahati, Agartala and Imphal -- as part of its winter schedule...

IIFCL seeks infra tag for the space sector

Keen to finance satellite vehicles manufacturing: MD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned IIFCL has requested the government to bring the space sector under the harmonized list of infrastructure for easier financing...



Currently, India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL) is providing advisory services to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) through its subsidiary IIFCL Projects Limited (IPL).

"Space sector is something which we have been engaged in through our subsidiary IPL. IPL got repeated mandates from ISRO for helping them in many of their endeavours, including transfer of space satellites," IIFCL managing director P R Jaishankar told PTI.

IIFCL subsidiary has helped in transferring 13 satellites from ISRO to NSIL which involved a very complicated legal process, he said, adding IPL has also done their business plans.

NewSpace India Ltd (NSIL), is the commercial arm of ISRO with the primary responsibility of enabling Indian industries to take up high-technology space-related activities and is also responsible for the promotion and commercial exploitation of the products and services emanating from the Indian space programme.

At the same time, he said, "We would like to engage with the space sector in terms of financing the space satellite vehicles manufacturing and other related areas. So, we have requested the government to include the space sector in the harmonized list of infrastructure so that we can be enabled to provide funding to this sector."

As per the extant guidelines, IIFCL can provide funds only to sectors in the harmonized master list of infrastructure. Presently, it includes five main sectors and 37 sub-sectors.

Earlier this year, the Union Cabinet liberalised Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy

allowing up to 100 per cent FDI through the automatic route in the space sector.

Foreign firms now planning to build satellites would not require government approval up to 74 per cent of the investment while up to 49 per cent in the case of launch vehicles.

This increased private sector participation would help to generate employment, enable modern technology absorption and make the sector self-reliant.

Besides, Jaishankar said, IIFCL is planning to set up a subsidiary for issuance of asset backed securities (ABS) or covered bonds, as it aims to securitize its assets and conserve capital for further growth in business.

The idea is to hived off part of our assets, he said, adding, "We will maintain a threshold, and we will focus on increasing the sanctions and disbursements more as compared to growing the asset size or loan book size".

Reliance's refining margins recover but retail remains uncertain

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

One of the two drivers of Reliance Industries Ltd's recent underperformance - weak refining margin - has reversed but the other, poor-retail top-line growth, is difficult to anticipate, brokerage JP Morgan said in a report.

Reliance stock is down 22 per cent from its peak on July 8 (NIFTY down 3.3 per cent), sharply reversing outperformance from earlier in the year.

In a market where most stocks are trading well above historical valuations, Reliance's fair relative valuations are an attraction.

The company helmed by billionaire Mukesh Ambani has three main business verticals - oil refining and petrochemical business housed in oil-to-chemical (O2C) unit, telecom arm Jio and retail. It also has a media unit and a new energy business.

Reliance Retail plus Telecom now account for about 50 per cent of total 2023-24 (FY24) consolidated EBITDA. These, JP Morgan estimates, will account for almost all of net EBITDA growth over the next three years.

With an EBITDA run-rate of USD 20 billion a year, Reliance is expected to deliver positive free cash flow for the next three years (despite elevated capex plans at new energy complex and in the retail business, and towards petchem capacity expansions).



FPI selling spree continues at Rs 26,533 cr, intensity of outflow reduces

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors have pulled out Rs 26,533 crore from the Indian equity market this month so far owing to increasing allocations to China, concerns over muted corporate earnings and elevated valuation of domestic stocks.

While the sell-off continues, the quantum of net outflows has significantly reduced compared to October, when Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPI) withdrew Rs 94,017 crore (USD 11.2 billion) on a net basis.

With the latest pull-out, FPI outflows on a net basis are Rs 19,940 crore in 2024 so far.

Going ahead, the flows from foreign investors into the Indian equity markets will depend on the policies implemented under Donald Trump's presidency, the prevailing inflation and interest rate dynamics, the trajectory of the geopolitical landscape, and the third-quarter earnings per-

formance of Indian companies, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said.

According to the data, FPIs recorded a net outflow of Rs 26,533 crore so far this month (till November 22). This came following a net withdrawal of Rs 94,017 crore in October, which was the worst monthly outflow. However, in September, foreign investors made a nine-month high investment of Rs 57,724 crore.

Concerns over the elevated valuations of Indian equities persist, prompting FPIs to redirect their attention toward markets offering more attractive valuations, Srivastava said.

Additionally, China continues to draw significant foreign inflows at India's expense, bolstered by its compelling valuation levels and the recent announcement of stimulus measures aimed at revitalizing its slowing economy, he said.

GLOBAL CUES, FIIS KEY FACTORS

Markets may react to assembly polls outcome: Analysts

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Global factors and FII activity will dictate trends in domestic equity markets this week while assembly poll results of Maharashtra and Jharkhand may impact stocks on Monday, say analysts.

Stock markets witnessed a spirited recovery on Friday with benchmark Sensex and Nifty notching the best single-day gains in more than five months and offering relief after weeks of correction.

On Friday, Sensex jumped 1,961.32 points or 2.54 per cent to settle at 79,117.11 while Nifty soared 557.35 points or 2.39 per cent to 23,907.25.

"On the domestic front, the outcomes of the Maharashtra and Jharkhand elections will be crucial triggers. Especially Maharashtra where NDA witnessed a one-sided victory which is likely to boost bullish sentiment further. However, global factors continue to pose significant risks. Escalating tensions between Russia and Ukraine, alongside rising crude oil prices, have added to inflationary concerns," Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd, said.

A strengthening US dollar index and elevated US bond yields are weighing on the rupee, leading to record foreign institution-



al investor (FII) outflows.

"The direction of FII flows will remain a key determinant for the markets following the recent correction," Meena added.

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.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude and the rupee-dollar trend would also influence trading in the stock market.

Global triggers, including US economic data such as GDP growth rate, and FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) meeting minutes, will play critical roles in shaping investor sentiment, Meena added.

Mobile industry seeks enhanced air cargo handling capacity

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mobile phone players want Indian airports to ramp up their existing cargo handling capacity to support a projected eight-fold increase in device exports to USD 180 billion by 2030, industry body ICEA said.

India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA) Chairman Pankaj Mohindroo told PTI that the turnaround time at customs is a major hurdle for the electronics industry which delays shipments' processing further.

"In China, while the factory to export take-off from the cargo terminal is achieved on Day 1, in India, the export take off happens only by Day 2. This is a glaring chasm especially when seen in the context of the volume of exports which in the case of China is more than 30 times electronics output (USD 959 billion) compared to India (USD 29 billion) in 2023," Mohindroo said.

Electronics is already India's largest export in air cargo while it's ranked third overall behind engineering and petrol.



"To keep pace with the expected growth in exports, concerted efforts are needed at the Central and State level. The infrastructure at current airports has already reached saturation levels as they are operating at 80-100 per cent of their capacity which calls for expansion of existing airports and developing new ones," Mohindroo said.

According to ICEA, total electronics exports stood at USD 29.1 billion for the period from financial year 2023-24, out of which mobiles stood at USD 15 billion.

"To achieve the USD 500 billion of electronics production

by 2030 requires airport capacities to increase parallelly to handle USD 180 bn of exports, the vast majority on an annual basis which would be 6 times higher than the current exports. By 2030, electronics will not only be India's top 2 exports (at the rate of USD 180-200 billion per year), but also significantly larger in terms of air cargo as compared to any other export from India," Mohindroo said.

