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**Modi, Jinping endorse patrolling agreement**



**INDIA CANNOT RISK ANOTHER BOUT OF INFLATION: RBI GOVERNOR DAS**



**'Small-scale films deserve more support from INDUSTRY'**

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**

**Perhaps KTR thinks of himself as innocent. The public knows about his deeds. They are aware of what happened in the phone-tapping and drugs cases, and how those cases were weakened. Until now, I have responded word for word. I will respond to legal notices with legal notices only. We respect the law and justice, and we will proceed according to them.**

**-Bandi Sanjay, Union Minister**

**DON'T MISS...**

**MP asks officials to implement...**

MP Putta Mahesh Kumar asked the district officials to implement welfare schemes efficiently and carry out development work on priority basis. The District Development, Coordination & Monitoring Committee meeting was held here in which district Collector K Vetri Selvi, Joint Collector P Dhatri Reddy and MLAs participated. The MP reviewed the implementation of various welfare schemes and carrying out development programmes including the Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee...



**AR Anuradha is new chairman of APPSC**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has officially appointed retired IPS officer AR Anuradha as the new chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC). The announcement was made on Wednesday, following an order issued with the consent of Governor Abdul Nazir. Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad issued GOMs: 92 appointing Anuradha as APPSC Chairman.

Former DGP Gautam Sawang was appointed as Chairman of APPSC in March 2022. However, he resigned from his post on July 4 this year after the change of government in the State. Since then the post has been lying vacant. The 1987 batch IPS officer earlier held the key responsibilities of Intelligence Chief, Home Secretary etc. She is the first woman IPS officer to serve as the head of the AP Intelligence Department.

## CM unveils 'Diwali bonanza'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet has given approval to supply three LPG cylinders per year in line with its poll promise from Diwali, with an estimated expenditure of Rs 2,700 crore. The Cabinet, which met under the chairmanship of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday, decided to provide one cylinder each for every four months. For those who paid for the cylinder in cash, they can get a refund of the cost directly to their bank account. The supply of free gas cylinders was one of the main poll promises of the NDA government.

After the AP Cabinet meeting, Ministers Koluva Parthasarathy, Kollu Ravindra, Nandendla Manohar and Anitha Vangalapudi spoke to the media persons and briefed the decisions.

They said the Cabinet also decided to waive off GST and seigniorage on the free sand supply policy even though it would be a financial burden to the State exchequer. The Cabinet also decided to allow individuals to extract sand from their own patta lands. Ministers and district in-charge officials have been instructed to ensure the proper implementation of the free sand policy. Additionally, the government plans to regulate prices in districts with sand shortages by appointing mineral dealers.

The Cabinet approved the revocation of the controversial land

### Three LPG cylinders per year from the festival



- Cabinet nod for waiver of GST and seigniorage on free sand supply.
- Land allocation for Sharada Peetham revoked.
- BSc Nursing seats increased.



**The Cabinet decided to provide one cylinder each for every four months. For those who paid for the cylinder in cash, they can get a refund of the cost directly to their bank account.**

allocation to the Sharada Peetham, headed by Swaroopnandendra Saraswati, in Visakhapatnam. The YSRCP government, during its tenure under then CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, had granted 15 acres of prime land near Bheemili town in Kothavalasa village, close to the seashore, to Swaroopnandendra, a close associate and spiritual advisor of Jagan. In another decision, the Cabinet gave nod to an amendment to increase the number of members in temple committees and reserve positions for Brahmins and Nayi Brahmins in these committees. The Cabinet has approved the

proposals for the up-gradation of the 100-bed area hospital in Mangalagiri, which is under the administrative control of the Directorate of Secondary Health, at an estimated cost of Rs 52,20,88,252 (Non-recurring expenditure of Rs 47.50 crore and recurring expenditure of Rs 4,70,88,252) along with the sanction of (73) additional posts.

The Cabinet approved the proposal to amend the Andhra Pradesh Medical Practitioners Registration Act, 1968 as proposed in the draft bill to eliminate discrimination against visually challenged persons and those suffering from muteness

and leprosy, and to provide a monthly pension of Rs 6,000 to the differently-abled.

The State Cabinet has approved the proposals for ratification of the orders issued by the Government Nursing College, Visakhapatnam, increasing the number of B.Sc (Nursing) seats from 25 to 100. It has also approved the sanction of 27 teaching posts and 56 non-teaching posts in the Government Nursing College, Visakhapatnam, and filling those posts on promotion/contract/outsourced basis as per the rules of the Indian Nursing Council.

Continued on Page 2

## Jagan's Disha Act was a lie, terms Lokesh

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh has challenged YSRCP chief and former CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for an open debate on 'X'. "Whether in Opposition or in Govt, TDP has remained dignified in the way we express our opinions. Even on occasions when emotions and injustice carried us away, our leader HCM @ncbn taught us to be mindful, decorous, and always uphold truth. Because he strongly believes that we're setting precedents for the future generation of leaders with our behaviour," he added.

Lokesh alleged that YSRCP was built on abuse, violence, and lies. "@ysjagan is a liar. He surrounds himself with a pack of liars and criminals of the highest order masquerading as politicians. They're in the business of peddling lies through press meets, fakes and morphs."

The Minister stated that there was no Disha Act to begin with. "Jagan's Disha Act was a lie. This was the biggest fraud in the country in the name of women's security," he added.

Under Jagan's rule, 2,027 women were brutally murdered between 2019-24. Not a single criminal was booked under Disha.

Continued on Page 2

**Schizophrenia linked with four...**

Risk of death due to a sudden heart attack could be four times higher for patients of schizophrenia, a new study has found. For those having other types of mental illness such as depression, death risk is still twice as high, regardless of age, suggesting that an 18-year-old could expect to live 10 years fewer, compared to one of same age without mental health issues, researchers have found. The team from the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, said that while having a...

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**Entertainment industry lost...**

The Indian entertainment industry suffered a staggering loss of Rs 22,400 crore in 2023 due to piracy, according to a report released on Wednesday, that advocated for stronger regulations and collaborative efforts to effectively mitigate piracy risks. According to 'The Rob Report' by EY and the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), 51 per cent of media consumers in India access content from pirated sources, with streaming services being the most significant contributor at...

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**India eye right selection calls to...**

Jolted by an unexpected loss on home turf, star-heavy India will look for right balance in the line-up to counter-attack against a spunky New Zealand in the crucial second Test beginning here on Thursday. After being shot out for an embarrassing 46 in the first innings at Bengaluru, India's resolute show in the second innings could not prevent an eight-wicket pounding which saw the top-ranked team in the World Test Championship table dropping points even though it continues to hold the top spot...

-SPORTS

## Vasireddy Padma quits YSRC

**Says she decided to resign due to lack of genuine reflection on party's electoral defeat**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Andhra Pradesh Women's Commission Chairperson and senior leader Vasireddy Padma resigned from the YSR Congress on Wednesday. In a letter addressed to party president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, Padma explained that she decided to quit the party due to the lack of genuine reflection on the recent electoral defeat.

Addressing the media later, Padma criticised Jagan Mohan Reddy for failing to take responsibility for the party, the government, and the people. She expressed disappointment with Jagan's leadership, stating that it lacked a human touch.

Padma deplored that Jagan did not recognise her services and despite asking YSRC ticket to contest the 2024 elections, he rejected the request. She was particularly



shocked by Jagan's approach of offering promotions to party members as if it were a corporate company. Objecting to the Good Book of Jagan, Padma said, "Jagan is introducing a 'Good Book' concept to deceive people. What we need is a heartfelt approach to win the trust of the public and party cadres, not just a polished image. Despite having personal and policy differences, she remained loyal to the party like a disciplined leader."

## 87 trains from Visakhapatnam cancelled

**Decision taken to ensure passenger safety and prevent disruptions in view of Cyclone Dana**

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Waltair Division of the East Coast Railway has cancelled 87 trains originating from Visakhapatnam as a precautionary measure in view of Cyclone Dana. The decision was taken to ensure passenger safety and prevent disruptions due to possible flooding and infrastructure damage.

Surabh Prasad, Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of Waltair, said that the safety of passengers is of utmost priority.

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## Jagan consoles victims' families, demands justice

**Slams TDP govt for failing to curb rising crimes against women**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Chief Minister and YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy consoled the families of two young women, who lost their lives following brutal attacks in Guntur and Kadapa districts, strongly criticising the TDP government's failure to maintain law and order and curb rising crimes against women.

During the visits, Jagan highlighted the alarming rise in violent crimes, particularly against women, and demanded swift action from the state government to provide justice and compensation to the affected families. In a compassionate move, YSRCP announced Rs 10 lakh ex-gratia to the victims' families in six similar cases, with Jagan urging the



TDP government to provide Rs 10 lakh financial assistance to the victims' families.

He expressed deep anguish over the increasing incidents of atrocities, including rapes, murders, and suicides, that have occurred under the current government's rule. He

revealed that in just four-and-a-half months, 77 rapes, seven murders, and five suicides had been reported, yet the government had taken no substantial action to prevent these crimes or bring the perpetrators to justice.

He accused the ruling Telugu Desam Party of shielding its party members involved in such heinous crimes, fostering a culture of impunity and disregard for justice.

He called upon the government to take immediate steps to offer financial aid to the victims' families and demanded that ministers personally visit the families to offer apologies and reassurances that such incidents would not be repeated.

Continued on Page 2

## APTIDCO Chairman Ajay Kumar assumes office

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The newly appointed Andhra Pradesh Township and Infrastructure Development Corporation (APTIDCO) Chairman Vemulapati Ajay Kumar assumed the chair at his chamber

at the NTR Administrative Block in Vijayawada on Wednesday. Minister for Tourism and Culture Kandula Durgesh, MP Vemireddy Prabhakar Reddy, MLA Lokam Naga Madhavi, MLC P Hari Prasad and others congratulated Ajay Kumar.



Speaking on the occasion, Ajay Kumar said that he would strive to construct their own houses for

those who have no shelter in the State. He thanked Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj & Rural Development K Pawan Kalyan and Minister for Municipal Administration & Urban Development P Narayana for choosing him as chairman.

Continued on Page 2

## GITAM team wins 2<sup>nd</sup> prize at Amaravathi Drone Summit

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Centre for Autonomous Systems (CAS) team from GITAM Deemed to be University has secured the second prize at the Amaravathi Drone Summit, organised by the Andhra Pradesh State government. The team's innovative drone, equipped with advanced technologies, impressed the judges with its potential for security applications.

The drone developed by the CAS team features a cutting-edge camera that follows a predefined reference trajectory. Utilising edge computing and artificial intelligence (AI), the drone processes live video to detect humans and perform face recognition. If an unknown face is detected, the system immediately sends alerts with coordinates to security teams.

Prof P Bharani Chandra Kumar,

Director of CAS, explained, "Our drone integrates AI-driven face recognition technology with real-time video processing, providing a sophisticated security solution. This technology has potential for various applications, including surveillance and law enforcement." The award-

winning drone was developed by students C Sairam, K Joshua, and T Meghana under the guidance of Prof. Bharani Chandra Kumar. "It was a collaborative effort by our talented student team, and I am proud of their hard work and innovative thinking," said Prof Kumar.

Looking ahead, the CAS Director highlighted the team's ongoing projects. "We are currently working on developing new drone technologies for a variety of applications, including agriculture, defense, surveillance, emergency services, delivery and logistics, and marine

ecosystem studies," he revealed. GITAM In-Charge Vice-Chancellor Prof Y Gowthamrao congratulated the CAS team. "This is a proud moment for GITAM. I believe the CAS team is set to reach new heights and achieve even more in the future," he said.



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## Union Minister, MPs, MLAs offer prayers at Durga Temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On Wednesday, Minister of Civil Aviation K. Rammoohan Naidu, Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath (alias Chinni), Anapalli MP CM Ramesh, Madugula MLA Bandaru Satyanarayana Murthy, and Yalamanchili Sundarapu Vijay Kumar visited the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam, located atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada, where they offered special prayers to goddess Durga Devi.

Durga Temple Executive Officer (EO) KS Rama Rao warmly welcomed the dignitaries and facilitated their darshan. Following the darshan, temple priests per-

formed a blessing ceremony for the Minister, MPs, and MLAs at the Veda Ashirvachana Mandapam. EO Rao then presented them with Laddu Prasadam and portraits of Durga Devi as tokens of the visit.

On the occasion, the Union Minister highlighted the achievements of the State under the leadership of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. He noted that with the blessings of Kanaka Durga Devi, the State government achieved five Guinness World Records while hosting the Drones Summit and Drones Show. He emphasised that the Drones Summit, a first-of-its-kind event in the State, was a result of the Chief Minister's efforts.



Kanaka Durga Temple EO Rama Rao presenting Durga Devi portraits to Union Minister Rammoohan Naidu, MPs Kesineni Chinni and CM Ramesh, MLAs Satyanarayana Murthy and Vijaya Kumar in Vijayawada on Wednesday

# AP unlocking 15% growth via wealth creation and investor trust

Andhra Pradesh, riding a colossal wave of transformation, is on the cusp of an economic explosion that promises to reshape its destiny. Historically overshadowed in terms of development, the state is now making headlines with its meteoric rise in economic indicators, signalling a new era of wealth creation and innovation. With a projected Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) growth rate of 17% for 2023-24, following an already robust 16.22% increase in the previous year, Andhra Pradesh's trajectory shows that it is not just catching up, but sprinting ahead.

The economic scale of Andhra Pradesh is staggering. The GSDP for 2023-24 is estimated at Rs 15.40 lakh crore (approximately US\$185 billion), a figure that puts the state in the upper bracket of India's economic performers. The state's per capita income, now at Rs 2.19 lakh-a remarkable 14% jump from that registered last year-paints a picture of increasing prosperity.

Yet, the state's financial landscape is not without its complexities. With a per capita debt of Rs 92,797 as of FY 2021-22, fiscal discipline will be essential moving forward. However, Andhra Pradesh's financial health remains strong. Tax revenues surged from Rs 57,427 crore in 2020-21 to Rs 84,389 crore in 2022-23, and non-tax revenues nearly doubled to Rs 6,511 crore, indicating the state's expanding revenue base.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) plays a crucial role in this growth story. Between October 2019 and March 2024, Andhra Pradesh attracted US\$ 888.13 million in FDI, reflecting its increasing appeal to global investors. Its global trade footprint is equally impressive, with merchandise exports reaching US\$19.76 billion in FY24, underscoring the state's growing role in international markets.

Agriculture remains the backbone of Andhra Pradesh's

**The leadership in Andhra Pradesh is keen to maintain this rapid pace of development, setting an ambitious annual growth target of 15%. Under the forward-thinking leadership of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, the state has focused on policy innovation and public-private partnerships (PPPs). These partnerships have become central to the state's development strategy, enabling it to harness the strengths of both the public and private sectors**



**DR. ARJA SRIKANTH**  
(Former Special Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh)

economy, employing 62% of its population. High productivity and a focus on high-yield crops such as oilseeds and rice have contributed to the sector's resilience. With abundant water from the Godavari and Krishna rivers, the state's agriculture sector expanded by 4.54% in FY 2022-23.

Innovation in fisheries is propelling Andhra Pradesh to new heights, as the state

leads India in shrimp production, accounting for 70% of the nation's output. With output rising from Rs 3.46 billion to Rs 5.61 billion, the fisheries sector is becoming a significant driver of growth, aided by advanced farming techniques and government initiatives.

Likewise, the state's horticulture sector is flourishing, spanning 17.48 lakh hectares and producing over 301 lakh metric tons of goods. Andhra

Pradesh has emerged as a top producer of high-value crops such as chillies and tomatoes, bolstering its export capacity and cementing its influence in global agricultural markets.

The industrial sector is also soaring, contributing Rs 507.45 billion (US\$6.1 billion) to the economy. Andhra Pradesh is rapidly positioning itself as a leader in heavy manufacturing, IT, and biotechnology, attracting

multinational corporations to cities like Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, and Tirupati. The state's IT Electronics Policy 2021-24 is aimed at further accelerating this momentum, establishing Andhra Pradesh as a hub for electronics manufacturing. Its industrial landscape is supported by 19 operational Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and 272 industrial estates, creating a favorable environment for industries ranging from agriculture to advanced biotechnology.

The state's mineral wealth is another powerful asset. Andhra Pradesh produces 93% of India's barytes and holds vast reserves of essential minerals such as mica, coal, and asbestos. These resources are vital for the state's power generation and industrial sectors, further solidifying their role in the state's economic foundation.

The leadership in Andhra Pradesh is keen to maintain this rapid pace of develop-

ment, setting an ambitious annual growth target of 15%. Under the forward-thinking leadership of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, the state has focused on policy innovation and public-private partnerships (PPPs). These partnerships have become central to the state's development strategy, enabling it to harness the strengths of both the public and private sectors. Through clear policies, tax incentives, and a business-friendly regulatory environment, Andhra Pradesh has become an attractive destination for both domestic and international investors.

Capacity development is also a central focus, with initiatives like the P-4 mentorship system aimed at empowering the population and setting SMART goals to ensure consistent progress. Investment in education and healthcare, viewed as essential for boosting productivity, will ensure Andhra Pradesh's long-term economic

resilience. Infrastructure development underpins this growth. The state boasts a robust transport network, including well-maintained roads, international airports, and the strategically crucial Visakhapatnam Port. Furthermore, Andhra Pradesh's push into digital infrastructure, with IoT sensors and real-time data analysis, promises to revolutionize its agriculture, industrial, and trade sectors.

In conclusion, Andhra Pradesh is not just moving forward; it is leaping into a future brimming with potential. By nurturing a culture of innovation, attracting global investors, and focusing on sustainable growth, the state is on course to become one of India's premier economic powerhouses. The future for Andhra Pradesh is bright, as it continues to redefine its economic landscape and unlock new opportunities for wealth creation and prosperity.

## KOREAN EXIM BANK REPRESENTATIVES MEET LOKESH

# Focus on investment opportunities in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh is actively engaging with international stakeholders attracting investment and generating employment opportunities across Andhra Pradesh. Several South Korean companies have expressed keen interest in investing in AP, encouraged by the leadership of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.

On Wednesday, a high-level South Korean delegation, including Korean Consul General in Chennai Kim Chang-nyun, Director General of KEXIM Bank's EDCF Operations Department Kevin Choi, KEXIM Bank NDRO Chief Representative Jung



Wan-ryu, and KOICA Director Chang Woo-Chan, met Lokesh at the Secretariat. The discussions focused on investment opportunities in the State.

KEXIM Bank reaffirmed its commitment to supporting various infrastructure projects in Andhra Pradesh. Lokesh outlined the government's efforts to create an investor-friendly environment, highlighting the subsidies available and the recent revival of the Economic

Development Board (EDB) to expedite the approval process for new industries. Minister Lokesh encouraged Korean companies to take part in the State's development initiatives.

Development Board (EDB) to expedite the approval process for new industries. Minister Lokesh encouraged Korean companies to take part in the State's development initiatives.

## Withdraw VRS plan at VSP: CPM

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

CPM State secretary V Srinivasa Rao has strongly criticised the Union Government's proposal for a Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) at the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP). He has demanded the immediate withdrawal of the VRS plan, urging the steel plant employees to reject the proposal, which he considers deceptive and harmful to their interests.

