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**QUOTE OF THE DAY**

The pioneer

I read that those who went to jail will become CM. But KTR's sister Kavitha went to jail first. He doesn't have a chance there. In KCR's family, that chance has gone to his sister who went to jail. He is unable to handle the competition in the family. He should stop such cheap thoughts. He worked as a minister for 10 years, went to the US. He should have some wisdom and use it



- Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister P4

**DON'T MISS...**

**'Single-window system for bldg permits'**

Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister P. Narayana announced that Andhra Pradesh would introduce a single-window system for building permits starting December 31. The initiative aims to streamline the approval process for construction projects, eliminating the need for developers to approach multiple departments such as Revenue, Fire Services, and Railways for permissions. The minister stated that the reform would enhance the "Speed of Doing Business" by integrating departmental servers with the municipal...

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**FIR against SP MP Barq, SP MLA's son**

Police have lodged seven FIRs in connection with the violence over a court-ordered survey of a Mughal-era mosque here, naming Samajwadi Party MP Zia-ur-Rehman Barq and local SP MLA Iqbal Mehmood's son Sohail Iqbal as accused, officials said on Monday. The district administration has already imposed prohibitory orders and barred the entry of outsiders into Sambhal till November 30. Internet services are suspended in Sambhal tehsil and Monday was declared a holiday...

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**Gold tumbles Rs 1K to Rs 79,400 per gram**

Gold prices tumbled Rs 1,000 to slip below the Rs 80,000 level in the national capital on Monday amid weak global trends, according to local marketmen. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity tanked Rs 1,000 to Rs 79,400 per 10 grams against the previous close of Rs 80,400 on Friday. Silver declined Rs 1,600 to Rs 91,700 per kg. The metal finished at Rs 93,300 per kg on Friday. The price of gold with 99.5 per cent purity plunged Rs 1,000 to Rs 79,000 per 10 grams. The yellow metal had...

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**Kohli proves why team India needs him**

In a reverential tone, India skipper Jasprit Bumrah on Monday paid a massive compliment to Virat Kohli, saying the team needs his support more than the batting mainstay needs theirs. Kohli's 30th Test century, an unbeaten 100, played a big part in India's epochal 295-run win over Australia at Perth after getting rolled over for a paltry 150 in the first innings. "Obviously, I have already said that Virat Kohli does not need us. We need him. He is an experienced player. This is ..."

-SPORTS

## AP to turn solar power hub: CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday directed officials to ensure that every household and office in Andhra Pradesh adopts solar power, aiming to establish the State as a hub for solar energy generation.

Highlighting the State's favourable weather conditions, the Chief Minister emphasised the need to harness solar energy to its full potential. "Educate the public about the benefits of solar power and achieve the solarisation targets," Naidu stated in an official press release. He proposed incentives such as "free power" for households installing rooftop solar systems and income generation from surplus energy fed into the grid. Naidu also urged officials to promote central schemes like PM-Surya Ghar and PM-KUSUM while reviewing the State's progress in solar adoption.

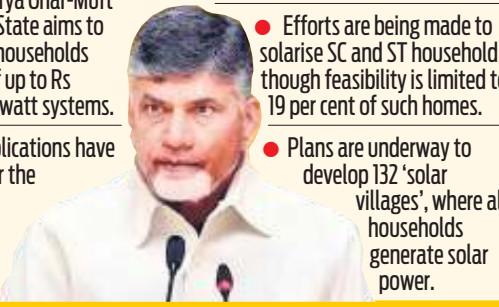
According to officials, Andhra Pradesh has targeted 30 lakh households under the PM Surya Ghar-Muft Biji Yojana. The scheme offers subsidies of up to Rs 78,000 for installing a 3-kilowatt solar power system, reducing the installation cost of Rs 1.45 lakh.

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**Under the PM Surya Ghar-Muft Biji Yojana, the State aims to solarise 30 lakh households with subsidies of up to Rs 78,000 for 3-kilowatt systems.**

- CM Naidu calls for universal adoption of solar power in households and offices
- State's favourable weather for solar energy highlighted and public education on its benefits to be encouraged to meet solarisation targets.
- Under the PM Surya Ghar-Muft Biji Yojana, the State aims to solarise 30 lakh households with subsidies of up to Rs 78,000 for 3-kilowatt systems.
- Over 70,000 applications have been received for the scheme, with installations completed on 4,961 rooftops.
- In Kuppam constituency, a pilot project for solarisation, 50,312 households have agreed to adopt solar power.
- Solar panel installation in 2,186 government offices could save Rs 379 crore annually, with NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Ltd executing the Rs 262 crore project.
- Efforts are being made to solarise SC and ST households, though feasibility is limited to 19 per cent of such homes.
- Plans are underway to develop 132 'solar villages', where all households generate solar power.



## 'Maintain quality in road works'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu held a review meeting on the State's road development projects, with a particular focus on the Pothole-Free Roads initiative. Launched on November 2 in Anakapalli district with an allocation of Rs 861 crore, the initiative aims to address road repairs across the state.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister directed that the work be completed by Sankranti and emphasised that the highest quality standards must be maintained.

He warned contractors that any substandard work would lead to blacklisting and instructed that private agencies also assess the quality of road repairs.

At the meeting on Monday, officials provided updates on the progress of the roadworks. Andhra Pradesh has a total of 45,378 km of roads under the Roads and Buildings (R&B) department, of which 22,299 km require repairs.

The state government has sanctioned ₹861 crore for these repairs, and so far, potholes have been filled on 1,991 km of roads.

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## Ruckus over Adani issue

- Oppn tries to corner govt, seeks JPC probe
- Both Houses adjourned within minutes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The winter session of Parliament got off to a rocky start on Monday with both houses being adjourned within minutes of the commencement of proceedings as the opposition tried to corner the government on the issue of corruption allegations against the Adani Group and demanded a JPC probe.

Addressing media before the two Houses met, Prime Minister Narendra Modi attacked the opposition on the issue of disruptions, saying those rejected by people "80-90 times" were trying to control Parliament by resorting to hooliganism for their political gains.

Several opposition MPs had given adjournment notices in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha seeking suspension of the day's listed business to discuss the issue of the indictment of Adani group head Gautam Adani and others in a US court on charges of paying bribes to secure solar power supply contracts.

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## Modi slams oppn

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday slammed the opposition, saying those rejected by people 80-90 times were trying to control Parliament by resorting to hooliganism for their own political gains. Addressing reporters ahead of the start of the Winter Session of Parliament, Modi said such handful of people did not succeed in their intentions but people of the country observed their actions and punished them at an appropriate time. Modi's remarks came days after the BJP-led coalition won the Maharashtra Assembly elections by a landslide, bagging 235 seats and relegating the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi to a distant 49 seats in the 288-member House.



## AP Assembly signs pact for NeVA app implementation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh (AP) Assembly has signed a significant agreement with the Parliamentary Affairs Department for the implementation of the "National e-Vidhan App" (NeVA). This app has been developed to streamline the operations of both Parliament and state assemblies on a single platform. Several states have already adopted the NeVA app.

With the NeVA app, all Assembly

activities in the State will move to a paperless system. The State government has already initiated several steps towards paperless governance. The central government will provide funding for the implementation of this system in both the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council, with the state government's contribution covering 40% of the total cost. To aid this transition, members of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council will be provided with special tablets and dashboards.

## Low pressure turns into depression

PNS ■ GUNTUR

A well-marked low pressure area over the central parts of the South Bay of Bengal and adjoining East Equatorial Indian Ocean has intensified into a depression, as confirmed by the Meteorological Centre on Monday.

At 8:30 AM on Monday, the depression was located near latitude 5.0°N and longitude 85.3°E, about 600 km southeast of Trincomalee, 880 km southeast of Nagapattinam, 980 km south-east of Puducherry, and 1050 km south-southeast of Chennai. The system is expected to move north-westward, gaining strength and potentially intensifying into a deep depression over the next 24 hours.

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## Plans being evolved to promote temple, heritage tourism: Dy CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj K Pawan Kalyan has said that plans are being developed to promote temple, eco, adventure, and heritage tourism in the state, expressing optimism that the tourism sector will generate significant employment opportunities.

Pawan Kalyan held a meeting with Endowments Minister Ramnarayana Reddy, Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh, and R&B Minister B.C. Janardhan Reddy at his camp office in Mangalagiri on Monday to review steps for the promotion and development of tourism in the state.

Speaking on the occasion, Pawan Kalyan noted that many countries



have developed by focusing on tourism. He emphasised that Andhra Pradesh would be developed as a major tourism hub and instructed officials to formulate plans to achieve this goal. "There are abundant opportunities

to develop temple, eco, and adventure tourism in the state. We aim for a 10 per cent annual growth in the tourism sector," he stated, adding that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu is fully supportive of these efforts.

Continued on Page 2

## Director Ram Gopal Varma ready to appear 'digitally' for probe

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Film director Ram Gopal Varma has expressed willingness to appear 'digitally' before the Andhra Pradesh police in connection with his alleged offensive posts against Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and others, his lawyer said here on Monday.

A case was booked against the director at Maddipadu police station in Prakasam district on November 11



- Ram Gopal Varma ready to appear 'digitally' for probe
- High drama at the film director's house as cops wait for him

for allegedly posting morphed photographs of Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and their family members in an 'indecent

manner on social media. "There is no requirement for physical presence. Now Digital India has come. Likewise, digital policing has also come. So, (physical) presence is not required. Give us virtual mode (opportunity), we will cooperate virtually with the investigation," the lawyer told reporters outside Varma's Jubilee Hills residence in Hyderabad.

## Routinely ordering CBI probe demoralises state police: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Routinely ordering the CBI to take over probes not only leads to an "unimaginable burden" on the premier investigative agency, but also has a "very serious and far-reaching demoralising impact" on the officers of the state police, the Supreme Court on Monday highlighted.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan made the remark while ordering an SIT investigation into the alleged torture of a woman in police custody following her arrest during the protests against the rape and murder of a doctor at R G Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata.

The bench, which modified the November 6 Calcutta High Court verdict upholding the single judge order directing a CBI probe, said, "It is not necessary for us to comment on those reasons except to say that

entrustment of the investigation of matters to the CBI not only leads to an unimaginable burden on the premier investigative agency of the country, but also has a very serious and far-reaching demoralising impact on the officers of the state police."

The bench did not find it prudent to proceed on the premise that senior IPS officers allocated to the West Bengal cadre were incompetent or inefficient to hold a fair and independent investigation and unearth the truth.



The court therefore constituted a three-member SIT comprising 2009 batch IPS Akash Magharia (DIG Presidency range), IPS Swati Bhangalia (SP Howrah (rural)) and IPS Sujata Kumari Veenapani (DSP (traffic) of Howrah).

"The SIT shall take over the investigation...forthwith, all the records of the investigation shall be entrusted to SIT today during the course of the day and the SIT will start investigation without any delay. The SIT shall be at liberty to associate some other police officers, if so required," the bench ordered. The top court urged the Calcutta High Court chief justice to constitute a special bench before which the

The bench did not find it prudent to proceed on the premise that senior IPS officers allocated to the West Bengal cadre were incompetent or inefficient to hold a fair and independent investigation and unearth the truth

Continued on Page 2

## GUDLAVALLERU ENGG COLLEGE ROW

## No hidden cameras found inside washrooms

District officials assure girl students there is no need for concern

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Collector DK Balaji and Superintendent of Police (SP) R Gangadhara Rao have assured that no hidden spy cameras were found inside the washrooms of the ladies' hostel at Seshadri Rao Gudlavalluru Engineering College. Addressing complaints from the fourth-year engineering students, the police conducted a thorough investigation and confirmed there were no such cameras in the bathrooms.

In a joint press release issued in Machilipatnam on Monday, Collector Balaji and SP Gangadhara Rao stated that the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) had also confirmed the absence of hidden cameras. The FSL report clarified that no photos or videos were found in the showerheads that had been seized for examination. These showerheads were tested at the FSL laboratory in Mangalagiri, which concluded that no images or videos were present.

The Collector and SP further clarified that the investigation would continue based on its merits, assuring students there was no need to



Krishna District Collector and the SP confirm that the Forensic Science Laboratory has clarified there were no photos or videos in the showerheads of the ladies' hostel bathrooms.

They also mentioned that the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) in New Delhi had reviewed the data stored on laptops and mobile phones by transferring it to a separate hard disk. CERT's analysis confirmed there were no images or videos related to the bathrooms.

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# CM stresses need for moral values in society

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has emphasised the importance of moral values in shaping a better society. He stated that alongside education, employment, and a secure future, the present generation must understand the significance of the Indian family system and imbibe moral principles.

During a meeting held at the Secretariat on Monday with Government Advisor Chaganti Koteswara Rao, the CM urged him to focus on inculcating values among students and youth. He suggested launching special programmes to promote ethics and spirituality, including organising lectures and events in schools, colleges, and universities.

Highlighting India's unique



During a meeting held at the Secretariat on Monday with Government Advisor Chaganti Koteswara Rao, the CM urged him to focus on inculcating values among students and youth. He suggested launching special programmes to promote ethics and spirituality, including organising lectures and events in schools, colleges, and universities.

cultural heritage, the CM stressed the need to teach youngsters to respect women, honour elders, and uphold family values. He expressed concern over the erosion of moral principles due to societal changes and its adverse impact on the younger generation.

Responding to the CM, Chaganti Koteswara Rao outlined his initiatives to instil values through Sumathi-Vemana Shatakas, moral stories, and motivational talks. He also discussed efforts with Education Minister Lokesh

to integrate these programmes into the education system.

This being Koteswara Rao's first visit after he was appointed advisor, the CM enquired about his well-being and felicitated him with a shawl and a statue of Lord Venkateswara as a mark of respect.

# GVMC Commissioner reviews TDRs for city development projects

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

GVMC Commissioner Dr P Sampath Kumar held a crucial review meeting with town planning officials on Monday at his camp office to assess the current status of Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) linked to ongoing and upcoming development projects in Visakhapatnam. The meeting focused on ensuring the smooth and timely release of TDRs, which are integral to advancing urban development initiatives across the city.

Dr. Sampath Kumar stressed the importance of maintaining a clear, updated overview of TDRs at each stage of the process to prevent delays. "It is crucial that we track the status of TDRs across various zones to avoid delays and ensure their prompt issuance," the Commissioner remarked during the meeting.

He further emphasized the need for setting clear targets to



streamline the TDR process and instructed town planning officials to prepare a comprehensive report outlining the release status. "Steps must be taken to expedite the release of TDRs so that development projects can progress without hindrances," he added.

The discussion also turned to the issue of unauthorized and illegal construction, which has been impacting the city's urban planning efforts. Dr. Sampath

was given to unauthorized structures that obstruct the progress of our urban development projects," he stated.

To address concerns regarding TDR delays, Dr. Sampath Kumar encouraged residents and developers facing issues with TDRs to reach out to their local town planning departments for assistance. "I urge anyone with questions or doubts about their pending TDRs to directly contact the town planning officials in their area for the necessary clarification," he concluded.

The review meeting marks a decisive step toward ensuring the efficient execution of both ongoing and upcoming development projects in Visakhapatnam. By addressing TDR-related concerns and reinforcing enforcement against illegal construction, the GVMC aims to enhance the city's infrastructure and urban landscape, paving the way for future growth.

## 5,979 tons of paddy worth Rs 13.86 cr purchased in NTR dist

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Civil Supplies District Manager, Thota Venkata Satish, has stated that around 5,979.04 metric tons of paddy, worth Rs 13.86 crore, were procured in the current Kharif season from 872 farmers at the Paddy Procurement Centres (PPC). Of this, the government has paid Rs. 12.97 crore to the farmers.

In a press release issued here on Monday, Satish mentioned that the department had set up PPCs across the district to procure paddy from the farmers. A total of 157 PPCs have been arranged at all Rythu Seva Kendras (RSKs), with 58 in the Tiruvuru division, 54 in Nandigama, and 45 in the Vijayawada division. In a single crop season, paddy is procured from farmers owning up to 25 acres, he added. He further mentioned that the government is procuring the MTU 1282 and MTU 1262 varieties of paddy. Satish advised farmers not to sell their paddy to middlemen and to sell it at the RSKs to ensure they receive the Minimum Support Price (MSP). Additionally, he assured that sufficient gunny bags, labour, and transport vehicles are available in the district. The department has also installed GPS systems in 118 vehicles.

## Ruckus over...

Continued from Page 1

But the notices were disallowed by the Chair, drawing protests from the opposition benches. Outside Parliament, the opposition INDIA bloc alleged that the government was "scared" of a discussion on the issue and sought a Joint Parliamentary Committee investigation into the "scam".

They questioned why Parliament was adjourned for the day without transacting any business, after which Lok Sabha officials said it was a convention to adjourn the proceedings of the House for a short duration immediately after making an obituary reference to a sitting member. Congress leader Vasant Chavan from Nanded in Maharashtra and Trinamool Congress leader S K Nurul Islam from Basirhat in West Bengal --- both members of the current Lok Sabha --- died between two sessions of Parliament.

## Clear fee reimbursement dues, YSRCP demands govt

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) has criticised the coalition government for adversely affecting the education sector and leaving students in distress due to delays in welfare schemes.

Addressing the media on Monday, party spokesperson Jupudi Prabhakar Rao demanded the immediate clearance of pending fee reimbursement dues, stating that college managements are withholding students' certificates as a result.

He alleged that the coalition government stopped welfare scheme payments citing the

election code and emphasised that dues from the TDP government (2014-19) were cleared by the YS Jagan Mohan Reddy administration.

Highlighting the reforms introduced by the YSRCP government, he pointed out that Rs 73,000 crore was spent on education, including Rs 17,000 crore for Vidya Deevena and Vidya Vasathi schemes, during YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's tenure. He credited the government for revolutionary changes such as the introduction of English medium instruction, which he claimed was discontinued by the coalition government.

Jupudi accused the

Chandrababu-led coalition of pursuing vindictive politics, causing undue hardship to students. He recalled that in 2019, Rs 2,800 crore in pending fee reimbursement bills was cleared by the YS Jagan Mohan Reddy government. From 2019 to 2024, Rs 12,609 crore was allocated for fee reimbursement, and Rs 26,067 crore was transferred under the Amma Vodi scheme to 44.49 lakh mothers' bank accounts.

Party student wing president Ravichandra also demanded that the fee reimbursement dues be cleared immediately to alleviate students' difficulties.

## Low pressure....

Continued from Page 1

As the depression progresses, it is forecast to continue its northward trajectory towards the Tamil Nadu-Sri Lanka coasts in the coming days.