At present 55 per cent of total mobile phone exports from India are handled by Delhi, 30 per cent by Madras Airport and 10 per cent at Bangalore airport.

National Consumer Helpline to roll out AI-based features

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

National Consumer Helpline (NCH) is set to introduce artificial intelligence-based features including speech recognition and multilingual chatbots as part of a major upgrade to its consumer grievance system.

The helpline has also announced partnerships with over 1,000 companies to expedite complaint resolution.

The new AI capabilities, dubbed NCH 2.0, will allow consumers to file complaints through voice input in their local languages, marking a

Partners with 1,000 firms

significant technological transformation of the consumer protection platform that currently operates in 17 languages.

The helpline has seen dramatic growth in usage, with monthly calls surging to 141,817 in January 2024 from 14,795 in January 2015. Monthly complaint registrations have tripled to 112,468 in 2024 from 37,062 in 2017.

"These technological upgrades are aimed at making the grievance filing process

more seamless, efficient, and inclusive," the Department of Consumer Affairs said in a statement.

The partnership programme, known as the Convergence Programme, has expanded to include major companies across sectors such as e-commerce, travel, education, and banking. The number of participating companies has grown nearly fourfold from 263 in 2017 to 1,009 currently.

26 major listed realty firms sell Rs 35,000 cr worth properties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's 26 major listed real estate firms have sold properties worth nearly Rs 35,000 crore during the September quarter with Godrej Properties reporting highest sales bookings.

According to the data compiled from regulatory filings, the 26 major listed realty firms have reported a combined sales bookings of Rs 34,985 crore in the second quarter of the current fiscal year. Bulk of pre-sales (sales bookings) came from residential segment.

In terms of sales bookings, Godrej Properties emerged as the largest listed player during July-September quarter with pre-sales of Rs 5,198 crore.

Mumbai-based Macrotech Developers Ltd, which sells properties under the Lodha brand, reported sales bookings of Rs 4,290 crore during the quarter under review.



Delhi-NCR-based Max Estates sold properties worth Rs 4,100 crore, while Bengaluru-based Prestige Estates Projects Ltd clocked sales bookings of Rs 4,022.6 crore during the quarter.

Delhi-NCR based Signature Global achieved sales bookings of Rs 2,780 crore in the September quarter, driven by strong demand for its housing projects at Gurugram.

DLF Ltd, the country's largest realty firm in terms of market capitalisation, sales bookings declined sharply during the July-September period to Rs 692 crore as it did not launch any new housing project.

Among other major listed players, Bengaluru-based Brigade Enterprises Ltd reported a sales bookings of Rs 1,821 crore during July-September period of this fiscal year, while Mumbai-based Oberoi Realty did pre-sales of Rs 1,442.46 crore.

IPO PIPELINE TO REMAIN STRONG

10 companies aim to raise Rs 20,000 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The primary market is expected to remain vibrant, with at least 10 companies, including supermarket major Vishal Mega Mart and Blackstone-owned diamond grading firm International Gemmological Institute (India) Ltd expected to raise a combined Rs 20,000 crore in the next month, merchant bankers said.

Education-focused NBFC Avanse Financial Services, TPG Capital-backed Sai Life Sciences, hospital chain operator Paras Healthcare, and investment bank DAM Capital Advisors are also among the companies planning to launch their IPOs in December, they added. The companies aim to raise a total of Rs 20,000 crore through their public offerings. These IPOs will span various sectors, and deal sizes, and include both fresh issues and offers for sale. Trivish D, COO of Tradejini, an online brokerage house, told PTI that the Maharashtra election verdict and the UP Lok Sabha by-election results have created a positive market sentiment that could boost IPO activity and fundraising efforts.

WITH RAMAYANA TRAIL PACKAGE

Lankan Airlines eyes more Indian tourists

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sri Lankan Airlines aims to increase flights to the country and attract more tourists, including with the Ramayana Trail package, according to a top airline official. The company sees India as a place that offers "enormous growth" opportunities.

people connect with 20 significant locations in Sri Lanka that are linked to the Ramayana story.

SriLankan Airlines CEO Richard Nuttall said growth in the number of tourists from India has been stellar this year but still below the pre-Covid numbers.

He was speaking at a function in the national capital for the



launch of the Ramayana Trail package on Saturday evening. High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to India Kshenuka

Senewiratne was also present.

Till the end of October this year, around 20 per cent of the tourists who came to Sri Lanka were from India.

"We have been looking at how to lift and rejuvenate tourism from India to Sri Lanka to the next level," he said while mentioning the Ramayana Trail and added that it was time to do something different.

Currently, the airline operates 88 flights a week to nine destinations in India -- Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kochi, Trivandrum, Chennai, Trichy and Madurai.

Emphasising that the airline sees India as a place of "enormous growth and possibilities", Nuttall said it wants to be part of that growth and is working with its Indian partners.

what's brewing?

SANYA MALHOTRA ON THE 'BEAUTIFUL BLEND' OF DIFFERENT ART FORMS IN MRS

Dance is the common thread that binds together Sanya Malhotra and her character Richa in Arati Kadav's *Mrs* and the actor says the film was the perfect project where she got an opportunity to pursue both her passions. The Delhi-born actor, who is a trained dancer in contemporary and ballet dance forms, participated in the popular dance reality show *Dance India Dance* before debuting in films with 2016's *Dangal*. *Mrs* is the Hindi-language adaptation of Jeo Baby's critically-acclaimed Malayalam film *The Great Indian Kitchen* (2021), about an aspiring dancer who is married off in a patriarchal family where she is reduced to doing household chores but ultimately resists her oppression. "This is what I was looking for. I love acting and I am extremely passionate

about dancing. Brinda Gopal ma'am has done the choreography for the film and it just blends with the story so well. Richa is really passionate about dancing, she is a professional dancer. When she gets married she is trying to love what her life has become after marriage but also doesn't want to lose herself. "As an actor, I am constantly looking for characters where I don't lose any of my passions. I love acting, I also like dancing. When I found such a beautiful blend... I was grateful to get the opportunity with such a film," said Malhotra. *Mrs*, presented by Jio Studios in association with Baweja Studios, is produced by Jyoti Deshpande, Pammi Baweja, Harman Baweja, Nishant Dahiya and Kanwaljit Singh in key roles.



Brad Pitt suffers scary fall while filming *F1* movie

Actor Brad Pitt, from Hollywood, recently experienced a frightening moment while filming his new *F1* movie. During the shooting of a scene with an intense car accident, the actor was observed tripping and eventually falling to the ground. Wearing complete racing attire, the 59-year-old actor was observed limping from the crash scene and then collapsing onto a cushioned mat supported by the crew. Scheduled for release in June 2025, the high-energy movie guarantees to be a hit during the summer season, showcasing cameos from actual F1 racers alongside Brad Pitt behind the wheel of a specially designed F2 vehicle.

