


sunday pioneer

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Cong being run by 'gang of urban Naxals': PM Modi



India to further strengthen FINTECH support to Bhutan: FM



Wrapping around a HAT-TRICK with Chuttamalle



QUOTE OF THE DAY
The pioneer

They are talking about whatever they want. He (KTR) is dreaming of coming to power using social media. Instead, they are more likely to end up in Cherlapally Jail. I am telling you with a guarantee, that you won't come to power through social media but will end up in jail if you engage in cheap tactics.

- Revanth Reddy, CM, Telangana P4



DON'T MISS...

Day 3 sees surge of pilgrims...

A large number of devotees flocked to the Goddess Kanaka Durga temple atop Indrakiladri on Saturday, the third day of the nine-day Dasara festival celebrations. This day, the Goddess appeared to her devotees as Annapurna Devi, the divine provider of food and sustenance for all beings. Annapurna Devi is revered in ancient tradition as the nurturer of life, believed to maintain the cosmic balance. Residing eternally in the sacred grounds of Kashi, she is closely associated with Lord Vishveshwara...

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Check maternal mortality during...

West Godavari District Collector, Chadalavada Nagarani, has directed doctors to ensure that no maternal deaths occur during deliveries. During a review meeting with district health, medical, women, and child welfare department officials on Saturday, Collector Nagarani expressed concern over the increase in maternal deaths in the district compared to the previous year. She emphasised that pregnant women with a history of one or two abortions must receive close medical attention. The Collector urged medical...

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Antarctica turning green 'dramatically'...

Antarctica is turning green "dramatically", with the trend accelerated by more than 30 per cent in recent years, compared to the past three decades, a new study has found. Researchers found that vegetation cover across the Antarctic Peninsula increased more than tenfold - from less than a square kilometre to almost 12 square kilometres - between 1986 and 2021. The researchers, including those at the University of Exeter, UK, used satellite data to estimate the "greening" rate of the Antarctic Peninsula in response to climate change. "This recent acceleration in the..."

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DoT, telcos deploying system...

The telecom department, in collaboration with telecom service providers, is rolling out an advanced system in phases to identify and block incoming international spoofed calls before they can reach Indian telecom subscribers, an official statement said on Friday. The Department of Telecom (DoT) has observed that citizens are receiving many fraudulent calls, often disguised as originating from Indian mobile numbers, while the calls are manipulated by cyber-criminals operating from abroad. "DoT, in collaboration with TSPs, has introduced an advanced system designed to identify and block incoming international..."

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'Operation cleansing' on in TTD

CM Naidu says no compromise on 'prasadam' quality

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, on Saturday, announced that the State Government has kicked off 'operation cleansing' in the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), emphasising that there's no compromise on the quality of 'Prasadam' offered to Lord Venkateswara's devotees.

While inaugurating the Vakula Matha Vantasala (kitchen) atop Tirumala Hills, constructed at a cost of ₹13.4 crore, Naidu stated that devotees' opinions would also be considered as new guidelines are introduced after the cleansing operation. The CM expressed happiness in inaugurating the kitchen, which can now serve 'Anna Prasadam' to 1.25 lakh devotees, and mentioned that food for 18,000 people can be prepared in just 30 minutes.

With the upgraded kitchens of Vengamamba, Akshaya, and Vakula Matha, the 'Anna Prasadam' can now be supplied to around three lakh devotees daily, Naidu said.

"We will ensure no compromise on quality, from the raw materials to the final preparation," he assured.

He proudly pointed out that no one can replicate the quality of Lord Venkateswara's Prasadam,



● CM inaugurates the Vakula Matha Vantasala kitchen atop Tirumala Hills, built at a cost of ₹13.4 crore, which can serve 'Anna Prasadam' to 1.25 lakh devotees and prepare food for 18,000 in just 30 minutes.

● Modernised kitchens at Vengamamba, Akshaya, and Vakula Matha can now serve 'Prasadam' to three lakh devotees daily.

● CM emphasises that no one can replicate the quality of Lord Venkateswara's 'Prasadam', which has patent protection, highlighting special items like 'Laddu', 'Mysorepak', and 'Vada'.

● Greenery on Tirumala Hills has reached 72%, with plans to increase it to 90%, while maintaining a serene and sacred environment.

● Efforts are underway to restore Tirumala's past glory, with instructions given to TTD officials to protect the sanctity of the pilgrim centre.

● CM personally prays to Lord Venkateswara and stresses that all those serving and visiting the Hills should maintain sanctity.

● He recalls the growth of the 'Anna Danam' scheme, which now serves three lakh devotees daily, and directed TTD officials to manage queue lines better.

which holds a patent. "Our Laddu, Mysorepak, and Vada are one of a kind," he added with a smile.

On the environmental front, Naidu highlighted that greenery on the Hills has already reached 72%, with efforts to push it up to 90%. "We're committed to maintaining a serene environment atop Tirumala, and the Prasadam will always respect the traditions and sentiments of the devotees," he

stressed. The Chief Minister also said that steps are being taken to restore Tirumala's past glory, ensuring the sanctity of the site is never compromised.

He reflected on his personal devotion, mentioning how he often prays to Lord Venkateswara upon waking and during difficult times. He urged those serving on the Hills and all devotees to maintain utmost sanctity.

Naidu recalled that the 'Anna Danam' scheme, initiated during NT Rama Rao's era for a few thousand devotees, now feeds around three lakh devotees daily.

He also instructed TTD officials to improve the management of queue lines, noting that devotees are satisfied with both the Prasadam quality and TTD services.



Enhance pilgrim services, Naidu tells TTD

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu held a review meeting with TTD officials at SPRH on Saturday, focusing on various activities related to the temple administration. He emphasised the need to prioritise devotees' feedback on TTD services and directed officials to make special efforts to gather their opinions and study the feasibility of their implementation.

Naidu instructed Endowments Minister Anam Ramnarayan Reddy to implement a feedback mechanism for devotees at all major temples, similar to the one at Tirumala, to enhance facilities for pilgrims.

The Chief Minister urged TTD officials to focus on elevating the glory and sanctity of Tirumala and to foster devotees' faith in the shrine. He insisted that only 'Govinda Nama Smarana' should resonate in Tirumala, maintaining its spiritual atmosphere.

"Tirumala is the holiest spiritual centre in the country. Everyone must work towards enhancing the glory of Lord Sri Venkateswara and preserving

the sanctity and serenity of Tirumala," Naidu said. He added that there should be no compromise in providing services to common devotees and VIP culture should be curtailed to ensure everyone respects the sentiments of pilgrims. He stressed that devotees should leave Tirumala with cherished memories of their spiritual experience.

The Chief Minister also directed officials to create an advance plan for water availability, increase forest coverage from the current 72% to 80% within five years, implement biodiversity protection measures for TTD forests, and maintain the quality of laddu and 'Anna Prasadam'. He noted that devotees are satisfied with the current standards, which use the best quality ingredients. Naidu also suggested improving the standards of 'Srivari Seva' by training volunteers through prominent spiritual organisations to enhance their service to pilgrims. TTD EO J. Shyamala Rao, Additional EO Venkaiah Choudhary, and department heads participated in the meeting.

Task force to ensure transparent public access to sand: Govt

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A recently circulated sand waybill has caused a stir, raising concerns and confusion about the State government's Free Sand Policy.

According to a press release issued by the State government on Saturday, the waybill, featuring a transportation cost of ₹9,276 and a total amount of ₹16,640 for a 20-tonne truck from a de-siltation supply point in East Godavari to Panasapadu, has been used in a media campaign to mislead the public.

As per Government Order 43 dated 8th July, the Free Sand Policy ensures that sand is provided at no charge, with consumers only bearing the operational costs, statutory levies, and GST.

According to the government, the total cost per tonne of sand, after excluding transportation charges, amounts to only ₹366, which is a significant reduction from the ₹625 per

- Clarifies that all costs are related to operational logistics
- Warns transporters against overcharging or illegal practices



tonne charged under the previous regime. This relief translates into savings of ₹260 per tonne for consumers.

Officials have clarified that no additional fees are collected by the government. All costs are directly related to operational logistics, and transportation rates have been stan-

dardised across the state to prevent exploitation by transporters. Consumers can either arrange their own transport or use government-provided services at a fixed rate, giving them flexibility to choose a cost-effective option.

The government has also introduced the 'AP Sand Management

System', an online portal to ensure full transparency and accountability in sand transactions. This system allows consumers to book sand online, providing a digital record from booking to delivery. In contrast to the previous manual system, which led to malpractice and higher costs, this initiative offers a clear breakdown of all charges, including transportation, ensuring no hidden fees.

The government has warned transporters against overcharging or illegal practices, with penalties including blacklisting for violators. District task forces have been strengthened to monitor and address any malpractices, reinforcing the government's commitment to ensuring affordable and transparent access to sand for the public.

Suicide pact by 4 of family, 2 survive

PNS ■ CHITTOOR

In a tragic incident, four members of a family in Gangadhar Nellore village attempted suicide by consuming pesticide, driven to desperation by mounting debts from online betting. Two of the family members lost their lives on Saturday.

According to police, Dinesh (22), the son of Nagaraja Reddy (49), developed an addiction to online betting. He borrowed ₹30 lakh and lost it all, plunging the family into financial distress. The pressure from moneylenders became unbearable, leading the family to this heartbreaking decision.

Continued on Page 2

Konakalla promises better facilities for RTC commuters

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Konakalla Narayana Rao took oath as the Chairman of APSRTC and assumed charge at a programme held at the RTC House here on Saturday.

Transport Minister M Ramprasad Reddy extended his congratulations to Narayana Rao, while APSRTC Executive Director KS Brahmanand Reddy welcomed him into the chamber. Narayana Rao, a former MP of Machilipatnam and a senior leader of the Telugu Desam Party has a long association with the organisation.

Speaking to the media, Narayana Rao expressed his gratitude to Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for appointing him as the APSRTC Chairman. He pledged to work diligently to enhance the reputation of the corporation. He recalled his



tenure as the honorary president of APSRTC unions for 30 years and highlighted his deep understanding of the challenges faced by RTC

employees. He assured that special attention would be given to addressing their health issues.

Continued on Page 2

Nukasani assumes charge as APTDC chief

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr Nukasani Balaji assumed charge as the Chairman of Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) on Saturday at the APTDC head office in Autonagar, Vijayawada. Dr Balaji, who was appointed by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, took charge at 10:50 am in a festive atmosphere, receiving the blessings of Vedic pundits.

Dr Balaji, known for his soft-spoken and approachable nature, is the president of the Telugu Desam Party in Prakasam district, where he enjoys considerable popularity. His swearing-in ceremony saw the attendance of many public representatives and prominent individuals from various fields, reflecting his friendly rapport with the public.



Addressing the media, Dr Balaji expressed his gratitude to Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for entrusting him with the responsibilities of APTDC. He acknowledged the Chief Minister's visionary leadership and pledged to steer APTDC along the path of progress, in line with the CM's vision.

OBTUSE ANGLE



Exit polls give Cong majority in Haryana; edge to NC-Cong in J-K

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Several exit polls on Saturday predicted a clear majority for the Congress in Haryana and gave an edge to its alliance with the National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, with the regional partner emerging as the single largest party.

'Dainik Bhaskar' predicted the Congress getting 44-54 seats and the BJP 15-29 seats in the 90-member Haryana Assembly. The C-Voter-India

Today polls gave Congress 50-58 seats and the BJP 20-28 seats in Haryana, while the Republic Bharat-Matrix polls put the Congress tally even higher at 55-62 seats as against the BJP's 18-24. The Red Mike-Datansh exit poll gave the Congress 50-55 seats in Haryana and the BJP at 20-25, while Dhruv Research pegged the Congress at 50-64 and the BJP at 22-32.

Peoples' Pulse exit poll gave the Congress 49-60 seats and the BJP 20-32 seats in Haryana.

Most exit polls pegged the INLD's tally higher than that of the JJP, while others were seen getting up to 10 seats.

The BJP has been in power in Haryana since 2014 with Manohar Lal Khattar as chief minister for over nine years. The BJP's second term in office in 2019 was in alliance with the JJP, with Dushyant Singh



Chautala as deputy chief minister. Khattar and Chautala quit in March ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, making way for Nayab Singh Saini, a prominent OBC face of the BJP, as chief minister. Chautala's JJP also snapped ties with the BJP.

Bhupinder Singh Hooda leading the poll campaign. In Jammu and Kashmir, the C-Voter-India Today survey put the National Conference-Congress alliance at 40-48 seats and the BJP at 27-32 seats in the 90-member assembly of the Union Territory.

Elections were held in Jammu and Kashmir after a gap of 10 years and the bifurcation of the state into two union territories -- Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh -- in 2019.

Dainik Bhaskar pegged the National Conference (NC)-Congress alliance at 35-40 and the BJP at 20-25 in Jammu and Kashmir, while Axis My India polls gave NC-Congress between 35 and 45 seats, the BJP in the range of 24-34 and others 4-10 seats.

Peoples' Pulse saw the NC-Congress alliance getting 46-50 seats as against the BJP's 23-27, while Republic-Gulistan put the NC-Congress tally at 31-36 as against the BJP's 28-30.

Last-minute invites leave scrambling scribes breathless

These days, thanks to new media and digital publishing, people get to absorb in real time news that mirror important events. This has somewhat marginalized the role of scribes whose presence in advance of the unfolding of important events was a requirement in good old days and for which invitations used to be sent out well in advance. In Telangana, officials are crossing their limits when it comes to inviting journalists covering key political events in the state, including those involving Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. Apart from not sticking to schedules, reporters are not being extended the elemental courtesy of being properly invited for various events. Perhaps by design; and since they say 'Seeing is believing', YouTube URLs or live links are being shared, just moments before the event kicks off. Recently, reporters were shocked to receive an official invite just 15 minutes before the CM's arrival! On another occasion, they were given only an hour's notice. Such eleventh-hour or last-minute invites leave scrambling reporters breathless, though they are supposed to cover the event and make a good job of reporting it for their readers or viewers as the case may be. The media fraternity does its job, whether invited properly or not; yet, in TG, the officials concerned are taking newshounds for granted. Vexed journalists chorus: "When the invites come so late, how are we supposed to do our jobs properly?" The least that the state government can do is to give the media its due. Timely invitation is their privilege, not officials' meherbari. Print medium journo's in particular feel the pinch most. What is worrying the media in TG is that the problem is not limited to government events. Opposition leaders too have gotten in on the act. One leader decided to hold an impromptu chat with journalists, giving them only an hour to rush to the venue. By the way, given traffic issues, this one hour is the bare minimum scribes require to make it in time to any event worth covering.

particularly under the erstwhile Bharat Rashtra Samithi rule, when MLC and Telangana Jagruthi founder K Kavitha took the initiative to broad-base the celebrations not just across the state but also in several countries abroad. This year the absence of Kavitha (out on bail in the liquor policy scam case and advised rest on medical grounds) is being felt widely, considering hers has been the face of Bathukamma events conducted officially across Telangana. She used to keep the celebrations alive with her customary grace via Jagruti. Bathukamma at Telangana Bhavan used to be the showpiece of bedecked women dancing to traditional tunes. So were the celebrations at Pragathi Bhavan until last year. At the party level, the gut feeling among the cadre and a section of the leaders is that

rounding Konda Surekha like a hot potato. Apparently wary of wading into a controversy themselves, Congress leaders have studiously avoided references to issues concerning Surekha that had shaken up the film industry and political circles. Even in informal settings they are on maun vrat when it comes to Surekha. Still, some Congress leaders chose to make bakras out of newshounds. On Saturday, one of the Ministers faulted media persons for dragging Konda Surekha into a web of controversies, saying certain scribes 'provocative questions' landed her in trouble. According to him, Konda Surekha was already disturbed due to BRS activities in social media and those media persons rubbed salt to her wounds, triggering her emotional outbursts. Luckily for the actors in question, the film industry stood solidly united, prompting Surekha to withdraw her comments to forestall a

defamation suit.

Jagan media-friendly after poll debacle

Shun scribes when they are after you, invite them when they avoid you. Some netas cannot help resorting to this after political setbacks. In Andhra Pradesh, opposition YSRCP chief and ex-CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has suddenly become media-friendly, perhaps humbled by the decimation of his party in the 2024 Assembly polls. During his tenure as CM from 2019 to 2024, the former chief minister barely organized pressers or gave interviews to media persons. These days he has been regularly conducting press meets, inviting media personnel wholeheartedly. In just the last three and half months, Jagan has held more press conferences than what he had organized throughout his rule. This week he spoke to the media twice. Media persons feel twice blessed.

Oh God! Politics?

When the Supreme Court observed the other day "Keep Gods out of politics", few would have imagined a political response to it. Yet, in Andhra Pradesh, both the NDA coalition government and the opposition YSRCP welcomed the apex court's verdict on the TTD laddu row case, interpreting it as "a judgment in our favour".

(With inputs from Naveena Ghanate, K Venkateswarlu, Samuel Joshua and Pradeep Kumar)

REPORTERS' DIARY

the festivities are no longer the same without her animating presence. Things have come to such a pass that people are wondering if the Kalvakuntla family is celebrating Bathukamma at least at home. After all, Bathukamma and Kavitha had become almost synonymous in BRS circles.

Minister stuns global gathering with bizarre brevity

Not all speakers go by the Bard of Avon's famous words 'Brevity is the soul of wit'. But, at the recent G-SPARC 2024 -- an international event at which World Health Organization officials, among other experts, were waiting for gyan from Telangana's rulers -- Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha, deputizing for Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, shocked the crowd by delivering a 'speech' that lasted less than a minute! Yes, they heard it (and you read it) right. The assembled doctors, national leaders, and health experts heard Narasimha say, looking over his prepared text: "I came with a long speech on paper, but will keep it short". This remarkable one-liner left the crowd wondering what exactly was wrong.

When the media 'provoked' ...

Endowment Minister Konda Surekha may have spoken her mind, sparking controversy after controversy, perhaps relying on kondanta balaamu from TPCC leaders, if not AICC bigwigs. However, Congress leaders in the state have dropped the highly sensitive issues sur-

Kavitha's absence leaves a void in Bathukamma fest

Celebrating a festival at home is quite different from taking part in public festivities replete with official paraphernalia. The Bathukamma festivities this season clearly lack the gusto with which people used to participate in recent years,

VIJAYAWADA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

New terminal to be ready by June 2025: MP Sivanath

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



MP Sivanath emphasised that CM Chandrababu is committed to the development of Amaravati's only airport. He acknowledged the efforts of Union Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu, who, after assuming office, increased flight services from Vijayawada to several parts of the country, thereby improving connectivity.