In the meantime, heavy rainfall is expected in isolated areas of South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema from November 26 to 29, with North Coastal Andhra Pradesh also experiencing heavy rain on November 29. Thunderstorms, accompanied by lightning, are likely to affect these regions during the same period.

## DGP lauds performance at police band

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

DGP Dwarka Tirumala Rao congratulated the Andhra Pradesh Police officers for their excellent performance at the 25th All India Police Band Competition, where they won the bronze medal. The competition, organised by Assam Rifles, was held in Dimapur, Nagaland, over seven days.

During the event, the Andhra Pradesh Police team showcased their talent and secured third place in the Bigil Call category, winning the bronze medal.

The 25th All India Band



Competition 2024, held from November 16 to 22 in Dimapur, Nagaland, featured three categories: Brass Band, Pipe Band, and Bigil Call. A total of 24 teams from various states, union territories, and

central armed forces across the country participated.

The Andhra Pradesh Police team, led by IG KV Mohan Rao, consisted of nine members from the Sports Department.

## AP to turn solar power...

Continued from Page 1

So far, over 70,000 applications have been received, with solar panels already installed on 4,961 rooftops.

In the Kuppam constituency, designated as a pilot project for solarisation, 50,312 households have agreed to adopt solar power. The government is also working on installing solar panels in 2,186 government offices, which could save nearly Rs 379 crore in electricity bills annually. The Rs 262 crore project, expected to generate 2.62 lakh kilo-

watts of power, will be executed by NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Ltd (NVVN).

Efforts are underway to solarise poor SC and ST households, but feasibility studies show that only 19 per cent of these homes are suitable for rooftop solar panels. Additionally, the State plans to develop 132 villages as 'solar villages', where every household will generate solar power. These initiatives aim to position Andhra Pradesh as a leader in renewable energy while benefiting its citizens through cost savings and additional income generation.

## 'Maintain quality...

Continued from Page 1

However, officials noted that 1,447 km of roads are in such poor condition that they cannot be repaired and will need to be fully reconstructed, at an estimated cost of Rs 581 crore. The Chief Minister assured that the necessary funds for reconstruction would be allocated soon. Additionally, 23,521 km of roads require jungle clearance, which will cost approximately Rs 33 crore and will be addressed in the coming days.

The government has also decided to construct 1,307 km of state highways using the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. The state currently has 12,653 km of state highways, with around 10,200 km suitable for PPP construction. The first phase of the project will focus on 18 roads, totaling 1,307 km. The Chief Minister directed that Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) be prepared for these roads and that work should begin as soon as possible. The roads will be developed under various PPP models, including DBFOT (Design, Build, Finance, Operate, and Transfer), BOT (Build-Operate-Transfer), HAM (Hybrid Annuity Model), and OMT (Operate, Maintain, and Transfer).

Regarding toll collection, the Chief Minister cautioned that tolls should primarily apply to heavy vehicles, with exemptions for motorcycles, auto-rickshaws, and tractors. He assured that the government would provide viability gap funding for these projects to ensure no additional financial burden on the public while ensuring the development of quality roads for the people. The Chief Minister also reviewed the progress of projects funded by the New Development Bank (NDB). Officials reported that only 666 km of work had been completed in Phase 1, amounting to 26% of the total work.

Additionally, the Chief Minister reviewed the condition of internal roads in rural areas. There are approximately 68,000 km of internal roads, of which 55,000 km are concrete roads (CC roads). Under the previous TDP government, 25,000 km of CC roads were constructed, while under the current YSR Congress Party government, only 6,000 km have been completed. The Chief Minister recommended that the remaining CC road works be completed using funds allocated by the Centre to Panchayats and through the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS). The Centre has also released 7275 crore for Panchayats, which will be utilised to complete rural roadworks.

## Plans being...

Continued from Page 1

Pawan Kalyan also lamented that tourism is often associated with foreign travel nowadays and stressed the need to shift this focus. "Efforts are being made to establish a corporation dedicated to promoting eco-tourism in the state," he noted.

The Deputy Chief Minister shared an example from his recent visit to Maharashtra, where people in Latur appealed for a special train to Tirupati. He mentioned that about 1,000 people travel to Tirupati from Latur every day. He has requested the railways to run a special train to facilitate this.

He expressed regret that temple visits have become more like picnics, urging that pilgrims should cultivate true devotion during their visits.

## Routinely ordering CBI...

Continued from Page 1

Varma will cooperate with the investigation via "digital mode" as "digital policing is prevalent all over India now," he said.

The lawyer claimed that the new Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) law has such provisions. It allows probes in hybrid mode for "small cases" such as the one in which the director has been booked.

"...RGV (Ram Gopal Varma) made no mistake. This is neither sedition nor international mafia. We will follow the

PNS ■ PARAVATIPURAM

Minister for Women and Child Welfare and Tribal Welfare, Gummidi Sandhya Rani, inaugurated the state's first container hospital, Giri Vaidya Kendra, at Karadavalasa village in Salur mandal on Monday. This innovative healthcare facility is set to improve accessibility for remote tribal areas, a significant stride toward equitable healthcare delivery.

Speaking at the event, Minister Sandhya Rani highlighted the government's dedication to addressing healthcare disparities in tribal regions. "Our Chief Minister is determined to ensure that even the remotest tribal villages have access to quality healthcare. Giri Vaidya Kendra is a testament to this vision, providing essential health services to avoid emergency makeshift solutions like 'doli' (makeshift stretchers)," she said.

The Giri Vaidya Kendra is designed to cater to over 2,000 residents from Karadavalasa and nearby villages such as Bellapaka Boddapadu, Narinjapadu, and Chakirevuvalasa. This fully functional healthcare unit aims to eliminate the need for rudimentary transportation during emergencies.

Minister Sandhya Rani highlighted the comprehensive

## Giri Vaidya Kendra in Karadavalasa village aims to improve medical access for over 2,000 residents



healthcare services offered at Giri Vaidya Kendra. The facility provides weekly outpatient consultations, regular check-ups by medical staff, and bi-monthly mobile medical unit visits. It also offers a wide range of medications, including essential drugs for common ailments, and comprehensive maternal care services.

The facility also includes monthly vaccination drives under the Universal Immunization Program (UIP) and diagnostic tests for diseases like malaria, dengue, tuberculosis, and hepatitis. Special health seminars are organized to raise awareness about tuberculosis among adolescent girls, alongside general health programs for lactating mothers and young children.

District Collector Shyam Prasad shared plans for scaling this initiative. "We plan to establish similar container hospitals in Porandamguda, Peddagudda, Srirangampadu, and Kondamosuru. I urge everyone to make full use of these facilities," he stated. In addition to addressing both communicable and non-communicable diseases, the Giri Vaidya Kendra offers basic dental, eye, and ENT care, newborn and child healthcare, family planning services, palliative care, and specialized support for the elderly.

Local leaders, medical professionals, and tribal welfare representatives attended the event. Special Officer GAP Prasuna and Deputy DMHO Dr. Padmavathi commended the initiative, describing it as

a "benchmark for community-focused healthcare" and a transformative step for tribal health services.

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## No hidden cameras...

Continued from Page 1

Additionally, the FSL has conducted a thorough examination of the laptops and mobile phones using advanced technology. In case of any concerns or new evidence, the students have been advised to approach the police, they added.

The state government, under the leadership of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, is treating the case with utmost seriousness, and it is being investigated under the supervision of a High-Level Committee, including Eluru Range IG GVG Ashok Kumar, IPS officers M Ravi Prakash and PHD Ramakrishna.

Regarding the incident, Collector Balaji and SP Gangadhara Rao explained that the students had staged a protest on August 29, expressing concerns that their images and videos had been captured by hidden cameras in the third-floor ladies' hostel bathrooms. Following the complaint, the police registered a case on August 30.





## Brochure unveiled for 'Krishna Tarang'

Inter-collegiate youth festival will take place from December 10-12

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Mines & Geology and Excise Kollu Ravindra unveiled the brochure for 'Krishna Tarang', an inter-collegiate youth festival that will be organised by Krishna University, at the R & B Guest House in Machilipatnam on Monday. The festival will take place at the KBN College in Vijayawada from December 10-12.



Minister Kollu Ravindra releasing the brochure for 'Krishna Tarang' along with Krishna District Collector DK Balaji and Joint Collector Geethanjali Sharma at the R & B Guest House in Machilipatnam on Monday

Earlier, the Minister convened a preparative meeting of the 'Yuva Keratalu' with Krishna District Collector DK Balaji, Joint Collector Geethanjali Sharma and others. The Yuva Keratalu will be conducted in the first week of January in Machilipatnam.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Ravindra said that Krishna University is encouraging students to participate in all activities such as sports, games and cultural activities. As part of the inter-collegiate pro-

grammes, the Krishna Tarang will be conducted at the KBN College in Vijayawada, he said. He asked the students to take part in the programme and showcase their talents.

Further, he said Yuva Keratalu will be an inspiration to the youth. He said that his government is conducting these programmes to encourage youngsters. Also, the Beach Festival will be conducted in February next year to promote

tourism, he explained.

Minister Ravindra added that Machilipatnam Port and Fishing Harbour works are progressing at a brisk pace. The State government is conducting review meetings on these works once in two weeks, he said.

Meanwhile, the Collector said that the upcoming Yuva Keratalu programme will help to spot the inner talent and creativity among the youth. Motivational speech sessions

will be conducted besides arranging stalls, he said.

Krishna University Registrar Prof K Sobhan Babu, Rector Basaveswara Rao, Krishna District Revenue Officer (DRO) K Chandrasekhar Rao, RDO K Swathi, DEO PVJ Rama Rao, DSP Md Abdul Subhani, Municipal Corporation Commissioner Bapi Raju, Tourism Officer Ram Lakshman, R & B EE Lokesh and others were present.

## Grievances galore at Lokesh's Praja Darbar

Majority of the complaints pertain to objectionable posts on social media

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Education, Information Technology (IT) and Electronics Nara Lokesh resumed Praja Darbar on Monday, after a gap of over a month. People from across the State queued up before the official residence of Lokesh at Vundavalli narrating their cup of woes. After a patient hearing of all those who are present, Lokesh assured them that every possible step will be taken to resolve their problems and forwarded the complaints to the departments concerned for necessary action.

In some of the cases the Minister took instant measures and directed the officers of the departments to initiate steps to resolve the matter. Majority of the complaints pertain to the objectionable



posts on social media for which Lokesh promised to take steps to permanently solve the issues.

Kamireddy Jayasree from Sriramavaram of Eluru district told Lokesh that her husband Kamireddy Venkata Narasimha Rao, who was the social media coordinator of the YSRCR, had resorted to

posting various objectionable comments on social media with the support of the then ruling party, and is now harassing her as she raised her voice against this. Lokesh promised to take necessary action after holding a proper inquiry into the whole episode.

Mee-Seva operators made an appeal to Lokesh to provide

some role in the WhatsApp services, and the Minister said that necessary action will be taken after studying the matter. Bejjam Rama Krishna Rao of Tadepalli sought proper employment opportunities for his children who have completed their higher studies. Lokesh promised to take necessary measures soon.

## Addl EO inspects shops in Tirumala

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The TTD Additional Executive Officer (EO), Ch. Venkaiah Chowdary, conducted surprise inspections at the shopping complex on Monday.

During the inspection, he directed the removal of encroachments from the shops without causing any inconvenience to the movement of devotees. He emphasized that cleanliness must be maintained around the shops.

The Additional EO also inspected the parking lot behind the HT shopping complex.

Later, he visited Ram Bhagicha and observed the distribution of Annaprasadam at the food counter near the bus stand.



TTD Deputy EO Asha Jyoti Prasad, and other officials participated in the inspection.

## APCC wants PM to announce rollback of VSP privatisation move



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) vice-president Kolanukonda Shivaji has demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi make a public statement withdrawing the proposal to privatise the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP).

The Congress leader made this demand in light of the Prime Minister's upcoming visit to Visakhapatnam, where he is scheduled to address a public meeting on November 29.

"The leaders of the TDP, BJP, and JSP should urge the Prime Minister to announce the withdrawal of the VSP privatisation proposal during his public meeting on November 29," Kolanukonda Shivaji stated.

The senior Congress leader reiterated that the Congress party in the state continues to support the labour unions leading the movement against the privatisation of VSP.

Although Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan has been vocally opposing the privatisation of VSP, Shivaji lamented that the ground reality does not reflect such opposition.

He pointed out that VSP's production has decreased by 30 per cent, and employees are not being paid on time. He questioned the delay in the payment of salaries to VSP workers.

## Preventive Oncology OP ward opens at Ongole GGH

PNS ■ ONGOLE

A Preventive Oncology OP ward was inaugurated at the Government General Hospital (GGH) here on Monday, as part of the Cancer-Free Andhra Pradesh programme.

GGH Superintendent Dr Jamuna and Medical College Principal Dr Yedukondala Rao jointly inaugurated the new Preventive Oncology Ward (No. 13) under government directives.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Yedukondala Rao encouraged individuals with suspected cancer symptoms to utilise the diagnostic services at the unit. He highlighted that early detection of breast, cervical, and oral cancers through smear tests is now possible, with free treatment available for diagnosed cases.

Dr Jamuna urged people from rural areas to visit the GGH OPD, either directly or through referrals from local medical staff, to access the specialised services. She added that the oncology ward will operate every Tuesday and Thursday, with all diagnostic tests provided free of cost.

Programme Coordinator



Dr B Tirumala Rao advised individuals consuming gutka or pan to undergo testing and noted that trained staff would identify suspected cases in rural areas through surveys and refer them to the unit.

Deputy Superintendent Dr Namineni Kiran emphasised the need to raise awareness about cancer symptoms and prevention. He inspected the

newly installed Velascope machine, which facilitates oral cancer detection, and oversaw diagnostic tests conducted on several individuals during the event.

Key officials, including CSRMO Dr Madhavilatha, DCG Dr S Suribabu, Nodal Officer Dr Bhagiradhi, and Nursing Superintendent Sampurnamma, were present at the inauguration.

## Lakshmisha assumes charge as NTR DC

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr G Lakshmisha formally assumed charge as the NTR district collector at the collectorate in Vijayawada on Monday. Though appointed 24 days ago, he reported for duty only after completing election responsibilities in Maharashtra.

Before assuming office, Dr Lakshmisha, accompanied by his family, visited the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri and offered special prayers to Goddess Durga. He later took charge from Joint Collector Dr Nidhi Meena, with blessings from the Durga temple priests marking the occasion.

Speaking to the media, Dr Lakshmisha expressed his commitment to the holistic development of the district, in line with government priorities. He thanked Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan for entrusting him with the responsibility. He pledged to continue the initiatives of his predecessors while working closely with people's representatives and district officials to ensure progress in all sectors.

He also emphasised the importance of implementing developmental and welfare

schemes effectively, aiming to position the district as a leader in the state.



Dr Lakshmisha took charge as the NTR District Collector in his chambers on the premises of the Collectorate in Vijayawada on Monday.

Joint Collector Dr Nidhi Meena, Assistant Collector Shubham Nokwal, DRO M Lakshmi Narasimha, Vijayawada RDO K Chaitanya, and other officials welcomed Dr Lakshmisha. Following his formal induction, he interacted with district officials and participated in the Mee Kosam Public Grievance Redressal System at the Pingali Venkaiah Meeting Hall.

Leaders from the Revenue Services Association, including S Srinivas Reddy, RV Rohini Devi, Jahnavi, Surya Rao, D Srinivas, Ramakrishna, Appa Rao, and Ravi, also met the new collector and extended their best wishes.

He pointed out that VSP's production has decreased by 30 per cent, and employees are not being paid on time. He questioned the delay in the payment of salaries to VSP workers.

## KRU archery tourney held

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Krishna University Inter-Collegiate Archery for Men and Women Championship was held at the Satavahana College at Sitaramapuram in Vijayawada on Monday. College Correspondent Nidumolu Rama Satyanarayana inaugurated the tournament. After the completion of the tournament, the Krishna University Men's

and Women's Archery teams have been selected to participate in the All India Inter University Archery Championship to be held at KIIT in Bhubaneswar from December 24 to 27. Andhra Pradesh Archery Association secretary Cherukuri Satyanarayana, Satavahana College principal K Sankara Rao, and tournament organising secretary BCh Sangeetha Rao were present.



## AU's Dr VS Krishna Library: A century-old repertoire of knowledge

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As Andhra University (AU) gears up to celebrate its centenary, its iconic Dr VS Krishna Library shines as a testament to the institution's commitment to academic excellence. Established in 1927, the library has evolved into one of Asia's largest, housing a vast collection of books, manuscripts, and historical documents.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Chief Librarian Acharya Venkateswarlu stated, "The library has played a crucial role in shaping the academic environment at Andhra University, providing unmatched access to a vast array of resources, ranging from ancient manuscripts to cutting-edge research."

The library's collection boasts historical significance, including signatures of

Established in 1927, the iconic library stands as a testament to academic excellence, preserving invaluable historical texts and embracing modern technology for future generations.

renowned figures like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. It also preserves rare ancient texts and royal decrees dating back centuries, providing a glimpse into the region's rich history.

Spread across 60,000 square feet, the library houses branches for both the Engineering College and the Law College. Its collection extends beyond books to encompass ancient inscriptions, scriptures, and sacred texts like the Valmiki Ramayana and Vyasa Mahabharata, preserved on palm leaves. These manu-

scripts are available in various languages, including Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil, and English.

"Preserving these rare manuscripts is a monumental task," said Venkateswarlu. "We are dedicated to ensuring their accessibility for future generations." The library's commitment to user convenience is evident in its well-organized collection and the introduction of the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC). This digital tool allows students to easily search for books and locate them on the shelves.

The library is open from 8 AM to 10 PM daily, with the reading room accessible until midnight. Students can borrow up to four books, while research students and faculty members have extended borrowing privileges.

To keep pace with technological advancements, the library has embarked on a significant digitization project. Over 5,13,000 books and 10,577 Ph.D. theses have been digitized, making them accessible to a wider audience. The digitization of the library's 2.5 lakh ancient Talapatras (palm



leaf manuscripts) began in December 2021, with nearly all of the collection now digitized. These texts, some of which date back over a thousand years, represent an important aspect of India's cultural and literary heritage.

As the library approaches its 100-year milestone, its continued growth and moderniza-

tion ensure that it remains a vital resource for scholars, researchers, and students, both now and for the generations to come. With its rich heritage, diverse collection, and forward-thinking approach to technology, Dr. V.S. Krishna Library stands as a monumental institution in the heart of Andhra University.