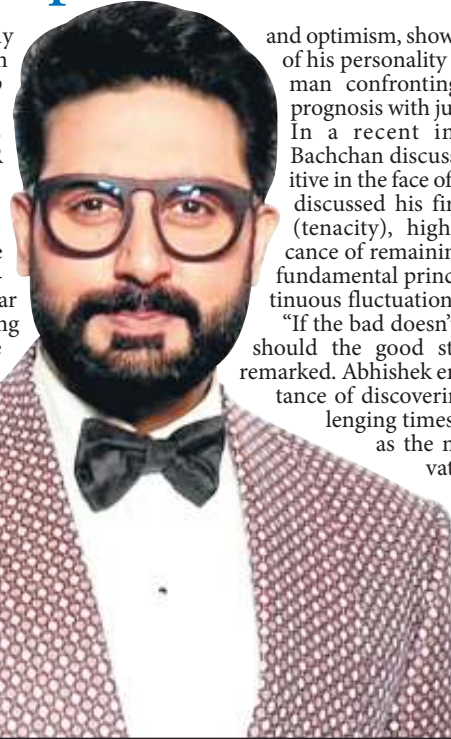
Leading up to the final filming of his much-anticipated movie, a collaboration with *F1* star Lewis Hamilton, Brad Pitt has been a regular presence at Grand Prix gatherings. After George Russell's pole position win on November 23 at the Vegas race, Pitt went onto the track to film a scene as his character, Sonny Hayes. Shortly after fans filmed the actor in complete racing attire, he walked shakily away from a crash site before falling onto a cushioned mat that was being held by a crew member. The 60-year-old actress will appear alongside cast members such as Javier Bardem, Tobias Menzies, Kerry Condon, Sarah Niles and Idris Elba. Pitt's team wasted no time issuing a statement about his health, referring to the actor by his



character's name, Hayes, as soon as the footage went viral: "During qualifying, Sonny sustained a significant impact requiring immediate medical evaluation. Incidents of this magnitude are always taken seriously and Sonny's health remains our top priority." APX GP added, "While Sonny is otherwise stable, he will not participate in tomorrow's race as he focuses on recovery. The entire team stands behind him and we'll provide updates when available. Joshua [Pearce] will race solo tomorrow, carrying the team forward."

Abhishek Bachchan talks about finding hope in dark times

Abhishek Bachchan is currently enjoying the praise for his role in Shoojit Sircar's film *I Want to Talk*. After taking a break for a year, Abhishek is back in the spotlight with his latest film, *I Want to Talk*, following R Balki's *Ghoomer* (2023). Despite receiving praise, the movie has not yet gained traction at the box office. The release of the movie happens at the same time as ongoing gossip about problems in Abhishek's marriage to film star Aishwarya Rai, following 17 years of being together. Abhishek and Aishwarya have not responded to these rumors, causing speculation about whether their silence is a deliberate choice to deal with the situation calmly or to ignore baseless gossip altogether. Despite the distractions, Abhishek remains filled with happiness



and optimism, showcasing the true nature of his personality in *I Want to Talk* — a man confronting a terminal cancer prognosis with just 100 days left to live. In a recent interview, Abhishek Bachchan discussed how he stays positive in the face of difficulties. Abhishek discussed his firm belief in *dhriddha* (tenacity), highlighting the significance of remaining committed to one's fundamental principles despite the continuous fluctuations of life. "If the bad doesn't stop being bad, why should the good stop being good," he remarked. Abhishek emphasised the importance of discovering hope during challenging times, stating that it serves as the motivation that motivates and maintains life. The actor also commended Shoojit Sircar for creating an inspiring movie from a potentially heavy topic, steering clear of the dangers of overwhelming emotional sorrow.

Ariana Grande opens up about seeking help at 8

Singer and *Wicked* star Ariana Grande shared that she first saw a therapist at the age of eight so she could "process" the divorce of her parents.

The 31-year-old is quoted by The Sun on Sunday's Bizarre column as saying: "I first saw a therapist when I was eight after my parents' divorce — but I don't think I was really mature enough to process things. But as I have gotten older, my therapist has been everything to me."

The *We can't be friends* hitmaker previously claimed that therapy sessions had been "life-saving" for her and called for mental health services to be made available for free so that even those that can't afford the expensive appointments can benefit from them.

She said: "Therapy has saved my life. That is why I am so passionate about making therapy and mental health services available for all. It shouldn't just be for those that can afford it."

Meanwhile, Grande is now starring as Glinda in the adaptation of the Broadway musical *Wicked* - which is the unofficial prequel to Judy Garland classic *The Wizard of Oz* - and noted how she and her co-star Cynthia Erivo have become



"so emotional" amid the release of the film, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

She said: "We have become such cryers — especially in the last few weeks. As we have been able to see the final product of what we have done, as we have been able to see people's reactions to the movie — it's just been so emotional."

Grande noted that Erivo, who plays the misunderstood green girl Elphba in the film, has become a "sister" to her and believes that they have created a bond that will last a lifetime.

She said: "Cynthia and myself just randomly burst out crying — but don't worry, they are good tears! Honestly, she has become my sister. The first time we met we had what we thought would be a short conversation about what we wanted to achieve creatively — and it ended up with us talking for hours, bonding over so many things."

"Creatively we wanted to do all we could — but we also decided early on that we would be there during shooting for each other — no matter what. I am so proud of what everybody on *Wicked* has achieved — but the greatest thing for me is that I have gained a sister for life."

FUN

ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBS

GARFIELD

REALITY CHECK

SPEED BUMP

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	
					6
7			8		9
				10	
					11
12	13			14	15
					16
17					
19					

NANCY

SUDOKU

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

GINGER MEGGS

ACROSS

- This type of word describes something
- Circular
- A boat you paddle along
- The throbbing pain
- The USA's coldest state
- Assistant
- A round mark
- Move in time to music
- A pale purple colour
- Smashed into small pieces

DOWN

- Uncooked bread
- Comes to a finish
- Use a feather to make someone laugh
- A planet

SOLUTION

W	H	I	S	K	E	R			
A	G	I	O	I					
L	E	M	O	N	C	A	R	O	N
U	T	O	K	I	S				
M	I	N	E	R	S	K	N	O	T
I									
N	O	O	N	C	A	R	O	N	
I	C	L	E	R	E	T			
U	N	C	L	E					
M	O	A	D	O					
P	R	O	P	E	R	T			

Vijayawada

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BREAKING STEREOTYPES IN LUXURY REAL ESTATE

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Deepti Malik is making waves in an industry long dominated by men, proving to be a formidable force in luxury real estate. With resilience and determination, she is breaking stereotypes and carving a path for women in this competitive space. Her journey, filled with challenges, has made her a trailblazer in an arena where obstacles often arise not just from clients but from within the industry itself.

"The biggest hurdle isn't always with homebuyers," she shares. "It's often within the industry itself. In the past, men typically took charge of home searches, involving women only later in the process. But platforms like Instagram and shows like *Million Dollar Listing* have created a noticeable shift. Women are taking charge, driving the process, whether it's for investment purposes or finding the perfect home for themselves."

This shift has empowered women to step into decision-making roles, both as buyers and as professionals in the real estate sector. "It's empowering to see this transformation," she reflects. "Women are no longer sidelined. Instead, they're driving the process, from the initial screening to defining what their dream home should look like."

However, her path hasn't always been smooth. Misconceptions persist, especially among male counterparts and clients who are hesitant to trust women with multimillion-dollar investments. "There's still skepticism," she admits. "Some question a woman's ability to handle complex portfolios or manage large financial transactions. But through experience, successful closures and an unwavering belief in my abilities, I've built my confidence and established myself as a credible name in this field."

As the industry evolves, she credits social media and popular culture with changing perceptions and opening doors for women to see real estate as a viable career path. Her background, a fusion of hospitality and entrepreneurship honed in Switzerland and Dubai—global epicenters of luxury service—has given her the edge in real estate, particularly

As a trailblazing agent and star of *Million Dollar Listing India*, Deepti Malik is not only closing high-stakes deals but also empowering women to take charge in the boardroom and beyond. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, she opens up about her remarkable journey, her vision for a more inclusive and dynamic real estate industry and more

in catering to high-net-worth clients on *Million Dollar Listing India*.

