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**'Adapt to rapidly evolving geopolitical threats'**

**5**

**LOOKING FORWARD TO ADVANCING EU-INDIA FTA TALKS: PEDRO**

**8**

**ANR award is crown jewel of my cinematic journey: CHIRANJEEVI**

**12**

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

**Drug tests must be conducted on all BRS MLAs and the karyakartas who defend them. BRS leaders are coming out and speaking loudly whenever drug rings are busted. We demand that the police should conduct drug tests on all BRS leaders and karyakartas. The BRS should be ashamed to support Raj Pakala and Vijay Madduri**

**- Anil Kumar Yadav, Rajya Sabha member**

**P4**



# Lokesh meets Satya Nadella

## SEEKS MICROSOFT CEO'S HELP FOR DIGITAL GOVERNANCE

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA/REDMOND (US)**

Minister for IT and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, has sought the active cooperation of Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella in advancing digital governance in Andhra Pradesh.

Currently visiting the United States, Lokesh has been engaging with top executives from leading IT firms. As part of his mission, he met Nadella at Microsoft's headquarters in Redmond, Washington, and extended an invitation to visit Andhra Pradesh. Nadella has personal ties to the state, with his father having served in the Andhra Pradesh cadre of the IAS in various key positions.

During the meeting, Nadella highlighted Microsoft's achievements as a global leader in software, cloud computing, and enterprise technology. He mentioned that as of October 2024, Microsoft's market cap stood at \$3.1 trillion, and the company posted a record profit of \$211.9 million in the 2023 fiscal year.

Lokesh recalled how Hyderabad emerged as an IT hub under the leadership of Chandrababu Naidu, then Chief Minister of united Andhra Pradesh. He stated that Naidu, now in his fourth term as Chief Minister, is determined to transform Andhra Pradesh into an IT capital.

- Nadella highlights Microsoft's leadership in software, cloud computing, and enterprise technology, with a \$3.1 trillion market cap.
- Lokesh notes Hyderabad's transformation into an IT hub under Chandrababu Naidu and plans to develop AP as an IT capital.
- New IT hubs and innovation parks are being set up with hopes for Microsoft's global-level support.



Lokesh highlights AP's potential as a regional hub for cloud infrastructure and data centres.

- Lokesh proposes AI integration in agriculture to bring transformative reforms to the sector.
- He seeks Microsoft's help in developing smart city programmes, with plans to make Amaravati the AI capital of India.
- Nadella assures full support for Andhra Pradesh's digital transformation and AI ambitions.

### IT Minister invites Adobe to set up R&D centre in AP

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA/REDMOND (US)**

Minister for IT and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, currently on a visit to the United States, has urged Adobe's Chief Executive Officer, Shantanu Narayen, to establish a research and development (R&D) centre in Andhra Pradesh. Lokesh invited Adobe to partner with the State in smart governance and AI-driven solutions.

The minister's visit to the US aims to attract investments, and as part of this mission, he met Narayen in San Francisco.

During their meeting, Lokesh sought Adobe's cooperation in enhancing digital technology skills among the youth. "With the Chief Minister's vision, Andhra Pradesh offers an investor-friendly environment and is an ideal destination for investments," he said.

Continued on Page 2

# ROW OVER FAMILY ASSETS

## Vijayamma urges public to stop denigrating her kids

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

In an open letter to the public on Tuesday, YS Vijayamma, wife of late YS Rajasekhara Reddy, urged people to refrain from making disparaging remarks about her children, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and YS Sharmila, and the family's internal matters, particularly on social media.

Vijayamma expressed deep anguish over recent developments, saying, "What is unfolding is deeply painful. My family, once filled with happiness, seems to be facing turmoil. It hurts to see rumours and false narratives spreading unchecked, causing damage." She appealed to supporters of her

late husband, reminding them of their love for the family. "If you truly care for us, please stop these unnecessary comments," she said.

In her letter, Vijayamma addressed the allegations of asset division within the family, clarifying that YSR did not divide the family's wealth during his lifetime. "Some properties were registered in the names of Jagan and Sharmila while they were growing up, but these were not division of assets," she explained.

Referring to the role of YV Subba Reddy and Vijayasai Reddy, she stated that both were closely involved in the family's matters. "Despite knowing the facts, it is painful that untruths are being spoken in public," she added.

Continued on Page 2



**Vijayamma appealed to everyone, especially those on social media, to refrain from spreading falsehoods and sensational stories. "This is a matter between siblings, and they will resolve it. I believe that my children will find peace and understanding," she expressed, ending the letter with the hope that public discussion on the issue would cease.**

### DON'T MISS...

#### Machilipatnam Port works to be...

Minister for Housing and Information & Public Relations K Parthasarathi has announced that the Machilipatnam Sea Port in Nellore district is being developed at a cost of Rs 3,760 crore, with the Machilipatnam Port works expected to be completed by December 2025. In a statement on Tuesday, the Housing Minister revealed that the first phase of the Machilipatnam Sea Port in Krishna district is being carried out at a cost of Rs 5,155 crore, also scheduled for completion by December 2025. Additionally, the Moolapet Sea Port...

-PAGE: 4

#### Indigenous vessel tracking system...

The indigenously developed Vessel Communication and Support System has emerged as a crucial tool in safeguarding fishermen during Cyclone DANA, the government said on Tuesday. The system, which enables real-time tracking and emergency response coordination, successfully guided fishing vessels to safety during the recent cyclonic conditions along the coast. "This represents a significant milestone in maritime safety infrastructure...The response to Cyclone DANA has underscored the..."

-PAGE: 5

#### India fastest growing major...

India is the fastest growing major economy and is likely to become the third largest economy soon, President Droupadi Murmu said on Tuesday. Addressing an event in Delhi, she said the Indian economy had been demonstrating resilience in the face of geopolitical challenges and the country's economy was likely to grow tenfold by 2047. "India is the fastest growing major economy and is likely to become the third largest economy soon," Murmu said. According to the latest World Bank estimate...

-PAGE: 8

#### Maxwell reveals Kohli blocked him...

Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell has revealed that Virat Kohli had blocked him on Instagram after he mocked the Indian batting maestro following his shoulder injury during the 2017 Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Kohli and Maxwell were not the best of friends until the Australian joined IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bengaluru in 2021 for a whopping Rs 14.25 crore. Maxwell said that he tried to follow Kohli on Instagram, only to discover that he had been blocked by the former India...

-SPORTS

### YSRCP protests removal of Ambedkar's name from memorial

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

YSRCP spokesperson Jupudi Prabhakar Rao has condemned the removal of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's name from his statue at Swaraj Maidan in Vijayawada, describing it as a blatant act of disrespect towards the architect of the Constitution.

Speaking to the media at the party's central office, he stated that the TDP coalition government's neglect of the Ambedkar statue and the removal of his name reflects a clear disregard for Ambedkar's legacy and the sentiments of the public.

Prabhakar Rao expressed concerns that this incident is part of a larger conspiracy to replace the statue and transfer the Swaraj Maidan area to the Lulu Group for development purposes. He criticised the government for its inaction, highlighting that when former chief minister YS Jagan's name was also removed from the site, there was no accountability.

He further alleged that leaders from the TDP and Janasena have been supporting anti-Ambedkar policies that align with the BJP, aiming to erase Ambedkar's legacy from public memory. He urged the government to arrest those responsible immediately, warning that if action is not taken, the Ambedkar community would be compelled to respond strongly.



### Bandi Sanjay advocates 'double engine' growth for AP

**PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM**

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, highlighted Andhra Pradesh's growth potential under the 'double engine' government at the 'Rozgar Mela' 8 lakh positions already filled in Visakhapatnam. He emphasised the combined efforts of the central and state governments in driving rapid development, particularly in tourism, leveraging the state's abundant temples and scenic destinations. "With this double-engine government, Andhra Pradesh has the potential to grow at a rate we haven't seen before," Sanjay Kumar said.

government employees, showcasing the government's commitment to job creation.

Sanjay Kumar noted that approximately 10 lakh Central government jobs are being created, with around 8 lakh positions already filled nationwide. "Today, appointment letters are being distributed to 51,000 people nationwide," he shared.

"This is a testament to our Prime Minister's vision of employment and self-reliance for India's youth." India's economic growth under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership has been remarkable, rising from 11th to 5th in global rankings, to reach third by 2028. Sanjay Kumar attributed this to the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" initiative, promoting self-sufficiency across sectors like agriculture and technology.

Continued on Page 2

### Pawan, Anitha focus on Diwali safety

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha met with Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Tuesday to discuss law and order and security arrangements in the run-up to Diwali. The meeting, held at the Deputy Chief Minister's office in Mangalagiri, focused on strategies to safeguard citizens as they prepare for the festive celebrations.

During the discussions, Home Minister Anitha announced the establishment of 185 new fire stations across the state. "These stations will monitor accident-prone areas, and our staff has been directed to remain alert and ready to respond to emergencies," she stated, emphasising the importance of vig-



**"We must educate our citizens on the safe use of green crackers during Diwali, especially given the rising air pollution levels across the nation. - Pawan"**

ilance during the festive season. To combat illegal firecracker manufacturing, facilities have also been set up to enable police and fire services to report suspicious activities through emergency numbers 100 or 101.

Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan

stressed the need for heightened awareness, particularly in the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema District's Mandapeta Mandal, to prevent incidents similar to the explosions that occurred in Edida village last year.

Continued on Page 2

### AP's new Industrial Policy unveiled

**PNS ■ NELLORE**

Industries, Commerce, and Food Processing Minister TG Bharat on Tuesday presented the newly launched Andhra Pradesh Industrial Policy 4.0 during an interactive session with CEOs and senior executives at Sri City, the integrated business hub.

The policy, developed under the guidance of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, aims to place Andhra Pradesh among the world's top investment destinations. The government is targeting investments of 730 lakh crore and \$10 billion in foreign investments over the next five years.



The key focus sectors include MSMEs, electronics, food processing, clean energy, and industrial parks.

Minister Bharat outlined the government's vision to build a globally competitive state by fostering innovation and international partnerships while ensuring sustainable industrial development.

Continued on Page 2

### Punetha appointed Vigilance Commissioner

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

The Andhra Pradesh government has appointed Anil Chandra Punetha as the Vigilance Commissioner for two years.

The official orders for Punetha's appointment were issued on Tuesday. A retired IAS officer of the 1984 batch, Punetha previously served in various key administrative roles.



### Shah launches mobile app for birth, death registration

#### Unveils statue of Sardar Patel

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday launched a mobile application for seamless and hassle-free registration of birth and death at the click of a button.

The Civil Registration System (CRS) mobile app, prepared by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, is expected to significantly reduce the time required for the registration of birth and death.

"Under PM Shri @narendramodi Ji's Digital India vision to integrate technology with governance, launched the Civil Registration System mobile application today. This application will make registra-



tion of births and deaths seamless and hassle-free by allowing citizens to register at any time, from any place, and in their state's official language," Shah wrote on his 'X' handle.

The Union minister also unveiled a statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel here at the office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, also known as the Jangana Bhawan.

### Kapil Dev, CM Naidu discuss new golf course plans

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Former Indian cricket captain Kapil Dev, accompanied by Andhra Cricket Association (ACA) president and Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni), met Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu at his residence in Undavalli on Tuesday. The discussion centred on establishing a golf course in the State and enhancing sports infrastructure.

Chief Minister Naidu expressed his pleasure at meeting the legendary cricketer and Chairman of the Professional Golf Tour of India, posting his thoughts on the meeting on the social media platform X.

During their discussion, they explored ways to expand the sports landscape in Andhra Pradesh, with a particular focus on establishing an international golf club in Amaravati. Naidu also mentioned plans for pre-



mier golf clubs in Anantapur and Visakhapatnam.

"The meeting with Kapil Dev will inspire a passion for golf among our

**ACA president and MP Kesineni Chinni announced plans to develop golf courses in Anantapur, Amaravati, and Visakhapatnam, inviting Kapil Dev to serve as the State's golf ambassador. He also mentioned the establishment of golf driving ranges, with further details to be finalised in upcoming meetings. Additionally, he emphasised plans to nurture AP players for international tournaments and bring cricket opportunities to rural areas.**

youth and encourage the next generation of golfers. The state government is committed to creating more opportunities and facilities for our citizens

across the state. We look forward to collaborating with sports icons to establish Andhra Pradesh as a true hub for sporting excellence," he said.

Following the meeting, Kapil Dev noted CM Naidu's strong interest in sports development, especially golf. As President of the Indian Golf Association, he highlighted that the government will decide on the golf course's location and expressed his vision for a Sports City in Andhra Pradesh. He underscored the growing popularity of golf worldwide and reaffirmed his dedication to promoting the sport.

ACA president and MP Kesineni Chinni announced plans to develop golf courses in Anantapur, Amaravati, and Visakhapatnam, inviting Kapil Dev to serve as the State's golf ambassador. He also mentioned the establishment of golf driving ranges, with further details to be finalised in upcoming meetings. Additionally, he emphasised plans to nurture AP players for international tournaments and bring cricket opportunities to rural areas.



# Family feud may tarnish Jagan's political image

The ongoing family feud over sharing assets among siblings of late Dr. YS Rajasekhara Reddy, if not handled properly by their well-wishers, could take an ugly turn and eventually tarnish the image of his YSR's son and former chief minister of Andhra Pradesh YS Jaganmohan Reddy. It is a different matter that Jagan played it down, calling it 'ghar ghar ki kahani'.

Upon the death of YSR, the family more or less projected Jagan as the head of the business empire with assets running into thousands of crores of rupees. People are not

aware of the assets created by Jagan particularly during the regime of YSR and during his own political journey in the Congress party. According to informed circles, Jagan's growth in the business world has been jaw-dropping and could be compared with that of Dhirubhai Ambani, founder of the Reliance group, who took 35 years to reach the peak stage. For Jagan, it has taken just five years of doing business.

YSR, during his days as Leader of the Opposition in the undivided AP Legislative Assembly, once defended him-

**According to informed circles, Jagan's growth in the business world has been jaw-dropping and could be compared with that of Dhirubhai Ambani, founder of the Reliance group, who took 35 years to reach the peak stage. For Jagan, it has taken just five years of doing business**

self for providing personal surety for a power project being set up by his son. He brushed aside the criticism made by his political detractors at the behest of then ruling party Telugu Desam Party

(TDP). As for the assets of YSR's family and competing claims over them, both his son and daughter are now heading two political parties. The assets acquired by the YSR



**M D RATNA KUMAR**  
Senior Journalist

family during his regime are to be considered combined properties, according to his

daughter Sharmila, who had initially moved to Telangana, after being marginalized in YSRCP, to float a new political party in YSR's name. Her political journey was not smooth in TG. Jagan has been claiming sole rights over the family's assets. The fight between the siblings is now in the open, perhaps hurting YSR's widow Vijayalakshmi.

Among the Telugus, family relations and strong bonds among siblings are valued highly. When a girl gets married and is sent to her in-laws' place; parents as well as brothers get emotionally

described his sister as his 'elder daughter'. Irrespective of the sentiments involved, Jagan will have a bumpy road on the next phase of his political journey in view of the family feud over sharing of YSR's assets. The relations among the siblings will be discussed widely among the people. It will be hard for Jagan to get over the stigma of possible wrongs attributed to him.

As one who had been desirous of ruling the state for decades, Jagan should not have given room for negative shades in his family life. Most people opine that the issue

should have been resolved within the four walls of the home, instead of letting it spill onto the streets.

Generally every leader boasts in the presence of the electorate that they are "like brothers and sisters" to show their commitment to women. They say 'Charity begins at home'. The spirit of this maxim can be imbibed by those who want to prove themselves responsible, particularly while dealing with women members of the family.

Any injustice done to siblings would lead to adverse impression in the public domain. It cannot do any good to Jagan's public life.

## APNRTS-TTD COLLABORATORY INITIATIVE

# 'Srinivasa Kalyanams' in 13 European cities from Nov 9

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for MSME, SERP, and NRI Empowerment & Relations, Kondapalli Srinivas, announced that Srinivasa Kalyanams will be conducted across 13 cities in the UK, Ireland, and Europe between 9th November and 21st December. Organised in collaboration with the Andhra Pradesh Non-Resident Telugu Society (APNRTS), Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), and local cultural bodies, these events will be held on a grand scale.

The minister said the initiative is in response to requests from various Telugu and cultural organisations abroad and intends to bring a spiritual experience to Telugu communities overseas.

On Tuesday, Kondapalli Srinivas released the official poster of Sri Venkateswara Swamy Kalyanams at the Secretariat. The release event saw the presence of event coordinators Surya Prakash Velaga and Venkata Krishna Javaji from Sri Balaji Vedic Centre, Germany, Principal Secretary, GAD (Political), Suresh Kumar, and



MSME Minister Kondapalli Srinivas releasing the poster on 'Srinivasa Kalyanams' at the Secretariat in Velagapudi on Tuesday.

**MSME Minister Kondapalli Srinivas said the initiative is in response to requests from various Telugu and cultural organisations abroad and intends to bring a spiritual experience to Telugu communities overseas.**

APNRTS CEO P. Hemalatha Rani, along with other dignitaries.

Speaking at the event, the minister highlighted that APNRTS has been coordinating with local associations to ensure smooth execution. TTD priests and Vedic scholars will perform the rituals following the Vaikhanasa Agama

tradition. Local voluntary, cultural, and religious groups are also making necessary arrangements.

Kondapalli Srinivas emphasised the state government's efforts to collaborate with TTD and local communities to make the events successful. He expressed confidence that large numbers of devotees would attend and participate. Entry to all events will be free, and everyone is invited to join the celebrations and receive the Lord's blessings.

The minister further mentioned that he will participate in several Srinivasa Kalyanams scheduled between November 9 and December 21.



