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**Indian Army trusted, inspiring organisations in country:**  
**Rajnath**

**EU'S DEFORESTATION REGULATION, CARBON TAX UNFAIR: GOYAL**

**Sreenu Vaitla's Viswam : A comedy routine that missed ITS SPOT!**

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
The pioneer  
**I respect RS Praveen Kumar. I don't mind which political party he belongs to. Why is he objecting to the setting up of Young India Integrated Schools on 25-acre campuses spending crores? KCR has money to construct BRS offices and buy lands but no funds to provide infrastructure in schools**  
- A. Revanth Reddy, Chief Minister P4

**DON'T MISS...**  
**CM making efforts to host National...**  
The Yonex-Sunrise All India Sub-Junior (U-15 & U-17) Ranking Badminton Tournament, held in memory of Kalagara Naga Babu Memorial, concluded on Friday after a nine-day event at the Chennupati Ramakotiah Municipal Corporation Indoor Stadium in Vijayawada. Vijayawada MP and Andhra Cricket Association (ACA) president, Kesineni Sivanat (Chinni), attended the closing ceremony as the chief guest, where he presented trophies to the winners and runners-up. In his address, MP Chinni highlighted that...



**Houses for all poor in 5 years: Kolusu**  
**The Minister inaugurates the Housing and I&PR office in the State Secretariat**

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**  
Housing and I&PR Minister Kolusu Parthasarathy has announced that the State government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, is committed to implementing welfare schemes despite financial challenges. The Minister stated that the Chief Minister has directed the provision of permanent housing to all the poor across the State, and efforts are underway to achieve this goal. The Minister inaugurated the Housing and I&PR office in the fourth block of the Secretariat. He also revealed that the distribution of three free LPG cylinders will commence from Divali.

**87,116 APPLICATIONS FILED FOR AP LIQUOR LICENCES**  
**Rs 1,742 cr income for govt**

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

The deadline for submitting applications for liquor shop licenses in Andhra Pradesh concluded at 7 pm on Friday. According to officials from the excise department, a total of 87,116 applications were received for liquor shops across the 26 districts of the state. Through this process, the government earned a significant revenue of Rs 1,742 crore, which is non-refundable. While the application period officially ended by 7 pm, excise officials extended the deadline for deposit payments until midnight.

The Excise Department received applications for 3,396 liquor shops statewide, and these outlets will be allocated through a lottery system on October 14. The selected individuals will be handed over their shops by October 15, ahead of the new liquor policy coming into effect on October 16.

Meanwhile, excise officials issued tokens to interested applicants wishing to participate in the lottery, with the process of receiving applications still ongoing. As a result, the total number of applications and the corresponding non-refundable deposits to the government are expected to increase.

In total, 87,116 applications were submitted across Andhra Pradesh. It is noteworthy that the State government has announced a new Excise Policy for 2024-26, allowing private retailers to sell liquor. Under this revised policy, 3,736 retail outlets have been identified for liquor sales across the state. Out

- LOTTERY ALLOCATION:** The 3,396 liquor shops will be allocated via a lottery on October 14, with shops handed over by October 15.
- NEW LIQUOR POLICY:** The new liquor policy will come into effect on October 16, 2024.
- DISTRICT-WISE APPLICATIONS:** The number of applications varies by district, with the highest number (5,764) in NTR District.
- EXCISE POLICY 2024-26:** The policy allows for 3,736 retail outlets, with 340 reserved for toddy tappers and 12 designated as premium shops.
- RETAIL MARGINS AND TAX:** Retailers will have a 20% margin, and the Retail Excise Tax (RET) ranges from Rs 50 lakh to Rs 85 lakh, depending on the population size, with a 10% increase for 2025-26.
- BUSINESS HOURS AND RESTRICTIONS:** Shops can operate between 10 am and 10 pm, with restrictions in certain areas of Tirupati.

of these, 3,396 outlets will be open for general allocation, while 340 will be reserved for toddy tappers. Additionally, 12 outlets will be designated as 'Premium Shops,' primarily in urban areas, to sell high-end brands and related accessories.

Mukesh Kumar Meena, Principal Secretary of the Excise Department, issued several Government Orders on September 30, outlining the rules of the new policy. Retailers will be granted a margin of 20%, and the sale of Indian-Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) and Foreign Liquor (FL) by retail shops will be given to private individuals or entities through a public application process. Applications can be submitted

both online and offline, with a non-refundable application fee of Rs 2 lakh.

The policy also specifies the Retail Excise Tax (RET) slabs for the licensing period, which will range from Rs 50 lakh to Rs 85 lakh, depending on the population size of the area. For the 2025-26 license period, the RET will be increased by 10%. License holders will have the option to pay the RET in six advance installments. Liquor shop business hours will be from 10 am to 10 pm. However, certain areas in Tirupati have been designated as restricted zones where liquor shops will not be permitted.

**Happy Dasara**  
the pioneer wishes its readers, advertisers, agents, suppliers and vendors a happy Dasara. May this Dasara be a harbinger of peace, health, prosperity and joy to all. The offices of the pioneer will remain closed on Saturday (12-10-2024) on account of the festival and there will be no issue of the paper on Sunday (13-10-2024).  
- Resident Editor

**CM, Dy CM, Lokesh, Jagan greet people**



**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**  
Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu extended his heartfelt greetings to Telugu people worldwide on the occasion of Vijayadasami (Dasara). He said, "I pray to Mother Kanakadurga to bless all with happiness and peace. May this festival of Dasara, which symbolises the triumph of good over evil, usher in new light and prosperity into our lives." He further emphasized the festival's message of unity and peace. Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan also conveyed his greetings on Vijaya Dasami, marking the conclusion of Navaratri. He said, "The Sarannavaratri festival is a special spiritual celebration, observed with great devotion across India."

**Society that worships women...**  
Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday said a society that worships and respects its women is inherently capable and powerful. Extending heartfelt greetings to the people of Uttar Pradesh on the auspicious occasions of Mahanavami and Vijayadashami celebrated as part of the grand festival of Sharadiya Navratri, the chief minister emphasised the strength and capability of a society are reflected in how it treats its women. Speaking to the media after performing the...

**Sebi orders probe into Trafiksol IPO...**  
Markets regulator Sebi on Friday decided to conduct a detailed investigation into the disclosures made by SME firm Trafiksol ITS Technologies Ltd in its draft IPO documents and instructed BSE not to proceed with the company's share listing. In its interim order, Sebi has asked BSE to ensure that the IPO proceeds are kept in an interest-bearing escrow account, with no access allowed to Trafiksol or its affiliates until further notice. The Sebi's investigation will be completed within 30 days. The order came nearly a...

**India eye series sweep, with runs...**  
Despite its inconsequential nature, India will be eagerly pursuing the twin goals of a series sweep and monitoring the progress of impressive second-line players during the third and final T20 against Bangladesh here on Saturday. India have already bagged the series 2-0 after wins at Gwalior and New Delhi. This Indian bunch under Gautam Gambhir has shown an insatiable hunger for victory, and doubters can glance back at its result-oriented approach during the rain-marred Kanpur Test...

**Half-brother Noel to succeed Ratan Tata as Chairman of Tata Trusts**

**PNS ■ MUMBAI**

Noel Tata, half-brother of legendary industrialist late Ratan Tata, will be the new head of Tata Trusts -- a collective of charities that indirectly controls the US\$ 165-billion salt-to-software conglomerate. Noel Tata has been appointed as Chairman of all the trusts that constitute the Tata Trusts and also designated Chairman, Tata Trusts, Tata Trusts said in a statement. The trustees of various trusts that comprise the Tata Trusts met at a joint meeting in Mumbai on Friday and condoled the demise of Ratan Tata, Chairman, Tata Trusts, and "recalled his yeoman services not only to the Tata Group but also to nation building", it said.



"In separate meetings held immediately, thereafter, it was unanimously decided to appoint Mr. Noel Naval Tata as the Chairman of the various Trusts that constitute the Tata Trusts and also designate him as Chairman, Tata Trusts," the statement said. His appointment is effective immediately, it added. On his appointment, Noel Tata said, "I look forward to carrying on the legacy of Mr Ratan N Tata and the Founders of the Tata Group. Founded more than a century ago, the Tata Trusts are a unique vehicle for undertaking social good." He further said, "On this solemn occasion, we rededicate ourselves to carrying on our developmental and philanthropic initiatives and continuing to play our part in nation building."

**Rooster training claims four lives in family**

**PNS ■ ELURU**

In a heart-wrenching tragedy, four members of a family from Kalvagunta village in Pedavegi mandal lost their lives in a shocking sequence of events. Shettipalli Venkateswara Rao and his two sons drowned in the Polavaram right canal on Wednesday while attempting to train a rooster for a cockfight. Unable to bear the grief, Venkateswara Rao's wife, Devi, took her own life on Friday. According to police reports, Venkateswara Rao was an experienced trainer of roosters for cock-fights.



**Firms returning to AP after Jagan rule: Lokesh**

**The Minister for Education & IT opens Kia showroom in Mangalagiri**

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Minister for Education and IT, Nara Lokesh, criticised Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, accusing him of "daydreaming" about bringing TCS to Andhra Pradesh. On Friday, Minister Lokesh inaugurated the Simha Kia car showroom at Kolanukonda, near Mangalagiri. Addressing the media, he asserted that Kia Motors was originally brought to AP by Chandrababu Naidu, while the YSRCP falsely claims that the company invested due to a letter from YS Rajasekhara Reddy. Lokesh challenged the ruling government to reveal how many companies were established and how many jobs were created dur-

ing Jagan Mohan Reddy's tenure. He pointed out that the YSRCP itself admitted in the Legislative Council that between 2014 and 2019, under Naidu's leadership, 44,000 industries were set up, creating 8 lakh jobs. Lokesh added, "Today, with Chandrababu back as CM, major investments are flowing into Andhra Pradesh. TCS and Lulu have come as part of this wave. Many industries are now eager to invest, and we will bring back all the companies that Jagan's regime drove away." The Minister outlined the government's plans for regional development, stating that they aim to bring manufacturing units to Rayalaseema and service industries to Uttarandhra.

**PLIGHT OF VISAKHAPATNAM STEEL PLANT EMPLOYEES**

**'No salary, no Dasara celebrations'**

**PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM**

Despite assurances to strengthen the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), the situation remains dire, with employees still waiting for their October salaries. Speaking to the media, senior journalist and Uttarandhra Praja Samstha leader V V Ramana Murthy expressed deep concern over the plight of VSP employees, who have not received their salaries even during the festive season of Dasara.

"Last year, the employees were at least given a bonus, but there has been no announcement about it this year. Adding to their woes, the House Rent Allowance (HRA) has been stopped, reflecting the grim state of the plant," lamented Ramana Murthy. He recalled that VSP employees received a bonus of Rs 20,000 last year, which offered some relief, but this year has been far more challenging for them. Ramanamurthy also highlighted that, in the past, VSP employees used

to receive their salaries promptly on the first of every month. "Those days seem to be long gone," he said, expressing regret that employees are now left in the lurch, waiting for their salaries amidst growing financial stress. He further pointed out that the lack of adequate raw material supply has led to a decline in production at VSP. This, coupled with the halted payments, has left employees in a state of despair. Murthy reminded that Chief Minister Chandrababu



Senior journalist and Uttarandhra Praja Samstha leader V V Ramana Murthy

Naidu had previously assured in Delhi that the VSP would not be privatized and would be strengthened into a robust unit, yet there has been no sign of improvement.

**Nobel Peace Prize given to Japanese organisation Nihon Hidankyo for its work against n-weapons**

The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded Friday to Nihon Hidankyo, a Japanese organisation of survivors of the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, for its activism against nuclear weapons. Jorgen Watne Frydnes, chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, said the award was made as the "taboo against the use of nuclear weapons is under pressure." Last month, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a shift in his country's nuclear doctrine, in a move aimed at discouraging the West from allowing Ukraine to strike Russia with longer-range weapons. It appeared to significantly lower the threshold for the possible use of Russia's nuclear arsenal. Watne Frydnes said the Nobel committee "wishes to honour all survivors who, despite physical suffering and painful memories, have chosen to use their costly experience to cultivate hope and engagement for peace."

**Bus and rly stations bursting at their seams**

**C PRADEEP KUMAR**  
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**■ VIJAYAWADA**

Vijayawada has turned into a bustling hub during the Dasara festival, with the bus and railway stations overwhelmed by passengers travelling home to celebrate. Dasara travellers from various parts of the State have filled the Vijayawada railway and bus stations, creating an unprecedented rush. South Central Railway has arranged 640 special trains for the festive season, but even with these additional services, Vijayawada Railway Station remains overcrowded. Passengers heading to destinations like Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam, and Odisha via Vijayawada Junction are struggling to secure seats.

**Private bus operators fleece festival-time passengers**



Devotees of Goddess Kanaka Durga, particularly those from Anakapalli and Srikakulam, have further increased the rush as they flock to Vijayawada for 'darshan' during the Sarannavaratri festivities. Despite the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) operating 6,100 special

**Despite the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) operating 6,100 special buses from October 4 to 20, with 3,040 buses before the festival, passengers continue to face difficulty finding seats.**

buses from October 4 to 20, with 3,040 buses before the festival, passengers continue to face difficulty finding seats. The rush is so intense that many are left without

tickets, even for these special services. Private travel operators, seeing an opportunity, have hiked fares substantially, forcing passengers to pay exorbitant prices. With limited availability in government buses and trains, passengers are left with no choice but to opt for private travel. The spike in demand, especially with Dasara on Saturday and a holiday on Sunday, has led to a surge in travel prices. While APSRTC's AC Intra service charges ₹905 per seat and Amaravati service ₹1,120, private operators are demanding anywhere between ₹2,000 and ₹2,500 for the same route, with non-AC buses charging ₹1,500 to ₹2,000. Software professional B. Suresh, a Visakhapatnam native working in Chennai, expressed his frustration.



# The Tata legacy in a land of lost opportunities

Ratan Tata, a great son of Bharat, is no more. The entire nation mourned his loss in unison. From leaders to ordinary citizens, Indians from across social, economic and political spectrums eulogised him as a nationalist who lived his life by that famous dictum captured by American President John F Kennedy's immortal words, "Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country". This occasion is not only a time to pay tribute to Ratan Tata but, as a nation, to consider what the country could have done differently to help Ratan Tata and, even more broadly, the Tatas to serve the country better.

Ratan Tata's life was a testament to the enduring ideals of Jamssetji Tata, the visionary founder of the Tata Group. In Ratan Tata's own words, "Marx's vision was to take

from the rich to feed the poor, and Jamssetji's vision was to make the poor rich." This philosophy, along with Jamssetji's belief that 'the community is not just another stakeholder in business but is, in fact, the very purpose of its existence', forms the unique "Tata Way" of doing business.

While a book would be insufficient to chronicle the Tatas' contributions, two facts underscore the Tata Way. Firstly, Jamssetji believed that only industrialisation could make India and Indians, then under British colonial rule, wealthier. Thus, when he founded the Tata Group in 1868, he focused on producing the essentials to build India - steel, power, and textiles - and build the world-class Taj Mahal Hotel in Mumbai -- the first hotel in India with electricity, to make it convenient for international business people

**Another example is Tata Nano. Mamata Banerjee pushed the project out of West Bengal solely for political reasons, never mind that Nano was a heroic effort by Ratan Tata to make cars affordable to lower-middle-class Indians or that it created a vast number of blue-collar jobs in a state where industrialists feared to tread, given its extreme left-wing politics**

to visit India. No wonder Jawaharlal Nehru called him a 'One-Man Planning Commission'. Secondly, 66% of 'Tata Sons,' the holding company for all Tata group companies, is held by philanthropic trusts created by Jamssetji's sons. Following the same path, Ratan Tata is equally known for growing Tata businesses, expanding their footprint globally, and under-

taking philanthropic endeavours. The Tata Group's contributions have not only shaped the Indian economy but also played a significant role in nation-building, a legacy that continues to inspire us all and fill us with national pride.

Today, the Tata Group has grown into an Indian international conglomerate that spans airlines, aerospace, defence, chemicals, steel, automobiles,



**KISHORE POREDDY**

software, telecom, power, and more. Operating in more than 100 countries, the Tata group's revenues top 165 billion US dollars, employing over a million individuals. From the day Ratan Tata joined the group, he helped grow the group's revenues over 40 times and profits over 50 times.

The Tata Group's achieve-

ments are remarkable, but what truly sets them apart is their philosophy of business. The very name TATA has become synonymous with trust among Indians, a testament to the group's ethical business practices. The Tatas, notably Jamssetji, JRD, and Ratan, have built a solid industrial base for India, created massive employment opportunities, earned valuable foreign exchange, contributed significant taxes, and put India on the global industrial map.

It seems impossible to imagine that the Tatas could have done even more for the country's industry and economy. One could only imagine what the Tatas could have contributed to India's growth in Airlines, Defence, Space, and many more strategic sectors, but for some politicians and, to put it mildly, their misguided actions.

Air India is a case in point. JRD Tata started India's first commercial airline in 1932 - before independence - and personally flew the first flight from Karachi to Bombay. Jawaharlal Nehru had no reason to distrust either Tatas' nationalist credentials or capabilities. Yet, he nationalised a profitable Air India in 1953. If Nehru wanted, he could have created a public sector airline of its own, but no, he had to banish private entrepreneurs from the "commanding heights" of our economy. One cannot stress enough the significance of this one step. While smaller nations like Singapore, UAE, Qatar, Korea, and many more became international aviation hubs with global airline brands, India fell behind by decades.

Another example is the case of Tata Nano. Mamata Banerjee pushed the Tata Nano project out of West Bengal

solely for political reasons, never mind that Nano was a heroic effort by Ratan Tata to make cars affordable to lower-middle-class Indians or that it created a vast number of blue-collar jobs in a state where industrialists feared to tread, given its extreme left-wing politics.

Imagine what the Tatas, and many more like them, could have achieved for India if only Nehru and Indira hadn't banished them from critical sectors like defence, space, aviation, etc., and limited them with the 'License-Permit Raj' in areas they were allowed to operate! Could the genius of Ratan Tata and so many other entrepreneurs have made India a significant player today in many more sectors and accelerated India's race to Viksit Bharat?

*(The author is BJP TS spokesperson)*

## TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT & LAW AND ORDER

# AP to boost CCTV surveillance

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government is set to enhance CCTV surveillance across the State, focusing on public safety, traffic management, and law and order. Infrastructure and Investment Department Secretary S. Suresh Kumar announced plans to integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based solutions to monitor helmet-less riding, seatbelt violations, mobile phone use while driving, detection of non-standard number plates, fire incidents, garbage accumulation, and traffic accidents.



A comprehensive review meeting was conducted with senior officials from various departments to evaluate the current use of CCTV systems and explore advanced technologies to improve surveillance. Suresh Kumar reviewed the performance of 14,770 cameras installed across the state and emphasised the need to optimise their use. He noted that these cameras could detect red light violations, monitor non-parking zones, identify wrong-way driving, recognise number plates, manage crowd formations, and perform facial recognition and intrusion detection.

Highlighting the system's potential, he stated, "In the past year, over 58 lakh violations were detected through CCTV surveillance, but less than 10% resulted in successful challans, generating about 77.5 crore in penalties. Strict enforcement and the conversion of all violations to e-challans are necessary."

Suresh Kumar also stressed expanding CCTV use to other departments and integrating surveillance data with the Real-Time Governance Society (RTGS). He invited suggestions from District Collectors and SPs to optimise the system's

usage and instructed officials to complete the construction of District RTG centres in 13 erstwhile districts, which would provide integrated command control for both civil and police administration.

He concluded by stating that a comprehensive action plan, incorporating feedback from the meeting, would soon be developed to strengthen Andhra Pradesh's surveillance framework

## World Standards Day celebrations in V'wada on Oct 14

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) will celebrate 'World Standards Day' on October 14 at Hyatt Place, Vijayawada, as announced by BIS Deputy Director D. Vivek Vardhan Reddy.

In a press release on Friday, Deputy Director Reddy highlighted that this year's theme is 'Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure'. The focus will be on how standards contribute to resilient and sustainable industrial growth.

He emphasised BIS's crucial role in promoting sustainable innovation and developing inclusive, future-ready infrastructure.

He also informed that BIS has introduced a special mobile app for consumers to lodge complaints, aimed at improving transparency and consumer protection.

# 108 new sand reaches to be operated by Oct 16



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has instructed officials to address the shortfall in sand supply across the State, urging them to resolve issues at the ground level and ensure that consumers do not face any difficulties. The CM reviewed the situation with the Mining Department officials at the Secretariat on Friday.