In a press release on Wednesday, Srinivasa Rao said that the VRS proposal could significantly disrupt steel production at a crucial juncture, especially as efforts by labourers have paved the way for the reopening of the second blast furnace. According to him, the proposal threatens to undo the progress made, which would negatively impact production levels and the plant's overall stability.

Rao also accused the Central government of intentionally trying to push the steel plant into financial losses by reducing production.

## AP receives accolades at SACEF event

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Ajay Jain, Special Chief Secretary, Housing Department, has highlighted the State's ambitious 'Housing for All' initiative, which aims to provide affordable housing to all eligible households by 2029. He affirmed that as part of this mission, Andhra Pradesh is facilitating access to cost-effective, energy-efficient appliances to reduce electricity costs and enhance the sustainability of homes. Ajay Jain addressed the South Asia Clean Energy Forum, Jaipur, Rajasthan (SACEF)-2024, organised by USAID, on Wednesday.

Among the many success stories shared at the SACEF event, the State of Andhra Pradesh was prominently recognised for its pioneering energy efficiency initiatives and AP received accolades for its transformative approach to energy efficiency, particularly through the adoption of super-efficient appliances which significantly reduced energy consumption.



Ajay Jain noted, "Under the leadership of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, we are committed to achieving housing for all and supporting our communities with energy-efficient solutions. These appliances not only lower electricity bills but also improve the quality of life for our citizens."

Regarding AP's housing initiatives, Ajay Jain explained that in alignment with India's Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) schemes, AP State has been allocated 2.3 million houses under PMAY, with an

additional 9,00,000 homes to be completed by March 2026. He added that the upcoming PMAY 2.0 scheme, with an enhanced unit cost, will further ensure affordable housing for remaining eligible households.

Animesh, Chief General Manager of Sales & PR at EESL, announced that EESL would make provision of essential lighting and cooling solutions to 300,000 low-income households in AP, with each family receiving four LED bulbs, two tube lights, and two fans at highly cost-effective prices.

## Jagan's Disha...

Continued from Page 1

Furthermore, under YSRCP, over 30,000 of our sisters and daughters disappeared without a trace, Lokesh alleged.

"YSRCP used police for their benefit to build a dictatorship. NDA is using the police for people's benefit to build a safer society. YSRCP didn't invest a single rupee to upgrade police infrastructure and technology.

Instead, Jagan used the police to harass Opposition and dissenting voices. HCM @ncbn Caru invested in 13,000+ CC Cameras to make policing efficient.

Jagan had Rs.12.85 Cr to build an Iron Compound for his palace. He didn't even bother to pay power bills to run CC Cameras," Lokesh said.

## Waqf Act amendment: Muslim associations, MLAs meet CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Representatives of various Muslim associations from other States including the All-India Muslim Law Board, Telugu Desam Party MLAs, Minister NMD Farooq, former chairman of Legislative Council Sharif and minority leaders in the party met Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at the Secretariat on Wednesday.

They expressed their objection to the proposals made by



the Central government on the amendment of the Waqf Act. They said the proposal will weaken the Waqf Board and harm the rights and sentiments of the Muslim community.

They submitted a memorandum to the Chief Minister

requesting not to accept the amendments in the Waqf Act and to oppose the law in Parliament.

The Chief Minister assured the Muslim representatives that he would discuss the matter with the Centre and take an appropriate decision.

## JSP Corporator accuses MVV Satyanarayana of corruption

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a series of explosive allegations, Jana Sena Party (JSP) corporator Peethala Murthy Yadav has accused former Visakhapatnam MP MVV Satyanarayana of corruption, claiming that the latter misused his power for personal enrichment rather than the city's development.

Speaking to the media here on Wednesday, Yadav charged Satyanarayana with using his political influence to amass vast wealth through business ventures over the past five years, while neglecting the needs of the people. "Satyanarayana used his tenure not for the betterment of Visakhapatnam, but for himself. He has accumulated crores of rupees through unethical business dealings," Yadav stated.

The JSP corporator did not hold back, accusing Satyanarayana of leveraging his position to intimidate government officials and seize public lands. "He grabbed government land, developed ventures, and even constructed apartments on sites reserved for GVMC parks and graveyards. This is not just a betrayal of public trust but a crime against the city," Yadav said.

He further highlighted Satyanarayana's massive expenditures during elections, alleging that the former MP had spent Rs 50 crore in the 2019 elections and Rs 100 crore for the 2024 elections to bolster the YSRCP. "His spending shows how deep-rooted the corruption is. This is a politician using his wealth to hold power, at the expense of the people he is supposed to serve," Yadav alleged.

Adding to the gravity of the accusations, Yadav referred to the findings of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) investigation.

## CM unveils 'Diwali...

Continued from Page 1

The Cabinet has approved the proposals to bring a web portal for generating GO numbers and uploading GOs issued between August 15, 2021 and August 28, 2024, which were suspended, on the GOIR web portal.

The Cabinet has approved the proposals for repealing the AP Infrastructure (Transparency through Judicial Preview) Act-2019. The Judicial Preview adopted by the previous government in the tender process is of no use. All the States including the Centre are following the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) guidelines in the tender process.

The State Cabinet has approved the proposal made by the Andhra Pradesh State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited to issue a government guarantee for obtaining fresh loan of Rs 1,800 crore through AP Markfed for procurement of paddy in the State for 2024-25 and to allow working capital assistance and government guarantee commission waiver under direct funds of the National Cooperative Development Corporation.

The State Council of Ministers has approved the proposal to continue the government guarantee for the bank loan of Rs 80 crore already received from the State Cooperative Bank Limited, Vijayawada.

## Water contamination reason behind ADD outbreak

31 out of 44 water samples from Gurla tested positive for coliform bacteria

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

A comprehensive report submitted by a six-member expert team has shed light on the underlying causes of the Acute Diarrhoeal Disease (ADD) outbreak in Gurla of Vizianagaram district. The report, which was presented to the Ministry of Health, Family Welfare, and Medical Education, pinpoints widespread contamination of drinking water as the primary reason behind the outbreak.

The Rapid Response Team (RRT), comprising a diverse

group of medical professionals, conducted a thorough investigation that included extensive field visits, interviews, and laboratory testing. Their findings revealed that 31 out of 44 water samples from Gurla tested positive for coliform bacteria, indicating the unsafe nature of the water supply. Besides, faecal contamination was detected in both surface and underground water sources.

The report highlighted the River Champa as a significant source of contamination, as it is used for religious and ceremonial activities, including cremations and fairs. The proximity of the river to the borewell supplying water to Gurla and nearby villages posed a substantial risk. Other contributing factors identified by the team included inadequate chlorination practices, water pipelines passing through drainage systems, sewage near Gurla, and large-scale open defecation in the area. The recent rains, which raised the water table.

In response to the findings, the expert team has recommended a series of immediate

and long-term preventive measures. These include frequent chlorination of the River Champa, repairs to water supply pipelines, construction of household and community toilets, regular surveillance of water sources, distribution of chlorine tablets, and community involvement in promoting cleanliness.

The report also emphasises the need for a regional laboratory to enable rapid testing of water and stool samples, thereby facilitating quicker diagnosis and intervention in future outbreaks.

According to him, the government's failure to act decisively sends a signal that crimes can be covered up if they are committed by those in power, undermining public trust in the State's ability to ensure safety and justice.

Jagan recalled the successful implementation of the YSRCP's tenure. The Disha app, introduced as a safety tool for women, enabled immediate police response within five minutes of an SOS alert. With over 1.56 crore downloads, the app had played a crucial role in saving 31,607 women and girls across the State, earning 19 national awards for excellence in policing. He lamented the decline of such initiatives under the current regime, accusing the TDP of undermining effective systems designed to protect women.

In Badvel, Kadapa district, Jagan met the family of Dastagiramma, a victim of a gruesome murder, and criticised the government's delayed response to the incident.

## 87 trains from Visakhapatnam...

Continued from Page 1

"The cancellation of these trains is a necessary step to prevent any untoward incidents in light of the severe weather conditions." The cancellations include both long-distance and local trains, and passengers affected by the cancellations have been encouraged to stay updated on the status of their trains through helpline numbers and announcements at stations. "Our communication systems are fully operational, and we are keeping passengers informed with the latest updates," Prasad added.

Helpline numbers for passenger assistance: Visakhapatnam station (0891-2746330; 0891-2744619; 8712641255; 7780787054), Vizianagaram (08922-221202; 8712641260), Srikakulam Road (08942-286213; 08942-286245), Duvvada (8500358524), and Rayagada (06856223400; 9439741071).

## APTIDCO Chairman....

Continued from Page 1

Further, he said that he would strive to fulfil his responsibilities to his post. He would be handing the TIDCO to all eligible beneficiaries in cities and towns, he said. His family members are his strength and on the occasion, he recalled the services of a prominent

Communist leader who worked as a corporator and has extended better services to the public. Later, Minister Kandula Durgesh said that those who got several nominated positions in the NDA government should be a role model and inspiration to others. The previous YSRCP government neglected the APTIDCO houses by not allotting them to the beneficiaries though houses were completed in the past five years, he alleged.

**TODAY**  
**ALMANAC**  
Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha  
Tithi: Ashtami: Oct 24 01:19 AM to Oct 25 01:58 AM  
Navami: Oct 25 01:58 AM to Oct 26 03:23 AM  
Nakshatram: Oct 23 05:38 AM to Oct 24 06:15 AM  
Pushya: Oct 24 06:15 AM to Oct 25 07:40 AM  
Rahukalam: 1:26 PM to 2:52 PM  
Yamagandam: 6:15 AM to 7:41 AM  
Varjyam: 02:43 PM to 04:25 PM  
Gulika: 9:07 AM to 10:34 AM  
Amritakalam: 12:53 AM to 02:35 AM  
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:37 AM to 12:23 PM  
**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**  
Forecast: Mostly Cloudy  
Temp: 33°C  
Humidity: 60%  
Sunrise: 6:02 AM  
Sunset: 5:41 PM  
Updated: October 23, 2024 5:00 PM

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# Govt reclaims Sarada Peetham land

## Institution intended to use it for commercial purposes

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet has approved the proposal to reclaim 15 acres of prime land allotted to the Visakha Sri Sarada Peetham at Pendurthi, which the institution intended to use for commercial purposes. The lands, previously allotted at an astonishingly low rate of just Rs 1 lakh per acre, are valued in the market at approximately Rs 225 crore.



ence following the Cabinet meeting at the Secretariat on Wednesday, a group of ministers, including Kolu

Parthasarathy (Information and Public Relations), Nadendla Manohar (Civil Supplies), Kollu Ravindra (Mines) and Vangalapati Anitha (Home) discussed the background of the land allocation. They highlighted that the previous YSRCP government had initially approved the allocation, but subsequent amendments allowed for the use of the land for commercial purposes. Parthasarathy emphasised the Cabinet's firm stance

against the commercialisation of government land. "The Cabinet made it clear that the government would never give precious lands at throwaway prices for commercial use by any institution or company in the State," he stated. He reiterated that if the Sarada Peetham was genuinely utilising the land for its intended purpose—conducting Veda Pathasala—it would be permitted, but the current plans suggested a shift towards commercial exploitation.

# APCRDA to complete registration for returnable plots in a week

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) Additional Commissioner G Surya Sai Praveen Chand has announced that the registration process for returnable plots to farmers who contributed their agricultural lands to the APCRDA through the Land Pooling Scheme (LPS) would be completed within a week. He mentioned that APCRDA Commissioner Katamaneni Bhaskar has made all necessary arrangements for this process.



over 68 returnable plots to 23 farmers from nine different villages on the first day of distribution.

Surya Sai Praveen conducted a lottery for the allocation of these returnable plots at the CRDA office in Vijayawada on Wednesday. Following the lottery, he allotted and handed

provided starting from December. APCRDA Lands Director BLN Rajakumari, and Special Deputy Collectors V David Raju, Visweswara Naidu, G Bhima Rao, K Swarna Mary, G Sai Srinivas Naik, and other officials attended the programme.

# Colostomy Care and Pain Management Centre launched

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Colostomy Care Clinic and Pain Management Centre has been launched at Omega Hospitals, in Guntur. This innovative facility aims to deliver comprehensive and specialised care for patients dealing with colostomies and chronic pain issues.

Speaking about the launch, Dr MG Naga Kishore, Chief Surgical Oncologist, said, "We are excited to open this state-of-the-art facility, which underscores our unwavering commitment to patient-centred care. By bringing together specialists in colostomy care and pain management under one roof, we aim to improve the quality of life for our patients who are managing these critical health challenges."

Dr Naga Kishore has an MS from PGI Chandigarh, M Ch in Surgical Oncology from KMO Bengaluru, experience at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre in New York, and fellowships in Oncoplastic Breast Surgery from Paris and HIPEC from Germany.

# DC calls for empathy and efficiency in revenue services

## Stress on adhering to government policies with honesty and integrity

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad has urged Revenue officials to approach their duties with empathy and professionalism, treating the public with the same respect and care they would afford their own family members. Speaking at the Bheemili Revenue Division Officers Conference, Prasad emphasised the importance of adhering to government policies with honesty and integrity.

"Every citizen who walks into our offices deserves to be treated with respect and served without unnecessary hurdles," Prasad stated. "Our responsibility is to ensure the people are not inconvenienced, and we must strive to serve them in accordance with the rules." He highlighted the need for Revenue staff to stay informed about local conditions, safeguard government lands, identify alienated properties, and maintain accurate records.



Proper land management, Prasad noted, would attract industries and IT companies to the region. "Visakhapatnam is rapidly becoming a metropolitan hub, and we must act accordingly," he added. "By being committed and honest in our work, we can ensure the growth and development of the region." Prasad also cautioned against negligence or irregularities in Revenue services, particularly in issuing critical documents like caste, income, and residence certificates.

"Mistakes in the mutation process or issuance of tenant passbooks will not be overlooked," Prasad warned. The conference covered key topics

such as the re-survey process, government land protection, certificate issuance, and revenue record management. Prasad reminded officials to be available to the public and informed about their duties.

"Every staff member, especially those newly appointed, should be fully aware of their responsibilities and perform their duties with the highest level of commitment," he stated. Joint Collector K Mayur Ashok, District Revenue Officer K Mohan Kumar, Bheemili RDO Sangeet Madhur, and other officials from the Bheemili constituency attended the conference.

# Good response to Amaravati Drone Summit

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The two-day Amaravati Drone Summit-2024, organised by the Government of Andhra Pradesh has been a success, said K Dinesh Kumar, MD, AP Drone Corporation. He expressed gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of the event. The summit saw a large turnout of representatives and attendees alike. He revealed that over 11,000 visitors attended the conference and the drone exhibition organised during the event. More than 4,000 participants were involved in the two-day summit, which featured four key discussions and included 62 experts from various fields as panel speakers, offering valuable advice and suggestions.

He noted that the summit was conducted in line with the aspirations of CM Chandrababu Naidu, thanking him for the support that contributed to its success.

# Visakhapatnam shines as South Zone's best district in water management

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Visakhapatnam district has been recognised as the South Zone winner for 2023 in the category of Best District for Water Resources Management and Conservation.

The Union Ministry of Jal Shakti announced the winners of the fifth National Water Awards 2023, recognising outstanding contributions in the field of water conservation and management. Visakhapatnam emerged as the top district in the South Zone, showcasing its commitment to sustainable water practices.

In a grand ceremony held in Delhi on Tuesday, District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad received the award from President of India Droupadi Murmu, in the

presence of national dignitaries and environmental experts. Upon receiving the honour, Prasad expressed his heartfelt gratitude, saying, "This award is a testament to the collective efforts of the administration, local communities, and all stakeholders involved in preserving and managing our water resources. It is not just an honour for the district, but also an inspiration to continue our work in making Visakhapatnam a model for water conservation."

Visakhapatnam's dedication to sustainable water management has borne remarkable results. Through innovative strategies, the district has significantly enhanced water availability, alleviated water scarcity, and maintained ecological balance. The focus on water

has become a cornerstone of its development model, showcasing the district's commitment to creating a water-secure future. "Visakhapatnam has long prioritised efficient water management, and this recognition strengthens our vision of a sustainable future," Prasad added. The National Water Award is a validation of the district's exemplary work in water resources management and sets a benchmark for others across the nation to follow.

Union Minister for Jal Shakti, CR Patil, along with Ministers of State V Somanna and Raj Bhushan Chaudhary, and the Secretary of the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti, extended their congratulations to the District Collector and wished him continued success.

# Govt to expedite issuing of permissions for building works

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh State government has taken decisive measures to expedite the process of issuing permissions for building constructions and layout approvals. Since the TDP-led NDA government came to power, Minister for Municipal Administration & Urban Development (MA & UD) Ponguru Narayana has been focusing on resolving delays in these approvals.

Minister Narayana has implemented a strategic plan to address the pending applications related to building construction and the issuance of occupancy certificates, as well as approvals for layouts and AP RERA permits. To tackle this issue, he has instructed the Town Planning Department to set up a special

system aimed at speeding up the resolution process for pending online applications, ensuring swift action for those who have already paid the required fees and submitted proper documentation.

In line with these efforts, the Town and Country Planning Department has introduced dedicated communication channels, including WhatsApp numbers 9398733100 and 93988733101 and an email ID: apdpmsheldesk@gmail.com, to facilitate quicker processing of applications. These measures are expected to significantly reduce the number of pending online applications across the State.

Recognising that delays persisted in some areas, Minister Narayana took a hands-on approach by visiting various municipalities and

urban local bodies. He conducted site visits in locations such as Visakhapatnam, Palakollu, Nellore, and Machilipatnam, where he directly engaged with applicants and addressed their concerns in coordination with local authorities, resolving many long-pending issues on the spot.

Additionally, Minister Narayana held discussions with representatives of the construction sector to address challenges related to the online permitting process, which has impacted the real estate sector. Following these interactions, authorities have been actively working to resolve the identified issues, further contributing to the State government's efforts to streamline the approval process.

# CII AP holds workshop on 'Best Earthing Practices'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

CII Andhra Pradesh conducted a one-day workshop on 'Best Earthing Practices' at the AP MSME Industries Association Hall here on Wednesday.

The workshop aimed at enhancing understanding and compliance with statutory requirements. DV Ravindranath, Chairman, CII Vijayawada, and Director, Siva Systems, welcomed the participants. In his address, he emphasised the importance of adopting best practices in electrical safety and infrastructure.

Kalle Sai Kaushik, Scientist D and Joint Director, BIS, Vijayawada, highlighted the reg-



ulatory frameworks governing earthing practices. He reiterated the importance of safety in electrical installations and the role of proper earthing systems in safeguarding lives and properties.

Malineni Narayana Prasad, Managing Partner, Narayana Prasad Electrical Works, set the theme for the workshop. He underscored the significance of earthing systems in ensuring the safety and reliability of electrical installations.

Bayana Venkat Rao, honorary president, AP MSME Industries Association, emphasised the need to adopt best practices in earthing to minimise the hazards.