## APSSDC and OMCAP sign MoU with SM Care GmbH and Hallo Language Centre

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC) and the Overseas Manpower Company of Andhra Pradesh (OMCAP) have entered into a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with SM Care GmbH and Hallo Language Centre. This partnership aims to support the Skill International Programme of the Skills Development and Training Department. The MoU was signed at the APSSDC office in Tadepalli, by APSSDC MD & CEO G. Ganesh Kumar in attendance.

This initiative is designed to train nursing graduates and postgraduates from Andhra Pradesh in German

language proficiency at levels A1, A2, B1, and B2, along with instruction in German etiquette. Upon successful completion of the training, candidates will receive confirmed placements in renowned German hospitals.

APSSDC Executive Director and OMCAP General Manager D. Manohar emphasised the global demand for skilled nurses, particularly in Germany. He explained that the six-month, placement-linked German language training programme aims to prepare Andhra Pradesh's nurses for international language standards, enabling them to secure registered nurse positions in Germany and advance their careers on a global scale.

# PM Modi lays stone for new ESI Hospital in Achutapuram

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually laid the foundation stone for a new Employee State Insurance (ESI) Hospital in Achutapuram today, marking a significant step towards enhancing healthcare facilities for workers in the region. The ceremony was attended by State Labor Minister Vasamsetti Subhash, District Collector Vijaya Krishnan, and local legislator Sandarapu Vijayakumar. The event underscores the government's commitment to the well-being of workers.

Speaking on the occasion, Labor Minister Vasamsetti Subhash highlighted the importance of the project. "This is one of seven ESI hospitals sanctioned for Andhra Pradesh," he said. "Prime Minister Modi's support and Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu's dedication to workers' welfare have made this possible." He added that the Rs 69 crore hospital is expected to be completed within three years. Minister Subhash acknowledged the delays encountered during the initial stages of the project. He attributed these setbacks to the



negligence of the previous administration. "We cannot allow workers' welfare to be an afterthought," he emphasized, citing a recent industrial accident that claimed 15 lives as a stark reminder of the urgent need for such facilities.

District Collector Vijaya Krishnan explained that the 30-bed hospital, spread across two acres, will cater to nearly 37,000 insured workers and 1,40,000 beneficiaries and their families. Its strategic location in the Achutapuram Special Economic Zone will provide healthcare access to workers within a 25-kilometer radius.

Legislator Sandarapu Vijay Kumar elaborated on the range of services the hospital will offer. "It will provide secondary care in multiple spe-

cialties, including medicine, surgery, gynaecology, orthopaedics, paediatrics, and anaesthesia. We are also making provisions for super-specialty medicines," he said. He added that the Labor Department will work closely with companies to ensure that employees and their families are covered under the healthcare scheme.

Residents of nearby areas, such as Parwada, Anakapalli, and Alluri Seetharama Raju, will also benefit from the hospital's services. "For just Rs 120 a year, retired and permanently disabled insured individuals and their spouses will receive medical benefits," Vijayakumar noted, highlighting the government's commitment to affordable healthcare.

## AP's new... Continued from Page 1

He invited feedback from industry leaders, underscoring the importance of business insights for refining policy measures. Dr N Yuvaraj, Secretary, of Industries and Commerce, provided further details of the policy, emphasising initiatives such as Speed of Doing Business to streamline processes, an investor-friendly environment, and the development of advanced infrastructure, including sector-specific industrial parks.

The new policy introduces a multi-tier framework for Private Industrial Parks (PIPs), categorising them by size—ranging from nano to mega parks—and aligning incentives with investment tiers (sub-large, large, and mega projects). Aiming to boost electronics manufacturing and economic growth, the policy prioritises sectors such as MSMEs, green energy, electronics, and food processing. It offers subsidies of up to 40%, a 6% decarbonisation subsidy, and simplified procedures to enhance ease of business. Export targets have been set to double to \$40 billion, focusing on automotive, pharmaceuticals, electronics, drones, IT, and aerospace.

# Cong sees Rs 1,000 cr scam in tie-up with BYJU's Edtech; demands probe

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) vice-president Kolanukonda Shivaji has alleged irregularities worth Rs 1,000 crore in the YSRCP government's tie-up with BYJU's Edtech and called for an investigation.

Addressing the media on Tuesday, Shivaji said the collaboration, intended to provide CBSE syllabus content for students of Classes 8 to 10, failed to yield any tangible benefits. He criticised the previous government for making the deal, claiming it



did not serve students as expected.

Shivaji urged HR Development Minister Nara Lokesh to investigate the

matter and uncover the facts. He accused the former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy of signing an agreement with BYJU's founder, Ravindran, without consulting senior officials or examining similar government partnerships with the edtech company.

The Congress leader recalled that the MoU with BYJU was hastily signed in the presence of Education Department Commissioner Suresh Kumar, BYJU's President Sushmit Sarkar, and the then Education Minister Botsa

Satyanarayana.

On Jagan Reddy's 50th birthday, the government distributed tablet PCs to over 9 lakh students across the state during 2022-23 and 2023-24. Shivaji pointed out inconsistencies, noting that BYJU had announced it provided content free of charge, while Jagan Reddy claimed the state paid ₹778 crore for it.

Alleging that the agreement involved a Rs 1,000 crore scam, Shivaji demanded a comprehensive inquiry to uncover the truth behind the deal with BYJU's Edtech.

## Lokesh meets... Continued from Page 1

"We are setting up new IT hubs and innovation parks, and we look forward to Microsoft's support in taking these hubs to a global level," Lokesh said. Expressing confidence that Andhra Pradesh will soon become a regional hub for cloud infrastructure and data centres, Lokesh underscored the state's strong academic record in producing talented IT and engineering professionals. He urged Microsoft to leverage these resources and focus on nurturing local talent.

Lokesh also emphasised the potential of integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into agriculture, stating that such efforts could bring significant reforms to the sector. He sought Microsoft's support in developing the state's digital governance system and smart city programmes, noting that the government aims to make Amaravati the AI capital of India. "As part of this vision, we will establish an AI University in Amaravati," he added.

In response, Nadella assured full cooperation in promoting Andhra Pradesh as an AI capital and supporting its digital transformation efforts. Kartikeya Mishra and Saikant Varma, members of the state's delegation, were also present at the meeting.

## IT Minister invites Adobe... Continued from Page 1

Narayan highlighted Adobe's leadership in digital media and cloud-based services, mentioning how products like Photoshop and Acrobat have become more accessible. He also noted that Adobe continues to release AI-driven innovations and productivity tools, with a market cap of ₹17.95 lakh crore globally.

Commending Adobe's achievements, Lokesh said the company's expertise aligns with Andhra Pradesh's digital transformation goals. He requested Adobe's support in turning the state into a global technology hub. Narayan assured that a decision regarding investments in Andhra Pradesh will be taken soon after consulting with the company's partners.

## Vijayamma urges public... Continued from Page 1

She disclosed that after Jagan became Chief Minister in 2019, the family decided to formalise the division of assets for practical reasons. "Jagan proposed the division, saying it would be better to sort things out as children grow older and new family members enter our lives," she said. Vijayamma confirmed that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed, detailing each sibling's share.

Vijayamma also praised Sharmila's contribution to Jagan's political success, stating that she worked selflessly to support his rise to power. "As a mother, I see both my children equally. It is difficult to witness any injustice, and I have to stand by the one facing it," she wrote. She urged everyone, especially those on social media, to refrain from spreading falsehoods and sensational stories. "This is a matter between siblings, and they will resolve it. I believe that my children will find peace and understanding," she expressed, ending the letter with the hope that public discussion on the issue would cease. Vijayamma also emphasised her faith, saying, "I trust in the Lord to bring resolution to this family matter."

## Pawan, Anitha... Continued from Page 1

"We must educate our citizens on the safe use of green crackers during Diwali, especially given the rising air pollution levels across the nation," he remarked, urging the community to act responsibly.

The Home Minister echoed this sentiment, highlighting the need for public awareness following the 'Diyajalav' initiative launched by the Union Environment Minister. "We need to sensitise the public in Andhra Pradesh to ensure a safe and eco-friendly festival," she added.

As part of the discussions, Kalyan inquired about the current health concerns in Vizianagaram district regarding diarrhoea cases. Home Minister Vangalapati responded confidently, stating, "Registrations have significantly decreased, and we have the situation under control." Furthermore, she assured that police have been instructed to remain vigilant following recent bomb threats at Tirupati and Visakhapatnam airports. "We will ensure a swift investigation into the chaotic conditions that arose during the YSRCP regime, and those responsible will face the law," Kalyan asserted.

In support of the Home Department's initiatives, the Deputy CM praised their efforts in organising the police martyrs' commemoration week statewide. "The involvement of citizens is crucial in maintaining law and order," Kalyan emphasised, highlighting the importance of community engagement in crime control efforts.

Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha also addressed pressing development needs in her constituency of Payakaraopeta, requesting permission from the forest department to construct an R&B road from Lingapuram to Kodavatiipudi Katta in the Kotavurulla Mandal of Anakapalli district.