The concrete works for the new terminal at Vijayawada International Airport, Gannavaram, will be completed by January 2025, announced Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath. He stated that the new terminal would be operational by June 2025 after the completion of additional work. The announcement was made during the Airport Advisory Committee (AAC) meeting, chaired by MP V Balashowry, with MP Kesineni Sivanath serving as the Vice-Chairman, held at the airport on Saturday. During the meeting, they discussed measures to expedite the terminal's construction and the facilities to be provided, keeping in mind the passengers' needs. It was decided to hold a weekly review meeting to monitor the progress of the work.

Speaking to the media, MP Kesineni Sivanath highlighted that all flights introduced after the NDA government's tenure began are running at full capacity. He added that a letter has been written to the AAC requesting enhanced connectivity to pilgrimage sites and commercial cities nationwide. The police and revenue departments will jointly address and resolve any issues related to the new terminal.

The MP also recommended that cab services be made available at the airport for the convenience of passengers. He urged Airport Director Lakshmi Kanth Reddy to ensure that cab services are operational

by the time the new terminal is inaugurated. Additionally, he suggested collaborating with the concerned officials to provide RTC bus services for passengers.

MP Sivanath emphasised that CM Chandrababu is committed to the development of Amaravati's only airport. He acknowledged the efforts of Union Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu, who,

after assuming office, increased flight services from Vijayawada to several parts of the country, thereby improving connectivity. The new terminal, which will be ready by June 2025, will cater to both domestic passengers and international delegates. He expressed his vision of making Vijayawada Airport one of India's top ten airports within the next five years. AAC Chairman, MP Balashowry, added that contractors and officials have been instructed to expedite the construction work. The meeting also discussed the issue of improving connectivity to more destinations. He noted the current drinking water shortage at the airport, and plans to bring water from the Krishna and Godavari rivers were considered. MP Balashowry also mentioned that Union Minister Rammohan Naidu has requested Emirates to start flight services from Vijayawada to Dubai. He further expressed optimism about launching direct flight services from Vijayawada to New York by 2029.

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Jagan to visit family of murdered child in Punganur on October 9

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy has announced that YSRCP president and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will visit the family of seven-year-old Asfiya Azam, who was kidnapped and murdered, on October 9 to offer his support and condolences.

After meeting the victim's family, Peddireddy

Ramachandra Reddy and MP Peddireddy Mithun Reddy expressed their deep sympathies and assured the family that the YSRCP would stand by them during this incredibly difficult time.

Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy strongly condemned the incident, stating that such a horrific crime had never occurred in Chittoor district before. He criticised the police for their delayed response and

questioned their inaction in handling the case. He also pointed out the swift actions taken by authorities during the Madanapalle Sub-Collectorate fire incident, highlighting the lack of urgency shown in this tragic case.

The former Minister urged the authorities to immediately apprehend those responsible for this heinous crime and deliver justice to the grieving family.

Suicide pact...

Continued from Page 1

Unable to cope with the situation, Nagaraja Reddy, his wife Jayanthi (45), their son Dinesh, and daughter Sunita (26) consumed pesticide. Neighbours discovered them unconscious and rushed them to the Government General Hospital in Chittoor. Due to their critical condition, they were later transferred to a hospital in Vellore, Tamil Nadu, where Nagaraja Reddy and Jayanthi succumbed to their injuries. Dinesh and Sunita are currently fighting for their lives in the hospital.

MLC Varudu Kalyani slams govt's 'laxity' on women's safety

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

YSRCP Women's Wing State President and MLC Varudu Kalyani voiced deep outrage over the tragic murder of seven-year-old Asfiya Azam in Punganur, calling out the failure of the authorities to act swiftly, which could have saved the child's life.

Speaking to the media in Visakhapatnam, Kalyani criticized the local police for their delayed response after the child was reported missing. The young girl's body was later discovered in a summer storage tank. "The family had already sounded the alarm, yet the police response was painfully slow. Had they acted in time, we would not be mourning this innocent life today," Kalyani stated with visible frustration. "This kind of negligence is intolerable and has only magnified the suffering of the family."

She went on to raise serious concerns about how the case is being handled. "Despite visible injuries on the victim's body,



Kalyani also reassured the public that YSRCP stands firmly with women and victims of violence. She announced that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will personally visit the grieving family on October 9 to offer support and condolences.

there seems to be little interest in a proper investigation. This kind of indifference in such a heart-breaking case is simply unacceptable," Kalyani said, adding that the role of the Home Minister in handling this grievous case deserves to be questioned, especially as it occurred in the Chief Minister's home district.

The MLC didn't hold back in condemning the government's overall approach to women's safety, pointing to ris-

ing incidents of violence across the state. She highlighted another tragic incident—the murder of a girl in Nandyal district—as part of a growing pattern. "Women are living in a constant state of fear under the TDP coalition government.

There's a total lack of confidence in the government's ability to safeguard them," Kalyani remarked sharply.

Drawing comparisons, Kalyani emphasized the steps

taken under the previous YSRCP government to prioritize women's safety. "The Disha App and dedicated police forces played a pivotal role in protecting women during our tenure. But now, under this administration, women's safety has been tragically neglected, and the consequences are plain to see. Where was the urgency in saving this little girl in Punganuru? It's appalling when we compare it to the swift response in the Madanapalle Sub-Collector's office fire," she questioned.

Kalyani also reassured the public that YSRCP stands firmly with women and victims of violence. She announced that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will personally visit the grieving family on October 9 to offer support and condolences. "We will not turn away from our responsibility to protect and stand with the women of Andhra Pradesh. This is a commitment YSRCP will uphold," she concluded, promising action and justice for the victims.

Release White Paper on flood relief, demands ex-MLA Malladi Vishnu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP Central Constituency Coordinator and former MLA Malladi Vishnu has demanded that the state government release a white paper detailing the relief provided to flood victims. He highlighted the emotional and distressing stories shared by many flood victims who have yet to receive financial assistance. Despite the Centre's recent announcement of ₹1,036 crore in aid for Andhra Pradesh's flood relief and significant donations from the public, the government has failed to adequately address the victims' needs, Vishnu alleged.



Malladi Vishnu stated that while officials claim that only 14,000 people remain under 179 ward secretariats, the reality is that more than 50,000 families are yet to receive any relief.

He stated that while officials claim that only 14,000 people remain under 179 ward secre-

tiariats, the reality is that more than 50,000 families are yet to receive any relief. The large gathering of victims at the Collectorate is evidence of this discrepancy, he said. If the government is genuinely committed, it should transparently disclose the assistance provided to all the victims in the city, backed by proper statistics, Vishnu demanded. He raised

questions about the accuracy of the flood impact survey, asking for detailed information on the number of people residing on ground floors, first floors, the number of damaged two-wheelers and four-wheelers, and the assistance provided to auto workers.

He noted that the survey, conducted by DTs and revenue staff from other areas, was rid-

dled with errors. Vishnu suggested that this situation could have been avoided if local volunteers were involved in the enumeration process.

Malladi Vishnu criticised the government's inefficiency, pointing out that it has failed to provide adequate support even a month after the floods. He expressed concern that the victims have been repeatedly visiting the Collectorate and ward secretariats for the past ten days without resolution. He demanded that the government immediately release a white paper on the flood relief provided.

If full compensation is not issued within two days, the YSR Congress party will launch an agitation on behalf of the victims, Vishnu warned.

Konakalla promises...

Continued from Page 1

"I will strive to improve the facilities for passengers. Efforts will be made to ensure a more comfortable and safer journey on RTC buses," he affirmed. Despite the corporation facing heavy losses, Narayana Rao assured that ticket prices would not be increased. He emphasised that both employees and passengers are equally important to the organisation.

Narayana Rao also announced plans to introduce more new buses, particularly electric buses, into the APSRTC fleet soon.

Charging stations for these electric buses will be established at various locations, he revealed. He further noted that the APSRTC has increased its revenue through the launch of cargo services.

He stressed the importance of strengthening the organisation to ensure its efficient functioning in the future.

Later, Transport Minister Ramprasada Reddy and Chairman Narayana Rao inaugurated new Indra buses. Among those present were Executive Directors KS Brahmam Reddy, GV Ravi Verma, Chandra Shekhar, Vijayawada Zone Executive Director Gopinath Reddy, and NTR District Public Transport Officer MY Danam.

‘Going to Islamabad for multilateral event’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after India announced that External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will travel to Islamabad to attend a key meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) mid-October, he said he was going to Pakistan for a "multilateral event" and not to discuss Indo-Pak relations. He said this in response to a query during an interaction after he delivered the Sardar Patel Lecture on Governance organised by IC Centre for Governance here.

"Yes, I am scheduled to go to Pakistan in the middle of this month, and that is for a meeting of the SCO Heads of Government. Normally, prime ministers go to high-level meetings of heads of state,

and one of the ministers goes for the heads of government meeting, so it's in line with the tradition," he said.

"It so happens that the meeting is taking place in Pakistan, because like us they are a relatively recent member," Jaishankar said.

Pakistan is hosting the SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting on October 15 and 16.

It will be for the first time in nearly nine years that India's external affairs minister will travel to Pakistan even as the ties between the two neighbours remained frosty over the Kashmir issue and cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan.

During the interaction, Jaishankar was asked if he was preparing for his visit to



Pakistan for the SCO meeting, and what was his anticipation from it.

"Am I planning for it? Of course, I am planning for it. In my business, you plan for everything which you are going to do, and for a lot of things that you are not going to do, and which could happen also, you

plan for that as well," he said. "So, I expect there will be a lot of media interest, because of the very nature of the relationship is such... I think, we will deal with it," he added.

The external affairs minister said his visit is for a "multilateral event, I am not going there to discuss India-Pakistan

relations. I am going there to be a good member of the SCO".

"But, since I am a courteous and civil person, I will behave myself accordingly," he said.

The SCO was founded at a summit in Shanghai in 2001 by the presidents of Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. India and Pakistan became its permanent members in 2017.

In July 2023, Iran became the new permanent member of the SCO at an India-hosted virtual summit of the grouping.

In his address, Jaishankar said, "Today the world is again in the midst of a great churn, and that world order that had just emerged in Patel's time, has now run its course."

"We are seeing the emergence of multi-polarity, and the

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DASARA FESTIVITIES AT DURGA TEMPLE

Day 3 sees surge of pilgrims

- Goddess blesses devotees in Annapurna Devi 'alankaram'
- Couple offer 'Mangalsutra' worth ₹16.50 lakh to the deity



Pics: Ch Vijaya Bhaskar

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A large number of devotees flocked to the Goddess Kanaka Durga temple atop Indrakiladri on Saturday, the third day of the nine-day Dasara festival celebrations. This day, the Goddess appeared to her devotees as Annapurna Devi, the divine provider of food and sustenance for all beings.

Annapurna Devi is revered in ancient tradition as the nurturer of life, believed to maintain the cosmic balance. Residing eternally in the sacred grounds of Kashi, she is closely associated with Lord Vishveshwara (Shiva), regarded as the father of the universe. The significance of this Alankaram (adornment) lies in the belief that Goddess Annapurna Devi, in her infinite grace, provides sustenance not only to Lord Shiva but to all living beings. She epitomises the highest form of charity, 'Anna Daanam', reminding humanity that the greatest act is to feed others.

COLLECTOR URGES VIPs TO FOLLOW DARSHAN TIMINGS

NTR District Collector Dr G Srijana stated that on the third day of Dasara, the Goddess was adorned as Annapurna Devi, and devotees had a smooth darshan through the queue lines. Speaking at the media point at Durga temple, the Collector emphasised that ensuring the convenience of ordinary devotees is their primary focus. She appealed to VIPs visiting the temple to adhere to the scheduled darshan timings. Special arrangements have been made for VIPs to visit the temple between 8 am to 10 am and 2 pm to 4 pm. The Collector mentioned that devotees who purchased 7500 tickets would be allowed into the queue lines even if they arrived slightly earlier or later than the designated time. She urged those holding VIP passes to strictly follow these timings for darshan. Meanwhile, Vijayawada City Police Commissioner Rajasekharababu said that all necessary measures are being implemented to ensure a comfortable darshan experience for devotees. He added that the suggestions of festival committee members are also being considered. The Commissioner informed that devotees with 7300 tickets can complete their darshan within half an hour. He further explained that traffic restrictions have been imposed in the city during the Dasara Navratri celebrations and highlighted the ongoing efforts to raise awareness about cybercrime during the festivities.

Throughout the day, many devotees presented offerings to the presiding deity, but one stood out. Ankulaiah, a coconut trader from Kompepi in Prakasam district, made a remarkable offering: a mangalsutra made of 203 grams of gold, valued at ₹16.50 lakh. Despite their modest means, Ankulaiah and his wife Rajeshwari saved a portion of their earnings each day to fulfil their dream of making this offering. Overwhelmed

with devotion, the couple shared that their love for Ammavaru has always driven them, and despite facing challenges, they remained determined to express their gratitude. Additionally, Chebrolu Pullaiah, a devotee from Guntur, presented a silver peacock to Goddess Kanaka Durga during the ongoing Sharannavaratri festival. This offering, made atop Indrakiladri, follows the tra-

dition that devotees believe will bring them long life and good health. Driven by faith, Pullaiah's offering symbolised his deep devotion. Temple Executive Officer KS Rama Rao welcomed the donor with traditional honours. In gratitude, the temple administration presented Pullaiah with 'theertha prasadam' and a sacred picture of the goddess, symbolising the blessings of Goddess Kanaka Durga.

'Swarnandhra@2047 Vision Plan': Officials, NGO reps take part in discussion

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A wide-ranging discussion was organized under the leadership of District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad, focusing on the "Swarnandhra @ 2047 Vision Plan," which aligns with the goals of Viksit Bharat. The meeting, held at the Collectorate, saw participation from officials of various district departments, representatives of voluntary organizations, industrialists, and farmers' associations, all contributing practical suggestions for the state's development.

Emphasizing the importance of inclusive economic policies, attendees stressed the need to embrace technological advancements and innovation for achieving the state's developmental goals by 2047. The discussions centred on undertaking transformative projects in the next five years (by 2029) to create new educational and employment opportunities, particularly for the youth, while modernizing agricultural practices to achieve tangible progress.

In his presentation, District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad outlined the state and district development plans, calling for a comprehensive approach to align with India's



vision of 100 years of independence. "We must give equal priority to the primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors while fostering an environment that welcomes innovation. Andhra Pradesh, with its vast natural resources and 975 km of coastline, has immense potential to achieve remarkable results if we manage these resources sustainably," said Prasad. He further highlighted the need to identify growth engines and provide targeted incentives to propel the state's economy. "Economic, social, and welfare development must go hand-in-hand," he added, calling for concerted efforts to improve job and business opportunities through training, climate-responsive crop planning, and public-private partnerships (PPP). "We must address critical

issues like poverty eradication, renewable energy, gender equality, and environmental protection to achieve the desired outcomes for a prosperous future," Prasad emphasized, while also advocating for the creation of MSME and technology service hubs to boost economic growth. Looking ahead to 2029, Prasad underscored the importance of discoveries and innovations to transform Visakhapatnam's future. "Our district currently contributes 9.15% to the state's GSDP, and we should all work together to raise this figure to 15%. Public health and welfare must be prioritized through basic infrastructure and by meeting the minimum needs of the people," he said. The meeting also saw input from various participants. "Visakhapatnam has the poten-

tial to lead in education, employment, and technological innovation, but this requires a united effort and strategic planning," said a representative from CREDAI. Others echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the need for sustainable development and modern agricultural practices to enhance the living standards of the population. GVMC Commissioner P Sam path Kumar, VMRDA Commissioner KS Viswanathan, CPO Srinivasa Rao, and representatives from FICCI, RINI, V-SEZ, and Bell, along with other district officials, also participated in the meeting, offering their insights and suggestions for the Swarnandhra 2047 Vision Plan. All suggestions were noted and will be considered for the formulation of the final vision plan.

VSP retirees resent delayed payments

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Retired employees of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant are up in arms over the delayed release of their provident fund (PF) and gratuity benefits. Since April of this year, many retirees have been struggling to make ends meet as the plant management has allegedly failed to provide any financial assistance.

The situation has become so dire that some retirees are questioning their decision to work in the steel plant. "It feels like our years of hard work were a sin," expressed one retiree.

The primary concern revolves around the non-payment of PF and gratuity. Retirees claim that the plant's finance department has been stalling the release of these funds, leaving them and their families in a state of financial uncertainty. Families of deceased employees who worked in the plant are particularly affected, as they are enti-



led to receive a portion of their loved one's PF and gratuity. According to the plant's policies, when an employee dies while in service, their dependents are entitled to receive a monthly pension and a lump sum payment of PF and gratuity. However, retirees allege that the finance department has not released these funds to around 80 employees whose pensions were discontinued in March after they reached retirement age. "It's been six months, and not a single rupee has been released since April," one retiree said. "The plant officials are turning a blind eye to our plight unless bribes are involved."

Some retirees have gone as far as to warn that they may resort to extreme measures if their dues are not settled immediately. "If we don't get our payments soon, we will have no option but to protest and bring our families to the plant," said another. DV Sharma, a retired employee who previously served as an Assistant General Manager in the steel plant, spoke about his own struggles. "I worked in the plant for many years and had to retire due to ill health," he said. "I turned 60 in March, and since then, my pension has stopped. My provident fund and gratuity—amounting to nearly one crore rupees—are still with the management."

Retired employees and their families are urging the plant's management and the Ministry of Steel to intervene and resolve the issue. They argue that after years of dedicated service, they should not have to face such financial hardships. "We've given our lives to this plant. The least they could do is pay us what we are owed," Sharma added.

ACA chief unveils BBL logo, poster

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Big Bharat Cricket League (BBL) logo and poster was unveiled by ACA President, MP Kesineni Sivanath at NTR Bhavan and Parliament Office in Vijayawada on Saturday. BBL founder Charunya Sai explained to ACA president Kesineni Sivanath that a total of 100 teams from various sectors of the state will participate in this league. He also said that this tournament will be held in Visakhapatnam in December in line with the IPL. He said that all the sectors in Andhra Pradesh will participate in this league.

ACA president and MP Sivanath asked the BBL organisers about the details of how the league will be managed. BBL co-founders Bharani, Chaitanya, Jaswant, Manish, Secretary Suraj, Vice Secretary Rohit, advisor Ravi Shankar were present.

Undavalli Sridevi rues joining YSRCP to begin her career

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Doctor-turned-politician Undavalli Sridevi, a former MLA from Tadikonda, says joining the YSRCP was her biggest mistake when she began her political career. "This has cost me dearly in realising my dream of serving the people with the inspiration from my politician-father Subba Rao," she added.