"Studying hospitality in Switzerland, the top destination for hospitality education, taught me the essence of impeccable service," she explains. "Later, working in Dubai, the gold standard for luxury services, refined my ability to cater to ultra-high-net-worth individuals (UHNWIs). These clients aren't just looking for a house—they seek a seamless, organized and professional experience. They want more than a broker; they need a consultant who understands their unique requirements and delivers personalised solutions."

This ethos of customisation has been key to her success. "I don't just facilitate transactions," she says. "I engage with clients from the beginning, helping them refine their vision and tailoring the process to suit their needs. It's about creating a stress-free, professional experience that respects their time and investments." Malik's hospitality background has equipped her with crucial skills like time management and patience—qualities she deems essential in luxury real estate. "Real estate at this level is a long-term process," she notes. "Deals require time to close. Patience is key—knowing when to step back and let the process unfold while ensuring everything runs smoothly."

Her entrepreneurial spirit complements her approach, allowing her to balance work with her personal passions. "Entrepreneurship enables me to design a dynamic life," she says. "I'm a fitness enthusiast, so I integrate workouts, dining out and

spending time in inspiring environments into my daily routine. I don't believe in waiting for retirement to enjoy life—I want to work, play and live my passions now." Her journey into luxury real estate wasn't without challenges. While her father's experience with large-scale land deals provided some guidance, she admits the residential luxury market was daunting. "I learned the hard way," she recalls. "I made it a point to meet clients personally and immerse myself in the process. Over time, I realised that success lies in creating a systematic, client-driven approach."

This approach begins with a rigorous screening process. "The first step is to thoroughly understand the client's needs," she explains. "From gauging their seriousness as buyers to identifying their budget, preferred location and property type, the screening helps us focus on what truly matters. It's about narrowing down the search to focus on what's right."

For Malik, being a public figure on *Million Dollar Listing India* is about purpose, not pressure. With every deal and interaction under scrutiny, she takes it all in stride, seeing her visibility as an opportunity rather than a challenge. "I'm grateful and I love it," she says with characteristic positivity. "There's no pressure because I've always believed in the motto: don't chase, attract. Everything amazing that's happening in my life, I've attracted it. I wanted to be a known face—but for the right reasons. There are many ways to become famous, but I wanted to be



recognised for my knowledge, expertise and the positive impact I bring to people's lives," she shares. "As a real estate consultant, you play a crucial role in someone's life. Whether it's helping them find a home or make a significant investment, the responsibility is immense, and I take that very seriously."

Rather than being daunted by the spotlight, she embraces it. "I enjoy sharing glimpses of my life beyond real estate," she says. "It's rewarding to set an example—whether for the industry or for people in general. And mistakes? They're part of the journey. You learn, you grow, and you move forward."

For her, visibility isn't a burden—it's a privilege. "The more you're seen, the more impact you can make. I don't see it as pressure. I see it as an opportunity to inspire, connect and contribute meaningfully to the industry I love."

For her, the thrill of being on *Million Dollar Listing India* goes beyond the glamour of the show. "The most rewarding moment? Closing a transaction that happens both on the show and in real life," she shares. "It's like hitting the bullseye—a bingo moment in this numbers game."

But the journey isn't just about deals. "Another highlight was meeting incredible people on the team," she says. "From on-screen to behind the scenes, the camaraderie we built was unforgettable. The crew, working tirelessly day and night, truly deserved a reality show of their own! The conversations, relationships and experiences became some of the most special parts of this journey."

For women seeking to enter the luxury real estate market, she offers clear advice: find a mentor. "A great mentor helps you avoid mistakes they've made, saving you time and effort," she advises. "Life is too short to make all the mistakes yourself—learn from others. With resources like social media and the internet at your fingertips, there's no excuse not to learn every single day."

Her aspirations remain high, inspiring others to find their own "bullseye" moments. When asked about the most memorable transaction from *Million Dollar Listing India*, she skillfully keeps the suspense alive. "I'd love to spill the beans," she teases. "But it would lose its charm! All I can say is it's a blockbuster—a deal worth waiting for. Stay tuned to Sony Liv every Friday at 8 p.m. to catch it!"

Kerala's son revolutionising cinematic genius

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In the lush, tropical landscapes of Kerala, India, a voice in cinema has emerged, weaving intricate tales that capture the complexities of human emotions. Christo Tomy, a talented filmmaker from this picturesque region, has been making waves in the Indian film industry with his thought-provoking stories. Now, with his selection for the prestigious BAFTA Breakthrough program, his unique voice is poised to resonate with audiences worldwide.

Being part of the breakthrough program is a dream come true for Tomy. "It means a lot to me. I've been following this program for quite a few years and it's finally this year that I was able to apply for it, with my project because my projects were recently released." Christo's journey to this milestone has not been easy. Despite passing out from film school in 2016, it took him eight years to make films and get them released. "So, it has been a long journey," he reflects. "And after all the hard work, the BAFTA Breakthrough program has happened at the right time."

He believes that this recognition will not only be a great emotional boost but also open doors to new opportunities. "I'm excited about all the opportunities that this will bring in," he says. As part of the program, he envisions himself taking his stories to a global audience. "I want my stories to be seen by people from around the world and the dream is for my films and stories to be celebrated all over the world," he expresses. The *Kanyaka* filmmaker hopes that the program will help him build relationships with industry experts, directors, producers and actors from across the world, leading to future collaborations on exciting international productions.

Christo's previous projects have already garnered national acclaim, including a National Award. When asked about how these experiences shaped his approach to directing a feature narrative, he recounts the moment he received the news of his National Award win. "I was editing my music video when I got a call from my mother, saying that I won the National Award," he reminisces. Initially, Tomy thought it was a mistake, confusing it with the National Student Film Award. However, upon verifying the news, he was overwhelmed with emotion. "It was a huge moment for me because

I was very young and I was winning at that time for a project where it's normally you don't win national awards for a student short film project," he explains.

Receiving a national award is a milestone for any filmmaker and for the *Kamuki* fame, it has been a surreal experience twice over. He fondly recalls his first trip to Delhi to receive the national award, describing it as a "great experience" that he will always cherish.

His second national award win for *Kamuki* was a testament to his conviction in telling stories that resonate with him, even if they may seem common to others. Despite initial doubts from others, Christo felt a deep connection to the story and decided to pursue it. The national award win was a huge moral booster, especially during a challenging time in his personal life.

These award wins have had a profound impact on Christo's approach to storytelling. "What these awards did is that it cemented my trust in the stories that I was telling," he reflects. Despite his stories being rooted in non-commercial themes, they have managed to connect with a wide audience. His film *Kamuki*, for instance, has garnered over 2 million views on YouTube.

In his films, Christo often explores the themes of secrecy and revelation. His movie *Ullozhukku*, for instance, delves into the complexities of family relationships and the secrets that bind them. "Kerala society puts family at the center of it," Christo explains. "Family and relationships hold very important value in all our lives. At the same time, it is also a society that is conservative."

This conservatism, he notes, can lead to secrets within even the closest-knit families. "A guy going out to see his girlfriend might not be able to tell his parents that okay, I'm going to see my girlfriend because they won't approve of the idea," he illustrates. "More so for a girl, a girl going out won't be able to tell her parents that I am going to meet my boyfriend."