## EVM storage facility inspected

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr Nidhi Meena inspected the Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) stored at the Marketing Yard godown in Gollapudi, near Vijayawada.

During her visit, she engaged with officials regarding the sealing of the EVM storage facility, the security measures in place, and the surveillance provided by CCTV cameras. Speaking on the occasion, Nidhi Meena stated that a comprehensive verifica-

tion of the EVMs and VVPATs godowns is being carried out under instructions from the Election Commission of India (ECI). She emphasised the need for security guards to remain vigilant during their duties. The inspection is being conducted with the presence of political party leaders, she added.

The inspection included participation from DRO V Srinivasa Rao, Deputy Tahsilard Madhu Babu of the Collectorate Election Cell, and other officials.

## Bandi Sanjay advocates... Continued from Page 1

Sanjay Kumar also emphasised the Central government's welfare schemes, including Jan Dhan, which facilitates direct benefit transfers, minimizing inefficiencies and reducing losses. He commended the Mudra loans, which have fostered self-employment by providing loans of up to Rs 20 lakh, enabling entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses. The Minister also highlighted major infrastructure initiatives in Andhra Pradesh, such as the Tribal University, AIIMS, and IIT, as well as enhanced medical facilities and ESI hospitals. The Polavaram project has received Rs 13,500 crore, with over Rs 15,000 crore allocated for the development of Amaravati.

"Projects like the Visakhapatnam-Raipur Express Highway and the South Coastal Railway Zone are set to redefine connectivity and opportunities in the region," he noted. "The Center is fully committed to Andhra Pradesh's growth."

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH**  
**RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT**  
**E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE**

No. 60 to 78/2024-25 Date: 26-10-2024

Online tenders are being invited for the maintenance of the 19 CPWS schemes, sanctioned under 15th Finance Commission grant, in undivided Prakasam district for the year 2024-25. Estimated cost of the works: Rs. 1695.90 Lakh. Tender documents can be had from e-procurement platform from 30-10-2024. For details, contact www.tender.e-procurement.gov.in or call 08592-233275.

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RWS and Sanitation Circle, Ongole

R.O.No: 14432/CLM/T/10261-32 Dt: 26.10.2024

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# Modi will make India financially strongest country by 2047: MP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

MP Kesineni Sivanath has praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts in strengthening India's development across key sectors, including education, health-care, industry, and defence. He highlighted the Prime Minister's vision to build a financially robust India, positioning it as one of the leading nations globally under the slogan of 'Vikasit Bharat'. Kesineni expressed confidence that under Modi's leadership, India is on track to become a financially strong country by 2047, the year marking a century of India's Independence.

The Andhra Pradesh Postal Circle organised the Prime Minister Rozgar Yojana (PMRY) Mela Trench-1 (Phase 2) at the Railway Auditorium here on Tuesday. On the occasion, MP Kesineni Sivanath and MLA Bonda Uma Maheswara Rao pre-



MP Kesineni Sivanath presenting job appointment letter to a woman at the Railway Auditorium in Vijayawada on Tuesday

sented appointment letters to those who secured jobs in various Central government departments.

In Vijayawada, as many as 151 candidates got jobs in the Postal Department, 10 in the

Railway, 15 candidates in the School of Planning and Architecture, six in the FCI, and three in the IOB. MP Chinni and MLA Uma congratulated the candidates.

Addressing the gathering, MP Chinni said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has reached a stage of exporting essential goods to other countries. Those who got jobs in various Central

government departments should strive to build a strong country. PM Modi is conducting Rozgar Mela, Skill Development of India and MSME programmes for the 'Yuva Bharat', he added.

Further, he expressed confidence in PM Modi that India would become the financially strongest country in the world by 2047.

The Union government handed over 51,000 appointment letters to the youth across the country and organised Rozgar Melas in 40 different regions. All these youths will get training in around 1,400 courses, marking the inauguration of Karmayogi, he explained.

Andhra Pradesh Postmaster General K Prakas, Vijayawada DRM Narendra Anandarao Patil, Vijayawada Regional Postmaster General Devireddy Sridhar Murthy, and BSNL Manager M Seshachalam were present at the programme.

# Action warned against those who misused SAAP funds

'YSRCP gov't organised 'Aadudam Andhra' event with political intentions'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chairman of the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP), Animini Ravi Naidu, has stated that those who misused the SAAP funds by conducting 'Aadudam Andhra' event will face serious consequences. He added that SAAP will request a Crime Investigation Department (CID) inquiry into the misappropriation of SAAP funds, as they had adequate evidence in this regard.

He alleged that the previous YSRCP government misused around Rs.119 crore targeting the youth as a vote bank. He alleged that the YSRCP government organised the sports event with political intentions, deviating from its original purpose of fostering athletic talent.

SAAP Chairman Naidu addressed a press conference at his chamber on the premises of the Indra Gandhi Municipal Corporation (IGMC) Stadium in Vijayawada on Tuesday. He stated that the 'Aadudam Andhra' event, which usually focuses on promoting sports among children aged 13-16, was instead directed towards individuals over 17 years—specifically, potential first-time voters rather than aspiring athletes. He alleged that YSRCP organised this event for political reasons.

Furthermore, he criticised the previous administration for neglecting sports infrastructure, citing the disrepair of stadiums built at high costs, but left unfinished. Ravi Naidu assured that works on these facilities will be completed promptly and made accessible to athletes.

He also expressed SAAP's commitment to holding the National Games in the State soon, emphasising the need to develop the required facilities. Meanwhile, he suspected



SAAP Chairman Naidu addressed a press conference at his chamber on the premises of the Indra Gandhi Municipal Corporation (IGMC) Stadium in Vijayawada on Tuesday. He stated that the 'Aadudam Andhra' event, which usually focuses on promoting sports among children aged 13-16, was instead directed towards individuals over 17 years—specifically, potential first-time voters rather than aspiring athletes. He alleged that YSRCP organised this event for political reasons

irregularities in the issuance of sports certificates during the YSRCP regime and revealed plans to review them to ensure transparency.

He said that they are planning to introduce digital certificates. He affirmed that SAAP will collaborate with sports associations to identify and support talented athletes for the upcoming National Games.

Later, he announced that to enhance facilities, all District Sports Development Officers (DSDO) should take over all indoor stadiums, Kreedha Vikasa Kendras (KVKs) and other sports stadiums by November. Also, he assured that the SAAP and DSAs will be fully available to players.

He added that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is keen on developing sports infrastruc-

ture in Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Rajamahendravaram, Kakinada, Tirupati and other cities. At the behest of the CM, the State government is developing sports infra across the State to conduct the National Games in the coming days, he added.

The SAAP Chairman said that the 1993 batch coaches' issue is under the purview of the court and after the verdict, their issue would be resolved. Similarly, outsourced coaches would get prominent priority in the coming days, he assured.

Naidu said that the SAAP would take over the Vidyadharapuram stadium in Vijayawada after holding discussions with the Municipal Department. SAAP would develop the stadium into a 'multi-purpose' one, he explained.

# GVMC bags award for excelling in PM SVANidhi Scheme

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) has earned accolades at the state level for its exemplary work in implementing the PM SVANidhi Scheme for the 2023-24 period. This achievement was acknowledged in an award ceremony held on Tuesday at Tummalapalli Kalakshetram in Vijayawada, where GVMC Commissioner Dr P Sampath Kumar accepted the award from the Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister (MAUD) P. Narayana.

According to GVMC's Urban Community



Development (UCD) Project Director PM Sathyaveni, the recognition comes as a result of the consistent efforts and dedication of GVMC's officers and employees who, under the Commissioner's guidance, have effectively facilitated the PM Swaniidhi scheme. "The GVMC team has worked tirelessly to ensure smooth processing of over 20,697 applications in three phases, providing crucial financial support to local street vendors," Sathyaveni shared.

Dr Sampath Kumar expressed pride in GVMC's achievement, stating, "This award reflects our commitment to empowering street vendors and uplifting the

community. We are honoured to be recognised as the best performer in the implementation of this scheme."

Minister Narayana commended GVMC's efforts, highlighting their role in ensuring that the benefits of the scheme reach the intended beneficiaries.

"GVMC's initiative serves as a model for effective execution of state government programs at the grassroots level," he said.

The award ceremony was attended by several notable officials, including MEPMA Mission Director N Tej Bharat, who lauded the collaborative efforts that contributed to this accomplishment.

# Minister reviews steps to tackle Excise Dept's challenges

'YSRCP gov't undermined the entire system by dividing department into two'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Minister for Mines and Excise Kollu Ravindra held a review meeting with officials from Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Anakapalli, Manam, and Alluri Seetharamaraju districts at the Visakhapatnam Zilla Parishad Office on Tuesday, to discuss steps to tackle the Excise Department's challenges. Ravindra expressed satisfaction with reinstating the Excise Department within two months of taking office.

"The previous YSRCP government undermined the entire system by dividing the Excise Department into two to facilitate their irregularities," Ravindra stated. He acknowledged irregularities in liquor production and sales over the past five years and pledged action against those involved.