Sridevi left the YSRCP well before the 2024 elections and joined the opposition TDP, which was recovering from its 2019 defeat. She played a key role in the success of TDP's MLC candidate Panchumarthi Anuradha in 2023. Upon

joining the TDP, party leader N. Chandrababu Naidu assured her of a prominent role when the party regained power. She had hoped to contest from Bapatla for the 2024 elections, but due to alliance politics, she did not get the ticket.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Dr. Sridevi said that the party's decisions, especially regarding reverse tendering and the three capitals issue, damaged her standing in Tadikonda, which falls under the Amaravati region. Additionally, she faced accusations from YSRCP leaders, which led to her decision to leave the party and join the TDP. She joined the

TDP during a difficult phase for the party and said the TDP allowed her to focus on serving the people of Tadikonda. Despite pressures from YSRCP, she remained with TDP.

Sridevi also helped organise protests in Hyderabad after Naidu's arrest in the skill development scam case, mobilising IT professionals to support him. The protest was held at Wipro Circle in Gachibowli, a major IT hub.

Currently, she manages two multi-speciality hospitals in Hyderabad with her husband and expects a political role from Naidu to continue her public service.



Adventure sports to be launched in Araku soon

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Tourists visiting the picturesque Araku Valley will soon have the opportunity to engage in adventure sports, with plans for a paramotor gliding facility to be established in the region for the upcoming tourist season. The Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) Paderu initially aimed to introduce the adventure sport at Vanjangi, a location that has gained popularity among tourists. However, due to challenging weather conditions, the plan was deemed unfeasible. The company behind this initiative, Mega Eagle Fly, has been conducting trial runs to identify suitable locations for paramotor activities. They have evaluated several potential sites, including Vanjangi, Dallapalli, Buddulaputtu near Paderu, and two locations within Araku Valley. G. Santosh,

the owner of Mega Eagle Fly, explained the challenges faced in launching the facility at Vanjangi: "In Vanjangi, we encountered issues like a lack of space, surrounding hills, and dust, all of which made it risky to conduct the rides there. In contrast, conditions in Araku Valley are much more favorable for this kind of activity." Local authorities are expected to finalize a location near Araku Valley soon, which will open up new avenues for adventure tourism in the region. The introduction of paramotor gliding is anticipated to attract thrill-seekers and boost the local economy, further enhancing the appeal of Araku Valley as a tourist destination. As the season approaches, the excitement among adventure enthusiasts grows, with many looking forward to experiencing the breathtaking views of Araku Valley from the skies.

PVPSIT students win 1st prize in National meet

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a remarkable achievement, a team of final-year Civil Engineering students from PVP Siddhartha Institute of Technology (PVPSIT), Vijayawada, secured the First Prize in the ICI-RDC National Level Mix Design & Cube Test Competition, organised by the Indian Concrete Institute (ICI) in collaboration with RDC Concrete (India) Limited. The event was held at Anna University, Guindy, Chennai, on October 4.

The winning team, comprising TB Deveeswar Sai Singh, Shaik Aleema, and G. Ramanjaneyulu Prasad, outshone competitors from top



institutions across the country to claim the top honour and a prize worth Rs 1 lakh. Their project showcased sustainable techniques in concrete mix

design, a crucial element of modern construction. Dr Jagadish Vengala, Head of the Civil Engineering Department and mentor to

the team expressed pride in the students' achievement, stating, "This accomplishment underscores the talent and technical expertise our students possess. It's an honour to see them excel on a national platform."

Dr K. Sivaji Babu, Principal of PVPSIT, along with Paladugu Lakshmana Rao, Secretary of Siddhartha Academy, extended their heartfelt congratulations to the students for their outstanding performance. They emphasised that this victory not only brings pride to the institution but also reinforces PVPSIT's commitment to fostering academic and practical excellence in engineering education.

APIIC allocated land for 203 companies: HM Anitha

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha stated that after the coalition government was formed, APIIC had allocated lands to 203 companies in industrial parks across various districts of Andhra Pradesh. She clarified that investments amounting to ₹2,349.86 crore were made following the land allocations, which would generate 4,300 jobs for the unemployed youth.

The Home Minister congratulated Mantena Ram Raju on assuming charge as the Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh State Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation. She also attended the swearing-in ceremony of APMB Chairman



Damacharla Satyanarayana, held at the Royal Convention Hall near the Maritime Board office. The Home Minister felicitated and congratulated the newly appointed chairmen of APIIC and AP Maritime Board. Home Minister Anitha expressed confidence that under the leadership of CM Chandrababu Naidu, the establishment of industries and the development of ports would create job opportunities for the unemployed youth across the state on a large scale.

Golf course to be set up in AP soon: Minister Durgesh

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Cinematography Kandula Durgesh, announced that steps would soon be taken to establish a golf course in the state with support from the central government. Speaking at the prize distribution ceremony of the Vizag Open Championship Tournament-2024, held at the East Point Golf Club in Visakhapatnam on Saturday, the minister congratulated the winner, Angad Cheema, and runner-up, Amanda Art, while presenting them with prize money.

"We are committed to promoting sports in the state, and establishing a golf course in Amaravati is part of that vision, led by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu," said Minister Durgesh. He empha-

sized the government's efforts to develop Amaravati as a hub for sports infrastructure.

The 'Vizag Open Golf 2024,' a national-level tournament organized by the Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI), began on October 2 and concluded on Saturday. The event, hosted at the East Point Golf Club, attracted hundreds of professional golfers, athletes, and enthusiasts from across the country. The minister praised the organizers, noting that "events like this are essential to promote professional golfing in India and enhance the visibility of emerging talents."

Minister Durgesh also underscored the importance of sportsmanship and the need for athletes to aim for success on national and international platforms. "Every athlete should strive to excel at both



national and global levels. Sports should be an integral part of life, and winning is a natural aspect of healthy competition," he remarked. He applauded the efforts of the

Professional Golf Tour of India, stating, "PGTI has done a commendable job in organizing this prestigious event, showcasing the highest level of professional golf in India."

The minister highlighted that East Point Golf Club (EPGC), which is accessible to people from all walks of life, has become a key venue for golf events in the region since the

state's bifurcation. "Such tournaments not only promote sports but also contribute significantly to the development of Visakhapatnam's tourism sector," he added.

Minister Durgesh concluded his address by expressing his appreciation for the organizers and acknowledging the tough competition faced by participants. "Those who succeed in this tournament will not only receive prize money but will also see their rankings improve, qualifying them for international competitions," he explained. The closing ceremony of the event saw the presence of several dignitaries, including PGTI CEO Uttamsingh Mande, Director Vikas Singh, East Point Golf Club Secretary MSN Raju, Ramakrishna, and international players.

Check maternal mortality during deliveries: WG DC

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector, Chadalavada Nagarani, has directed doctors to ensure that no maternal deaths occur during deliveries.

During a review meeting with district health, medical, women, and child welfare department officials on Saturday, Collector Nagarani expressed concern over the increase in maternal deaths in the district compared to the previous year. She emphasised that pregnant women with a history of one or two abortions must receive close medical attention.

The Collector urged medical officers and doctors to work diligently to prevent maternal and child deaths due to lack of medical care. She called upon government hospital doctors to adhere to their schedules and give up private practice, ensuring better service to the public. Medical officers must be present at their respective Primary Health Centres (PHCs) from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm, she stated.



She also stressed that medical officers should reside in the areas where they are stationed. If complaints arise regarding the unavailability of doctors in government hospitals, strict action will be taken, she warned.

Collector Nagarani highlighted the prevalence of anaemia across all age groups and urged doctors to educate the public on proper nutrition. She pointed out that early detection of high-risk pregnancies, anaemia, or other health

issues is crucial, and treatment should continue until safe deliveries are ensured. The Women and Child Welfare Department must work in coordination with the Medical Department to achieve the goal of zero maternal and child deaths, she added.

The Collector also expressed concern over children's growing dependence on junk food, identifying it as a major contributor to anaemia. She urged officials to promote healthy eating habits among children.

"Reports indicate that about 7,000 people in West Godavari district are suffering from malnutrition," she said, noting that the government is spending significant funds to provide nutritious food to the underprivileged and appealed to the public to take advantage of the resources.

District Medical Health Officer Dr. D. Maheswara Rao, District Women and Child Welfare Officer B. Sujatha Rani, and other senior officials were present at the meeting.

UMBRELLA RALLY

TTD appeals to devotees not to offer gifts

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) appealed to the devotees on Saturday not to offer any gifts during the umbrella procession arriving from Chennai. This procession, part of the Srivari Salakata Brahmotsavam, will culminate in the decoration of the Garuda Vahana on Oct 8.

TTD clarified that any gifts given by devotees will not reach the TTD and that the institution has no association with such gifts. During the annual Brahmotsavam, several Hindu organisations traditionally donate umbrellas from Chennai, which are then presented to Srivari during the procession. TTD stated that these umbrellas are expected to arrive in Tirumala on October 7.

Kannababu slams CM for false claims about 'Tirupati laddu'

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Former minister Kurasala Kannababu strongly criticised Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for engaging in what he termed as negative propaganda and diversionary politics, particularly over the false allegations concerning the Tirupati Laddu. He urged Naidu to refrain from spreading misinformation, which he said could damage the reputation of TTD and disrespect Lord Venkateswara.

Addressing the media in Kakinada on Friday, Kannababu called upon the TDP to focus on real issues rather than politicising religious matters. He emphasised that Naidu should address pressing concerns such as the rising prices of essential goods like onions and rice, and the severe sand shortage that has impacted construction workers across the State.

He highlighted the plight of thousands of families affected



Kannababu called upon the TDP to focus on real issues rather than politicising religious matters. He emphasised that Naidu should address pressing concerns such as the rising prices of essential goods like onions and rice, and the severe sand shortage that has impacted construction workers across the State.

by recent floods, which destroyed crops over 15 lakh acres, accusing the government of neglecting their needs.

Kannababu noted that onion prices have surged to over Rs 60 per kilogram in farmers' markets and Rs 75 in the open market, while rice prices have jumped from Rs 150 to Rs 200 for a 25-kilogram bag. He also criticised the government for its claims of providing free sand,

pointing out that transportation charges alone have reached Rs 9,276, with total costs rising to Rs 16,640.

The former minister expressed concern over the TDP government's negligence in areas like agriculture and public welfare, urging the ruling party to focus on solving these issues instead of resorting to diversionary tactics to hide its failures.

SAAP must function transparently: Chairman

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) Chairman Animini Ravi Naidu emphasised that the activities of SAAP should benefit the players in the State and that the organisation must function transparently. Ravi Naidu met with SAAP Managing Director PS Girisha at the SAAP office here on Saturday.



MD Girisha gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation to the Chairman, explaining the various works undertaken by SAAP, its functioning, performance of district sports authorities, status of sports grounds and school grounds, and the facilities required by sportspersons. The presentation also covered SAAP funds, sports policies, residential academies, hostels, administration, coaching staff, sports associations, sports quota admissions, recruitments, incentives, investments, finan-

cial assistance, Khelo India works, pending projects, stadium development, and issues faced by sportspersons.

Speaking on the occasion, Ravi Naidu stressed that the ongoing and future projects of SAAP should be communicated to the public regularly. "People and sportspersons should be aware that SAAP is working with accountability, unlike in the past. I will ensure SAAP progresses by providing the necessary infrastructure for the sports sector and

addressing the mistakes made by the previous government," he said.

He also highlighted the importance of updating the SAAP website to keep players informed and advocated the use of advanced technology to enhance SAAP's efficiency and transparency.

MD Girisha assured that all suggestions made by Chairman Ravi Naidu would be implemented. TSO Ramanamma, ASO Mahesh, and other officials were present during the meeting.

2 die in van mishap

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Two persons were killed when a speeding van knocked them down fatally near Chendurty junction along the National Highway -16 near Gollaprolu village 30 km from here on Saturday, police said.

The Gollaprolu police who registered a case identified the deceased as the resident of Pathaperumallapuram village of Thondangi mandal. Pending further investigation the bodies were shifted to the Kakinada government general hospital for post-mortem, police added.

MP assures MSP for cocoa farmers



PNS ■ ELURU

Eluru Lok Sabha member Putta Mahesh Kumar has assured cocoa farmers of securing a Minimum Support Price (MSP) for their produce, stating that he would meet Agriculture Minister K Atchannaidu to discuss the

issue.

Accompanied by Denduluru Chintamaneni Prabhakar, the MP visited the Oil Palm Research Centre at Lakshimpuram in Pedavegi mandal on Saturday. During a meeting with the scientists at the centre, they briefed the MP on their ongoing research and

experiments. Speaking on the occasion, Mahesh Kumar emphasised the importance of ensuring that the benefits of agricultural research reach the farmers.

The MP reiterated his commitment to ensuring fair prices for cocoa farmers and mentioned that he would submit a

memorandum to Agriculture Minister Atchannaidu. "I plan to propose the establishment of a chocolate manufacturing company in the region, which will greatly benefit cocoa farmers," he revealed.

Mahesh Kumar also promised to support the oil palm farmers in Eluru district and work continuously to address their concerns. He noted that the promises he made during the general elections were being fulfilled in order of priority.

The MP further assured farmers cultivating lime crops that their issues would also be resolved. A group of farmers from Telangana felicitated Mahesh Kumar for his efforts in securing remunerative prices for oil palm produce.

17 cultural teams from 9 states take part in Brahmotsavams

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

A total number of 17 cultural teams, comprising 412 artists from nine states, showcased their art forms in front of Chinna Sesa Vahanam along the Mada streets on the second day of the ongoing annual Srivari Brahmotsavam on Saturday.

The participating states included Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Odisha, Maharashtra, Manipur, and Punjab. Noteworthy performances included Kuchipudi dances by students from the Sri Venkateswara Sangeet Nritya College, Tirupati, and the Dharani Kashyap troupe from the Coastal Andhra region.

Devotees gathered in the galleries along the Mada streets were captivated by the Odissi dance performed by the Vasuki Rao troupe from Odisha and the Jago art form presented by the Ram troupe from Rajasthan. Other highlights included Kuchipudi dances by the Renuka troupe from Coastal Andhra and Bharatanatyam by the Sujendra Babu troupe from Karnataka. A spectacular Mahavishnu



TTD REFUTES DEVOTEE'S CHARGE

TIRUMALA: The TTD has clarified that the allegation by a devotee that a centipede was found in the 'Anna Prasadam' at Madhava Nilayam was baseless and false. TTD prepares hot 'Anna Prasadam' for thousands of devotees that come for Srivari Darshan and it is an unconvincing claim by the devotee that a centipede was found in 'Anna Prasadam'. Even if rice is mixed with curd the creature could not go unnoticed. TTD said it was a deliberate attempt to defame the holy institution and hurt the sentiments of devotees who consume Anna Prasadam as a blessing from Srivari. TTD appeals to devotees to not be carried away by such baseless and false news.

Avatar Rupakam was performed by Ananya from Bangalore, while the

Rajeshwari troupe from Maharashtra presented a Simi Rupakam. The traditional

dance by the Raksha Karthik troupe from Bangalore also held the audience spellbound.

The Geetha Troupe from Anantapur performed Dasa Sankirtana Rupakam, and the Ajay Troupe from Chhattisgarh showcased the Goomar Traditional Art Dance. Additionally, the Pridvi team from Karnataka presented the Suggikunita dance. Kolata dances from Railway Koduru, Anakapalli, Tirupati, and Tirumala further impressed the audience.

Konda Surekha is not alone, says Ponnam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Making it clear that the woman Minister from Backward Class is not alone and that the support of all Congress leaders is there for her, BC Welfare and Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar said, "Why are there so many attacks on her?"

Ponnam commented that it is not proper for film industry people to respond even after Surekha withdrew her comments. The issue is over as Surekha withdrew her comments, he said.

He said that the government is in thoughts to maintain restraint in regard to the ongoing episode of film industry people. The film industry people would have responded in the same manner in regard to the posts posted insulting Minister Konda Surekha, he said wondering if this much of attack is necessary even after Konda Surekha withdrew her comments? Don't think the Minister from backward classes is alone, Minister Ponnam warned.

"The victims themselves asked Konda Surekha to withdraw her comments. The Minister withdrew her comments responding immediately

'Bommala Kolu' tradition gains renewed interest

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

With the arrival of the Navaratri festival, the cherished tradition of 'Bommala Kolu' — a vibrant display of dolls and figurines that narrate cultural and mythological tales — is making a comeback in Visakhapatnam. Once a common sight during Dasara, this practice is being lovingly revived by elders who are eager to share it with younger generations.



As a part of Navaratri celebrations, 'Bommala Kolu' arranged at a house in Visakhapatnam.

Also referred to as 'Bommai Golu' in Tamil Nadu, 'Bommala Kolu' features the artistic arrangement of idols and dolls on tiered platforms, which can range from one to fifteen steps or even more. This custom is prevalent in South Indian states like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu,

Karnataka, and among certain communities in Kerala. Each display tells a distinct story, often weaving together scenes from mythology, cultural history, and everyday life. During the festive season, these

displays provide entertainment, education, and opportunities for social connection.

Eminent cultural organiser Kanna Saraswati, in her seventies, explains that 'Bommala Kolu' is a beautiful artistic

display of dolls, traditionally presented during the auspicious Hindu festival of Navaratri or Dasara. The dolls represent the evolution of human society, beginning with a gathering of gods and goddesses, with Goddess Durga at the forefront. The final step typically depicts daily life, showcasing the complete human experience." She highlights the cultural significance of the tradition, pointing out that the display takes place before the Mother Goddess sets out to conquer Mahishasura, symbolising the triumph of good over evil.

For many, 'Bommala Kolu' is more than just a display of dolls. Sarojini, a long-time resident of Visakhapatnam, fondly recalls her childhood experiences with the tradition: "I had only a few dolls as a child,

but each one had its own story. Now, I'm thrilled to pass them on to my granddaughter, who creates her own Bommala Kolu. It's about sharing stories and values that mean so much more than material possessions," she explains.

Her granddaughter, Naga Lakshmi, treasures the time spent setting up the display. "It takes patience and effort, but it brings families together, allowing them to bond and enjoy joyful, creative moments," she says. In today's fast-paced world, the tradition takes on new significance. Shruti Kumar, a working professional, shares: "Even with my busy schedule, I've been organizing Bommala Kolu for 15 years. It helps me stay connected to my roots and fosters a sense of community."