During the meeting, officials informed the CM that 108 new sand reaches, with a combined capacity of 70 lakh metric tons, will be opera-

tional from October 16. These reaches are expected to provide an additional 80,000 metric tons of sand per day. Currently, around 30,000 metric tons of sand are being supplied daily, and the new reaches will significantly boost availability.

To streamline the sand booking process, the Chief Minister suggested that the option for direct booking at sand reaches should be introduced, in addition to the existing online portal. "Those unable to book through the online portal should be able to book directly at the sand

reach," the CM advised.

Officials explained that the management of sand reaches will be handled by private agencies, selected by the District Level Sand Committee (DLSC) through a tender process. These agencies will be responsible for setting up ramps and maintaining the reaches.

In Telangana, the Bathukamma festival is celebrated with fervour, while in Andhra Pradesh, the Durgamma temple at Indrakeeladri overflows with devotees. I feel blessed to have visited Durgamma during this auspicious time. I pray to Shakti Swarupini Durga that this Vijayadasami, a symbol of victory, brings success and prosperity to all Telugu people and the Telugu states," Kalyan added.

Minister for Education, IT, and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, extended his best wishes, celebrating Dasara as a victory over adversity.

## Nobel Peace Prize...

Continued from Page 1

Hidankyo's Hiroshima branch chairperson, Tomoyuki Mimaki, who was standing by at the city hall for the announcement, cheered and teared up when he received the news. "Is it really true? Unbelievable!" Mimaki screamed.

Efforts to eradicate nuclear weapons have been honoured before by the Nobel committee. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons won the peace prize in 2017, and in 1995 Joseph Rotblat and the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs won for "their efforts to diminish the part played by nuclear arms in international politics and, in the longer run, to eliminate such arms." This year's prize was awarded against a backdrop of devastating conflicts raging in the Middle East, Ukraine and Sudan.

"It is very clear that threats of using nuclear weapons are putting pressure on the important international norm, the taboo of using nuclear weapons," Watne Frydnes said in response to a question on whether the rhetoric from Russia surrounding nuclear weapons in its invasion of Ukraine had influenced this year's decision.

# SAAP chief takes issues to notice of Minister Lokesh

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Animini Ravi Naidu, Chairman of the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP), met with Nara Lokesh, Minister for Human Resources and IT, at his residence in Undavalli.

During the Praja Darbar session, Chairman Naidu highlighted several issues related to SAAP and athletes' challenges, submitting a representation to the minister. Naidu sought the minister's attention on matters affecting the develop-



SAAP Chairman Ravi Naidu explaining the issues to Minister Nara Lokesh at his residence in Undavalli on Friday.

ment of sports in the state. In response, Minister Lokesh expressed his willingness to address the con-

cerns and assured his support for the growth of sports and athletes in Andhra Pradesh.

# CM, Dy CM, Lokesh, Jagan greet people...

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In Telangana, the Bathukamma festival is celebrated with fervour, while in Andhra Pradesh, the Durgamma temple at Indrakeeladri overflows with devotees. I feel blessed to have visited Durgamma during this auspicious time. I pray to Shakti Swarupini Durga that this Vijayadasami, a symbol of victory, brings success and prosperity to all Telugu people and the Telugu states," Kalyan added.

Minister for Education,

IT, and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, extended his best wishes, celebrating Dasara as a victory over adversity.

"The people themselves have ended the destructive rule of Jaganasura (Jagan), who wreaked havoc on the state. Our alliance has achieved a great victory over the evils of the YSRC. We have overcome various calamities, including floods, and have secured important achievements like the expansion of Lulu, Foxconn, HCL, and TCS, creating thousands of jobs. Polavaram is progressing,

the foundation stone for the new railway zone will be laid, and the Central government is aiding the preservation of Visakh Steel Plant. Let us celebrate this success, made possible by the support of the people and the blessings of Durgamma, as we work towards a brighter future for the state," Lokesh said.

Meanwhile, YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) president and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy also extended his greetings to the people on Durga Ashtami, Mahanavami, and

Vijayadasami.

He reflected on the festival's symbolism, noting, "Vijaya Dasami marks the victory of good over evil, as Goddess Durga triumphed over Mahishasura. No matter how powerful evil may seem, goodness will always prevail." Jagan Mohan Reddy wished for peace, prosperity, and success for all, praying that the blessings of Goddess Kanaka Durga bring joy and progress to every family in the state. He expressed hope for a future filled with happiness and well-being for all.

# Firms returning...

Continued from Page 1

"We will focus on wind, solar, and pump storage projects, cement factories in Kurnool, electronic manufacturing in Kadapa and Chittoor, and automobile industries in Anantapur. Aqua and petrochemical industries will come to East and West Godavari districts. Krishna and Guntur will also see significant investment," he said, reaffirming the government's commitment to balanced development across the state.

Minister Lokesh accused the YSRC of copying his initiatives, referring to the ruling party's "Blue Book" and "Good Book" as ideas taken from him. "I addressed over a hundred public meetings during my Padayatra, and we spoke about taking legal action against officials and YSRC leaders who violated the law. We even issued a Red Book, and action has already begun," he stated.

He also responded to allegations from the YSRC regarding flood relief efforts, stressing that for over 10 days, Chandrababu Naidu and the entire cabinet oversaw the relief work in flood-hit areas. "Where was YSRC during that time?" Lokesh questioned. He demanded an explanation from the ruling government regarding the crores of rupees Jagan Mohan Reddy claimed to have spent on flood relief. Lokesh clarified that about Rs 650 crore was spent on relief measures, and if there were any shortcomings, the government is prepared to address them. The minister further announced plans for the construction of an ESI Hospital in Guntur and a 100-bed hospital along with improved water supply for AIMS Mangalagiri. He also assured that underground drainage works in Mangalagiri would be completed within three months. "We will grant land pattas to those living on government lands for decades and reward party workers with nominated posts. We will also discuss the formation of the Sanatana Dharma Board and take a collective decision. Road repairs and new road constructions will also commence soon," Lokesh concluded.

# Houses for all poor...

Continued from Page 1

During his address, Minister Parthasarathy expressed gratitude to CM Chandrababu Naidu, Nara Lokesh, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi for entrusting him with the ministerial position. He emphasised the government's commitment to providing transparent and efficient governance. He criticised the previous regime, claiming that it had misappropriated Rs 4,500 crore allocated by the Centre for housing schemes, causing injustice to the poor.

The Minister pointed out that under the previous government, the loan assistance for housing units had been reduced from Rs 2.50 lakh to Rs 1.80 lakh. However, the current government is taking necessary steps, as directed by the CM, to ensure proper housing facilities for all, including journalists who contribute significantly to the state's development. Parthasarathy further stated that the state's debt had risen to Rs 10.50 lakh crore due to the mistakes of the previous government, leaving it unable to pay salaries to employees. The CM is working hard during the first 100 days of governance to rectify these issues and put the state back on the path of progress. Efforts are also being made to increase employment opportunities through a skill census to prepare young men and women for development. The government aims to boost the state's GDP and improve the per capita income of every citizen by 2029.

The Minister assured that all promises made during the elections will be fulfilled in phases, highlighting the increase in social security pensions from Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,000. He also mentioned that the Rs 1,600 crore debt left by the previous regime for grain procurement has been cleared by the present NDA government. Additionally, a Mega DSC has been announced to fill 16,700 teaching posts, aimed at providing quality education to students.

I&PR Director Himanshu Shukla, State Housing Corporation MD K. Rajababu, Additional Director Information Department L. Swarnalatha, Joint Director P. Kiran Kumar, and several other officials were present at the event.

# Rooster training claims...

Continued from Page 1

On October 9, he, along with his sons Manikantha (16) and Sai Kumar (13), went to the Polavaram canal to train their rooster in swimming. Unfortunately, all three slipped into the canal and drowned. The bodies were later retrieved. Stricken by the loss of her husband and sons, Devi (45) hanged herself in the bathroom of her house on Friday. The entire village was plunged into mourning, with devastated family members inconsolable. The incident has sent shockwaves across the district. Pedavegi SI K Ramakrishna has registered a case, and the bodies were sent to GGH Eluru for postmortem.

# Bus and rly...

Continued from Page 1

"Travelling during festivals has become extremely expensive with private travels. From Chennai to Vijayawada, I had to pay ₹2,500, and again from Vijayawada to Vizag, another ₹2,500. It costs nearly ₹10,000 just for travel, which is unaffordable for most people. The government should step in and take action against private operators exploiting passengers." Passengers across the state are facing similar struggles, as private operators take advantage of the situation, leaving many common travellers burdened by the skyrocketing costs.

# Half-brother...

Continued from Page 1

The 67-year-old Noel was chosen by the board to lead the string of philanthropic trusts that control the Tata empire. He is already a trustee on the boards of Sir Ratan Tata Trust and Sir Dorabji Tata Trust. Having functioned mostly under the shadows of his illustrious half-brother, Noel will now have the responsibility of leading the Tata Trusts - broadly comprising Sir Ratan Tata Trust & Allied Trusts, and Sir Dorabji Tata Trust & Allied Trusts -- that hold a controlling 66 per cent stake in Tata Sons, the holding and promoter firm of Tata Group companies. Known to keep a low profile, Noel was also seen at the cremation of his half brother on Thursday.

The meeting of the Tata Trusts board was held to choose the successor to Ratan Tata after his demise on Wednesday. Noel has been involved with the Tata Group since 1999, and chairs the successful retail arm Trent, which looks after chains like Westside and Zudio, and commands a market capitalisation of over Rs 2 lakh crore.

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DASARA FESTIVITIES ATOP INDRAKEELADRI

# Deity appears as Mahishasura Mardini

## Chief Secy, DGP and other dignitaries offer prayers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the auspicious 9th day of the Dasara celebrations at Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam, atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada, Goddess Kanaka Durga Devi graced devotees in the divine form of Sri Mahishasura Mardini. Special poojas were conducted by temple priests to honour the presiding deity, Durga Devi, on this sacred day.

Despite the persistent rains since morning, a large number of devotees, including Bhavanis from different districts, thronged the temple, many arriving on foot as a mark of their devotion. The goddess appeared in her Mahishasura Mardini avatar, symbolising the victory of good over evil and the triumph of knowledge over ignorance. According to ancient scriptures, this powerful form of the goddess not only vanquishes negativity but also bestows wisdom and strength upon her devotees.

As the Dasara festivities reached their peak, the number of visitors to Indrakeeladri surged. Along with regular devotees, many Bhavani Mala



As the Dasara festivities reached their peak, the number of visitors to Indrakeeladri surged. Along with regular devotees, many Bhavani Mala Diksha followers flocked to seek the blessings of Goddess Durga. Compared to previous days, the crowd on this day slightly eased, allowing devotees to have darshan within an hour.



with their families to offer their prayers. They were warmly welcomed by temple authorities and given a special darshan. The dignitaries were later presented with Laddu Prasadam, Sesha Vastram, and portraits of the deity as the priests bestowed blessings upon them.

Additionally, Jana Sena Party (JSP) MLC P. Hari Prasad, MLAs Ganta Srinivasa Rao, B. Ramanjaneyulu, Vasantha Krishna Prasad, film producer K. Ashok Kumar, actress Ananya, and others also visited the temple on the occasion of Maharnavami. They offered special prayers to Goddess Kanaka Durga in her Mahishasura Mardini form, receiving the blessings of the temple priests.

**TTD presents silk robes to Durga Devi**  
Assistant Executive Officer

(AEO) of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), B. Doraswamy, presented silk robes to Goddess Kanaka Durga Devi on behalf of TTD. The Durga Temple Executive Officer (EO), K.S. Rama Rao, Deputy EO Ratna Raju, and Chief Priest Srinivasa Sastry extended a grand traditional welcome to the TTD delegation. The silk robes were then ceremoniously offered to the goddess at the Antharalayam.

Meanwhile, the temple authorities organised an Archaka Sabha on the sixth floor of the Mallikharjuna Maha Mandapam, attended by around 175 archakas (temple priests). During the programme, the temple EO K.S. Rama Rao distributed cash rewards to the priests. He announced that such Archaka Sabhas would continue to be held as part of traditional temple rituals.



Diksha followers flocked to seek the blessings of Goddess Durga. Compared to previous days, the crowd on this day slightly eased, allowing devotees to have darshan within an hour.

State Chief Secretary Nirabh Kumar Prasad, Director General of Police (DGP) Ch. Dwaraka Tirumala Rao, and other dignitaries visited the temple

# CM making efforts to host National Games in '27: MP

## All India sub-junior ranking tournament concludes



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Yonex-Sunrise All India Sub-Junior (U-15 & U-17) Ranking Badminton Tournament, held in memory of Kalagara Naga Babu Memorial, concluded on Friday after a nine-day event at the Chennupati Ramakotaiah Municipal Corporation Indoor Stadium in Vijayawada. Vijayawada MP and Andhra Cricket Association (ACA) president, Kesineni Sivanat (Chinni), attended the closing ceremony as the chief guest, where he presented trophies to the winners and runners-up.

In his address, MP Chinni highlighted that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is making efforts to bring the National Games to Andhra Pradesh in 2027. He expressed that without hosting the National Games, the state may struggle to develop sports infrastructure. He also assured that the ACA would extend financial support to all sports across the state.

Furthermore, MP Chinni announced that a Sports City will soon be established in Amaravati. He added that under the leadership of CM

Chandrababu Naidu, the state government is committed to providing sports infrastructure in all 175 assembly constituencies. Additionally, he revealed plans for a Mega Sports Tournament, covering all disciplines, to be organised under the supervision of the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) from December 1 to January 15.

SAAP Chairman Animini Ravi Naidu, Andhra Pradesh Badminton Association Secretary Dr P Ankamma Chowdary, and other dignitaries were present at the event.

# Supply 16 commodities through PDS: CPM

## State committee meeting seeks measures to control prices

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The CPM State committee has demanded that the State government should take all necessary measures to control price rise in the State. Also, the party asked the government to supply 16 varieties of essential goods to the people through the Public Distribution System (PDS). Due to natural calamities, drought conditions and the government's failure to take appropriate steps, prices of essential goods are skyrocketing, the party said.

The two-day CPM State committee meetings were chaired by party secretary member Y Venkateswara Rao at the Balotsav Bhavan in Vijayawada. Politburo members BV Raghavulu, MA Baby and the State secretary V Srinivasa Rao attended the meeting.

On Friday, the CPM State committee released its resolutions in Vijayawada. The CPM two-day meeting felt that the soaring prices would affect the people. People's purchasing

capacity decreased due to unemployment, agriculture crisis, and the lack of employment opportunities, the party said. Additionally, soaring prices have severely affected the people, the meeting said. "Though there are adequate food grains in the State, rice prices have touched the sky," said Srinivasa Rao. The price is currently Rs.80 per kg, a 40 per cent increase from last year. Also, Dal (Redgram) prices have increased by 100 per cent—to Rs.180 from Rs.95 per kg, he added.

Similarly, prices of palm oil and other edible oils have increased by 30-40 per cent, he said in the press release. Onion price is Rs.60 per kg. Prices of vegetables have doubled. Poor people spend all their income on food grains and the impact will be felt on the education and health sectors.

Meanwhile, Srinivasa Rao alleged that the Central and State governments failed to control prices and violated the assurance of free rice supply for all people.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Civil Supplies Nadendra Manohar conducted a surprise inspection of several Rythu Bazars in Vijayawada on Friday. He visited the Patmata and APIIC Colony Rythu Bazars to assess the quality of essential goods like onions and tomatoes. The Minister spoke to consumers about the availability and prices of onions, tomatoes, edible oils, and other essentials.

Manohar announced that the State government has decided to implement uniform pricing across all Rythu Bazars, from Srikakulam to Chittoor. He emphasised that the Civil Supplies Department is offering subsidised rates for onions, tomatoes, refined oil, and palm oil. Specifically, refined oil will be provided at Rs.124 per litre, and palm oil at Rs. 110, benefiting all 1.49 crore ration cardholders in the State.

Besides, he instructed Rythu Bazar Estate Officers to ensure that price boards are displayed at every shop, ensuring trans-

# Uniform pricing in all Rythu Bazars

## Civil Supplies Minister inspects Rythu Bazars in Vijayawada



Minister Nadendra Manohar inspects at a Rythu Bazaar in Vijayawada on Friday. Sellers must adhere to the fixed prices, and any violations would result in strict action.

### THE PIONEER IMPACT

# Vijayawada Rural Mandal added to AP CEO website

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Andhra Pradesh has addressed an issue concerning the absence of Vijayawada Rural Mandal from its official website, www.ceoandhra.nic.in. This error caused difficulties for graduates from Vijayawada Rural Mandal, preventing them from registering as voters in the Krishna-Guntur Graduates' Constituency for the Graduate MLC (Member of the Legislative Council) elections.

However, following a news report published by The Pioneer on Friday, highlighting the problems faced by graduates trying to register for the Krishna-Guntur Graduate Constituency,



Chief Electoral Officer Vivek Yadav responded promptly. He instructed the authorities concerned to rectify the issue.

As a result, the Vijayawada Rural Mandal has now been reinstated on the voter registration platform, allowing graduates to register without further problems. CEO Vivek Yadav, in

a press release, confirmed that the Vijayawada Rural Mandal had been incorporated into the Graduates' MLC voter enrolment system.

The news report titled 'No V'wada Rural Mandal on AP CEO website' in The Pioneer had drawn attention to the registration challenges. "Upon verification, it was found that Vijayawada Rural Mandal was inadvertently missed. It has now been incorporated for enrolment," stated CEO Vivek Yadav.

Graduates from Vijayawada Rural Mandal, including teachers and private employees, expressed their gratitude to The Pioneer for bringing the issue to light and CEO Vivek Yadav for his swift action.

# Stress on preserving wildlife habitats, creating urban green spaces

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The newly appointed Chief Conservation Officer of the Visakhapatnam circle of the Forest Department, B. Mohamed Diwan Mydeen, has outlined his ambitious plans to safeguard wildlife lands and foster a deeper connection between the people and nature. Speaking to media people here on Friday, Mydeen emphasised the importance of preserving wildlife habitats and creating urban green spaces. "We will prioritise protecting wildlife lands from encroachment while developing city forests," he stated.

Addressing the challenges of land alienation, Mydeen revealed plans to review and manage ongoing court cases with relevant authorities. He also highlighted the progress of seven city parks under development across the combined Visakhapatnam district, stressing their role in providing



essential facilities for the people.

To enhance eco-tourism and raise environmental awareness, Mydeen announced that nine eco-tourism projects are in progress, with plans to implement the remaining initiatives soon. He also discussed the government's efforts to mitigate the damage caused by elephant movements in neighbouring districts.

Mydeen expressed his commitment to utilising the employment guarantee scheme to support forest protection measures, stating, "Efforts will be made to leverage this scheme for the benefit of our forests and wildlife."

# Andhra Loyola Institutions distribute 1,000 flood relief kits

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Loyola Institutions, in partnership with the Linsi Foundation, Compassion Connect (Phase 2) and numerous generous donors, undertook a mission of unparalleled scale to bring relief to the flood-ravaged families of Vijayawada.

The grand initiative saw the distribution of 1,000 comprehensive flood relief kits, primarily benefiting the marginalised rag-picking community, whose lives were upended by the recent deluge.

This remarkable humanitarian drive wasn't just another relief effort – it was a lifeline extended to those grappling with unimaginable loss.

The kit included two bedsheets, towels, a mosquito net, a full sanitisation kit, a gas stove, a mat, and essential dry rations.

# 'Nari Shakti' begins on a grand note in city

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The three-day 'Nari Shakti' celebrations commenced with grandeur at Punnami Ghat in Babburi Grounds on Friday. Nara Bhuvaneshwari, wife of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, attended the event as the chief guest on

the first day. Speaking on the occasion, she said the 'Nari Shakti' programme aims to showcase the rich culture and traditions of the Telugu people. The event is being organised by the Andhra Pradesh State Government, she added.

Bhuvaneshwari highlighted the significance of Dasara as a

festival that symbolises the power and bravery of women. She recalled how the festival marks the victory over the demon Mahishasura and noted that the sacred Indrakiladri Hill, home to the temple of Goddess Kanaka Durga, holds a special place in the hearts of devotees during this time. She expressed her wish for the goddess to bless the people of the state.

She also emphasised the pivotal role women are playing in the country, from village sarpanches to the President of India, and expressed pride in having Droupadi Murmu as the nation's President.