# 'Rail Chaupal' held at Vijayawada railway station

## Interaction platform launched as part of Swachhata Abhiyaan - Special Campaign 4.0

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada Division, South Central Railway, as part of on-going 'Swachhata Abhiyaan - Special Campaign 4.0', organised a 'Rail Chaupal' at the Gandhi Waiting Hall at Vijayawada railway station on Wednesday. Divisional Railway Manager Narendra A. Patil, ADRM Srinivasa Rao Konda, and other officials took part in the programme. Rail Chaupal is a community interaction platform launched by the Railway Board as part of Special campaign 4.0, which aims to facilitate direct feedback, suggestions, and grievances from passengers to Railway officials.

The DRM and team interacted with passengers on the occasion. Passengers present at the event appreciated the cleanliness at stations and expressed their satisfaction with the steps being taken by the Railways. All the suggestions, feedback and grievances raised by the passengers were placed on record to further enhance

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Narendra A Patil briefed the passengers about the various initiatives being implemented under the Swachhata Abhiyaan that have led to noticeable improvements in hygiene standards. He emphasised the importance of passengers' support and cooperation in maintaining these facilities. The DRM assured the passengers that all the suggestions and feedback on cleanliness improvements will be dealt with determination to resolve it at the earliest. He thanked the pas-

sengers for their participation and feedback.

The ADRM sought the passengers' cooperation and support for the upkeep of amenities and hygiene standards. He stressed that collective efforts are the real key to maintain the cleanliness standards. The event concluded with distribution of cloth bags to passengers at the Waiting Hall.

M Kishore, Senior DEnHM, A Sanjay, Senior DME, Md Ali Khan, DCM, M Sailaja, Station Director, Vijayawada, other officers and staff took part in the event.

# AP Chambers requests State govt to provide addl walking tracks

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry Federation (APCCIF) has formally submitted a representation to MT Krishna Babu, Special Chief Secretary, Health, Medical & Family Welfare Department, highlighting the urgent need for more jogging and walking tracks in the State.

In its representation, AP Chambers emphasised that the lack of dedicated spaces for exercise poses a significant challenge to citizens' health and well-being. With insufficient jogging tracks and playgrounds, many residents struggle to find safe environments for their daily walks and runs.

The AP Chambers pointed out that exercising on busy roads is not only hazardous due to heavy vehicular traffic but also exacerbated by the presence of stray dogs. Current municipal parks often feature crowded and inadequate paths that do not meet the needs of walkers and joggers.

The Chambers requested the State government to issue GO directing educational institutions to open their playgrounds to the public during designated morning and evening hours, 4 am-7 am

**The AP Chambers pointed out that exercising on busy roads is not only hazardous due to heavy vehicular traffic but also exacerbated by the presence of stray dogs. Current municipal parks often feature crowded and inadequate paths that do not meet the needs of walkers and joggers**

and 5 pm-6 pm, so the citizens would have the opportunity to exercise in a safer, more conducive environment without disrupting the institutions' regular activities.

Furthermore, utilising the natural tracks found in educational institutions that are made of soil would be beneficial for joint health, as these surfaces are gentler on the joints compared to concrete. Additionally, collaboration between educational institutions and local Walker Associations could foster community health initiatives, including charity work and health awareness programmes.



VMC Commissioner HM Dhyanaachandra addressing a review meeting of Revenue and Engineering officials on Wednesday

# Water tax: Revenue, Engineering officials told to work together

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Commissioner HM Dhyanaachandra held a review meeting with Revenue and Engineering officials on Wednesday.

They discussed issues related to vacant lands, properties,

and other taxes in areas not affected by floods.

The Revenue officials were instructed to visit regularly and monitor new buildings and floors. It was emphasised that Revenue and Engineering officials should work in coordination on the water tax issue to ensure that the pub-

lic does not face any inconvenience.

Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) G Srijana, Executive Engineer G Samrajyam, Assistant Commissioners, Revenue Inspectors, other Engineering staff, among others, attended the meeting.

# MP asks officials to implement welfare schemes efficiently

PNS ■ ELURU

MP Putta Mahesh Kumar asked the district officials to implement welfare schemes efficiently and carry out development work on priority basis.

The District Development, Coordination & Monitoring Committee meeting was held here in which district Collector K Vetri Selvi, Joint Collector P Dhatri Reddy and MLAs participated.

The MP reviewed the implementation of various welfare schemes and carrying out development programmes including the Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Scheme, Swachh Bharat, Pradhan Mantri Sadak Yojana, Jal Jeevan Mission, National Health Mission, Education, Agriculture, PMEGP, Amrit, PM Vishwakarma Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Yojana, National Highways, BSNL, Railways, Animal Husbandry Department, District Rural



Development.

Speaking on the occasion, MP Putta Mahesh Kumar asked the district officials to keep the district at top in implementing welfare schemes of State and Centre. The implementation of welfare schemes and carrying out development works should be done as per the aspirations of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, he told them.

"The authorities should take more efficient measures to ensure that even the people at remote villages get the benefits of Central government schemes. The schemes implemented by the Central government should be monitored from time to time to ensure proper implementation," the MP asserted.

The MP vented his anger at the absence of BSNL and railway

department officials at the meeting and warned of serious consequences if the officials did not attend the next meeting.

MP Mahesh Kumar ordered the officials to initiate the establishment of food processing units in the district and give priority for agriculture, vocational training and employment for the youth. Swachh Bharat Mission and Jal Jeevan Mission pro-

grams should be implemented with full force, he told the officials and assured of extending his full cooperation to make the Eluru city as well as the nearby Dendulur constituency pleasant.

Voicing concern at the accumulating plastic waste, the MP emphasized that special action should be taken to plastic waste recycle management. "The youth are not willing to migrate to other areas seeking livelihood," he opined and underlined the need of establishing industries in the district to churn out employment opportunities. The MP underlined the need of modernizing the Nuzvid railway station by augmenting passenger amenities.

Collector Vetri Selvi explained the development works being carried out and the implementation of welfare schemes in the district. Steps were taken to establish aqua processing units in the district, she revealed. MLA Chintamani Prabhakar, MLA Roshan Kumar also spoke.



## Officials directed to submit estimates to construct subway

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam district Collector A Thameem Ansariya directed the R&B officials to submit the proposals for the construction of a subway at the railway crossing at Tangutur.

The Collector visited the railway crossing gate 193 at Tangutur accompanied by the R&B engineers on Wednesday. She also visited the 194 railway cross where an RO Bridge would be constructed.

The R&B and the railway officials explained to the Collector about the construc-

tion of RO Bridge and a subway. The Collector directed the engineers and the officials to submit the proposals for the works at the earliest. RDO Lakshmi Prasanna, R&R SE Devananda, and EE Gopi Naik were among those who accompanied the Collector.



## Election will be conducted to weavers' societies: Minister

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Minister for BC Welfare and Handlooms S Sabitha has made it clear that election will be conducted to the weavers' societies soon and directed the officials and unions to form new societies in various districts.

The Minister held a meeting with the DDs, ADs and other officials concerned in the handloom textile commissionerate at Mangalagiri on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, she

directed the officials to rejuvenate the weaver's societies which are inactive now.

She said the Chandrababu Naidu headed government had decided to exempt GST on handloom cloths. She assured of providing marketing facilities to the handloom cloths and efforts being made to provide health insurance to the weavers.

She promised to provide free electricity up to 200 units to the handloom units and up

to 500 units machine units. She assured of providing a 15 percent subsidy on yarn and raw material.

"A new textile park will be established in Chirala besides bolstering the existing textile parks", the Minister revealed.

She directed the officials to form new cooperative societies. Handloom and Textiles Commissioner Reksha Rani and Additional Director Srikanth Prabhakar were among those who were present.

## Hundi collection touches Rs 1.24 cr at Kanipakam temple



PNS ■ CHITTOOR

The hundi collection has fetched Rs 1.24 crore to the famous Vinayaka temple located at Kanipakam town.

The temple authorities opened the coffers of the temple on Wednesday and counted the money offered by the devotees.

The temple received through hundi Rs 1,24,94,275, Executive officer of the Kanipakam temple Guru Prasad told the media.

The hundi collections of 22 days were counted in the Astana mandapam amid tighter security and being monitored by the officials.

The temple received 1,24,94,275 cash, 45 grams gold, 859 grams of silver and 1450 foreign currency notes.

The money, gold and silver were deposited in the bank, the EO said. Assistant EOs Ravindra Babu and SV Krishna Reddy monitored the counting.

## Microsoft team meets IT Minister about vision of AI



IT Minister D Sridhar Babu discussing with the Microsoft team in his chamber at the State Secretariat on Wednesday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Microsoft Leadership Team met with IT and Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu on Wednesday to discuss AI City and Future City initiatives at the State Secretariat.

Sridhar Babu tweeted that he had the privilege of meeting Microsoft's leadership team, including Rajiv Kumar, president and managing director, Nitu Narula, director-

chief of staff and Mythili Lanka, senior executive administrator.

The Minister highlighted Hyderabad's rise as a key innovation hub for Microsoft over the past 25 years. The city plays a crucial role in Microsoft's product development, especially in areas like CoPilot, Cloud, Security and AI.

Microsoft's Hyderabad campus is the largest engineering centre outside the US,

showcasing the city's tech talent. During the discussions, Sridhar Babu shared the government's vision for AI City and Future City, focusing on sustainable growth through advanced technology.

He expressed confidence about collaborating with Microsoft to help Hyderabad become a \$1 trillion economy and emphasised Hyderabad's continued leadership in technological innovation.

## Governor interacts with newly appointed Vice-Chancellors

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Governor of Telangana Jishnu Dev Varma held an interactive session on October 23 with the nine newly appointed Vice-Chancellors of various universities across the State. The meeting, which took place at Raj Bhavan, also included the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Telangana State Council of Higher Education (TSCHC).

During the session, Governor Dev Varma referred to the Vice-Chancellors as the "captains of the ship," emphasizing their pivotal role in steering the future of higher



education in Telangana. He directed on them to meet the expectations of the government and ensure that their universities focus on providing

quality education and fostering innovative research. The Governor extended his best wishes as they take on these new responsibilities.

The Governor further announced that moving forward, there will be quarterly interactions with the Vice-Chancellors to assess the academic progress and achievements of their respective universities. This initiative is aimed at promoting continuous improvement and ensuring accountability in the higher education sector.

The meeting was also attended by Burra Venkatesham, Principal Secretary to Governor, J Bhavani Shankar, Joint Secretary to Governor, and other senior officials from Raj Bhavan.

## Tusker tramples farmer to death



PNS ■ CHITTOOR

An elephant trampled to death a farmer at PMK Tanda village in Ramakuppam mandal at the agriculture fields in the district on Wednesday. Officials said that the deceased farmer Redya Naik went to his agriculture field to carry out farm work.

A lone elephant went amok

after seeing the deceased Redya Naik and attacked him. The furious tusker trampled him to death. He was killed instantaneously. Later the elephant went into the nearby forest.

It is suspected the elephant got separated from its herd. The police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH.



## Will reply to notice, says Bandi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Making it clear that he will not fear BRS working president KT Rama Rao's notices, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay alleged that KTR answered with notices to his criticism. Bandi Sanjay made it clear that he will also serve notices to KTR.

Bandi Sanjay said, "I will not be afraid of sounds of toddy leaves. KTR, get ready to receive my notices also. Are you thinking as a sincere Suddapusa? I replied to you in the same manner for speaking against me in an insulting manner. Tit for tat and I will answer with notices to your notices."

The Union Minister said that he saw in the media that KTR served legal notices to him. Nobody is here to fear the legal notices of KTR. He said that KTR has no guts to

face him politically and hence served legal notices. It is a pity on the part of KTR, he ridiculed.

Bandi Sanjay said that KTR is the person who first made allegations personally in an insulting manner. "I spoke in response to KTR's personal criticism. People know very well about KTR's history. Everybody knows as to how water-downed the cases in connection with phone tapping and drugs are," Bandi Sanjay said.

It may be recalled that KTR served legal notices to Bandi Sanjay on Wednesday alleging that Bandi Sanjay's remarks are in an insulting manner and those remarks will defame his image and hence he served notices. KTR asked Bandi Sanjay to prove the latter's remarks, or else Bandi Sanjay should tender a public apology within a week taking back his allegations.

## 25 passengers injured as RTC plunges into gorge



PNS ■ KADAPA

As many as 25 passengers were injured when an APSRTC bus in which they were traveling plunged into a gorge at Pulivendula in YSR district on Wednesday. Police said that the Pallevelugu RTC bus was going to Pulivendula from Kadiri.

The RTC bus driver applied a sudden brake to avoid collision with a vehicle coming in the opposite direction near a dumping yard on the outskirts of Pulivendula town. The driver lost control over the bus resulting in it plunged into the 30 feet deep gorge.

As many as 25 bus passengers suffered various degrees of injuries.

The injured were admitted to the GGH where the condition of two of the injured was said to be critical.

MLC Bhumireddy Ramgola Reddy and municipal chairman Vara Prasad visited the injured in the hospital.

## Two students run over by train

PNS ■ RAYACHOTI

Two intermediate students were killed when an express train ran over them at Peluru on Wednesday.

Kadiri Railway SI Rahim said that the deceased Krian Kumar (18) was studying Intermediate second year and Yashin (17) was studying Intermediate first year.

They squatted on the railway track and did not notice the train approaching them. The Nagercoil-Mumbai express crushed them to death on the railway track.

The deceased belonged to Pileru town. The loco-pilot immediately stopped the train and informed about the accident to the railway officials. The police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH in Peluru. It is learnt the two deceased were having liquor by sitting on the railway track when the accident took place.

## Cyclonic storm Dana to cross between Puri-Sagar in Odisha

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The cyclonic storm "DANA", over East Central Bay of Bengal moved northwards with a speed of 13 kmph and lay centred over the same region about 490 km southeast of Paradip (Odisha), 520 km south-southeast of Dhamara (Odisha) and 570 km south-southeast of Sagar Island (West Bengal).

The Indian Meteorological department said on Wednesday that it is very likely to move northwards and intensify into a severe cyclonic storm over northwest Bay of Bengal by early morning of 24th and cross north Odisha and West Bengal coasts between Puri and Sagar Island close to

Bhitarkanika and Dhamara (Odisha) during night of 24th to morning of October 25th as a severe Cyclonic Storm with a wind speed of 100-110 kmph gusting 120 kmph. Gusty winds with a speed of 80 km to 100 km forecasted to Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts.

ACROSS THE STATES



Driver averts tragedy as school bus catches fire

In a narrow escape from a potential disaster, an alert school bus driver swiftly evacuated 12 students and staff from the moving vehicle that caught fire in Shivpuri city of Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday afternoon. The incident occurred on Circular Road, but fortunately, nobody was injured, a police official said. Bus driver Gotu Dhakad was transporting students from Geeta Public School when he noticed smoke billowing from the engine. Recognising the imminent danger, he acted quickly, helping the children and school staff to exit the bus. "12 children and some teachers were aboard when the fire broke out and started spreading," recounted Dhakad. Fire Brigade personnel extinguished the flames. Authorities have initiated an investigation to assess the bus's fitness and verify relevant documents, according to a Traffic Police official.



UP: Student fakes his kidnapping for ransom

A student who allegedly staged his kidnapping to extort money from his family, along with his two accomplices, was arrested by police on Wednesday in Shahjahanpur, officials said. Superintendent of Police Rajesh S said that Sanjeev Tyagi, a 22-year-old BBA student from Katra town, left home last Monday, claiming he was going to Bareilly to collect his mark sheet. However, he did not return home by late evening. Later that night, Sanjeev's mother received a WhatsApp call demanding a ransom of Rs 2 lakh for his release. The caller threatened to kill her son if the money was not paid. The panic-stricken family immediately approached the police, Rajesh said. Following the complaint, a police team was formed, and Sanjeev's family was directed to take the ransom money to a location near the Bahgul River, as instructed by the alleged kidnapers.



'Elaborate arrangements being made for pilgrims'

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday said the Travancore Devaswom Board is making elaborate arrangements at the Lord Ayyappa temple ahead of the upcoming annual pilgrimage season despite attempts to create misunderstandings. Lavishing praise on the TDB, Vijayan said the apex temple body is implementing various new initiatives at the hill temple in view of the Mandalam-Makaravilakku pilgrimage season beginning by mid-November. The CM was speaking after inaugurating the platinum jubilee celebration of the TDB in a function here. "Efforts are now on to complete the construction of the Sabari guest house. At Nilakkal, facilities to park over 2000 vehicles are now being prepared," he said, elaborating various programmes of the TDB. Steps have also been taken to ensure the adequate availability of 'aravana', one of the major offerings at the Lord Ayyappa shrine, the CM said, adding that the temple board is making several such initiatives ahead of the upcoming pilgrimage season.

Modi, Jinping endorse patrolling agreement

Instruct resumption of SR Dialogue

PNS ■ KAZAN

In their first structured bilateral talks in nearly five years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping Wednesday agreed that India and China can have a "peaceful and stable" relationship by displaying maturity and mutual respect and endorsed the pact on the resolution of the dragging eastern Ladakh border row. In the meeting, Modi underscored the need to not allow differences on boundary-related matters to disturb peace and tranquility along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).



The two leaders noted that the special representatives on the India-China boundary question have a critical role to play in the resolution of the issue and for the maintenance of peace and tranquility in border areas. Modi and Xi instructed the special representatives to meet at an early date and continue their efforts, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said at a media

briefing. "We hope to schedule the next meeting of Special Representatives at an appropriate date," he said.

The foreign secretary said Modi and Xi reviewed the state of bilateral relations from a strategic and long-term perspective and they were of the view that stable ties between the

two countries will have a positive impact on regional and global peace and prosperity.

Both Modi and Xi stressed that with maturity and wisdom, and by showing mutual respect, India and China can have a peaceful and stable relationship, Misri said.

He said restoration of peace

and tranquility in border areas will create space for returning towards the path of normalisation of ties.

Officials will now take the next steps to discuss enhancing strategic communication and stabilising bilateral relations by utilising official dialogue mechanisms, he said.



SC holds states have power to regulate industrial alcohol

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday held the states have regulatory power over production, manufacture and supply of industrial alcohol.

In an 8:1 majority ruling, the top court held that the phrase "intoxicating liquor" in Entry 8 of the State List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution would include industrial alcohol within its ambit.

The majority bench comprised Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud and Justices Hrishikesh Roy, Abhay S Oka, J B Pardiwala, Manoj Misra, Ujjal Bhuyan, Satish Chandra Sharma and Augustine George Masih, Justice B V Nagarathna, however, dissented and held states did not have the legislative competence to regulate industrial alcohol or denatured spirit.

The apex court's majority verdict overturned its 1990 seven-judge bench judgment in Synthetics & Chemicals Ltd. v. State of Uttar Pradesh holding that Centre had the regulatory power over the production of industrial alcohol.

Ethyl alcohol (which has 95 per cent ethanol) is an industrial form of alcohol and unfit for human consumption.

The CJI, who authored the majority verdict, also writing on behalf of the seven judges, said Entry 8 sought to regu-

late everything from "raw materials to production of intoxicating liquor".