'Shun your Zamindari lifestyle'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy criticised opposition leaders KCR and KTR's luxurious lifestyles and their habit of ignoring the underprivileged.

The CM was speaking while attending the 95th birth anniversary of G. Venkataswamy, affectionately known as 'Kaka', in Hyderabad on Saturday. Revanth asked KCR and KTR to donate the lands of their farmhouses to help the poor.

"If KCR and KTR are truly committed to the poor, they should donate the land of their farmhouses rather than living like zamindars while the poor languish in slums." KCR has a farmhouse in Gajwel with 1,000 acres. If you give 500 acres out of it, we will build

◆ Donate farmhouses for Indiramma Houses
◆ CM Revanth asks KCR, KTR

Indiramma houses for the poor. KCR do some Bhoodhan. KTR has 50 acres in Janwada. Give 25 acres out of it to build Indiramma houses. The BRS bank account has Rs 1500 crore. Give Rs 500 crore. Let's distribute it to the people. All this money was stolen from the people," Revanth said.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that it is not possible for them (BRS Working President KT Rama Rao) to

come to power through social media. Instead, they are sure to go to Cherlapally jail, he added. Addressing the Venkata Swamy birth anniversary celebrations at the Ravindra Bharathi on Saturday, Revanth said that KTR is dreaming that he will come to power through social media.

He said that KTR will not come to power through social media but it is sure that KTR will eat Cherlapally Jail food if he engages in cheap tricks.

IN BRIEF



India to host Malabar naval exercise

India will host the four-nation Malabar naval exercise beginning Tuesday amid evolving security situation in the region. The navies of India, the US, Australia and Japan will carry out a series of complex naval drills during the 'sea phase' of the mega wargame. "Exercise Malabar 2024 is scheduled to take place from October 8 to 18, beginning with the Harbour Phase in Visakhapatnam, followed by the sea phase," the Indian Navy announced on Saturday. The Malabar exercise, which began in 1992 as a bilateral naval drill between the US and the Indian Navy, has evolved into a key multilateral event aimed at enhancing interoperability, fostering mutual understanding and addressing shared maritime challenges in the Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific region. The exercise will feature the participation of various Indian naval platforms, including guided missile destroyers, multi-purpose frigates, submarines, fighter aircraft and helicopters.



Man slits relative's throat over affair with wife

A 45-year-old man was killed here by his brother-in-law over suspicion he was having an affair with his wife, police said on Saturday. The victim, Lalji, a Gonda native, had been living with his brother-in-law Kania - his wife's sister's husband - for the last four to five days in adjacent Balrampur district. Circle Officer (Sadar) Shipra Verma said. On Friday evening, Kania took Lalji out, had liquor with him, and slit his throat with a knife, she said. The ensuing commotion drew the attention of the passersby, who rushed him to the district hospital in Balrampur, where he was declared dead. CO Verma said a case was filed against Kania on the complaint of Lalji's son. She said Kania suspected his wife was having an affair with Lalji and meeting him every time she would visit her maternal home. Lalji's body was sent for post mortem, Iitaythok Kotwali Dehat Police Station SHO Durgesh Singh said.



Over 60 per cent polling in Haryana polls

Over 60 per cent polling was recorded in the Haryana Assembly elections on Saturday in which the ruling BJP is eyeing a third term and the Congress seeking a comeback after a decade. Officials said polling, which closed at 6 pm, went on smoothly barring a clash in Nuh between supporters of two candidates which left three persons injured. According to the data available at 5 pm, 61 per cent polling has been registered and it will further increase once all information comes in. The BJP, Congress, the INLD-BSP and the JJP-Azad Samaj Party alliances and the Aam Aadmi Party are the key parties contesting the polls. A total of 1,031 candidates are in the fray, including 101 women and 464 Independent nominees.

Cong being run by 'gang of urban Naxals': PM Modi

PNS ■ WASHIM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday alleged that the Congress is being run by a "gang of urban Naxals", and asked people to unite to defeat the "dangerous agenda" of that party. He also accused the Congress of looting the poor and not improving their condition for its selfish politics.

"They (Congress) think that if we all unite, then their agenda to divide the country will fail," Modi said, addressing a rally in Washim district of Maharashtra after launching various projects.

"Congress only knows how to loot the poor and keep them poor for its selfish politics. It only knows how to divide people. We have to be alert and remain united. Congress is run by a gang of urban Naxals," he alleged. Everyone can see how closely Congress stands with those people who do not harbour good intentions for India, Modi said. "Drugs worth thousands of crores of rupees were seized in Delhi recently. A Congress leader is suspected to



"Congress only knows how to loot the poor and keep them poor for its selfish politics. It only knows how to divide people. We have to be alert and remain united. Congress is run by a gang of urban Naxals," he alleged.

be the kingpin. Congress wants to contest elections from the money it gets by pushing the youth towards drugs," he said.

The Indian Youth Congress had said on October 3 that Tushar Goel, the suspected kingpin, was expelled from the organisation on October 17, 2022, for anti-party activities, soon after BJP spokesperson and MP Sudhanshu Trivedi charged the opposition

party with having links with the drug dealers. Modi alleged that Congress' thinking has been foreign from the very beginning. "Like the British rule, this Congress family also does not consider Dalits, backward and tribals as their equals. They feel that India should be ruled by only one family. That is why they have always maintained a derogatory attitude towards the Banjara communi-

ty," he said.

"Saints from the Banjara community inspired culture and spiritualism. Britishers harassed the community, but when they left, successive Congress governments continued the trend and prevented the community from coming into the mainstream," the PM alleged. The PM also accused the Congress of leaving no stone unturned to make the lives of farmers miserable.

"The governments run by the Congress used the money meant for farmers and irrigation schemes for corruption," he alleged. Modi asked people to beware of the Congress propaganda of false assurance of farm loan waiver. "People in Telangana are still waiting for the loan waiver. In Karnataka, the Congress government stopped the irrigation schemes started by the BJP regime," he said.

Stating that Maharashtra has the capacity to lead the country to economic progress, Modi said the state government was giving double benefit to farmers in terms of financial assistance, in addition to what the central government was providing.



'Durga Puja heartbeat of our identity': Mamata

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday asserted that for Bengalis, Durga Puja is more than a festival and is the heartbeat of the identity, art and heritage of the community.

She inaugurated 10 Durga Pujas in south Kolkata amid chanting of shlokas (hymns), beating of 'dhaak' (drums) and blowing of conch shells.

"For us, Durga Puja is more than just a festival, it's the heartbeat of our identity, our art and our heritage... The pandals reflect the spirit of community that brings people from all walks of life together

to celebrate the divine and embrace the joy of togetherness," she said in a post on X. Among the pujas she inaugurated during the day are 64 Pally, Bakulbagan Sarbajanin, Abasar, Priyanath Mallick Road, Sanghasree, Chakraberia and Chetla Sarbajanin Durgotsab. In another social media post, Banerjee wished people on the occasion of Tiritiya or the third day of the festivities, saying, "We are inching closer to the four days that Bengalis around the world eagerly await all year."

The CM has inaugurated over 60 pujas in Kolkata and around 800 pujas virtually in other districts since Mahalaya.

'We have lost our patience'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

We have lost our patience, the Supreme Court has said while expressing concern over delay by the states and Union Territories in providing ration card to the migrant workers.

A bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Ahsanuddin Amanullah granted a final opportunity to the Centre, states and Union Territories (UTs) to take necessary steps in this regard by November 19. "We have lost our patience, we are making it very clear that there will be no more indulgence. "We are giving you one last window to comply with our order or your secretary will remain present," the bench said.

SC on delay in providing ration cards to migrant workers



Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, informed that only one ration card is issued per priority household under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana.

The top court was hearing a suo motu case registered in 2020 after taking cognizance of

problems and miseries of the migrant labourers during COVID. The apex court had earlier asked the Centre to file an affidavit giving details about compliance of its 2021 judgement and subsequent directions on providing ration cards and other welfare measures to the migrant workers.

The top court, in June 29, 2021 judgement and subsequent orders, had passed a slew of directions to the authorities asking them to undertake welfare measures, including giving ration cards to all migrant workers, who were distressed during the COVID-19 pandemic, registered with the 'e-Shram' portal. The 'e-

Shram' is a comprehensive National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW) launched by the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment with a primary aim to facilitate delivery of welfare benefits and social security measures to unorganised sector workers across the country. The top court, in the 2021 judgement, had termed as "unpardonable" the Centre's "apathy and lackadaisical attitude" towards creating National Database for Unorganised Workers (NDUW) and ordered its commencement by July 31, 2021 so that all migrant workers are registered and welfare measures extended to them during COVID distress.

Abdullah rules out post-poll alliance with BJP

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah on Saturday asserted that his party would not forge a post-poll alliance with the BJP for government formation in Jammu and Kashmir. "We cannot go with the BJP. The vote which we have got here is the vote against the BJP. The difficulties they put the Muslims in, bulldozed their shops, houses, mosques and schools, do you think we will go with them?" Abdullah told PTI videos here.

He said the BJP did not give mandate to even a single Muslim in the Parliamentary election nor is there a single Muslim minister in the Union Cabinet.

"I think our people will not vote for the BJP. If they (BJP) think they will form the government, then they live in cuckoo's world," the National Conference (NC) chief added. The NC had on Friday said



"I think our people will not vote for the BJP. If they (BJP) think they will form the government, then they live in cuckoo's world," the National Conference (NC) chief added.

it was not in touch with any political party other than INDIA bloc constituents for government formation in

Jammu and Kashmir.

The party's clarification came amid speculation that it was engaged in backchannel deliberations with the BJP for government formation.

Asked if Baramulla MP Engineer Rashid, who is on bail, was a factor in the assembly polls, Abdullah said he does not see any factor.

"Whoever stands with them (BJP), he will be finished," the former Union minister said.

The NC as well as the PDP have labelled Rashid as a BJP proxy and agent.

Asked about his expectations from the exit polls, which would come later in the day, Abdullah said he has never believed in them.

"The votes are in the boxes. We will know on October 8 what exactly is in and out. Who has got the majority and who has not, so let us wait till October 8. I do not believe in exit polls. I have never believed in them and I will never," said Abdullah.

ELECTORAL BONDS SCHEME

SC dismisses pleas seeking review of verdict

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has dismissed a batch of pleas seeking review of its February 15 verdict, which had scrapped the Modi government's electoral bonds scheme of anonymous political funding.

A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavai, J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said there is no error apparent on the face of the record. The top court also rejected the prayer for listing the review petitions in an open court.

"Having perused the review petitions, there is no error apparent on the face of the record. No case for review under Order XLVII Rule 1 of the Supreme Court Rules 2013. The review petitions are, therefore, dismissed," the bench said in its order dated September 25 that was



any specific legal injury exclusive to them, their petition could not have been decided as if a private litigation for the enforcement of rights which are specific and exclusive to them," Nudumpara had submitted in his plea.

He had said the court failed to notice that the public opinion could be sharply divided and the majority of the people of this country could probably be in support of the scheme, brought into existence by their elected representatives, and that they too have a right to be heard as much as the petitioners. "The court failed to notice that, if at all it is venturing into the forbidden domain of adjudicating upon a matter of legislative policy, they have a duty to hear the public at large and that the proceedings ought to be converted into representative proceedings," the plea had said.

Make Kannada state's 'business language': CM

PNS ■ RAICHUR

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday gave a clarion call to the people of Karnataka to make Kannada their 'business language'. Speaking at an event to celebrate 50 years of naming the erstwhile Mysore state as Karnataka, the CM appealed to people to make Karnataka a Kannada state.

"All the people living here are Kannadigas. No matter what your home language is, the 'business language' should be Kannada. Kannada should be the main and first language in the state," he said. "Learn every language, but Kannada should be the official language in the state," he



"All the people living here are Kannadigas. No matter what your home language is, the 'business language' should be Kannada. Kannada should be the main and first language in the state," he said.

added. Dwelling on the Gokak agitation, which was related to granting Kannada the first language status in the state, the chief minister said the 'Kannada Kavali Samiti' was formed to create an atmosphere for Kannada to prosper in Karnataka. Later, the com-

mittee became the Kannada Development Authority, he explained. Siddaramaiah asked people to respect all languages, learn as many languages as possible but never be generous to give up Kannada, the language of this land.

Antarctica turning green 'dramatically'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Antarctica is turning green "dramatically", with the trend accelerated by more than 30 per cent in recent years, compared to the past three decades, a new study has found.

Researchers found that vegetation cover across the Antarctic Peninsula increased more than tenfold -- from less than a square kilometre to almost 12 square kilometres -- between 1986 and 2021.

The researchers, including those at the University of Exeter, UK, used satellite data to estimate the "greening" rate of the Antarctic Peninsula in response to climate change. "This recent acceleration in the rate of change in vegetation cover (2016-2021) coincides with a

Trend accelerated in recent years, study finds



marked decrease in sea-ice extent in Antarctica over the same period," the authors wrote in the study published in the

journal Nature Geoscience. The study provides evidence that a widespread greening trend, across the Antarctic Peninsula,

is under way and accelerating, they said.

Antarctica has been shown to be warming faster than the global average, with extreme heat events becoming more common. "The plants we find on the Antarctic Peninsula -- mostly mosses -- grow in perhaps the harshest conditions on Earth," corresponding author Thomas Roland, University of Exeter, said. While only a tiny fraction of the landscape -- still largely dominated by snow, ice and rock -- is colonised by plant life, that tiny fraction has grown "dramatically", showing that even this vast and isolated wilderness is affected by human-caused climate change,

Roland said. Corresponding author Oliver Bartlett, University of Hertfordshire, UK, said that as the climate warms and these plant ecosystems establish themselves more, it is likely that the greening will increase.

"Soil in Antarctica is mostly poor or non-existent, but this increase in plant life will add organic matter, and facilitate soil formation -- potentially paving the way for other plants to grow," Bartlett said. Calling for further research to look into the processes that are driving the greening trend, the researchers said that the study raised serious concerns about the future of Antarctica.

A TASTE OF THE NEW

EXCITING RESTAURANTS SHAPING NCR'S FOOD SCENE



The food scene in the NCR is heating up, with a host of new eateries making their mark, each worth a visit. This month, I sampled a few, and here are my impressions.

LITCHI BISTRO

Nestled in the culinary hub of Malviya Nagar, *Litchi Bistro* offers a creative world cuisine menu alongside freshly brewed coffee from their in-house roastery. The spacious open patio outshines the indoor seating, creating a vibrant atmosphere. Two dishes I highly recommend are the *Spicy Tuna Taco*, served on a crisp Nori sheet with a kick from sriracha mayo and *the Korean Bacon*, a miso-marinated pork belly. The latter is so exceptional that I would return just for this dish.

AVARTANA AT ITC MAURYA

This is easily the most intriguing restaurant I've explored this year. *Avartana* offers set-course menus ranging from 7 to 13 courses, priced from Rs. 2,950 upwards per person. The cuisine is a contemporary interpretation of South Indian ingredients, far from the traditional dishes we usually associate with the region. I'll be doing a detailed review soon, as it's hard to choose favourites when each dish is stellar. It's no surprise that *Avartana* ranks 44th among Asia's 50 best.

689, GURGAON

Six Eighty Nine at Two Horizon brings Quorum Club's finesse into the public domain. This Asian restaurant draws inspiration from Japanese cuisine, with a clever twist of Japanese ingredients across its offerings. A standout dish is the *Flame-Kissed Avocado* from the *Robotayaki* section. The buttery avocado, glazed with soy-mirin, perfectly balances saltiness and sharpness, with a



zing from shichimi lime. Ideal for those who enjoy Asian flavours and refined cocktails without the distraction of loud music.

TEPPANYAKI AT EEST, WESTIN GURGAON

Gurgaon finally has a live *Teppanyaki* counter. What was once

Eest's Omakase section has been revamped to accommodate a *Teppanyaki* grill. The sauces are fresh, the ingredients top-notch and Chef Jatin engages with diners to craft dishes tailored to their preferences. The food here is as delicious as it is healthy, ensuring my return visit soon.

ROOM XO, AIPL JOY CENTRAL, GURGAON

The new party hub, *Room XO*, features one of the largest bars in the city, offering high-energy music, creative cocktails, massive screens and a performance bar. The food, curated by celebrity chef *Sabyasachi Gorai*, complements the lively atmosphere. With the same founders as *Studio XO*, this spot is set to be the next big thing in Gurgaon's nightlife.

THANKS AND BEYOND, NEHRU PLACE, DELHI

Veteran nightlife impresario *Priyank Sukhija's* latest venture at *Epicuria Mall* offers three distinct zones. 'Thanks' is a casual dining space, 'And' is the outdoor area, and

'Beyond' is a high-energy bar. For a great time, I recommend the Tequila-based *Picante*, the *Sheesha*, and the *Tuna on Toast*.

PIRATES OF GRILL GRANDE, CYBERHUB, GURGAON

Buffets just went gourmet, thanks to the famous *Banga Brothers*, who have redefined the concept with their Grande edition of *Pirates of Grill*. The quality, variety, and pricing are a revelation - priced at around Rs. 1,000 per head; the spread rivals the best à la carte restaurants. Standout items include the *Benne Dosa* with *Podi Masala*, possibly the best in the NCR and *Dim Sum* that would hold its own in any reputable dim sum restaurant. Don't miss the *Grilled Pineapple*, an old favourite or the *Indianised Meatballs* with shredded egg caulis and cheese, a delightful fusion.

Now that you're in the loop on the hottest dining and nightlife spots in the NCR, where are you heading tonight or later this week? Let me know at pawan.soni@indianfoodfreak.com.

Explore NCR's newest hotspots, serving up bold flavours and vibrant atmospheres for those looking to experience the best in dining and nightlife



PAWAN SONI
Food critic and founder of the Big F Awards



FROM KOLKATA TO DELHI: THE TASTE OF TWO CITIES

While Durga Puja is celebrated across the country, it is at a different level in Kolkata. The rhythm of the dhak, the vibrant atmosphere and the exquisite food transport you to another world, writes DIVYA BHATIA



A visit to Kolkata revealed the grandeur of the festivities, showcasing stunning pandals and creating cherished moments. As a foodie, I was captivated by the culinary extravaganza, especially the traditional *Bhuribhoj* and *Bengali Thali*. The unforgettable flavours of *Basanti Polao*, *Aloo Bhaja*, *Begun Bhaja*, *Potol Bhaja*, *Luchi* and *Chholar Dal*, paired with *Mishti Doi* and *Rasgulla*, left a lasting impression. The magic of these dishes lies in the love behind their preparation. Bengalis savour their meals in small courses, enhancing the authentic flavours of their cuisine. While I've felt a festive spirit in Delhi, it cannot match Kolkata's enchanting transformation during Durga Puja. However, Delhi offers its own take on Bengali cuisine, and this year, I explored delightful recipes from young chefs, ensuring that whether you're in Kolkata or elsewhere, you can enjoy traditional Puja dishes.