Ravindra noted Andhra Pradesh's revenue shortfall



compared to Telangana, attributing it to the previous government's irregularities. "In 2019, Andhra Pradesh's revenue was only Rs 4,000 crore less than that of Telangana. However, by 2024, the shortfall of Rs 42,000 crore in revenue compared to Telangana is attributed to the irregularities of the previous government."

Despite challenges, Ravindra commended the

department's efforts. "The allotment of liquor shops has been completed with utmost transparency. The nearly 90,000 applications received serve as evidence of our efficiency." He inspected the Excise Department's laboratory at Andhra University, emphasising quality control.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Regional Fire Officer Hanumanth Rao said: "A total of 536 applications were submitted for setting up cracker stalls. After careful evaluation, we approved 510, rejected 10, and 16 are still under review."

"Each approved stall must comply with strict safety guidelines, requiring the use of non-combustible materials for construction and the mandatory provision of fire extinguishers, sand-filled buckets, and water drums," he added.

The approved stalls are strategically dispersed across the city: 90 at the Andhra University (AU) main

# GVMC enforces strict safety steps for Diwali cracker sales

Number of stalls per cluster limited to 50

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) is implementing rigorous safety measures to prevent accidents during the sale and bursting of firecrackers. To ensure public safety, the civic body has capped the number of stalls per cluster at 50.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Regional Fire Officer Hanumanth Rao said: "A total of 536 applications were submitted for setting up cracker stalls. After careful evaluation, we approved 510, rejected 10, and 16 are still under review."

"Each approved stall must comply with strict safety guidelines, requiring the use of non-combustible materials for construction and the mandatory provision of fire extinguishers, sand-filled buckets, and water drums," he added.

The approved stalls are strategically dispersed across the city: 90 at the Andhra University (AU) main



grounds, 60 at the AU helipad grounds, 44 at Anakapalle NTR stadium, 50 at Gajuwaka Adhar grounds, 44 at Malkapuram, 33 at Madhurawada, and 31 at Gopalapatnam, with additional stalls planned for Lankilipalem and Kancharapalem.

"By limiting the number of stalls per cluster to 50, we aim to prevent overcrowding and maintain essential safety standards," Rao explained.

"GVMC officials are actively monitoring each site to ensure strict adherence to safety regulations."

The sale of firecrackers is permitted from October 29-31, with stalls operating from early morning until 10 PM. "We urge the public to exercise caution while purchasing and bursting firecrackers," Rao added. "Adherence to safety guidelines is crucial to prevent accidents and ensure a joyous Diwali for everyone."



# Visakhapatnam's air cargo plans fail to take off

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

For years, political promises have painted a bright future for Visakhapatnam's development, yet the city still cannot export a single tonne of goods internationally by air. The challenge of facilitating air cargo exports has persisted since Purandeshwari's tenure as Union Minister. "Efforts were made by Purandeshwari and former MP Haribabu to address these export hurdles," shared a source, "but logistical barriers remain."

Despite hosting hundreds of industries, including Andhra Pradesh's flourishing seafood sector, which leads India in marine product exports, Visakhapatnam's air cargo capabilities are effectively grounded. Pharmaceuticals are also a major export product from the region. "Visakhapatnam industries are key players in the national export chain, yet all air cargo is routed through other cities," stated a local industry expert.

A significant barrier has been security compliance. The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) in Delhi mandated two years ago that airports independently conduct all cargo security operations after inconsistencies were found with some airlines scanning cargo themselves. This led to halting cargo operations at non-compliant airports, including Visakhapatnam.

However, the Visakhapatnam Airport has since taken steps to align with requirements: necessary scanners, trained personnel, a Drug Control Officer for pharmaceutical exports, and an Animal Quarantine

City hosts hundreds of industries, including Andhra Pradesh's flourishing seafood sector

Officer for marine product exports have all been appointed. Nevertheless, two essential pieces remain missing — specialised lifts for loading cargo onto planes and a designated custodian to secure goods.

"Without these missing components, Visakhapatnam's air cargo cannot take off," explained O Naresh Kumar, vice-president of the AP Air Travellers Association. Kumar recently raised the issue with Civil Aviation Minister Rammohan Naidu.

Local MP Sribharat also relayed the matter to Minister Lokesh during his recent visit. "Minister Lokesh responded immediately, reaching out to senior officials in Delhi," shared a representative from his office. Lokesh has since directed officials to explore the temporary deployment of cargo personnel from Chennai to support Visakhapatnam.

With direct flights to Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand operating 10 times a week through Scoot Airlines and Air Asia, Visakhapatnam has ample potential to export around two tonnes of cargo daily, totaling 80 tonnes a month. Currently, flights are running at 50 per cent capacity. "Using the excess weight capacity for cargo could be a viable solution," noted Kumar.

# VPA celebrates Rashtriya Ekta Diwas with 'Run for Unity'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA) commemorated Rashtriya Ekta Diwas with a spirited 'Run for Unity' event at the CISF Complex in Saligramapuram here on Tuesday, embracing the legacy of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

VPA Chairperson Dr M Angamuthu, who was the chief guest, highlighted Patel's unifying message and vision in his speech. "Today's turnout reflects our commitment to national integrity and our shared responsibility in carrying forward Sardar Patel's vision of a united India," Dr. Angamuthu expressed pride in the participants' enthusiasm.

The event drew VPA officials, CISF personnel, employees, and young athletes. Dr Angamuthu also acknowledged the accom-



plishments of celebrated Olympian Jyothi Yerraji, a former student of Visakhapatnam Port High School, presenting her with a cheque for Rs 5,00,000.

"Jyothi Yerraji embodies the spirit of determination and excellence, making her a beacon of inspiration for youth across the region. VPA is honoured to support her on

her journey as she continues to excel on the world stage," Dr Angamuthu said.

Deputy Chairperson Surgesh Kumar Dubey, Commandant Satish Kumar

Bajpai, CISF, department heads, and young sports enthusiasts were present on the occasion.

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, or National Unity Day, is cele-





# Machilipatnam Port works to be completed by Dec next: Kolusu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Housing and Information & Public Relations K Parthasarathi has announced that the Ramayapatnam Sea Port in Nellore district is being developed at a cost of Rs 3,760 crore, with the Machilipatnam Port works expected to be completed by December 2025.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Housing Minister revealed that the first phase of the Machilipatnam Sea Port in Krishna district is being carried out at a cost of Rs 5,155 crore, also scheduled for completion by December 2025. Additionally, the Moolapet Sea Port in Srikakulam district is being constructed at a cost of Rs 4,362 crore.

Under the Sagarmala project, development works at Kakinada Anchorage Port are being undertaken with an investment of Rs 91 crore, of which Rs 43 crore has been



**In a statement on Tuesday, the Housing Minister revealed that the first phase of the Machilipatnam Sea Port in Krishna district is being carried out at a cost of Rs 5,155 crore, also scheduled for completion by December 2025. Additionally, the Moolapet Sea Port in Srikakulam district is being constructed at a cost of Rs 4,362 crore.**

allocated by the Centre under the Sagarmala scheme and another Rs 43 crore from the Andhra Pradesh Maritime Board (APMB), the Minister asserted.

"The Andhra Pradesh government aims to construct four fishing harbours at a cost

of Rs 1,523 crore in the first phase and six fishing harbours in the second phase at a cost of Rs 1,595 crore. Proposals have been submitted to the Union Minister for Ports and Shipping, S. Sonowal, for the construction of 29 new projects in the state

at a cost of Rs 3,300 crore," Parthasarathi disclosed.

The Minister also noted that the Visakhapatnam Port Authority and the Inland Waterways Authority of India are jointly developing 36 new projects in Andhra Pradesh at a cost of Rs 4,600 crore, which

includes passenger jetties, fishing harbours, and the modernisation of ports.

Minister Parthasarathi acknowledged that Union Minister for Ports and Shipping Sonowal had confirmed that the Machilipatnam Port construction would be completed by December 2025. He highlighted that Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu is personally monitoring the construction works of Machilipatnam Port.

"The construction of a Greenfield Port over 1,145 acres at Manginapudi village in Krishna district was initiated by the then TDP-led government during 2014-19. However, the YSRCP-led government neglected the construction works, causing significant delays. The Naidu-led government is committed to completing the Machilipatnam Port works on schedule," Minister Parthasarathi reiterated.



# Priority for Veligonda project, says Nimmala

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Minister for Water Resources Development Nimmala Ramanaidu has made it clear that the government is giving priority to the Veligonda Project and it is keen to complete it at the earliest.

The Minister accompanied by Ministers Dola Balaveeranjaneeya Swamy, Gottipati Ravi Kumar, MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy and Collector Thameem Ansariya visited the Veligonda project on Tuesday. He inspected the works in the tunnel and the engineers explained to him the progress of the works.

Talking to the media in Markapuram, Nimmala Ramanaidu said that the NDA-led State Government, after the Polavaram project, is giving priority to the Veligonda project.

The Minister said that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu ordered to finalisation of the schedule to provide irrigation and drinking water to the people of the Prakasam district by completing the stalled works like head works, two tunnels, feeder channel and lining in phase-1 of the Veligonda project.