His film *Ullozhukku* features a powerful performance by Urvashi as Leelamma, a character whose resilience and despair are deeply intertwined. When Christo finished writing the script, he knew that he needed an extraordinary actor to bring Leelamma to life. "I was blessed to have Urushi play the character," he says.

Urvashi's rich personal experiences and emotional depth brought a level of authenticity to her performance. "That is why her performance is very true and very honest," Christo notes. As a director, he often found himself in awe of Urvashi's talent, saying, "Sometimes when

Christo Tomy has emerged as a trailblazing force in Malayalam cinema, pushing the boundaries of narrative and artistic expression. In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, he takes us into his creative world, sharing the passions, inspirations and experiences that have shaped his remarkable journey as a filmmaker.

she performs, I would just stand there, marvel at the magic that she creates on the screen."

Christo and Urvashi's working method was highly collaborative. Before each scene, Urvashi would read the script, call Christo and they would discuss the character's motivations and rework the lines to make them more convincing. Once Urvashi was inspired by the character's motivations, she would take over and Christo would simply observe the magic unfold. "My job as a director with Urvashi was to get her inspired, to do that scene, to get her inspired in the motivations of the character to do and say those things in the scene," Christo says. "Once she's inspired or seen that space, she just takes it from there and you can just sit and watch the magic happen before you."

Malayalam cinema is experiencing an international resurgence, with audiences keen on its unique storytelling. Christo is enthusiastic about the global appeal of Malayalam films, saying, "I'm excited about Malayalam cinema. I'm excited that the films have done extremely well in the theatres in Kerala. And not just in Kerala, outside Kerala as well." He notes that even unconventional narratives have been huge successes in Kerala, which is encouraging for filmmakers and storytellers.

His experience as a jury for the National Film Awards has given him a unique perspective on the importance of language and title in filmmaking. For Christo, the title of a film plays a crucial role in capturing the essence of the story. "I feel like the title plays an important role because for me, when the title doesn't land, it always feels that something is not right," he explains.

Christo's own experience with finding the right title for his film was a laborious one. He recalls having many options and changing the title over time. "I had a book where I've written options for the titles and the list would go on and on," he says. "And I would ask friends and family about which titles would which title is better." Finally, landed the title.

As the spotlight shines brighter on Christo Tomy, his dedication to his craft, his passion for storytelling and his willingness to take creative risks will undoubtedly inspire a new generation of filmmakers and audiences alike. With his cinematic journey gaining momentum, one thing is clear: Christo Tomy's voice will be heard, his stories will be told, and his vision will leave an indelible mark on the world of cinema.

GAME ON! EDUGAMES MAKING LEARNING FUN AND EFFECTIVE

Imagine a classroom where lessons feel like an adventure, quizzes turn into challenges and students are so engrossed in learning that they forget it is even "routine". That is the power of gaming in education: blending interactive elements of games with educational content can bring students deep engagement, greater retention and more enjoyment than ever before in learning. From problem-solving puzzles to deeply immersed virtual worlds, gaming takes traditional education and converts the dullness of school into a source of excitement, thus opening the doors of real access to learning for the modern generation. An effective learning game is knowledge-based and provides the pupil or learner with room for freedom while learning and discovering things and problems independently. Therefore, game-based learning further helps increase motivation among students more than traditional methods. Reports indicated that students who participated in the mathematics game were characterised by a better attitude toward mathematics compared to those in the control groups. Educational games have been linked to significant cognitive enhancement, especially problem-solving, critical thinking, as well as spatial awareness.

offering customised challenges that foster a deeper understanding of content. This adaptability is crucial, especially in diverse classrooms where students may have varying levels of ability and learning preferences.

DEVELOPMENT OF 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Multitasking and cooperative games tend to foster social interaction among the students and thereby promote empathy and teamwork within them. The students learn to communicate effectively and solve conflicts building blocks to either academic or personal success. Apart from that, research has shown that children's games are also positive for children's social development and above all, for cooperative skills and empathy.

ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

Educational Games provide instant feedback to learners, allowing them to understand their mistakes and learn from them in real time. This can lead to better attention and understanding of complex subjects. Research shows that students who engage with educational games tend to recall information more effectively, as they are learning through experiences.

SOCIAL INTERACTION AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Teamwork is one way through which students will attain better communication skills by solving conflicts that facilitate both academic success and life success. Apart from such purposes, studies conclude that games for the younger generation enhance aspects like cooperation and even empathy.

ENCOURAGING EXPLORATION AND CREATIVITY

Games foster an environment that encourages exploration and creativity. Many educational games are designed to be open-ended, allowing students to experiment and discover solutions independently.



Improvements in attentional skills among gamers were further found to be produced from experiments conducted by Dr. Dye, Dr. Green, and Dr. Bavelier of University of Rochester as essential for performing a given task if the process requires swift thinking as well as multitasking.

The benefits of gaming, among children which more conventional methods failed to achieve:

PERSONALISED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Gaming provides personalised learning opportunities tailored to individual student needs. According to a literature review by Pearson, digital games can adapt to the learner's pace and style,

(The author, Rachana Heda, is the COO at Gintree Academy.)

Rishabh Pant becomes most expensive IPL buy at ₹27 crore

PTI ■ JEDDAH (SAUDI ARABIA)

Rishabh Pant became the most expensive player in the history of IPL as Lucknow Super Giants splurged a humongous Rs 27 crore to buy the flamboyant India keeper-batter in the tournament's mega auction here on Sunday. The amount LSG spent for Pant ensured Shreyas Iyer's record of being the tournament's costliest player lasted barely a few minutes after Punjab Kings broke the bank to buy the India batter for Rs 26.75 crore. Moments before Pant emerged as the most expensive player, Iyer surpassed the record held by Australian pacer Mitchell Starc, who was bought by Kolkata Knight Riders for Rs 24.75 crore in the last auction. Pant went to LSG after his former franchise Delhi Capitals did not use the Right to Match card to buy him back. Starc got a much lower price this time and was sold to Delhi Capitals for Rs 11.75 crore,



while England's Jos Buttler went to Gujarat Titans for Rs 15.75 crore. Among others, left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh's consistency earned him a massive bid of Rs 18 crore, also from Punjab Kings via the Right to Match card, while South African speedster Kagiso Rabada was bought for Rs 10.75 crore by Gujarat Titans. Iyer, the former Kolkata Knight Riders captain, started with a base price of Rs two crore. Delhi Capitals had the bid at Rs 26 crore for him but PBKS raised the amount to get the player. Chennai Super Kings started with the first bid for Arshdeep, whose base price was also Rs two crore. Eventually, after an intense bidding war, the seamer was bought back by Punjab, who exercised the right to match option to complete the deal, having released him earlier. This is the second time an IPL auction is being held outside the country after last year's event in Dubai.