CHEF GAUTAM KUMAR'S RECIPE FOR GOBINDOBHOG GURER PAYESH

Chef *Gautam Kumar*, Executive Chef at Foodlink F&B Holdings (India), brings over 20 years of experience in regional Indian cuisine. He emphasises fresh, locally sourced ingredients and has held prestigious positions at top hotels like *Shangri-La* and *Grand Hyatt Delhi*. His innovative approach has garnered numerous accolades, and one of his favourite dishes is *Gobindobhog Gurer Payesh*.

GOBINDOBHOG GURER PAYESH

Kheer, or "payesh" in Bengali, is a sweet rice and milk dish beloved in Bengali culture. Offered to the goddess *Durga* as "bhog," it is shared among devotees after the puja. Made with date palm jaggery, "nolen gud kheer" is a healthier alternative to sugar, especially popular during Durga Puja. Sharing *Payesh* symbolizes unity and harmony among family members. *Durga Puja*. Sharing *Payesh* symbolises unity and fosters harmony among family members.



INGREDIENTS

- 1 litre full-fat milk
- 50 grams Gobindo bhog rice
- 150 grams nolen gur (date palm jaggery)
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon green cardamom powder
- 20 grams cashew nuts
- 10 grams raisins (soaked and drained)
- 10 grams ghee

METHOD

- **Soak the Rice:** Soak the rice in water for 30 minutes, ensuring not to over-wash it to retain as much starch as possible. After soaking, drain the rice and spread it out to dry.
- **Coat the Rice:** Coat the soaked rice with ¼ teaspoon of ghee and set aside.
- **Prepare the Raisins:** Soak the raisins in water until swollen.
- **Fry Cashews:** Heat ghee in a pan and fry the cashews until golden. Set aside.
- **Boil the Milk:** Boil the milk in a heavy-bottomed pan, simmer for 15 minutes, and add cardamom powder.
- **Cook the Rice:** Add the ghee-coated rice to the milk and cook on low heat until fully cooked. The rice should be soft and mushy when mashed between your fingers, as it will firm up while cooling. Stir gently to prevent burning and release starch, which thickens the payesh.
- **Thicken the Payesh:** Ensure the rice is fully cooked; the payesh should be slightly thicker than desired, as the gur will thin it out.
- **Add Gur:** Turn off the heat and mix in the gur, salt, soaked raisins, and fried cashews, keeping the heat off to prevent curdling. Gently fold everything together, cover the pan, and let the residual heat melt the gur completely. Serve the payesh hot or cold in a bowl, garnished with fried cashews and soaked raisins.

RECIPE FOR NARDEL NI CHINGRI

Chef *Gagandeep Singh Bedi*, Director of Culinary at *Roseate Hotels & Resorts*, specialises in reviving regional Indian cuisines and creating signature dishes at *Kheer*. He focuses on organic produce and minimising food waste.

NARDEL NI CHINGRI RECIPE

One of his standout creations is *Nardel ni Chingri*, a delightful prawn dish cooked in coconut milk. This recipe exemplifies Chef *Gagandeep's* commitment to authentic flavours and sustainable practices. Here's how to make it:

INGREDIENTS

- 500g prawns, cleaned and deveined
- 200ml fresh coconut milk
- 75g fresh grated coconut
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 tsp ginger paste
- 1 tsp garlic paste
- 2-3 green chilies, slit
- ½ tsp turmeric powder
- ½ tsp red chili powder
- 40ml mustard oil
- Salt to taste
- Fresh coriander for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

- Marinate the prawns with turmeric and salt for 15 minutes.
- Roast the grated coconut on medium flame until golden brown.
- Heat mustard oil in a pan until smoking, then reduce heat.
- Sauté onions until golden brown, then add ginger and garlic paste.
- Add green chilies, turmeric and red chili powder, stirring well.
- Add marinated prawns and cook until pink (5-7 minutes).
- Pour in coconut milk and simmer for 5-10 minutes.
- Add roasted grated coconut and cook for an additional 2-3 minutes.
- Adjust seasoning and garnish with fresh coriander and Serve hot with steamed rice for a delicious meal!



Navratri: The essence of Satvik food

BY TEAM VIVA

The festival of Navratri is here and the air is filled with a spirit of devotion and celebration. During these nine auspicious days, millions across India follow a special dietary regimen, abstaining from regular food and opting for Satvik meals. While these dishes are rooted in tradition, chefs at hotels like *Le Meridien, New Delhi* have taken the opportunity to elevate this sacred cuisine with contemporary flavours, ensuring that even the most discerning food lovers can enjoy fasting meals with a gourmet touch. Navratri food is characterised by simplicity, with ingredients that align with spiritual purity. Common dishes consumed during this period have been improvised by Chef *Setuu Gupta*. Here are the dishes:

- **'Kuttu ki Puri'** (*Buckwheat Flour Puri*) - A deep-fried, gluten-free flatbread made from buckwheat flour, which is one of the staples during Navratri.
- **'Sabudana tikki'** - A light and flavorful dish made with soaked tapioca pearls, peanuts, and mild spices like cumin, offering a fulfilling yet easy-to-digest meal.
- **'Paneer Tikka'** - Cottage cheese cubes marinated in yoghurt and mild spices, then grilled to perfection. Paneer dishes are popular as they provide a protein-rich option for those fasting.
- **'Samak Rice Pulao'** - This is made from barnyard millet, often called "vrat rice," and is cooked with mild spices and



vegetables to offer a flavorful alternative to regular rice.

- **'Anjeer ka Halwa'** - A dessert made from figs, slow-cooked in milk and flavoured with cardamom, is a popular sweet indulgence for the fasting period.
- **'Makhana Curry'** - A creamy salty pudding made from foxnuts (makhana) and curd flavoured with spices and nuts for a rich taste.
- **'Kacche Kale Sabudana Tikki'** is a crispy snack made from raw banana, sabudana (tapioca pearls), green chilies, and spices. Shallow-fried and enjoyed during fasting periods like Navratri, it offers a flavourful and energising treat.
- **'Arbi Singara Kadhi'** - is a flavourful curry made with colocasia (arbi) and water chestnuts (singhara), simmered in a spiced yoghurt-based gravy. It's thickened with singhara flour and seasoned with mustard seeds, curry leaves and chilies for a tangy, savoury dish. Navratri food has always been about maintaining purity and simplicity, but at *Le Meridien, New Delhi*, Chef *Setuu Gupta* and his team have shown that fasting meals can be both humble and sophisticated. By elevating traditional dishes with innovative techniques, they ensure that guests not only honour their spiritual commitment but also indulge in a culinary journey that excites the senses. This fusion of faith and flavour is a testament to the evolving nature of India's food culture, where tradition and modernity walk hand in hand.

Photo: Pankaj Kumar



CELEBRATING NAVRATRI

A SPECTACULAR DANCE-DRAMA EXPERIENCE

With the festive spirit of Navratri, *Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra* presents a captivating dance-drama that brings the timeless tale of the Ramayana to life, highlighting the struggle between good and evil and the victory of righteousness, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

October marks the arrival of a magical time in India, where the festive spirit fills the air and people from all walks of life come together to celebrate the rich cultural heritage passed down for generations. Among the many stories and traditions that take centre stage during this season, none are as cherished or as timeless as the story of the Ramayana. Retold through art, music, dance and drama, the Ramayana during Navratri is more than just a mythological tale; it's a reminder of the eternal struggle between good and evil, love and loss, and the ultimate victory of righteousness. One of the most iconic ways to experience this story is through the grand production of "Shri Ram" by the *Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra*. For 68 years, this dance-drama has been a hallmark of Delhi's festive calendar, drawing audiences into the epic saga of the Ramayana. The production spans 24 days during the Navratri festival; it's not just a performance but an experience, a journey through time and a deep dive into India's cultural and spiritual heritage.

A GRAND STAGE AND CAPTIVATING ATMOSPHERE

From the moment visitors arrive at the venue, they are welcomed by an impressive stage representing ancient Ayodhya. The meticulous attention to detail in the stage design is evident, featuring intricate patterns and vibrant colours that transport the audience to the heart of the Ramayana. The lighting shifts throughout the performance, enhancing the emotional depth of each scene. As the performance commences, the atmosphere buzzes with excitement and anticipation. Artists in elaborate costumes fill the stage, celebrating the arrival of their lord Ram. The traditional music accompanying their movements resonates with the audience, enveloping everyone in the festive spirit. The dance-drama format allows for a seamless blend of storytelling and art; classical Indian dance forms like Kathak, Bharatnatyam and Odissi take centre stage, where each gesture and expression conveys deep emotion. The opening scene beautifully showcases themes of community, love, and unity, drawing everyone into the celebration.

A DIVINE BEGINNING

The story begins with the birth of Lord Ram and his brothers, as the people of Ayodhya rejoice in the arrival of their beloved prince. The joy on stage is visible, reflecting the warmth and happiness of the occasion. The scenes that follow take the audience on a journey through Ram's life, from his education in scriptures and warfare to his marriage with Sita, highlighting the trials he faces along the way. What makes this story captivating is not just Ram's destiny as a divine figure but his humanity. From a young age, Ram exemplifies virtues of humility, patience and wisdom, shaping his actions throughout his life. This sense of divine purpose, combined with Ram's ability to empathise with ordinary people, makes his character relatable and inspiring to devotees during Navratri. As "Shri Ram" beautifully portrays, Ram's early years symbolise the joys of life and the weight of responsibility he must bear as the future ruler.

“ 'SHRI RAM' IS MORE THAN JUST A RETELLING OF THE RAMAYANA; IT IS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL, A COMMON CONNECTION BETWEEN GENERATIONS, AND A TRIBUTE TO INDIAN TALENT IN DANCE, POETRY AND DESIGN”



Photo: Pankaj Kumar



The early relationships that shape him, including his bond with his brothers Lakshman, Bharata and Shatrughna, each play an essential role in the unfolding drama.

THE JOURNEY OF LORD RAM AND HIS BROTHERS

As the story progresses, spectators witness the formative years of Ram alongside his brothers, training under Vishwamitra. This segment showcases the dedication and brotherly camaraderie that define their relationships, expressed through intricate choreography that highlights their commitment to duty. The physical movements and emotional expressions of the dancers capture the essence of loyalty, honour, and sacrifice, core values that resonate throughout the Ramayana. The portrayal of Ram's marriage to Sita is another highlight of the performance. The ceremony is beautifully staged and thoughtfully executed, illustrating the depth of love and devotion between the two characters. Sita is depicted with grace and strength, captivating the audience as she expresses her hopes and dreams. The artistry of this scene reflects the timeless nature of love, with each gesture drawing the audience deeper into their narrative. This portrayal captures the essence of their divine union while reminding the audience that true love involves enduring hardship and remaining steadfast in faith.

THE RISE OF CONFLICT

The story takes a dramatic turn with the introduction of Ravana. The portrayal of Ravana brings an air of tension and complexity, masterfully performed by a talented artist whose commanding presence leaves a lasting impression. The audience feels the weight of impending conflict as the stage transforms into a realm where good clashes with evil. One of the most gripping moments comes when Ravana sends a golden deer to tempt Sita, leading to the separation of Ram and Sita. The tension during this scene is visible, as Sita's innocence and longing are powerfully conveyed. This pivotal moment marks the beginning of trials that will test Ram's love and resolve. The fierce confrontation between Lakshman and Surpanakha highlights themes of loyalty and honour. The choreography in this segment is intense, illustrating the raw emotions involved in defending family honour. Lakshman's decisive action

in cutting off Surpanakha's nose showcases the protective instincts that run deep within the characters of the Ramayana.

THE BATTLE OF GOOD AND EVIL

As the narrative escalates, the stage transforms into a dramatic battlefield. The choreography during these scenes is breathtaking, with performers moving in perfect synchrony to depict the chaos of war. Ram's battle against Ravana becomes the climactic moment of the performance, showcasing the bravery and determination of the forces of good. The audience is enthralled as Ram ultimately conquers Ravana, a victory resonating with the core message of the Ramayana: righteousness prevails in the face of evil. The final scenes, where Ram returns to Ayodhya to be crowned king, are a celebration of joy and mastery. The atmosphere fills with colour and light, reflecting the happiness of the citizens of Ayodhya as they welcome their lord home. This ending serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of justice, duty, and the values that bind communities together.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF "SHRI RAM"

Under the artistic direction of Padmashri Shobha Deepak Singh, the show has evolved over the years while retaining its essence. Singh, Chairperson of SBKK, beautifully articulated this sentiment when she stated, "Shri Ram" is more than just a retelling of the Ramayana; it is an educational tool, a common connection between generations, and a tribute to Indian talent in dance, poetry, and design." Her words resonate throughout the venue, emphasising the importance of preserving and celebrating Indian culture. The entire production is a tribute to the dedication of the artists and the meticulous planning that went into its execution. Every detail, from the stunning costumes to the intricate choreography, was carefully curated to create a seamless experience for the audience. This performance not only entertains but also educates, providing insights into the values of loyalty, courage, and righteousness at the heart of the Ramayana.



A CELEBRATION OF CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

The performance of "Shri Ram" is not just an artistic display; it is a celebration of culture and community. The universal messages of love, sacrifice, and the struggle against adversity resonate deeply, reminding everyone of the cherished values in our lives. The lighting is masterfully used to reflect shifts in tone, from the warmth and joy of Ram and Sita's union to the ominous darkness of Ravana's plans. As the scenes transition, the stage transforms fluidly, drawing the audience deeper into the narrative. The costumes are a visual feast - rich, vibrant and steeped in historical authenticity. Each character, from Ram and Sita in their royal attire to Hanuman and his monkey warriors, is dressed to reflect their roles and the cultural and mythological significance of their actions. The grandness of the set and costumes adds a layer of magic to the story, allowing the audience to fully immerse themselves in the spectacle. Embracing the Spirit of Navratri The festival of Navratri is a time for reflection, devotion and celebration, beautifully captured in the performance of "Shri Ram." This production highlights the strength of unity and the importance of standing up for what is right while encouraging a shared understanding of our cultural values. As the Navratri celebrations continue, performances like "Shri Ram" inspire us to reflect on the deeper meanings of the Ramayana and the victory of good over evil. With performances scheduled until 26 October 2024, families have the chance to experience this iconic production together, witnessing the brilliance of Indian art and culture come to life on stage. So, as we gather with friends and family to celebrate Navratri, let us carry forward the lessons of the Ramayana in our hearts. May this festive season fill our lives with joy, love, and an unwavering commitment to righteousness. Wishing all readers a blessed Navratri filled with love and light!



IN BRIEF



Govt grants one-year extension to RBI Deputy Guv

The government has extended the term of RBI Deputy Governor M Rajeshwar Rao for a period of one year, according to sources. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the re-appointment of Rao for a period of one year with effect from October 9, 2024 or until further orders, sources said quoting a government order dated October 4. The ACC is headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Rao was appointed as RBI Deputy Governor in October 2020 for a period of three years. Rao was elevated as RBI executive director in November 2016. An economics graduate and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Cochin, Rao joined the central bank in 1984. As a career central banker, he has exposure to various aspects of the RBI's functioning. He has previously held the charge of the Risk Monitoring Department.



IPO-bound Swiggy launches 'XL' fleet

IPO-bound food tech platform Swiggy on Saturday formally launched its bulk order 'XL' fleet to serve large orders in one go. The launch comes hours after Swiggy announced it has started a 10-minute meals and beverages delivery service 'Bolt', currently operational in select cities. The large order fleet, on a pilot run for the past few weeks, was formally launched on Saturday in Gurugram, on the day of Haryana Assembly elections. "To commemorate its official launch, the Swiggy XL EV fleet delivered 3,500 meals to electoral officials at more than 580 polling booths in Gurugram and Badshahpur constituencies. This service was provided free of cost to the District Administration," Swiggy stated. Sidharth Bhakoo, National Business Head of Swiggy Food Marketplace said, the food delivery services are helping in the overall growth of the F&B sector in India by driving new consumption occasions, promoting supply proliferation and enabling expansion of consumer base.



Centre to finance 65% of Chennai Metro Phase 2

The central government will finance 65 per cent of the estimated cost of Chennai Metro Phase-2 project, which will add up to over Rs 41,000 crore, the finance ministry said on Saturday. The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved a proposal to construct three corridors under the Chennai Metro Rail project phase-2 involving a total estimated cost of Rs 63,246 crore. The Centre's share adds up to over Rs 41,000 crore. In a statement, the finance ministry said the central government will finance almost 65 per cent of the estimated cost of Chennai Metro Phase 2. This will include the entire required loan of Rs 33,593 crore, besides the equity and subordinate debt of Rs 7,425 crore. The balance 35 per cent of the estimated cost will be financed by the state government. "The loans taken from multilateral and bilateral development agencies will be treated as the loans to the central government and will be provided directly to Chennai Metro Rail Ltd (CMRL) from the Central Government's budget," the statement added.

Road logistics industry revenues likely to grow up to 9 pc: Icra

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The domestic road logistics industry is expected to register a growth of up to 9 per cent in revenues in the ongoing 2024-25 financial year, according to Icra. The organised road logistics sector had witnessed a growth 4.6 per cent in the 2023-24 fiscal year, the ratings agency said in a report. As per Icra, the industry logged a revenue of Rs 23,273 crore in FY24.

"Icra expects the revenues of the Indian road logistics industry to grow by a moderate 6-9 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) in FY25," it said. The agency further said it also maintains a stable outlook for the sector, fuelled by various government measures and policies in favour of the sector on expectations of good demand outlook from segments like e-commerce, FMCG, retail,



chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and industrial goods.

Srikumar Krishnamurthy, Senior Vice President & Co-Group Head Corporate Ratings, Icra Ltd, said, "In FY24, the growth was subdued

on account of a relatively muted demand amid high inflation, an uneven monsoon, a relatively lacklustre festive season and the rising interest rate regime."

"We expect the industry

"Icra expects the revenues of the Indian road logistics industry to grow by a moderate 6-9 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) in FY25," it said.

operating profit margins to remain in the range of 11-12 per cent in FY25, with the organised players expected to maintain the pricing premium amid an overall inflationary cost scenario," he said.

India to further strengthen fintech support to Bhutan: FM



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said India will further strengthen its fintech support to Bhutan as UPI and RuPay cards gain traction in the neighbouring nation.