Bhuvaneshwari encouraged young girls to pursue education and aim for higher studies. She shared her own experience of managing Heritage Foods, saying, "When I first took charge, I had doubts about whether I could handle the company efficiently, but I embraced the challenge and gained a reputation for managing it well."

She further urged women to face the challenges and obstacles in their lives with courage and determination to achieve their goals.

BC Welfare Minister S. Savitha, Home Minister V. Anitha, and Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh also called on women to excel in all fields.



Earlier, a 'Maha Harathi' was performed on the banks of the Krishna River, filling the entire area with a deep sense of devotion.

NTR District Collector G. Srujana, Tourism MD Abhishek Kishore, and several IAS and IPS officers were among the dignitaries present at the event.

# Sea kayaking coaching camp

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The District Sports Development Authority, in collaboration with the Canoeing and Kayaking Association of Andhra Pradesh (CKAAP), is set to host an exciting sea kayaking coaching camp at Rushikonda Beach. Scheduled to be held on Saturday from 6 AM to 9 PM, the camp invites adventure enthusiasts to dive into the world of sea kayaking, regardless of their skill level.

This camp is a fantastic opportunity for both beginners and experienced kayakers to learn the fundamentals of sea kayaking while enjoying the stunning beauty of our coastline," said an official from the District Sports Development Authority. "Participants will gain valuable skills and confidence on the water."

# YSRCP to protest VSP privatisation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP Visakhapatnam district president and former minister, Gudivada Amarnath, announced that the party, along with steel plant workers and public organisations, will soon launch protests, including dharnas, against the privatisation of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP).

Addressing the media in Visakhapatnam, Amarnath expressed his disappointment that TDP Chief N. Chandrababu Naidu, despite his visit to Delhi, failed to issue a clear statement on stopping the privatisation. He noted with surprise that Naidu, who had previously opposed privatisation during election campaigns, now admitted to being uncertain about the issue.

Amarnath stressed that every citizen of Andhra Pradesh has to safeguard the steel plant, which was established after a prolonged struggle and the sacrifice of 32 lives. He criticised the current coalition government for weakening the plant within just 100 days of coming to power. "The blast furnace has already been shut down, permanent employees are not being paid on time, and housing allowances have been stopped," he pointed out.

He questioned why Naidu, with the support of 16 MPs, could not take a firm stand to protect the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, especially when a smaller group of MPs had managed to save the Bhadravathi Steel Plant in Karnataka.



Nara Bhuvaneshwari, wife of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Ministers K Durgesh, V Anita, Sabita as well as wives of officers and women officers participated in the 3-Day Nari Shakti programme in Vijayawada on Friday.

# 'Ensure draw of lots for liquor shops is transparent'

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani has directed officials to ensure a transparent lottery process for the allocation of liquor shops under the new liquor policy.

During a meeting held on Friday, the Collector reviewed the arrangements and instructed officials to complete preparations swiftly. She emphasised that the lottery process should be conducted flawlessly, as part of the State Government's new liquor policy.

"The new liquor shops will start operations from October 16 in the district. A total of 4,400 applications have been received for 175 liquor shops in West Godavari. The deadline for receiving applications is 7 pm on October 11," said the Collector.



The lottery process will be held on October 14 at Nirmaladevi Kalyanamandapam in Peda Amiram. Collector Nagarani instructed officials to make arrangements on a war footing, ensuring there are no power failures during the process. She asked the electricity

department to set up a generator as a backup.

The Collector further directed that CCTV cameras be installed at the venue and counting machines be arranged for handling money. The scrutiny of applications will be completed on October 12 and 13,

with the lottery taking place on October 14.

Joint Collector T. Raul Kumar Reddy, District Excise Officer Dr. R. S. Kumareswaran, District Lead Bank Manager Prasad, and Arogyasri Coordinator Dr. Keerthi Shrevaan were present at the meeting.

# WG donates Rs 1.17 cr for flood relief

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

The West Godavari district has collected Rs 1.17 crore worth of donations from the people, institutions and individuals to extend help to the flood victims and handed over the amount to the Chief Minister.

District Collector Chadalavada Nagarani handed over Rs 1,17,75,351 donations, collected from the people, individuals and organizations, to Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu in the secretariat on Friday.

She said that BV Raju educational institutions donated Rs 25 lakh, educational institutions associations and other institutions donated Rs 11,76,904, revenue employees donated Rs 7,62,039, cooperative society donated Rs 6,05,053, the management of Swamy Vivekananda Seva Samithi, Sri Gopikrishna Infrastructure limited and the management of Bhimavaram hospitals contributed Rs 5 lakh each.

The total amount of donations for flood relief operations 1,17,75,351 was handed over to



the Chief Minister by the District Collector. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu thanked the people of West Godavari for donating the amount for the CMRE.



# Australian team visits Vizag Port

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA) has welcomed a high-level Australian delegation, including David Eggleston, Deputy Consul General, Australian Consulate, and Grace Williams, First Secretary, Australian High Commission. The visit aimed to strengthen trade relations between India and Australia, particularly in the energy and steel sectors.

Durgesh Kumar Dubey, Deputy Chairperson of VPA, hosted the delegation and provided a comprehensive overview of the port's facilities and strategic initiatives. He emphasised the crucial role of India's import of coking coal from Australia in supporting

Goal is to strengthen trade relations, particularly in energy and steel sectors

**Durgesh Kumar Dubey, Deputy Chairperson of VPA, hosted the delegation and provided a comprehensive overview of the port's facilities and strategic initiatives. He emphasised the crucial role of India's import of coking coal from Australia in supporting the country's steel production.**

Eggleston appreciated the port's hospitality and the potential for enhanced cooperation. He highlighted Australia's significant contribu-

tion to India's energy requirements and expressed interest in developing cruise tourism in Visakhapatnam.

The discussions covered a range of key issues, including ease of doing business, port connectivity, transshipment, and efforts to improve port operations. Both sides expressed optimism about the future of bilateral trade relations and explored opportunities for further collaboration in various sectors.

Eggleston commended VPA for its professionalism and support during the visit, paving the way for more fruitful engagements in the future.

# 'DWCRA Exhibition empowers rural women'

254 stalls showcase products crafted by DWCRA women from 18 States

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

The All-India DWCRA Products Exhibition opened its doors in conjunction with the Sri Pydithalli Ammavaru Festival, part of the Vizianagaram Utsav. Held at Mansa Grounds on Peddacheruvu Road, the exhibition was inaugurated by former Union Minister and Mansa Chairman Pusapati Ashok Gajapathiraju. The event features 254 stalls showcasing a diverse range of products including food, textiles, Ayurvedic items, decorative pieces, and household appliances—all crafted by DWCRA women from 18 different States. Unique Kath artworks are also available for purchase.

Pusapati Ashok Gajapathiraju, addressing the media, highlighted the significance of such exhibitions in empowering rural women. "Exhibitions like this provide a valuable platform to showcase the skills and craftsmanship of women, especially from rural areas. It is crucial for their economic independence and dignity," he said. He added, "The 'Paidithalli Amma



Sirimanotsavam should be celebrated with the same grandeur as the Mysore Utsav. I invite everyone to be a part of this vibrant festival."

State Minister for MSME, SERP, and NRI Affairs, Kondapalli Srinivas, who was present at the inauguration, stressed the role of such events

in reducing poverty. "These exhibitions contribute significantly to the economic development of women in rural areas," he said. The Minister also shared that a request has been made to the Chief Minister for 10 acres of land in Amaravati for a permanent venue. He expressed gratitude

to the organisations that helped conduct the exhibition and encouraged the public to participate in the 10-day event.

MP Kalishetti Appalanaidu spoke about the preparations for the Sri Pydithalli Ammavaru and Vizianagaram Utsav, noting that efforts are

underway to ensure a grand celebration. "We are incorporating the opinions of various groups to make the event a success. I urge everyone to participate and join in the festivities."

MP Pusapati Aditi Vijayalakshmi Gajapathiraju noted that this is the first time the festival is being organised by the government. "Beautiful handicrafts, textiles, and artworks made by women from across the country are on display. I encourage the people of the district to support these women by purchasing their products," she said.

District Collector Dr BR Ambedkar, SERP CEO Veera Pandyan, Joint Collector S Sethu Madhavan, NABARD CGM KVS Prasad, DRDA PD A. Kalyana chakravarthy, ZP CEO BV Satyanarayana, CPO P Murali, Municipal Commissioner Nallanaiah, NABARD DD Nagarjuna, as well as political leaders and notable individuals like Palavalasa Yashaswini, Kondapalli Kondalrao, IVP Raju, Boddula Narsinga Rao, and Avanapu Vikram visited the expo.



# Dy CM sets up special panels to develop Pithapuram

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj K Pawan Kalyan took a significant initiative for the comprehensive development of his Pithapuram constituency by constituting special committees.

Official sources here Friday said that these committees are headed by 21 district-level officers of various departments.

The committees will tour all 52 villages and two municipalities in the constituency and submit a detailed report on the developmental needs.

The local Jana Sena Party leaders in liaison with coalition partners—TDP and BJP already drew the attention of Pawan Kalyan about the major problems of the constituency, the sources added.

Already the district Collector Shan Mohan is holding a grievances redressal cell once a fortnight at Pithapuram and giving major thrust on solving the problems on war footing.

# 28 kg of cannabis seized; six peddlers arrested



PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

The police seized 28 kg of ganja while being transported illegally on two scooters and arrested six peddlers at Telaprolu village in Gannavaram mandal.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, Krishna district Superintendent of Police R Gangadhar Rao said that a police team conducted checking of vehicles on the national highway at Telaprolu on October 8. The police team noticed two persons fleeing

after seeing police leaving their two scooters on the highway.

The police checked the scooters and found 28 kg. The police launched a search and arrested two drug peddlers. On the information provided by two arrested peddlers, the police arrested four more persons. Four of the arrested persons belong to Kerala State and two belong to Odisha State.

The arrested drug peddlers told the police that to earn money easily to fund their vices, they had taken up the

ganja-selling business. They purchased the ganja in Odisha in bulk and were taking it to Kerala on scooters to sell in retail. The SP gave the names of the arrested as Niyaz, Augustine, Sadiq, Dhanush, Sadhu and Hemanth.

The SP appreciated Gannavaram SDPO Chalasani Srinivasa Rao, Hanuman Junction CI KVVN Satyanarayana, SI Chava Suresh and other police personnel for arresting ganja smugglers and seizure of 28 kg of ganja.

# RS Praveen joined 'doras' who denied education & medical care to the poor: CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that BRS leader RS Praveen Kumar has joined hands with the 'doras', who deprived the poor of education and medical care, and is criticising the Congress government.

The CM was speaking while laying the foundation stone for the Young India Integrated Residential School in Kondurg in Shadnagar of Rangareddy district on Friday.

He said that former Prime Minister, the late PV Narasimha Rao, introduced residential schools in United



AP in 1972 when he was the CM.

"People like Burra Venkatesham could join the IAS due to PVN's visionary ideas. However, the BRS gov-

ernment did not do anything to provide education to the poor or develop the infrastructure in schools. The opposition is criticising the government due to the Congress admin's commitment to provide education to the poor," the CM said.

"I respect RS Praveen Kumar. I don't mind which political party he belongs to. Why is he objecting to the setting up of Young India Integrated Schools on 25-acre campuses spending crores?"

KCR has money to construct BRS offices and buy lands but no funds to provide infrastructure in schools," the CM

said. The CM said that 'doras' deprived the poor of education and medical care. Leaders like RS Praveen Kumar joined hands with the 'doras' and have been criticising the government's attempts to ensure the well-being of weaker sections. As KCR said should SCs, STs and BCs live by raising sheep and goats, the CM asked.

The CM said that BRS leaders have not yet understood the reason for their poor performance in the Lok Sabha elections and wondered saying that Praveen Kumar is toeing the same line.

# 93 red sanders logs seized, 5 smugglers arrested



PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Red Sanders Anti-Smuggling Task Force (RSATF) seized 93 red sander logs and two cars, and arrested five smugglers at Somasila in Nellore district.

DSP G. Balareddy informed the media on Friday that on the directions of SP L. Subba Rayudu, an RSATF team led by RI (Operations) K. Suresh Kumar Reddy and K. Suresh Babu conducted combing operations in the forest area. The task force team

intercepted the smugglers on the Somasila-Ananthasagaram road while they were transporting the red sander logs. The seized logs, along with the cars, were taken into custody, and the five smugglers were arrested and shifted to the task force police station.

The SP announced rewards for the task force personnel for their successful operation. DSP Balareddy added that the Preventive Detention (PD) Act would be invoked against repeat offenders among the arrested smugglers.

# Mentally-challenged woman finds her way home

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a heartwarming tale of perseverance and community spirit, a mentally-challenged woman, Vidhala Tirumala (40), has been reunited with her family thanks to the relentless efforts of the Red Cross.

Tirumala, who lost both parents at a young age, was found in a distressed state by the Bheemili police. Initially, she was transferred to a government shelter, but the Red Cross, moved by her plight, took it upon themselves to help her find her way back home.

"When we learned more about Tirumala's situation, we felt a deep sense of responsibility to assist her," stated a spokesperson from the Red Cross. "She gradually opened up to us, expressing her longing to return to her hometown." With patience and understanding, the Red Cross organisers gathered vital information

about Tirumala's family. "She mentioned that her sister, Govindamma, was involved in service programmes at the Sai Baba temple, which gave us a crucial clue," the spokesperson added.

Through diligent investigations, the Red Cross team discovered that Tirumala had another sister named Kondamma. Following this lead, they ventured to the Koli Highway area to gather more details. With the invaluable assistance of local villagers, the manager and staff of the Red Cross Pedawaltheru Shelterless Homeless programme swiftly followed up on Tirumala's case and contacted the Bheemili police.

"The cooperation of the community was indispensable in reuniting Tirumala with her family," said a police officer involved in the case. "We ensured her safe handover to her family, which brought immense relief to everyone."

ACROSS THE STATES



**Jeweller held in Palghar for cheating customers**

A jeweller on the run for more than a year after allegedly duping several customers in Maharashtra's Palghar district was held from Madhya Pradesh, a police official said on Friday. Two jewellers, identified as Kanaram Dalaram Chowdhari and Hotes Shantilal Dholakia from Rajasthan and Gujarat, respectively, had fled after cheating customers of Rs 1.38 crore between January 2022 and May 2023, Palghar Superintendent of Police Balasaheb Patil said. "Dholakia was arrested in 2023 but Chowdhari was absconding. On a tip off, Chowdhari was held from Indore in Madhya Pradesh. We have recovered Rs 17.71 lakh from him. Further probe is underway," he said.



**Animals sacrificed at 'Chhatar Jatra'**

Despite repeated appeals by the administration to desist from animal sacrifice, hundreds of goats and hens were slaughtered to 'appease' Maa Manikeswar during the annual 'Chhatar Jatra' in Odisha's Bhawanipatna on Friday. Every Mahastami, the eighth day of Durga Puja, the streets of Bhawanipatna, the district headquarters of tribal-dominated Kalahandi in Odisha, become bloodstained as both tribal and non-tribal people publicly sacrifice animals in the presence of senior police and administrative officers, all of whom expressed their helplessness to stop the practice due to its deep ties to the religious sentiments of the local population, including the Kandha tribes. Requesting anonymity, a senior magistrate said, "Though the administration held several awareness campaigns against animal sacrifice, people hardly consider it an act of cruelty."



**Probe into PIO's social media posts in Singapore**

The Singapore government has called for investigation of an Indian-origin activist here for not posting a correction to her social media posts related to execution of drug-related convicted prisoners, which it said is incorrect. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said it would refer Kokilia Annamalai to the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act (POFMA) Office for "investigations into her non-compliance with the correction direction that was issued to her on October 5". Annamalai was issued the order for posts she had made on Facebook and X. The posts falsely stated that "the government schedules and stays executions arbitrarily and without regard for due legal process, and that the State does not bear the legal burden of proving a drug trafficking charge against the accused person", the MHA said on Friday. The two social media platforms have been issued with targeted correction directions after the activist did not comply with a POFMA order issued to her last week, according to a report by the Channel News Asia.

**Cong avers MP deputy CM has links with drug racket kingpin**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after a massive drug haul from a factory on the outskirts of Bhopal, the Congress on Friday alleged that a close associate of Madhya Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Jagdish Devda is involved in drug trade in the state and questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "silence" on the issue.

The opposition party demanded Devda's resignation alleging that he has links with the kingpin of the drug racket busted recently by the Gujarat Police and Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in Madhya Pradesh.

Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Jitendra Patwari alleged that Prime Minister Modi did not provide two crore jobs every year but "created two crore drug addicts every year".

There was no immediate reaction from the BJP or Devda on the allegations.

Drugs in many states are linked to the racket busted in Bhopal and the Modi government is completely responsible for this, Patwari said at a press conference at the AICC headquarters here.

The Modi government had presented a report in Parliament, stating that around 40 crore people in the country consume drugs, he said.

This number of drug addicts

**Questions PM's 'silence'**



in the country is increasing by about 2.10 crore every year, Patwari claimed.

The situation is such that even

BJP leaders and workers are worried because their children are addicted to drugs, he said.

"Today, the drug business is

spreading throughout the country. In such a situation, what steps is the Modi government taking? A favourite of the deputy chief minister of Madhya Pradesh is running a drug racket in the state, so why is Chief Minister Mohan Yadav silent?" Patwari said.

He said the BJP had come out with a lame defence that just because Devda had been photographed with the kingpin does not mean they were close.

It was not about just one or two or three pictures, at least 500 photographs and videos of the kingpin with the deputy chief minister were available on social media and that cannot be a mere coincidence, Patwari said.

**Delhi's Rs 7,000-cr drugs haul : LOCs issued against six including UK national**

New Delhi, Oct 11 (PTI) The Delhi Police, which is probing the city's biggest-ever seizure of cocaine worth over Rs 7,000 crore, has issued look-out circulars (LOCs) against six people, including an Indian-origin UK national who fled the country before the latest recovery of 208 kg of the drug from west Delhi.

According to police sources, the UK



national, Savinder Singh, came to India last month to supervise the transportation and delivery of the 208-kg consignment suspected to have been brought from South American countries.

The sources said Singh spent around 25 days in three separate locations in Delhi before fleeing to the United Kingdom soon after the arrest of the first four members of the syndicate.



**Indian Army trusted, inspiring organisations in country: Rajnath**

PNS ■ GANGTOK

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday praised the Indian Army as one of the most trusted and inspiring organisations in the country, highlighting its significant role in safeguarding borders, combating terrorism and assisting civil administration in times of need.

Addressing the Army Commanders Conference, held virtually from an army location in Sukma (West Bengal) due to inclement weather that prevented his helicopter from reaching Sikkim, Singh expressed admiration for every soldier's contributions and honoured those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to the nation.

"The Indian Army plays a significant role in guarding our borders and fighting terrorism apart from providing assistance to the civil administration in every need of hour," he said while addressing the Army Commanders Conference.

He commended the Army leadership for advancing the nation's 'Defence and Security' vision, as outlined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Singh noted that he has attended the Army Commanders' Conference for over five years, emphasising that these high-level discussions benefit both the armed forces and the nation as a whole. He also praised the Army's efforts in integrating cutting-edge technology.

**2022 ATTACK ON COPS IN HUBBALLI**

**Congress govt in Karnataka withdraws case against mob**



PNS ■ BENGALURU

The Congress government in Karnataka has decided to withdraw a criminal case registered against a mob which had attacked policemen with stones on April 16, 2022 in Hubballi town.

This was one of the 43 cases the state Cabinet decided to withdraw at its meeting on Thursday following a petition by the Anjuman-e-Islam to the Home Minister G Parameshwara, official sources said.

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi on Friday described the

Government's decision as "height of appeasement."

"Unfortunately, the Congress party here in Karnataka has reached the height of appeasement. They have withdrawn the case under the UAPA case, when the matter is before the NIA court. In normal course as far as I know, the state cannot withdraw it but still they have withdrawn it. This is the height of appeasement," Joshi said.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said: "The government has the powers to withdraw some cases. There is

**Politics of appeasement: BJP**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday accused the Congress government in Karnataka of indulging in "politics of appeasement" and asked how will the party protect the country's democracy if it cannot even protect the police personnel of the state under its rule.

This came after the Karnataka government decided to withdraw a criminal case registered against a group of people, who had attacked the policemen with stones in Hubballi town on April 16, 2022.

a Cabinet subcommittee under Home Minister's leadership, as per their discretion they have taken the decision and the Cabinet has approved it. I will see what it is."