"Parliament cannot occupy the field of the entire industry merely by issuing a declaration under Entry 52 of List I. The State Legislature's competence under Entry 24 of List II is denuded only to the extent of the field covered by the law of Parliament under Entry 52 of List I," the bench said in a 364-page judgement.

Parliament does not have the legislative competence to enact a law taking control of the industry of intoxicating liquor, it added.

The majority judgment said the phrase "intoxicating liquor" in Entry 8 included all alcoholic liquids which could harm public health.

While Entry 8 in the State List under the 7th Schedule of the Constitution gives the states the power to legislate on the manufacture, possession, transport, purchase and sale of "intoxicating liquors", Entry 52 of the Union List and Entry 33 of the Concurrent List mention industries whose control was "declared by Parliament by law to be expedient in public interest".

While both parliament and state legislatures can enact laws on the subjects mentioned in the Concurrent List, a central law will have primacy over the state law.

NPRD opposes amendments to disability rules

Calls them burdensome and regressive

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled (NPRD) on Wednesday opposed the recent amendments to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, claiming they will make the process of obtaining disability certificates more difficult and burdensome.

In a statement, the cross disability rights organisation called the amendments "regressive" and warned that they would add more obstacles for people with disabilities, hindering their access to essential services and entitlements.

The NPRD highlighted that the new rules, including an extension of the time frame for issuing disability certificates from one month to three months, will exacerbate existing delays.

The rights organisation also criticised the provision that forces applicants to reapply if their request remains undressed for two years, calling it "unacceptable" and an unjust punishment for system failures. Additionally, they raised concerns over the mandatory use of the UDID portal for applying for certificates, arguing that this would create further barriers for many applicants.

Legal aid: NALSA rendering yeoman service, says SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), with effective coordination of other agencies, is rendering "yeoman service" to realise the constitutional goal of equal justice and free legal aid. The apex court, which passed a slew of directions on the aspect of access to free legal aid for prison inmates, observed that NALSA and other agencies are also striving hard for the effective implementation of the provisions of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. A bench of Justices B R Gavai and K V Viswanathan noted that as of 2023-24, NALSA has interacted with 4,56,798 inmates and

provided legal assistance to 3,24,867. It further noted that as of June this year, 880 appeals of convicts have been filed in the sessions courts and 1,593 appeals in the high courts, and as of September 4, 1,309 convicts have been able to file special leave petitions (SLPs) in the apex court. The top court said a pioneering measure adopted by NALSA since 2021-22 is the introduction of legal aid defence counsel system with a view to strengthen and professionalise legal services delivered. The bench said NALSA's status report indicates that convicts were made aware of the availability of free legal services, availability of the right to file appeals or SLPs and the process of filing the same.

No fissures, only debate in DMK-led alliance: Stalin

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The DMK-led alliance in Tamil Nadu is built on ideology and there may be 'debates, but no crack' in relationship among parties, Chief Minister M K Stalin said here on Wednesday.

Addressing an event, Stalin said that AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami, who has been sidelined by the people has been alleging that the DMK regime's influence is on the wane. Since Palaniswami is jealous of DMK government's achievements and its rising popularity, he is making such accusations.

Also, he is claiming that the DMK-led alliance is set to break soon. "I so far thought that he was dreaming, now he has changed into an astrologer," the DMK president said adding the AIADMK chief has been extremely frustrated.

"Our alliance was not formed merely for the sake of elections,



it was not forged in order to get post (capture power), you must not forget that ours is an ideology-based alliance, there may be debates within our alliance and talks may happen; but there is no crack (in relationship with allies) and it will not happen...it is a people's alliance and it is not only an ideology based alliance."

Furthermore, the CM said that not only in the 2026 Assembly election, but in any future polls, the DMK shall be the winner and there is no doubt about it.

Congress, the Left parties,

Vaiko-led MDMK and the Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi are among the partners of the DMK.

Slamming Palaniswami, Stalin said the former Chief Minister, who does not have the ability to develop his party was making predictions about the ruling party.

Whether in power or not, it is the DMK that always works for the people, including during the rainy seasons unlike Palaniswami who went to Salem, his hometown, with the onset of rains (in Chennai).

The CM presided over the wedding of his namesake, Stalin, (who is the grandson of party leader, late Gummidipoondi Ki Venu) with Yuvasri at Anna Arivalayam, the DMK headquarters here. The DMK chief said the bridegroom's name is 'Stalin', just like his name and that of the premier of the erstwhile Soviet state (Joseph Stalin--1878-1953).

PROCUREMENT PANGS

Panjab farmers delay paddy harvest

PNS ■ HOSHIARPUR/ KAPURTHALA (PB)

Ravinder Singh, a farmer in Hoshiarpur, has delayed harvesting of his paddy crop sown over two acres of land, fearing that the produce will not be lifted in the wake of "tardy" purchase in mandis in Punjab.

Like Singh, there are many farmers in the state, who are not harvesting paddy as grain markets are bursting at the seams with the Kharif crop piling up because of slow lifting and delayed procurement.

Though the Punjab government claims that every grain will be purchased from farmers, several paddy growers said they were in need of money to repay loans, for events like wedding ceremonies and the "tardy" paddy procurement would put them under significant financial strain.

Paddy lifting from mandis in Punjab is hit after the state



rice millers refused to mill the paddy till their demands are met.

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday spoke with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, urging him to address the issues of the state rice millers.

While the ruling AAP blamed the BJP-led Centre for not evacuating foodgrain stock in the state to create sufficient space for storing fresh crop, the opposition parties Congress

and Akali Dal lashed out at the Bhagwant Mann government for the slow paddy procurement and lifting.

Expressing frustration over the slow pace of paddy purchase, Ravinder Singh said he has not harvested his crop sown over two acres of land.

The Kangra grain market, where he plans to sell his produce, is already full due to the backlog of unsold paddy, said Singh, who hails from Bhatolani village.

Schizophrenia linked with four times higher risk of death: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Risk of death due to a sudden heart attack could be four times higher for patients of schizophrenia, a new study has found.

For those having other types of mental illness such as depression, death risk is still twice as high, regardless of age, suggesting that an 18-year-old could expect to live 10 years fewer, compared to one of same age without mental health issues, researchers have found.

The team from the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, said that while having a psychiatric condition is known to heighten death risk due to a sudden cardiac arrest, it is not clear if the risk extends across one's lifespan.

For the study, published in the journal Heart, the



researchers looked at deaths in 18-90 year old Danish residents during 2010. Over 45,000 people had died that year, of which 6,002 were classified as sudden cardiac deaths -- 3,683 in the general population and 2,319 among those with a mental illness.

The team found that overall, cases of sudden deaths due to a heart attack were up to 6.5

times more among those having a mental disorder, compared to the general population.

Death risk was twice as high in people with depression, 3-fold higher among those with bipolar disorder, and 4.5 times higher risk among those with schizophrenia, the researchers said.

All mental health was found to be related with a doubling in

death risk from a sudden cardiac arrest, regardless of age, sex, and co-existing medical conditions.

Further, having a mental health condition was also significantly linked with death due to other causes -- almost 3 times the risk compared to that in the general population -- and with a shortened lifespan. The researchers also estimated that a 70-year-old with a mental health condition could expect to live another 10 years, compared with 14 more years that one without such a condition could expect to live for. A sudden death due to a cardiac arrest was also found to explain about 13 per cent of the discrepancy in reduced longevity among people with ill mental health, the team said.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Railway Board has advised all 17 railway zones and its public sector undertakings to properly maintain reservation rosters of SCs, STs and OBCs so that its effective implementation can be ensured.

In a written communication dated October 18 to the general managers of all the zones and the heads of the public sector undertakings as well as autonomous bodies, the board's Chairman and CEO Satish Kumar said that during the sitting of the Parliamentary Committee on Backward Classes held on September 9, the issue of proper implementation of reservation rules and maintenance of reservation rosters in the railways, particularly in its PSUs, were raised by various members.

"These issues have also been raised earlier by the National Commission for Backward Classes during meetings or hearings held," he wrote.

RAILWAY BOARD TO ZONES

Maintain reservation roster for policy implementation



Kumar added that on May 3, the board emphasized all railway zones to ensure the proper implementation of extant reservation policies and the maintenance of reservation rosters both in

recruitments and promotions, as per the laid down guidelines.

According to Kumar, apart from the above, another letter dated February 26 was exclusively addressed to the managing

directors of all the PSUs under the Ministry of Railways, reiterating to follow the extant instructions or policies on reservation and to maintain reservation rosters appropriately as per the extant guidelines of the DOP&T.

Kumar advised seven steps to be followed by all zones and bodies to address the concerns of the Parliamentary Committee on Backward Classes and the National Commission for Backward Classes.

"Reservation Roster Registers are to be maintained as per the laid down guidelines of DOP&T/Railway Board issued from time to time in order to ensure proper implementation of extant reservation policies," the Railway Board chairman said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## A diplomatic push for peace

During his visit to Russia for BRICS Summit, Prime Minister Modi once again roots for peace

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Kazan to discuss wide ranging issues. The meeting highlighted India's continued advocacy for peaceful resolutions to conflicts, particularly the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. The BRICS summit brought together leaders from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa to discuss global issues and solidify their collective stance on a multipolar world order. During the meeting, PM Modi reaffirmed India's position on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, stressing the importance of dialogue and peaceful solutions. This stance underscores India's diplomatic approach of engaging with both Russia and Ukraine while maintaining its strategic autonomy. PM Modi's message comes at a critical time when Russia is advancing on the battlefield in eastern Ukraine, and global powers are grappling with the conflict's wider implications. Modi's call for peace aligns with India's broader foreign policy, which seeks to mediate and foster dialogue without aligning explicitly with any one bloc. This Summit marks a significant milestone for BRICS, as the addition of five new members, set to be formalised through the 'Kazan Declaration' at the conclusion of the Summit, reflects the growing importance of the bloc as an alternative forum in the shifting global power structure and a multipolar world order.

No wonder Russia has touted the BRICS Summit as a diplomatic victory, countering Western attempts to isolate Moscow over the Ukraine conflict. For India, this Summit was also an opportunity to reinforce India's pivotal role in BRICS as it continues to advocate for multipolarity and global governance reforms. India and

Russia's relationship has been characterised as a 'special and privileged strategic partnership', a sentiment echoed by President Putin, who noted that the bilateral ties continue to actively develop. While the Ukraine conflict has strained Russia's relations with the West, India has maintained a pragmatic approach by continuing to engage with Russia on economic and strategic matters. Notably, India has emerged as a significant purchaser of Russian oil, much to the disapproval of Western countries that are attempting to limit Russia's trade capabilities. India's stance has remained clear: its foreign policy decisions, including energy procurement, will prioritise its national interest, particularly in securing affordable resources for its citizens. The United States remains concerned over Russia's diplomatic manoeuvres amid the ongoing Ukraine conflict. Modi's visit to Russia for the BRICS Summit and his meeting with Putin emphasised India's role as a mediator advocating for peaceful conflict resolution. The strengthening of the BRICS bloc and the deepening of the India-Russia partnership signify broader shifts in global dynamics toward a multipolar world. As India navigates this evolving landscape, its policy of non-alignment and focus on strategic autonomy will be crucial in maintaining balanced relations with all major powers, while advocating for peace and stability.

### PICTALK



Women colour earthen lamps at a roadside shop ahead of the Diwali festival, in Jaipur

## Kerachakka unpaved road to development

It is home to 80 tribal families struggling for basic infrastructure. With impassable road access to education, healthcare and essential services remains a distant dream

Kerachakka village, located about 50 kilometres from the district headquarters of Sarangarh-Bilaigarh in Chhattisgarh, is struggling with a lack of basic infrastructure. Home to 80 families, primarily from the Khairwar and Bariha tribal communities, the village is accessible only through a broken, unpaved road. During the monsoon, this road becomes nearly impassable, cutting the village off from the outside world. This affects not only transportation but also children's access to education. Sunil Lal Chauhan, the head teacher of the local government primary school, explains that while 23 children are enrolled, only a few attend school during the rainy season.

The road conditions are simply too poor, making the journey unsafe, especially for adolescent girls whose education suffers the most. Chauhan adds that with only one teacher, who is also burdened with administrative tasks, the school struggles to provide the attention



the children need. The broader issue is compounded by the migration of families in search of employment, disrupting children's schooling for extended periods. Resident Badri Prasad highlights another challenge: ineffective local governance.

Though the village falls under Gram Panchayat Gardih, meetings are rarely held, and the Panchayat office is often closed. Essential services like ration distribution happen only once a month, which creates difficulties for the villagers. Badri Prasad emphasises that due to the village's dis-

tance from the district headquarters, Kerachakka has been left behind in the development process. Poor road connectivity remains a major barrier, preventing growth and access to opportunities.

Rameshwar Prasad Kurke, a local social worker, points out that the village's rocky terrain limits agricultural opportunities. Most families own small plots of land that barely yield enough to sustain them. Consequently, many villagers migrate during the off-season in search of work, which has a particularly harsh impact on

women and adolescent girls. Malnutrition is rampant, with women and girls often being the first to suffer when resources are scarce. While pregnant women and young children receive some nutritional support from the Anganwadi centre, this does not extend to other women, leaving them vulnerable. Recent government initiatives, however, offer hope. The Union Cabinet has approved Rs 70,000 crore for rural road development under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana for 2024-29, and the Chhattisgarh government has allocated Rs17,529 crore in its 2024-25 budget for village roads. These investments aim to improve infrastructure, create employment opportunities, and reduce migration. Better roads could be the first step in bringing Kerachakka and similar villages into the fold of progress, ensuring they are no longer left behind in the race for development. (The author is a grassroots worker from Ajmer, Rajasthan; views expressed are personal)

CHOTU SINGH RAWAT

## Israel challenges the UN ahead of UN Day



SANTHOSH MATHEW

Israel's unprecedented declaration of UN Secretary-General António Guterres as persona non grata has challenged the very foundations of global diplomacy

The United Nations was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell. These words from Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), resonate with renewed urgency today. As the world observes United Nations Day on October 24, the occasion is marked by an unprecedented diplomatic crisis that raises critical questions about the future of global cooperation. Israel's recent declaration of current UN Secretary-General António Guterres as persona non grata has sent shockwaves through international diplomacy, challenging the very principles the UN was founded to uphold. The persona non grata designation, meaning a foreign official is no longer welcome, effectively bars Guterres from entering Israeli territory. This decision stems from his comments about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, which were meant to emphasise the need for aid and peace. However, many Israeli officials viewed his remarks as biased against Israel, sparking tensions that led to this extraordinary response. As the world pauses to honour the UN's efforts in fostering peace and multilateral dialogue, this incident serves as a stark reminder of the difficulties faced by diplomacy in an increasingly polarised world. Established in 1945 following the devastation of World War II, the UN was created to maintain peace, promote human rights, and foster global cooperation. United Nations Day is intended to celebrate these ideals and the achievements of the world's largest international organisation. Yet, as we commemorate the UN's 79th anniversary, Israel's declaration of Guterres as persona non grata stands in sharp contrast to the spirit of multilateralism. The move not only represents a significant rebuke of Guterres' leadership but also challenges the UN's ability to act as an impartial mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one of the world's longest-standing disputes. The UN has often faced criticism



for its perceived bias or ineffectiveness, especially in conflict zones. Israel's frustrations with the organisation are longstanding, rooted in concerns about what it perceives as an undue focus on its policies while other nations escape similar scrutiny. The exclusion of Guterres from Israel, however, marks a dramatic escalation in this discontent. It signals a rejection not just of the Secretary-General's leadership but of the UN's role in mediating peace, setting a troubling precedent for the organisation's future involvement in the region. The concept of persona non grata has been wielded as a powerful diplomatic tool throughout history. Declaring someone unwelcome goes beyond a personal rebuke; it conveys a nation's stance on international relations. Past examples include the expulsion of Russian diplomats from various European countries amid political tensions, or Venezuela's Hugo Chávez being declared persona non grata by Colombia. However, Israel's designation of the UN's top diplomat is an extraordinary and rare occurrence, symbolising a low point in the relationship between Israel and the international community. For Israel, Guterres' remarks on the Gaza crisis were viewed as an affront to its right to self-defense, adding to long-standing grievances over perceived

THE CONCEPT OF PERSONA NON GRATA HAS BEEN WIELDED AS A POWERFUL DIPLOMATIC TOOL THROUGHOUT HISTORY. DECLARING SOMEONE UNWELCOME GOES BEYOND A PERSONAL REBUKE; IT CONVEYS A NATION'S STANCE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

bias at international forums. Israeli officials, including the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, quickly accused Guterres of undermining their security by portraying Israel's military actions as disproportionate. This stance reflects broader frustrations with international organisations, which some Israelis feel have not adequately acknowledged the complexities of their national security concerns. While the declaration is a decision made by Israel, its implications extend far beyond its borders. Human rights organisations and diplomatic circles have reacted swiftly to the move. Amnesty International, for instance, condemned the decision, arguing that it undermines the principles of diplomacy and the UN's mission to foster dialogue. Critics assert that Guterres, in his capacity as Secretary-General, was fulfilling his duty by highlighting the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and his exclusion from Israel sets a dangerous precedent. This incident highlights a growing trend of nations rejecting external criticism, even when it comes from humanitarian or impartial voices. The result could be a world where diplomacy no longer seeks common ground but instead shuts out dissent. The exclusion of Guterres

reflects not only a national stance but a broader global trend of rising nationalism and isolationism. Across the world, countries are increasingly resistant to international oversight or critique, a shift that threatens the very role of the UN as a mediator and peacekeeper. As we observe UN Day, the importance of this moment cannot be overstated. The UN's mission to save humanity from conflict, as Hammarskjöld envisioned, is more critical than ever. The exclusion of Guterres exposes a fragile global order where the organisation's ability to mediate and foster peace is increasingly questioned. Israel's actions are not only a national response to perceived bias but also resonate with broader concerns about the fairness and effectiveness of international institutions in addressing security issues. Despite these challenges, the current diplomatic crisis could serve as a turning point for global diplomacy. As we mark United Nations Day, Guterres' designation as persona non grata by Israel is a stark reminder of the challenges facing diplomacy today. Yet, in the midst of this crisis lies an opportunity. This mission remains as vital now as it was when the UN was founded nearly eight decades ago. (The writer is an associate professor; views are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### DEMOCRACY OVER RELIGION

Madam—This refers to the editorial 'Path to Democracy'. Growth and stability could be achieved only under a vibrant democracy with liberty for all forces to make their productive contributions and point out the misdeeds and mistakes of the rulers for due corrections. In Bangladesh, things are taking a swing from one extreme to the next. In the name of restoring democracy, rabidly communal fundamentalists are taking centre stage. The people should understand that religion is an innate affair and allowing it to dominate political affairs can cause only hurdles to revive the economy and care for the people. History is clear that wherever religion plays a dominant role, liberty and development suffer. Even after 7 decades, Pakistan is still lingering around its basic issues. India, which was developing in many fields, is on a retrograde path with communal forces trying to dominate the affairs, leaving 81 crore poor people to manage their lives with 5 kg of free rice, unemployment reaching its heights, untamed inflation and a minuscule section allowed to amass the wealth of the nation. Therefore, the people of Bangladesh should be careful in keeping religion away from politics and focus on development failing which the country may have to join the band of Afghans and Pakistan.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

#### TERROR STRIKES GANDERBAL

Madam—Apropos to the article 'Dastardly Act', October 22. The Ganderbal terror attack, which claimed the lives of a doctor and six labourers at a tunnel construction site, leaves no room for doubt that Pakistan will persist with its nefarious policy of bleeding India and J and K in particular with a thousand cuts. It is no coincidence that the terror attack has taken place in Ganderbal, the constituency of J and K's new CM Omar Abdullah. Clearly, Pakistan-backed terror groups are sending the unmistakable message - after targeting the Jammu region in recent

## De-escalating border tensions



The efforts of India and China for the purpose of military de-escalation are welcome. At this critical moment, when both the nations have been facing critical tension around the Line of Actual Control and surrounding areas, including Depsang and

months - that the remarkably peaceful polls in the UT could not have taken place without the Pakistani military establishment's tacit agreement. The attempt to disrupt an infrastructure project is aimed not just at stalling development in the valley and scaring away migrant labourers and tourists who have a crucial role in boosting J and K's economy, it is also to demonstrate that no one in Kashmir is fully safe. Clearly, Pakistan's Army chief, Gen Asim Munir, has a second message to his own government in response to former PM Nawaz Sharif telling visiting Indian journalists last week, "We have lost the last 75 years, and it is important we don't lose the next 75." Which is, that hosting an Indian foreign minister on Pakistani soil is all very well, but the Army cannot be kept out of any conversation with India.