BUILDING PERMITS

# Single-window system from Dec 31: Narayana

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister P. Narayana announced that Andhra Pradesh would introduce a single-window system for building permits starting December 31. The initiative aims to streamline the approval process for construction projects, eliminating the need for developers to approach multiple departments such as Revenue, Fire Services, and Railways for permissions.



The minister stated that the reform would enhance the "Speed of Doing Business" by integrating departmental servers with the municipal administration's server. This system will enable developers to secure all necessary approvals from a single point. Strict action, including license revocation and legal consequences, will be taken against licensed surveyors found indulging in malpractice during the approval process, he added.

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As part of the reforms, the required road setback for layouts will be reduced to 9 feet,

aligning with practices in other states. Permissions for cellar construction will also be granted for commercial and residential buildings exceeding 500 square metres. Clear guidelines for setbacks in high-rise buildings are also being finalised.

Minister Narayana further revealed that the state government aims to complete the AMRUT 2.0 mission within two years, as directed by the Chief Minister. Regarding Amaravati, the minister clarified that the central government has officially recognised it as the state capital. Following a review of

designs by Norman Foster & Partners, which were cancelled by the previous government, new tenders have been invited, and the designs have now been approved.

Construction in the Amaravati capital region will commence soon, with no issues concerning World Bank funding, which has already been committed in phases. The state government is focused on simplifying building permissions, accelerating construction, and enhancing urban development to drive infrastructure growth, the minister said.

# Poaching gang busted, skin of 24 deer seized

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

Anantapur police arrested a five-member poaching gang and seized 24 deer skins and two buck horns in Konakondla village of Vajrakurur mandal.

Speaking to the media on Monday, SI Nagaswamy said the arrests were made following a tip-off during a

vehicle check. The police discovered the illegal consignment of wildlife items being transported to Karnataka.

The arrested gang members were produced before the court, while the seized deer skins and horns were handed over to the Forest Department for further investigation.



# WG collector Nagarani receives GI certification for Narasapuram lace



PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani received the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) certification for Narasapuram lace, recognising the district's rich heritage in lace making.

Union Minister for Handlooms, Giriraj Singh, presented the GI certificate to the Collector at an event held in a New Delhi hotel on Monday. Narasapuram lace was among the eight textile handicrafts across India to be honoured with the GI tag by the Department for

Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Nagarani expressed her hope that the GI recognition would provide a significant boost to thousands of artisans and weavers associated with the craft. She emphasised the importance of GI certification in encouraging market linkages, branding, and promoting unique regional products.

The Collector also highlighted the significance of hand-woven and handmade textiles in India's textile industry, noting that they form a major share of GI-reg-

istered products in the country. She appreciated the efforts of lace manufacturers in achieving this recognition, stating that the GI tag would bring both international acclaim and local pride to the Narasapuram lace craft.

A workshop held in Delhi on the same day showcased GI-tagged handloom and handicraft products from across India, which the collector found particularly impressive. She extended her congratulations to the lace artisans of West Godavari for their contribution to this achievement.

# CPI-M questions silence of ED, CBI, and IT on Adani scam

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) has described the Adani corruption case as an "international scam" and the largest in the country. The party has urged the central government to prioritise the issue in the ongoing Winter Session of Parliament.



Furthermore, the CPI-M has called for the formation of a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) to conduct a thorough investigation, ensuring transparency and accountability. CPI-M Politburo members BV Raghavulu and MA Baby, who attended the two-day AP state secretariat meeting in Vijayawada, addressed the media at Balotsav Bhavan along with state secretary V Srinivasa Rao. They questioned the silence of the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), and Income Tax (IT) authorities on the international scam. While these agencies show greater interest in probing smaller corruption cases, they remain silent on the biggest scam, they pointed out.

Raghavulu criticised former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for entering into an agreement with Adani to purchase solar power at ₹2.49 per unit, despite solar energy being available at ₹1.99 per unit. He alleged that the agreement was linked to a scam worth approximately ₹2,029 crore, from which ₹1,750 crore was diverted to Jagan. The CPI-M, along with the INDIA bloc, has demanded a JPC investigation into the scam.

"The ED, CBI, and IT showed keen interest in investigating former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a ₹10 crore scam, and the ED even arrested Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren in a corruption case. But why are these agencies silent on the biggest international scam involving Adani?" Raghavulu asked. He also demanded that a JPC probe into the agreement between Adani and Jagan concerning the ₹2,029 crore scam be initiated, alleging that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Jagan, and Adani share close ties.

Raghavulu further demanded that both Modi and Jagan answer questions regarding the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) agreement. He also urged current Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu to speak out on the issue. Despite the ruling NDA government claiming to have evidence of a scam, they have refrained from making allegations against Adani, he noted.

Raghavulu also called on the state government and Naidu to reveal details of the SECI scam to the public and questioned the TDP's stance on the matter. He also sought clarification from Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan regarding the scam.

On a different issue, Raghavulu made it clear that his party opposed the setting up of a Mittal Steel Plant in Anakapalli. He expressed concerns that the establishment of this plant could lead to the loss-making situation of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. He suggested that the Mittal Steel Plant should be set up elsewhere in Rayalaseema. He also demanded that Prime Minister Modi announce the privatization of the plant during his visit to Visakhapatnam.

Senior CPI-M leader MA Baby, speaking on the ₹2,029 crore scam, stated that the Andhra Pradesh state government imposed an additional burden of around ₹18,000 crore on the public in the form of true-up charges. He demanded that the police register cases against the SECI scam and take action against Adani and Jagan.

Baby also alleged that Prime Minister Modi has been neglecting states governed by non-BJP parties and failing to provide adequate financial support. He cited the example of Wayanad district, which was severely affected by floods, yet received no assistance from the central government.

# Geo-tagging of households to be completed by month-end: DC

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad has announced that, in line with the State Government's directives, a mobile application has been deployed for village and ward employees to catalogue houses, plots, and apartments, particularly in gated communities, within the jurisdiction of their respective secretariats.



The government has mandated that all households within the Gram Panchayat and ward secretariat limits must be geo-tagged. This initiative will help streamline administrative processes and improve infra-

structure planning," said the District Collector.

To facilitate the process, ward and village staff have been instructed to visit households and collect relevant details while identifying themselves with official ID cards. "I urge the staff to ensure cooperation and efficiency while interacting

with residents," Mr. Prasad emphasized.

Highlighting the importance of public participation, the Collector appealed to residents to assist the survey teams by providing accurate information. "This survey must be completed by the 30th of this month. I request all residents to cooperate fully, ensuring the data collection is smooth and free of misunderstandings," he added. The geo-tagging initiative is expected to enhance governance and planning by providing a comprehensive database of residential and commercial units within the secretariat limits.

# Rs 300-cr potable water project plans unveiled



PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

Minister for MSME, SERP, and NRI Affairs, Kondapalli Srinivas, has unveiled plans for a Rs 300-crore drinking water project to address the water needs of the Gajapatnagar constituency. The initiative, which will source water from the Tatipudi reservoir, is expected to significantly alleviate the region's water challenges. "We are committed to ensuring clean drinking water for all. This project is a significant step towards solving the water crisis in the constituency," said Minister Srinivas.

On Monday, the minister launched several development projects in Gantiada, Bondapalli, and Gajapatnagar mandals. At Pedavemali village in Gantiada mandal, he laid the foundation stone for four roads worth Rs 23.50 lakh. In Lakkidam village, 12 development works costing Rs 59.5 lakh were initiated. Additionally, a newly constructed village secretariat building, valued at Rs 43.6 lakh, was inaugurated in B. Rajeru, Bondapalli mandal.

"In just five months, we have launched numerous development programs across the region. The previous government completely neglected rural development, leaving the villages in a state of stagnation.

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, we are transforming this narrative," the minister said.

Minister Srinivas also announced several welfare initiatives, including the provision of cowsheds with a 90% subsidy, installation of household water taps in every village, repair of damaged roads, and timely payment of salaries and electricity bills for village-level staff. Additionally, he highlighted improvements to pension schemes. "We are ensuring that pensioners can now withdraw three months' pension in advance. In cases of sudden bereavement, widow pensions will be granted immediately to support affected families," he added.

At Pedavemali, Minister Srinivas distributed PMEGP dairy unit sanction letters worth Rs 2 lakh each to ten beneficiaries. He also launched a national campaign against gender-based violence, reinforcing the government's commitment to social welfare. "Development is only possible with collective effort. We are determined to bring visible change across the constituency," the minister concluded. The announcement and initiatives have been well-received by residents, who are optimistic about the positive transformation these projects promise to bring.

# 3 projects identified under PRASHAD scheme in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

During the first day of the Winter Parliamentary Sessions on Monday, Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath inquired about the new proposals being considered under the PRASHAD Scheme. Responding to the question, Union Minister for Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said that the Ministry of Tourism provides financial assistance to State governments and Union Territories under the Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) Scheme.

The scheme aims to develop tourism infrastructure at identified pilgrimage destinations and heritage cities, with interventions planned in consultation with State governments and Union Territories.

# Call for unity to end violence against women

Sex workers remain one of the most stigmatised and vulnerable groups in society

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the occasion of International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women, HELP and VIMUKTHI have conducted a meeting in Rajarajeswari Peta against all forms of violence against rescued survivors of human trafficking and victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

Apurva, president of VIMUKTHI, stated that, taking into the consideration of the theme of the day by the United Nations, "Every 10 Minutes, a woman is a victim of violence. No Excuse. Unite to end violence against women."

VIMUKTHI is conducting a 16-day campaign and community level meetings in united Prakasam, Guntur and Krishna districts.

She said sex workers remain one of the most stigmatised



and vulnerable groups in society, often subjected to physical, emotional, and economic abuse by clients, law enforcement, and communities. Despite legal protections under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, enforcement gaps and societal discrimination exacerbate their victimisation, leaving them without justice or safety.

Andhra Pradesh, with an estimated 1.33 lakh native sex workers, ranks among the states with the highest incidence of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation. Reports indicate that many women are forced into sex work due to socio-economic vulnerabilities, with little support or acknowledgment from mainstream society.

She said that HELP and VIMUKTHI's 2024 study in Andhra Pradesh revealed alarming levels of violence against survivors of trafficking and sex workers in Prakasam, Guntur, and Krishna districts. She said that 65 per cent reported verbal abuse from clients, followed by 14 per cent experiencing emotional abuse, nine per cent sexual violence, and 12 per cent physical violence. Perpetrators included clients (28 per cent), family members (24 per cent), police (7 per cent), and pimps (9 per cent). Notably, 22 per cent experienced violence from multiple sources. Many women (41.33 per cent) involved in sex work were separated from their families or partners, while 21.33 per cent were deserted. Additional vulnerabilities included widows (14.67 per cent), married women (18.67 per cent), and divorced or

unmarried women (2 per cent each).

HELP and VIMUKTHI call for urgent collective action to address violence against women, particularly sex workers. They sought the government to decriminalise sex work and ensure equal legal protections, including access to justice and victim compensation mechanisms. Partner with sex workers to create safe spaces for dialogue, support, and advocacy. Provide trauma-informed healthcare, legal aid, psychosocial counselling, and safe shelters. Strengthen mechanisms to prosecute perpetrators effectively and protect survivors from re-victimisation. Launch campaigns to combat stigma and educate society on the rights and dignity of sex workers. Recognise the experiences of sex workers in shaping policies and addressing gender-based violence, they added.

# Five red sanders logs seized; one smuggler arrested

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Red Sander Anti-Smuggling Task Force (RSASTF) seized five red sander logs and arrested a smuggler near Pincha Dam in the Rajampet division.

Speaking to the media on Monday, DSP G Balireddy said a task force team, led by Sub-Controller Kupananda and RSI T Raghavendra, conducted a combing operation in the forest area.



The team spotted a group of individuals moving suspiciously in the forest. On seeing the task force personnel, the smugglers abandoned the red sander logs and fled into the dense forest. The task force managed to apprehend one smuggler after a chase and recovered five red sander logs from the scene.

Sub-Inspector CH Rafi has registered a case, and further investigation is underway.



ACROSS THE STATES



71 tigers died due to unnatural causes

Seventy-one tigers died due to unnatural causes, including poaching and seizures, since 2021, the Environment Ministry said on Monday. Responding to a query in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Kirti Vardhan Singh, said Madhya Pradesh reported the highest number of deaths at 20, followed by Maharashtra (15) and Karnataka (4) since 2021. Twenty tiger deaths were reported in 2021, while 25 big cats died in 2022. In 2023, 25 tigers were reported dead while one casualty due to unnatural causes has been confirmed so far this year, according to the data shared by the minister in his reply. Tiger population is increasing at a rate of 6 per cent per annum in the country when consistently sampled areas are compared, Singh said. The tiger population has increased as per the All India Tiger Estimation done in 2022, with an estimated number of 3,682 (range 3,167-3,925) as compared to the 2018 estimation of 2,967 (range 2,603-3,346) and the 2014 estimation of 2,226 (range 1,945-2,491), Singh said in his written response.



Mobile internet suspension extended in Manipur

The Manipur government extended suspension of mobile internet services for two days in nine districts till November 27, according to an order issued by the Home Department. After violence escalated in the northeastern state on November 16, the administration suspended the services for two days to prevent anti-social elements from spreading content that might create law and order problems. It has been extended several times since then. "The state government after reviewing the prevailing law and order situation has decided to continue suspension of mobile internet services in Imphal West, Imphal East, Kakching, Bishnupur, Thoubal, Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, Pherzawl and Jiribam for another two days in public interests," the order said. Internet services on both mobile phones and broadband were suspended on November 16 after violence broke out in the state following the recovery of bodies of three women and three children.



BJP questions Delhi government's edu policies

The BJP on Monday questioned the Delhi government's education policies, claiming "high failure rates" among the students in classes nine and eleven. BJP MLA Vijender Gupta accused the government of using the concept of an "education revolution" as a cover for corruption, alleging that funds were misused in the construction of schools and abandoned projects. Gupta alleged the closure of 29 Bal Pratibha Vikas Schools, terming it a political conspiracy. He claimed this decision, which phased out classes 6 to 10 and plans to end grades 11 and 12 by 2025, has harmed the future of thousands of talented students. There was no immediate reaction from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on these allegations. The BJP leader claimed that nearly three lakh students in classes nine and eleven failed between 2022-24 and were subsequently expelled. Many of these students were pushed towards correspondence programmes instead of regular schooling, he said at a press conference here.

India supports immediate ceasefire in West Asia

PNS ■ ROME

India supports an immediate ceasefire in West Asia and favours a two-state solution in the long-term, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said Monday as he condemned terrorism, hostage-taking and civilian casualties in military operations.

Speaking at the 10th edition of the MED Mediterranean Dialogue in Rome, Jaishankar said that India regards large-scale civilian casualties in military operations to be unacceptable and added that international humanitarian law cannot be disregarded.

"In immediate terms, we should all support the ceasefire... In the longer term, it is imperative that the future of the Palestinian people be addressed. India favours a two-state solution," he said.

Voicing concerns over the widening of the conflict in West Asia, Jaishankar said that India has been in regular touch with both Israel and Iran at the highest levels to advocate restraint and enhance communication. He said an Indian contingent like Italy is in Lebanon as part of UNIFIL. Indian naval ships have been deployed in the Gulf of Aden and the northern Arabian Sea since last year to protect commercial shipping.

United Nations Interim Force in South Lebanon (UNIFIL) has around 10,500 peacekeepers drawn from 50 troop-contributing countries. India has more than 900 people as part of UNIFIL in Lebanon.

"Given our capacity to engage various parties, we are always willing to contribute meaningfully to any international diplomatic endeavours," he said.

On the Ukraine-Russia war, he said the continuation of this conflict has serious, destabilising consequences, including for the Mediterranean. "What is clear is that no solution is going to emerge from the battlefield. India has consistently held the view that

Favours two-state solution: Jaishankar



disputes in this era cannot be settled by war. There must be a return to dialogue and diplomacy. The sooner, the better. This is a widespread sentiment in the world today, especially in the Global South," he said.

Since June, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has personally engaged leaders of both Russia and Ukraine to this end, this has included his visiting Moscow and Kyiv, and senior officials remain in continuous touch.

"We firmly believe that those who have the ability to explore finding common ground must step up to that responsibility," he added.

He said that due to these two conflicts supply chains are insecure, and connectivity, especially maritime, stands disrupted. Talking about opportunities, he said a closer and stronger relationship between India and the Mediterranean will serve both of us well.

"Our annual trade with the Mediterranean nations is about USD 80 billion. We have a diaspora of 460,000, and about 40% of that is in Italy. Our key interests are in fertilisers, energy, water, technology, diamonds, defence and cyber," he said.



Future-ready teachers key to shaping young minds: Pradhan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is poised to be a key growth engine in the world economy, and mapping and supporting evolution of future-ready educators would be critical in shaping young minds in a tech-driven society, Union Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan said on Monday.

Pradhan said "future-mapping" is the biggest challenge, and emphasised the need to focus on updating the skills of both teachers and students. Teachers should foster curiosity, innovative mindset and critical thinking among students through scientific-learning outcomes, not rote learning, he said adding teachers in India have the talent, all they need is a vision and an opportunity.

"Almost 25 per cent of the global jobs which existed in 2015 are no longer there. By 2028, nature of almost 40 per cent of existing jobs will change. Society will go into skilling, upskilling and reskilling, and as India has the youngest population, teachers will hold the key, the pass-word..." Pradhan said while unveiling 'TheTeacherApp' developed by Bharti Airtel Foundation.

The minister noted that India, the fifth-largest economy in the world, is poised to become the third-largest in a few years. "Given the growth rate of our economy, in two decades, we may surpass and lead the global economy. India will become the growth engine for the world. How will it happen... It will happen from clarity of thought of our young minds, which in turn will be catalysed by teachers who will make it possible," Pradhan said.

The minister said that debate, at times, is around rewriting of history (curriculum), but added that he does not see that as a big issue. According to him, the biggest challenge of NEP implementation is about future-mapping, in a way that readies students to partake not only in the new economic order but to contribute as innovators in the global economy.

Need to link co-op movement with circular economy: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday emphasised the need to link cooperative movement to circular economy and promote international collaboration in the sector.

Addressing the ICA Global Cooperative Conference 2024 at the Bharat Mandapam here, Modi said that for India, cooperatives are the basis of culture and a way of life.