"If the construction of the Veligonda project is completed, 4.5 lakh acres will be irrigated and 22 lakh people will get drinking water. In 1996, the then Chief Minister N

**Talking to the media in Markapuram, Nimmala Ramanaidu said that the NDA-led State Government, after the Polavaram project, is giving priority to the Veligonda project**

Chandrababu Naidu laid the foundation stone for the Veligonda project. The project works will be completed soon," he said, adding that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu will dedicate the project to the people and release water from the project, after its completion.

The then TDP-led government during 2014-19 had allocated Rs 1373 crore for the Veligonda project works of which Rs 1,319 crore had been spent. Unfortunately, the Jagan Reddy-headed government had allocated Rs 3,000 crore for the project works but had spent a paltry Rs 170 crore, the Minister criticized. Many construction works of the Veligonda project remain incomplete due to the indifference of the erstwhile YSRCP government, he lamented.

"Even before completing many works of the project, the then Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy dedicated the project to the people in a hurry, keeping in view the

elections," he slammed. The government has to allocate Rs 980 crore every year for the Veligonda project; construction works by the YSRCP government had allocated only Rs 225 crore during the five-year tenure.

The Minister explained that the head works and wall works of Veligonda project were not yet completed and 1.20 lakh cubic meters of soil had to be removed, adding that during the previous government's tenure, 11 km of lining work took several years and 6.8 km of works are yet to be carried out. The Government had to release Rs 880 crore for the R&R package but the YSRCP government did not release the money, he regretted.

"Under the Veligonda project, 11 villages will be submerged in the backwaters and the villagers to be shifted to the rehabilitation centres after constructing five colonies for them. But the YSRCP government did not take steps to construct the colonies," Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu lashed out.

Minister for Energy Gottipati Ravikumar and Social Welfare Minister Balaveeranjaneeya Swamy also spoke. MLAs Damacharla Janardhan Rao, K Narayana Reddy, BN Vijay Kumar, M Narasimha Reddy, M Ashok Reddy and Lanka Dinakar were among those who accompanied the Minister.

# Collector vows to double farmers' income

PNS ■ PADERU

District Collector AS Dinesh Kumar has emphasized the need for strategic planning to boost agricultural productivity and farmers' income in Paderu district. During a recent meeting with officials from various departments, Kumar stressed the importance of financial upliftment for farmers.



"Our farmers have expressed a strong desire for development, and it is our responsibility to fulfill their aspirations," Kumar said. He questioned the current per capita income of farmers and the specific details of cultivated lands in the district.

Kumar proposed a comprehensive survey of three mandals to gather crucial data on geographical and climatic conditions, water drainage facilities, and other relevant factors. The aim is to develop targeted action plans to double farmers' annual income within the next five years.

"By forming farmer producer associations, we can empower farmers and enhance their income potential," Kumar added. He urged officials to work closely with all agriculture-related departments to achieve this goal.

The meeting was attended by key officials from Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, and Sericulture departments. The collective effort aims to create a more prosperous agricultural future for Paderu district.

# Industrial safety panel draws flak for lack of transparency

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A state government-appointed committee, tasked with revamping industrial safety protocols following a tragic reactor explosion at Essentia AS in Atchutapuram SEZ of Anakapalli district in August, faces fierce criticism from union leaders and safety advocates. The devastating accident claimed 17 lives and left over 30 injured, prompting swift action from the Industries department, which issued a Government Order (GO-51) on September 13, outlining new safety measures and establishing this high-level committee.

However, union leaders and safety experts are voicing serious concerns, questioning the committee's transparency and ability to effect real change. Criticism has intensified after its first meeting, held at a corporate hotel in Visakhapatnam, a setting some say underscores a disconnect with those most affected by industrial accidents.

"We want to interact with

these members and share our observations regarding these accidents, but the members are inaccessible," remarked Gani Shetty Satyanarayana, honorary president of the Pharma City Staff and Workers Union. "The process lacks transparency and feels disconnected from the workers on the ground."

In addition to accessibility concerns, some question the qualifications of committee members. EAS Sharma, a former bureaucrat and vocal safety advocate, noted that, despite the inclusion of representatives from prestigious institutions like IIT Chennai, IIT Tirupati, and Niti Aayog, the committee's members lack the direct, hands-on experience necessary to assess and implement safety protocols effectively. "Additionally, more than five committee members are representatives of industries where accidents are frequent, raising doubts about the committee's effectiveness," he noted.

Defending the committee's approach, Chandrashekar Verma, Director of Factories, assured that a comprehensive

report is underway. "We have been given three months to complete our report. Union leaders who want to meet us should inform us by email," he said, emphasizing the importance of a data-driven assessment.

Yet, Verma's assurances have done little to allay concerns. Union leaders argue that proactive, open engagement is crucial, calling on the committee to adopt a more inclusive approach that would allow active input from union members and safety experts. "Inclusion is key if this committee is genuinely committed to protecting workers," said Satyanarayana.

As the committee's deadline looms, workers, union leaders, and community members hope that the government will take their concerns seriously and implement stringent measures to prevent future tragedies. The fear remains that without meaningful reforms and a genuine commitment to worker safety, the region could witness another devastating industrial disaster.

# District administration intensifies war on drugs

PNS ■ PARVATHIPURAM

District Collector A Shyam Prasad has sounded the alarm on the escalating drug menace in Parvathipuram district. During a crucial district-level meeting on Tuesday, he emphasised the urgent need for a comprehensive strategy to curb drug abuse, particularly among the youth. "Awareness programmes are the cornerstone of our fight against drugs," said the Collector.

"We must educate our young generation about the devastating consequences of substance abuse. By empowering them with knowledge, we can shield them from this pernicious problem," he added.

## Comprehensive strategy needed to curb drug abuse

To ensure the safety of students, Prasad instructed authorities to install and monitor CCTV cameras in hostels and schools. Regular awareness sessions, he added, would reinforce the message of a drug-free future.

Superintendent of Police SV Madhava Reddy highlighted the proactive measures being taken by the police. "We are determined to rid our district of this scourge," said SP Reddy. "Rigorous patrolling, intelligence-based operations, and strict enforcement of the law are our primary strategies."



He further recommended that the Medical and Health departments bolster security measures in hospitals. "Forming security

committees and establishing safety rooms will enhance the protection of our healthcare workers."

Additional SP Dr. Dilip Kiran shared insights into recent enforcement actions. "In 2024 alone, we have registered five cases and seized five vehicles involved in ganja transportation," he revealed. "Moreover, the deployment of drones and sniffer dogs has significantly aided our efforts in detecting and dismantling drug networks."

District Forest Officer G.A.P. Prasanna, District Hospitals Coordination Officer Dr. B. Vagdevi, and others, attended the meeting.

# Conduct drug tests on BRS MLAs, says Anil

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Appealing to the police to conduct drug tests on all BRS MLAs, Rajya Sabha Member Anil Kumar Yadav said that BRS leaders come out whenever drug rings are busted.

BRS MLAs should face drug tests if they have any shame left, Yadav said. BRS MLAs should be ashamed to support people like Raj Pakala and Vijay Madduri, he added.

Speaking to the media at Gandhi Bhavan on Tuesday, he said that BRS Working President KTR's real proxy is Vijay Madduri. People knew how the BRS government side-tracked issues, he said alleging that the 'Janwada farmhouse incident means controversy'. He said BRS leaders said

once that the Janwada farmhouse party was connected to Diwali and later they said that it was a housewarming party. The BRS government has the credit of taking drugs to schools. However, the Congress is trying to make the state drug-free. But BRS leaders are still trying to encourage the drug culture. What do the KCR family want with Telangana, he asked.

Vijay Madduri himself admitted to the police that he consumed drugs and that Raj Pakala gave the drugs to him, Yadav said and added that the same proxy is Vijay Madduri who has now changed his stance. Moreover, KCR is troubling the DGP by calling him on the phone, Yadav said. Yadav asked KCR in what way he is interested in it.

# Make elaborate arrangements for Tiruchanur Brahmotsavams: TTD EO

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) Executive Officer J Syamala Rao has instructed officials to make elaborate arrangements to ensure a smooth experience for devotees attending the annual Kartika Brahmotsavams at the Goddess Padmavathi Ammavari Temple, Tiruchanur, scheduled for November 28 to December 4.

Reviewing the preparations on Monday, the EO emphasised that officials from all departments should draw from previous experiences and coordinate closely to organise the event on par with the Tirumala Srivari Brahmotsavams, sources said on Tuesday.

He directed the engineering department to expedite works related to drinking water, rangolis, queue lines, and barricades. Electrical decorations in the temple and surrounding areas, along with PA systems and LED screens, must be completed promptly to enhance the festive atmosphere.



The EO also asked for cultural, religious, and musical programmes to be organised under the auspices of the Hindu Dharma Prachara Parishad at venues including Mahathi Kalakshetra, Annamacharya Kalamandiram, Ramachandra Pushkarini, Shilparamam, and Asthana Mandapam to attract devotees.