N Sathasiva Reddy | Washington

#### FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Madam—The picture of the freshly-made 'diyas' or 'earthen lamps' ahead of the Deepavali festival, which is just days away, was a visual delight. ("Pic Talk" October

Demchok, such efforts of engagement and de-escalation are worth appreciating. Although the timing is a bit dramatic because PM Modi is in Russia for the purpose of an official visit to attend the BRICS summit, with probable estimation to meet President Xi Jinping with PM Modi on the sidelines of the summit.

The announcement from the side of Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri with respect to military personnel disengagement and patrolling personnel arrangements is particularly welcoming that India's hard efforts are now ripening fruits and cooperation with China will help India to manage the bilateral rivalry and assist in strengthening ties between the two.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

22). The word 'Deepavali' is derived from the Sanskrit fusion word 'Deepavali', which is formed from 'dipa' (light) and 'avali' (series or row). It thus means a 'row or series of lights', which illuminates the country with its brilliance and dazzles all with joy. Illuminating homes with lights is the expression of obeisance to the heavens for the attainment of health, wealth, knowledge, peace, and prosperity. While the electric illumination looks stunning, there is no comparison to the age-old diyas. In fact, the advantage of lighting diya lamps is that they are biodegradable, cost-effective, and a feast to our eyes. The festival of Diwali is a lot more than just bursting firecrackers, which, in fact, pose serious health hazards given the significant relationship between air pollution and respiratory infections. In comparison, diyas serve the purpose of purifying the environment by getting rid of negativity and creating positive vibes.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

## ENCOUNTERING THE DIVINE

From answering prayers to reducing life's hardships, the divine remains ever-present



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

With the internet and social media, we are constantly being reminded about the wealthiest, the most powerful, very famous, the prettiest, etc. Have you imagined meeting any one of these personalities except to see them in print or in a video? What about God, who owns everything there is, is omnipotent, is omniscient, is omnipresent and a whole lot more, about which I will write in this article?

God is not only omnipresent but available to us 24x7. Yes, God cannot be seen in person except to the very best of devotees like Sant Tulsidas, but can be seen in Deity forms and in nice photos everywhere. God even manifests in His murti forms like He had in His Rama Lalla form in Ayodhya.

How is Lord helping us by His activities? He listens to all our prayers, and He must respond to them, they being spiritual activities. However, the response will be appropriate at a time chosen by God. Mostly, it won't be as prayed for, because most of the prayers are for material gains, which are undeserved. For example, a student prays for good marks even though he doesn't deserve them. God will give something as God can never be a debtor. Then, God is ever ready to guide us, as He guided Arjuna by preaching the instructions of the Bhagavad-Geeta. Few pray for guidance but those who do really benefit, because direction is all important. It determines where we will end up. God gives intuitions, uses mediums to convey, etc. God even instructs directly His devotees as He instructed Arjuna.



The third important help God provides is to get us out of troubles, we get into due to our past faulty karmaphalas (results of acts). God does not stop them from coming because that will make the 'Karmaphala Principle' ineffective; God only makes them less painful. Continuing about God's bounties, God empowers us in various ways. For example, a scientist is deep into looking for a solution, which will benefit humanity, and he deserves getting credit for it due to past pious karmaphalas. God gives him the intuition, because God is the only source. We cannot invent or create anything new. All big or important acts are done by God only; He makes the deserving among us 'nimitta' (instruments), just as He used Arjuna to kill the biggest warriors of the Kaurava army (11.33)

God is especially partial to welfare workers, because it suits His Creation. He has promised that doers of welfare acts will not end up badly. (6.40) What this means is that such persons will not suffer a painful death. God goes a step further for His advanced devotees; He does miracles for them. Meerabai was given poison to drink because she chose Lord Krishna as her worshipable Deity. What did the Lord do? He made poison ineffective. How did Lord Krishna save Arjuna - His devotee and friend (4.3), who had sworn to enter fire, if he could not kill Jayadrath before sunset? As soon as Jayadrath came out of hiding Arjuna's imminent death, Lord brought the sunlight back. This allowed Arjuna to kill Jayadrath before sunset.

I can go on regarding what all God does and can do for us if we link with Him. And He has made approaching Him very easy. What is so difficult to have 'darshan' of God in His Deity form in a temple? What about chanting God's names? Is it so difficult? It may appear childish but this is the way it has been designed to gain God's favour. Someone may say why is it so easy to get so much cash out of a ATM? Because this is the way it has been designed.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

## AI's impact shines in Nobel Prizes



B K SINGH

David Baker, Demis Hassabis and others have harnessed AI to revolutionise medicine and nanotechnology, ushering in a new era of scientific breakthroughs



This year's Physics and Chemistry both Nobel prizes are linked to Artificial Intelligence. While Physics laureates applied principles and tools of Physics namely atomic spin and Boltzmann's machine to create structures that can store, reconstruct and discover properties in data for artificial neural networks to enable powerful computers to mimic human memory and learning, Chemistry laureates worked on computational protein design that advanced protein structure predictions. In all living creatures, proteins are essential for cell functions. David Baker, a 62-year-old Professor at the University of Washington, Seattle succeeded in building an entirely new kind of Protein, that is known as life's building blocks and comprises 20 different amino acids. Since 2003, he and his research group have created several imaginative proteins that can be used in pharmaceuticals, vaccines, tiny sensors and nanomaterials. He was awarded half the prize money for the 2024 Chemistry Nobel Prize.

In 2020 David Hassabis and John Jumper both Britons aged 49 years and 39 years respectively presented AlphaFold2, an AI model that predicted the structure of Proteins from amino acid sequences. Two Britons were awarded this year's remaining half of the prize. AI model AlphaFold2 has opened ways to predict proteins and has already been used by researchers to predict nearly 200 million proteins. Research has also advanced in understanding antibiotic resistance and creating enzymes that have the potential to decompose plastics. Proteins are molecular machines of our lives making up a significant portion of bodies i.e. muscles, enzymes, hormones, hair, blood and cartilage.

Proteins' shape determines their function. Different shapes can be folded in numerous ways to arrive at the resultant shapes of protein. Incorrectly folded protein may lead to improper functioning and can be the reason for Alzheimer's, cystic fibrosis, and diabetes. As protein's shape is solely based on amino acid sequence, these can manoeuvre into specific shapes duly minimising inter-atomic repulsions among the atoms of amino acids.

In the new era of machine learning laure-



THE SCIENTIFIC AND ACADEMIC COMMUNITIES HAVE EXPRESSED CONFUSION OVER HOW MACHINE LEARNING AND ARTIFICIAL NEURAL NETWORKS CAN BE ALIGNED WITH THE TRADITIONAL BOUNDARIES OF PHYSICS

ates have solved the problem by using a large database of experimentally obtained protein structures to train AI and allowed it to learn the principles of folding. The result was AlphaFold2 which predicted three-dimensional structures of proteins. A new nanomaterial was developed in 2016 where up to 120 proteins were spontaneously linked together. In 2021 nanoparticles with protein were developed that were found to imitate the influenza virus which will further help in developing a vaccine for influenza. Vaccines for livestock using the technology have already been successful. Some of the other developments are the proteins that function as molecular rotors and also the geometrically shaped proteins that can change their shape under external influences.

Such geometrically shaped proteins which are impacted by external influences are quite useful in producing tiny sensors. Many new possibilities for the use of protein in nanotechnology are useful to develop new tools for precise control and manipulation of elements at the nanoscale. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of molecules has been studied and researchers have found how specially modified diamond flakes can be used as nanoscale magnetic field detectors. These tiny sensors can elucidate the structure of a single organic molecule.

With nanoscale MRI researchers may one day directly image proteins. A 91-year-old Professor at Princeton University, USA John Hopfield and a 76-year-old Professor at University of Toronto, Canada have been awarded this year's Nobel Prize in Physics. Hopfield created associative memory for storing and recreating images.

Like the structure of the brain, the artificial neural network was created where the brain's neurons were

represented by nodes and each of these nodes having different values. A neural network as a system is inspired by how the human brain works, it does the same with data. It takes in information, processes it and makes decisions, learning from experience. Neural network utilises Physics that describes characteristics of any material due to its atomic spin, which makes each atom a tiny magnet. Hopfield described the network as energy in the spin system as in Physics and is trained by finding values for connections between the nodes such that saved images have low energy. When it is fed with incomplete/ distorted images it works through the nodes and updates the values for each in such a way that the energy of the network falls.

The overall state of his network i.e. energy is calculated using a formula that uses all values of the nodes and all strengths of connections between them. When the minimum energy is attained, the corresponding saved image is most like the imperfect image fed in the network. Further improvements have made it possible to save more pictures and to differentiate between them even when they are quite similar.

Using the Hopfield network, Hinton found the Boltzmann machine using tools from statistical Physics - a new network that can learn to recognise a characteristic element in the given data. Researchers use the tool from statistical mechanics to look at the collective behaviour of a large number of particles to determine large-scale microscopic properties like temperature, pressure and magnetisation. There are different energy states in the model and the material is more likely to exist in the lowest energy state. Boltzmann distribution explains how likely the given state is. It describes the probability of a system being in a particular state -

solid, liquid or gas - based on its energy and temperature. Hinton used the tool to solve computing problems in neural networks. Hinton added hidden layers to neural networks allowing machines to analyse data in more sophisticated ways.

The machine is trained by feeding it with examples that are most likely to arise when it is run. Boltzmann machine can also classify images or create new examples on the pattern it was trained. A trained Boltzmann machine can recognise a familiar trait in information it has not previously seen. Hinton has further developed this work which led to the current explosive development of machine learning. "The laureates' work has already been of greatest benefit. In Physics we use artificial neural networks in vast range of areas, such as developing new materials with specific properties." Says Ellen Moons, chair of the Nobel Committee for Physics.

The scientific and academic communities have expressed confusion over how machine learning and artificial neural networks can be aligned with the traditional boundaries of Physics. Nevertheless, the work of Hopfield and Hinton is having a profound impact on the digital age, even if its classification within the Physics domain remains contested.

The laureates' contribution is the brain behind medical imaging systems that detect cancer faster than doctors. Scientists are inventing more and more applications of machine learning and advanced studies in Physics like processing data to discover Higgs particles, searching for exoplanets, and reducing noise in the measurement of gravitational waves from colliding black holes.

(The writer is Retired Principal Chief Conservator of Forests- head of Forest Force-Karnataka; views are personal)

## Nobel Prize snub of Rosalind Lee sparks debate on fairness of the system

The exclusion of Rosalind Lee has reignited discussions about the fairness of scientific recognition

The recent announcement of the Nobel Prize snubbing Rosalind Lee of Nobel Prize who was the first author of the paper that was considered for this year's Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, while considering her co-worker and husband, Victor Ambros, the corresponding author of the paper for the coveted prize, has reignited discussions about fairness, recognition, and the implications of such decisions on science. Traditionally, scientific papers list authors in an order that reflects the perceived contribution to the work. The first author typically plays a significant role in conducting the research and writing the paper. In



BIJU DHARMAPALAN

contrast, the last author often represents the senior scientist or principal investigator who guided the research. Middle authors usually contribute in specific areas but are not as heavily involved as the first or last author. This system has fostered a hierarchy in academia that rewards a select few. At the same time, many essential team members go unacknowledged, ultimately

skewing career advancement, compensation, and visibility in the scientific community. We still follow this flawed authorship order in most recruitments, funding agencies, promotions, awards, and recognitions. Even for awarding doctoral degrees, our universities follow this order of authorship. It often overlooks a person's intellectual knowledge and technical skills needed for the study.

This bias creates an environment where specific contributors, though not in prominent author positions, have a diminished chance of recognition and growth, potentially leading to a loss of morale and an outflow of valuable talent from academia and research fields.

Many talented and skilled youngsters are not getting good positions because of this flawed protocol in research and academic institutions. In today's world, science cannot be done in isolation.

Most of today's research involves interdisciplinary work collaborating with one or more institutions, and each person involved may contribute to its success. Projects like the Human Genome Project or the Large Hadron Collider involve the contributions of hundreds of scientists from varied institutions across the globe. Even in our national institutions, outsourcing certain works has become a norm. In that scenario, even the



company that does the work has to be credited, though they may charge for it. The importance of each contributor extends beyond the experimenters. Data analysts, statisticians, field researchers, technicians, and other support staff often carry out substantial portions of the work. While their names might not always

appear on a paper, they enable discoveries and innovations by ensuring the research is feasible, accurate and applicable. In such a framework, reducing credit to a first-author or corresponding author model grossly underestimates the collective effort, leading to unfair career advantages for select individuals over others

equally deserving. A system that values equal contribution offers a fairer foundation for hiring, promotions, and awards.

This shift would ensure that positions of responsibility and recognition are not limited to those with the resources or negotiating power to secure lead author positions. Moreover, equal credit distribution could improve diversity in science. This approach could also boost diversity by supporting women, early-career researchers, and marginalised groups who are often in middle-author roles due to limited mentorship and systemic inequities, giving them a better chance at securing resources and opportunities. Critics may argue that equal

weightage could lead to confusion over who contributed most to a particular study, possibly complicating the evaluation process.

To address this, journals should strictly include only those who actively contributed to the study, ending practices of "gift authorship" to the department or the head of the institution. Science thrives on collaboration and equal weightage for all authors in jobs and awards, including consideration for the Nobel Prize, which promotes a culture of inclusivity, fairness, and shared achievement.

(The author is the Dean-Academic affairs, at Garden City University and adjunct faculty at NIAS, Bangalore; Views are personal)

IN BRIEF



Swiggy introduces 'Seal' badge for food quality standards

Online food delivery firm Swiggy on Wednesday introduced the 'Swiggy Seal' initiative to raise hygiene and food quality standards among restaurant partners on its platform. The initiative, which is currently live in Pune, will be gradually scaled up during November to cover over 650 cities across India. "Since the program's launch two weeks ago, restaurant partners have shown high interest, with hundreds of requests for hygiene audits already received. Should any concerns arise about a restaurant holding the Seal, Swiggy will thoroughly review the feedback and may revoke the badge if the restaurant fails to maintain the established standards," Swiggy stated. Under the initiative, the 'Swiggy Seal' badge will be featured on restaurant menu pages to highlight those with a proven track record of serving hygienic, high-quality meals in quality packaging.



KPIT Technologies net profit up to Rs 204 crore

Automobile-industry focused KPIT Technologies has recorded a 44 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 203.7 crore in the September quarter. It reported a net profit of Rs 141.4 crore in the year-ago period, according to a regulatory filing. Revenue the quarter under review stood at Rs 1,471.4 crore, up 22.71 per cent from Rs 1,199 crore in the July-September of FY24. As compared to the previous quarter, its revenues rose 7.8 per cent while profits fell 0.19 per cent. The company closed USD 207 million worth of engagements during the September 2024 quarter, it said in a statement. "The Mobility Industry, specifically the Automotive sub vertical, has been under pressure to keep up with the changing regulations, reduce cost of vehicles and meet demands of the ever-changing consumer preferences in recent times. "We continue to prioritise investments in technology and markets ahead of demand to help our T25 clients stay on the cutting edge of technology and competitiveness, basis which, we reiterate our revenue growth and profitability outlook for the full year," KPIT co-founder, CEO and MD Kishor Patil said.



Bajaj Finserv profit up 8 pc at Rs 2,087 crore

Bajaj Finserv on Wednesday reported an 8 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 2,087 crore for the second quarter ended September 30. The company had posted a profit of Rs 1,929 crore in the July-September quarter a year ago. The total consolidated income increased to Rs 33,704 crore during the quarter against Rs 26,023 crore in the same period a year earlier, Bajaj Finserv said in a regulatory filing. The Pune-headquartered company's total expenditure rose to Rs 27,741 crore compared to Rs 20,731 crore in the year-ago period. Bajaj Finserv Asset Management recorded assets under management (AUM) of Rs 16,293 crore as on September 30, 2024. Its subsidiary Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company Ltd reported a profit of Rs 494 crore from Rs 468 crore in Q2 FY24, an increase of 6 per cent. Another subsidiary Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance Company Ltd posted shareholders' profit after tax at Rs 148 crore down from Rs 193 crore in Q2 FY24 due to new business strain, higher expense overruns and change in product mix.

India cannot risk another bout of inflation: RBI Governor Das

PNS ■ MUMBAI

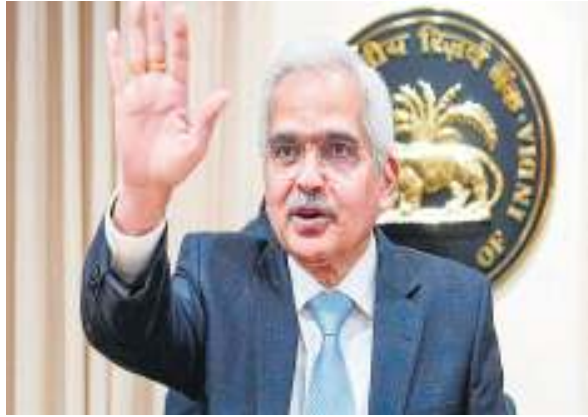
India cannot risk another bout of inflation, and the best approach currently would be to remain flexible and wait for inflation to durably align with the central bank's target, opined Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das while voting for the status quo on benchmark rates during the MPC meeting.

"Monetary policy can support sustainable growth only by maintaining price stability," Das said, as per the minutes of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting held earlier in the month.

The MPC had decided to keep the benchmark interest rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent. This was the tenth consecutive meeting of MPC when it decided to keep the policy rate unchanged with a majority vote of 5-1.