He further said India sees a huge role for cooperatives in its future growth and in the last 10 years the country has worked to transform the entire ecosystem related to cooperatives.

"Our effort is to make cooperative societies multipurpose," he said, adding that with the objective in mind, the government of India created a separate cooperative ministry. Modi said cooperatives are also playing a key role in the housing sector as well as in the banking segment.

There are about 2 lakh housing cooperative societies in the country. He said the government has strengthened the cooperative banking sector and reformed it. "India is among the fastest growing economies in the world. Our aim is to

achieve high GDP growth and take the benefits to the poor. It is necessary for the world to see growth from a human-centric angle," he said.

Stressing that there is a big opportunity for cooperatives in the world, Modi said there is a need to make cooperatives as flag bearers for integrity and mutual respect in the world.

"For this, we need to innovate our policies and strategize. To make cooperative climate resilient, we need to link it to the circular economy. We need to discuss ways to encourage startups in the cooperative sector," he added.

Presently, about Rs 12 lakh crore are deposited in cooperative banks. The Prime Minister also informed



the gathering that his government is committed to further strengthening the cooperative movement, and about 2 lakh additional multi-purpose cooperative societies are being set up in villages.

He also lauded the role being played by women in furthering the cooperative movement, saying about 60 per cent of the members are women.

Modi said India believes that cooperativeness can provide new energy to global cooperation and can help countries, particularly in the Global South, achieve the kind of growth they need.

SAMBHAL VIOLENCE

FIR against SP MP Barq, SP MLA's son; 25 arrested

PNS ■ SAMBHAL (UP)

Police have lodged seven FIRs in connection with the violence over a court-ordered survey of a Mughal-era mosque here, naming Samajwadi Party MP Zia-ur-Rehman Barq and local SP MLA Iqbal Mehmood's son Sohail Iqbal as accused, officials said on Monday.

The district administration has already imposed prohibitory orders and barred the entry of outsiders into Sambhal till November 30. Internet services are suspended in Sambhal tehsil and Monday was declared a holiday for all schools. A magisterial probe has also been ordered into the violence.

Three people were killed and scores of others, including security personnel and administration officials, injured on Sunday as protesters opposing the survey of the Shahi Jama Masjid clashed with police. A fourth injured person died on Monday. Asked about their autopsy reports, Divisional



Commissioner Aunjaneya Kumar Singh said that prima facie, it appears that gunshots from countrymade weapons were the cause of death. However, he did not go into further details.

Addressing a press conference on Monday, Superintendent of Police Krishan Kumar said seven FIRs have been lodged in connection with the violence. Six people, including Barq and Iqbal, were named and 2,750 others have been mentioned as unident-

fied, he said. "Due to Barq's statement earlier, the situation worsened. He was given a notice earlier for this," he added. The official said that Barq's "Jama Masjid ki hifazat" (protection of Jama Masjid) remark mobilised the mob.

When asked about the MP being in Bengaluru and not Sambhal on Sunday, Kumar said Barq's name was included in the FIR based on his previous statements.

Priest's charred body found at Gorakhpur temple

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR (UP)

The charred body of an elderly priest was found on Monday morning here at the Bamant Mata Temple. It is suspected to be an accident, police said.

The deceased was identified as Ganga Das, 95, who had been sleeping in the temple's veranda at the time of the incident in the Gulriha area of Gorakhpur district, they said.

According to police, by the morning, his body was reduced to ashes, with only part of the head remaining intact.

A police official said Ganga Das, who was hearing and speech impaired, was unable to call for help, which is why the incident went unnoticed during the night.

City Superintendent of Police (SP) Abhinav Tyagi and a police team visited the scene and sent the body for post-mortem. "The exact cause of death is yet to be determined, but preliminary investigations suggest it may have been accidental. It is suspected that the priest lit a fire to stay warm in the cold night, which tragically led to the incident," the police officials said.



Mahayuti halts 'Constitution change' narrative

Wins lion's share of SC-ST seats

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Mahayuti won 21 of 29 Scheduled Caste-reserved and 21 of 24 Scheduled Tribe-reserved seats in the Maharashtra assembly polls, results of which were announced on November 23.

The ruling alliance's sweep of these seats comes just months after the Lok Sabha polls during which the Maha Vikas Aghadi led a campaign that the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance was aiming to win over 400 seats in order to change the Constitution and end reservations for SCs and STs.

Of the 21 ST-reserved seats the Mahayuti won, 10 went into the kitty of the BJP, six to the Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena and five to Ajit Pawar-led NCP.

For the MVA, the Congress managed to win two of ST-reserved seats while one went to the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

In 2019, the BJP-led NDA won 12 of these 24 seats, while nine went to the then United Progressive Alliance, which had the Congress and undivided NCP as its main constituents. The remaining three were bagged by CPM,

Prahar Janshakti Party and an independent candidate.

In 2019, the BJP and undivided Shiv Sena were the main constituents of the NDA in the state. The two parties broke their alliance some months later after the assembly polls.

Of the 21 SC-reserved seats won by the Mahayuti in 2024, nine went to the BJP, five to the Shiv Sena and six to the NCP. One seat was won by Jan Surajya Party.

The MVA, which comprises the Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) managed to emerge victorious on eight SC-reserved seats in the November 20 assembly polls.

Of these, the Congress bagged four, while the NCP (SP) and Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT) got two each.

In the 2019 assembly polls, the NDA and UPA had emerged victorious on 13 SC-reserved seats each, while three were won by smaller parties and independents.

For the NDA, the BJP was victorious on eight seats while its ally Shiv Sena bagged five. That year the NCP won seven seats and Congress six as part of the UPA.

PREAMBLE TO CONSTITUTION

SC junks pleas challenging words 'socialist', 'secular'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant verdict, the Supreme Court on Monday dismissed pleas challenging the 1976 amendment to the Constitution adding terms "socialist", "secular" and "integrity" to the Preamble.

The words "socialist", "secular" and "integrity" were inserted into the Preamble to the Constitution under the 42nd constitutional amendment moved by the Indira Gandhi government in 1976.

A bench of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice

Sanjay Kumar had on November 22 reserved its verdict on the pleas filed by former Rajya Sabha MP Subramanian Swamy and advocate Ashwini Updhayay challenging the inclusion of the words "socialist" and "secular" in the Preamble to the Constitution.

One of the first petitions was filed by one Balram Singh through advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain in 2020.

"The writ petitions do not need further deliberation and adjudication. The amending power of Parliament over the Constitution extends to

Preamble," the CJ said while pronouncing the verdict.

The CJ said the verdict explained that after so many years the process cannot be so nullified.

The date of the adoption of the Constitution would not curtail the government's power under Article 368 and more-over this is

not under challenge, the bench noted.

The amending power of Parliament extends to Preamble as well, it added. The top court asked further, "It has almost been so many years, why rake up the issue now?"

A detailed judgement is awaited. While reserving the judgement, the bench said the 1976 amendment to

the Constitution adding terms "socialist", "secular" and "integrity" to the Preamble had undergone judicial reviews and it cannot be said whatever Parliament did during the emergency period was all nullity.

The amendment changed the description of India in the Preamble from a "sovereign, democratic republic" to a "sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic".

Emergency in India was declared by the late PM Indira Gandhi from June 25, 1975 to March 21, 1977.







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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Celebrating Constitution Day

The Indian Constitution is not just a legal document; it is the soul of the nation, guiding India through its complexities

Every year, on November 26, India celebrates Constitution Day, also known as 'Samvidhan Divas'. This day commemorates the adoption of the Indian Constitution in 1949, a landmark event that laid the foundation for India's democratic ethos. As we reflect on this momentous occasion, it is imperative to understand the making, functioning and future challenges of this legal document that has been the guiding force for the world's largest democracy, India. The drafting of the Indian Constitution was an extraordinary achievement, considering the diversity and complexities of India. Following independence in 1947, the Constituent Assembly, comprising 299 members, undertook the monumental task of framing a constitution for a newly liberated yet diverse nation. Dr BR Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, chaired the drafting committee, ensuring that the document reflected justice, equality, liberty, and fraternity. The Assembly took 2 years, 11 months and 18 days to complete



the drafting process, during which it conducted exhaustive debates and deliberations. Drawing inspiration from the constitutions of various nations, such as the United States, Ireland and Canada, the Indian Constitution incorporated the best practices while tailoring them to Indian realities.

On January 26, 1950, the Constitution came into effect, marking the birth of the Republic of India. The Indian Constitution, with its 448 articles, 12 schedules and numerous amendments, is one of the most detailed constitutions in the world. Its core strength lies in its 'flexibility' and 'adaptability'. While being rigid in its foundational principles, it allows amend-

ments to address evolving socio-political challenges. Since its adoption, the Constitution has guided the nation through numerous challenges, including partition, economic crises, and social upheavals, ensuring continuity and stability. Despite its success, the Indian Constitution faces several challenges. India faces growing tensions between the Centre and states over resource allocation, legislative powers and administrative autonomy, while concerns about judicial activism and transparency persist despite the judiciary's role as a constitutional custodian. Issues such as money power, criminalisation of politics and declining voter turnout demand urgent reforms. At the same time, caste-based discrimination, gender inequality and regional disparities continue to undermine the nation's progress, despite constitutional safeguards. Balancing individual freedoms with national security has become increasingly challenging in the digital age. As India approaches its centenary as a Republic, there is a pressing need to reaffirm commitment to the Constitution's ideals by strengthening institutions for accountability and transparency, fostering participatory democracy, upholding the secular and pluralistic ethos and ensuring that constitutional amendments preserve its core principles.

## PICTALK



Visitors at a stall at the International Trade Fair at Pragati Maidan, in New Delhi

## Samvidhan Divas: A tribute to India's democratic vision



RAJDEEP PATHAK

Rooted in the Gandhian principles the Indian Constitution continues to guide the world's largest democracy in fostering a harmonious and equitable society

Constitution Day, known as 'Samvidhan Divas' in Hindi, is celebrated annually on November 26 in India. This day commemorates the adoption of the Indian Constitution, which was formally approved by the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949. It later came into effect on January 26, 1950, marking the birth of India as a sovereign democratic republic.

In 2015, the Government of India officially recognised November 26 as Constitution Day through a gazette notification issued on November 19. This followed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement during the foundation-laying ceremony of the 'B R Ambedkar Statue of Equality' memorial in Mumbai on October 11, 2015.

As India marks the 75th anniversary of the Constitution in 2024, it is a moment to reflect on this transformative document, which serves as the bedrock of the nation's democracy and inclusivity.

## The Vision Behind the Indian Constitution

The Indian Constitution is more than a legal charter; it is a visionary framework that upholds the values of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. It reflects the collective aspirations of a diverse population, drawing inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of truth, non-violence, and grassroots empowerment. Gandhi's ideals of swaraj (self-rule) emphasised moral values, social equity and the welfare of all, which deeply influenced the Constitution's framers.

Although Gandhi and Dr BR Ambedkar had differences on certain issues, they shared a commitment to social justice and local self-governance. This shared vision is evident in foundational aspects of the Constitution, such as the Preamble, Directive Principles of State Policy and Fundamental Duties.

## The Preamble: Soul of the Constitution

The Preamble encapsulates the essence of the Constitution, emphasising ideals like justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. These values resonate with Gandhi's



lifelong struggle against colonial oppression and social inequality. Historian Judith Brown aptly stated, "Gandhi's struggle was not just for legal justice but for ethical and humanistic justice that transcends caste, creed and gender." The Preamble remains a guiding light for India's pursuit of a just and inclusive society.

## Directive Principles: A Vision for Social Equity

Part IV of the Constitution, the Directive Principles of State Policy, articulates a vision of economic equity, social justice, and upliftment of marginalised communities. Gandhi's influence is evident in provisions like Article 40, which advocates for the Panchayati Raj system, and Article 43, promoting cottage industries. Historian Anthony Parel observed that these principles are "the most visible articulation of Gandhi's socio-economic vision aimed at eradicating poverty and ensuring dignity."

## Fundamental Duties: Rights and Responsibilities

Mahatma Gandhi emphasised the interconnectedness of rights and duties, asserting that rights derive their meaning from duties well-performed. Reflecting this philosophy, the 42nd Amendment introduced Fundamental Duties in 1976. These duties, such as fostering harmony, protecting the environment, and upholding the dignity of women, align closely with Gandhian principles of non-

violence, ecological stewardship, and gender equality. Gandhi's timeless reminder, "The Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed," underlines the importance of responsible citizenship.

## Gandhian Values in a Modern Context

As India navigates contemporary challenges, the values rooted in Gandhian philosophy remain profoundly relevant. Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, in "The Idea of Justice," highlights that justice involves removing barriers that prevent marginalised communities from realizing their potential. Gandhi's vision of Sarvodaya (welfare of all) aligns with this principle, urging inclusive growth and equitable resource distribution.

In geopolitics, Gandhi's commitment to peace and 'Ahimsa' (non-violence) resonates globally. His campaigns, from the Salt March to the Quit India Movement, demonstrated how unity and empowerment can coexist in a diverse society. Historian Ramachandra Guha remarked, "Gandhi's idea of fraternity, rooted in empathy and non-violence, offers a moral compass for modern democracy."

## Decentralized Governance

A cornerstone of Gandhi's political thought was decentralised governance. He believed true democracy could only be achieved by empowering local communi-

ties, enshrined in the Constitution, embodies this vision. Similarly, Prime Minister Modi's initiatives, such as 'Vocal for Local' and 'Viksit Bharat 2047,' echo Gandhi's principle of 'Gram Swaraj'. These programmes aim to promote local entrepreneurship, sustainable development, and self-reliance, elevating India's global stature while empowering its citizens.

## The Role of Citizens and Media

Democracy thrives on active citizen participation. Voting, engaging in public discourse, and addressing civic issues are essential for robust democratic institutions. Equally crucial is the media's role as the fourth estate, providing checks and balances while safeguarding the freedom of speech guaranteed by the Constitution. Exercising this freedom responsibly ensures accountability and transparency in governance.

## A Living Document for a Dynamic Nation

The Indian Constitution, inspired by Gandhian principles, remains a living document that harmonizes individual aspirations with collective well-being. Its relevance extends beyond legal frameworks, addressing issues such as social justice, environmental conservation, and global leadership.

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Smriti; views are personal)



AS INDIA MARKS THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONSTITUTION IN 2024, IT IS A MOMENT TO REFLECT ON THIS TRANSFORMATIVE DOCUMENT, WHICH SERVES AS THE BEDROCK OF THE NATION'S DEMOCRACY AND INCLUSIVITY

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## BJP'S STRONG COMEBACK

Madam — In just five months, the momentum in Indian politics has shifted dramatically. Following the BJP's underwhelming performance in the last Parliament elections, questions were raised about its durability and PM Modi's pan-national acceptability. Now, it's the opposition INDIA bloc that is looking fragile. The reason for the shift is a series of unexpected electoral reverses suffered by the INDIA bloc. The most significant of these setbacks occurred in Maharashtra, the second most consequential state in the Indian union. By handing the NDA a mammoth victory, Maharashtra voters have given the alliance a pretext to dismiss the Lok Sabha election jolt as an aberration.

A reversal triggered more by a "fake narrative" spun by a desperate Opposition than any discernible anti-incumbency. In Maharashtra, the BJP with allies not only smashed a five-decade-old electoral record, but it has also come astonishingly close to winning the election on its own steam. The party has been able to reunite its coalition of disparate castes. Add to this, the BJP has been better able to present itself as the emissary of "political nationalism and economic welfare." Meanwhile, this victory is a stepping stone to the validation it needs to push ahead with its governance agenda.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

## GENDER BIAS IN THE US POLITICS

Madam — The United States is not ready for a woman president, as was evident in the just-concluded elections. There is little doubt that American voters have gendered biases that factored into their votes, both in the 2016 and 2024 elections. Both Hillary Clinton and Kamala Harris faced off against Trump under different circumstances and with different strategies. But the result was the same for both candidates. Another way of looking at the impact of gender is to compare how Harris did among women voters in comparison with Hillary Clinton, whose lead over Trump among women voters was 13 points in 2016. Eight years later now, Kamala Harris'

## Kohli breaks Tendulkar's record



Team India's superstar King Kohli back in form after he reached his 30th century at the Opus Stadium, Perth. The Border-Gavaskar Trophy seems to be the redemption of pride for India after the worst loss in the home series. The year 2024 in Virat Kohli's career has been low while Kohli scored only one fifty in his 13 innings so far. By reaching this milestone of his 30th ton

his 203rd innings across 119 tests, it was his seventh in Australia, breaking the record of six hundreds by the legendary Sachin Tendulkar in the format of this game. By this century, Kohli has equalled his record with Wally Hammond for the most test hundreds in Australia by a visiting batter, and Jack Hobbs holds the highest record of nine test centuries down under which one can be sure is in the mind of Virat to cross the figure during this series.

While India is in the driver's seat in the first test and assured of a win at the moment for the fans' delight, one hopes that Kohli may come out with many more flying kisses at different venues to cheer Anushka and his fans with his inimitable style of batting prowess.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

lead over Trump was only eight points. In other words, Harris lost support among women voters who had previously voted for a woman candidate. Neither Hillary Clinton nor Harris succeeded in winning a majority of American men. In fact, out of the nine nuclear powers in the world, only Britain, Israel, India and Pakistan have elected women to the top job. Indira Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto were daughters of powerful political fathers in dynastic democracies. Sexism and racism, inextricably woven into the culture of American politics, played a central role in 2016 and 2024 against women candidates getting elected as presidents. Under the Trump regime 2.0, this scenario could also reflect in the next election in the US.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Urapakkam

## ADDRESS FARMERS' DISTRESS

Madam — It is indeed a matter of concern that the distress of the farmers is not attended to with the amount of seriousness it requires. The agri sector that was contributing to the tune of more than 50 per cent to the GDP of the nation at the time the

nation attained independence is now reduced to a deplorable level of contribution, hardly 14 per cent.

The Green Revolution has helped in increasing the yield but the other aspects of the farmers, like input cost, subsidies and MSP, in spite of being vital, are not considered favourably but changes are made hostile to the farmers' needs and benefits. The policies of the successive governments are focusing on the industrial sector. A lot of incentives, like concessions, exemptions, and extending huge loans to write off or waive off, and PLI are extended to the industrial sector, though the desired results, like a substantial increase in employment and exports, are not forthcoming. Such apathy in the approach of the government towards agriculture has resulted in millions of farmers resorting to suicide, getting plunged in unbearable debt and small farmers deserting their fields and seeking livelihood in cities.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

## Lessons from childhood, family and experiences

The past shapes our present. The present is past the next moment, to make way for the future. We are left with memories which also teach us invaluable lessons

I was also a mischievous child like any other young boy my age. I was assured of a haven, hiding behind my grandmother, whenever my parents were inclined to scold me. She would then counsel my parents to be more indulgent, simultaneously telling us to be particular about our behaviour.