**TRUMP'S PROMISE ON POWER TARIFF**

**Free ki revri reaches US: Kejriwal takes dig at critics**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Citing Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's promise to halve electricity costs, AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal took a dig at his political rivals on Friday, saying "free ki revri" has now reached the United States.

Addressing the Detroit Economic Club on Thursday, Trump vowed to slash energy prices and expedite environmental approvals to boost electricity capacity if elected. "I will cut the price of energy and electricity in HALF within 12 months. We will seriously expedite our environmental approvals and quickly double our electricity capacity. This will drive down inflation and make America and Michigan the best places on earth to build a factory," the former US president said in a post on X.

Repeating the message on the microblogging platform on Friday, Kejriwal said, "Trump has announced that he will reduce electricity rates by half. Free ki revri reach US."

Kejriwal is often attacked over subsidised electricity and

**'Himachal's Bismillah Khan' Surajmani dead**

**Free ki revri reaches US: Kejriwal takes dig at critics**



PNS ■ BILASPUR (HP)

Noted shehnai player from Himachal Pradesh Surajmani passed away at the AIIMS-Bilaspur, officials said on Friday. He was 63.

Suffering from chronic pancreatitis, Surajmani breathed his last on Thursday. He is survived by wife and two sons.

Hailing from Chachiot village in the Nahan area of Mandi district, Surajmani was often referred to as the "Bismillah Khan of Himachal" after the late shehnai maestro. He was known for his contributions in preserving the folk-music traditions of the hill state. Sources said Surajmani suffered a pancreatic attack soon after returning home from Chandigarh, where he had gone for a recording.

**NEWLY ELECTED J-K MLAs**

**Shagun youngest, Abdul Rather oldest**

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

BJP's 29-year-old Shagun Parihar is the youngest member of the newly elected Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, while National Conference veteran Abdul Rahim Rather aged 80 is the oldest member. Parihar, who lost her father and uncle in a terror attack in 2018, is the only member of assembly below the age of 30 while Rather, the seven-time MLA from Chara-



e-Sharief, is the only octogenarian in the house, data compiled

by Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) reveals.

According to the ADR data, the average age of an MLA in Jammu and Kashmir is 55.71 years, which is reflected in the number of legislators with 32 falling in the age group of 51 to 60 years. Among the 10 youngest newly-elected MLAs are PDP's Waheed Para (Pulwama), Aam Admi Party's Mehraj Malik (Doda), NC's Mehar Ali (Kangan), independent Rameshwar Singh (Bani) and BJP's Sunil Bharadwaj (Ramnagar).

**BJP will sweep Assembly polls in Maharashtra, Jharkhand: Nadda**

PNS ■ BILASPUR (HP)

After Haryana, the BJP would also sweep the upcoming assembly elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand, BJP president J P Nadda asserted on Friday.

Nadda, who paid obeisance at the Shri Naina Devi temple here and performed Kanjak puja, said people are happy with the performance of the BJP government at the Centre led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Talking to a group of reporters, he said the BJP has achieved a lot in Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir and credited it for this goes to the people and God.

The Union health minister was here to offer prayers after the party's victory in the polls.

"The party would also sweep upcoming assembly elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand," he said.

Later addressing party workers, he said in Haryana, an illusion was created.

The ground reality was something else but some other environment was created and finally the BJP won the polls and the vote share has increased in Jammu and Kashmir.

The people of Haryana -



youth, farmers, women and all other sections - gave a befitting reply to the opposition parties and made it clear that they believe in the policies and leadership of Prime Minister Modi, he said.

"From six to eight per cent voting in Jammu and Kashmir to over 60 per cent voting shows that the people believe in the democratic setup and support scrapping of Article 370," he said.

Nadda said that today, terrorism is under control and the BJP rule is not to just sit in power but to make the country safe. Referring to the scenario prevailing in the world, he said Modi has asserted that this is not time for war but for development and everyone should be taken along together.

**Society that worships women is powerful: UP CM**

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday said a society that worships and respects its women is inherently capable and powerful.

Extending heartfelt greetings to the people of Uttar Pradesh on the auspicious occasions of Mahanavami and Vijaydashami celebrated as part of the grand festival of Sharadiya Navratri, the chief minister emphasised the strength and capability of a society are reflected in how it treats its women.

Speaking to the media after

performing the 'Kanya Pujan' ritual at the Gorakhnath Temple here, Adityanath shared the significance of this tradition.

"Sharadiya Navratri is a festival that upholds and honors the dignity of women," he said.

Adityanath said the followers of Sanatan Dharma in India and around the world come together with devotion and enthusiasm to worship the nine forms of 'Maa Bhagwati Durga' during the festivals of 'Sharadiya' and 'Vasantik Navratri'.

The rich traditions of Sanatan Dharma's festivals



Adityanath said the followers of Sanatan Dharma in India and around the world come together with devotion and enthusiasm to worship the nine forms of 'Maa Bhagwati Durga' during the festivals of 'Sharadiya' and 'Vasantik Navratri'.

attract attention and on the ninth day of Sharadiya Navratri, the ritual of Kanya Pujan is performed along with the worship of Maa Siddhidatri, who fulfills all wishes, he added.

The chief minister also expressed his gratitude for having the opportunity to carry out this sacred ritual as per the long-standing traditions of Gorakshapeeth.

"Navratri is not just a festival of worshipping Shakti (power) but also represents respect for women, who make up half of the population. Since ancient times, Indian wisdom

has embraced the belief that where women are worshipped, divine powers reside," said Adityanath.

He said the worship of the nine forms of 'Maa Durga' during Navratri is a significant tradition in Sanatan Dharma, offering inspiration for ensuring the safety, respect and empowerment of women.

"The safety of society is closely linked with the safety and dignity of women. By empowering women and respecting their dignity, both the state and the country can progress towards prosperity for all," he added.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## India acts East

PM Modi visits Laos for the 21st India-ASEAN Summit; says the 21st century belongs to India and ASEAN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Laos for the 21st India-ASEAN Summit reestablishes India's diplomatic engagement with Southeast Asian nations. With a focus on enhancing connectivity and resilience, Modi announced a comprehensive 10-point action plan aimed at fortifying the India-ASEAN partnership. This initiative not only underscores the importance of regional collaboration in a time of global uncertainty but also highlights the potential for growth within the 21st-century landscape, which PM Modi asserts 'belongs to India and ASEAN.' PM Modi emphasised the critical need for friendship and cooperation among India and ASEAN countries, especially as tensions rise globally, with conflicts affecting various regions. He reiterated that India-ASEAN friendship, coordination dialogue and cooperation are essential at a time when several parts of the world are facing conflicts and tensions. The summit also coincides with the review of a decade of India's Act East Policy, which has significantly contributed to the doubling of India-ASEAN trade to over USD 130 billion in the past ten years.



The Prime Minister's vision for deeper ties with ASEAN encompasses several key areas. One of the important initiatives is the enhancement of connectivity, marked by the establishment of direct flight connections with seven ASEAN nations. This move aims to facilitate easier travel and trade, further integrating the economies of the region. In the realm of technology, PM Modi announced the launch of fintech connectivity with Singapore, setting a precedent for future collaborations across the ASEAN region. This initiative promotes technological advancement and financial inclusion, essential for emerging economies. Cultural ties are also a focal point, with efforts to restore shared heritage in Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar and Indonesia reflecting India's commitment to preserving regional history and identity. Moreover, Modi stressed the urgency of completing the ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement (AITIGA) review to unlock greater economic potential for both parties. He highlighted the significance of educational exchanges. Over 300 students from ASEAN countries have benefitted from scholarships at Nalanda University, fostering deeper educational ties. As regional tensions persist, especially concerning maritime disputes in the South China Sea and the ongoing crisis in Myanmar, PM Modi's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative underscores the need for collaborative efforts in ensuring regional stability and security. This approach, along with a commitment to humanitarian cooperation, highlights India's readiness to support ASEAN nations in times of natural disasters. India's vision is firmly anchored in a people-centric approach, indicating a commitment to sustainable development that addresses the needs and aspirations of citizens across both regions. Indeed India and ASEAN nations have much in common; they share heritage and values which date back to centuries. It is time to revive them.

By declaring PPPs, sports bodies, and cooperatives as public authorities under the RTI Act, a significant amount of time and resources could be saved. These entities often handle substantial public funds, and their exclusion from RTI coverage has raised questions about transparency. Including them under the Act would not only enhance accountability but also reduce the number of cases that reach Information Commissions and courts, streamlining the entire RTI process.

### PICTALK



An artist paints effigies of the demon king Ravana on the Dussehra, in Prayagraj

# Strengthening RTI Act with practical reforms



SUBHASH CHANDRA AGRAWAL

As the Right to Information (RTI) Act completes 19 years, it is time to amend the rules and expand its scope to ensure it continues to serve its purpose effectively

The Right to Information (RTI) Act, implemented on October 12, 2005, marked a monumental step toward government transparency and accountability in India. Over the years, the Act has been instrumental in exposing corruption and various scams, empowering citizens to demand information from public authorities. However, while the Act has undeniably brought about significant reform, certain amendments to the RTI rules—not the Act itself—are necessary to prevent misuse, streamline the process, and reduce the burden on the courts.

### Addressing Misuse and Unnecessary Litigation

One of the key challenges facing the RTI framework today is the misuse of the system by individuals and groups, often leading to unnecessary appeals and challenges in courts. The Central Information Commission (CIC), tasked with handling RTI appeals, is often burdened by frivolous cases that clog the system and delay the resolution of genuine complaints. Amendments to the RTI rules, particularly in the area of public-private partnerships (PPPs), sports bodies, and cooperatives, could alleviate some of this pressure.

By declaring PPPs, sports bodies, and cooperatives as public authorities under the RTI Act, a significant amount of time and resources could be saved. These entities often handle substantial public funds, and their exclusion from RTI coverage has raised questions about transparency. Including them under the Act would not only enhance accountability but also reduce the number of cases that reach Information Commissions and courts, streamlining the entire RTI process.

### Bringing Government Allotments Under RTI

A critical area that requires attention is the issue of government land and accommodation allotments. Many government-owned properties are allotted at subsidised rates, often raising concerns about favouritism or corruption. To address this, all such allotments should be brought



under the purview of the RTI Act. Moreover, future allotments should be made conditional upon compliance with the Act, ensuring that beneficiaries are transparent about the process and accountable to the public. This move would further reduce the burden on Information Commissions, as it would discourage non-compliant beneficiaries from evading public scrutiny. It would also provide citizens with a tool to question and monitor how public resources are being allocated, contributing to more transparent government.

### Streamlining High Offices' RTI Applications

High offices such as those of the President, Prime Minister, and Chief Ministers often receive RTI applications that may not be directly related to their functions. To improve efficiency, these offices should only address RTI applications that pertain specifically to their roles. Any other applications should be returned to the applicant, along with advice on which department or authority they should approach instead. This measure would reduce the workload on these high offices while ensuring that citizens receive the information they seek from the correct sources.

### Bringing Private Sector Banks Under RTI

The financial sector has long been an area where greater transparency is needed, particularly in light of recent scan-



ONE OF THE KEY CHALLENGES FACING THE RTI FRAMEWORK TODAY IS THE MISUSE OF THE SYSTEM BY INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS, OFTEN LEADING TO UNNECESSARY APPEALS AND CHALLENGES IN COURTS

dals and issues of financial mismanagement. While public sector banks are already subject to RTI, the private sector remains outside the Act's purview. This is a matter of concern, given the extensive use of public funds by private banks and the critical role they play in the economy. To address this gap, private sector banks should be brought under the RTI Act. This would allow citizens to seek information about their financial practices, thereby increasing accountability in the sector.

### Standardising RTI Fees and Preventing Misuse

Another issue that plagues the current RTI framework is the inconsistency in application fees across states. RTI fees should be standardised nationwide at Rs 50, which would cover the cost of 20 photocopied pages. Furthermore, no fees should be charged for appeals. These changes would simplify the process for citizens and eliminate confusion regarding varying charges in different states. However, there is also a need to address the misuse of free RTI applications by certain vested interests. For instance, contractors have been known to exploit Below Poverty Line (BPL) workers by having them file RTI requests on their behalf, thus avoiding fees. To prevent this, the free provision for BPL applicants should be limited to 20 pages. Any additional pages should incur a nominal charge, ensur-

ing that the system is not abused while still providing free access to information for genuinely disadvantaged individuals.

### Enhancing Accessibility and Digital Integration

To further streamline the RTI process, post offices across the country should accept post-free RTI applications. This would make it easier for citizens, particularly those in rural areas, to file applications without worrying about postage costs. In addition, a mandatory requirement for ID proof, as seen in states like Punjab and Haryana, should be implemented nationwide. This would prevent misuse of the RTI system and ensure that applications are being filed by genuine individuals seeking information. The introduction of online RTI portals has been a positive step in recent years, but there is still room for improvement. All states should adopt the National Informatics Centre (NIC)-designed RTI websites, which allow for greater standardisation and ease of use. These portals should feature auto-emailed responses and alerts, keeping applicants informed of the status of their requests. Moreover, outdated state-specific RTI laws, such as the Delhi RTI Act, should be repealed in favor of the national RTI Act to ensure uniformity across the country.

(The writer is a RTI activist; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### INDIAN WORKERS ARE OVERBURDENED

Madam — "Work more, take less" is the mantra of the Indian employers of all sectors who are hell-bent on extracting more and more work from their employees while the emolument is not parallel to the labour at all. Consequently, stress tends to percolate through the workplace as shown by two work-related deaths of young employees in private companies. An International Labour Organisation (ILO) report that Indians work 46.7 hours per week, much higher than their American, Japanese, South African and Chinese counterparts, speaks volumes about the workload taken by an average Indian worker.

It is documented in other papers, too, that more than sixty percent of the Indian workers are stressed at work, while in general the Asian countries' workforce is more burdened by work. The primary cause for all this can be traced to the burgeoning unemployment in the country and the dearth of the right job for the right person. Employers' proclivity to recruit less to save their coffers has compounded the problem. Egoistic and haughty employers, fretting and fuming over no real reason, have pushed an already overstressed Indian worker to the edge. There is no time to waste: balancing work with rest should engage everyone's attention including that of the government.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

### INDIA-MALDIVES RELATIONS IMPROVE

Madam—India and its neighbour Maldives recently concluded a bilateral summit and agreed upon numerous deals. This came after a strain of ties between the two nations for almost one year after Mohamed Muizzu became president of the Island nation. India came forward to help the Maldives recover from its economic distress by signing a currency swap deal of around 385 million dollars. The two nations also agreed to enhance strategic and defence cooperation in the future. This visit has

## Sports promote social unity



From time immemorial, sports have always been more than just games; they are powerful agents of social change, capable of uniting people, breaking down religion and caste barriers, and driving positive transformations in society. From local community

games to international tournaments, sports have a unique way of bringing people together, fostering a sense of community, and promoting health and well-being. One of the most compelling aspects of sport is its ability to bridge cultural gaps. Whether it's a small-town soccer match or the grandeur of the Olympic Games, sports create a common ground where individuals can connect and share experiences.

This shared passion fosters mutual respect and understanding, promoting peace and camaraderie among different cultures. The impact of sports on society is profound, touching on aspects of culture, economy, and personal development. As we move forward, embracing the positive aspects of sport while addressing its challenges will ensure that it continues to be a powerful force for good in the world.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

### THE BJP WINS HARYANA

Madam — Contrary to all expectations and predictions, the BJP was able to retain Haryana for the third time. All pollsters, analysts and exit polls have been proved wrong. Politics is an unforgiving game and the defeat of the Congress has created ripples in opposition unity as the Congress will have lost its bargaining power.

The victory for BJP will undoubtedly give them a lot of confidence to face assembly elections in Jharkhand and the all important Maharashtra. It is not in the best interests of Indian democracy to use caste equations to try and win elections. All parties are guilty of the practice of pandering to particular castes for gaining their votes. Time and again, it has been seen that in a one-to-one fight, the Congress is no match for the well-oiled BJP election fighting machinery.

Anthony Henriques | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## A new era of global opportunities awaits India in higher education

With initiatives like 'Study in India' and the recognition of qualifications of other countries, India is positioning itself as a growing hub for international education

India offers tremendous opportunities in various sectors, the education is no different. Internationalisation of this sector was envisaged in the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP), and the Government of India has taken effective steps over the last 4 years towards achieving this goal. Initiatives such as Study in India, Foreign Higher Educational Institutions (FHEIs) setting up campuses in India, collaborations between Indian institutions and FHEIs, and mutual recognition of qualifications between governments are already seeing positive results. Enabling FHEIs to set up their campuses in India was allowed through Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) regulations as well as by the University Grants Commission (UGC). These regulations aim to attract top-ranked global universities and institutions to India and offer Indian students a chance to avail global certifications at comparatively affordable costs in their home country. We have already seen Deakin University operationalise its



campus in July this year and the University of Wollongong preparing for their launch, both at GIFT City. The University of Southampton (UK), ranked 80th in the 2025 QS World Rankings, became the first university to receive a Letter of Intent (LoI) from the Indian Government to establish its campus in India. We are also seeing Indian institutions set up campuses overseas as part of the internationalisation initiative. IIT Delhi has set up its first international campus in Abu Dhabi and IIT Madras has located its first overseas campus in Zanzibar. The UGC Institutions of Eminence (IoE) guidelines enable IoEs to set up their campuses overseas and BITS Pilani and Manipal Academy took advantage of the window to do their forays outside India. While there is a lot of inter-

est from other private universities to set up campuses overseas, formulating an enabling framework through regulations by the government would catalyze this interest further. In May 2022, the government revamped the collaboration guidelines to allow for joint degree, dual degree and twinning programmes between Indian institutions and FHEIs. We have already seen a lot of traction in this space, with Manipal Institute of Technology tying up with Deakin, the University of Australia, and Shoolini University offering dual degrees with the University of Melbourne being some recent examples.

Studying in India is another initiative towards the internationalisation of the Indian education system. It is a flagship programme of the Government of India in line with PM Modi's vision. The website portal acts as a single window system for admission and visa applications for foreign students wanting to pursue higher education in India, with more than 60,000 students already registering through this portal. The

baton of internationalisation of education is also being taken forward through the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) and the Mutual Recognition of Qualification (MRQ) Agreement between India and other countries, which aims to facilitate student and faculty exchanges. There are around 50 plus active MoUs (including France, and Germany) with a few under negotiation. MRQs have been signed with a few countries as well and some are under negotiation. A fabulous start to an era of transformation of the Indian education landscape! Is there a need to do more? A more targeted approach, probably through a campaign run with Indian consulates in overseas countries, could further the cause of internationalisation. FHEIs are now rethinking their strategy. Possibly an opportunity for India to tap — open an FHEI campus in India and offer itself as an alternate education hub in the region.

(The writer is Partner, Deloitte India, inputs by Guncha Prakash, Assistant Manager, Deloitte India; views are personal)



SAHIL GUPTA





## FIRST COLUMN

## OVERCOMING ANXIETY: THE RIGHT WAY

Mindfulness, mental resilience and stress-relieving activities are essential to combat anxiety



RAVI VALLURI

Sameer was armed with a degree in management from an estimable institute. Having specialised in the field of marketing management, he was well versed in the 4Ps of marketing. At this juncture of his life, the young trainee fantasised about joining an FMCG company, earning an exorbitant salary and over a period acquiring an opulent property in an up-market area of the town. But there was an element of hesitation in his mind about successfully crossing the final hurdle – the interview. As the mind was not in the present moment and instead fixated on the future it remained anxious and continuously agitated. Thus, it was not in a state of equilibrium, equipoise, or equanimity. Meanwhile, Siddhartha, his school mate majored in architecture and apprenticed at a celebrated architectural firm in the city. Siddhartha however, was not content in designing buildings.

He possessed a feeble mind that ached to pursue a greenfield area called entertainment design. The stripling self-taught himself and acquired ultra-modern and newfangled skill sets. Fortified with the newly acquired knowledge he prepared a portfolio consisting of visionary and ingenious graphics, sketches and paintings. Yet, mentally he was anxious, tense and strained as to what lay in future. It is a normal human tendency to be apprehensive before anxious situations as it is not in the present moment. Several individuals become splenetic and waspish. Invariably there is a churning in the abdomen region and the mind is subsumed with anxiety. Arjuna, in possession of a lethal arsenal, was numbed seeing the mammoth army of the Kauravas. This, even though Lord Krishna was his charioteer! At zero hour, before the showdown at Kurukshetra, he lay down his weaponry. The consummate warrior could not distinguish between righteousness and malevolence. The demons in his mind were



eventually dispelled through the Vishwarupa Darshan of Lord Krishna and the song celestial – The Bhagavad Gita. Psychologists have advanced a two-pronged strategy to combat such inhospitable states, firstly by closely monitoring the piquant state and taking prompt and effective action and second, by avoiding and blunting the situation. Monitoring involves taking several proactive steps which help in the preparation of the mind. Advanced and well-rehearsed preparation before a significant event; this is tapasya and no one can relax on this ground.