However, it changed the stance to 'neutral' from the earlier 'withdrawal of accommodation' unanimously.

This was the first meeting of the reconstituted MPC. The three newly-appointed external members are Ram Singh, Saugata Bhattacharya and



Nagesh Kumar.

As per the minutes of the meeting, Das said monetary policy can support sustainable growth only by maintaining price stability.

"Taking all these factors into consideration, I vote for changing the stance from withdrawal of accommodation to 'neutral' while keeping the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent," he said.

Overall, the Indian economy presents a picture of stability and strength, he said, adding the balance between inflation and growth is well-poised.

heightened geo-political tensions and volatile commodity prices to risks of adverse weather in food inflation," he said.

Expressing a similar view, RBI Deputy Governor Michael Debarata Patra had said a gradual wait-and-assess approach to removing policy restraint in terms of the policy rate remains appropriate as long as inflation is not lastingly close to its target.

Therefore, he voted for maintaining the status quo on the policy rate but a shift in the stance to neutral in the meeting.

Another member Rajiv Ranjan, Executive Director RBI had said between now and December, there will be greater clarity on some of the uncertainties - US elections, geopolitical risks and Chinese fiscal stimulus and its impact on global commodity prices.

"At this juncture, India's resilient growth story helps us to continue our determined focus on inflation and keep the policy rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent. Hence, I vote for a status quo on rates and change of stance to neutral," Ranjan had said.

Despite the near-term uptick in inflation, the outlook for headline inflation towards the later part of the year and early next year points to further alignment with the 4 per cent target, he said.

"Thus, the conditions are appropriate for a change in monetary policy stance to neutral from withdrawal of accommodation. This would provide greater flexibility and optionality to monetary policy to act in accordance with the evolving outlook. It also provides space to watch out for the uncertainties on the horizon - ranging from

BRICS nations agree to financial settlement in local currencies

PNS ■ KAZAN

BRICS nations on Wednesday agreed to strengthen trade and financial settlement in local currencies, study feasibility of an independent cross-border settlement and depositary infrastructure, and a BRICS reinsurance company.

The leaders also agreed to jointly develop the New Development Bank into a new type of multilateral development bank (MDB) in the 21st century and supported further expansion of the BRICS-led bank's membership.

In the declaration issued after the 16th BRICS Summit here, the leaders reiterated their commitment to enhancing financial cooperation within BRICS.

"We recognise the widespread benefits of faster, low cost, more efficient, transparent, safe and inclusive cross-border payment instruments built upon the principle of minimiz-

ing trade barriers and non-discriminatory access.

"We welcome the use of local currencies in financial transactions between BRICS countries and their trading partners," it said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is here to attend the BRICS Summit.

The BRICS leaders encouraged strengthening of correspondent banking networks within BRICS and enabling settlements in local currencies in line with BRICS Cross-Border Payments Initiative (BCBPI), which is voluntary and non-binding.

BRICS, consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, has now expanded with five additional members - Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

The nations also acknowledged the importance of exploring the feasibility of connecting BRICS countries' financial markets infrastructure.



Upswing in India, China ties unlikely to alter trade relations: GTRI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The improvement in diplomatic relations between India and China is unlikely to dramatically alter the economic and trade dynamics between the countries in the near future, think tank GTRI said on Wednesday.

It said that India's low exports and high reliance on Chinese imports, especially in industrial sectors, are due to structural issues and it will require long-term policy efforts to address the trade imbalance.

India and China have signed an agreement on patrolling by their military along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, in a major breakthrough to end the over four-year standoff.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping held bilateral talks on Wednesday on the margins of the BRICS summit in Russia, in their first structured meeting since the eastern Ladakh border row erupted in

2020. "The recent meeting between Modi and Xi may signal a diplomatic breakthrough, but it is unlikely to dramatically alter the economic and trade dynamics between India and China in the near future," the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said.

For India, reducing its trade deficit with China and encouraging more balanced economic relations will require a multifaceted approach, including strengthening domestic manufacturing capabilities, diversifying its import sources, and promoting export growth, it added.

"Until then, the thaw in diplomatic relations, while positive, is unlikely to bring about a significant shift in India-China trade and economic ties. Trade dynamics between the two countries remain largely unaffected by political developments, driven by private businesses rather than government-led initiatives," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.



HUL to separate ice cream business, does independent valuation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) on Wednesday said it is separating its ice cream business, which owns brands as Kwality Wall's, Cornetto and Magnum, and has done an independent valuation to have a fair idea.

The board of HUL on Wednesday decided to demerge the ice cream business, based on the recommendation of an independent committee, which was formed by the FMCG major in September this year.

The committee has said the ice cream business, which contributes 3 per cent to HUL's turnover, has a different operating model, including cold chain infrastructure, and a distinct channel landscape, which limits synergies with other businesses of the company. During an earnings call, CFO Ritesh Tiwari confirmed that HUL has gone for an independent valuation of the ice cream business. However, he did not share details. "Yes, we have done independent valuation. The board has reviewed the independent valuation of the business today, and that is one of the key inputs that will be added as we get into the separation mode going forward," he said.

Gold, silver prices hit new lifetime highs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rallying for the sixth straight session, gold and silver prices breached fresh record high levels in the national capital on Wednesday mainly driven by festive and wedding season demand, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Gold prices jumped by Rs 500 to an all-time high of Rs 81,500 per 10 grams while silver surged Rs 1,000 to Rs 1.02 lakh per kg.

Gold prices of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity rose by Rs 500 each to Rs 81,500 per 10 grams and Rs 81,100 per 10 grams, respectively.

Silver jumped Rs 1,000 to reach a fresh high of Rs 1.02 lakh per kg from the previous close of Rs 1.01 lakh per kg on Tuesday.

In the last six trading sessions, silver prices have zoomed by Rs 10,000 per kg. Gold increased by Rs 2,850 per 10 grams since October 16.

According to Narinder Wadhwa, MD of SKI Capital, silver prices reaching Rs 1 lakh in the physical market



and on the MCX is a clear reflection of multiple converging factors such as seasonal demand in India and geopolitical risks from West Asia conflict.

In July, gold and silver prices corrected sharply by 7 per cent in the local markets after the government slashed basic customs duty on gold and other metals.

However, the bullion prices rebounded as demand from Indian consumers increased due to ongoing festivals, expectations of rate cuts in the US and flare up in geopolitical tensions.

In futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for December delivery increased

Rs 112 or 0.14 per cent to Rs 78,768 per 10 grams.

The precious metal had jumped Rs 263 or 0.33 per cent to touch an all-time peak of Rs 78,919 per 10 grams during the day.

"Gold prices saw another positive move, supported by gains in Comex, where gold moved closer to USD 2,750. This in turn helped MCX gold stay above Rs 78,750, reflecting the underlying bullish sentiment.

"The ongoing favourable interest rate cycle has been one of the main factors supporting gold's rise," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

Sensex drops 138 pts, extends losses to 3rd day

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Stock markets declined for the third straight day on Wednesday due to profit-taking in auto, pharma and capital goods shares amid relentless foreign fund outflows.

In a volatile session, benchmark BSE Sensex declined 138.74 points or 0.17 per cent to settle at 80,081.98 with 22 of its constituents ending lower. Intra-day, the benchmark fell below the 80,000-mark to hit a low of 79,891.68.

The NSE Nifty closed lower by 36.60 points or 0.15 per cent to 24,435.50.

From the 30 Sensex pack, Mahindra & Mahindra, Sun Pharma, Power Grid, NTPC, Adani Ports, Larsen & Toubro,



ICICI Bank and Titan were among the biggest laggards.

Bajaj Finance climbed nearly 5 per cent after the firm reported a 13 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 4,014 crore in the second quarter ended September 2024.

exchange data, while domestic institutional investors (DIIs) bought equities worth Rs 5,869.06 crore.

"Investor mindset turned gloomy with the tepid earnings and a knee jerk reaction from FIIs, which dragged the market sentiment. However, mid and smallcaps are experiencing bargain hunting following the recent decline, though the sustainability of this momentum-driven buying remains uncertain.

"The US 10-year yield inched higher, signalling a slower tempo of rate cuts by the FED, which is poised for a risk-off sentiment towards EMs," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank, HCL Technologies and Bajaj Finserv were among other big gainers.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded shares worth Rs 3,978.61 crore on Tuesday, according to

UP state GDP to touch Rs 32 lakh cr by March 2025: CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday said the state's gross domestic product (GDP) is projected to reach Rs 32 lakh crore by March 2025 and the country's "fastest-growing" economy is paving the way for employment of "1.5 crore youth".

"The state will play a pivotal role in India's journey toward achieving a USD 5 trillion economy while moving towards becoming the nation's top economic powerhouse shortly," Adityanath said at a function here on Wednesday.

He also said that the state has secured "75 GI tags across 75 districts, with Varanasi leading the way".

While referring to the initiatives to establish UP as a "major logistics hub" he highlighted the construction of a logistics multimodal terminal in Varanasi and proposed logistics hub in Gautam Buddha Nagar.

He pointed to events like the Global Investors Summit, which attracted investment proposals "worth Rs 40 lakh crore"

that have "transformed" UP's economic landscape. "Previously, securing Rs 20,000 crore in investments was considered a major achievement. He attributed such a change to the government's economic policies and the crackdown on mafia and anti-social elements.

"Today, we have garnered Rs 40 lakh crore in proposals, paving the way for employment opportunities for 1.5 crore young people. Previous governments had a 'One District, One

Mafia' policy, whereas we have branded Uttar Pradesh through the 'One District, One Product' (ODOP) initiative," he said.

"The state's GDP, which stood at Rs 12 lakh crore during previous regimes has now touched Rs 26 lakh crore (2023-24) while targeting Rs 32 lakh crore (by 2025)," he said.

"Our government responds to criminals and mafia with the same severity with which they target citizens," he remarked while noting that measures like the Anti-Land Mafia Task Force, have reclaimed 64,000 acres of land from illegal possession.



Entertainment industry lost Rs 22,400 cr to piracy: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian entertainment industry suffered a staggering loss of Rs 22,400 crore in 2023 due to piracy, according to a report released on Wednesday, that advocated for stronger regulations and collaborative efforts to effectively mitigate piracy risks.

According to "The Rob Report" by EY and the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), 51 per cent of media consumers in India access content from pirated sources, with streaming services being the most significant

contributor at 63 per cent. "The size of India's piracy economy was Rs 22,400 crore in 2023, ranking fourth against the segment-wise revenue generated by India's Media and Entertainment industry.

"Of this, Rs 13,700 crore was generated from pirated content from movie theatres while Rs 8,700 crore was generated from OTT platforms' content. The potential GST losses of up to Rs 4,300 crore were estimated to have been incurred," it said.

Piracy refers to the unauthorized copying, distribution, or use of copyrighted material,



which can include music, movies, software, and other forms of intellectual property. It is considered a form of theft because it infringes on the

rights of the original creators and can lead to significant financial losses for them. Rohit Jain, Chairman of IAMA's Digital

Entertainment Committee, emphasised the urgent need for collective action among stakeholders.

"The rapid growth of digital entertainment in India is undeniable, with filmed entertainment expected to reach Rs 14,600 crore by 2026. However, this potential is severely threatened by rampant piracy. It is imperative for all stakeholders - government bodies, industry players, and consumers - to unite in combating this issue," he said. Viewers cited high subscription fees, the unavailability of desired content, and the hassle of managing multi-

ple subscriptions as primary reasons for indulging in pirated content.

The report said that piracy is particularly prevalent among younger audiences aged 19 to 34, with women favouring OTT shows, while men gravitate towards classic films.

Interestingly, 64 per cent of those who access pirated content expressed willingness to switch to authorised channels if offered for free, despite advertisement interruptions, revealing the need for content providers to rethink their pricing models and accessibility strategies.



## Abhishek Bachchan thrills as chatterbox in *I Want To Talk*



Director Shoojit Sircar released a thrilling preview for his upcoming film, *I Want To Talk*, showcasing Abhishek Bachchan in a fresh and dynamic character. The preview, posted on Shoojit's social media, gives a sneak peek of Bachchan's character as someone who "thrives on conversation," showcasing positivity in all interactions.

In the post, Shoojit captioned the teaser with, "We all know that one person who ~loves~ lives to talk. Here's the story of a man who always looks at the brighter side of life, no matter what life throws at him! Tag that person you know who lives to talk! (sic)"

The short clip features a bobble-head toy of Abhishek Bachchan that has been placed in a car, while in the background voiceover, he says, "I don't just love to talk; I live to talk. The only basic difference I see between being alive and being dead is this: The living can speak, the dead cannot." *I Want To Talk*, directed by Shoojit Sircar and produced by Rising Sun Films and Kino Works, is scheduled for a global theatrical release on November 22, 2024.

## 'No more disparity' - Kareena demands equal pay!



Kareena Kapoor Khan spoke out about the importance of receiving equal pay to her male counterparts, such as the three Khans and her husband Saif Ali Khan. During a conversation, Kareena mentioned her efforts to achieve fair wages in the film industry. "No means no, so now it's a time when you feel if this is not worthy enough for my character or worthy enough for myself, I'm not going to do it. And I will wait; I will push myself to do better so that they realise I'm equally good as my male counterparts. The Rs. 1,000 crore club? *Koshish toh hai* (I've been trying)," Kareena said.

"For young girls of today, saying no should not make them feel that they're not confident. No means no; whether it's something you're not comfortable doing, something you're not comfortable wearing, or something you're not comfortable eating, shape, size, or a job you're looking forward to doing, if you feel it's something less for you, one should not take it. One should be so confident that one can push oneself to achieve and do something better. So I think no as an answer should be something reassuring, rather than making you feel underconfident," Kareena added. She has advocated for equal pay earlier too! In the early 2000s, when producer Karan Johar offered her the lead role in Nikkhil Advani's 2003 romantic comedy *Kal Ho Naa Ho*, she insisted on receiving a salary equal to Shah Rukh Khan's. Preity Zinta replaced Kareena, causing a rift between her and Karan.

## Millie Bobby Brown on Vecna's terrifying impact

*Stranger Things* has brought many creepy moments throughout its seasons, but few characters have scared fans and cast members as much as Vecna. Millie Bobby Brown, portraying Eleven, discussed the profound impact Jamie Campbell Bower's portrayal of the terrifying character had on her during filming. Even though she was familiar with him behind the scenes, Brown was truly unsettled by his change. Brown talked openly in an interview about how Bower's depiction of Vecna sparked genuine fear in their shared scenes. Brown was taken off guard by his intimidating makeover, involving prosthetics and a spooky demeanour, which blurred the distinction between him as an actor and his character. The eerie setting and Bower's acting during their intense confrontations made it difficult for Brown to separate herself from the fear while filming. Acknowledging that seeing Bower in complete Vecna makeup brought back her childhood phobia of masks, she confessed, "Brown's role required him to show emotional vulnerability and Vecna's presence only made that emotional pressure stronger. She playfully remarked that despite Bower being a close friend, she couldn't overlook his change into "a gremlin hiding in my closet," referring to how disturbing he looked in full costume. Brown also emphasised how Bower was committed to his performance, frequently staying in character between scenes to uphold Vecna's formidable presence. The presence of Vecna on set intensified the horror experience, causing even experienced crew members to feel chills. The detailed effort put in by the makeup team on Bower's look added to his unsettling presence, transforming him into the fearsome creature that fans dreaded.



## Barkha Singh promises 'something new' with upcoming films

Barkha Singh has established herself as a remarkable talent in the entertainment industry, captivating audiences with her compelling performances and undeniable charisma. She has garnered significant acclaim for her standout roles in popular projects such as *Engineering Girls*, *Maja Ma* and *Masaba Masaba 2*. Her ability to bring depth and nuance to her characters has resonated with viewers, contributing to her growing fanbase.

Barkha is now eager to explore more complex, darker roles that push her boundaries and showcase a different side of her talent within the entertainment world. In an interview, the actress reflected on her journey and offered insights into her aspirations. "I have enjoyed doing a lot of rom-coms and a lot of girl next door roles. Now, I'm looking forward to more serious and darker roles. We've already made inroads into that." The actor adds, "My next couple of releases are a big step away from what the audience has seen me doing till now. They have seen me in happier roles. Now they're going to see me in darker and grungy roles. I am excited about the roles. I personally feel I'm better at that, but it's just not been tapped into. I'm very excited for the makers to see that side of me. So, I get more such roles (going forward)."

On the professional front, Barkha Singh has announced her forthcoming project titled *Lafangey*, which will stream on Amazon MiniTV. In addition to this promising venture, she has an array of intriguing projects lined up for release this year.

## Hocus Pocus 3: Bette Midler and Disney tease the next magical chapter

Bette Midler is once again trying to get Disney to start working on *Hocus Pocus 3* by stirring up the cauldron. The famous actress has ditched the broomstick and is pushing the studio to develop a screenplay for the upcoming fantastical journey. On the OVC+ talk show *Busy This Week*, Midler hinted, "I haven't seen the script, but I've heard rumblings." She didn't hold back, adding, "Time is barrel-assing to the finish line. Get us while we're still breathing, I mean, God!" Midler, Sarah Jessica Parker and Kathy Najimy are prepared to play the Sanderson sisters once again. *Hocus Pocus 2* will premiere on Disney+ in 2022, almost three decades following the release of the original movie. Under the direction of Anne Fletcher, the film was a success, demonstrating that the power of the witches was still potent. Disney confirmed in June 2023 that *Hocus Pocus 3* was

in the works, with Fletcher and writer Jen D'Angelo set to return for more witchy mischief. D'Angelo disclosed that they are currently in the storytelling stage, but she is brimming with enthusiasm about the various new paths the third movie could explore. Her focus is on exploring the character of Hannah Waddingham's enigmatic mother witch, who left a lasting impact in the sequel. But hang onto your broomsticks—Midler's remarks weren't the sole enchanting treat offered lately. D'Angelo shared her plans for the upcoming chapter. She playfully suggested that there are numerous unexplored stories to delve into and indicated a desire to expand the mystical universe even more. "We've only scratched the surface of Hannah Waddingham's mother witch," she said. Regarding familiar faces from Salem's past, it is a combination of different types of people. D'Angelo sadly confirmed that the original trio of youngsters—Thora Birch, Vinessa Shaw and Omri Katz—did not appear in the sequel. Plans were in place to reintroduce Dani, envisioning her using anti-magic abilities to battle the revived Sanderson. Nevertheless, those concepts were put on hold. We must anticipate some traditional guest appearances in the third movie. *Hocus Pocus 2* initially contained references to previous occurrences, such as a planned appearance by Max that got removed and scenes with bullies Jay and Lee that were ultimately left out. However, the second installment evoked plenty of nostalgic emotions, causing excitement among fans of *Hocus Pocus* who eagerly enjoyed every magical moment.



## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



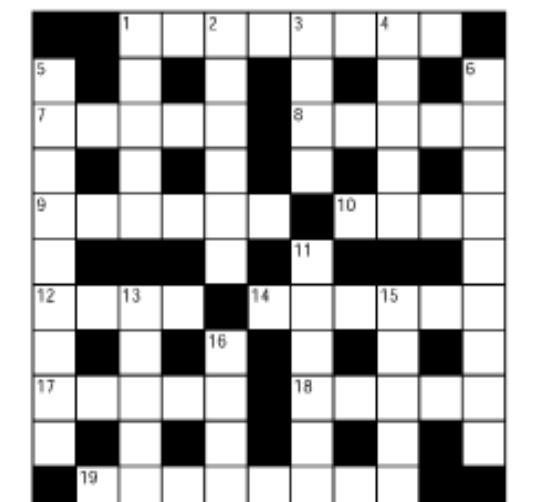
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



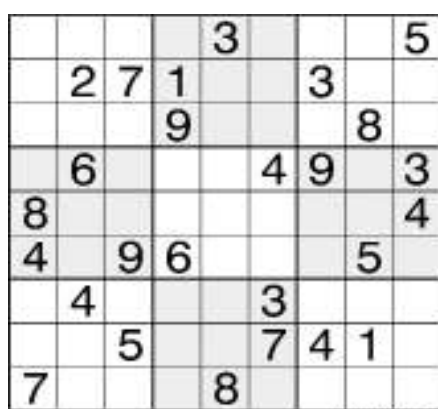
### CROSSWORD



### NANCY



### SUDOKU



**Yesterday's solution**

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

**Rules**

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

### ACROSS

- Long pants
- Correct
- Untrue
- Someone who lives alone, keeping away from others
- Costing nothing
- Shortly
- Thief
- Lift up
- Think the same way
- Huge

### DOWN

- A large wild cat
- Get
- Out of danger

4 Draw a straight line with this

5 A large group of musicians who play together

6 Practised

11 A root vegetable

13 A smelly vegetable

15 Destroys by fire

16 Expensive

**SOLUTION**

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

### GINGER MEGGS



## 'NARI' POWER ON WHEELS, BREAKING BARRIERS, BUILDING BRIDGES

FROM BIKING TO PHILANTHROPY, SHE FOR SOCIETY HAS BECOME A BEACON OF HOPE FOR MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY. IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE PIONEER, HARSHINI VENKATESH, FOUNDER-PRESIDENT OF SHE FOR SOCIETY, SHARES HER VISION FOR A MORE EMPOWERED AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

TEJAL SINHA  
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

Shattering stereotypes and embracing the thrill of biking, women riders today are breaking free from societal norms, enjoying the freedom and independence that comes with riding. With increased accessibility, women are confidently navigating city streets, scenic routes and off-road trails.

Among those passionate ones, we came across a group of women riders, working tirelessly towards the welfare and well-being of our 'veer naris', ex-soldiers and their families. She For Society provides a platform for people to donate, give and support a cause that works to improve the lives of our veterans and their families, maintaining the comfort and rehabilitation of the infrastructure veterans receive after serving our country.

The brainchild of Harshini Venkatesh, a social activist and the founder president of this first-ever NGO formed by women bikers and joined by Kavita Prabhakar and Shalini Deepak, they are now a group of hundreds of women working for multiple causes.

"We ride for a cause," begins Harshini over an exclusive interaction with *The Pioneer* for our special segment of Community Wise. To date, ever since its inception in 2020, they have organised more than 100 initiatives and events in collaboration with the Indian Army Ex-Soldier Association and the traffic police. "Since the past three years on Kargil Vijay Diwas, we ride along with the Indian Army, where hundreds of their soldiers and tornadoes perform the stunt shows. We were a total of around 800 bikers who were riding to create awareness about the sacrifices of the Kargil heroes.



"We've been riding with the Indian Army every Independence day and on Republic Day." Their work for the cause has just not been confined to riding. These fierce women have set up seven computer training centers for them in different districts which are taken care of by the former soldiers. They also have established 26 computer training centers. What started off as a team of 15 to 20 bikers initially, she yearned to gather over 150 women bikers in and all of them together raised funds of Rs 3 lakh for six ex-soldier families, who were suffering from cancer.

"Then, we've also worked on 14 different projects during the pandemic. We provided ambulances, free food and rations for the ones in need. Recognising the unrecognised was our main motto. That's the reason why we all wished to work for the former soldiers. There were many transgenders, sex workers and visually challenged people too who were not getting proper food. So we worked for them as well," shares the founder president, adding that they've also actively working towards projects on nature every Environment Day.

"On World Environment Day in 2020, we donated 100 desi cows, which encourage natural and spiritual farming. We also try to promote 'no use of pesticides and eat chemical-free food.'" They've had their hands on rejuvenating a lake in Harapanahalli near Ramanagara.

While Harshini rides a BMW G310 bike, there are many of the other riders who choose to drive Royal Enfield and different vintage bikes. However, it's no less than a challenge for them to ride these bikes



because "it weighs at least 200 kgs, which is not easy. These bikes are designed for men. But these women are more daring. When a woman can give birth to a child. Why can't she ride a bike?"

Another challenge was getting the women riders onboard for the cause. In fact, "We did a ride with Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB). RCB invited us to lead the Women Premier League team, which was the first women's league and it was for the inaugural WPL. We escorted them from the hotel to the stadium. We are the only non-cricketers on the Instagram page of RCB. However, even for an RCB event, when we asked the bikers to come, it was difficult for me to find even 50 bikers. On the contrary, it would be much easier to get in the men bikers onboard."

While initially she struggled to convince her family to let her work on the cause, today they are all proud of her. In fact, Harshini's husband had also sponsored one of the computer training centers.

Talking of the causes, that's not it, folks! She further tells us, "I'm organising these rides and raising funds for the brands. We ride for a cause and purpose with glamour and passion for a cause. I was the first person to start the biker fashion shows. We ride on the stage. Then we are also the first ones who started wearing saris and riding on bikes. For some jewellery brands, we wore about jewels worth 18 lakhs and rode across the commercial streets."

During the Navratri, nine of these bikers had dressed in the nine different forms of Durga, wearing different colours of saris. They were recently in the news for organising the first-ever transgender ride in the country. Oh not to forget, they've organised multiple events with the Disabled Cricket Council of India.



With every mile, she fuels a revolution, riding to empower the unsung heroes—soldiers, ex-servicemen, women and children in rural areas of the country. By 2026, she envisions 100 vibrant centers, bridging the digital divide and illuminating the path to progress. But what drives her quest? The stark truth is that countless schools

lie dormant, their state-of-the-art labs awaiting the spark of life—computers. The government promises to linger and tenders are issued, yet the silence of unused labs echoes through corridors. Undaunted, she's already transformed 20 schools, infusing digital life into barren labs. Her crusade against digital darkness gathers momentum, scripting a new chapter in the story of empowerment, where women and children claim their rightful place in the digital age. Every revolution begins with a single ride and hers is just the beginning.

### Awakening sacred sound of 'Aum'

Adwait Yoghushan, from the Himalayan Yogi Institute and Swamrpan Foundation, has embarked on a 13,000 km journey with a mission to spread the wisdom of 'Aum' and holistic well-being across India. His mission is not only personal enlightenment but also the upliftment of those he encounters along his journey.

Currently in Ujjain, he continues his pilgrimage to deepen the spiritual practice while fostering community engagement through yoga, mindfulness and connection with nature. Starting at the Veerbhadra Temple, he is on his way to visit 12 Jyotirlingas, including Mahakaleshwar, Somnath and Kedarnath, while engaging with communities along the way.

The pilgrimage, inspired by his personal journey through adversity, focuses on awakening the sacred sound of 'Aum' in those he encounters. Yogi Adwait emphasises the importance of non-duality and teaches mindfulness and yoga, particularly to children in schools and local communities. His sessions in temples often draw large crowds,

where he speaks on themes of forgiveness and letting go of negativity.

"In line with Yogi Ji's vision for an India united in Advait philosophy, this Yatra presents a unique opportunity for local governments to participate and benefit from this transformative journey," shared a participant and devoted 'shishya'. Not long ago, during a stop at a village near a riverbank, Yogi Adwait led a yoga session under the shade of a banyan tree for national Kabaddi players and local villagers alike. His gentle yet powerful teachings inspired everyone, young and old, as they moved through the postures and chanted in unison.

The journey also includes spiritual camps (Shivirs) catering to various societal groups. Yogi Adwait seeks to collaborate with government officials to amplify the pilgrimage's impact, aiming to inspire a broader embrace of yoga and spirituality across the nation.

His goal is to inspire millions to embrace the values of yoga and spirituality, fostering a message of unity, peace, and holistic well-being.



## How Chumma became season's hottest desi party anthem!

SHIKHA DUGGAL  
shikhaduggalwork@gmail.com

The song *Chumma* from Rajkumar Rao and Tripti Dimri's movie *Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video* was sung by Rupali Jagga and Pawan Singh! We can still feel the energy in that song, which is why it became a chart-topping hit. To put it simply, it's the season's new Desi party music. And let's take a closer look at the voice behind the song that gets everyone moving and dancing.

"To be honest, I didn't try very hard to get this music; it just happened to fall into my basket. Sachin-Jigar called me the other day as I was working out at the gym. 'Come to the studio if you're free,' Sachin suggested over the phone. I've got a song. So I went straight to the studio. He played the song for me when I got there and I sang it. I finished in twenty to twenty-five minutes. I had no expectations, just as with any other song, since in this business, you can't be certain of anything until you see your music on screens. I sang it and walked away. Then, two days before the film's screening, Jigar sir gave me another call to inform me that my voice had been accepted and that my song would be included. The song turned out so beautifully that I was genuinely ecstatic. It has been playing well on Spotify, Instagram and YouTube, trending as the number one song on YouTube. Being a part of such a popular song this year makes me very happy, and I want to thank Sachin-Jigar for the chance," shares Rupali.

She performs live all over the world and has previously been the voice behind several independent songs, including *Sorry*, *Superstar* and *Di Ye Dilbaro*, to mention a few. She has also performed her own songs for Himesh Reshammiya! Accordingly, she stated, "The song plays during the credits, right at the end, when people are eagerly anticipating it and hankering after it. It appears at the ideal time and is positioned perfectly throughout the film. Everyone wants to try

the hook step since it's so good and catchy. In the theatre, I even witnessed audience members performing the hook step. I thought that was hilarious!"

You don't need to do a lot of promotion for a song this popular. Social media's influence has made platforms so widespread that everyone can hear about it. You can hear it playing in cars, restaurants, radio stations and on social media if it's the top trending song. Everyone had heard it by then, despite Rupali's lack of promotion! Regardless of whether a song is tier 1, tier 2, or tier 3, social media's value lies in its ability to reach every city. It is heard by all. These platforms are quite helpful; they enable these singers to connect with a larger audience.

"As you pointed out, *Jogan and Tere Bin Jeena Kya* are only two samples of the diversity in my work; the three songs I've written are all quite distinct from one another. Being able to perform for the renowned composer M M Keeravani sir on his romantic song *Tere Bin Jeena Kya* is a huge opportunity for any singer. Given that I sang it with Vishal Mishra, who is equally well-known for his romantic songs, I am incredibly appreciative of the opportunity. Then there was the focused, Sufi-sounding song *Jogan for Good Luck Jerry*, which featured Jhanvi Kapoor. My latest energetic dance performance is a duet with Pawan Singh, a self-made sensation. I've performed songs in a variety of genres and each one is handled differently. Since each song provides a unique educational opportunity, this journey has been immensely enlightening for me. I consider myself really fortunate to have such a wide variety of tunes in my basket," the singer shares, who began performing when she was just four years old. She continues, "Being a Punjabi girl, the majority of my independent work has mostly focused on Punjabi music, with an emphasis on the songs' playful taunting and Punjabi lyrics. Since I have a lot of creative flexibility, I have primarily performed independent Punjabi music. I was free to do as I pleased, so I did Punjabi when I felt like it. I've largely heard Hindi music in Bollywood, although some have a slight Bhojpuri influence. The song has a really Desi vibe, even if the words are in Hindi. I'm happy I concentrated on Punjabi and I've been able to independently produce the music I wanted to do. Bollywood, on the other hand, has introduced me to a wide range of music, which has helped me realise my versatility.

Okay, I can do this too! I've discovered."

This position has advantages and disadvantages. Rupali think it's critical to change with the times. "This strategy is effective, so we must work hard to increase our own numbers and figure out how to reach more people. Numbers aren't everything; people with high numbers can efficiently promote their music and give what listeners want to hear. I think there's nothing wrong with that. I'm a singer with sixteen years of classical music training, but I can't hold it against people who succeed without it. They are also putting in a lot of effort and successfully reaching a large audience. I find no problem with this relationship because I want people to hear my music and value their opinions," added Rupali, who has spent several years studying classical music under her guru maa,

Nidhi Narang from 'Agra Gharana'. However, reality shows have had a big impact on her career. "If you go back eight or ten years, reality shows were the main way for any singer to get noticed," she says. "Independent music didn't have as much room at the time. In 2016, I competed in *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa*, where I advanced to the finals and amassed a sizable fan base and reputation. People still remember me from that show and I gained a lot of notoriety as my Instagram following exploded overnight. In 2021, I participated in and won the *Indian Pro Music League*. I then got the chance to judge *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa*, which was a unique experience because I was judging the same show on which I had competed. I developed a unique bond with each competitor that took the stage as a result. I would want to attribute a lot of my professional success to my involvement in reality programs thus far."

She's a huge fan of EDM. As a Punjabi girl, she frequently selects Punjabi folk tunes; therefore, she loves the notion of fusing them with EDM to create fusion music. To develop this blend, she collaborated closely with her music producer, which produced a novel sound. "The monotony of traditional folk music, which has long been popular in Punjab, is broken up by this method. We produce something fresh and engaging by fusing lively EDM with traditional folk music. I enjoy creating this type of fusion music myself and I intend to keep experimenting with it in the future. Although I understand that the music I want to make isn't always commercial and that people frequently prefer alternative types, I still want to experiment with that fusion sound. Usually, they would rather sing something different, which may not be my favourite. But let's face it, money matters, so I make an effort to keep things in balance."

Her career has been going great overall. She has been learning a great deal and realising her own potential. She considers herself lucky to be receiving such high-caliber tunes and to benefit greatly from each one. One day, she hopes to perform for A.R. Rahman. He was a guest on one of the *Indian Pro Musical League's* shows, giving her the chance to sing in front of him. He gave Rupali a lot of appreciation after she sang one of his own songs, *Raanjhanaa*, *Maahi Ve*. "I will never forget that evening; witnessing his amazement was genuinely unique." She felt just that way. She still looks forward to the day when his office calls and invites her to work together. "I'm dying to collaborate with him as an artist, and I am trying to make it happen. I hope it happens quickly!"



Rupali Jagga, the talented singer who has taken the nation by storm with her electrifying rendition of *Chumma*, shares her inspiring story of passion, perseverance and creative expression in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*



# INDIA EYE RIGHT SELECTION CALLS TO COUNTER NEW ZEALAND

PTI ■ PUNE

Jolted by an unexpected loss on home turf, star-heavy India will look for right balance in the line-up to counter-attack against a spunky New Zealand in the crucial second Test beginning here on Thursday.

After being shot out for an embarrassing 46 in the first innings at Bengaluru, India's resolute show in the second innings could not prevent an eight-wicket pounding which saw the top-ranked team in the World Test Championship table dropping points even though it continues to hold the top spot.

Winning the next two Tests will be first priority for Rohit Sharma and his men before they hit the Australian shores for a five-Test affair next month.

With India in a spot of bother, focus has undeniably been on the nature of the pitch here at the MCA Stadium here. It does not have grass cover and is composed of black soil to negate the bounce which New Zealand extracted in Bengaluru.

India's free-flowing batters cut a sorry figure when William O'Rourke and the seasoned duo of Matt Henry and Tim Southee served a wake up call which no one saw coming on a pace-friendly track that was admittedly misread by Rohit despite overcast conditions.

Preparing a rank turner could be one way out of the mire but it has backfired on India twice in the past.

Australia hammered them by a monumental 333 runs here eight years ago while the same team handed a nine-wicket defeat to them in Indore last year. With Shubman Gill priming for a comeback, one among KL Rahul and Sarfaraz Khan will have to make way. Coach Gautam Gambhir has expressed his desire to give the latter a long rope but Sarfaraz has made a strong case with his second innings 150 in Bengaluru.

One could say a big score for each of the two seniors, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, is around the corner. The latter, especially, would be keen to draw from his 254 not out here in 2019-20, which paved the way for an innings and 137-



run thrashing of South Africa. By his own lofty standards, Yashasvi Jaiswal endured twin failures in the Bengaluru Test and the young batter looked to iron out his flaws when he had multiple stints in the nets.

As much as the Indian camp values Rahul's credentials in Test cricket, the right-handed batter hasn't looked his best and runs haven't come off his bat on a consistent basis.

The Karnataka batter is locked in the fight for a spot against a red-hot Sarfaraz, who followed his 222 not out in the Irani Cup for Mumbai with a superlative 150 in Bengaluru, helping India fight against all odds.

Rishabh Pant kept wickets for a short period towards end of India's training session on Tuesday but it remains to be seen if he is 100 per cent fit to endure match workload.

India's perennial problem of plenty also goes along with ensuring their players are adequately rested as well as primed for future challenges, but on these counts it is unlikely that Jasprit Bumrah will get some time off given a series-leveling win is much-needed here.

However, with Mohammed Siraj enduring a "wickets-drought" as assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate put it, there could be a possibility of Akash Deep coming back into the fold. He too had a long batting stint in the nets here on Tuesday.

Ravichandran Ashwin will look to make the most of what will be on offer over the next five days, with Ravindra Jadeja in tow.

The addition of Washington Sundar, who can spin the ball away from New Zealand's southpaws in captain Tom Latham, Devon Conway and the immensely talented Rachin Ravindra, would also bolster India's batting.

On their part, New Zealand have done fairly well given the absence of Kane Williamson from two of the three Tests on this tour. Will Young appeared resolute in the middle-order which features Ravindra's brilliance.

New Zealand will, however, expect more off Daryl Mitchell and Tom Blundell's bats and at the same time want the others to try and emulate Southee's feats in the first innings of the opening Test.



## Pakistan retain spin heavy team for third and final Test against England

AP ■ RAWALPINDI PAKISTAN

Pakistan has retained its spin-heavy team for Thursday's series-deciding third Test against England as both sides anticipate another dry wicket that will suit the slow bowlers.

The groundsmen have been trying to dry out the track for the last four days, with the help of industrial-sized fans and outdoor heaters, to fulfil the wish of Pakistan skipper Shan Masood to nullify England's aggressive batters.

Left-arm spinner Noman Ali and off-spinner Sajid Khan claimed all 20 England wickets in the second test, on a recycled wicket in Multan, to level the series at 1-1.

England had won the series opener by an innings after it posted a record-breaking 823-7, with Harry Brook scoring a triple century and Joe Root making a career-best 262.

The third specialist slow bowler, leg-spinner Zahid Mahmood, bowled six wicketless overs in England's first innings, and was not even required in the second innings as the visitors folded for 144 against Ali and Khan to lose the second test by 152 runs.

"It (the wicket) is very dry with not a lot of grass on it," Pakistan head coach Jason Gillespie said on Wednesday. "We probably expect it to

favor the slower bowlers." The toss could again play a vital role, with the spinners expected to dominate the batters as the game goes on.