During the bilateral meeting with her Bhutanese counterpart Lyonpo Lekey Dorji here, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman conveyed greetings to the King of Bhutan, the members of the Royal Family

and to the people of Bhutan.

The Union Finance Minister acknowledged the support of Bhutan as a testament to the enduring partnership and shared commitment to growth and prosperity, the Finance Ministry said in a post on X.

"FM Smt. @nsitharaman noted the wide acceptance of BHIM #UPI and #Rupay cards in Bhutan and reaffirmed India's commitment to further strengthen FinTech Connectivity between India and Bhutan," she said.

'India will be among leading exporters of defence equipment'

PNS ■ CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR

India will be among the leading exporters of defence equipment in ten years, and the imports will come down to five to ten per cent, DRDO chairman Samir V Kamat said here on Saturday.

Kamat said the country's defence imports have been decreasing, and out of the capital acquisition budget last year, nearly 90 per cent was used on indigenous systems.

Kamat was speaking at Chhatrapati Shahu College of Engineering, where he inaugurated the Defence Innovation Challenge for Excellence (DICE) organised by the Marathwada Accelerator for Growth and Incubation

Council (MAGIC).

"It is true that ten years ago, we were leading importers of defence systems. But if we look at last year's figures, out of our capital acquisition budget, nearly 90 per cent was used on indigenous systems.

I am confident that in ten years the imports will be negligible. A country can't make everything. So five to 10 per cent (import) will remain," he said.

India will be among the leading exporters of defence equipment in ten years, he added.

Talking to reporters after the event, Kamat said India has set a target to achieve exports worth Rs 50,000 crore by 2028 and Rs 1 lakh crore by 2035.



REC gives loans totalling Rs 90,955 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned REC has disbursed loans worth Rs 90,955 crore during April-September FY25, up 20.10 per cent from the year-ago period.

Of the total amount, Rs 11,297 crore was green loan, 92.68 per cent higher year-on-year, the company said in a statement.

In the September quarter of FY25, REC said it disbursed Rs 47,303 crore loans, 13.71 per cent higher than the Rs 41,598 crore disbursed a year earlier.

Of this, renewable energy loans aggregated to Rs 5,946 crore, up 37.35 per cent YoY.

Renewable energy loans accounted for 13 per cent of the total disbursements in the July-September period in FY25 as against 10 per cent in the year-ago period.

REC, under the Ministry of Power, is a non-banking financial company focusing on power sector financing in India.

'Generative AI holds significance in shaping future'

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its significance in shaping technology for the future took the centre stage at the CTOtalk event mentored by the city-based software-as-a-service firm Kissflow on Saturday.

CTOtalk is aimed at building a team of senior engineering professionals who share their knowledge and experience with like-minded peers in the industry.

Leaders representing various IT companies delved deep into the applications on AI ranging from automation and machine learning on occasion.

"We found that India does not have a community around CTO level technology content and we wanted to enable that and also bring chief executive officer and vice president level technology talent to Chennai," said Kissflow Founder-CEO Suresh Sambandam at the CTOtalk annual summit, here.

"What started as small talk is now running as a big programme not just in



Chennai, but also in Bengaluru, Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad throughout the year. The summit is our flagship event where all the folks across India come to Chennai, network, learn and build great technology," he said.

The conference laid emphasis on the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence with industry leaders, technology innovators trying to explore the way AI is reshaping industries.

More than 1,000 officials belonging to several information technology majors, including AWS, Google,

Freshworks, Clevertap, Swiggy, participated.

"Generative AI has significantly transformed the way we operate at Swiggy, making our engineering processes far more efficient and compelling. Repetitive tasks are now automated with GenAI, allowing us to handle vast amounts of unstructured data and analyze millions of logs in seconds," said Swiggy, Director of Engineering, Rishabh Tripathi.

"From a business perspective, our AI-driven text to SQL system delivers invaluable insights, empowering teams with faster, more accurate data," he added.

MEIL commissions 5 solar plants in Maha

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Infrastructure company MEIL on Saturday said it has commissioned five solar plants in Maharashtra having a combined capacity of 19 megawatt (MW).

The plants were inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually, Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Ltd (MEIL) said in a statement.

"MEIL has commissioned five solar power plants with a total capacity of 19 MW under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthaan Mahabhayaan (PM KUSUM) scheme across Maharashtra. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Solar Plants and Dedicated to the Nation," it said. The five solar plants are at Shambhaji Nagar (3 MW), Nanded (5MW), Kolhapur (3MW), Akola (3MW), and Buldhana (5 MW) in Maharashtra.

Ops at Surda copper mine resume; Kendadih, Rakha may reopen soon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Saturday said operations at Surda copper mine in Jharkhand have resumed while Kendadih and Rakha copper mines in the state are likely to reopen this year.

Hindustan Copper Ltd (HCL) -- the public sector undertaking under the administrative control of the mines ministry -- owns the mine.

The resumption of Surda Mine operation is a significant step towards making the nation self-reliant in copper, Minister of State for Coal and Mine Satish Chandra Dubey said.

Surda Mine operation will generate employment, revive the local economy and generate about Rs 100 crore revenue per annum, the government said.



HCL has plans to ramp up mining capacity of the copper mine from the current level of 0.4 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) to 0.9 MTPA in the next seven years.

Jharkhand Cabinet has approved lease extension for the Kendadih and Rakha mines recently.

"Reopening of Kendadih and Rakha mines is on the cards this year which will lead to 2,000 direct employment and 10,000 indirect

employment among the local populace and triple the production of Indian Copper Complex," mines ministry said in a statement.

HCL CMD Ghanshyam Sharma said the resumption of Surda mine operations will provide direct employment to about 1,100 people and indirect employment to about 5,000.

A capital investment of Rs 50 crore will be made by HCL for mining operation during 2024-25.

Parl panel to hear SEBI chief on Oct 24 amid Adani-Hindenburg row

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of Parliament has decided to review the functioning of top regulatory authorities in the country and has called heads of SEBI and TRAI for deposition on October 24.

Top officials of the Ministry of Finance, (Department of Economic Affairs) and Ministry of Communications have also been asked to appear before the key parliamentary panel, with sources saying representatives of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) chairperson Badhabi Puri Buch and Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) chairperson Anil Kumar Lahoti are likely to appear before the panel.

Sources said the unstated convention in parliamentary practice is that chiefs of institutions have to attend parliamentary panel briefings whenever summoned.

The meeting of the key parliamentary panel comes amid a major row over allegations made by US research body Hindenburg against SEBI chair-

person Madhabi Puri Much and her husband Dhaval Buch over her alleged links with the Adani Group.

Briefing by Audit followed by Oral evidence of the representatives of Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs) and Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on the subject, 'Performance Review of Regulatory Bodies established by Act of Parliament,' the official agenda for the October 24 meeting of the PAC said.

"Oral evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Communications, Department of Telecommunications and Telecom Regulatory Authority of India on the subject, 'Performance Review of Regulatory Bodies established by Act of Parliament,' it also said.

The Congress had earlier in August staged a nation-wide protest over allegations by Hindenburg against SEBI chief Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch, who have denied any wrongdoing.

The Congress also sought her resignation as SEBI chief.



DoT, telcos deploying system to stop overseas spoof calls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The telecom department, in collaboration with telecom service providers, is rolling out an advanced system in phases to identify and block incoming international spoofed calls before they can reach Indian telecom subscribers, an official statement said on Friday.

The Department of Telecom (DoT) has observed that citizens are receiving many fraudulent calls, often disguised as originating from Indian mobile numbers, while the calls are manipulated by cyber-crim-

inals operating from abroad. "DoT, in collaboration with TSPs, has introduced an advanced system designed to identify and block incoming international spoofed calls before they can reach Indian telecom subscribers. This system is being deployed in two phases: first, at the TSP level, to prevent calls spoofed with phone numbers of their own subscribers; and second, at a central level, to stop calls spoofed with the numbers of subscribers from other TSPs," the statement said.

The DoT said that cyber criminals exploit the Calling



Line Identity (CLI) to mask the actual origin of the calls, which has led to a spate of

incidents, involving threats of mobile number disconnection, fake digital arrests,

and even impersonation of government officials or law enforcement agencies.

Recent cases have included false accusations involving drugs, narcotics, and sex rackets, further intensifying public concern, the statement said.

"As of now, all four TSPs have successfully implemented the system. About one-third of total spoofed calls at 4.5 million spoofed calls are being stopped from entering the Indian telecom network. The next phase, involving a centralised system that will eliminate the remaining spoofed calls across all TSPs, is expected to be commissioned shortly," it added.

GRAPE-TASTIC CELEBRATION

'FORK'LORE



AARTI SREENATH
aarti.sreenath9@gmail.com

Novotel Hyderabad Airport transformed into a whimsical wonderland, throwing open its doors for the annual cake-mixing and grape-stomping extravaganza. Imagine this: a sun-soaked terrace, a delightful medley of hotel guests and local community members sporting chef hats and aprons and a brunch spread so glorious that it would make a monk rethink their diet!

As the culinary team showcased a menu bursting with flavours, vegetarian delights like were served alongside royal treats for the non-vegetarians, featuring *Peri Peri prawns*, *Mustard Bombay duck fish* and the star of the show: *mutton chapli*. Honestly, if those dishes don't make your taste buds do a happy dance, I don't know what will.

The pièce de résistance of the day was the cake mixing ceremony, a vibrant affair where guests channelled their inner bakers. Armed with bowls of colourful dry fruits, spices and spirits, they joyfully combined the ingredients, creating a blend for the hotel's signature Christmas cake. It was like watching a reality cooking show, complete with enthusiastic arm movements that could rival any Olympic sport! Synchronised mixing, anyone?

But wait, the fun didn't stop there! Following the cake-mixing came the wildly popular grape-stomping activity. Participants rolled up their pants (and some even went full-on gladiator by rolling up their sleeves) to stomp grapes as if they were auditioning for a new fitness craze. Amidst the bright sun and uproarious laughter, you could almost hear the grapes begging for mercy as they transformed into grape juice. Talk about a workout that's both fun and delicious.

The growth of this event has been nothing short of phenomenal. "We've seen a massive increase in participation," the GM beamed. "The proof is in the pudding, or in this case, the cake! Just look at the crowd today; it's clear our events have hit the sweet spot."

But what happens to those squashed grapes after all the squashing? "They'll be discarded," he admitted with a chuckle, "but it's really about the fun we create today!" As the sun began to set on this jubilant gathering, it was clear that cake mixing and grape stomping was not merely an event; it was a delightful whirlwind of laughter, camaraderie and just a sprinkle of chaos. With a promise of even more festive cheer next year, you can bet your favourite apron that I'll be back, grape stomping with the best of them and aiming for that elusive grape-squishing glory!

So, when you hear "cake mixing and grape stomping," remember, it's not just an event—it's a wildly entertaining celebration of flavor, tradition, and good-natured fun.



Travel sparks

connections, finds study

Tinder has launched the perfect travel partner for daring solo young adults.

According to a recent survey, travel is the top interest for young adults aged 18-25 worldwide, with 50% of Gen Z in India finding it attractive to share this interest. This is reflected in Indian Tinder profiles, with a 17x increase in users mentioning 'solo travel' like "love exploring new places, solo traveller, cat mom" and "Living the mountain life as a solo adventurer, searching for home from beach to mountains."

As an increasing number of young individuals, particularly those from Generation Z and millennials, opt to pursue their own independent journeys, the manual offers advice on travelling in a prudent and secure manner, as well as on establishing international relations both prior to and following their arrival. It is evident that forming new connections is increasingly important for young singles in Asia Pacific, with 78% showing interest in making friends before traveling. In 2024, Bangkok, Tokyo, London, Seoul and Delhi were the top 5 cities for young singles to visit on the Passport app.

With more and more young people, especially Gen Z and millennials, choosing to embark on their own journeys, the guide provides tips for traveling safely and responsibly, as well as for building global connections before and after reaching their destination. It is clear that establishing new relationships is becoming more crucial for young individuals in Asia Pacific, as 78% express a desire to make friends prior to their trips.

Ultimate hack for solo travellers

Encountering unfamiliar individuals in a different city may seem daunting, but this travel document makes it easy and enjoyable. Users have the option to turn on Passport Mode effortlessly by accessing their settings, choosing a city as their destination, or placing a pin on the map to update their location. Following that, they have the option to explore profiles, show interest, make connections and engage in conversations with either locals or other travelers prior to their arrival. With safety being a top priority for young singles in the area, 30% prioritise their safety before meeting someone from a dating app for a first date. The resource also emphasises the different safety features and tips available for a secure online or offline connection.

Here are some tips on how users can make the most out of their solo travel adventures:

1. Line up local connections before you arrive: Use the feature to match with locals before your trip. This can turn potential tourist traps into authentic, off-the-beaten-path experiences guided by someone who knows the area inside out.

2. Be clear about your intentions: Update your bio with your travel dates, hobbies and intentions. This lets matches know what you're looking for—be it local tips or something more—and helps you find the right connections. Be upfront in your conversations, as this helps to avoid misunderstandings, especially when crossing cultural boundaries.

3. Prioritise safety: When meeting someone abroad, always remember to prioritise safety. Use features like Photo Verification and Share My Date and meet up in public spaces.

4. Be open to possibilities: A vacation romance can be thrilling, but it's also important to manage your own expectations. Keep an open mind—sometimes a brief connection is just what you need and even if it doesn't last, it could reignite your excitement for dating once you're back home!

Neha Sudan, travel content creator, "For solo travellers, here are a few tips: opt for a fanny pack instead of a sling bag to keep your belongings secure, avoid areas known for trouble, memorise an emergency phone number and be cautious about sharing personal details with new friends if you have any doubts."

Anali Gupta, another travel content creator, shares "Solo travel taught me that it's the unexpected, funny moments that lead to the most meaningful connections—and sometimes, all it takes is a little stumble to find a friend for life."

Naikita Bali, also a travel content creator, says "For all my Gen Z solo explorers: don't over-plan, leave room for surprises! Safety is a priority, of course, but also don't forget to enjoy the spontaneous adventures. Keep your playlists ready, trust your gut and most importantly, go make some epic memories—you'll thank yourself later!"

WHAT'S NEW

NAVRATRI SPECIAL

It's that time of year again—a time to dust off your dance shoes, embrace the festive spirit and of course, figure out what on earth to give your loved ones—as the colourful tornado of Navratri sweeps in! Let's get inventive. Similar to the dance-off you'll unavoidably get yourself in at your cousin's place, Navratri gift-giving is about spreading happiness, laughing and a bit of anarchy. Cheers to joyous dancing and gifting.



ELEVATE YOUR NAVRATRI LOOK

Navratri is all about vibrant celebrations and unforgettable garba nights and your makeup should shine just as brightly. Elevate your festive look with Anastasia Beverly Hills' Soft Glam eye shadow palette. This must-have palette features a full-pigment, easy-to-blend formula that delivers high color payoff and buildable intensity. With 14 stunning shades ranging from soft neutrals to bright shimmers, it includes 9 ultra-matte and 5 metallic finishes to suit every mood. Stand out and dazzle with each dance move this festive season!

ACHIEVE RADIANT GLOW

O,WOW oxygenating firming mask is an oxygen-infused mask that firms and rejuvenates, leaving skin fresh and luminous. This product by BIE make for thoughtful and luxurious festive gifts, perfect for skincare lovers looking to elevate their festive beauty routine.



NAVRATRI SKINCARE RITUALS

The Honest Tree Sweet Bliss Milk body cleanser is a luxurious blend designed to transform your daily shower into a soothing spa experience. Infused with the richness of milk proteins, this body cleanser gently cleanses your skin while maintaining its natural moisture balance.

Price: Rs 499/-



DEBUTANTE PUMPS

Debutante chic chunkies by Anaar were born to be in the spotlight. They're crafted in satin and embellished with a beautiful ornate bow. Make a dramatic entry with it by your side and wrap up the festivities with compliments galore.

Rs. 8,990/-



GLOSS COLLECTION

Sobé Decor is thrilled to present their exceptional collections that bring elegance and charm to the festive season! Crafted in Norway, their color crystal pieces—including candle stands, bookends and vases—are designed to elevate any space. Each item showcases unique craftsmanship, making them a standout choice for celebrations.



THIS NAVRATRI, SHINE BRIGHT

Navratri is all about dressing up in vibrant, eye-catching colours and hitting the dance floor with your best 'Garba' moves on display! What better than stunning, exquisite jewellery to brighten up your festive wardrobe and help you make a style statement. Demi-fine jewellery Flourish by Gunjan Jain has curated a range of beautifully crafted earrings, rings, bracelets, and necklaces just for Navratri. These pieces flaunt lab-grown precious or semi-precious gemstones like emeralds and solitaires set in 18k Gold or Silver, making them the ideal accessories to complement all your Navratri looks.



Price - INR 4800

GET ALIA BHATT'S SIGNATURE NUDE LOOK THIS FESTIVE SEASON

Achieving the perfect festive look doesn't always require bold colours—sometimes, a soft, nude lip is all it takes to bring effortless elegance to any occasion. As Alia Bhatt, the face of L'Oréal Paris, shares, her two favourite shades from the Infalible Matte Resistance liquid lipstick collection—Worth It and Worth It Medium—they are the key to her signature no-makeup makeup look. Whether you're dancing at a Diwali party or celebrating Navratri with your loved ones, you won't have to worry about smudging or fading.

Priced at just Rs. 749

HOROSCOPE



ARIES

Find time for your loved ones despite the pressure. Tenacity will ensure success, but balance is needed. Reconnect with family, manage confusion, and trust relationships to improve soon.



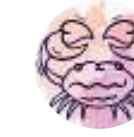
TAURUS

Your patience, humour and commitment attract others. Enjoy strong relationships, respect and career success. Emotional tendencies may cause delays. Challenges will soon improve.



GEMINI

Stay confident despite challenges, as your perseverance and generosity will soon bring success. Balance emotions, provide support, and rely on your instincts for personal life growth.



CANCER

Life feels chaotic, but reflection will reveal it's not so bad. Stay calm, loosen up and focus on health and work. Relationships may challenge you, but your energy and health will prevail.



LEO

Avoid overconfidence to prevent mistakes. Communicate openly with loved ones. Success at work and home is likely, but postpone changes and consult the family on vital decisions.



VIRGO

Proceed with long-planned goals. Stay calm despite agitation and focus on recharging. Embrace challenges, remain humble, and avoid emotions that tarnish your health and relationships.



LIBRA

Avoid delays and emotional outbursts. Stay calm and positive. Despite setbacks, your energy and perseverance will lead to success. Focus on self, enjoy good health and relationships.