The mind should be resolute and robust, to practice incessantly like the celebrated archer Arjuna. In the process, the individual de-clutters the mind and gets rid of the baggage of anxiety and fear. The Inoculation Technique is another effective strategy. An individual insulates the self against the perils of stress through constant exposure to rehearsals and role-playing.

This mentally toughens up the candidate to be prepared for the scrutiny and appraisal with utmost confidence and credence. Further, adopting a positive dispensation is invaluable. In addition, there are blunting tactics and strategies which help to augment the above. It is perspicacious and canny to drown in physical activity. It could be going for long walks, swimming, hitting the gym, taking up a sport or learning yogic techniques to de-stress the mind. These activities release endorphins which assuage the mind. Simultaneously, an individual will appear chiselled and smart. There are other ways to remain happy. For instance, join the Happiness Programme of the Art of Living to learn the unique rhythmic breathing technique of Sudarshan Kriya which calms the body and mind. Learn pranayama and various techniques of meditation to remain in the present moment. Only when a human being is in the present moment is he insulated from anxiety and manages inexpedient and onerous situations?

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

## ‘Fourth transformation’ of Mexico embraces inclusivity



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

Claudia Sheinbaum’s leadership promises to reshape the nation’s trajectory away from its violent past, embracing inclusive and human-centred policies

Claudia Sheinbaum’s swearing-in on October 1 as Mexico’s first female President marks a transformative moment not only for gender equality but also within the broader historical trajectory shaped by violence, revolution and the ongoing pursuit of justice. In a nation long burdened by colonial legacies and systemic inequality, her presidency signals a paradigm shift towards more inclusive and human-centred governance. Declaring a “fourth transformation,” Sheinbaum’s leadership reflects the weight of Mexico’s tumultuous history and the lives lost in its struggles. Her rise to power disrupts the deeply entrenched male-dominated political sphere, accentuating the resilience of women fighting for representation in a country plagued by gender-based violence and femicide.

Historically, Mexico has undergone significant transformations marked by bloodshed and resistance. The country’s struggle for independence from Spanish colonial rule in the early 19th century was fuelled by revolutionary fervour and the desire for self-determination. Statesmen like Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos emerged as symbols of resistance, galvanising the population against colonial oppression. The violent conflicts that followed laid the groundwork for a nation striving for autonomy, albeit at a considerable human cost. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the divide between church and state catalysed further revolutions and conflicts. The Liberal Reform, led by figures such as Benito Juárez, sought to dismantle the power of the Catholic Church and establish a secular state.

This period was marked by violence and civil strife, as conservative factions resisted these changes. The Mexican Revolution of 1910 further exemplified the nation’s tumultuous journey, with leaders like Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa rallying for agrarian reform and social justice. The revolution, while transformative, came at a heavy price, resulting in the loss of countless lives and widespread suffering. The bloodshed that characterised these early transformations stands in stark contrast to Sheinbaum’s vision for the fourth transformation, which she advocates as a path of non-violence and reconciliation. She seeks to distance her administration from the militarised approach that has defined previous efforts to combat crime and violence. In her inaugural speech, she emphasised that “we must turn the page on the cycles of violence that have plagued our country.” By framing her presidency as a continuation of a peaceful and humanistic governance model, she aims to redefine Mexico’s political structure.

The economic model embraced by Sheinbaum’s administration marks a significant departure from the neoliberal policies that have dominated Mexico for decades. The neoliberal framework, characterised by deregulation, resource exploitation, privatisation, and an emphasis on unethical free-market principles, has often exacerbated social inequalities and marginalised vulnerable populations. In contrast, Sheinbaum’s “Mexican Humanist” approach seeks to prioritise social welfare, equity, and sustainable development. This shift is not merely a matter of policy but represents a broader socio-political transformation in the way governance is conceived. Sheinbaum advocates for a model that empowers communities and fosters inclusivity, stating, “We must build



IN THE CONTEXT OF CLAUDIA SHEINBAUM’S PRESIDENCY, THE ENDURING LEGACY OF CIA COVERT OPERATIONS AND FOREIGN INTERVENTIONS LOOMS LARGE

a Mexico where no one is left behind.” This vision reflects a recognition that systemic issues require collective solutions and that the voices of marginalised communities must be heard in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Yet, while Sheinbaum’s approach has garnered support from many, it also faces criticism and scepticism from those who question the feasibility of her proposed reforms. Critics argue that the structural challenges posed by organised crime and entrenched political corruption may undermine her efforts to implement meaningful change. The harsh realities of violence and inequality persist, and many Mexicans remain wary of promises that may be difficult to fulfil in the face of overwhelming opposition. The historical backdrop of Mexico’s political volatility illuminates the formidable challenges in achieving authentic progress, as the legacies of colonialism, imperialism, and systemic oppression remain deeply ingrained.

The ongoing struggles for justice and equality have come at a profound cost, with the violence woven into Mexico’s history continuing to influence the present and complicate future paths.

The Zapatista movement, which arose in the 1990s in response to neoliberal policies and the marginalisation of Indigenous communities, stands as a powerful testament to the fight for social justice. Led by Subcomandante Marcos, the Zapatistas championed self-determination, autonomy, and the acknowledgement of Indigenous rights, challenging dominant political narratives and inspiring a new generation of activists, including Sheinbaum. Yet, their movement also reveals the challenges inherent in revolutionary politics; while their promise of non-violence and social justice aligns with Sheinbaum’s vision, navigating the realities of power and governance often demands difficult compromises. The pressing challenge remains: how to dismantle deeply rooted systems of inequality and violence without mirroring the oppressive methods of the past. Sheinbaum’s fourth transformation for Mexico calls for a reevaluation of economic policies and a fundamental shift in political culture, emphasising transparency, accountability, and democratic principles that prioritise the needs of the many.

She stresses the importance of restoring faith in institutions and rebuilding the nation’s social fabric. However, the ongoing issues of alleged corruption and political machinations, exacerbated by her predecessor López Obrador’s concentration of power and undermining of democratic institutions, raise concerns about the sustainability of her reforms. In the context of Claudia Sheinbaum’s presidency, the enduring legacy of CIA covert operations and foreign interventions looms large. Historically, the United States has intervened in Latin America to safeguard its interests, often undermining democratic governance and social justice. The repercussions of these interventions have fostered a deep-seated distrust and scepticism toward foreign influence in Mexico’s internal affairs. As Sheinbaum endeavours to establish a nation committed to human rights and social justice, she must grapple with the pervasive effects of these historical injustices and the Western media narratives that distort the actual picture of Mexican society. In terms of international relations, Sheinbaum vehemently opposes foreign intervention, particularly regarding the US blockade against Cuba, which harms ordinary cit-

izens rather than the government. She advocates for cooperation rather than militarisation in addressing drug-related violence, emphasising that the drug market is intricately linked to US consumer demand. As she aptly stated, “We must honour our past, learn from our struggles, and build a future that reflects the aspirations of all Mexicans.” Yet, the pursuit of a more just and equitable Mexico demands collective action, engagement from diverse communities, and a steadfast commitment to dismantling systemic barriers, as Sheinbaum seeks to embody the hopes of a nation shaped by resilience and struggle. However, the structural challenges, as Enrique Dussel, an Argentine-Mexican philosopher, explained in his writings, continue to haunt Mexico, posing real threats to the stability of political leadership. He emphasises the need for integrating diverse cultural perspectives and fostering dialogue from the Global South, as seen in his concept of transmodernity.

Dussel also highlights the coloniality of power, illustrating how historical injustices persist in contemporary governance, perpetuating inequality. Furthermore, his ethics of the Other calls for recognising the experiences of marginalised individuals as central to any discourse on justice. Additionally, the aporia of borders illustrates the contradictions communities face at national edges, such as the Mexico-US border, where ideals of freedom and security often clash. Addressing these issues demands a nuanced approach that acknowledges the voices of those usually left unheard, which presents a significant challenge for the historic administration of Dr Sheinbaum.

(The writer is a journalist and author; Views expressed are personal)

## Half of the world’s GDP at risk due to environmental degradation

The conservation and restoration of depleted forests are essential steps to combat climate change

Climate change has become an important challenge for the whole world. Conservation and restoration of depleted forests can become a necessary step to deal with this challenge.

Regarding this, many companies around the world have pledged to plant over 12 billion trees in the next seven years. The report published by the World Economic Forum on Nature and Biodiversity on January 18, 2024, clarifies that half of the world’s GDP, i.e. about \$44 trillion, is in danger. Which is due to the loss of nature.

To save it, more than 100 companies have pledged to conserve, restore and plant new trees of over 12 billion



RAJEEV AACHARYA

trees in more than 100 countries. This report states that companies around the world are working together through the World Economic Forum’s It.org initiative.

It aims to support the global movement to protect over 12 billion trees by 2030. In January 2024, It.org welcomed this resolution by

five new companies Bharat Heavy Electricals (BHEL), Burberry China, Go To Group, RPG Enterprises and Vale. Member companies of It.org are committed to implementing the goal in line with the Paris Agreement to save trees and reduce carbon emissions. Tree conservation is not only important for environmental sustainability, but it is also a part of our cultural and religious heritage. Trees learn from each other. That research was published on May 28, 2024 in the Current Forestry Reports magazine of Springer Nature, America.

This research is based on the topic that how trees planted in agro-forestry and urban forestry can learn from each

other and flourish. According to the research, both systems can be seen as natural solutions. Both systems also have similarities in ownership and management responsibilities. For example, most of the agricultural land in the Global North is privately owned, just as a large part of the green cover is seen in cities.

Increasing the density of trees improves air quality. The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore conducted a study in 2023 on the role of trees in the urban environment. This study was mainly done in urban areas of Bangalore. It was found that trees in urban areas play an important role in improving air quality as well as controlling



temperature. In this research, it was told that the higher the density of trees, the greater the increase in air quality and the effect of heat can also be reduced.

This study also found that the mental and physical health of people living in green areas improves. The density of trees prevents soil erosion.

A study conducted by the University of Sydney, Australia, says that dense cover of trees can control the flow of water and help prevent soil erosion. This study also stated that the conservation of trees helps in reducing the effects of climate change. All these studies confirm how important the conservation of trees is for our future. In Indian culture, importance has been given to the conservation of trees since the beginning. According to Matasya Purana, “Dashakoopasama Vaapi, Dashavaapisamo

Hradah. Dashahradasamo Putro, Dashputrasamo Drumah.” That is, one tree is equal to ten sons. Similarly, it is said in Vishnu Purana that the person who plants a tree earns virtue not only in his life but also for the coming generations.

Planting and caring for trees has been described as an important religious and social work in Indian scriptures. At present, planting trees is not only to save lives but also to save the earth. Let us take resolve to conserve nature. Each one of us must take a pledge to plant at least 5 trees, only then this disaster of global warming can be dealt with.

(The writer is an environmentalist; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



Industrial output contracts 0.1 pc in August: Govt data

India's industrial production contracted 0.1 per cent in August, mainly due to poor showing by the mining and power generation sectors, according to official data released on Friday. The factory output, measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) witnessed a growth of 10.9 per cent in August 2023. The IIP growth rate for the month of August 2024 is (-) 0.1 per cent, which was 4.7 per cent in the month of July 2024, an official statement said. The data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) showed that the growth in mining, manufacturing and electricity for August 2024 stood at (-) 4.3 per cent, 0.1 per cent and (-) 3.7 per cent, respectively. The decline in growth of the mining sector is likely due to heavy rainfall in August 2024, NSO said.



India's forex kitty drops by \$3.71 bln to \$701.176 bln

India's forex reserves dropped by \$3.709 billion to \$701.176 billion for the week ended October 4, the RBI said on Friday. In the previous reporting week, the reserves had jumped by \$12.588 billion to an all-time high of \$704.885 billion. For the week ended October 4, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by \$3.511 billion to \$612.643 billion, the data released on Friday showed. Expressed in terms of dollar, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves decreased by \$40 million to \$65.756 billion during the week, the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by USD 123 million to USD 18.425 billion, the apex bank said.



Amazon corporate gifting store sees 134 pc growth

Amazon's B2B marketplace Amazon Business on Friday said it has recorded a 134 per cent growth year-on-year in its corporate gifting store in the first ten days of Amazon Great Indian Festival 2024. A 95 per cent increase in total orders and a 107 per cent rise in customers making a purchase was witnessed during the period, a company statement said. The Amazon Great Indian Festival sale commenced on September 27, 2024, with Prime members getting a 24-hour early access window. Kitchenware emerged as the most gifted category with mixer grinders and juicers emerging as the most gifted items showing 5.6x year-on-year growth, Amazon said. Headphones and speakers were the most popular tech gifting items whereas chocolates, dry fruit, and tea-coffee hamper were in the snacks and sweets category. The remarkable growth of our corporate gifting store this festive season highlights the rapid adoption of e-procurement across India.

EU's deforestation regulation, carbon tax unfair: Goyal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The European Union's (EU) deforestation regulation and carbon tax are unfair and would impact Indian industries, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday.

He also said the EU's safeguard measures on some steel products are irrational too.

Addressing industry and representatives of EU here on the launch of Federation of European Business in India (FEBI), he said Indian industries are "confronted with unfair rules of deforestation, rules around CBAM (Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism) and various other measures".

Major agriculture-exporting countries, including Brazil, India, Indonesia and the US, have raised objections to the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR).

The EUDR was adopted on May 16, 2023, and seeks to prevent the import of specified goods contributing to deforestation and forest degradation in the EU market.

The covered products include coffee, leather, oil cake, wood furniture, paper,



and paperboard, with plans to expand the product list further.

However, the regulation has faced significant backlash from several major trading partners.

The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said India's exports of products like coffee, leather hides, and paperboard worth USD 1.3 billion annually to the European Union could be impacted due to the regulation.

Similarly, India has raised strong objections against the CBAM, under which EU has proposed to impose additional duty on seven carbon-intensive sectors, including steel, cement, fertiliser, aluminium and hydrocarbon products.

He said that in the Paris Agreement it was decided that the developed world -- which in the first place is responsible for the environmental problems of the world -- will contribute to the low-cost, long-term financing and will also provide grants and technology.

But, COP 21 (Paris Climate Conference) premise is sought to be demolished by the EU, he said. He added that on the issue of imposing safeguard duty measures, which are "irrational duties and totally against the MFN (most favoured nation) laws of WTO (World Trade Organization) on certain steel products", India is discussing the matter for the last 5-6 years now.

"I have been holding back, I have been negotiating and requesting... India does not have unfair trade practices, now should we be subject to that additional duty? Now after six years, we have to take other measures," Goyal said.

He added that those measures are "not going to be conducive for the kind of good relations that we believe Europe and India share and should continue to share at the business level".

Over 40 pc women-owned micro businesses lack emergency savings: report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A significant number of women-owned micro businesses in India lack savings for financial emergencies, making them highly vulnerable to economic shocks, said a report.

The report titled 'Decoding the Financial Health of Women-Owned Micro-Businesses (wMB) in India' was prepared by MicroSave Consulting (MSC) in collaboration with Sa-Dhan and supported by JPMorgan Chase.

The research covers six regions - Delhi-NCR, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu - providing data-driven insights and calls for targeted interventions. Data was collected through 1,460 computer-assisted

personal interviews, key informant interviews with financial institutions and enterprise support organisations, and comprehensive desk research.

Interviews with 150 women-owned micro businesses across the six regions revealed insights into their financial decision-making processes, challenges and motivations.

The report indicated that 45 per cent of women entrepreneurs lack savings for financial emergencies, making them highly susceptible to economic shocks. Additionally, many face challenges in distinguishing between personal and business finances, which complicates cash flow management and hinders the maintenance of accurate financial records.



Arkade Developers Q1 profit jumps over 4 times

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Realty firm Arkade Developers Ltd, which got listed on the stock exchanges recently, has reported a more than four-fold jump in its consolidated net profit to Rs 30.21 crore for the first quarter of this fiscal year.

Its profit stood at Rs 6.57 crore in the year-ago period. Total income doubled to Rs 125.51 crore during the April-June period of this fiscal from Rs 62.01 crore in the corresponding period of the preceding fiscal.

"The Indian real estate market, particularly the luxury housing segment, has witnessed strong demand driven by urbanisation and rising incomes," Amit Jain, Chairman and Managing Director of Arkade Developers, said.

'India a priority for us in global expansion plans'

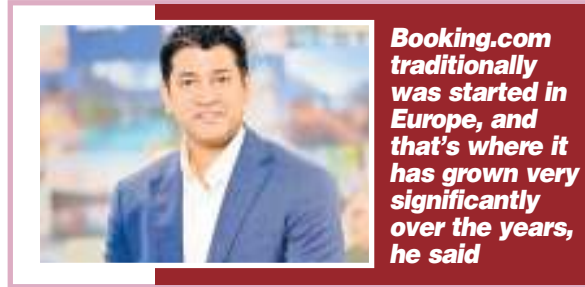
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Online reservation platform Booking.com sees India as a "big priority" in terms of its global expansion plans and a long-term strategic player in the travel and tourism space, Santosh Kumar, the firm's Country Manager for India, Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia, said.

Kumar said the company is betting big on India and it continues to invest "very heavily" in the country's market.

Brazil and Japan, too, are priority markets for Booking.com as it looks at further expansion in markets apart from the US, he said.

"When you look at Booking.com and also Booking Holdings, the parent company... post-pandemic, our domestic business has also grown very significantly... It (India) is a very big priority.



Booking.com traditionally was started in Europe, and that's where it has grown very significantly over the years, he said

We continue to invest very heavily in this market and we are really looking at India as a long-term strategic player," Kumar said.

Booking.com traditionally was started in Europe, and that's where it has grown very significantly over the years, he said. "US is a very big priority... after that we have markets like India, Brazil, Japan, etc, which are very big priorities for us," he said.

Talking about India's economic

prospects, Kumar said, "Our GDP continues to grow. We are continuing to get foreign direct investment into the country.

Our infrastructure is continuously improving with all the policies and the investments that the current government has been making. So all of those indicators are very positive."

He asserted that the contribution of the tourism industry to India's GDP is set to double in the next few years, creating millions of job opportunities.

According to estimates, tourism in India contributes 6.5 per cent to the country's GDP and supports 4.3 crore jobs.

"Travel and tourism as a contributor to GDP is expected to double in the next few years. It is already a very significant part of our GDP. It will double in the years to come and will create multiple new jobs. It will create 58 million jobs in the next nine years or so," the Booking.com country manager said.

According to Kumar, increasing connectivity, easing visa processes and promoting India more in overseas markets as a tourism destination are the top-three focus areas to realise the country's full potential in the sector, going forward.

CDSCO favours Wockhard's antibiotic

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drug firm Wockhard on Friday said the national drug regulator has accorded a favourable recommendation for its novel antibiotic developed for the treatment of community-acquired bacterial pneumonia (CABP) in adults. The Subject Expert Committee (SEC) of the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has provided a favourable recommendation for Miquaf (mifampricin), the drug firm said in a statement. The SEC recommendation is based on CDSCO's comprehensive review of the product dossier consisting of non-clinical, US/EU Phase 1, Global Phase 2 and India Phase 3 clinical studies conducted over the last 15 years, it added. A positive opinion from the SEC of CDSCO would pave the way for gaining DCGI's final approval for Miquaf, the company stated.

Miquaf is the once-a-day 3-days-only treatment for CABP patients, including those caused by multi-drug resistant (MDR) bugs.

CABP is the most common infection, leading to hospitalisation and death. Globally, 2.4 million annual deaths are caused by lower respiratory tract infections.

Profitability of small banks likely to decline in FY25: Crisil

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The profitability of small finance banks, measured in terms of return of assets (RoA), will moderate around 40 basis points to about 1.7 per cent this fiscal from 2.1 per cent in last financial year due to lower net interest margins (NIM) and higher credit costs, said a report.

That said, RoA for small finance banks (SFBs) will still be higher than that for the overall banking system by 50-60 bps on account of the relatively higher yielding nature of their loan book, Crisil said in the report.

Last month, Reserve Bank Deputy Governor Swaminathan J had asked SFBs to be vigilant and ensure that risks are mitigated in time.