"It (the toss) is a 50-50 call, you always want it to go your way," Gillespie said. "Both teams will have that mindset but, yeah, we'll see."

The wicket has encouraged England to recall leg-spinner Rehan Ahmed as its third specialist slow option to go with Jack Leach's left-arm spin and the off-spin of Shoaib Bashir.

"Who knows what's going to happen?" said captain Ben Stokes after England's last training session at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. "It looks a very good wicket at the moment (but) with some cricket on it, it might change. We feel the longer it goes, more spin is going to come into play."

Bashir has replaced Matthew Potts in the England team while Gus Atkinson, who was part of the memorable win by an innings and 47 runs in the first test, will replace rested fast bowler Brydon Carse.

Reverse swing with the old ball might be ineffective, with a greener square on both sides of the wicket.

"The square is very lush and green," Stokes said. "It's going to be hard to manufacture reverse swing. The longer the games goes on, the more spin is going to come in."

## Pant overtakes Kohli in Test rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

Rishabh Pant on Wednesday overtook his superstar India teammate Virat Kohli to reach the sixth spot in the ICC Test rankings for batters.

Fresh from a counter-attacking 99 in the second innings of the opening Test against New Zealand, Pant gained three spots in the rankings while Kohli, who made a fluent 70 in Bengaluru, dropped a place to be eighth.

Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal remains India's highest ranked batter at four. India captain Rohit Sharma dropped two places to be joint 15th alongside Sri Lanka's Dimuth Karunaratne. England star Joe Root



maintains a healthy lead at the top of the charts.

New Zealand duo of Rachin Ravindra (up 36 places to 18th) and Devon Conway (up 12 spots to 36th) also made good ground on the latest list

for Test batters, while teammate Matt Henry (up two rungs to ninth with a new career-high rating) was the big winner in bowlers' category.

Henry picked up eight

wickets during the Black Caps' drought-breaking eight-wicket victory over India in Bengaluru, while teammate Will O'Rourke (up two spots to 39th) was also rewarded for his seven scalps from the same match.

Pakistan spinner Noman Ali was re-instated at 17th on the rankings following his 11 wickets across two innings against England, while teammate Sajid Khan gained 22 places to move to 50th after he was adjudged Player of the Match in the same contest.

India's pace spearhead remains at the top of the bowlers' rankings followed by teammate R Ashwin. Retaining the seventh spot, Ravindra Jadeja is another Indian in the top-10.



## Mehidy Hasan's 87 not out rescues Bangladesh from innings defeat

AP ■ MIRPUR, DHAKA (BANGLADESH)

Mehidy Hasan's 87 not out helped Bangladesh take an 81-run lead on Wednesday, ending fears of an innings defeat in the opening Test against South Africa.

The battling Mehidy led his side to 283-7 at stumps, a comeback from 112-6 during a third day interrupted by rain and bad light. Nayeem Hasan was also unbeaten on 16.

Mehidy shared a record 138-run stand with debutant Jaker Ali, who made 58 as the hosts wiped out a first-innings deficit of 202.

Bangladesh was bowled out for 106 in its first innings before South Africa replied with 308, thanks to Kyle Verreynne's 114.

Fast bowler Kagiso Rabada (4-35) and left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj (3-105) then shared seven wickets as South Africa put Bangladesh under even more pressure.

Rabada used the early moisture of the pitch expertly after Bangladesh began the day on 101-3. He pegged back the hosts with two wickets in three balls in the fourth over.

Opener Mahmudul Hasan edged to the first slip on 40 after being undone by extra bounce.

Mushfiqur Rahim, who became the first Bangladesh batter to reach 6,000 Test runs on Day 2, paid the price for a lack of foot movement as Rabada's fuller-length delivery skidded through to rattle the stumps when he was on 33.

Maharaj removed Liton Das for 7 and South Africa sensed a chance to wrap up an early victory. But, Mehidy and Jaker then survived a probing spell from Maharaj and Rabada.

Mehidy hit Dane Piedt for a six over his head and drove Maharaj to deep mid-off for a single to raise his ninth Test half-century from 94 balls.

Maharaj finally broke through by trapping Jaker lbw to end their partnership, which was Bangladesh's highest against South Africa for any wicket.

Mehidy, who hit nine fours and one six in 171 balls, continued to frustrate South Africa with support from Nayeem before bad light brought a premature end to the day's play.

## India is a powerhouse that don't want to bow down: Brett Lee



PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australian speedster Brett Lee has described the Indian team as a "powerhouse that don't want to bow down" to anyone, cautioning his compatriots who will take on the Asian giants in an upcoming five-match Test series.

Lee's remarks came after India's eight-wicket defeat to New Zealand in the

Bengaluru Test earlier this week.

India, aiming to qualify for their third successive final in the World Test Championship, will be travelling to Australia next month to defend the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

"This day and age, India is a powerhouse that don't want to bow down. They know how to win, and they know they can beat Australia; they know they can beat the Kiwis. They know they can beat anyone

on any given day," Lee told 'Fox Cricket'.

Commenting on India's outing in the Bengaluru Test against the Kiwis, Lee felt that they might have got influenced by 'Bazball', leading to playing some loose shots.

"India just didn't go into their shell. Maybe it's Bazball brushing off on other cricketers around the world," he noted. "I know that India won't be proud of the way they played. They played some pretty loose shots."

India's decision to bat first in overcast conditions raised eyebrows, as the team was bowled out for 46 in the first innings of the opening Test, its lowest Test score at home.

Lee said the side needs to "weigh up the risk factor" and added the Indians should have judged the conditions better.

"But, you've got to weigh up the risk factor as well. There are times when you've got to go, 'Okay, well, maybe the big shots aren't working today.' 'Maybe, just rein it in a little bit. I don't think they sort of summed up the conditions as quickly as what they should have done,' Lee said.

India play two more Tests against New Zealand -- Pune (October 24-28) and Mumbai (November 1-5) -- before leaving for Australia.

# On utilising spinners well in second Test against India: Latham

PTI ■ PUNE

Skipper Tom Latham on Wednesday said New Zealand will head into the second Test against India without any preconceived ideas about a spin-friendly surface, focusing instead on utilising their bowling options effectively.

New Zealand hold a vital 1-0 lead after an eight-wicket win in the opening Test in Bengaluru.

The Kiwis bowled India out for their lowest total of 46 on home soil in the Bengaluru Test. Despite a second innings fightback from the hosts, New Zealand held their nerves to record their first win in India in 36 years.

"Whatever we're presented with, for us it's about trying to adapt as quick as we can," Latham told the media ahead of the second Test here.

"If it is going to be a wicket that turns a little bit more, then we've got four spinners in our line-up, that will play into their hands, but it's (also) about to try not to go into the game with too many

preconceived ideas," he added.

Latham admitted he has given thought to how to utilise the spinners at their disposal. New Zealand have Ish Sodhi, Mitchell Santner and Ajaz Patel among frontline tweakers and Rachin Ravindra and Glenn Phillips also to roll over their arms.

"I obviously had a little bit of a think around what that may look like," he said.

"(We will) try to get a little bit of information from previous games here and also the practice wickets that we're on, will hopefully be something around, or similar to what we're getting," he said.

Latham said New Zealand won't be resting on their laurels of drought-breaking Bengaluru Test win.

"(It is) very special, there is myself, Graham Dowling and John Wright, to be in this position is really special. But for me it was a team effort," he said.

"We celebrated what was a special performance, but our attention (has) turned quickly to this game and we're trying not to rest on what

## NZ MUST AVOID PRECONCEIVED IDEAS



happened last week, (we are) trying to take the confidence from last week and take that into this game and hopefully hit the ground running.

"The confidence that it can bring into a side is probably the most important thing, that we can come over here and we can compete and we can do well," he added.

The opening batter, who took over captaincy before this tour, said his lack of big scores are not too concerning for him.

"For me it's about trying to contribute as best I can in my role, it's not just myself, it's other guys that are just trying to perform their role as best they can and that may look slightly different throughout the test match," he said.

"I've certainly been working hard behind the scenes to get my game where I want it to be. As a batsman it's a really fine line, you can be hitting the ball really well and get a good one, or vice versa, you may not be hitting it so well and get a bit of luck," he added.

Latham said Rachin Ravindra's

approach at different stages of his fabulous 134 in Bengaluru showed the right way to balance the elements of attack and defence in Indian conditions.

"The way he played throughout that whole innings was outstanding, (if) you take the situations of some of the partnerships that he was involved in, the way he played was really important," he said.

"He put the foot down a little bit, played a little bit more attacking at certain stages and then obviously sucked up a little bit of pressure at times as well. We saw that in the second innings too," he said.

Latham said Kane Williamson, who has missed the first two of the three Tests on this tour, is working closely with the medical team.

"It's a day-by-day thing with Kane, fingers crossed that he will be up and ready. He's obviously working closely with the medical team back home," he said.

"It's just a bit of a waiting game, hopefully we'll find out a little bit more after the Test," Latham added.

**Narudi Brathuku Natana is all set to hit the cinemas on Friday, featuring Shiva and Nithin in lead roles. As both the actors are excited to don the hat of the protagonist, they share their experience, journey and more**



## 'SMALL-SCALE FILMS DESERVE MORE SUPPORT FROM INDUSTRY'

SURESH KAVIRAYANI  
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

Actor Shiva has been a part of several films; *Tholi Prema*, *Majili*, *Hit 2* and *Bhaje Vaayuvagam*, to name a few. And here he is now playing the lead role in the upcoming film *Narudi Brathuku Natana*. "Director Rishikesh first showed me a draft of the story and post that, I was keen on acting in this film," said Shiva about the film. Hailing from Bheemavaram and passionate about films, Shiva entered the industry at the age of 18. "Now, I have completed 12 years of my journey into films. I am now playing a lead. I always believe in hard work and honesty. I believe that leads me to get into good work," said Shiva about playing the lead.

On the other hand, the film also has Nithin, a Malayali who has worked in an IT firm in Singapore. "I left the job because I fascinated about acting in films. My first film was *A: Ad Infinitum* and while working for that film, I learned Telugu while communicating with the office assistant," he said about his journey. He is married and has a daughter

too. He then acted in *Ambajipeta Marriage Band* and *Prasanna Vadanam*. "I have performed negative roles in those two films, but in this *Narudi Brathuku Natana* I play a positive character," said Nithin about his role.

Though the film had finished long ago, however, there were no takers. "We went to every production house, but no one showed interest to back up our film. We even sent our film to many film festivals, where it did win many awards and was also nominated nearly in 60 film festivals. We explained to many of them that our film has won many awards, but some of them asked, 'is there an item song?' So, finally, TG Vishwaprasad has seen the film, liked it and he wanted to support us." He added that it is a good sign that a production house like People Media Factory backed a small film. "The film industry needs small films also and they should be encouraged; the industry does not thrive only on big films."

Talking about the story, they said it is all about a person's life. "I play the character of Satya, a rich kid, who wanted to become an actor, but only money can't make him an actor and he needs to know the emotions, the struggles of an aspiring actor. So, an incident leads

him to land in Kerala, which he doesn't know anything, language, place and then met his friend Salman played by Nithin there," said "It's a failed actor's story and he randomly ended up in Kerala and how he survived and what happened in the end," said about the film's story in a simple way.

So, why a Kerala backdrop? "We can put Tamil or Karnataka, but somehow we can manage those languages, whereas Malayalam is a bit difficult, so we have taken the backdrop of Kerala. Apart from the director and I, most of the actors and technicians are Malayalam," said Shiva. He shared an incident that happened to him and the film unit was all worried. "I was travelling to Madhapur in night, when I met with a major accident. I was into Coma and doctors said that I may not recover in six months, but like a miracle, after the thirteenth day of my surgery, I woke up and after two weeks I went to shoot for this film," recalls Shiva about his accident.

Nani's film *Pilla Zamindar* is similar to lines where the spoiled rich kid went to a college. "This is completely different and this is a feel good film and there is more human angle in it," said the lead stars. Both are confident that this film will give actors

like them more work. "If people back up films like this, many more actors and technicians are going to be introduced to the industry and also people get work and many families survive," said both.

The title of this film is interesting. First it was titled as *Kamal* and then changed to *Nata Samrat*. "We couldn't get both the titles, but now we got *Narudi Brathuku Natana* which we feel apt for this film," said both. Actually this title is also with Sithara Entertainment production house, which they registered for *DJ Tilla* film. "When we requested, the production house gave it to us," they said. They sent it to film festivals with the *Samrat* title, but now they are releasing in theaters with the changed title *Narudi Brathuku Natana*.

Talking about their upcoming projects, Shiva said he is back from America after working on three projects. "I completed shooting for three films in the USA and one film is Telugu and English," he said. He also acted in the recently released web film *Balu Gani Talkies*. Nithin is doing a Raj Tarun film where he is playing a police character. "I am also playing a role in Ravi Teja's upcoming film and a small character in *Thandel*," said Nithin. He is also doing a Malayalam film.

**PRABHAS' B'DAY SPECIAL CINESTA**

## Salaar 2 shooting begins; Raja Saab poster out



To celebrate Prabhas' birthday, the makers of his next movie *Salaar: Shouryaanga Parvam*, the second installment of the previous *Salaar* part one, revealed a fresh update. It was stated that Prabhas has begun filming for the highly anticipated sequel after pausing to celebrate his birthday.

Hombale Films produces the film, directed by Prashanth Neel. In addition to Prabhas, Malayalam actor Pridhiviraj Sukumar also has a significant role in this sequel. The makers revealed that the current filming plan is scheduled for 20 days, with the team hoping to film intense sequences.

In the continuation, the narrative delves further into the complex themes of power dynamics, vengeance and seeking salvation where the initial film concluded. As tensions rise and alliances are put to the test, viewers can anticipate an exciting journey packed with surprising turns. The plot will delve into the characters' reasons for their actions and the results they face, presenting an exhilarating story blending intense drama with adrenaline-inducing action scenes.

However, the creators of his other film *Raja Saab* also launched a brief motion poster during the same event. Maruthi directed the horror comedy film. Prabhas is venturing into the horror-comedy genre for the first time, generating high levels of excitement.

The motion poster, lasting two minutes, starts with an eerie rendition of 'Happy Birthday' being played on a piano in the heart of a forest. Next, a mysterious character wanders through the forest before the audience is taken to an old palace, where Prabhas' appearance is revealed. Prabhas emits a strong and nostalgic aura while dressed as royalty and smoking a cigar. The slogan 'Horror Is The New Humour' is also highlighted on the poster. The movie will be out on April 10, 2025 and is made by People Media Factory production company.



## ANU EMMANUEL PAIRED WITH SHIVA KANDUKURI

Actress Anu Emmanuel has signed a new film and she is pairing opposite Shiva Kandukuri. The film's shooting is going on in London and it is directed by Andrew Babu, who is making his debut as director. He is known as a cinematographer and now turned as director with this film. It is interesting to see after a long gap, Anu Emmanuel is doing a film.

Her last Telugu film was *Ravanaasura* opposite Ravi Teja which bombed at the box-office and later her Tamil film *Japan* opposite Karthi was also not done

well. These films released last year and now, the actress signed this Telugu film.

The makers announced that the film is not titled yet, but the story is going to be a thriller. "It is like an edge of the seat thriller and the shooting is going on at some beautiful locations in London," say the makers in a press release. London Ganesh and Dr Praveen Reddy Vootla are the producers. Viva Harsha, Vennela Kishore, Shakalaka Shankar and few other actors are participating in the shooting.

## Sivakarthiskeyan & Sai Pallavi capture hearts in *Amaran* trailer

The wait is finally over! The much-anticipated trailer for *Amaran* has released on Wednesday, offering audiences across India a powerful first look at its emotional and stirring narrative. Starring Sivakarthiskeyan and Sai Pallavi in lead roles, *Amaran* promises to be a visually stunning and emotionally charged cinematic experience. This film is set to hit theatres this Diwali, on October 31, 2024. The trailer opens with a powerful line from an officer telling Major Mukund, "You do not choose 44 RR, but 44 RR chooses you," setting the tone for the heroism that is set to unfold. Glimpses of Major Mukund's (Sivakarthiskeyan) personal life are revealed, including his family's reaction to his decision to join the army and the love story between him and Indhu (Sai Pallavi).

Action-packed sequences show Major Mukund perfectly portrayed by Sivakarthiskeyan in combat, refusing to retreat when his superior asks him to return, responding with, "I'll save every life I can and come back, sir." Indhu's voice resonates with pride as she says, "I am proud of him being an army officer and me being an army wife." In a gripping moment, Sivakarthiskeyan's character poignantly declares, "This is the face of the Indian army," showcasing his unwavering resolve. Inspired by the real-life events

documented in Shiv Aroor and Rahul Singh's book *India's Most Fearless*, *Amaran* is a heartfelt tribute to a true hero.

The trailer has been released in multiple languages, with notable figures amplifying its reach: Nani is releasing it in Telugu, Tovino Thomas in Malayalam, Shiva Rajkumar in Kannada and Aamir Khan in Hindi. The trailer ends on an emotional note, with Major Mukund's daughter asking Indhu, "You told me appa will come for my birthday, will he come?" Directed by Rajkumar Periasamy and produced by legendary actor Kamal Haasan, alongside R Mahendran and Sony Pictures International Productions, *Amaran* tells the heartwarming and inspiring story of Major Mukund Varadharajan and his wife Indhu. The film captures the essence of their journey—love, sacrifice and the immense personal losses faced during Major Varadharajan's courageous service to the nation.



## Suriya talks about *Singham Again*

The upcoming movie *Kanguva* starring Tamil actor Suriya is set to be released on November 14. This movie, directed by Siva, is a major investment in Suriya's filmography. Disha Patani stars as the lead actress while Suriya plays a dual role in the film. The actor has begun promoting the film in Mumbai.

The actor gained popularity for his role as a police officer in the *Singham* series. Hari, the director, has worked on three films with Suriya playing the role of Singham. The movies have been translated into Telugu and the initial one is replicated in Hindi as *Singham* under the direction of Rohit Shetty. The director of Hindi origin initiated follow-up films to his *Singham* titled *Singham Returns* and *Simba*. The director is currently developing another police-themed story titled *Singham Again*.

The movie features a large ensemble cast comprising of Ajay Devgn, Ranveer Singh, Akshay Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Deepika Padukone and numerous other actors. Recently, Suriya, famous for his *Singham* movie series in

the South, expressed his opinions on the upcoming Hindi film.

During the media session, Suriya was questioned about the likelihood of the two *Singham* characters joining forces and whether there had been talks about him entering the universe.

"Ajay sir has been asking why you're not doing the next sequence, why you're not going ahead, but it has to come again from Hari sir (Director). I would love to do it, but just because people have loved *Singham* and just because of the title, we don't want to put another one, just don't want to go ahead with the numbers," said Suriya.

"I'm very happy for the franchise and we loved *Simba* and looking forward to the latest one (*Singham Again*). It is interesting to see the Ramayana and *Singham* sequences being on 'what if this happens'. All the best to the team and very happy the way they've taken it forward," said Suriya.