I played with fearless mindset, took brave decisions: Yashasvi

PTI ■ PERTH

Yashasvi Jaiswal termed his "fearless mindset" and ability to take "brave decisions" as the catalysts behind his exceptional hundred against Australia in the ongoing first Test, here on Sunday. Jaiswal made a 161 in only his second innings on Australian soil and added 201 runs for the opening wicket with KL Rahul (77) to lay the foundation of India's imposing 533-run target. "It was a very special moment for me. I always wanted to tour Australia and do well and this knock is very important for me," Jaiswal said in the post-day press meet. "I always wanted to play with a fearless mindset. I always believe in myself and take brave decisions. So, it was an amazing experience to play against such quality bowlers in their country, and it's special to score a hundred against the world's best," he added. Jaiswal, who was dismissed for an eight-ball duck in the first innings, said the focus was on negating the new ball spell by Australian quicks. "The wicket was seaming a bit more in the first innings. In the second innings we were discussing how to play the new ball better — which balls to leave and which to play. So, it was important for the team that I play the new ball better," Jaiswal said he had set small targets for himself in the second essay. "I never thought I would get this big a hundred, as my goals were small, taking it session by session. Then I had a good partnership with (KL) Rahul bhai. He was guiding me during the partnership, so that was helpful." So, what was the conversation between him and Rahul during the alliance?

"We have been playing together for a while, we all know each other well and talk between ourselves in the dressing room. "Whenever I felt nervous in the middle, Rahul bhai was telling me to remain focused and calm. It was helpful because you are going to get some good balls in these kinds of pitches," he said. The left-hander said the team was prepared to tackle the bounce at Perth. "We knew that the ball would bounce here. We were prepared for the bounce. We had a nice camp here ahead of this Test. We were practicing in similar conditions with the same kind of mindset as how we can score runs in these conditions. It's all about practicing hard and learning what shots to play here," he explained. Jaiswal brought up his fourth Test hundred with a remarkable ramped six off pacer Josh Hazlewood. The 22-year-old said he was mentally prepared for it. "To be honest, I knew he was going to bowl a bouncer because the field was set like that and I was ready for the bounce, and I was ready to play that shot. Happy that I pulled it off and carried on for some more time," he said. "Virat paaji is incredible" Virat Kohli brought up his 30th Test hundred a while after Jaiswal reached the landmark, and the youngster said it was a privilege to watch and play alongside the star batter. "I have seen Virat paaji making runs at Perth (in 2018) on TV. Now, I have seen it live too. He has been doing it for a long, long time. So, he is just incredible. "We were so happy for him that he could finish it. We were all waiting for his 100. He played amazingly," he said.

Justin Greaves scores first century as West Indies lead Bangladesh by 410 runs



AP ■ NORTH SOUND

Justin Greaves scored a patient maiden century in only his third test before West Indies declared at 450-9 on the second day of the first test against Bangladesh. Greaves, who finished 115 not out, had a previous highest score in tests of 33 and only one century in 43 first-class matches before compiling a composed hundred from 181 balls, batting at No. 6. He completed the first century of West Indies' innings after Mikyle Louis was out for 97 and Alick Athanaze for 90 on the first day. Bangladesh was 40-2 at stumps, trailing by 410 runs when bad light stopped play with seven overs left in the day. Shahadat Hossain was 10 not out and Mominul Haque on 7. The tourists lost Mahmudul Hasan Joy (5) and Zakir Hasan (15) in 20 overs before the close.

West Indies resumed Saturday at 250-5 after being sent in when Bangladesh won the toss. They were 261-7, the match closely balanced, when Greaves was joined by Kemar Roach, batting at nine. The pair put on 140 for the eighth wicket to fully turn the match in West Indies' favor. Roach made a painstaking 47 from 144 balls, following the example of Greaves whose innings of 206 deliveries included 128 dot balls. "Me and Justin are from the same country and he understands my batting ability so he just backed me in the situation and obviously it paid off," Roach said. "We're good mates, we have very good conversations at the cricket and outside cricket so that's what helped us in the middle." The 30-year-old Greaves, playing his first test for 10 months, hit only four fours, including the boundary that

brought up his century. Otherwise, he took 52 runs from singles, 38 from twos and nine from threes in an excellent example of running between wickets. His batting form had been hinted at by the fact he scored four centuries in domestic one-day matches in West Indies. "It was a fantastic effort," Roach said. "He's one who wants to learn ... I've had big hopes for him from the time he started." Roach also restrained his attacking instinct, hitting two boundaries and scoring at a strike rate of 32.6 as he played a vital support role to Greaves. When Roach came to the crease, Greaves was only 18 after resuming Saturday at 11 not out. The pair came together in the 87th over after Alzarri Joseph (4) was brilliantly caught in the gully by Zakir Hasan from the bowling of Hasan Mahmud. They built their partnership diligently, ticking off milestones. Greaves reached his half century from 88 balls and by lunch the West Indies had recovered to 336-7, scoring at a steady three runs per over. Brief rain breaks failed to disturb the batters' concentration. Roach finally was out in the 134th over when the total was 401-8. Mahmud delivered a ball outside off stump which beat Roach's shot as it curled back to hit middle. Greaves was 98 when Roach was out but kept his concentration and avoided the fate of Louis and Athanaze who both fell just short of maiden centuries. He reached his personal milestone four balls later, raising his bat to acknowledge the applause of the crowd.

Hyderabad FC host Odisha FC

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad FC will play hosts to Odisha FC in the Indian Super League here on Monday as both sides seek to climb up the ladder to strengthen their positions in their respective first matches after the international break. After a tough campaign last year, Hyderabad FC have shown increasingly encouraging signs by securing two victories and a draw in their seven matches thus far. Their seven points place them at the 11th spot and with the sixth-placed Punjab FC merely five points ahead (12), the home team can begin thinking towards bridging the gap with the higher-ranked opponents. Odisha FC, positioned ninth in the table, have nine points from eight games. Head coach Sergio Lobera has been amongst the most competitive tacticians in the competition regardless of the team that he has been at the helm of, and the Spaniard would hence want better



results with consistent performances from the juggernauts. This away fixture gives them the opportunity to begin maximising points in the matches coming their way. Hyderabad FC believe in making early inroads into the opposition's defence, ensuring that they set the tone for the flow of the proceedings. This has resulted in them netting 43 per cent of their goals in the opening 15 minutes of the matches in ISL 2024-25, with three out of their seven strikes so far coming in this phase of the game.

Will they push Odisha FC back with an early breakthrough here too? Interestingly though, Hyderabad FC play their best away from home. That explains their concerning home form, since they have not registered a victory in the previous 15 matches in their backyard. In fact, their last win at the stadium came back in February 2023 against Mohun Bagan Super Giant by a 1-0 margin. Having worked on their impediments this year, can they brush aside this concern to go on an upward surge? Odisha FC have recorded eight sequences of 10+ open play passes per game in ISL 2024-25. This is the highest such average by any team and it clearly suggests that Hyderabad will have to strategise through which they can secure points despite not having possession for a large chunk of the game, since Odisha FC prefer keeping the ball.

Verstappen captures 4th F1 championship

AP ■ LAS VEGAS

Max Verstappen cruised to a fourth consecutive Formula 1 championship by finishing fifth in the Las Vegas Grand Prix. Verstappen needed only to finish ahead of Lando Norris of McLaren to give Red Bull a fourth straight driver championship. The Dutchman started fifth but was already up to second by the 10th lap around the street circuit that includes the famed Las Vegas Strip on Saturday night. Norris, who had to score at least three points more than Verstappen to extend the championship fight, finished sixth. Verstappen needed only to finish higher than Norris to win the title, which he did with two races remaining on the season.