I recall another memory from childhood. Our return home from school coincided with my mother's siesta. We would tiptoe into the house, careful not to disturb her. One afternoon I was excited enough to wake her to tell her about my outstanding results in the examinations. Still groggy, she hugged and blessed me, before continuing with her sleep. I still cannot forget her spontaneous reaction, even though I had interrupted her much needed rest.

My father was short-tempered in his younger days. He usually rested and slept on Sunday afternoons. We tried to be as quiet as children could be. One day, we might have been noisier than usual, and ended up soundly thrashed by him. Later in the evening, I witnessed a different facet of my father's per-



sonality. He gruffly apologized for having hurt me. I learnt an important lesson. There is no shame in accepting your mistake. I remember the day I met the young girl who became my wife and life partner in the next few months. I also remember I had eyes only for her during the wedding reception. Those were the heady days before we buckled up to the serious business of making a life together. We have been married for 40 years. These have not been easy decades, faced with the harsh realities of life. We never give up, whatever the setbacks. We work towards the common goal of leading a happy and contented life together. There is respect, and a recognition of the need

for space for each to evolve as an individual. Another nostalgic memory is from a long-ago holiday to Puri. Our guest house was a couple of hundred meters from the seashore. Our daughters were much younger. I was, and continue to be, a protective father, worrying about their safety. That one day, I sat on the veranda, fondly looking at the two children playing on the beach. I was proud of their happiness as they shrieked with joy creating something with sand. My mother kept a copy of Ramcharitmanas in her prayer corner. I read somewhere that you could find a solution to any problem from the epic. All you had to do was open any page, and the

top line would help you find ways to tackle your most pressing issue. I also tried it sometimes. I learnt that I could not always tackle situations through conventional thinking while navigating the complex labyrinths of life. Fair play, guiding the team members, impartiality, giving undivided time to team members however busy you might be, empathy, working for the team, pride in the performance of the team members, and out-of-box thinking, were only a few of the invaluable lessons that my experiences taught me. They have stood me in good stead through the rough and tumble of life. The words of psychiatrist, Abraham Twerski would resonate with many, "Ruminating about the past will get you nowhere. So go ahead and learn from the past whatever you can, and then put it behind you. Remember, there is nothing you can do to change it, but you can use its lessons to improve your future."

(The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)



SANJAY CHANDRA

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com





## FIRST COLUMN CORPORATE CAREWASHING

Many organisations falsely present themselves as socially responsible



SAKSHI SETHI

Nowadays we often see that companies are engaged towards launching mental health awareness campaigns while maintaining toxic work environments or failing to provide meaningful employee support; at times companies celebrate diversity during cultural moments without addressing systemic inequities, such as unequal pay or a lack of diverse leadership. But the question arises are the employees getting benefited or are still victims?

In an age where ethical responsibility and social consciousness are increasingly demanded of corporations, governments and individuals, a troubling phenomenon termed carewashing has emerged. The term refers to the practice of falsely presenting an organisation, business or individual as socially or ethically responsible, particularly in areas of caregiving or support, to improve their reputation or deflect criticism. Much like its environmental counterpart greenwashing, carewashing also exploits emotional appeals to mask the absence of genuine commitment to caregiving causes.

Several factors such as modern consumers increasingly seeking brands that align with their values, create pressure for organisations to appear socially conscious or social platforms that provide both positive as well as failures, thereby encouraging companies to capitalise on social causes for visibility and if that not enough then such organisations outshine its competitors by attracting customers and talent with minimal invest-



ment in genuine reform contribute to the rising of carewashing. While these pressures reflect positive shifts in societal values, they also incentivise performative actions over authentic efforts. It is believed that when carewashing is exposed, it damages trust between organisations and their stakeholders as it is often when the dissonance between claims and actions becomes apparent. Employees who witness discrepancies between an organisation's statements and its actions often feel disillusioned.

This alienation leads to reduced morale, engagement and retention, especially among those drawn to the organisation by its purported values. Quiet often we hear once the trust is lost, rebuilding it is a slow and costly process. Exposure to carewashing through whistleblowers, investigative journalism, or public criticism can lead to significant reputational harm. By co-opting social causes for profit, carewashing trivializes important issues, potentially reducing the urgency of addressing them authentically. To counteract carewashing, organisations must prioritise authenticity and accountability. This involves providing measurable, verifiable data on social and environmental efforts rather than vague claims; including employees in shaping policies and initiatives to ensure alignment with internal realities; conducting regular audits and feedback loops that will help organisations stay true to their commitments and correct shortcomings and public statements should be backed by tangible actions, such as policy changes or resource allocation.

There is no denying that carewashing is a symptom of the growing demand for ethical behaviour in business and society, but it represents a shortcut that sacrifices trust and authenticity for superficial gains. While it may offer short-term visibility, its long-term consequences are overwhelmingly negative, eroding credibility and alienating stakeholders. Organisations must recognise that true social responsibility requires meaningful actions, transparency and a commitment to sustained progress. Only by moving beyond carwashing can businesses and institutions genuinely contribute to a better world while earning the loyalty and respect of their communities.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

# Food subsidy: Go for direct transfer to curb leakages



UTTAM GUPTA

Despite extensive measures implemented by the government, including digitisation, pilferage persists, revealing systemic flaws in how food subsidies are administered

According to a Study titled 'Rationalising Public Distribution System in India' done by the Indian Council For Research On International Economic Relations (ICRIER), there was grain leakage under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) of 20 million tons (17 million ton of rice and 3 million ton of wheat) which is 28 per cent of the 71 million ton of grain off-take by states (that included 52 million ton of rice and 19 million ton wheat) during August 2022 - July 2023. The Study estimates the annual fiscal cost of this leakage to be around Rs 70,000 crore. Under the PMGKAY, the Union Government asks the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and other state agencies to procure food from the farmers at MSP (minimum support price) and organise its distribution to around 820 million people for free. The entire cost i.e. MSP paid to farmers plus handling and distribution cost (HDC) is reimbursed to the FCI/other state agencies as a subsidy. The money comes from the Union Budget's allocation for 'food subsidy'. While, the PMGKAY has been in force since January 1, 2023, before that, the Centre was giving food to 820 million persons (7 kg of cereals per person per month to 120 million poorest of the poor persons covered under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana or AAY families and five kilograms of cereals per person per month to the remaining 700 million) at a heavily subsidised price of Rs 2/3/1 per kg for wheat/rice/coarse cereals under the National Food Security Act (NFSA). In addition, since April 2020, it has given 5 kg of food per person per month for "free" to all 820 million beneficiaries under PMGKAY to mitigate the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

From January 1, 2023, it merged the free part of PMGKAY with the regular food security schemes under NFSA. Now, food is available to all 820 million beneficiaries for free under the new incarnation of NFSA, the PMGKAY. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced in November 2023, this arrangement will continue for five years until the end of CY 2028. During the financial year (FY) 2022-23, the Centre's expenditure on food subsidy was Rs 272,000 crore. Apart from expenses under PMGKAY for the whole of that FY, this amount also included the subsidy on food grain given under NFSA at the subsidised price of Rs 2/3/1 per kg for wheat/rice/coarse cereals from April to December 2022. Within this total expenditure, how much money was lost due to pilferage? How does the Study reach Rs 70,000 crore? The authors look at the 'economic cost' (EC) of rice and wheat. This is the MSP paid to farmers plus HDC.

During 2022-23, this was Rs 36.7 per kg or Rs 36,700 per ton for rice and Rs 25.9 per kg or Rs 25,900 per ton for wheat. Multiply the pilfered quantity of rice 17 million tons by its EC, we get the cost of its pilferage Rs 62,390 crore. Likewise, multiply 3 million tons of pilfered wheat by its EC, and the cost comes to Rs 7770 crore. Thus, the total cost was around Rs 70,000 crore. This



is around 26 per cent of the food subsidy expenditure of Rs 272,000 crore for 2022-23. Taken as a percentage of the subsidy given under PMGKAY alone (the budget doesn't provide this figure; a back-of-the-envelope calculation using annual off-take of 55 million tons, EC for rice and wheat given above and their use in 75:25 ratio, yields Rs 187,000 crore), this is much higher at 37 per cent.

**How has the Study arrived at the quantum of leakage?**

The Study picked up monthly off-take (albeit "reported") data from the FCI from August 2022 to July 2023 and saw this in juxtaposition with "actual household consumption levels" taken from the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) 2022-23. While the former was taken as an approximation for the quantity of food grain sent for distribution amongst the PMGKAY beneficiaries, the latter was taken as a proxy of the quantity received.

Based on the above comparison, it was concluded that as against 52.4 million tons of rice that were sent, 35.7 million tons were received suggesting a shortfall of 16.7 million tons. Likewise, against 19 million tons of wheat that was sent, 16 million tons were received pointing toward a shortfall of 3 million tons. Thus, a total of 19.7 million tons or close to 20 million tons was pilfered from the public distribution system (PDS). But, there is a flaw in such a comparison.

At the Off-take level, it can't be surmised that the quantities that

left the FCI warehouses and were picked up by states were 'entirely' meant for PDS stocks to be used for distribution (actual consumption) by the PMGKAY beneficiaries.

Off-take figures also include food stocks in transit, buffer stock, operational reserves and cereals set aside for social welfare schemes and commercial sales by the government. Each of these serves a specific purpose. For instance, 'buffer stock' refers to a strategic stock for smoothening out price fluctuations —buying a commodity when the price is low and releasing it in the market when the price is high. Likewise, 'operational reserves' are kept as a backstop which can be used quickly in the case of an unplanned event/emergency. Similarly, stock in transit can't be considered as part of food grain meant for PDS consumption within a given time frame.

The quantities meant for all such purposes need to be excluded from the grains that left FCI warehouses and only the net figure available for PDS consumption should be compared with actual household consumption levels as read from the Consumption surveys. It seems, the Study hasn't done it.

This is also corroborated by the fact that the annual distribution of free food for PMGKAY beneficiaries is normally 55 million tons; against this, the Study uses 71 million tons.

At the beneficiary's end also, the actual household consumption level includes cereal consumed from multiple sources, such as

private purchases or state-specific schemes and not just the quantities available under PMGKAY etc. Therefore, it won't be on all fours to directly correlate with PDS off-take.

To conclude, there are leakages from the PDS though not on a scale indicated by the Study. Its root cause has to do with how food subsidy is administered. Under the extant system, the subsidy is built into the price which under this Scheme is Zero. Herein lies the rub.

The availability of a mammoth of around 55 million tons (the quantity distributed under the PMGKAY) in the supply chain with zero price tag is an open invitation to dubious operators to siphon off and sell in the open market raking in a moolah. Howsoever, foolproof one may make the system (Modi - government has done an exemplary job getting PoS (point of sale machines) installed at 530,000 fair price shops across the country; digitisation of supply chain from procurement to distribution; authentication of beneficiaries with their Aadhaar numbers and so on), as long as subsidy is routed through the State agencies, unscrupulous characters will always find ways to circumvent even the best of technology interventions aimed at curbing pilferage. Pilferage can be eliminated only when the government gives subsidies directly to the beneficiaries and allows the food markets to function competitively and efficiently.

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



'BUFFER STOCK' REFERS TO A STRATEGIC STOCK FOR SMOOTHENING OUT PRICE FLUCTUATIONS—BUYING A COMMODITY WHEN THE PRICE IS LOW AND RELEASING IT IN THE MARKET WHEN THE PRICE IS HIGH

## Addressing rural housing challenges in India: A case study of PMAY-G

PMAY-G has transformed rural housing in India, delivering not just shelter but also dignity and opportunity to millions

Housing is a fundamental challenge for rural India, where a significant portion of households live in kutcha structures made of non-durable materials such as mud and bamboo. These homes are highly vulnerable to harsh weather conditions, exposing residents to risks and uncertainties. Recognising this, the Indian government launched the 'Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G)' as part of its commitment to achieving "Housing for All."



JEEVANT RAMPAL

This ambitious welfare program aims to provide financial and construction assistance to build durable 'pucca' houses equipped with essential amenities. The scheme targets both houseless households and those residing in 'kutcha'

or dilapidated structures. As of October 2024, PMAY-G has facilitated the construction of 2.67 crore houses, marking a significant milestone in its progress. However, this raises critical questions: Will this initiative truly ensure housing for all? How effectively does it address rural India's housing challenges?

**Leveraging Technology for Quality and Oversight**

A cornerstone of PMAY-G's success lies in its use of technology to enhance construction quality and ensure transparency in disbursement. One notable component is the 'Rural Mason Training (RMT) Program', developed in collaboration with the National Skill Development Corporation. The programme has trained 2.81 lakh masons, equipping them with the skills to deliver high-quality construction while fostering local expertise. This initiative not only improves housing quality but also accelerates construction. For instance, over 40 lakh houses were built in 2021-22, with the number surpassing 50 lakh in 2022-23, breaking all previous records. Further, the program prioritises disaster-resilient designs, supported

by tools like the 'Pahal Compendium'. This resource offers diverse, region-specific house designs incorporating disaster-resilient features. Complementing the compendium is an app that provides 3D visualisations of recommended house designs, ensuring practicality and accessibility. **Transformative Impact on Beneficiaries** PMAY-G's impact extends beyond physical housing. Recent research highlights its role in improving living conditions, access to infrastructure, and overall wellbeing. Beneficiaries have reported enhanced social status, self-esteem, and a sense of belonging—factors that potentially reduce distress migration. A key feature of the programme



is its focus on marginalised groups, promoting transparency and ensuring female co-ownership, thereby empowering women. The initiative has also significantly contributed to rural employment. Each house constructed under PMAY-G generates approximately 314 person-days of work, distributed among skilled (81 days), semi-skilled (71 days), and unskilled (164 days) labour. This

employment impact is further amplified by integration with the 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGN-REGS)'. The quality of training under the RMT programme is evident, with certified masons even securing overseas employment opportunities. Such achievements underscore PMAY-G's dual focus on immediate housing needs and long-term skill development. **Comprehensive Programme Integration** One of PMAY-G's standout features is its integration with other government schemes to improve beneficiaries' overall quality of life. This includes: - Toilets through 'Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)' - LPG connections via 'Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala

Yojana (PMUY)' **Ensuring Transparency and Fairness** Transparency in beneficiary selection is another critical strength of PMAY-G. Beneficiaries are identified using the 'Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011' and 'Awaas+ 2018' lists, verified through Gram Sabhas and an appellate process. The program also uses the 'Awaas+2024 Mobile App', which enables households to self-survey and update their housing status. Recently, facial recognition systems were introduced to further improve oversight, ensuring fairness and reducing fraudulent claims. **Global Scale and Ambitions:** PMAY-G Despite its notable success, PMAY-G faces sever-

al challenges that need attention. A significant issue is the lack of awareness among many eligible beneficiaries, particularly in remote areas, about the programme's eligibility criteria, highlighting the need for better information dissemination. Additionally, the program would benefit from stronger feedback mechanisms to address potential blind spots and improve implementation efficiency. Another concern is the uneven progress across states, with some exceeding their targets while others fall behind. Achieving balanced implementation will require greater political consensus and more equitable resource allocation. (The writer is faculty, IIM Ahmedabad; views are personal)



## IN BRIEF



### KEC Intl bags orders worth Rs 1,114 cr

KEC International on Monday said it has secured new orders worth Rs 1,114 crore across its various businesses. These businesses include Transmission & Distribution (T&D) under which the company has secured orders for T&D projects in the Middle East and the Americas, according to a statement. The company has bagged a 400 kV Transmission line in Oman and an order for supply of towers, hardware and poles in the Americas. Its civil business secured orders in the industrial segment in India and an order for Metro Overhead Electrification (OHE) works in the technologically enabled segment in the country. The company's cable business has bagged orders for supply of various types of cables in India and overseas. "With these new orders, our YTD (year-to-date) order intake stands at Rs 14,600 crore, reflecting a healthy growth of 50 per cent compared to last year," Vimal Kejriwal, MD & CEO of KEC International, said in the statement.



### Maruti looks to diversify export markets

Maruti Suzuki India on Monday said it is looking to diversify export markets as it aims to clock 7.5 lakh units to overseas locations by 2030-31. The auto major has already exported 30 lakh units to various markets across the globe. The 3 millionth vehicle export was part of a shipment of 1,053 units that sailed from Gujarat's Pipavav port comprising models like Celerio, Fronx, Jimny, Baleno, Ciaz, Dzire, and S-Presso. "Aligned with the Government of India's flagship 'Make in India' initiative, Maruti Suzuki is committed to deep localisation and multiplying exports," Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) MD & CEO Hisashi Takeuchi said in a statement. Today, 40 per cent of passenger vehicles exported from India are from the auto major, he added. "Our exports from India have grown by three times from four years ago. Inspired by this global demand, the company is determined to diversify and ramp-up vehicle exports to 7.5 lakh units by 2030-31," Takeuchi said.



### Rupee rises 10 paise to close at 84.31 against US dollar

The rupee appreciated 10 paise to close at 84.31 (provisional) against US dollar on Monday, supported by a firm trend in domestic equities amid improved investor risk appetite. Forex traders said investor sentiment got a boost after the Israeli ambassador to Washington said the Hezzbollah ceasefire deal could come "within days". At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.38 and touched an intra-day high of 84.25 against the greenback. The unit ended the session at 84.31 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a rise of 10 paise over its previous close. On Friday, the rupee recovered from its all-time low level and appreciated 9 paise to close at 84.41 against the US dollar. "The US bonds are rallying on Trump appointing Scott Bessent as his Treasury Secretary. It is to be known that Bessent is a deficit hawk, so the possibility of a reduction in borrowing is weighing on the yields, in turn supporting the INR. "In addition, geopolitical concerns are somewhat contained as Israel may reach a ceasefire deal with Hezzbollah and there has not been any concerning developments in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war either."

## After multiple RBI strictures, MFIs tighten norms

PNS ■ MUMBAI

After repeated strictures from the Reserve Bank on the industry's practices, the Microfinance Institutions Network (MFIN) on Monday announced a slew of changes to make lending to the bottom of the pyramid more "responsible".