He suggested curating dance troupes from other states for participation in Vahana Seva and called for attractive floral decorations at the Friday Gardens. Continuous distribution of Annarasadam on Panchami Theertham day and during Brahmotsavam days was also instructed. Trained personnel must be deployed to handle elephants, horses, and bulls during the Vahana Sevas.

The EO further stressed the need for temporary and mobile toilets to ensure proper sanitation. He instructed that doctors, paramedical staff, ambulances, and essential medicines be kept ready to address any medical emergencies. Coordination between TTD security and local police was urged to maintain robust security arrangements throughout the festival.

# Atrocities against women: YSRCP delegation appeals to NHRC, NWC



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A delegation from the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), led by MP Gumma Thanuja Rani and including MP Gurumurthy, YSRCP Women's Wing president Varudu Kalyani, and former MPs Goddeti Madhavi and Chinta Anuradha, has approached the National Human Rights Commission

(NHRC) and the National Women's Commission (NWC) to address rising concerns over atrocities against women in Andhra Pradesh. The delegation highlighted numerous incidents of violence targeting women and girls, seeking urgent intervention and justice for the affected individuals in the State.



ACROSS THE STATES



Women outnumber men in Mizoram's draft voter list

Mizoram has a total of 8,58,534 voters, comprising 4,42,667 women and 4,15,867 men, according to the draft voter list published on Tuesday. Female voters outnumber their male counterparts by 26,800. The draft electoral rolls were prepared for the special summary revision of the voter list to include people turning 18 years old on January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1 in 2025. Aizawl district with 12 assembly constituencies has the highest number of voters at 2,88,962 followed by Lunglei district at 1,01,002, which has six assembly constituencies. Hnahthial district, which was created in 2019, has the least number of electorate at 16,276. Claim (inclusion) and objection can be filed between October 29 and November 28, an official said. The final rolls will be published in January next, they said. There are 40 assembly constituencies and 1,301 polling stations in Mizoram.



Chaos in Ghaziabad court, lawyers clash with police

Lawyers and baton-wielding police personnel come to blows in a courtroom in Ghaziabad on Tuesday. It was not immediately clear what led to the altercation at the District and Sessions Court complex in the Raj Nagar area here and there were no immediate reports of any serious injuries. However, purported video clips of the incident doing the rounds on social media showed a large number of police personnel and lawyers in a confrontation in the courtroom. Some police personnel brandished batons, while one even wielded a wooden chair, gesturing as if to strike the opposing side. A lawyer was also purportedly seen with a wound on his head in a related photo shared on social media.



ABVP, Left clash over 'derogatory' remarks

A clash erupted between students from the Left outfits and the ABVP early Tuesday during a University Governing Body Meeting (UGBM) at the Jawaharlal Nehru University over alleged derogatory remarks against Lord Ram. The JNU Students' Union (JNUSU) alleged that the ABVP members hurled casteist slurs at office-bearers of JNUSU. The meeting was convened by the JNU Students' Union (JNUSU) to discuss their participation in the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) elections — a body established to address sexual harassment complaints on campus. The JNUSU has long been opposing the setting up of ICC in place of Gender Sensitization Committee Against Sexual Harassment (GSCASH) which was scrapped by the varsity in 2017. In a statement on Tuesday, the JNUSU alleged that Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) members disrupted the proceedings of the UGBM by forcibly occupying the stage, and heckled and threatened its members.

'Adapt to rapidly evolving geopolitical threats'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday urged the military leadership to be prepared to adapt to rapidly evolving geopolitical threats and opportunities and emphasised that a more 'whole-of-government' approach is needed to effectively advance national security.

He said this in his address at the closing day of the second phase of the Army Commanders' Conference 2024 which witnessed the Indian Army's senior leadership deliberating on critical strategic issues affecting both border security and the hinterland.

The conference happened at a time when troop disengagement at the two friction points at Demchok and Depsang Plains in eastern Ladakh is in its 'final stages', following a key agreement firmed up between India and China.

Jaishankar's address was themed -- 'Global and Geopolitical Intricacies: Opportunities for India and Expectations from the Armed Forces'.

Jaishankar urges military leadership



In a post on X, Jaishankar wrote, "Pleased to address the Army Commanders Conference in Delhi today. Discussed the intricacies of current geopolitics, as well as its challenges, possibilities and opportunities. Urged that a more 'whole of the Government' approach is needed to effectively advance national security."

Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi shared the dais with the Union minister.

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Government' approach is needed to effectively advance national security."

The Ministry of Defence later issued a statement on the conference, saying it reaffirmed the Indian Army's unwavering commitment to readiness and adaptability, as the senior leadership "resolved to accelerate ongoing transformational initia-

tives" and actively contribute to various national endeavours.

Emphasising a forward-looking approach, the Indian Army remains fully dedicated to preparing for present and emerging challenges, ensuring a progressive, resilient, and future-ready force aligned with India's strategic interests, it said.



'India needs stronger security measures to tackle cyber attacks'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The cyber security experts on Tuesday raised concern over the increase in cases of cyber attacks in India and stressed the need for stronger measures to tackle the problem.

The thoughts were shared during a release of a report titled 'The Invisible Hand' by PRAHAR, an NGO, which focuses on such issues in the public domain which, if not addressed, can cause helplessness among Indian citizens.

According to PRAHAR's statistical projections, India will be attracting nearly one trillion cyber attacks annually by 2033. By the time the country turns 100 in 2047, it will face a target of 17 trillion

cyber attacks.

"This staggering scale underscores the urgent need for a robust, large-scale cyber defence apparatus to safeguard the nation," it said.

Expressing grave concerns on cyber attacks, Abhay Mishra, national convener and president of PRAHAR, said there are two types of cyber attacks. The first involves traditional hackers who exploit vulnerabilities in systems for financial gain or disruption, he said.

"The second, the more insidious form, targets citizens, recruiting them to engage in anti-national activities through manipulation, coercion or threats. Such tactics are most likely to be used on illegal betting apps," he said.

12 killed as bus rams into flyover wall in Rajasthan

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Twelve people died and around 30 passengers got injured after a private bus crashed into the wing wall of a flyover in Rajasthan's Sikar district on Tuesday afternoon, police said.

District Superintendent of Police Bhuvan Bhushan Yadav said the bus coming from Salasar rammed into a part of the flyover in Laxmangarh while taking a turn.

According to the police, the bus was speeding and filled with passengers due to which the driver lost control and the



vehicle rammed into the wing wall of the flyover.

The right side of the bus got completely crushed and the driver died on the spot. A crane

was called to take out the passengers stuck inside, they said.

Sikar IGP Satyendra Singh said some of the injured have been referred to Jaipur and oth-

ers are undergoing treatment at SK Hospital here.

Twelve people have died in the accident, he said.

Vinita, Seema, Kiran Kanwar, Kamla, Banarasi Meghwal, Aditya Meghwal and Pramod Singh are among those killed in the accident. Efforts are on to identify the rest, the police said.

A team of doctors and administration has taken control of the situation and all arrangements have been made. Passengers are local residents. Their family members have been informed, the IGP said.

He said that the reason

behind the accident is yet not known.

Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma has expressed grief over the accident.

"The loss of life in the bus accident in Sikar's Laxmangarh area is extremely sad and heartbreaking. My deepest condolences are with the bereaved families of the deceased. The concerned officials have been directed to ensure proper treatment of the injured. I pray to Lord Shri Ram to give place to the departed souls in his feet and grant speedy recovery to the injured. Om Shanti," Sharma said on X.

CEC KUMAR TO MAHA DGP

'Clampdown on politically motivated crimes'



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar on Tuesday expressed concerns over politically motivated crimes in Maharashtra and asked its police chief to ensure a strict clampdown on crimes that vitiate the electoral atmosphere, sources said.

The poll watchdog held a review meeting with the chief secretaries, police chiefs and other top officials of Maharashtra, Jharkhand and their neighbouring states to assess the law-and-order situation for the assembly elections.

During the review, CEC Kumar expressed concerns over politically motivated crimes in Maharashtra and asked the state's director general of police to ensure a strict clampdown on such crimes, the sources said.

The recent killing of NCP leader Baba Siddique in the state has created a political furor.

CEC Kumar also cautioned the administration and law enforcement authorities in Jharkhand to be even-handed in their dealings with political functionaries and ensure that no authority is exercised in a mala fide manner, they said.

'Will stand with Wayanad families just like Rahul'

PNS ■ WAYANAD (KERALA)

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday said that just like her brother, Rahul Gandhi, she was committed to standing with the families of the hill district.

Referring to the life of Wayanad native Siji, a mother of three, Priyanka said the woman benefitted from the Rahul Gandhi Kaithangu Project that was funded by the MP's funds when her brother represented the hill constituency.

The Congress leader said that the mother of three and her family now have a home "that brings them the comfort and stability they had long yearned for", according to a party statement.

"Siji's story is one of grit and determination. A resident of Mukkam, and a courageous single mother of three, Siji has tirelessly created a safe, loving



space for her children, two of whom have special needs.