SCORPIO

Enjoy the rewards of your hard work but stay focused. Balance personal growth, relationships, and obligations. Guard against stress, seek revitalization with family and embrace changes.



SAGITTARIUS

Embrace unexpected feelings and remain confident. Your drive ensures success. Personal ethics may challenge relationships. Trust your instincts. Invest your energy in meaningful pursuits.



CAPRICORN

Your joyful nature attracts others. Stay calm during challenges, especially with family. Avoid emotional blowups, focus on self-control and balance your generosity to prevent issues.



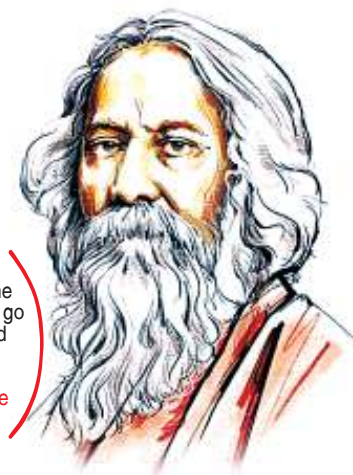
AQUARIUS

You will find a stimulating partner and experience joy through introspection. Avoid appearing unreliable. Focus on decisions regarding your future while managing criticism and worries.



PISCES

This week emphasizes harmony and joy. Communicate openly with siblings and prioritize time with your children. Your charm attracts affection. Emotional awareness is key to good health.



"Now, I ask, has the time come at last when I may go in and see thy face and offer thee my silent salutation?"
— Rabindranath Tagore



STEP INTO THE FESTIVE SPIRIT

Kullu Dussehra is a vibrant festival in Himachal Pradesh that brings the Kullu valley to life with colourful processions, traditional music, and cultural performances. Celebrated in honour of Lord Raghunath Ji, this annual event attracts visitors from all over, creating a sense of community and joy, writes **SAKSHI PRIYA**



Kullu Dussehra, celebrated in the picturesque valley of Kullu in Himachal Pradesh, is a vibrant week-long festival that goes beyond just religious observance. It brings together centuries-old traditions, the unity of hundreds of local deities and the incredible artistic expression of the region. *Kullu Dussehra* has a distinctive flavour, embracing the valley's culture, history and devotion. This year, the International *Kullu Dussehra* Festival is set to take place from 13th to 19th October 2024, offering visitors a chance to immerse themselves in the vibrant festivities while also appreciating the breathtaking scenic beauty and natural wonders of this enchanting region. The origins of *Kullu Dussehra* date back to the 17th century when *Raja Jagat Singh*, a ruler of Kullu, brought the idol of Lord Raghunath Ji to the valley. From then on, Lord Raghunath Ji became the central deity of the festival and *Kullu Dussehra* has been celebrated in His honour ever since. What sets this festival apart is its spirit of inclusion, with over 300 local deities from surrounding villages joining the celebrations. These deities, carried on beautifully decorated palanquins, are accompanied by their devotees, musicians and dancers, creating a lively and spiritual atmosphere as they converge at Dhalpur Maidan in Kullu. The festival begins on 13th October with the grand Rath Yatra, a procession where Lord Raghunath Ji is placed in a chariot and pulled through the streets by devotees. This procession marks the beginning of a week filled with devotion, music and dance. The streets come alive with the sounds of traditional instruments, the colourful sight of waving flags and the energy of people who have come from far and wide to participate in this sacred event. The Rath Yatra is not just a religious act; it's a celebration of the unity and shared faith that binds the people of Kullu together. *Kullu Dussehra* is not only a spiritual gathering but also a cultural festival that showcases the rich artistic heritage of the region. Every evening, the open-air auditorium at Lal Chand Prarthi Kalakendra becomes a stage for performances by local, national and international artists. From traditional Himachali folk dances like the Nati to contemporary performances, the festival offers a diverse range of cultural experiences. This year, approximately 15 international cultural troupes will participate, bringing their unique traditions and performances to Kullu. These performances reflect the universal language of art, reminding everyone of the shared human connection through culture. On 14th October, the Cultural Parade takes place, showcasing a vibrant display of traditional attire, music and dance from across India and the world. This parade highlights the rich diversity of cultures, where each troupe brings its own distinct flavour to the celebrations.

"Kullu Dussehra beautifully showcases our cultural richness and serves as a reminder of the bonds that unite us as a community." - Sushil Kumar Singla, Principal Resident Commissioner of Himachal Pradesh Sadan, New Delhi



Sunder Singh Thakur CPS and Sushil Kumar Singla, Principal Resident Commissioner Government of Himachal Pradesh, New Delhi

The sight of dancers in traditional costumes, performing to the rhythmic beats of their native instruments, creates a colourful experience that celebrates unity in diversity. The Cultural Parade embodies *Kullu Dussehra's* inclusive spirit, welcoming different cultures to come together in celebration. A highlight of *Kullu Dussehra* is the performance of Lalhri, a traditional dance native to the Kullu Valley. Passed down through generations, Lalhri is not just a dance but a form of storytelling, where each graceful movement and musical note carries the history of the region. Watching the dancers perform in their traditional attire is like stepping back in time, where the cultural legacy of Kullu comes alive through the art of movement and music. This performance encapsulates the very essence of the festival, where tradition and heritage are celebrated and preserved. The spiritual climax of *Kullu Dussehra* takes place on 19th October with the symbolic Lanka Dahan, marking the return of nearly 300 deities, or devidevatas, to their homes. This significant day begins as the Raja approaches Lord Raghunath Ji, causing all music and dance to pause. After the Raja circumambulates the chariot, the procession moves towards Lanka by the river Beas. Here, bushes and grass are set ablaze, symbolising the burning of Lanka. The flames create a captivating spectacle, while the Lanka Dahan ceremony reinforces values of justice, morality, and goodness, highlighting the festival's importance in uniting the community.

The penultimate day features the



Muhalla ceremony, an event filled with joy, music and festivity. Villagers from across Kullu gather at Dhalpur Maidan, setting aside their daily lives to participate in this lively celebration. The deities, surrounded by flags and accompanied by traditional music, pay their respects to Lord Raghunath Ji. The Muhalla is a vibrant reflection of the community spirit that defines *Kullu Dussehra*, where unity and togetherness are celebrated in a colourful display of devotion. Historically, *Kullu Dussehra* has also been a major commercial event. It once served as a trading hub where villagers would sell their crops, handicrafts and other goods. Traders from regions like Lahaul and Ladakh would bring products such as pashmina shawls, carpets and local herbs, creating a bustling marketplace. Today, this tradition continues with the Artisan Showcase, where award-winning artisans display their crafts, from textiles to woodwork. Visitors can purchase these handmade items, taking home a piece of Kullu's rich artistic heritage and supporting the local economy. For those who enjoy food, *Kullu Dussehra* is a culinary journey that showcases the flavours of Himachal Pradesh. The food courts at the festival serve traditional dishes such as siddu (a type of steamed bread) and madra (a rich chickpea curry), offering a taste of the region's culinary traditions. Alongside these local delicacies,

international cuisine is also available, ensuring that visitors can enjoy a wide variety of food during the festival. The culinary experience is an integral part of *Kullu Dussehra*, reflecting the valley's agricultural richness and its connection to the land. This year's *Kullu Dussehra* will also feature the Ambassador's Meet on 18th October, presided over by *Shri Sukhvinder Singh*, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh. The event will bring together resident ambassadors from various countries, promoting cultural exchange and enriching trade ties. The Ambassador's Meet reflects *Kullu Dussehra's* growing global recognition, where tradition meets modernity on an international stage. This blend of cultural celebration and diplomatic engagement adds a new dimension to the festival, highlighting its significance beyond the local community. Beyond its vibrant cultural performances and religious rituals, *Kullu Dussehra* offers a diverse range of entertainment options for visitors of all ages. Families can enjoy amusement rides like toy trains and swings, while sports enthusiasts can engage in competitions such as

volleyball,

“ THE ORIGINS OF KULLU DUSSEHRA DATE BACK TO THE 17TH CENTURY WHEN RAJA JAGAT SINGH, A RULER OF KULLU, BROUGHT THE IDOL OF LORD RAGHUNATH JI TO THE VALLEY. FROM THEN ON, LORD RAGHUNATH JI BECAME THE CENTRAL DEITY OF THE FESTIVAL AND KULLU DUSSEHRA HAS BEEN CELEBRATED IN HIS HONOUR EVER SINCE

kabaddi and tug-of-war. The open-air performances continue late into the night, ensuring that the festivities are alive with music, dance and laughter. As the festival progresses, visitors will also have the opportunity to explore the natural beauty of the Kullu Valley, which offers breathtaking views of snow-capped peaks, lush green valleys, and flowing rivers. Many visitors choose to explore nearby attractions such as the Great Himalayan National Park, Biji Mahadev Temple, and the historic Hadimba Devi Temple in Manali, combining the spiritual experience of *Kullu Dussehra* with the serene beauty of Himachal Pradesh's natural landscape.

As Kullu prepares to host this grand celebration, it's essential to reflect on the significance of festivals like *Kullu Dussehra* in preserving and promoting cultural heritage. The festival not only showcases the artistic traditions of Himachal Pradesh but also serves as a reminder of the unity and community spirit that festivals inspire. It brings together people from different walks of life, whether they are locals, tourists or international dignitaries, all coming together to celebrate the rich cultural legacy of the region. *Kullu Dussehra* is a festival that everyone should experience at least once in their lifetime. It's not just a celebration; it's a living tradition that continues to evolve while staying deeply rooted in the values of the community. The festival's grandeur, coupled with the warm hospitality of the people of Kullu, makes it a truly unique experience. As the date approaches, excitement is building, and the town of Kullu is gearing up to welcome visitors from all over the world. It's a time of joy, devotion and celebration, an event that leaves a lasting impression on all who attend. *The International Kullu Dussehra Festival 2024* is set to be a spectacular event that will showcase the best of Himachal's culture, art and traditions. *Kullu Dussehra 2024* promises to be a celebration unlike any other. From the grand Rath Yatra to the vibrant cultural performances, from the symbolic Lanka Dahan to the bustling artisan markets, the festival offers a diverse range of experiences for all who attend. Whether visitors are drawn by the spiritual devotion, the artistic performances or the natural beauty of the valley, *Kullu Dussehra* is a festival that speaks to the heart, offering a unique glimpse into the soul of Himachal Pradesh. As the festival approaches, everyone is encouraged to mark their calendars and experience this remarkable celebration from 13th to 19th October 2024. It's a perfect opportunity to enjoy the magic of Kullu Valley, where tradition, culture and community come together in a festival of life, love and joy!

CHAT-O-CINO

Bharti's journey from 'ek episode to anek episodes'

TEJAL SINHA
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A Punjabi Kudi, who grew up in the beautiful holy city of Amritsar, little did she know, she'd become one of the top comedians we have here in India, entering Forbes India's celebrity 100 list someday!

William James, an American philosopher, once very well said, 'We don't laugh because we're happy—we're happy because we laugh.' Well, thanks to our exclusive Chat-O-Cino guest, every time she's on-screen, you can just not stop but laugh your heart out.

She's a favourite of all the celebs. Because when she's there, it's never a dull moment. She makes you feel like home.

Though Bharti Singh had her own struggles to reach where she's been today, she had already become a favourite of all when she created a mark in *The Great Indian Laughter Challenge*, becoming the second runner-up. "Trust me, even I never knew I'd be the second runner-up back then," begins the "Laughter Queen" with great exhilaration. Looking back at those days, she recalls how she had initially thought of just coming in one episode on the television and people of Amritsar would all watch her! "I then realised, Why just one episode? I have a lot more to bring. With every episode, I put in more hard work, which made people appreciate me and motivated me to do more of it. *Ek episode se anek episodes bann gaye.*"

Every time the *Comedy Circus* fame would see people tee-hee because of her, it would bring her a moment of joy. "This has been something that I'd wanted to do; I'm doing it and will always look forward to doing it," affirms the comedian.

From being a contestant in comedy shows like *Comedy Circus Maha-Sangram*, *Kahani Comedy Circus Ki*, *Funhit Mein Jaari*, or *The Kapil Sharma Show* to hosting shows like *India's Got Talent 5*, *India's Best Dancer*, *Khatra Khatra Khatra*, *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Lil Champs*, or *Dance Deewane* to also doing shows like *Fear Factor: Khatron Ke Khiladi 9*, or *Nach Baliye*, she proves to be an inspiration and someone who inspires to do our best no matter what.

But she humbly tells us, "I'm not an inspiration. I don't think I inspire anyone. It's me who gets inspired by people, be it a kid, an adult, or someone old; I always get inspired by good things. But again, when people come up to me and say that Bharti, we are inspired by you, I really feel so good about it. I'd say it's just the beginning. *Abhi toh bahut saare diggaj longe baithe hai jinse*

In the world of comedy, Bharti Singh has been one of the gems who, beyond a doubt, is a favourite of all. But how does it go when you have a heart-to-heart chat with her? Well, *The Pioneer* brings to you an exclusive chinwag with one of the popular comedians of the country!



I'VE BEEN KAPIL BHAI AND SUDESH LEHRI'S STUDENT. SO IF I GET A CHANCE OR GET A SCRIPT, YOU WILL DEFINITELY SEE ME WITH KAPIL SHARMA IN THE GREAT INDIAN KAPIL SHOW

Just imagine you are in those mid-week zones, tired of your work, but getting onto your dinner tables with *Laughter Chefs* on your television shows was the best combo, wasn't it? With a lot of talks around its comeback, we ask her about it and the *Hunarbaaz: Desh Ki Shaan* host tells us, "People have been talking about it a lot and we've got to hear about it that the show would make a comeback post-*Bigg Boss 18*. Well, I feel, *zaroor aana chahiye*. Everyone deserves good therapy after all. People these days have forgotten to laugh. With *Laughter Chefs*, they'd laugh and the show should continue."

Well, fingers crossed, so let's manifest, guys!

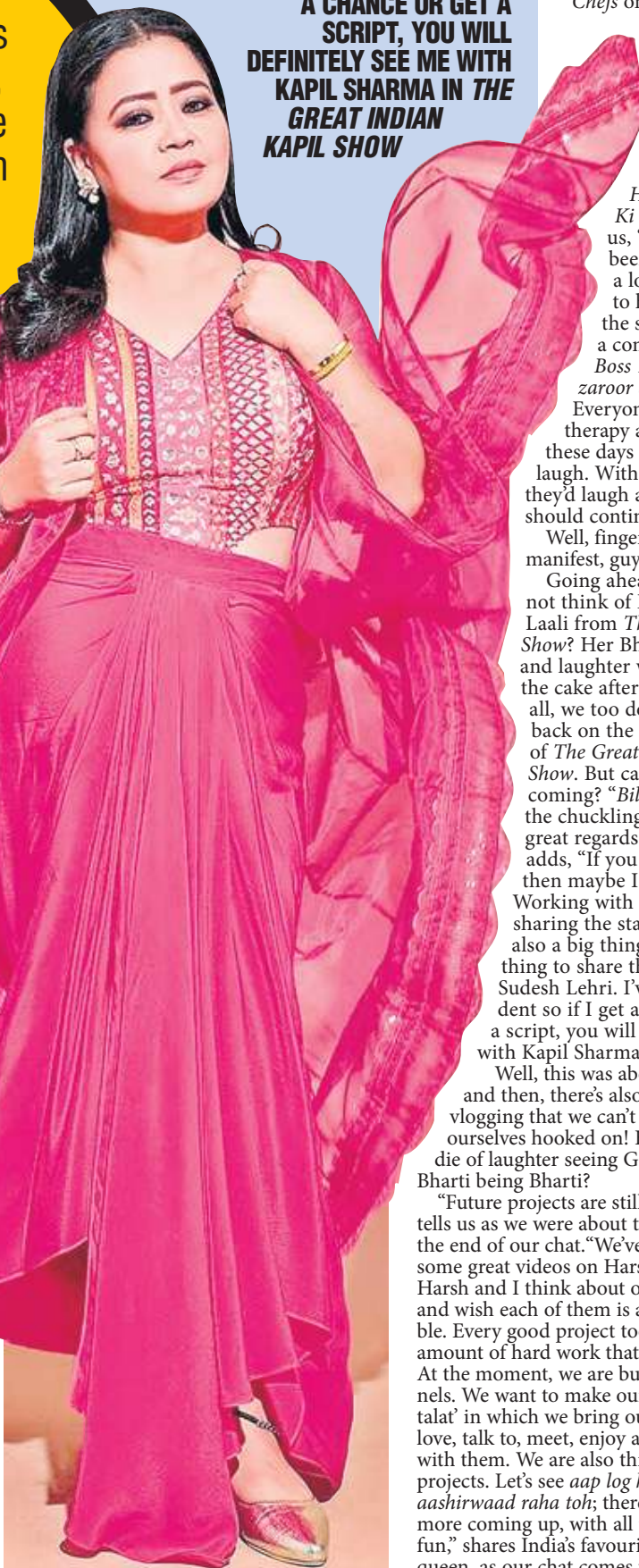
Going ahead, how can one not think of Babi Mausi or Laali from *The Kapil Sharma Show*? Her Bhanga-tric entries and laughter were a cherry on the cake after all. Just as you all, we too do wish to see her back on the ongoing season of *The Great Indian Kapil Show*. But can we really see it coming? "Bilkul" expresses the chuckling beauty with great regards and she further adds, "If you think about it, then maybe I would definitely. Working with Kapil Bhai and sharing the stage with him is also a big thing. It is also a great thing to share the stage with Sudesh Lehri. I've been their student so if I get a chance and I get a script, you will definitely see me with Kapil Sharma."

Well, this was about her projects and then, there's also her podcast and vlogging that we can't stop but keep ourselves hooked on! How can one not die of laughter seeing Golla's masti, Bharti being Bharti?

"Future projects are still ongoing," she tells us as we were about to head towards the end of our chat. "We've been posting some great videos on Harsh's new channel. Harsh and I think about our future projects and wish each of them is as good as possible. Every good project too has the same amount of hard work that's put in the rest! At the moment, we are busy with our channels. We want to make our own 'rajya santalat' in which we bring out what people love, talk to, meet, enjoy and play games with them. We are also thinking of such projects. Let's see *aap log ka pyaar raha aashirwaad raha toh*; there will be a lot more coming up, with all the chuckles and fun," shares India's favourite laughter queen, as our chat comes to an end.

inspire hona hai aur seekhna hai.