From January 1, the self-regulatory organisation's members will ensure that a single MFI client's borrowings are limited to three MFIs as against four at present and the total indebtedness of a borrower including MFI and unsecured retail loans is capped at Rs 2 lakh, a statement said.

The body's chief executive and director Alok Misra hoped that the sector will become "more resilient" with the new measures.

Over the last few months, the RBI has gone public with its concerns on a slew of practices adopted by the MFIs, including usurious high inter-

est rates, multiple lendings to single borrowers and even practices like not crediting loan repayments to the rightful accounts despite being paid by borrowers.

On October 21, the RBI also asked four entities including Navi Finserv, DMI Finance, Arohan Financial Services and Asirvad Micro Finance to cease and desist from sanctioning and disbursing new loans because of unfair practices.

At the same time, many lenders are showing a rise in their NPAs in the MFI segment.

Microlenders have also tightened the norms on lending to a client who has slipped into the non-performing asset category, as per the MFIN guidelines.

No lending will be made to a delinquent client who has not repaid an outstanding of over Rs 3,000 for over 60 days as against 90 days at present, the guidelines for MFIN members state.

### HDFC Life Insurance faces data breach, assessing potential impact

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

HDFC Life Insurance on Monday said there have been some instances of data leaks and assessing potential impact of this breach.

"We have received communication from an unknown source, who has shared certain data fields of our customers with us, with mala fide intent," HDFC Life said in a regulatory filing.

The company has initiated an information security assessment and data log analysis, it said.

A detailed investigation is underway in consultation with information security experts to assess the root cause and take remedial action, as necessary, it said. The company continues to investigate this further to assess the potential impact,

it said, adding, "We will take utmost care to handle concerns of our customers and take actions to safeguard their interest." Last month, insurance regulator Irdai directed two insurers to carry out audits of their IT systems following concerns over the recent instances of policyholders' data leaks.

Without naming the insurers, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) had said it takes data breaches very seriously and asserted that it will continue to engage with the companies to ensure that the policyholders' interests are fully protected.

Star Health Insurance had recently admitted data breach. Tata AIG is another insurance company which faced a data leak.



## India's economic outlook 'cautiously optimistic': Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's economic outlook for the coming months is 'cautiously optimistic', with agriculture likely to benefit from favourable monsoon conditions, increased minimum support prices and adequate supply of inputs, the finance ministry said in a report.

"Bright agricultural production prospects make the inflation outlook benign, despite existing price pressures in select food items," the October edition of Monthly Economic Review released by the Department of Economic Affairs on Monday said.

Early November trends signalled moderation in key food prices, though geopolitical factors may continue to impact domestic inflation and supply chains, it said.

A bumper kharif harvest is expected to lower food inflation in the coming months, it said, adding that a favourable monsoon, adequate reservoir levels and higher minimum support prices are likely to boost rabi sowing and produc-



tion. Amidst a clouded global background, and after a brief period of softening momentum over the monsoon months, the report said, many high-frequency indicators of economic activity in India have shown a rebound in October.

These include indicators of rural and urban demand and supply side variables like Purchasing Managers' Index and E-way bill generation, it said.

On the employment front, it said, the formal workforce is expanding, with notable

increases in manufacturing jobs and a strong inflow of youth into organised sectors.

With regard to the external front, it said, India's export recovery may encounter challenges due to softening demand in developed markets.

However, it said, trade in the services sector is sustaining momentum.

Net foreign direct investment inflows registered remarkable growth in the first five months of FY25, it said.

Supported by stable capital inflows, India's forex reserves increased by USD 64.8 billion

so far during 2024, the second-largest increase after China amongst major forex reserve-holding countries, it said.

Apart from the emerging indications of domestic growth and stability, the dynamics of global interest rates, earning growth and valuation, geopolitical developments and policy decisions of the next administration in the United States will determine the course of trade and capital flows, the report said.

Recent developments in the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine have caused some concern in financial markets with safe-haven assets such as US Treasuries and gold finding a bid, it said, adding, that geopolitical conditions remain fragile.

The report said the global economy reveals a mixed outlook as 2024 draws to a close.

Structural weaknesses in parts of Europe and China's slowdown continued to weigh on growth. In contrast, the US economy has surpassed earlier expectations, maintaining steady expansion

### Over 25 pc subscribers report decline in pesky calls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Around 27 per cent mobile subscribers have experienced reduction in pesky calls after telecom regulator Trai's stringent action against unregistered telemarketers, according to a survey by online platform LocalCircles.

However, a majority of subscribers said there is no relief yet from pesky callers, instead there has been an increase in robo calls, the survey, which was released on Monday, said.

According to the survey report, only 9 per cent mobile subscribers surveyed confirmed net reduction in pesky calls post Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) blacklisting of spammers.

## Gold tumbles Rs 1,000 to Rs 79,400 per 10 gms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices tumbled Rs 1,000 to slip below the Rs 80,000 level in the national capital on Monday amid weak global trends, according to local marketmen.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity tanked Rs 1,000 to Rs 79,400 per 10 grams against the previous close of Rs 80,400 on Friday.

Silver declined Rs 1,600 to Rs 91,700 per kg. The metal finished at Rs 93,300 per kg on Friday.

The price of gold with 99.5 per cent purity plunged Rs 1,000 to Rs 79,000 per 10 grams. The yellow metal had settled at Rs 80,000 per 10 grams in the previous session on Friday.

"Gold witnessed a sharp decline of more than Rs 1,000 below Rs 76,500, as the war premium faded, with no fresh



geopolitical escalations over the weekend to sustain the rally," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

Last week's strong surge in MCX and Comex prices prompted profit booking, leading to the unwinding of long positions. This week, traders will await weekly jobless claims and the Fed's Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting minutes, which will

more direction for the yellow metal, Trivedi added.

Meanwhile, in futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for December delivery plunged Rs 1,071 or 1.38 per cent to trade at Rs 76,545 per 10 grams. It closed at Rs 77,616 per 10 grams in the previous trading session. Silver contracts for December delivery declined Rs 1,468 or 1.62 per cent to Rs 89,300 per kg against the previous close of Rs 90,768 per kg on Friday.

## Sensex reclaims 80k mark; Nifty surges over 1%

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty surged more than 1 per cent on Monday, helped by a rally in blue-chip stocks and the BJP pulling off a stunning performance in Maharashtra, winning a record number of seats to propel the party-led ruling Mahayuti alliance to a landslide victory.

Extending its previous day's sharp rally, the BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 992.74 points or 1.25 per cent to settle at 80,109.85. During the day, it soared 1,355.97 points or 1.71 per cent to 80,473.08.

The NSE Nifty surged 314.65 points or 1.32 per cent to 24,221.90.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Larsen & Toubro, State Bank of India, Adani Ports, Reliance Industries, Power Grid, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Axis Bank were the biggest gainers.

On the other hand, JSW Steel, Tech Mahindra, Infosys, Maruti, Asian Paints and



HCL Tech were the laggards.

Online food delivery giant Zomato will become a part of the benchmark BSE Sensex, replacing JSW Steel from December 23.

This is part of the latest reconstitution announced by Asia Index Private Ltd, a subsidiary of BSE.

"The ability of the market to surprise was evident in the 557 points spurt in the Nifty on Friday. This sharp upswing will continue today assisted by the super NDA performance in Maharashtra. The political message from this election is huge and highly positive from the market perspective," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

### D-Street investors richer by Rs 14.20 lakh cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investors' wealth soared Rs 14.20 lakh crore in two days of spectacular rally in the equity market where the BSE benchmark Sensex jumped nearly 4 per cent during this time. The Sensex has surged 2,954.06 points or 3.82 per cent in the past two days, regaining the crucial 80,000 mark. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms soared Rs 14,20,004.4 crore to Rs 4,39,58,912.41 crore (USD 5.22 trillion).

"The relief rally backed by robust short-covering ahead of the monthly expiry this week continued for a second straight session as benchmark Sensex breached the psychological 80k mark on all-round buying support.

"The enthusiasm after the Maharashtra assembly election win by the BJP & its allies gave equity markets a

major boost on expectations that infrastructure projects would get a fresh leg up going ahead," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research) at Mehta Equities Ltd, said.

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.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Larsen & Toubro, State Bank of India, Adani Ports, Reliance Industries, Power Grid, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Axis Bank were the biggest gainers. On the other hand, JSW Steel, Tech Mahindra, Infosys, Maruti, Asian Paints and HCL Tech were the laggards.

## 'No new investment in Adani till bribe charges cleared'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

French energy giant TotalEnergies SE on Monday said it will make no new financial contribution as part of its investments in Adani group companies till the Indian firm's founder is cleared of bribery charges.

The energy giant said it was not aware of the investigation into the alleged corruption.

TotalEnergies is one of the biggest foreign investors in billionaire Gautam Adani's business empire and had previously taken stakes in the group's renewable energy venture Adani Green Energy Ltd (AEGE) and city gas unit Adani Total Gas Ltd (ATGL).

In a statement, the French firm said it learnt of US authorities indicting Gautam Adani and two other executives for allegedly paying USD 265 million bribes to Indian officials to secure solar power supply contracts for AEGE.

"This indictment does not target AEGE itself, nor any AEGE-related companies," TotalEnergies said. "Until such time when the accusations against the Adani group individuals and their consequences have been clarified, TotalEnergies will not make any new financial contribution as

part of its investments in the Adani group of companies."

Adani group has dismissed the allegations brought in the US court as baseless and has said it would seek all possible legal recourse.

TotalEnergies holds a 19.75 per cent stake in Adani Green Energy Ltd - the renewable energy arm of the Indian group helmed by Gautam Adani. It also has a 50 per cent stake in three joint venture companies that produce electricity from sunlight and wind with AEGE.

The French firm also holds a 37.4 per cent stake in Adani Total Gas Ltd, which retails CNG to automobiles and pipes natural gas to households for cooking.

"In accordance with its code of conduct, TotalEnergies rejects corruption in any form," the French giant said in the statement. "TotalEnergies, which is not targeted nor involved in the facts described by such indictment, will take all relevant actions to protect its interests as a minority (19.75 per cent) shareholder of AEGE and as a joint-venture partner (50 per cent) in project companies with AEGE."

The company said it made the investments in Adani's entities "in full compliance with applicable laws."



## About 7 pc workforce growth expected: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

With 59 per cent of employers planning to increase headcount in October-March FY25, 7.1 per cent workforce growth is expected during the period, driven by the logistics, e-commerce, and manufacturing sectors, a report said.

According to TeamLease Services' Employment Outlook Report for October 2024 to March 2025, an additional 22 per cent will maintain their current staffing levels.

The report is based on primary and secondary research, taking inputs from 1,307

employers across 23 industries in 20 cities.

These findings reveal a dynamic hiring landscape where industry-specific demands and macroeconomic factors are significantly shaping employment trends, the report added.

This growth will mainly be driven by sectors including logistics, EV & EV infrastructure, agriculture and agrochemicals, and e-commerce, which are heavily investing in infrastructure and technological advancements, it said.

Logistics, for instance, stands out with a 14.2 per cent

net employment change, as 69 per cent of companies in the sector look to increase headcount. This growth is attributed to the sector's adoption of 5G logistics, green supply

chain initiatives, and benefits from National Logistics Policy

implementations, it noted.

Logistics is followed by EV and EV Infrastructure (12.1 per cent), agriculture and agrochemicals (10.5 per cent), and e-

commerce and tech startups (8.9 per cent), where startups are capitalising on AI-enabled customer insights, Web 3.0 applications, and seasonal demand from the festive period, it said.

As technology continues to evolve, the automotive industry is also seeing 8.5 per cent growth, spurred by integrated smart technologies, while the retail sector's 8.2 per cent growth reflects the popularity of hyperlocal deliveries and smart-store concepts.

The report further said that cities like Coimbatore (24.6 per cent) and Gurugram (22.6 per

cent) are becoming job hubs, representing a decentralisation of employment opportunities beyond traditional metros.

While Bengaluru (53.1 per cent), Mumbai (50.2 per cent), and Hyderabad (48.2 per cent) remained central employment anchors with high workforce demand, demand in cities like Coimbatore, Gurugram, Jaipur, Lucknow, and Nagpur signals a broader spread of job growth across India, reinforcing the appeal of smaller cities as viable alternatives for job seekers and companies alike, it added.



## Saiyami Kher's intensive training with firefighters for Agni

Saiyami Kher, known for her dedication to her craft, is going the extra mile to bring authenticity to her role as a firefighter in the upcoming film *Agni*, directed by acclaimed filmmaker Rahul Dholakia. In preparation for this groundbreaking character, Kher trained extensively with real-life firefighters, visiting Mumbai fire stations multiple times to gain

firsthand experience of their rigorous routines, techniques, and mental resilience. Starring alongside Pratik Gandhi and Divyendu Sharma, *Agni* will be one of the first films in Indian cinema to highlight the life of a female firefighter, with Kher leading a powerful portrayal of courage and commitment.

Kher shared her experience of working with Mumbai's firefighters, saying, "As an actor with every film I have done I have gotten to learn a new skill. And I take immense pride in that. Be it horse riding for *Mirzya*, counting notes like a banker for *Choked*, cricket for *ghoomer* and now firefighting for *Agni*! Preparing for this role was deeply inspiring and exciting. Spending time with real firefighters gave me an understanding of how little I knew about firefighters in our city and what all they have to endure. The number of female firefighters also was an eye-opener. The training sessions were very exciting. I learned how to handle equipment, did the drills the firefighter do. Seeing the sacrifices these men and women make every day—often at great risk to themselves—was incredibly humbling. We want people witness the world of firefighters and the bravery it takes to do what they do. I wish and hope we have done justice to their commitment."

With Pratik Gandhi and Divyendu Sharma joining Kher in this powerful narrative, *Agni* promises to bring a new level of intensity and realism to the big screen, offering audiences a closer look at the lives of those who risk everything for others' safety.



## Malaika's cue on her relationship status?

Malaika Arora has finally spoken out about her split from Arjun Kapoor. Arjun Kapoor announced last month that he and Malaika had ended their relationship after dating for almost six years. Nevertheless, Malaika did not give a clear response to Arjun's confirmation. Now, the actress has released a post verifying her relationship status.

The post read, "My status right now." It had three options—in a relationship, single and hehehe. The last option was highlighted. Malaika simple reposted it and didn't add anything to it. Malaika Arora has been engaging her fans with updates on her Instagram Stories. After Arjun Kapoor announced their split during the *Singham Again* promotional event, Malaika Arora has been sharing mysterious posts on social media.



## Prakash Jha reveals plans for Rajneeti & Gangaajal sequels with new cast



Prakash Jha, the filmmaker, announced that he is currently developing sequels for his well-known movies, *Rajneeti* and *Gangaajal*. During a recent interview, he discussed the main topic of both stories and provided information about the two projects. Nevertheless, he also suggested that Ajay Devgn and Ranbir Kapoor would not be returning for the two movies.

In his interview, Jha pointed out that meeting actors nowadays is difficult due to the involvement of agencies and managers. The well-known director explained that nowadays, there are barriers that must be overcome in order to communicate directly with actors, unlike in the past when directors could easily present their ideas and stories to the stars. Jha talked extensively about creating the third part of *Gangaajal* and *Rajneeti 2*, acknowledging that their plots will vary and he hasn't finalised the cast yet.

The filmmaker said, "I cannot say anything about repeating the cast. There are a few (good) actors, and they are managed by talent agencies. The actors cannot take the decisions themselves. A decade ago, we could just meet the actors, narrate the story, and convince them to make a decision. Today, you cannot. Actors don't read the scripts; their assistants and managers do. You have to go through three levels of management to reach the stars." When asked about having Ranbir and Ajay, he admitted having lost touch with both of them. Jha said, "They are shooting for many projects. I am not in touch with them, but if there is a project, they will be contacted." The director elaborated on the idea behind *Gangaajal 3*, which has been tentatively titled *Dharamkshetra*. He said, "There is a script ready for *Gangaajal*. It's tentatively called *Dharamkshetra*. It's based on several stories about the police force, society and the dilemma they face with each other. It's not an extension of *Gangaajal*. Instead, it's about a head constable."

And what about *Rajneeti 3*? Does the story continue from where it ended in the first film? Jha said they are going to retain a few characters, including Ranbir's Samar Pratap: "The second part is intended to be an extension of the first movie. Though Samar Pratap has gone abroad, he is there (in this story). The story's structure has been worked out."

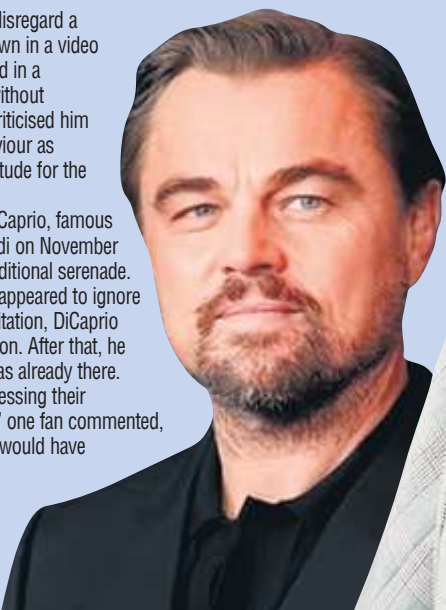
Prakash Jha is known for making popular political thrillers, including *Aarakshan* (2011), *Apaharan* (2005), *Satyagraha* (2013) and *Chakravyuh* (2012), among others.

## Leonardo DiCaprio slammed for disrespecting Fijian welcome ceremony

Leonardo DiCaprio is facing criticism for appearing to disregard a traditional Fijian welcome ceremony in a hotel, as shown in a video that has surfaced. The famous actor was filmed, absorbed in a conversation on the phone, walking by the entertainers without acknowledging them. Social media users have recently criticised him for being "disrespectful," with some describing the behaviour as "snobbish," urging the actor to demonstrate greater gratitude for the cultural gesture.

In a TikTok video that has gained popularity, Leonardo DiCaprio, famous for his role in *Titanic*, was filmed departing a hotel in Nadi on November 20 while hotel staff lined up to bid him farewell with a traditional serenade. Sporting a dark cap, tracksuit, and sunglasses, the actor appeared to ignore the cultural farewell as he entered the lobby. Without hesitation, DiCaprio immediately grabbed his phone and initiated a conversation. After that, he promptly bowed his head before hurrying to a car that was already there. Fans were left questioning his behaviour, with some expressing their disappointment. "He didn't even recognise the welcome," one fan commented, while another wrote, "At least a quick wave or thank you would have been nice." Many felt his lack of acknowledgment was disrespectful to the Fijian tradition.