He also highlighted the importance of sustainable business models. He underscored the need to strengthen cybersecurity to safeguard against dig-

ital threats. The report said NIM for SFBs is expected to contract 15 bps as they continue diversifying to secured asset classes, which have relatively lower yields.

Credit cost, meanwhile, may rise to about 40 bps because of rising delinquencies, primarily in the microfinance and other unsecured segments, it said.

An uptick in delinquencies, albeit more controlled, is also likely in sub-segments of secured assets classes catering to a similar customer segment.

"SFBs have been focusing on segmental diversification as a core growth strategy. With many having started out as microfinance lenders, the diversification has largely been towards secured asset classes (primarily loans against property, housing loans and vehicle loans), to curtail potential volatility in asset quality and earnings," it said.

NDT collection grows 18% to Rs 11.25 lakh cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Net direct tax (NDT) collection grew 18.3 per cent to about Rs 11.25 lakh crore as of October 10 this fiscal, government data showed on Friday.

The mop-up includes personal income tax collection of Rs 5.98 lakh crore and corporate tax collection of Rs 4.94 lakh crore. Securities

Transaction Tax (STT) stood at Rs 30,630 crore, while other taxes (including equalisation levy and gift tax) earned Rs 2,150 crore.

The income tax department had collected Rs 9.51 lakh crore during the same period a year ago.

Refunds worth Rs 2.31 lakh crore were issued between April 1 and October 10, a

growth of 46 per cent.

On a gross basis, direct tax collection grew 22.3 per cent to Rs 13.57 lakh crore. The collection includes PIT (personal income tax) of Rs 7.13 lakh crore and corporate tax of Rs 6.11 lakh crore.

The government has budgeted to collect Rs 22.07 lakh crore in the current fiscal from direct taxes.

CCPA SLAPS NOTICE

10K complaints against Ola Electric

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Consumer rights regulator CCPA has slapped a notice on electric two-wheeler manufacturer Ola, as it initiates a class action after over 10,000 complaints related to quality and after-sales service remained unaddressed, according to sources.

The National Consumer

Helpline (NCH) has been getting complaints against Ola Electric for the last one year, which were escalated to higher levels at the company for redressal "but there was little interest shown in redressing these complaints", said a source.

Subsequently, the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) "started examining these complaints

for class action and found that over the last one year, NCH received over 10,000 complaints", the source added. According to the source, the major categories of consumer complaints include charging during the free service period/warranty, delayed and unsatisfactory services, refusal or delay in warranty services, inadequate services, recurrent

defects despite services, inconsistent performance with advertised claims, over-charging and inaccurate invoices.

Also, failure to provide refunds and documentation, unprofessional conduct and complaint closure and multiple issues with battery and vehicle components were highlighted by the aggrieved consumers, a source said.

Sebi orders probe into Trafiksol IPO disclosures

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Friday decided to conduct a detailed investigation into the disclosures made by SME firm Trafiksol ITS Technologies Ltd in its draft IPO documents and instructed BSE not to proceed with the company's share listing.

In its interim order, Sebi has asked BSE to ensure that the IPO proceeds are kept in an interest-bearing escrow account, with no access allowed to Trafiksol or its affiliates until further notice.

The Sebi's investigation will be completed within 30 days.

The order came nearly a month after BSE postponed the listing of Trafiksol ITS Technologies on its SME plat-

form after investor concerns. The decision was taken after the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) asked the exchange to investigate the complaints.

Trafiksol ITS Technologies' Rs 45-crore IPO was oversubscribed by over 345 times, attracting bids worth more than Rs 10,000 crore. The issue, priced between Rs 66 and Rs 70 per share, was open for subscription from September 10 to 12.

The company raised the funds, with plans to use the funds for software purchases, repayment of borrowings, working capital and general corporate purposes.

Post the closure of the issue and allotment of shares, certain complaints were received by

Halts listing on BSE SME platform



Sebi and BSE regarding discrepancies in Trafiksol's IPO, particularly about the use of funds for software procurement. It was alleged that the third-party vendor chosen by Trafiksol was incapable of fulfilling the contract.

In response, Sebi and BSE took steps to investigate, including deferring the listing of the IPO.

The investigation found that the vendor had not filed financial statements in three years and had reported NIL revenue

in the last year for which financials were filed. It was prima facie that the vendor was a retail trader, not a software developer, according to the order.

Further investigations revealed irregularities, such as missing financial document identification numbers and a non-operational office of the vendor, it noted.

"Given the above facts, it cannot be ruled out at this stage that the attempt to award the software contract to a vendor, who prima facie appears to be a shell entity without any prior experience in developing a software platform of the nature disclosed by the company in its DRHP, was an attempt to deliberately mislead investors and divert the IPO proceeds," Sebi said in its order.

Therefore, in order to safeguard investor interest, Sebi is of the view that issues raised in this order require a detailed investigation.

Accordingly, "a detailed examination shall be made by Sebi into the disclosures made by Trafiksol ITS Technologies Ltd, in its DRHP (draft red herring prospectus) filed with BSE on May 30, 2024, including the issues identified in this order".

BSE has been "directed not to proceed with the listing of shares of the company".

However, the company proposed to get new quotes from at least three suppliers, seek shareholder approval before making any payments and allow BSE to appoint a monitoring agency to oversee the procurement process.

Bandhan Bank shares jump over 12 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Bandhan Bank on Friday jumped more than 12 per cent after the Reserve Bank of India approved the appointment of Partha Pratim Sengupta as its MD and CEO for three years.

The stock of the company soared 12.38 per cent to close at Rs 211 apiece on the BSE.

On the NSE, it climbed 11.58 per cent to settle at Rs 209.44 per piece. In terms of volume, 80.83 lakh equity shares were traded on the BSE, while 12.98 crore shares exchanged hands on the NSE during the day.

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell 230.05 points or 0.28 per cent

to close at 81,381.36 and the NSE Nifty slipped 34.20 points or 0.14 per cent to 24,964.25.

Bandhan Bank on Thursday said that the RBI approved the appointment of Partha Pratim Sengupta as its Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer for a period of three years. His three-year tenure counts from the date of taking charge, which shall not be later than November 10, 2024, the bank said.

Sengupta replaces founder MD and CEO Chandra Sekhar Ghosh who stepped down on July 9. Currently, Ratan Kesh, one of the executive directors, is serving as the interim MD and CEO.



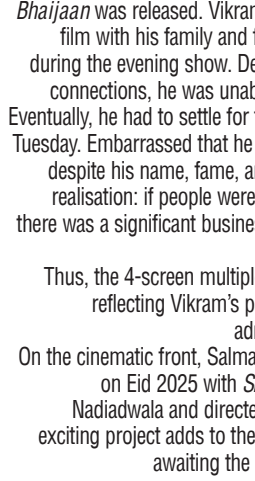
## 'I'VE DONE QUITE A BIT OF THEATRE AND WANT TO KEEP THAT GOING'

Junaid Khan, in a latest chat, credits his extensive theatre experience for significantly influencing his success in television and film and remains dedicated to balancing stage and screen pursuits. "I've done quite a bit of theatre and I want to keep that going. In fact, I'm currently rehearsing for a new play set to open in November," Khan shared, showcasing his unwavering dedication to the stage. He highlighted the significance of practice in acting, noting, "Acting is all about practice; the more you do it, the better you get." While acknowledging the technical nuances between stage and camera work, he assured that actors can learn to adapt with time. "There are some technical differences between performing live and in front of a camera, but you get the hang of it," he said. As he juggles both theatre and screen acting, Khan reflected on his growth as a performer. "With more time in front of the camera, I'm becoming increasingly comfortable," he remarked, emphasising his evolving artistry. With a promising play on the horizon and a burgeoning career in film and television, Junaid is dedicated to refining his craft through a variety of acting experiences. He made his Hindi film debut in *Maharaj* alongside Sharvari Wagh and Shalini Pandey, which is currently available for streaming on Netflix.

## FOR THE LOVE OF SALMAN KHAN

Salman Khan is one of those actors, who has been adored across borders, has an immense fan base, with followers willing to go to great lengths to express their love for him. One remarkable example of this devotion is Vikram Agrawal, a businessman from Pandrauna in the Kushinagar district of Uttar Pradesh, who built an entire multiplex as a tribute to Salman Khan. Vikram constructed a thriving business complex and multiplex, showcasing his admiration for the actor. While many fans go to great lengths for their favorite stars, Vikram's dedication is truly extraordinary.

His journey began in 2015 when Salman Khan's film *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* was released. Vikram wanted to watch the film with his family and friends on the first day during the evening show. Despite leveraging all his connections, he was unable to secure 45 tickets. Eventually, he had to settle for tickets for the following Tuesday. Embarrassed that he couldn't arrange tickets despite his name, fame, and wealth, Vikram had a realisation: if people were waiting days for tickets, there was a significant business opportunity in cinema exhibition. Thus, the 4-screen multiplex in Pandrauna was born, reflecting Vikram's passion for cinema and his admiration for Salman Khan. On the cinematic front, Salman is set to make his return on Eid 2025 with *Sikandar*, produced by Sajid Nadiadwala and directed by AR Murugadoss. This exciting project adds to the anticipation of fans eagerly awaiting the superstar's next big release.



## Boo! Did you hear? Akshay's not haunting *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*!

*Bhool Bhulaiyaa* has carved its place as a cornerstone of Indian horror-comedy since its debut in 2007. The film, featuring Akshay Kumar's comedic brilliance alongside Vidya Balan's captivating performance, quickly became a beloved classic. When the sequel, *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*, hit theaters in 2022 with Kartik Aaryan at the helm, many fans were uncertain. Yet, it shattered expectations and turned into a blockbuster hit. Now, as the buzz intensifies for *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*, fans are thrilled to see Kartik reunite with Vidya Balan for the first time, along with an



impressive cast that includes Triptii Dimri and the iconic Madhuri Dixit. Rumours of Akshay Kumar returning for a cameo had many hopeful for a nostalgic connection. However, Akshay has put those hopes to rest, firmly stating, "No, absolutely not. It's fake news." Despite this disappointment, horror-comedy enthusiasts can look forward to Akshay's appearance in *Street 2*, where he'll join Rajkumar Rao and Shradha Kapoor, continuing his legacy in the genre. The excitement for *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3* reached new heights with the recent trailer, which set a record by rack-

ing up over 155 million views in just 24 hours. Director Anees Bazmee has added a twist by filming two different climaxes for the film, keeping both the cast and crew in the dark about the final outcome. "People will be shocked; they'll be like 'oh my god!' We have tried to make a good and beautiful film," Bazmee explained. The cast has only been privy to the story up to the pre-climax and the director intentionally withheld the last 15 pages of the script from them to maintain an element of surprise. "Initially, we shot the final climax, but later I called the team again and said, 'Mazza nahi aa raha hai, firse karenge'," Bazmee shared. As Kartik reprises his role as Rooh Baba, he will be joined by the original Manjulika, Vidya Balan, along with Madhuri Dixit and Triptii Dimri, promising a thrilling blend of laughter and chills. Directed by Anees Bazmee and produced by Bhusan Kumar, this eagerly awaited film is set to uphold the legacy of Bollywood's favorite horror-comedy franchise.

## Alia Bhatt hints 'many more movies' not just acting but also producing

Alia Bhatt, fresh off the release of *Jigra*, opened up about her future plans and the significant moments that shaped her as an actress. She reflected on her career journey, family support and what she envisions for the years to come. Alia highlighted the transformative impact of her role in *Highway*, saying, "It was like going away to college, but my campus was a film set." She also recalled the intense experience of shooting *Uda Punjab*, where she emotionally disconnected from the world to dive deep into her character. And then there was *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, which she described as a life-altering experience under the direction of Sanjay Leela Bhansali: "You're never the same actor after you're directed by him." When discussing her family's role in her career, Alia noted, "Having a family connected to the film industry helped prepare

me, but nothing really prepares you for the ups and downs. You have to have thick skin and be hard-working because the spotlight is always shifting." Alia also shared her hopes for her daughter Raha, mentioning which of her and Ranbir Kapoor's films she'd recommend for her to watch. "I'd say *Student of the Year* because it's fun and kid-friendly, even if I'm not proud of my performance. For Ranbir, I think *Barfi* is a great choice." Looking ahead, Alia's aspirations include "many more movies—not just acting but also producing, more babies, lots of travel, and a healthy, happy life filled with nature." On her approach to goals, she said, "I don't believe in goals; I believe in milestones. They should come naturally as part of life, so don't get too attached or seek too much from them. Just keep doing your thing and let the milestones come."



## Khushalii Kumar to star in a new wedding comedy

After her lauded performance in *Dedh Bigha Zameen*, Khushalii Kumar is all set to take on a new exciting venture. The actress, who garnered praise for her nuanced portrayal in the drama, is now shifting gears with a wedding comedy family drama. The film will see her sharing the screen with two powerhouse performers, Mahesh Manjrekar and Piyush Mishra. Kumar will portray the role of the protagonist who is a bride in this lively narrative that revolves around the chaos, emotions and humour where she is in search of a groom. The film promises to deliver a mix of comedy and family dynamics, with Mahesh Manjrekar and Piyush Mishra bringing their signature style and seasoned performances to the table. With a blend of humour, emotions and grand wedding celebrations, this is titled as *Dulhaniyan le Aayegi* film is set to offer an engaging ride, adding another feather to Khushalii's body of work in Bollywood. Directed by Akashaditya Lama, under the banner of Think Tank Global Films, this film is expected to be released soon.



## Shilpa Shetty & Raj Kundra's lawyer sets the record straight on Ponzi scam rumours

In response to a flurry of media speculation regarding Shilpa Shetty Kundra and Raj Kundra's alleged ties to the Gain Bitcoin Ponzi scheme, their attorney, Advocate Prashant Patil, has issued a clarifying statement to address the misconceptions. With rumours swirling, Patil's remarks aim to set the record straight and alleviate concerns about the couple's involvement in any wrongdoing. "First and foremost, we want to address the misleading reports claiming that Raj Kundra and Shilpa Shetty Kundra are linked to any Ponzi scam involving cryptocurrency. This is not even part of the Enforcement Directorate's case," Patil stated, emphasising that the couple has no involvement with the alleged scam, which reportedly dates back to 2017. Regarding the recent eviction notice, Patil noted, "The Enforcement Directorate did issue an eviction notice for my clients' residential properties, but this has been stayed by the Honourable High Court, allowing Raj Kundra and Shilpa Shetty Kundra time to file an appeal with the Honourable Appellate Tribunal in Delhi for further relief." He concluded by affirming, "My clients are committed to cooperating with the Enforcement Directorate's investigation." Meanwhile, in a recent social media post, entrepreneur Raj Kundra stirred speculation after sharing a cryptic message addressing two unnamed individuals. He said, "For the two men that tried to tarnish my reputation and bring me down. I forgive you, but let me remind you—it's not easy to break someone who stands on the foundation of truth and courage!"



## STANDALONE

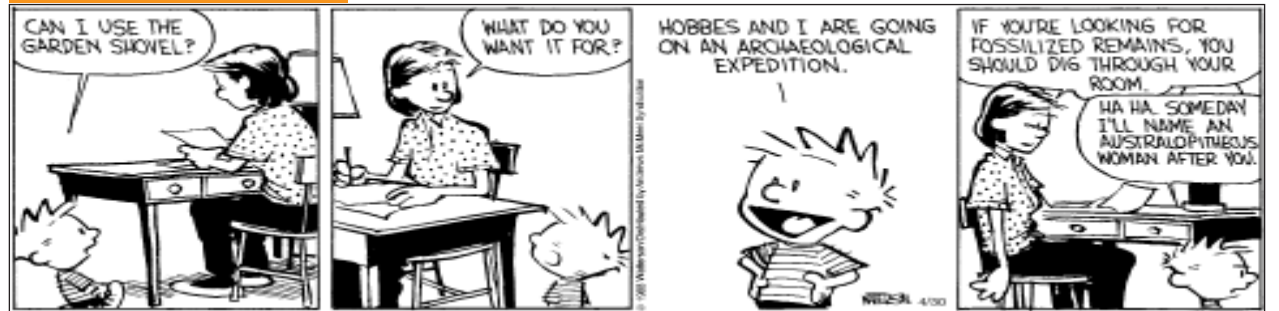
Renowned choreographer Shiamak Davar was honoured with the Kalpana Sham Munshi Lifetime Achievement Award for Performing Arts by the Rotary Club of Bombay. This accolade celebrates his remarkable contributions to contemporary dance over a vibrant 25-year career. Known as the "Guru of Contemporary Dance," Davar has redefined the Indian dance landscape with his innovative choreography and unique fusion of styles. At the award ceremony in Mumbai, he shared a humorous memory of performing for Prince William and Kate Middleton.

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



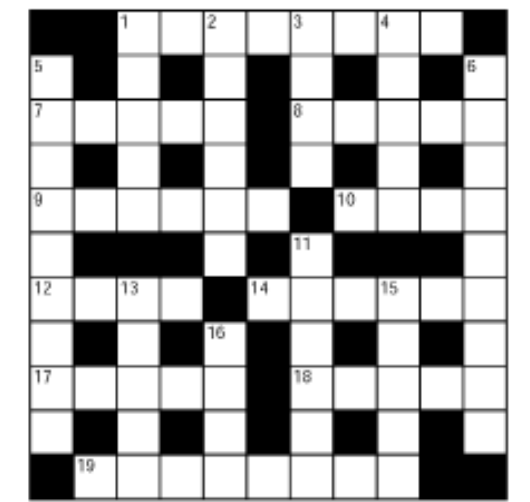
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### NANCY



### SUDOKU

2			9					1
	1			2	7			
4				1	3	9		
3	7	4					8	
				7				
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		8	2			1		
1				3				8

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

### ACROSS

- 1 Altering
- 2 To cook something in an oven
- 3 Last
- 4 Follows eighth
- 5 Favoured, liked better
- 6 Squashed
- 7 Failed to remember
- 8 Injured by a bullet
- 9 Stink
- 10 An award for a successful university student
- 11 One of the planets
- 12 Lift up
- 13 Tree limbs
- 14 Part of the face

### DOWN

- 1 Sit on this
- 2 The writer of a book
- 3 Birthday present



# Vijayawada

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October 12, 2024

## Hyderabadi Queen who's all about empowering modern Maharanis in Hyd

FROM THE LUSH LANDSCAPES OF ASSAM TO THE BUSTLING STREETS OF HYDERABAD, DR SUDHA JAIN HAS FOUND HER HOME HERE IN THE 'CITY OF NIZAMS'. IN AN EXCLUSIVE CHAT WITH THE PIONEER, SHE DISCUSSES HER ALLURE FOR THE CITY, INITIAL MEMORIES HERE AND MORE



AARTI SREENATH  
aarti.sreenath9@gmail.com

Meet Dr Sudha Jain, a powerhouse of passion and purpose from Hyderabad. This dynamic woman isn't just a Ph.D. holder; she's also the former Miss India Asia Pacific (2017-18), using her title to advocate for women's empowerment.

Her journey to Hyderabad unfolds like a heartwarming narrative, rich with anecdotes and serendipitous connections. After nearly two decades in the city, she reflects on her early days with a blend of nostalgia and humor. "Chennai was my first experience in the South," she chuckles. "It's a beautiful city, but I often felt like an outsider. It was always, 'Oh, you're from the North?' But Hyderabad was different. People would smile and say, 'Your Hindi sounds nice,' even if it hinted at a northern twang."

When she first arrived in Hyderabad, she carried the usual apprehensions about moving to a new place, particularly after her time in Chennai. However, she was pleasantly surprised. "Hyderabad didn't just accept me; it embraced me with open arms," she recalls. The locals were not only welcoming but genuinely curious about her northern roots. "They would ask me about the weather in Assam and show real interest in my background. It was refreshing."

For her, Assam remains a cherished backdrop from her childhood, where the air was crisp, winters required woolen clothes and life flowed in harmony with the Brahmaputra River. "Assam was all about bungalows. In contrast, Hyderabad's high-rises and fast-paced life were new to me. But the warmth of its people more than made up for the lack of a winter season," she reminisces.

Her connection to Hyderabad soon deepened, transforming it into a sense of home. "Before I knew it, I was buying a bungalow here and settling in. It wasn't just a city I moved to; it became mine," she smiles. Sudha's journey from a newcomer to a proud Hyderabadi is filled with moments that have shaped her love for the city.

She fondly recalls an early experience at an exhibition that took her by surprise. "Back then, exhibitions were rare. At one event, someone complimented my jawline, saying it was 'hexagonal,' which is apparently quite unusual," she laughs. "It's one of those quirky interactions that make Hyderabad so interesting."