"Max Verstappen you are a four-time world champion," team principal Christian Horner said on the radio. "That is a phenomenal, phenomenal achievement. You can be incredibly proud of yourself as we are." Verstappen, only the sixth driver in F1 history to win at least four titles, sounded unusually emotional on the radio. "Oh My God, what a season. Four times. Thank you, thank you guys," he said. "We gave it all." The race was won, meanwhile, by George Russell who was followed by Lewis Hamilton in the first 1-2 sweep for the Mercedes drivers since 2022. Hamilton came from 10th on the grid — two weeks after a demoralizing race in Brazil — to capture his podium finish.



The duo crossed the finish line under a checkered flag waved by actor Sylvester Stallone. Carlos Sainz Jr. Finished third for Ferrari as the constructor championship remains a tight battle between leader McLaren and Ferrari. Charles Leclerc, his teammate, was

fourth. Red Bull had won the title that pays roughly \$150 million in prize money the last two seasons but has slipped to third in the standings. But that championship battle appears headed to next month's season finale in Abu Dhabi. Verstappen, meanwhile, made easy work of Norris after a season where the McLaren driver pushed him harder than he'd been challenged since Verstappen's 2021 first title. He was cruising in third with about 20 laps remaining and not overly pushing when Red Bull urged Verstappen to be patient over the team radio. "Max, just don't lose sight of our aim today, yeah?" he was told. Verstappen wasn't interested in receiving any instructions.

Virat Kohli doesn't have anything to prove, his contribution is unparalleled: Kapil Dev

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Legendary Kapil Dev said Virat Kohli doesn't have anything to prove and his contribution is "unparalleled" after the Indian batting star made his 30th Test hundred against Australia in the ongoing first Test at Perth on Sunday. Kohli (100 not out) joined young gun Yashasvi Jaiswal (161) in rewriting record books as they put Australia to swords on the third day of the Test with their respective tons powering India to a huge 533-run lead. Kohli also surpassed batting legend Sachin Tendulkar (6) for hitting most centuries by an Indian batter with his seventh ton Down Under. "People who have to criticise will criticise. If a big player takes a lot of time to bounce back, (the) media's job is (to do) that," Kapil told PTI at the Vishwa Samudra Golden Eagle Golf Championship. "One has to see his ability and talent. He's a big, big player. He doesn't have to prove anybody,

prove me or prove (it to the) media." "What he's done for cricket is amazing. We should all say, well done (to him). (Even) if he doesn't get too many runs, it's (also) okay. But what he's given to cricket is unparalleled," Kapil added. Kapil said he was happy to see the mix of young and senior Indian batters making their mark. "I don't like to compare. I just want to see our youngsters coming out and playing well. The new records are (always) going to be made. (But) it's important (for) the youngsters to come out and take the responsibility, represent the country and perform better," he said. "Don't compare any player with anybody. It's unfair, (they play in) different conditions, different eras. Today's youth are far more intelligent. They are much more ruthless and they have much more confidence," he said, referring to Jaiswal. The 1983 World Cup-winning captain said Indian cricket "is in the right place" as new players like



Harshit Rana and Nitish Reddy have also made a good beginning. "I just want to say it's great to see the youngsters coming out and expressing themselves. It's good, Indian cricket is (in) the right place," he said. Kapil also praised Jasprit Bumrah for leading India's fight from the front in the Perth Test and said the visitors have so far performed beyond expectations. Bumrah, the stand-in captain for the Perth Test, led the team's charge towards a vital 46-run lead in the first innings returning 5 for 30, as Australia were bowled out for a mere 104. Bumrah's 11th five-for in Test cricket was also his seventh in SENA (South Africa, England, New Zealand and Australia), which put him at par with Kapil for most five-wicket hauls in these nations. "Special congratulations must be given to Bumrah because it is very rare that bowlers are chosen as captains and it feels very good to see him lead the way he has done," Kapil told the media.

Kapil lauded Bumrah for bringing fast bowling back into the discussions in the country. "I need not say anything — his records show (how good he is). He is the top bowler in the world, what else do we need?" he said. "I hadn't thought before that a fast bowler would be discussed so much in India but that is happening today and I feel happy and proud about that," he added. Kapil said India's performance was contrary to the expectations given the team was recently trounced 0-3 by New Zealand at home. "The team is playing really well. They should win the first Test, positive thinking should always be there," he said. "It wasn't expected that the team would play so well after the New Zealand series. You feel angry when they play badly but also (rediscover the) love when they do well," he said. "It (the praise) is for all, it is a team game. One player has done the job today for the team and tomorrow there would be someone else."

TELUGU'S OWN MARVEL MUTANT SAGA!

AARTI SREENATH
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Behind every iconic superhero on screen lies an unsung hero, one who lends a voice that brings the character to life in a completely new language. For Telugu audiences, Krishna Kaushik, an accomplished actor and dubbing artist, did just that by stepping into the shoes of rather, the voice of Gambit, the suave and enigmatic mutant in the Marvel universe.

In a candid conversation with *The Pioneer*, he shares his journey of preparing for the role, his creative twists and the challenges of breathing life into a global character for a regional audience.

"When I first got the call to audition for Gambit, I didn't even get to see what he looked like," he begins, his tone infused with excitement. "I had to visualise everything, how he moves, how he talks, his attitude. That was my starting

point." A seasoned dubbing artist and actor, he relied on his experience and imagination to craft Gambit's Telugu avatar. "I approached it like I would any character I play on screen—by asking myself how this person would behave if they spoke Telugu. From his subtle humor to his confident charm, I wanted the audience to feel like Gambit belonged to them, even though he's from a different universe."

His creative process didn't stop at simply translating Gambit's lines. "The vocabulary and grammar of English and Telugu are so different that you have to improvise to make the emotions land," he explains. One of his most unique additions? A playful twist on pronunciation. "We decided to replace the 'Pa' sounds in Telugu with 'Fa'. So, 'Papa' became 'Fafa'. It gave the character a humorous edge that resonated with the audience."

This simple tweak not only made Gambit more relatable but also added a fresh layer of wit to the character. "It's



these little things that make a difference. They bring the character closer to the audience's hearts," he adds with a smile.

Gambit, known for his quiet confidence and magnetic charm, posed a unique challenge for him. "He's not loud or overly expressive. His power lies in his subtlety—his sharp wit, his mysterious aura. It reminded me of Shah Rukh Khan's style of emoting with his eyes and minimal expressions," he shares.

Since Marvel's dubbing process only allowed him to see limited visuals—mostly just lip movements, he had to imagine Gambit's body language and emotional depth. "It's tough when you don't see the full picture, but as an actor, I've learned to adapt. I visualised Gambit's every move, his cards, his smirks and tried to reflect that in my tone."

In the *Deadpool* universe, humor and intensity often coexist and he found himself navigating this fine line while dubbing Gambit's dialogues. "I had to adjust my pitch and tone to match the other characters like Deadpool and Wolverine. While Deadpool is loud and irreverent, Gambit is more composed and calculated," he notes. One of his favorite scenes? The introduction. "When Gambit says his real name, it's a tongue-twister. Deadpool reacts with his classic sarcasm, asking him to repeat it. Translating that moment into Telugu was a riot because we added layers of humor that clicked with our audience." Another memorable moment involved a punchline about Gambit's parents. "In English, it's bold and edgy, but in Telugu, we made it funny and colloquial. It's these moments that connect with the audience."

When asked if being a Marvel fan

influenced his performance, he beams. "Of course, I'm a Marvel fan! But I made sure my admiration for the universe didn't overshadow the task at hand. I approached Gambit as a character, not just a superhero." And if given the chance to voice another Marvel hero? "Wolverine," he says without hesitation. "I love his raw intensity and Hugh Jackman's iconic portrayal."