Some even criticised him for using a "fake call" method to exit the venue. "Haha, the old 'fake call' act. Gets in the car, drops the phone," one user remarked.



## Jennifer opens up about tough times during Friends reunion

How did Jennifer Aniston become a star? The highway is not smooth. She is now revealing the details of one of the toughest times in her life, which coincided with the filming of the *Friends* reunion in 2021. "I think we were just so naive walking into it," she said, reminiscing on the reunion. "How fun is this going to be? The sets are back; the vibe is set." Then—boom—reality crashed in. "Oh right, I hadn't thought about what was going on the last time I was here."

Cue emotional reset. What exactly hit her so hard? She didn't spill all the tea, but it wasn't career drama. "It was more personal stuff that I had expectations about that sort of shape-shifted," she shared. Reliving the past was like opening an emotional Pandora's box. "Hi, past, remember me? Remember how that sucked?" she joked. But it wasn't a joke. The pain was real. "You thought everything was in front of you, and life was going to be just gorgeous, and then you went through maybe the hardest time of your life," she admitted. And, since Aniston's always been emotionally accessible (her words, not ours), the floodgates opened, making the cameras feel like an emotional spotlight. "I had to walk out at certain points. I don't know how they cut around it," she confessed.



## FUN

### ARCHIE



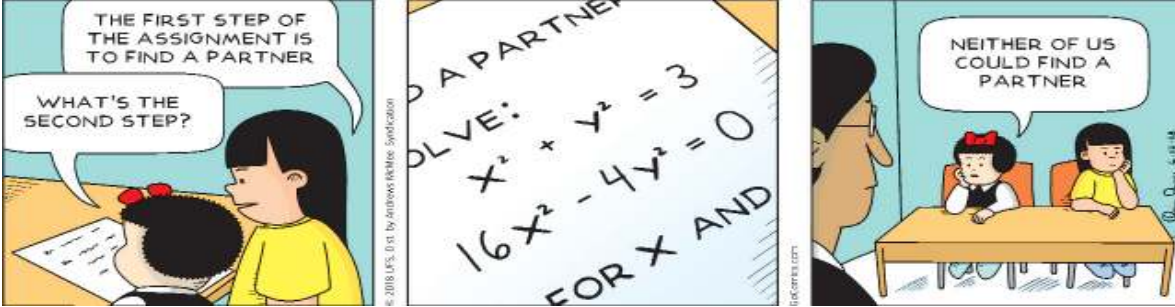
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



### NANCY



### GINGER MEGGS



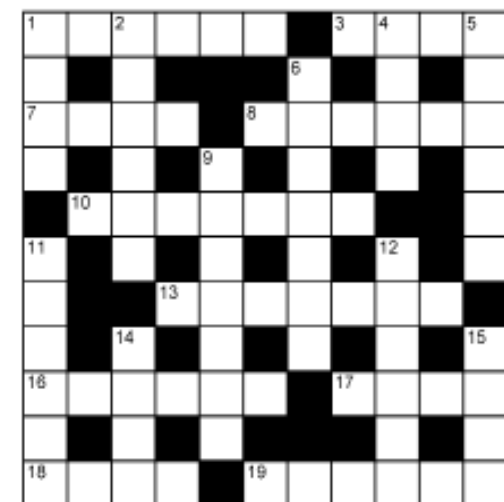
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

### ACROSS

- A hole in a hill for a train
- Unlock
- Very uncommon
- An animal with a shell
- An erupting mountain
- A long sort of table where you are served in a shop
- A restaurant worker
- Meat and vegetables cooked slowly in liquid
- Scraps of material
- A planet

### DOWN

- Ripped and ragged
- Opposite of wide
- Tame animals kept at home
- Required
- On fire
- A month
- Reply
- Defeated
- Make music with the voice
- These birds hunt at night





## YUNG SAMMY GOES GLOBAL! JOINS DRAKE & MORE

**Trailblazing hip-hop sensation Yung Sammy, sits down with *The Pioneer* for an exclusive chat, as he speaks about his remarkable journey from the streets of Noida to the global stage, leaving an indelible mark on the music world**

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With his innovative flair and unstoppable energy, Yung Sammy is rapidly becoming one of the most talked-about young artists in hip-hop. Through his inventive approach and boundless enthusiasm, this emerging artist is redefining the sonic landscape of his generation. His most recent freestyle, *Noida 2 NYC*, has achieved a historic milestone in Indian hip-hop by being featured on New York's *On The Radar* platform, further solidifying his global presence.

Following his highly regarded appearance on *Fire in the Booth* with Charlie Sloth, the musical artist tells us in an exclusive interview, "Hip-hop has always been unique in its storytelling and has undoubtedly been very cultural in expressing other cultures. I believe I have been able to have the USP and I am also receptive to other cultures, including India and my own culture, where I was born at Nigeria. Therefore, if you listen to any of my music, you'll notice that I employ a variety of voice modulations, lingos and slang, which is more open because I have been receptive to both cultures."

He believes that music has a significant role in culture and storytelling. When you see Afro music, you may say, "I'm trying something new like Punjabi lyrics on Afro music, an Afro dialect and Afro music and Afro accent. He has a lot to convey about his experiences living in both countries, so he thinks music has played a significant role. As a result, the music has a greater taste and more listeners." Sammy believes that it has consistently played a positive role.

The trailblazing Nigerian hip-hop artist further states, "You know, artists have always been pushed by *Fire in the Booth*. The opportunity to showcase musicians from around the globe and my ability to represent Nigeria and India. I made the track for the intro and when I was in London, Shabz informed me that we were going to *Fire in the Booth* tomorrow. To be honest, I had no idea that I would be a part of the *Fire in the Booth*. When I was in the venue and I saw Charlie Sloth, I was really anxious. However, when I was rapping, there was a point in the video where I was kind of annoyed because I began to remember where I started and where I was. That emotion took me by surprise and I thought, 'I need to kill this shit.' I wanted to be flawless when I was in and the location had to be flawless, so that's what I was actually thinking while I was pitting the bars, which was undoubtedly a one-take. I took care to ensure I didn't overlook anything."

Yung Sammy is totally obsessed with Indian music - and it shows in his amazing collaborations with artists like 'Seedhe Maui!' He's also into Honey Singh, Krsna, Raftaar and all the other talented musicians who are making waves in the Indian hip-hop scene. With the scene exploding right now, Yung Sammy is right at the forefront! "As I mentioned earlier, it's a huge honour to represent both India and my home country, Nigeria. As an artist, gaining legitimacy and respect is crucial and people's admiration is a wonderful bonus. In my opinion, it's a significant achievement and it serves as a reminder that anyone can succeed, regardless of their race, nationality, or culture. Moreover, it shows that one can repre-

sent their country from anywhere in the world." Well, true that Yung!

Freestyling is a gift in itself. Not all artists possess the ability to freestyle. For Yung Sammy, freestyling is also a skill he honed in the studio, where he and his team would play instrumental tracks and improvise rap verses. They would experiment with different rhythms and flows to test their abilities and improve their freestyling skills. As a result, Yung Sammy has a deep appreciation for artists who can freestyle well. Joining the league of artists like Drake, Central Cee, Da Baby and Ice Spice, Yung Sammy has become the second India-based hip-hop artist, after Hanumankind, to feature on a prominent global show. He states, "This freestyle is more than just music - it's a bridge between Noida and New York, showing the world what Indian hip-hop is capable of. From the streets of Noida to New York's iconic platforms, this journey represents every young Indian artist's dream."

Building on this momentum, his unique journey from Noida's streets to New York's hip-hop scene serves as an inspiration for aspiring Indian artists. His ability to blend authentic Hindi lyrics with international rap styles has not only caught the attention of global platforms but has also created a new blueprint for Indian hip-hop artists aiming to make their mark on the world stage.



## Navdeep Khanuja's *Million Dollar* deals and beyond

**In an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, Navdeep Khanuja, star of *Million Dollar Listing India*, opens up about his journey in luxury real estate, sharing insights into his business mantra and future plans. The new show offers an inside look at the high-stakes world of selling multimillion-dollar properties to India's elite, and his expertise makes him a key figure in this thrilling venture.**

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In the high-stakes world of real estate, success isn't just about sharp deals and gleaming properties, it's about resilience, adaptability and teamwork. For Navdeep Khanuja, his journey to building a thriving enterprise epitomises these values, with family support and a strategic vision playing pivotal roles.

Reflecting on his early days, he recalls a defining moment: "Within a couple of months, I closed a significant transaction. That early success gave me the confidence to go all in." Starting as a one-man army, he managed every aspect of the business himself. However, as demand surged, he quickly realised the importance of a solid support system.

"It was just me at the beginning," he shares. "Then the business expanded so rapidly that I had to hire an executive assistant. Even then, it wasn't enough. I remember telling my wife, Geet, who was managing our five-month-old baby at the time, 'Hire two full-time maids because I need you in the office. The business is growing, and I can't handle it alone.'"

Geet's entry into the business marked a turning point. "She took charge of operations and follow-ups while I focused on the fieldwork," he explains. Her efficiency enabled the business to scale smoothly and today, their team has grown to 15 members. "The credit goes to my wife for managing operations so seamlessly," he says.

By 2023, he had achieved considerable milestones but yearned for more. Inspired by Netflix's *Selling Sunset*, he began dreaming of showcasing Indian real estate in a similar glamorous light. "I thought, 'This doesn't exist in India yet.' I envisioned something centered on my life, my work, and the stunning properties I deal with," he says.

He discussed the concept with industry friends, but one filmmaker advised him to wait for a network's interest. In January 2024, destiny intervened when he received a message from Endemol. "They were planning a show like this and wanted to meet me," he recalls. "It felt surreal, like the power of manifestation coming to life."

During his initial meeting, he learned that the global real estate franchise *Million Dollar Listing* was launching in India. "The moment I heard that, I knew it had to involve me," he says confidently.

Unlike the dramatic rivalries often seen in reality TV, he found the experience on *Million Dollar Listing India* refreshingly collaborative. "All six of us have unique spaces in the market, catering to different clientele," he explains. "We didn't have prior rivalries, so instead of competing, we ended up learning from each other."

He highlights how the show provided opportunities to collaborate on projects, gaining insights into his peers' approaches. "It became a learning curve for all of us. Each one of us is doing fabulous work in our respective spaces and the show allowed us to showcase our strengths while learning from others."

Being on *Million Dollar Listing India* wasn't just a professional milestone, it was a game-changer for his personal brand. "These days, personal branding plays a massive role," he explains. "When a client invests, they're not just buying a property, they're trusting you, your reputation and your expertise." The show gave him a platform to highlight his authenticity and professionalism. "It's about building credibility as a realtor and connecting with people on a personal level. The exposure helps potential clients trust us with their investments," he adds.

Filming the show posed its own challenges. For a month and a half, he had to delegate responsibilities to his team while focusing on filming. "Honestly, I didn't work much during that period," he admits. "I was setting up strategies and overseeing things from afar." Despite his absence, his team delivered impressive results. "I'm so thankful to them for stepping up. They not only kept things running smoothly but achieved big numbers. It's a testament to the systems we've put in place."

He also credits the show for reshaping his marketing strategy. "It's no longer just about selling properties, it's about selling a lifestyle, a vision, and trust," he says. With increased visibility, his focus shifted to relatability and authenticity, ensuring that his personal and professional values resonate with his audience.

One memorable deal showcased on the show involved a young client returning from the US. "He contacted me from his UK number, saying he wanted a 500-square-yard property for his mother," he recounts. "He told me, 'I've come to you and I'm not going anywhere else.'"

The transaction unfolded swiftly. "His mother, a senior advocate, visited one of the properties and decided to close the deal on the spot. It was a quick, successful transaction and you'll see it all on the show," he shares proudly.

For those entering the competitive world of real estate, he emphasises authenticity and a client-first approach. "First and foremost, find your niche," he advises. "Identify your space in the market and approach it your way. You don't need a mentor or a godfather. I didn't have either, I carved my own path by staying true to myself."

He underscores the importance of honesty and transparency. "You're handling clients' hard-earned money, it's a responsibility that should never be taken lightly. Establish your credibility through fairness and integrity. Clients value trust, and that's what sets you apart in this industry."

Ultimately, he believes success lies in carving your own journey. "Don't imitate someone else's path. Define your style, build relationships, and focus on trust. Real estate is as much about connections as it is about properties. If you stick to these principles, success will follow."

Participating in *Million Dollar Listing India* marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter for him. "Being on Sony LIV is not just about visibility, it's about opening new doors and exploring fresh prospects," he says. For him, growth is a constant pursuit and his journey exemplifies how resilience, vision and authenticity can lead to unparalleled success.



## INDIA'S WAR ON DIABETES

The 52nd Annual Conference of the Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI), in collaboration with the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), was officially commenced on World Diabetes Day. The event attended by several dignitaries brought together over 5,000 healthcare professionals, national and international experts and prominent speakers to discuss and address the growing diabetes epidemic in India. According to the latest report from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), more than 10 crore people are currently affected.

Science and Technology Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh, who was one of the attendees at the conference, stated that to tackle the epidemic of diabetes that confronts us today, we need a collaborative effort that has to be extended beyond the practitioners of medicine and the researchers of medicine. He further opined, "This collaboration must include inputs from cultural and social activists. As rightly pointed out, it's about breaking barriers and bridging gaps—between individuals and patients, individuals and doctors, individuals and families, individuals and soci-

ety, as well as between the private and public sectors. I have been a strong advocate of increasing private-sector involvement in these efforts. It is only through such partnerships that we can achieve truly optimal results."

The conference also announced a joint declaration by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) and RSSDI. This declaration underscores the global and regional commitment to diabetes awareness, prevention and treatment. Another key aspect of the conference is the Doctors' Pledge, or Doctor's Oath, with over 10,000 healthcare professionals from across India taking a solemn oath to increase diabetes awareness, advocate for early screenings, and promote healthier lifestyle choices.

Dr. Banshi Saboo, Chief Diabetologist & Chairman of Dia Care—Diabetes Care & Hormone Clinic, emphasised, "The urgency of addressing diabetes as a national priority cannot be overstated. By focusing on prevention, early diagnosis and patient education, we empower individuals to manage their health more proactively, ultimately reducing the burden of this epidemic on families and communities."

The conference agenda features in-depth sessions on various critical aspects of diabetes care and treatment. Key highlights included discussions on diabetes in pregnancy and women's health, addressing topics such as gestational diabetes and unique concerns like diabetes and PCOS, and highlighting both maternal and fetal health. Sessions on Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes management will also provide insights into insulin therapy, glucose monitoring guidelines and the latest combination therapies.

The program also highlighted nationwide activities led by doctors, including the A-Z Diabetes Awareness Activity campaign. Emerging therapies and technological advances are another focal point, with workshops on Artificial Intelligence in diabetes care, Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) and alternative therapies that explore new technological tools and their applications in patient care. Organ-specific complications related to diabetes, including heart, liver, kidney and nervous system issues, will also be explored in detail to help attendees understand the broader impacts of the disease.

Lifestyle, obesity and diet were the critical themes, with master classes and nutritional talks addressing the role of obesity in diabetes and strategies for managing it through diet, exercise and the latest treatments. A specialised focus was placed on the mental health aspects of diabetes, underscoring the importance of psychological support in diabetes management.

Prevention, global strategies and perspectives, including a lecture by the IDF President, provided insights into international standards and community-focused preventive measures. Additionally, practical workshops on CPR, manuscript writing, insulin use and case-based learning will equip healthcare providers with the skills needed to enhance their clinical practice.





# I automatically want to put myself in tough

PTI ■ PERTH

Jasprit Bumrah said on Monday that he relishes absorbing the pressure in tight situations as captain and bowler which can make the job of his less experienced colleagues much easier. The ace pacer was India's standout bowler with an eight-wicket haul in the Perth Test, shaping India's humongous 295-run drubbing of Australia. "Whenever the tough scenarios come, I look at myself to see how I can contribute, even when I'm not the captain. So, whenever tough scenarios are there, I look at answers — if I'm going to bowl at this moment, what can I do? I automatically want to put myself in tough scenarios," said Bumrah in the post-match press conference here. His fighting spirit found resonance in young bowlers like Harshit Rana and Nitish Kumar Reddy as all contributed at crucial junctures at the Optus Stadium. "I was trying to put myself in

that tough scenario to make the job a little bit easier for the new guys coming in. Because, you know, it's not very easy in the first tour to take a lot of responsibility. "So, I was trying to do that and very happy to be on the positive side," he added. Despite the historic win, Bumrah will have to vacate the top seat when Rohit Sharma returns for the Adelaide Test to lead India. So, how will he tackle a rather personal tough spot? Bumrah offered a cheeky reply. "I'm not going to tell him that I'm going to leave (captaincy)," he said. Going more matter of fact, the 30-year-old said: "I said that in the previous press conference as well, he's the captain and he's done a phenomenal job. I was filling in for him. "I had discussions when he was in India, you know, discussing how we are shaping up. But, yeah, But, yeah, I'm going to help him in whatever capacity I can," he noted. However, Bumrah was quite chuffed to see his side



responding to a marshy situation after getting bundled out for 150 in the first innings. The Indian bowlers struck

back to skittle the Aussies for 104 in their first essay. "I am very proud of the team. We were put under pressure in the first innings when we

were bowled out for 150. But then, you know, the team showed character and didn't lose belief. So, that is something that will be really

special for us. "Obviously, in this game, there are a lot of positives for us. You know, we scored a lot of runs in the second innings.

New guys coming in, also chipping in with a lot of runs. Of course, Virat scoring a 100 as well is a great sign for us," he added. So, what was the plan of the Indian bowling unit to be successful on the Perth pitch? "There was some health on the wicket. So, I want to make the batters play as much as I can because the new ball is crucial over here. So, with the wicket having dents in it, the ball would seam around." Bumrah said the key for his bowlers was not to get desperate to bag wickets even in helpful conditions. "Sometimes when you are bowled out for a lower score, you can be a little too desperate and try too much to get wickets. When you try too much here, it doesn't really help and the run scoring goes high. So, we had to be nice and disciplined." The 30-year-old pacer was delighted to see his colleagues adjusting to the Perth length very quickly to make an impact. "Usually in Perth, there could be a scenario when we come

from India, you tend to bowl a little short because you can get excited by the bounce and you can't find the length. It looks good when you bowl a back of length delivery and the batsman gets beaten, but the batsman is still there. "So, you have to find the right length. We were focusing on our strength. We as a bowling unit got a lot of dismissals through LBW and caught behind. So, yeah, we realised that, you have to stick to your strengths and find the right length and we were able to do that," he explained. However, Bumrah reminded the team that they needed to start afresh in the second Test since it would be the Pink Ball Test, starting from December 6 at Adelaide. "Adelaide might be totally different. It's a pink ball. So, yes, you can take the confidence from here. But, again, you have to start from zero. You have to build on this confidence. "You have to take learnings from this game as well. So we're going to take it in our stride and, you know, put our best foot forward," he noted.