She contrasts Hyderabad's bustling lifestyle with Assam's simplicity, where traditional meals and a sense of community prevail over fast food. Yet, she appreciates Hyderabad's dynamic nature, where every lane has its own charm and people are always ready to welcome guests. "Hyderabad is two cities in one," she describes. "It's alive and buzzing at night, but in the morning, it has a vibrant energy that makes you feel like you belong."

Reflecting on how the city has shaped her career, she notes, "Hyderabad has been exceptionally supportive. It's a place where you can pursue your passions, and the community truly rallies behind you. Since I started in the industry, the relationships I've built here have been invaluable. The people I've met, especially in the fashion and beauty sectors, have helped me grow immensely."

As she discusses her experiences, she touches on the challenges she has faced, particularly regarding the changing dynamics of her clientele. But rather than dwelling on the negative, she remains optimistic. Her resilience and positive outlook have further enabled her to navigate industry challenges while cherishing the unforgettable moments and connections she has made in Hyderabad.

Each experience, whether glamorous or challenging, has contributed to her growth, making her journey uniquely fulfilling.

Her journey in Hyderabad is more than just a chapter in her life; it's a vibrant assortment woven with art, culture and deep-rooted connections. She passionately discusses the nuances of judging in the fashion industry, emphasising that the role is far from superficial.

Her reflections on Hyderabad showcase both her admiration and critical insights.

While she respects a few local judges, she notes, "There are only two or three judges here who I believe can fit anywhere in India. Their presence motivated me to create new hashtags for my work, breaking free from the traditional celebrity-based judgments." Her desire to shift towards more genuine assessments reveals her vision for growth in the fashion world, one that values substance over superficiality.

Her commitment to promoting Hyderabad's handloom industry is particularly notable. She beams with pride when talking about her efforts to support local artisans, especially weavers from Pochampally and Bhuvangiri. "The handloom sector is thriving in Hyderabad," she shares. Not long ago, she organised a press meet for weavers, attracting coverage from 17 leading newspapers. "I've registered copyrights for their unique motifs, ensuring recognition and protection for each weaver's work," she adds. Her efforts aim not only to uplift individual artisans but also to ensure that their cultural heritage is preserved and celebrated.

Yet, her love for Hyderabad extends beyond fashion and art. It's the spirit of the people that endears the city to her. "Hyderabad has vibes of royalty, yet it's incredibly open to adopting new things," she reflects on the city's unique blend of tradition and modernity. From the rich heritage of Charminar to the casual warmth of a roadside chai stall, she finds joy in the city's simplicity and hospitality. "In Lucknow, food is royal and the presentation is classic. But here, it's casual and effortless. You'll walk into a place and they'll serve you a bun with chai, and you just sit and enjoy," she remarks with a smile.

Her story embodies the essence of a city that welcomes newcomers with open arms, blending tradition and modernity in a unique tapestry of culture. As she continues to thrive in the fashion industry, advocating for local artisans and embracing her roots, she inspires others to navigate their paths with resilience and authenticity. With a heart full of gratitude for the serendipitous moments that have shaped her life, she reminds us that true belonging often arises from the simplest acts of kindness, making Hyderabad not just a city she lives in, but a home she cherishes deeply.



## Embryo freezing for DINKs

DINK, an acronym for Double Income, No Kids, refers to couples who both have incomes from jobs or investments and do not have children. In India, the number of DINK couples is growing rapidly, with an estimated annual increase of 30%. These couples typically have higher disposable incomes and lead flexible lifestyles. The term gained popularity in the late 20th century as more women pursued higher education and careers, resulting in dual-income households. This shift has influenced changing perspectives on parenthood.

### Why is DINK on rise?

Some of the common reasons for the rise in DINKs approach follows:

**Financial pressure:** Raising children comes with significant financial responsibility. Contrary to the common perception, not all DINK (Double Income, No Kids) couples have excess funds. Many urban and rural couples, particularly those with lower incomes, face financial challenges. The expenses of raising and educating children pose a major concern on their shoulders.

**Career-focused:** In today's world, both men and women are highly driven by their career ambitions to become proficient in their professional lives in order to achieve financial stability and compete with rising inflation. They are focused on dedicating their time, energy and resources to build robust finances that support themselves and their lifestyle. As a result, many individuals choose to prioritise their careers over starting a family in their early years, leading to declined fertility and lower chances of conception later on.

**Personal requisites:** Some couples face medical conditions that make pregnancy high-risk, leading them to prioritise their health. For some couples, mental health is a priority, and they choose to minimise stress in their lives by avoiding the demands of parenthood.

**Environmental concerns:** Many DINK couples have concerns about the ongoing looping environmental dangers. Acknowledging the serious risks like climate change and global warming pose to humanity, many are apprehensive about the potential negative impact on their children's future and consider not going ahead on the path to parenthood.

### Embryo freezing - An intervention for the better?

Embryo freezing, or embryo cryopreservation, is a method of freezing and storing embryos for future use, allowing individuals to preserve their fertility. This technique can be beneficial for DINKs individuals looking to explore parenthood at a later stage or anyone wishing to postpone parenthood, offering them the option to delay rather than forgo the possibility of starting a family later.

For the creation of an embryo, an embryologist retrieves the egg and then fertilises one or more of the harvested eggs with the sperm of a partner or donor. The embryo is monitored as it grows in a petri dish over five to seven days. During this period, genetic testing is conducted, especially if the egg or sperm donor is known to carry certain genetic conditions.

At this stage, the highest-graded embryos are frozen through a process called vitrification. The embryos are quickly frozen by immersion in liquid nitrogen, turning them into a glass-like state. This rapid freezing method prevents the formation of ice crystals, which increases the embryos' survival rate and viability after thawing.

### Success rates of embryo freezing

The possibility of pregnancy from an embryo transfer is primarily influenced by the woman's age at the time the embryos are created. These procedures are most beneficial for individuals aged 35 or younger leading to the highest success rates for pregnancy. Furthermore, over 95% of frozen embryos successfully survive the thawing process.

(The author, Dr Parul Gupta, is a fertility specialist at Nova IVF Fertility, Vasant Vihar.)

## Gutar Gu 2: Predictable romance as plot falls flat

TEJAL SINHA  
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

### PLOT

Vishesh Bansal and Ashlesha Thakur's show *Gutar Gu* is back again and delves deeper into their love story. Now, they are in a long-distance relationship since she moved to Ahmedabad. The show will investigate if their love can withstand time, along with other unknowns. Will they choose to break up or will they decide to give their relationship a chance?

### HIGHLIGHTS

The heart of this season lies in the shift from young love in season one to a more mature but still adolescent relationship. Ritu, a visual arts student in Ahmedabad, and Anuj, an engineering student in Bhopal, attempt to navigate the obstacles of their distant relationship. The show depicts the struggles of young love spread over long distances with a sense of predictability that is both familiar and constricting.

### DRAWBACKS

You can predict the plot developments: envy-fueled arguments, unwanted input from friends, a new person entering the picture, and a 'break-up party' that seems more like a ritual than a heartbreaking event. Although the series is known for its relatable content, there is a chance it may fall into clichés from time to time. The story follows typical patterns and does not aim to shock; rather, it relies on common themes in long-distance relationships. The consistent belief that physical separation will result in cheating, envy in everyday scenarios and a friend interfering in a rela-

tionship, appear to be clichés in romantic stories that viewers have witnessed numerous times.

### PERFORMANCES

The lead actors give strong enough performances to carry the show, even when the script lacks depth for them to work with. The chemistry between Ashlesha and Vishesh feels authentic; their interactions capture the mix of first love's innocence and youthful frustration. Anuj's choice to join a college play in order to go to Ahmedabad shows a charming side of young love, highlighting the extravagant actions that are common in such relationships, even when they seem ridiculous.

### TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Gaurav Chatterji's music is undeniably impressive. The mellow, gentle music that plays consistently in the episodes is worth keeping and can effortlessly be added to the collections of modern romantics. Unlike season 1, Sriram Ganapathy's cinematography. However, there are times when pacing suffers in a few parts, here and there.

### VERDICT

With that being said, at times this season doesn't have enough at stake to capture interest. Despite the refreshing light-hearted tone, the series may feel like it is just coasting along due to the lack of real tension and emotional depth, failing to truly capture the complexities of a developing relationship. This might not meet the expectations of those looking for a thorough exploration of love and relationships. For those seeking a delightful, simple-to-understand series that doesn't require much effort from viewers, this show is a perfect match.



Directed by: Saqib Pandor ■ Produced by: Guneet Monga Kapoor's Sikhya Entertainment

Cast: Ashlesha Thakur, Vishesh Bansal ■ Written by: Garima Kunzru and Gunjan Saxena

Cinematography by: Sriram Ganapathy ■ Streaming on: Amazon MX Player

Rating: 2.5/5

# INDIA EYE SERIES SWEEP, WITH RUNS FROM OPENERS

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Disinfectant nature, India will be eagerly pursuing the twin goals of a series sweep and monitoring the progress of impressive second-line players during the third and final T20 against Bangladesh here on Saturday. India have already bagged the series 2-0 after wins at Gwalior and New Delhi.

This Indian bunch under Gautam Gambhir has shown an insatiable hunger for victory, and doubters can glance back at its result-oriented approach during the rain-marred Kanpur Test against the same opposition a few days ago.

Hence, they are unlikely to show any laxity here too as a 3-0 sweep will sit nicely along with the 2-0 margin in the preceding Test series.

Beyond the obvious, India will also look to add new pieces to their white ball jigsaw puzzle ahead of some important assignments such as the Champions Trophy.

So, in a season teeming with showpiece events globally as well as bilaterally, it's critical for the team to have multiple backup options.

In that context, it's clear that Gambhir and his colleagues in the backroom have set in motion the process of finding able support cast to frontline



players keeping in mind the long-term goals such as the ICC event next year.

Be it pacer Mayank Yadav or spinner Varun Chakravarthy, Gambhir wants to take a closer look at them and assess their readiness for the sterner assays ahead.

They haven't been disappointing either in this series.

Mayank, who missed a lot of action since IPL 2024 due to an injury, bowled at over 150

clicks while Chakravarthy returned with a three-wicket haul in his first outing in blue in three years at Gwalior.

The team management will also keep a close eye on the journey of Nitish Kumar Reddy, highly impressive in the Delhi T20 while smashing a 34-ball 74 and returning with a couple of wickets.

Opening woes Among these slivers of positives, the outings of Sanju Samson and Abhishek Sharma

stick out like a sore thumb. Samson has given a chance to open the innings in this series and it's a godsend in T20s, giving the batter a chance to exploit the six power play overs.

But the Kerala man has two modest outings to show so far - a 19-ball 29, a missed chance to make a fifty in a small chase of 128, and a 7-ball 10.

Samson will have to come up with something special here not to slip away from the

eyesight of management, unless they want to give a go to Jitesh Sharma, the second wicketkeeper batter in the squad.

Similarly, the backroom staff would want a substantial outing from Abhishek who too has produced lukewarm 15 and 16 in the last two matches.

The failure of openers has put a bit of strain on the middle-order, as the hosts were 41 for three inside the power play segment before the middle-

order bailed them out in the second T20.

Apart from that, the team think-tank will decide whether to hand a match to some other worthy names on the bench like leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi and all-rounder Harshit Rana.

As for Bangladesh, the visitors will strive to taste that elusive victory on this tour.

For that, they will need a consistent effort, particularly from seniors like captain Najmul Hossain Shanto, Litton Das and Mustafizur Rahman who all have been disappointing till now.

**SQUADS:**

**India:** Suryakumar Yadav (C), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (wk), Rinku Singh, Hardik Pandya, Riyan Parag, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Varun Chakravarthy, Jitesh Sharma (wk), Arshdeep Singh, Harshit Rana, Mayank Yadav, Tilak Varma.

**Bangladesh:** Najmul Hossain Shanto (Captain), Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Parvez Hossain Emon, Tawhid Hridoy, Mahmud Ullah, Litton Kumar Das, Jaker Ali Anik, Mehidy Hassan Miraz, Shak Mahedi Hasan, Rishad Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman, Taskin Ahmed, Shoriful Islam, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Rakibul Hasan.



PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

New Zealand's new Test captain Tom Latham feels the only way to challenge an almost invincible India in their own backyard is by playing fearless cricket.

Latham has taken over the captaincy from Tim Southee ahead of the three-match Test series in India beginning on October 16 in Bengaluru.

"It's an exciting challenging going over to India and once we can go over there, hopefully play with a bit of freedom, bit of no fear and try and take it to them. If we do that hopefully, it gives ourselves a good chance," said Latham ahead of the team's departure to India on Friday.

While India have won their last 18 series at home, New Zealand come to India on the back of four successive series defeats in the World Test Championship, most recently against Sri Lanka. New Zealand have won only two Tests in India with their last one coming back in 1988.

"In India we've seen teams that have done well out there in the past have been quite aggressive towards them, especially with the bat they've looked to play a few shots, but also put them under pressure... Rather than sitting and waiting for something to happen."

"We'll decide on how we want to play when we get over there, but guys have got plans around how they like to approach things and hopefully we can fine-tune those."

Despite the 0-2 defeat in Sri Lanka, left-handed Latham

reckons they got a few things right in the island nation.

"We actually did some really good things in Sri Lanka. We fell on the wrong side of the results but there were some good things. The approach we had with the bat, apart from that one innings, I thought we played really well."

"So it's about continuing that as much as we can and trying to play a brand of cricket that we are proud of playing," he said.

Latham's predecessor Southee has not been at his best with the ball over the 12 months. The emergence of pacer Will O'Rourke means Southee is not a sure starter in the playing eleven.

The skipper, however, backed the veteran.

"If you look back, think in Bangalore (Southee) took seven wickets last time we toured there," Latham said.

"Someone with that amount of experience who's done it for many years there's certainly no reason why he can't get back to where he's been in the past. He's been a fantastic bowler for us for many years, there's a reason why he's so high on the wicket list for New Zealand."

"He'll have a similar role that he has always had whether it's as captain or in the past, someone like that who has a wealth of experience, a wealth of knowledge in all conditions and he's done it for many years and has been successful. We'll certainly be tapping into his mind, his ideas, so looking forward to it," he added.

The first Test will be played in Bengaluru, second in Pune and third in Mumbai.

# England completes record-filled test match with innings win over Pakistan



AP ■ MULTAN

England notched one of its most memorable test wins as it beat Pakistan by an innings and 47 runs on the fifth and final day of the first cricket test on Friday.

Pakistan was bowled out for 220 inside the first session as Salman Ali Agha (63) and Aamer Jamal (55 not out) delayed the inevitable with their fighting half centuries.

Ill No. 11 Abrar Ahmed couldn't bat due to a fever as Pakistan suffered the

embarrassment of becoming the first test-playing country to lose a match by an innings after scoring over 500 runs in the first innings.

Left-arm spinner Jack Leach picked up all the three wickets on the final morning to finish with 4-30 after fast bowlers Gus Atkinson and debutant Brydon Carse had mopped the Pakistan top-order on the fourth evening.

Resuming on 152-6, Agha and Jamal resisted for an hour and stretched their partnership to 109 before Leach struck in his

first over when he had Agha trapped leg before wicket off a straight delivery.

Leach then finished off the tail quickly by grabbing a stunning low return catch of Shaheen Shah Afridi and Naseem Shah was stumped after hitting the left-arm spinner for a straight six.

England had broken number of test records when it amassed 823-7 declared on the back of Harry Brook's belligerent triple century and Joe Root's impeccable 262 in reply to Pakistan's first innings score of 556.

On Wednesday, Root also became England's highest test run-scorer.

Pakistan woeful run in test cricket continued with skipper Shan Masood losing his sixth successive test since being elevated as captain last year. It was also Pakistan's seventh loss at home in 11 test matches with the last win coming against South Africa in February 2021.

The second test begins at Multan from next Tuesday with the final test scheduled for Rawalpindi from Oct.

# Slow start for Shubhankar in French Open golf

PTI ■ PARIS

Indian golfer Shubhankar Sharma's patchy form continued as he carded a tropy-turvy one-over 72 in the opening round of the FedEx Open de France that left him tied 77th in the standings here.

Sharma struck four birdies against five bogeys. He was one of the early starters and stumbled to a bogey on the second hole but quickly made amends with two fine birdies on the fourth and the sixth.

On the back nine, he had a good start with a birdie to go to two-under.

Then came three bogeys on the trot from 11th to the 13th and he was not able to recover from that, managing a birdie-bogey finish in the last two holes.

The cut looks likely at even par or better and Sharma will need a solid round to make the cut, after missing out last week.

Joe Dean, Thorbjorn Olesen and Jesper Svensson shared



the first-round lead after carding identical six-under 65s.

The trio made the most of soft conditions at Le Golf National after almost 80 millimetres of rain fell on Wednesday, causing the ground staff to work through the night to make the course playable.

Englishman Dean, making his first appearance at this venue, posted the early clubhouse lead after carding four birdies

and an eagle.

He was then joined at the top of the leaderboard by Olesen, who has fond memories of the Albatross Course as a member of Thomas Bjorn's victorious 2018 Ryder Cup side.

The Dane was one-under after playing the back-nine, but then reeled off four consecutive birdies from the first before adding a seventh gain of the day on the par-four seventh hole.

# England loses to Greece as Carsley experiment backfires and France wins without Mbappé

AP ■ LONDON

Lee Carsley ran into the first problems of his tenure as England's interim coach after a bold team selection backfired in a 2-1 home loss to Greece in the Nations League on Thursday.

Erling Haaland became Norway's record scorer at the age of 24 with a double in his country's 3-0 win over Slovakia, while France - playing without Kylian Mbappé and the retired Antoine Griezmann - still had far too much for Israel in a 4-1 victory.

After leading England to back-to-back victories since becoming temporary coach after the European Championship, Carsley felt emboldened enough to field a team without a recognized striker in the absence of injured captain Harry Kane.

The lineup looked interesting and exciting on paper but resembled a mess on the field as Greece repeatedly picked off England and got in behind a stretched defense.

Vangelis Pavlidis scored the opener for the visitors at Wembley Stadium in the 49th, Jude Bellingham equalized in the 87th, only for Pavlidis to take advantage of more sloppy defending to grab Greece's winner in the fourth minute of stoppage time.

Greece's players, who also had three goals disallowed in



the game, celebrated one of their most famous wins by gathering together and holding up the No. 2 jersey of George Baldock, the Panathinaikos defender who was found dead in his Athens home on Wednesday at age 31. Baldock played 12 matches for Greece and there was a period of silence in tribute to the right back ahead of the game, with players wearing black armbands.

"We gave everything for him," Pavlidis said in a tribute to Baldock, who he

described as a "special guy." It was England's first loss to Greece, which is ranked No. 48 in the world ranking, in 10 matches between the teams and deals a major blow to Carsley's hopes of becoming coach of the national team on a permanent basis.

It was meant to be fluid setup, with in-form Chelsea playmaker Cole Palmer starting a competitive international for the first time for England and deployed in central midfield, with Phil Foden and Bellingham splitting time as

the furthest player forward in an attack filled with midfielders. It didn't work.

"We never really gave ourselves a chance to see whether it was the right decision or wrong," said Carsley, who insisted it was not an "experiment."

"With the players we've got, we've got to be courageous at times with our systems and be creative. I thought it was important to try something different. I never at any point thought I've got it cracked. It was a case of, let's try

something different."

Haaland scored twice to move onto 34 goals for Norway, one more than the previous record-holder Jorgen Juve from the 1930s. Haaland, who has already scored 11 goals for Manchester City this season in all competitions, was captaining Norway for the first time in his 36th international appearance.

Alexander Sorloth also scored for Norway. Mbappé wasn't called up by France because of a minor injury, even though he has

since played for Real Madrid, while the surprise retirement of Griezmann - a stalwart for coach Didier Deschamps for the past decade - gave it the feel of a new era for Les Bleus.

Goals by Matteo Guendouzi in the 87th and Bradley Barcola in the 89th wrapped up France's win against Israel, after Eduardo Camavinga and Christopher Nkunku netted in the first half.

The game was played in Budapest, with Israeli teams having played home matches in neutral countries such as Hungary and Cyprus for security reasons since the Hamas attacks one year ago.

Italy forward Lorenzo Pellegrini's red card proved decisive as his team squandered a two-goal lead and drew with Belgium 2-2 in Rome.

Italy went in front after barely 60 seconds, through right wing back Andrea Cambiaso, and striker Mateo Retegu made it 2-0 in the 24th.