For him, dubbing Gambit was more than just a professional milestone—it was a testament to how cinema is evolving. "Post-COVID, there's no North or South in Indian cinema. It's all Indian cinema. With OTT platforms, Telugu audiences are watching Malayalam, Bengali and Tamil films, just as others are discovering Telugu content. Bringing Marvel movies into regional languages is part of that larger movement," he says proudly. His advice for aspiring voice artists? "Stick to the character. Let the brief guide you and don't let other voices or performances overshadow yours. Even if your character is quiet, like Gambit, find ways to make them memorable. Sometimes, the pauses and subtle nuances speak louder than words."

His work as Gambit hasn't gone unnoticed. Fans have flooded him with messages, praising how he made the character uniquely Telugu while staying true to Gambit's essence. "Some even joked that they saw him in Gambit, not the original actor," he laughs.

As for the future? He hopes to continue exploring uncharted territories in voice acting, perhaps even making his way to Hollywood one day. "For now, I'm just grateful to be part of something as iconic as Marvel. It's a dream come true."

FROM THE MARVEL UNIVERSE TO THE HEARTS OF TELUGU AUDIENCES, KRISHNA KAUSHIK'S VOICE ACTING HAS BROUGHT GAMBIT TO LIFE IN A WHOLE NEW WAY. IN A CANDID CONVERSATION WITH THE PIONEER, KAUSHIK OPENS UP ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE OF DUBBING FOR THE ICONIC CHARACTER, THE CHALLENGES HE FACED AND THE THRILL OF MAKING GAMBIT A PART OF TELUGU POP CULTURE.

Naga Chaitanya to work with Virupaksha Director



Akkineni Naga Chaitanya is in a great phase of his life. The actor is set to marry actress Sobhita Dhulipala on December 4, and his upcoming film *Thandel* is scheduled for release on February 7, 2025. Adding to the excitement, Naga Chaitanya has signed another film, this time with Karthik Dandu, the acclaimed director of *Virupaksha*.

On the occasion of his birthday on Saturday, the makers officially announced the project, launched a poster that hints at a mythological touch to the story. BVSN Prasad, in collaboration with Sukumar Writings, is producing the film. Interestingly, BVSN Prasad also produced *Virupaksha*, a fantasy-supernatural hit, and is now reuniting with the same director for this venture.

Tentatively titled *NC24*, the film features Naga Chaitanya as the protagonist. The poster showcases a dramatic scene of the hero standing on a rock with climbing gear strapped to his back, exuding intrigue and adventure. The production house, SVCC, announced that shooting will begin in December. Co-produced by Sukumar, the movie promises top-notch production values and a grand scale, with heavy CGI work to deliver visually stunning sequences.

The music for the film will be composed by Ajaneesh Loknath, renowned for his exceptional work in *Kantara* and *Virupaksha*.

Ram Charan's *Game Changer* intensifies promotions

The much-anticipated film *Game Changer*, starring Ram Charan and Kiara Advani, is set to release on January 10, 2025, during the Sankranti festival. Directed by Shankar and produced by Dil Raju in association with Zee Studios, the film is ramping up its promotional campaign.

As part of the promotional blitz, a pre-release event is planned in the USA, and the third song from the film will drop on November 28. Previous releases, *Jaragandi* and *Ra Machaa*, became instant chartbusters, heightening expectations.

The upcoming single, a melodious track shot in New Zealand featuring Ram Charan and Kiara Advani, is expected to captivate audiences. A grand pre-release event is also scheduled for December 21 in the USA.

In *Game Changer*, Ram Charan takes on two powerful roles, with a gripping story penned by Karthik Subbaraj and music composed by SS Thaman. The film boasts a star-studded cast, including SJ Surya, Srikanth, Naveen Chandra, Anjali, Samuthirakani and Nasser and will be released in multiple languages.



Sunny Leone packs her punch in *Shero*

Bollywood star Sunny Leone steps into a new realm with *Shero*, her first multilingual psychological thriller, directed by Sreejith Vijayan and shot in the picturesque locale of Munnar, Kerala. Speaking about the intense preparation for her role, Sunny revealed,

"Learning the dialogues was a significant task. I worked hard to memorise them on my own, and with the help of a dialogue coach, I mastered both the pronunciation and delivery."

When it came to action sequences, Sunny embraced the challenge wholeheartedly, performing all the stunts herself. She recalled, "One particular scene involving a heavy, solid chair was especially demanding and I even experienced a mishap with a harness. But such moments are part of the process and you move on." She added,

Adapting to a South Indian film was a new experience for the actress, but with dedicated language coaches and supportive collaborators, she confidently navigated her role. "Having good guidance makes all the difference," she noted.

Sunny also emphasised her focus on authenticity in portraying her character, avoiding mimicry of existing performances. "I aimed to bring realism to my character, concentrating on her story and emotions, rather than drawing directly from other works," she shared.

Shero promises to be an intriguing addition to Sunny Leone's repertoire, with fans eagerly awaiting this unique cinematic endeavor.



SAI DURGHA TEJ'S SATYA WINS HEARTS

Sai Dharam Tej, who recently changed his name to Sai Durgha Tej, is on a roll. His short film *Satya* continues to make waves, earning widespread praise. The heartwarming film has now been nominated in the People's Choice category at the Filmfare Short Film Awards 2024. Expressing his gratitude, Sai Durgha Tej took to social media to invite audiences to watch and vote for *Satya*, a project he holds close to his heart. Produced by his close friend Naveen Vijay Krishna, son of veteran actor VK Nares, the film was made under Vijaya Durga Productions in collaboration with Dil Raju Productions.

The short film stars popular actress Swathi Reddy in the lead role, with Naveen Vijay Krishna helming the project as director. Dedicated to those who have selflessly sacrificed for their loved ones and their nation, *Satya* strikes an emotional chord with viewers.

Allu Arjun determined to outshine Prabhas?

Allu Arjun's highly anticipated film *Pushpa 2*, directed by Sukumar, is slated to release on December 5. While the filmmakers are confident about meeting this date, reports suggest some hurdles remain. A song is yet to be shot and the dubbing work is incomplete, fueling rumors of a possible delay. However, insiders claim the makers are determined to release the film on the announced date, even if it means rushing the post-production process. Amid the final touches, Allu Arjun is reportedly focused on the film's box-office performance. According to sources, the actor has urged the producers to push for a significant hike in ticket prices, up to Rs 600, across the Telugu states. However, such hikes require government approval, and the decision is yet to be finalized.

Meanwhile, whispers from Allu Arjun's PR team suggest the actor has taken a staggering Rs 300 crore

remuneration for *Pushpa 2*. Industry insiders are skeptical, given that the film's production budget is estimated to be between Rs 600 and Rs 700 crore.

The first installment, *Pushpa: The Rise*, didn't perform exceptionally well in the Telugu states but gained massive traction in the Hindi belt. This time, the actor has strategically focused promotions on the Hindi, Bengali, and Tamil markets, with the Hyderabad pre-release event planned closer to the release date.

Allu Arjun's dedication to the *Pushpa* franchise is undeniable, having earned him a National Award for Best Actor for the first film. "He worked equally hard on this sequel but is also keen to achieve record-breaking figures at the box office, proving his dominance over Prabhas in the market," said a source. Allu Arjun seems to have set his sights on elevating his box-office stature and proving he's bigger than Prabhas.