As goes the description 'Unlimited Entertainment' of her latest show *Laughters Chef*, the show is a rib-tickling, one-of-a-kind cooking show! A show that was expected to have an extension somehow dismayed the audience. Unfortunately, the cooking-comedy show may come to an emotional close with nothing else but tears rolling down our eyes too. "I've done a lot of cooking shows and game shows, but had never done any cooking-laughing show," discusses the *Jatt & Juliet 2* fame about hosting the show. "I really enjoyed it. It's so amazing seeing how everyone is loving the show so much. The first season turned out to be such a hit and talking of food. You can get a glimpse of my passion for cooking and comedy in my vlogs. When these two interests merge, it creates unforgettable moments that bring me immense joy. I've had some great memories from the show. In the last episode, all of us shed tears as we went through the memories of the show, watching those clippings. We were all so emotional. There were fights, dance, fun and love—everything. We really wish to work with the same team yet again."



TRENDING

KONDA SUREKHA

PERSON



Telangana Minister K Surekha linked former Minister and BRS leader KTR to the divorce of Samantha and Naga Chaitanya, accusing KTR of tapping the phones of actors and blackmailing them.

'MOOH KAALA KARO ISKA'

VIDEO



Jaipur entrepreneurs deface Tripti Dimri's poster and call for her 'boycott' for not attending the event.

After the massive success of the *KGF* franchise and *Kantara*, all eyes are on Dhruva Sarja starrer *Martin*. The trailer for the film has set the internet ablaze and it is undoubtedly the next big hit of Indian cinema.

MARTIN



SONG



Ram Charan recreates his father's (Chiranjeevi) famous veena step from *Dayi Dayi Damma (Indra)* in *Raa Macha Macha*.

RAA MACHA MACHA

COUNTERFEIT CURRENCY NOTES FEATURING ANUPAM KHER'S FACE

PICTURE



Counterfeit currency notes, worth approximately Rs 1.6 crore, featuring actor's face had been discovered in Gujarat.

Unwind in the wild with rise of wildlife-centric getaways

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A new trend that lures people away from metropolitan amenities and into the heart of untamed wilderness is growing amid the restless beat of city life. Properties that focus on wildlife are becoming more and more well-liked because they provide visitors the chance to fully experience the untainted splendour of the natural world. These, which range from opulent tents on African plains to secluded cottages deep in Indian jungles, offer a genuine getaway where the sound of faraway wildlife rustling and birds chirping in the morning silence takes the place of blaring alarm clocks and traffic. More and more people today are searching for locations where the excitement of unspoiled, raw landscapes and the comforts of contemporary life coexist together in order to experience a closer connection to nature. In this leisurely read, let us tell you how nature itself becomes the experience, bringing adventure, peace and the kind of amazement that only the wild can inspire!

"The best way to follow this new trend is to adopt sustainable habits that reduce our environmental impact and improve the surrounding natural ecosystems! The first step in preventing development from upsetting the native flora and fauna is to carefully manage land use. Give top priority to the usage of environmentally friendly building materials and install energy-saving equipment. Naturally, why not work with regional conservation organisations to save wildlife habitats and guarantee that activities interact sustainably with the surrounding ecosystems? Isn't this a smart move? Encouraging environmentally sensitive visitor experiences, such as wildlife safaris guided by knowledgeable naturalists, that aim to increase understanding and reverence for the surrounding ecosystem—perhaps is an additional concept to consider," communicates the Managing Director of Ananta Hotels & Resorts. Because he is bringing one of the most noteworthy aspects of the forward-thinking initiatives: the creation of a serene and peaceful oasis at Ajabgarh, carefully crafted to har-

monise perfectly with the stunning natural surroundings of the Sariska Tiger Reserve. This innovative project not only showcases a deep understanding of the importance of environmental balance but also offers a unique opportunity to experience the beauty and tranquility of this breathtaking reserve. By blending seamlessly into the existing landscape, the oasis enhances the natural charm of the area, making it a fascinating destination to explore and learn about the delicate ecosystem.

To minimise the neg-



ative effects of wildlife tourism, a meticulously responsible strategy is crucial in designing eco-friendly properties. This entails constructing facilities with minimal disturbance to surrounding natural habitats. Prior to development, comprehensive environmental impact assessments must be conducted to guarantee seamless integration with the local ecosystem. Wildlife excursions should be led by expert naturalists who instruct visitors on responsible tourism practices, fostering respect for the environment and wildlife. Furthermore, collaborating with local conservation initiatives and promoting sustainable methods—such as waste reduction, water conservation and renewable energy utilisation—ensures that these contribute positively to the delicate environments rather than causing harm. "India's breathtaking wildlife and diverse landscapes have long been a profound source of inspiration for us. Driven by this pas-

sion, we sought to share these natural wonders with others through unforgettable, up-close experiences. By combining my passion with environmental stewardship, wildlife tourism emerged as the perfect synergy. The wildlife-focused revolution aims to inspire a deeper appreciation and reverence for nature while offering immersive and unique adventures. Furthermore, we recognised wildlife tourism as a catalyst for positive change in local communities!" recognises our interviewee, who is focusing on this "wild" innovation to carry on his father's legacy.

The preservation of the natural balance is crucial and particular caution must be used when developing land close to delicate habitats like the Sariska Tiger Reserve. To ensure compatibility with the native flora and animals, these teams employ a conscientious and sustainable approach! "During one of the safaris, patrons had the unique opportunity to see a mother tiger and her children in a waterhole. This is an exclusive story I often tell! They were forever changed by this enchanted moment because they were able to appreciate the beauty of wildlife and understand how crucial it is to preserve these magnificent animals and their natural habitat. The new buzz surrounding this type of tourism is due to the profoundly transformational experience that these unusual encounters, when paired with environmentally conscientious actions, give." The crew is also working to safeguard the local Indian species known as the Great Indian Bustard, which is in grave risk of extinction! They support conservation programs targeted at saving this famous species, assist in raising awareness and contribute to habitat preservation efforts by collaborating with local wildlife authorities and conservation organisations.

These kinds of immersive experiences are becoming more and more popular. Additionally, there are guided wildlife photography tours that offer opportunities to take amazing pictures! Then, by allowing visitors to take part in conservation and research initiatives, citizen science programs promote a closer bond with the natural world. Overall, this tourism offers genuine cultural experiences and empowers indigenous people, so why not?





Wrapping around a hat-trick with *Chuttamalle*

In a heart-to-heart conversation with **Shikha Duggal** of *The Pioneer*, Shilpa Rao, the voice behind the latest Telugu chartbuster *Chuttamalle*, takes us through the trajectory of her life with charm, nostalgia and a hint of mischief. From climbing trees during her growing years to seek solace to making waves in the Telugu music world against odds with her never-say-die attitude, she has taken life on her terms. You may take a girl out of the south, but you can't take the south out of the girl: Shilpa has demonstrated this with *Chuttamalle*. Shilpa embodies her southern heritage in every note, evoking the same grace of her grandmother's Kanjivaram sarees and the coziness of homemade *Ugadi pachadi*. Shilpa's accomplishments transcend borders—her voice can be heard in some of the biggest hits in Bollywood too—and she has made waves even at the global level with her body of work. Her participation in the 'The Global Goal: Unite for Our Future' concert brought her recognition on a global scale, earning her a nomination for her first Grammy! Shilpa has consistently demonstrated why hers is one of the most versatile voices in Indian music, whether it is through her captivating vocals in hit songs that have won awards or her stunning live performances. While *Devara's Chuttamalle* is breaking records all over, Shilpa takes time out of her busy schedule to share the high points of her career in the world of music.

RAPID FIRE

- Your pinch-me moment of life:** My younger brother Anurag came home from the hospital the day he was born
- Latest thing you discovered about yourself:** That every day, no matter how pleasant or awful, will pass.
- Singer who inspires you:** Mehdi Hassan Sahab
- Proudest moment of your career:** I feel so, so proud when someone says to me, "Oh, you're Anurag's sister."
- Favourite city/country to stay in:** India has always been one location that feels like home and it never will change.



RELATIONSHIP BUILT ON SHARED JOY

I feel profoundly grateful for the serene and enjoyable life my partner and I share. I am married to Ritesh Krishnan. He is a photographer by profession. In 2021, I married him at home and the wedding was registered. We had met three years back on (music composer) Pritam's USA tour. Ritesh seemed to be an affectionate person and we started hanging out together. On the first day that I met him, I felt that he was a chilled-out guy, which was very attractive for me. We started travelling together in 2018 and did many shows across India. Our relationship is built on a foundation of mutual passions, including a love for exploration and culinary delights. Travelling together allows us to experience new cultures, meet fascinating people and create lasting memories. Our weekends are like a mini vacation; they are busier than the workdays. Getting up comfortably, having a meal, making coffee, cooking and then hanging out with friends is always a good idea.

HER 17-YEAR-OLD MUSICAL JOURNEY

Over the past 17 years, my life has been serenaded by the rhythms of the music industry. Surprisingly, my own musical aspirations were not always clear, even with my father's influential presence. Through relentless practice and perseverance, I have cultivated a fulfilling career. Music has become my North Star, illuminating life's journey. Each day brings new lessons from talented musicians and I am humbled by the love and support that has accompanied me every step of the way.

ROOTS OF HAPPINESS

My childhood was idyllic and carefree, thanks to the loving presence of my grandmother and parents. I was born on April 11, 1984, in Jamshedpur. My father, S. V. Rao, is a businessman and my mother is a homemaker. Music was my first passion, introduced to me by my parents, followed by academics. I completed my schooling at Loyola School, Jamshedpur and later graduated with a degree in psychology from St. Xavier's College! While growing up, I was a bit laidback in my attitude, often enjoying exploring nature, climbing trees and even daydreaming. I had no grand ambitions or life plans back then. Those peaceful days remain cherished memories. After school, I would not rush home; instead, I would escape to the nearby park, seeking refuge in the branches of my favourite trees. My parents would often wonder where I was, searching high and low, only to eventually discover me perched in my leafy hideaway, completely carefree.



SAGE ADVICE

The early days in the music industry were a trial by fire. My own journey was no exception! Transformation from being a distinctive voice to an established artiste required perseverance on my part. A pivotal moment came when Shankar Mahadevan sir counselled me to cultivate a solo identity at just 23. I have since discovered that success in Bollywood requires unwavering dedication. The key to endurance lies in preserving individuality and authenticity, while embracing lifelong learning and self-improvement—essential principles for thriving in music and art.

DAD'S LEGACY AT TATAS

My father, S. V. Rao, hails from Vijayawada, which is located in the Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh. So, my cultural roots have a blend of Telugu and Bengali aspects, reflecting my father's Andhra Pradesh origins and my mother's Bengali background. But our moorings run deep in Jamshedpur, where three generations of my family—my grandfather, uncle and dad—built their careers at Tatas. I have fond memories of growing up in a vibrant, cosmopolitan city like that. Jamshedpur's diverse community, comprising people from various backgrounds working for Tatas, also exposed me to a rich cultural tapestry.



PARENTS WHO PRIORITISED PASSION OVER PRESSURE

While growing up, I was fortunate to have parents who embodied a unique blend of intellectual curiosity, creativity and progressive thinking. My father, a true polymath, holds a Master's degree in music and a Master's in technical engineering, showcasing his remarkable range of interests and expertise. His professional accomplishments, including designing the Starbucks for the Tatas, are a testament to his innovative spirit. He retired as the post of AGM. My parents have excellent taste for music. They would listen to a lot of female musicians when I was growing up and that helped me cultivate my own interest in music. My brother Anurag, my parents and I used to spend a lot of time together. They were really laidback. My dad would always say, "No, we should go to the concert; this is more important". It could be listening to music or attending late-night classical music events. We studied and attended school, but he did not put any pressure on us. We therefore, I believe, grew up in a fairly balanced environment.



SHUTTING DOWN NAYSAYERS

All through my childhood people told me I could not sing and I initially believed them. But I loved music back then; therefore, I was learning to sing. I never imagined back then that I would become a musician. In that regard, I was not very goal-oriented. I do not give much thought to what people say these days also. All I believe in is hard work. Everyone is free to express themselves, but we need to weed out irrelevant remarks. I would listen to and find value in anything said to me by someone like Rashid Khan Sahab, but not by everyone. Being raised in a musical family provided me with a rich tapestry of genres and styles from the very beginning. This immersive experience kindled a deep passion for music and laid the groundwork for development of my vocal skills. Furthermore, the cultural nuances and experiences woven into my Telugu style upbringing have profoundly impacted my musical identity, informing the melodies I choose and the artistic style I have cultivated.

TOSE NAINA KI KAHANI

During my final days in college I had a serendipitous meeting with Mithoon, a renowned music composer. Actually, our encounter was for a different project, but destiny had other plans. Mithoon shared a rough draft of *Tose Naina* with me and as I lent my voice to the scratch track, something magical unfolded.

POWER OF TEAMWORK ON MUSICAL TOUR

When embarking on a musical tour, my priority is comfort. I firmly believe that feeling at ease in my attire is essential to delivering a captivating performance. If I am not completely comfortable wearing something, I simply do not wear it. Equally vital is the camaraderie with my team, with whom I have shared a decade of unforgettable adventures. Together, we have navigated the highs and lows of touring, forging unbreakable bonds. Their unwavering support, trust and friendship make each day on the road a joy whenever on a musical tour.

LESSONS FROM RAHMAN, ILAAYARAJA

In those days, Shankar sir's (Shankar Mahadevan) invaluable guidance had a lasting impact on my approach to life and career. One essential lesson he imparted is the importance of laying a solid foundation, emphasising the power of slow and steady progress. He wisely advised me to begin with jingles, mastering the art of recording, before transitioning to film projects. The remarkable careers of AR Rahman Sahab and Ilayaraja sir serve as powerful testaments to the boundless potential of artistic expression. These legendary composers have shattered conventional molds, defying expectations and proving that creativity knows no bounds. They have demonstrated that artists can thrive without conforming to predetermined norms, instead of embracing their unique identities and perspectives to produce extraordinary work.

MAESTROS WHO SAW HER POTENTIAL

I vividly recall the transformative impact Ustadji (Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan) had on my musical journey. Unlike others who tended to focus on flaws, he astutely recognised my potential and chose to nurture it. With constant encouragement, he guided me toward self-improvement, and this approach profoundly altered my perspective on music, riyaz and personal growth. When I was thirteen, I got the chance to meet Hariharan since I was in a school singing group. His encouragement also led me to study Hindustani music with Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan and this established a solid basis for my professional future. I quickly began taking part in live performances with Hariharan and later won accolades during a nationwide talent search, all of which helped me get started in the music industry. Legends like Prabha Atre, Ustad Amir Khan, Mehdi Hassan Saab, Pandit Nikhil Banerjee, Ustad Sultan Khan, Begum Akhtar and Farida Khanum fostered my love for music during my formative years. Their iconic voices and masterful artistry instilled in me a profound love for singing and shaped my musical perspective, leaving an enduring legacy that still inspires my craft.

TELUGU TRADITIONS & LOVE

Telugu was the language of our household and it remains so to this day. While growing up, I was exposed to rich cultural traditions, surrounded by the warmth of my mother and grandmother, who adorned themselves in elegant Kanjivaram sarees. They lovingly explained the significance of each festival, sharing stories behind the flowers, foods and rituals. As an example, we would have corn if it was Ganpati. Pear fruit is consumed during Saraswati puja. We used to celebrate Ugadi, a Telugu holiday that marks the beginning of the year. On this occasion, we would eat *Ugadi pachadi*. Naturally, after that, we would take a vacation down south, meet up with our relatives and relax at the Vizag beach. That has always been a constant in our lives.

MISS MAGIC OF BAGHAAR-E-BAINGAN TO BIRYANI

I make it a point to have a substantial amount of food, no doubt about it, whenever in Hyderabad. Most of our family members have lived in Andhra Pradesh, including my grandparents and my sisters. The nicest meals I have ever had were those that I relished at my grandmother's place; they are not there anymore, but the memories are there. My father was born and brought up in Vijayawada, though he moved to Jamshedpur for work. My uncles, aunts and cousins continue to live in Andhra Pradesh, primarily in Vijayawada and surrounding areas. We undoubtedly miss a lot of delicious food from Andhra, like *Baghaar-e-baingan*, *haleem* and *biryani*. I love every dish. I often visit my ancestral home in Vijayawada and connect with my roots during festivals and on special occasions!

JINGLE EFFECT

Then, working on jingles proved to be a pivotal stepping stone in my musical journey. By singing those concise, catchy tunes, I gained invaluable hands-on experience in tracking and recording. The process taught me the intricacies of vocal delivery, mic technique and studio etiquette.

NURTURING HER VOICE

Preserving my vocal well-being is paramount. Adequate sleep is the cornerstone of my voice's health, allowing my voice to recharge. Daily riyaz, or vocal exercises, are essential, but it is not just physical discipline—it is also a mental harmony. I cultivate a deep connection between my voice, thoughts and emotions, ensuring alignment that fuels my artistic expression and nurtures my singing excellence.

CHANGING LIVES, ONE DONATION AT A TIME

Despite achieving success, I still encounter rejection and it is essential to acknowledge that this reality persists throughout one's career. Rejection is an inherent part of the journey and I want to share this vital message with aspiring musicians and singers. Next, I firmly believe that every individual's journey is influenced by the kindness and support of others. Reflecting on our personal experiences, it is evident that we have all benefited from the guidance, encouragement, or assistance of others at some point. This realisation instills a profound sense of gratitude and responsibility. That is why we have cultivated interest in philanthropy! And anything that persists every day and becomes more challenging no matter what is going on; I am always willing to take that up. Another lesson is that everything you are going through could not be that big of a concern because looking back on the past usually does not feel that large. We suffer more in our minds, therefore, it is best to just accept things as they are and go with the flow. I attempt to do that through philanthropy.



KAAVAALAA, CHALONA AND NOW CHUTTAMALLE

The most captivating aspect of studying classical music or any music lies in its boundless depth and complexity. This timeless art form presents an endless journey of discovery, where the pursuit of mastery becomes a lifelong passion. The realisation that there is always more to explore, more to absorb and more to perfect is both humbling and exhilarating for me. I was curious as to why Anirudh chose me for *Kaavaalaa* since it was unlike anything I had ever sung before. Trusting the director's and composer's vision, however, is essential. Because Anirudh Ravichander and I were both present, we were able to make decisions quickly and feed off each other's energy, finishing the *Chalona* recording in just twenty minutes. Having the viewpoints of the composer, lyricist, and occasionally the director, in the same room truly does make a difference. It is hard to figure out all those options when you are alone. *Chuttamalle* has such a sweet and fresh vibe, with bouncy words that capture the slow dance feel of Telugu music so smoothly.