Pellegrini was sent off for a foul on Arthur Theate that initially earned him a booking but was upgraded to a red card in the 40th after a VAR review. From the resulting free kick, Maxim De Cuyper tucked away a fine finish from a well-worked move and Leandro Trossard equalized in the 61st.

# Toyota returns to Formula 1

AP ■ TOKYO

Toyota is returning to Formula 1 after 15 years as the Japanese automaker becomes a "technical partner" of American racing team Haas.

There will be Toyota branding on the Haas cars starting from next week's United States Grand Prix in Austin, Texas, and the auto giant's racing division will provide "design, technical and manufacturing services" to the North Carolina-based team.

This doesn't mean a return of the Toyota works team which raced in F1 for eight seasons until 2009, however.

Haas will still race under its own name and Toyota isn't going to be supplying engines like it did for other teams in the 2000s.

Haas already has an agreement to use Ferrari engines through 2028 as part of an existing partnership which dates to Haas' first F1 season in 2016. Haas previously extended its Ferrari deal in July to cover the new F1 regulations coming in 2026.

The announcement of the "multi-year agreement" seemed to suggest Toyota could seek to place a driver with Haas, which doesn't have

a spare seat for next year.

The head of Toyota's Gazoo racing division, Tomoya Takahashi, said in a statement Friday that Toyota would aim to "cultivate drivers, engineers, and mechanics" in its partnership with Haas. The team has already signed Ferrari reserve Oliver Bearman and the experienced Esteban Ocon, who's currently at Alpine, as its drivers for 2025.

Toyota spent lavishly when it joined F1 in 2002 as it attempted to build a title-winning team, but never won a race despite several near-misses.

Toyota made a sudden announcement at the end of the 2009 season that it was leaving F1 as part of a cost-cutting program even though it had almost finished designing its car for the following season.

Since then, Toyota has focused on other forms of auto racing like NASCAR, the Le Mans 24-hour race - where it has a rivalry with Ferrari - and rallying.

The Toyota-Haas F1 announcement Friday came just over a week after the company was among three big Japanese firms which pulled sponsorship money out of the Olympics.

# SREENU VAITLA'S VISWAM: A COMEDY ROUTINE THAT MISSED ITS SPOT!

**SURESH KAVIRAYANI**  
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Director Sreenu Vaitla made his mark in Telugu cinema with his type of comedy and delivered many successful films like *Anandam*, *Venky*, *Dubai Seenu*, *Dhee*, *Ready* and *Dookudu*. But he lost his touch over the last few years and now, after a six-year gap, his latest film *Viswam* has hit the theatres. On the other hand, actor Gopichand is also looking for a break after the last few years and now both of them have joined hands for this film. Kavya Thapar is the female lead and her earlier films have not done well, so she is also looking for a hit with this one. The production house People Media Factory is going through a rough patch as their films are commercially unsuccessful, so they too are banking on this film's success. Many people are looking forward to *Viswam* and how it fares at the box office and whether it brings success to them.

## STORY

A Central Minister (played by Suman) is killed in Hyderabad by his brother Bachiraju (played by Sunil) and Sanjay Sharma alias Khureshi (played by Jisshu Sengupta), who is working for a terrorist organization. A small girl witnesses the murder and these two people send goons to kill her. Gopi Reddy (played by Gopichand), who is close to the girl's family, saves her whenever these goons try to kill her. On the other hand, Samaira (played by Kavya Thapar) is a fashion designer who met Gopi in Milan and fell in love with him. Actually, Gopi also entered their house to meet Samaira only. Why did *Viswam* change his name and enter as Gopi Reddy and what is the reason behind saving the small girl? What is the background of *Viswam* and who is he? What is the link between the small girl and

**Director:** Sreenu Vaitla  
**Producers:** TG Vishwa Prasad, Venu Donepudi  
**Writers:** Gopi Mohan, Bhanu-Nandu, Praveen Varma  
**Cast:** Gopichand, Kavya Thapar, Jisshu Sengupta, VK Nareesh, Sunil Pragathi, VT Ganesh, Prudhvi, Shaam, Vennela Kishore, Mukesh Rishi, Ajay Ghosh and others  
**Cinematography by:** KV Guhan  
**Music:** Chaitan Bharadwaj  
**Rating:** 2/5



the terrorist organization that is operating in India? If you want answers to these questions, you have to watch *Viswam*.

## Analysis

As a director, Sreenu Vaitla created his style of comedy films in Telugu cinema. However, his last few films didn't do well at the box office, so he completely took a long break and came back with this *Viswam*. Everyone thought that the director had now come up with some kind of new idea. But he has disappointed all with his routine comedy once again. If you look at most of his films, the protagonist changes his name and enters the lead actress's house. From there, he creates comedy by

introducing many characters. In *Viswam* too, he has narrated it in the same style; there is nothing new in the storytelling or the comic scenes. Without a strong story, putting a few comedy scenes together won't resonate much with the audience. Sreenu Vaitla did the same thing in this *Viswam*. In the first half, he used the character of Prudhvi to elicit a few laughs and in the second half, he used the character of Vennela Kishore for the same. The film has no strong characterisation or story. If you look at Sreenu Vaitla's earlier film, Mahesh Babu's starer *Dookudu*, *Viswam* also falls into the same kind of story and track.

A small girl witnesses a murder and it is connected to a terrorist backdrop. The protagonist also has

some link to the girl and the terrorists, so on paper, it is interesting, but when it comes to the big screen, it is like a routine. The director completely set aside the story and concentrated more on the *Jabardasth* kind of comic scenes. People show interest in watching *Jabardasth* comedy on YouTube as bits, but you can't watch it on the big screen continuously for two and a half hours. The same is the case with *Viswam*. Some of the comedy scenes are like *Jabardasth* skits, which you can enjoy for a few minutes, but as a film, it is a complete bore.

As a director, Sreenu Vaitla didn't upgrade his style and completely sticks to his old and routine formula. Even after a six-year break, he didn't realise that he hasn't done anything new. Before

the release, people talked about the train comedy, which is in the film just for the sake of comedy. Instead of these long train sequences, the director should concentrate more on the story. There is not a single emotional scene in the film and the climax is a big bore. Sreenu Vaitla should needs to now come out of his routine formula filmmaking and try out something new.

## PERFORMANCE

When it comes to the artists' performances, Gopichand played a routine lead character with nothing new to his role. The action scenes are choreographed well for him and has executed them well in those scenes. Kavya Thapar's scene appearance is only for a few songs and scenes, adding some glamour quotient. While in the first half, comedian Prudhvi does good in providing the chuckles, in the second half, Vennela Kishore does it. Jisshu Sengupta, as the villain, is again a routine with no emotions on his face. Sunil, Rahul Ramakrishna, VK Nareesh and Pragathi provide a few laughs. Kick Shaam, Banerjee, Praveen and many other actors as supporting actors are good. The cinematography is good, showcasing some beautiful foreign locations. The music by Chaitan Bharadwaj is okayish. There are a few punch dialogues that one can enjoy here and there.

## VERDICT

Finally, *Viswam* does not offer anything new as director Sreenu Vaitla comes up with the same routine formula. When you watch this *Viswam*, one can conclude that the director made a few changes to his earlier film *Dookudu* for this one. You can enjoy a few comedy scenes, but that's not enough for a successful film. A big production house like People Media Factory has been delivering bad films continuously in recent times and *Viswam* adds to that list.



**Director:** Abhilash Reddy Kankara ■ **Producers:** Sunil Balusu  
**Writers:** MVS Bharadwaj, Shruvan Madala, Abhilash Reddy Kankara  
**Cast:** Sudheer Babu, Sayaji Shinde, Sai Chand, Shashank, Arna, Amani, Devi Prasad and others ■ **Music director:** Jai Krish  
**Cinematographer:** Sameer Kalyani ■ **Rating:** 2.5/5

## Maa Nanna Super Hero fails to tug at the heartstrings

PNS | HYDERABAD

Actor Sudheer Babu, known for his action-oriented movies, is now venturing into emotional territory with the film *Maa Nanna Super Hero*. This film marks Abhilash Reddy Kankara's directorial debut, which has Sayaji Shinde and Sai Chand play significant roles in the movie, with Arna playing the main female lead. The film was released on Friday. Go ahead and read the review to understand if this film is going to bring Sudheer Babu the success he's been keen to have for a while now.

## STORY:

Prakash (played by Sai Chand), after the loss of his wife, puts his son into an orphanage and is later wrongly imprisoned. The head of the orphanage named the boy Jani (played by Sudheer Babu), who later gets adopted by a businessman named Srinivas (played by Sayaji Shinde). Srinivas treats Jani as his real son. However, he despises him now due to losing everything in his business, believing that all of this happened because Jani came into his life. Jani, on the other hand, showed his father the highest level of respect and viewed him as his personal hero. If anyone spoke ill of his father, he would not hesitate to defend him and was willing to go to any lengths to support him. Following Srinivas' advice, a local leader invested a significant amount of money in the stock market and ended up losing it all. Therefore, he utilised his power to have Srinivas arrested and subjected to torture while in custody. Jani aimed to rescue his father by meeting the local leader's demand of repaying his father's debt of Rs one crore in order to secure his father's release from jail. In contrast, Prakash was released from prison after two decades and began looking for his son. What did Jani do to secure Rs one crore for his father's release from jail? What was the way in which Prakash finally encountered his son? Why did Jani and Prakash journey together and what is

their objective? You must view the movie at the cinema.

## ANALYSIS:

Sudheer Babu has been known for starring in action films, but this time he has opted for an emotional drama role. Abhilash Reddy entered the world of directing with his film *Maa Nanna Hero*. This young filmmaker has introduced a creative concept in this movie about a son and his two fathers, one who is adopted and the other who is biological. The focus of the plot is primarily on these three characters, and the director aimed to convey this with a significant amount of emotion. If you write it down, you will enjoy it, but when it's portrayed on screen, the director fails to convey the emotion effectively.

Sayaji Shinde is undeniably a talented actor, however he did not portray a convincing father figure to Sudheer Babu in this movie. There is no emotional presence of an angel in the father and son relationship. The film began by introducing Prakash, portrayed by Sai Chand and showed how he abandoned his baby son at an orphanage. The son later matures under a different father and everything turns out well. Jani is constantly hiding his father's errors whenever he makes them. The director demonstrates Srinivas' decision to adopt Jani, even though his wife Amani disapproves. She requested him to at least change his name, but Srinivas refused and treated him as if he were his own son. Showing this scene at the start can help the audience better understand Sudheer Babu's later interactions with Sayaji Shinde and why he sees his father as a superhero.

Once Prakash appears, the story becomes more intriguing. The interactions between Sai Chand and Sudheer Babu are well-executed, but the director still struggles to effectively portray the emotional aspect. Raju Sundaram's performance was not satisfactory and the song is also not needed. The initial part focuses on a son who is adopted by his father, while the latter part delves into the relationship between a son and his biological father.

The peak of the story is somewhat sentimental and is presented in a pleasing manner. In some enjoyable scenes, Sudheer Babu jokes that his name is Mahesh Babu, due to his father being a Krishna fan. Krishna and Mahesh Babu fans may find these types of scenes appealing since the actor comes from their family background. If the director focuses on the emotional aspect, this movie has the potential to be a huge hit and even better than before. However, he ought to value a groundbreaking.

## PERFORMANCE:

Regarding the performance, Sudheer Babu excelled in his portrayal of a son. There is evidence of his hard work and dedication on screen as he fully embodies his character and emotes effectively. His emotions were flawless when he was with the adoptive father and later with the biological father. He performed his role flawlessly, especially in the scene where he confronts the homeowner for disrespecting his father. As soon as the owner's daughter appears, he quickly displays his fondness for her. Every child perceives their father as a superhero and therefore avoids criticizing him in front of their child. In the final scene, he also portrayed his emotions in the most effective manner. Sayaji Shinde's performance is good, but his Telugu skills are not up to the level of a typical Telugu actor, causing the scenes with Sudheer Babu to not blend well. Sai Chand is an experienced actor and effortlessly delivers his performances. He is the standout performer in the second half. Arna holds the main female role, but her character is insignificant as she only appears in a few scenes. The cinematography is excellent and the music is excellent.

## VERDICT:

In conclusion, *Maa Nanna Super Hero* tells a tale of a son caught between two fathers. Director Abhilash Reddy presents a solid storyline, but it is missing emotion which could elevate the film to a higher level. Sudheer Babu stands out in the film with his exceptional performance.



## Nikhil-Sudheer combo aims for hat-trick with Appudo Ippudo Eppudo

Nikhil, who gained nationwide popularity with *Karthikeya 2*, is all set to impress with his upcoming film titled *Appudo Ippudo Eppudo*. The film is directed by blockbuster director Sudheer Varma, known for his variety of films. This interesting combo previously collaborated on blockbuster films *Swamy Rara* and *Keshava*. The prominent production house Sri Venkateswara Cine Chitra LLP is producing this project. It is being bankrolled by senior and producer BVSN Prasad. Recently released first look impressed everyone and on Friday, the makers dropped the teaser as Dussehra a treat. The teaser introduces Rishi, portrayed by Nikhil, who is a racer and a thief. Rishi instantly falls in love with Rukmini Vasanth. Their delightful chemistry and the unfolding love story spark curiosity. As the plot unfolds, it reveals Divyansha Kaushik as another of Rishi's love interest, after which the teaser transitions into an action mode.

With intense chases and an exhilarating score, it builds significant anticipation for this action-packed film. Titled *Appudo Ippudo Eppudo*, it is set to release worldwide on November 8 as a Diwali treat, offering a blend of thrills, humor, and a lighthearted romance. The last dialogue definitely connects to all the men. Packed with massive action, fun and racy moments, the teaser promises an exhilarating experience in cinema halls. The collaboration between Nikhil and director Sudheer Varma aims for a hat-trick blockbuster. Kannada actress Rukmini Vasanth, who has gained solid popularity, is making her Telugu debut with this film. Yogesh Sudhakara, Sunil Shah and Raja Subramanian are co-producing the film. Bapineedu B is presenting this prestigious project. Singer Karthik is composing the songs, while Sunny MR is handling the background score. Richard Prasad is in charge of cinematography, and Navin Nooli is handling the editing.

## Janaka Aithe Ganaka: A fresh yet flawed take on middle-class

PNS | HYDERABAD

Comedian-turned-character actor Suhas has slowly emerged as a lead actor and has become a bankable star for small films. He, of late, has been choosing different kinds of scripts and encouraging new directors. His film *Janaka Aithe Ganaka* is releasing on October 12, with Sandeep Reddy Bandla making his directorial debut. Produced by the top production house led by popular producer Dil Raju, the film has generated curiosity. Sangeerthana plays the female lead.

## Story:

Prasad (played by Suhas) is a middle-class man living with his wife (played by Sangeerthana) and parents. Though his parents and grandmother pressure him to have children, Prasad is clear about his stance. Earning only Rs 30,000 a month, he knows it would be difficult to provide the best for his children. After two years of marriage, he and his wife have agreed not to plan for kids. His father (played by Goparaju Ramana) continuously pressures him, but Prasad eventually shows him the high costs of delivery and child education, which finally silences his father. However, when Prasad's wife unexpectedly becomes pregnant, he is shocked. He decides to sue the condom company and take the case to court. His friend (played by Vennela Kishore), a lawyer, represents him in court. This court case turns into a sensational story and what happens next forms the crux of the film.

## ANALYSIS

Director Sandeep Reddy Bandla introduces a fresh, out-of-the-box concept. It's a sensitive subject, but he chooses to narrate it in an entertaining way. Stories with a middle-class backdrop often resonate well and if the emotions are captured correctly, success follows. *Janaka Aithe Ganaka* explores the life of a middle-class man who doesn't want kids because, in the current system, he feels he cannot afford the hospital and education expenses. Despite using a condom, his wife becomes pregnant, leading him to take the matter to court. However, the director takes his time to establish the protago-



**Actors:** Suhas, Sangeerthana, Rajendra Prasad, Vennela Kishore, Prabhas Sreenu, Goparaju Ramana, Murali Sharma and others

**Music:** Vijay Bulganin ■ **Cinematography:** Sai Sriram

**Producers:** Harshith Reddy, Hanshitha Reddy

**Director:** Sandeep Reddy Bandla

**Release date:** October 12, 2024 ■ **Rating:** 2.5/5

nist's background, including his friends, family, parents, grandmother, and the relationship between husband and wife. As a result, the story drags a bit in the beginning, but once the director reaches the main point, the narration picks up.

The film's main drawback is the director's inability to capture the emotional depth of a middle-class family effectively. He tries to make the courtroom drama more entertaining, reminiscent of *Jathi Ratnalu*, which had similar humorous courtroom scenes. When Murali Sharma's character enters the court, the story becomes more engaging. Though some scenes are overly cinematic and dragged, the second half is better than the first, moving the film in a positive direction. While the climax isn't particularly emotional, the final twist is hilarious and engaging. Some scenes, such as Suhas explaining the terms and conditions and the sequence with Rajendra Prasad and his wife, feel unnecessary. If the director had focused more on the flaws in the education system, the film might have been more compelling.

## PERFORMANCE

In terms of performance, Suhas fits perfectly into the role of a middle-class man and delivers well. Sangeerthana, in her debut film, does a neat job, performing like an experienced actress. Goparaju Ramana excels as Suhas' father. Vennela Kishore provides plenty of laughs, especially in the courtroom, where his emotional speech is a highlight. Rajendra Prasad, as the judge, performs well but occasionally goes overboard. Murali Sharma is solid, while Prabhas Sreenu and others provide good support. The background music is effective, and the cinematography is decent. Some dialogues are both thought-provoking and entertaining.

## VERDICT

Overall, with *Janaka Aithe Ganaka*, director Sandeep Reddy Bandla presents a fresh idea, but it only comes across as interesting in parts. He focuses on entertainment without crossing the line, but the emotional depth is lacking. Despite that, it's a decent and time-pass film.

## Narudi Brathuku Natana explores twists of destiny

This year, few small films have been making big at the box-office and now another small film *Narudi Brathuku Natana* is all set to hit the screens on October 25. Shiva Kumar Ramachandraravuru and Nithin Prasanna will be seen playing the lead actors in this film. The film directed by Rishikeshwar Yogi, also stars Shruthi Jayan, Aiswarya Anil Kumar and Viva Raghav. TG Vishwa Prasad, Sukumar Boreddy and Dr Sindhu Reddy are the producers. Niharika Konidela had released the trailer for the film. Going by the trailer, the film has some good content with Shiva Kumar wanting to become an actor. Despite his father's immense wealth, he insists that Shiva pursues a conventional job, but he wants to pursue acting. Acting needs a lot of passion and it is also spontaneous and real; feeling weighed down by the criticism, Shiva decides to embark on a journey. He meets a Malayalam man and travels with him to Kerala. In this journey, there are some unexpected twists and turns and the story reveals the other actor, Nithin and his future. Though Shiva Kumar and Nithin Prasanna have been regularly seen in some films, according to the makers, they have carried their respective parts effectively. They also revealed that the director Rishikeshwar Yogi picked a unique script which he narrated engagingly.

## LUCKY BASKHAR STORY WAS INSPIRED BY WOLF OF WALL STREET: DIRECTOR

Malayalam Superstar Dulquer Salmaan is now concentrating more on directing Telugu films. On Friday, the makers announced that they will be releasing the film on October 31 and are also planning premieres for the film, a day before. Venky Atluri is the writer and director of this film. Talking about the film, director Venky Atluri said that the film's story is about the banking system in the 1980s. He added that he got inspired by the Hollywood classic *Wolf of Wall Street*. He further revealed that he did not take any scene from any popular movie but he wanted to explore such a new genre for Indian Cinema with this film. He confidently stated that they are making a film in a completely unexplored genre in Indian Cinema. The theatrical trailer is going to be released on October 21 and they are planning two pre-release events October 26 and 27, in both the Telugu states. On choosing Dulquer Salmaan, the director revealed that he wanted an actor who can carry a very different character while suiting the middle-class persona of his lead protagonist. He also revealed that Dulquer Salmaan has a believable charm and his performance in the film is incredible. The director said that the movie will touch on the late 80's and early 90's Banking System in India. Talking about taking real-life incidents as inspiration to make a film in that time period, he stated that he researched the banking system and then he wanted to add those details to give an authenticity to the fictional story. He didn't insert any real incidents in this film, but he takes inspiration from several incidents to suit his story. Meenakshi Chaudhary is playing the female lead. Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya are the producers.