## Kohli proves why team India needs him

PTI ■ PERTH

In a reverential tone, India skipper Jasprit Bumrah on Monday paid a massive compliment to Virat Kohli, saying the team needs his support more than the batting mainstay needs theirs. Kohli's 30th Test century, an unbeaten 100, played a big part in India's epochal 295-run win over Australia at Perth after getting rolled over for a paltry 150 in the first innings. "Obviously, I have already said that Virat Kohli does not need us. We need him. He is an experienced player. This is his fourth or fifth tour. So, he knows his cricket more than anyone else," said Bumrah in the post-match press meet. "He was in good shape. He was mentally switched on. Sometimes, as long as the career is, sometimes you bat in tough scenarios. He has always been batting in tough scenarios. So, it is always difficult to do in every match. But he was batting in a very good form and in a very good space. "And obviously, he got a good delivery in the first inning. But he was still in a great space. And in the



second inning, he capitalized. He needed a lot of experience at that time. So, he played with him and also made the other player play with him." The stand-in skipper added, "So, we are very happy for that. And obviously, at the start of the series, when he comes in confidence, you can't ask for more than this." Bumrah was also delighted to register his first Test win as skipper, but remained firmly rooted to the ground saying that the India need to start afresh in the second Test against Australia at Adelaide on December 6. "Special win, first win as captain. We were put under pressure and we showed the character. "We can take confidence from this game but we need to start afresh in the second Test. We need to carry forward the learnings as well to Adelaide," Bumrah added. The speedster also said there were no jitters in the dressing room despite getting bundled out for a low score in the first innings. "When we got out for 150, no one was feeling down in the dressing room. That was the biggest positive, that attitude, you know," he said.



## Getting Ishan Kishan a huge deal for us, nothing

PTI ■ JEDDAH

Sunrisers Hyderabad head Coach Daniel Vettori was most excited about securing Ishan Kishan on day one of the IPL mega auction here but admitted that losing T Natarajan to Delhi Capitals was a setback. Kishan, who made his name at the Mumbai Indians, was sold to SRH for Rs 11.25 crore on Sunday. The left-arm batter has had a tumultuous year, having lost his place in the Indian team as well as a BCCI central contract for defying the board's diktat to play domestic cricket. However, he is back playing Ranji Trophy. SRH bought as many as eight players on day one including pacers Mohammed Shami (Rs 10 crore) and Harshal Patel (Rs 8 crore). However, they were not able to buy back T Natarajan and Vettori said nobody could offset the loss of the left-arm pacer. SRH had retained five players ahead of the auction including skipper Pat Cummins, Travis Head, Abhishek Sharma, Heinrich

Klaasen and Nitish Reddy. "Nothing sets off Nattu's loss (smiles). Every team goes through it, whether you try and find the players early and...Pounce on opportunities or you try and wait for the back end," said Vettori in a media interaction. Natarajan was bought by Delhi Capitals for Rs 10.75 crore. "We decided today to try and sense an opportunity when they came along and Mohammed Shami was one and then Harshal Patel, they were two guys that we potentially didn't think would go for those prices (bargain buys). "And then Ishan Kishan was a huge deal for us. We really wanted to secure him and we thought he, once again, we thought he'd go for more. So extremely happy that we got those three players as well as the rest," said Vettori, who took time off from his coaching duties for Australia in the ongoing first Test against India. Vettori said skipper Cummins is in agreement with all the picks.

"Yes, yes there were (inputs from Cummins). A sad captain tonight (referring to Australia being behind in Perth), he had a hard day. I spoke to him earlier today (Sunday) and he understood the logic of the players that we'd gone for and then he had some ideas for obviously the rest of the squad building," said the former New Zealand spinner. Leg-spinner Rahul Chahar was a steal at Rs 3.2 crore. Vettori said they factored both recent performance and pedigree before going for the players. "We identified players that we thought had performed in the IPL previously. So we put a premium on that experience. And we've seen that pay off time and time again. "So to get those players who maybe didn't have the season they wanted, in terms of Rahul Chahar last year (for Punjab Kings), we still see the skill set. We still see a bowler who's played for India, and hopefully in our conditions, he can be a real asset for us," Vettori added.

## Harshit Rana, Nitish Reddy prove detractors wrong

PTI ■ PERTH

Skipper Jasprit Bumrah was highly impressed by the fearless attitude and maturity of Harshit Rana and Nitish Kumar Reddy, saying he never got the feeling that the two youngsters were playing in Australia for the first time. Their selection was viewed with raised eyebrows in the run-up to the first Test in Perth, but they silenced the doubters, chipping in their own way in India's massive 295-run win over the Aussies. "When they made their debut, the biggest positive sign was that they were not nervous at all. It didn't feel like they were playing for the first time in Australia or it was their first match," Bumrah said in the post-match press conference here on Monday. Rana took the prized wicket of Travis Head in the first



innings with a gem of a delivery and was even not hesitant to exchange a few words with veteran Mitchell Starc, despite them being team-mates at the Kolkata Knight Riders during the IPL 2024. Nitish made nerveless 41 and 38 across two innings here, knocks that belied his lack of sufficient exposure in First-

Class cricket. "If you are scared, then your fear will not go away. So, that is a very positive sign for me that they are not afraid and have a lot of desire to learn. "They have started very well and hopefully, they will do well in the future as well," added Bumrah. The pace talisman said the two young players were more

than happy to handle the responsibility once they were informed of their debut. "They themselves were looking for responsibility. When you talk to them... they are more than ready. They were looking for responsibility. So, that is a very positive sign for our team. "All the youngsters who are coming (in), they are very hungry. They have a lot of faith in their ability. So, if that happens, then you can learn skills," he said. Similarly, Yashasvi Jaiswal was also playing his first Test Down Under but the left-hander left an indelible impression with a remarkable 161. Bumrah said it was the best Test innings in Jaiswal's fledgling career because the 22-year-old showed a lot of self-restraint. "If I had to choose a man of

the match, I would choose Jaiswal. I think this was his best Test knock so far because, you know, he has an attacking nature. But in that second innings, he left certain balls, he took his time and batted deep. That gives us a lot of confidence. "He showed that he has patience as well and he's ready to adapt and change. That is a brilliant sign for Indian cricket that a batsman is able to adapt so early in his career," said Bumrah. The 30-year-old also did not forget the role KL Rahul played as an opener. The right-hander made an obdurate 26 off 74 balls in the first innings before getting out to a dubious caught-behind decision, and a more fluent 77 off 176 balls in the second while sharing 201 runs with Jaiswal for the first wicket.

## We are a really tight unit: Cummins scotches speculation on dressing room divide

PTI ■ PERTH

Australia captain Pat Cummins on Monday defended his struggling batting unit after former players including Adam Gilchrist raised the question of a potential batters and bowlers divide in the dressing room. Following one of their heaviest defeats at home, Cummins was asked if there were any divisions in the team with batters letting the team down in Perth. The chatter around possible tensions in the unit started when Josh Hazlewood was asked about Australia's approach going into day four, having been reduced to 12 for three on day three chasing an improbable 534. Australia were bundled out for 104 in their second innings after India put up 150 on day one. "You probably have to ask one

of the batters that question. I'm sort of relaxing and trying to get a bit of physio and a bit of treatment, and I'm probably looking mostly towards the next Test and what plans we can do against these batters," Hazlewood said on Sunday. A day later, Cummins cleared the air. "I don't know what Josh (Hazlewood) said, but no, not at all (division). There's plenty of times where the batters have dragged us bowlers out of tight situations, and we've done the same. So it's a really tight unit. It's probably one of the tightest teams I've ever played with," Cummins was quick to scotch the speculations following the loss. "We really enjoy playing cricket together. We've been through a lot over the last few years, the core group. So no problems there. Everyone gets along really well. So all good."

On Fox Cricket, Gilchrist and Michael Vaughan were the experts who sensed a possible divide between batters and bowlers. "That to me tells me there is potentially a divided change room. I don't know if there is. I might be reading too much into that," Gilchrist said referring to Hazlewood's comments. Vaughan added: "I must admit, I'm staggered by that. Josh Hazlewood is a great bowler, terrific team member. Publicly, I've never heard an Australian come out and kind of divide the camp into batters and bowlers." On the same Fox Cricket panel was Hazlewood's longtime teammate David Warner who came to the fast bowler's defence. "Those comments (from Hazlewood) probably weren't warranted, [but] I don't think there is a divide.



"In the England team, Broady [Stuart Broad] or Jimmy [Anderson] might have come off after a long day and you can start pointing fingers, but

I don't think there is a divide," said Warner. Marnus has got a very good pink ball record Cummins was asked about the lean run

of Marnus Labuschagne in the post match media interaction. The batters in general have been under the scanner for a while now and that includes

the great Steve Smith. "Marnus, along with quite a few guys in the team didn't have the week that we would have wanted. It's no secret how hard the batters, particularly Marn, works in the nets, and he's always trying to find those small marginal gains. "So, this week, there'll be a lot of conversation with the coaches around, you know, maybe his approach and what he could be doing differently. We know he's a class player. "So, yeah, this week will be about those conversations. As I say, get to Adelaide a little bit earlier, maybe do an extra day or two prep leading to that second Test. But he's done it before over here. He's got a very good pink ball record. "So I always think it's, you know, looking back at past successes when you're at your best is always a pretty good way to get yourself back on track," said the skipper.

Cummins had no qualms in admitting that his team was thoroughly outplayed in the series opener but he promised to bounce back in Adelaide where India struggled on the previous tour with pink ball under lights. "You kind of sit in the change room after a loss like that and it hurts. You know when a team declares on you, it's never an amazing feeling. So we've all been in these situations before. It's the nature of being professional sport. "You're going to lose some games. The biggest challenge and the biggest, the most important thing is how do you bounce back? What's your next move? So that's what we've got to do this week," Cummins said. He also added that there won't be too many changes to the playing eleven despite the unexpected outcome in Perth.



## TUNE TURNS SOUR

# Devi Sri Prasad expresses discontent with *Pushpa 2* makers



**THE MAKERS OF PUSHPA 2 HAVE ROPEDED IN THREE MUSIC DIRECTORS FOR THE BACKGROUND MUSIC, AS THEY FEEL THAT DSP (DEVI SRI PRASAD) IS NOT DELIVERING ON TIME. IN RESPONSE, HE OPENLY CRITICISED THE PRODUCERS REGARDING THE ISSUE AT THE PUSHPA 2 SONG RELEASE EVENT IN CHENNAI**

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It is known that the makers of *Pushpa 2* have roped in three additional music directors - SS Thaman, B Ajaneesh Loknath and Sam CS - to work on the film's background score, alongside the primary music director, Devi Sri Prasad. This decision was reportedly made due to concerns that the film's delay was partly caused by the background music. However, this move openly suggests that the makers are dissatisfied with Devi Sri Prasad's work. On Sunday, the makers released a special song from the film at an event in Chennai. The song, titled *Kissak*, features Allu Arjun and Sreeleela. The film's lead pair, Allu Arjun and Rashmika Mandanna, along with Sreeleela, attended the event. Music director Devi Sri Prasad, who resides in Chennai, was also present.

During his speech, Devi Sri Prasad primarily spoke in Telugu, possibly to convey his thoughts directly to the producers of *Pushpa 2*. At one point, he stated, "Whatever we want, we have to ask and take it. The payment from the producers or for the credit on the screen!" His satirical talk is indirectly points towards the producers. He went on to say that if he receives support from fans, nothing will occur.

The music director discusses the movie and expressed

his happiness after watching the first half of it. "But when I completed the second half too, it was definitely on another level. Allu Arjun is mind blowing and his performance is next level," said Devi Sri Prasad about the film. This confirms that he has provided the music for the entire film.

However, it is still not known whether the makers will go on further with Devi Sri Prasad's background music, or the other three music directors.

Going ahead, he went on to express his disagreement on the producers. "Ravi (producer) has so much love for me at the same time he brought more complaints than love," said DSP. "You didn't give the song in time, background score was not given and even you didn't come for this programme not on time, just like how he has several complaints to me," said DSP. He added that he came to this event nearly 25 minutes before, but they didn't allow him. And the music director added that the producer, after seeing him, said 'wrong timing.' "What do I do sir, if they didn't allow me



inside," said DSP to producer Ravi. "Whatever you want to ask, do it right now, if we do the same separately there's no kick in it," said the music director. This tells us that the differences between producers and the music director continues. The same producers made a film with Ajith titled *Good Bad Ugly* which they roped in Devi Sri Prasad as music director initially. Now, they replaced him with GV Prakash Kumar. *Pushpa 2* is releasing on December 5 and the special song is not going well when compared to the *Oo Antava Mava* from part one. The trailer also does not appeal to the Telugu audience.

**“RAVI (PRODUCER) HAS SO MUCH LOVE FOR ME AT THE SAME TIME HE BROUGHT MORE COMPLAINTS THAN LOVE. YOU DIDN'T GIVE THE SONG IN TIME, BACKGROUND SCORE WAS NOT GIVEN”**



## Tamil music director-duo Vivek-Mervin enters Tollywood

The Telugu film industry provides a platform for numerous artists, technicians, and other professionals. Many female actors and antagonists from different languages can be seen. Several technicians from various regions of India are currently employed in Tollywood and Mythri Movie Makers has recently brought in a new music director duo to the industry. Tamil music director Vivek-Mervin is

ready to make their first appearance in Telugu with a Ram Pothineni movie directed by Mahesh Babu, known for *Miss Shetty Mr Polishetty*. Ram Pothineni takes an active approach in promoting fresh and thrilling talent.

The musical works for this film will be handled by the talented music composer-duo Vivek-Mervin. The producers announced on Monday that the music for *RaPo22*

will be composed by the Vivek-Mervin duo.

Vivek Siva and Mervin Solomon, who are better known by their stage name of Vivek-Mervin.

They collaborated on multiple highly praised Tamil movies, with the standout being *Vada Curry*. They also created music for Dhanush's film *Pataas*. *RAPO22* is set to star Ram and Bhagyashree Borse in the main roles.

## Tollywood's weekend washouts disappoint

Recently, Vishwak Sen's movies like *Mechanic Rocky*, *Zebra* and *Devaki Nandana Vasudeva* were released. Despite Vishwak Sen's strong belief in the success of his film and his aggressive promotion, the audience did not respond positively and rejected it. The actor had high expectations for this film, but it didn't make as much money as anticipated at the box office. The figures are significantly lower compared to Vishwak's prior movies, resulting in a huge disappointment and a major setback for the actor. This film marked Ravi Teja Mullapudi's first venture as a director, with Shraddha Srinath and Meenakshi Chaughary portraying the female leads.

Another movie called *Zebra* was also released, featuring Satya Dev, Daali Dhananjaya, Satya Raj and Priya Bhavani Shankar. Satya Dev, who has been seeking a great opportunity for the past few years, is optimistic that this movie will be the perfect one. However, to his disappointment, the audience immediately rejected the film. The director of the film is Easvar Karthic, and the plot revolves around a banking scam and money laundering. However, it appears that the director was unable to effectively communicate the story. Despite being shown on a holiday like Sunday, the film does not attract many viewers to the box office, resulting in disappointing numbers for Satya Dev once again.

The second film of Mahesh Babu's nephew Ashok Galla, *Devaki Nandana Vasudeva*, was also released but got cancelled in numerous areas on the very first day. Arjun Jandiyala serves as the director of the film, with Devdatta Nage making his debut as the villain in *Aadipurush*. Miss India Manasa Varanasi also had her first appearance as the female protagonist; however, the movie was rightfully not successful in theaters. The filmmaker invested heavily in this movie, but he is finding it challenging to profit from it.

## Vishnu Manchu locks release date of *Kannappa*

Vishnu Manchu's highly anticipated project, *Kannappa*, is ready for its big premiere. Accompanied by Mohan Babu, actor Sarathkumar, Arpit Ranka and director Mukesh Kumar Singh, Vishnu went to the Shri Mahakaleswar Temple in Ujjain to officially reveal the film's release date.

*Kannappa* is set to be globally released on April 25, 2025, strategically scheduled for the summer, which is an ideal time for movie premieres. The movie will be available in languages other than Telugu, including Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, and Hindi. Vishnu Manchu has enlisted numerous top actors from various languages, such as Mohan Lal, Akshay Kumar,

Sarath Kumar and Prabhas, to portray important characters in the movie. Filming is done and post-production is nearly finished as well. The majority of the movie was filmed in New Zealand.

So far, the movie has released initial posters showcasing the main actors and a teaser, both of which have greatly increased excitement for the film. The film narrates the untold tale of Kannappa, the greatest follower of Lord Shiva, known for his immense courage and unwavering devotion. The movie is being made on a global level, with Hollywood experts participating in its creation. The movie will highlight the stunning scenery of New Zealand, offering viewers a magnificent visual treat.



## FALSE ALARM! *KANTARA: CHAPTER 1* TEAM CLARIFIES ACCIDENT RUMOURS

Reports indicate that a bus transporting certain individuals from the *Kantara: Chapter 1* team was involved in an accident, leading to the suspension of the film shooting. Kannada actor Rishabh Shetty is currently starring in this movie and the filming is progressing rapidly. This is the movie that came before *Kantara*, which was a big success. However, it was stated that the shooting came to a stop as the bus transporting 20 junior artistes from Jadhka to Kollur was involved in an accident, resulting in nearly six severe injuries.

However, the production company strongly refuted these claims and stated that filming is still in progress. It was reported that there was a collision, however, they managed to get away unharmed. In a



statement, the production stated that the shooting commenced at 6 am in the morning.

"The news making the rounds is completely false. The *Kantara: Chapter 1* team began shooting at 6 am today, and everything is proceeding as normal. A minor accident occurred 20 kilometers away from the shooting location, involving a local bus carrying some members of the *Kantara* team. However, no injuries were reported," said the production house in a statement.

*Kantara* was widely popular not just in Kannada but also in other languages. Rishabh Shetty is both the director and main actor, with Saptami Gowda playing the female lead. B Ajaneesh Loknath is in charge of composing the music.