"Siji's journey reminds me of the resilience that defines so many families in Wayanad. I am committed to standing by families like hers, carrying forward Rahul's vision to ensure every person feels the warmth of support and solidarity," she said in the statement.

Priyanka, who marks her electoral debut in this by-poll,

is contesting against the LDF's veteran leader Sathyan Mokeri, a former MLA, and the BJP's Navya Haridas, a two-time councillor of the Kozhikode Corporation.

The by-election was necessitated after Rahul Gandhi vacated the seat following his victory in the Rai Bareli constituency in the recent parliamentary elections. The by-election will be held on November 13.



Will consider only constructive criticism, says actor Vijay

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam will always play a constructive role in politics and will achieve its goals in the 2026 Assembly election, its president Vijay said on Tuesday.

Throughout its political journey, the TVK will take into account only constructive criticism and ignore the baiters, the actor said, and cautioned his party workers that criticism against the TVK was bound

to intensify in the coming days.

Vijay, who made a mark through his maiden political speech on October 27, said in a letter addressed to his party workers that their work should be oriented towards meeting the aspirations of the people.

"This should be made possible through intense, definite, and determined efforts to gain the people's recognition. So, let's work wholeheartedly," Vijay urged in the letter.

RESCUING FISHERMEN DURING DANA CYCLONE

Indigenous vessel tracking system emerges as game-changer

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The indigenously developed Vessel Communication and Support System has emerged as a crucial tool in safeguarding fishermen during Cyclone DANA, the government said on Tuesday.

The system, which enables real-time tracking and emergency response coordination, successfully guided fishing vessels to safety during the recent cyclonic conditions along the coast.

"This represents a significant milestone in maritime safety infrastructure...The response to Cyclone DANA has underscored the capabilities of transponder technology in protecting the lives of fisher-



men and enhancing India's preparedness for future maritime challenges," the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying said in a statement.

The technology allows

authorities to track vessel locations in real-time and coordinate emergency responses, marking a departure from traditional maritime safety measures, it added.

The Vessel Communication

and Support System features indigenous transponder technology developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

The government has planned to install indigenously developed transponders on one lakh fishing vessels in all 13 coastal states and Union territories.

According to the ministry, more than 1,000 transponders have been installed in Odisha, and the technology proved to be a lifeline for the fishermen by providing support to them during the recent cyclone.

Experts said the system's success during Cyclone DANA could serve as a blueprint for other coastal regions facing similar challenges.

Ayodhya Temple not to use Chinese Diwali decorative items: Trust

PNS ■ AYODHYA

The Sri Ram Janmabhoomi Tirath Kshetra Trust, which manages the Ram Temple in the city, has decided not to use Chinese decorative items during Diwali to promote local craftsmanship, according to officials.

The city of Ayodhya is preparing for a grand Deepotsav this year -- it will be the eighth edition of the event and the first since the consecration ceremony at the Ram Temple in January.

The temple premises will also be decorated with diyas and other items.

"The Sri Ram Janmabhoomi Tirath Kshetra Trust has prohibited the use of Chinese decorative items during Diwali, promoting local craftsmanship and aligning with the 'Vocal for



Local' initiative and the push toward self-reliance (Atmanirbhar Bharat)," according to a media statement.

Police said there will be around 10,000 security personnel on duty to maintain security during the Deepotsav event and nearly half of them will be in plain dress.

When asked about the Ram Temple's decision not to use Chinese decorative items, Ayodhya Commissioner Gaurav Dayal said, "Basically, we want to just use items which are indigenous and local. They are saying they will not use Chinese items but the whole idea is they want to promote local artisans,

local artists and local material which is more eco-friendly."

Asked if there is any such appeal or directive to people to not use Chinese material, he said it's up to them. "We cannot force people."

Deepotsav will be organised on Wednesday, a day before Diwali, with the government aiming to set a Guinness World Records again this year with most number of diyas lit simultaneously.

Special Ram Leela and other performances have been planned for the day.

"Renowned fashion designer Manish Malhotra has been tasked with designing special outfits for Ram Lalla and his brothers, showcasing the blend of high fashion and spirituality for the festive occasion," according to the media release.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Delhi water woes

Political blame game erupts as toxic ammonia levels in Yamuna spark crisis and residents are supplied with unpotable water

As images of a frothy Yamuna flooded the media, Delhiites were shocked and alarmed. Pollution levels in the river have soared beyond what anyone could have imagined. This has disrupted the Delhi water supply and Delhiites are forced to consume polluted water. Delhi is in the grips of a severe water crisis as elevated ammonia levels in the Yamuna River disrupt water supply across the capital. With water treatment plants at Sonia Vihar and Bhagirathi struggling to manage the contamination, residents face widespread shortages. The AAP and BJP have engaged in a heated blame game, with the AAP accusing the BJP-led Haryana government of neglecting pollution controls upstream, while the BJP criticizes Delhi's administration for failing to bolster treatment facilities. As political tensions rise, Delhiites are left hoping for swift, actionable solutions to restore their water supply. The ammonia levels in the Yamuna have surged to nearly 0.9 parts per million (ppm), far exceeding the safe limit of 0.5 ppm required for effective treatment. This spike is severely affecting the functionality of the Sonia Vihar and Bhagirathi water treatment plants (WTPs), which play a pivotal role in providing clean water to the city. When the Upper Ganga Canal—Delhi's primary source of clean water—is closed for annual maintenance, as it was from October 12 to 31, the city becomes increasingly reliant on the Yamuna, compounding the water scarcity problem. Amid mounting public dissatisfaction, the political sparring has escalated. The AAP has blamed the BJP-led Haryana government, accusing it of being 'hostile' towards Delhi's interests by failing to curb the industrial waste entering the Yamuna. AAP officials claim that Haryana's callous attitude has left Delhi residents without a reliable water supply, with no proactive steps being taken to control the pollutants entering the river. On the other hand, the BJP's Delhi unit responded by holding AAP accountable for the water crisis, criticising the Kejriwal administration for what they call "mismanagement." They say that the AAP government has failed in two major areas: maintaining operational sewage treatment plants and equipping existing WTPs, such as those at Sonia Vihar and Dwarka, with the capacity to handle ammonia contamination. Indeed it is a classic case of passing the buck and Delhi has had enough of it. Rather than blaming each other both Delhi and Haryana government would do well to mitigate this disaster. The Yamuna water is coming from Haryana so no two opinions about where the source of contamination is but AAP should have managed the situation well as it new well in advance that Upper Ganga Canal would be closed for the maintenance till October 31. Right now water remains the biggest concern for Delhi. Yamuna is no better than a drain. Apart from being visually appalling it is a health hazard and the water being supplied is not fit for bathing let alone drinking. But is anybody listening?



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### PICTALK



A Vendor sell flowers ahead of the Diwali festival, at the Ghazipur flower market in Delhi

# A mirage of progress on the LAC

The path to restoring the status quo appears fraught, with divergent interpretations between the two countries clouding any clear progress



ASHOK K MEHTA

The 21st October Agreement to disengage from Demchok and Depsang and resume patrolling as in April 2020, is being hailed as a breakthrough. It's not quite that: now Indian soldiers have to inform the Chinese of the timetable for patrolling and grazing. The government has called this disengagement as a pathway to return to conditions on the ground that existed in April 2020. It is also hoped this will lead to the disengagement of troops deployed in buffer zones, de-escalation, de-induction and return to status quo ante (RSQA) in April 2020. This is wishful thinking. COAS, Gen Dwivedi has expressed fear that the Chinese may encroach into buffer zones, so low is the trust factor. He has called the latest disengagement a 'low hanging fruit'. But the government has given the impression as if RSQA is around the corner. Far from it. From day one after the intrusions had taken place government has covered LAC in a smokescreen: making unilateral statements and blocking debate in parliament as it would undermine troop morale. But PM Modi's famous statement after Galwan that no one came in and no one is in, took the cake. The government has banned former COAS Gen Naravane's book Four Stars of Destiny as it removes some of the smoke screen. India has its interpretation of the 21st October Agreement and China its own. There were no joint statements after the Agreement and Modi-Xi Jinping bilateral on 24 October. The Chinese readout of the 21st October Agreement and the bilateral are different from India's like chalk from cheese. In the Agreement, the Chinese say: "two sides have reached a solution to relevant issues which has been evaluated positively. In the next step China will work with India to implement above solution". There is no mention of RSQA April 2020, and no details of "the solution" and "relevant issues". Similarly, on the bilateral which was scheduled for 45 minutes (more than half the time is taken up in translation) Indian readout mentions "complete disengage-



ment"; "properly handling differences and disputes"; "Special Representatives would meet to resolve border dispute". China's readout: "two sides agreed on holding talks between Foreign Ministers and officials to bring relationship back to sound and steady development at early date"; "it notes progress and development on both sides and in border areas and recommends more communication and cooperation" ... in short China has shown a vague inclination to implement border agreement. For China border talks and bilateral relations are separate issues. For India normalcy on the border is linked to bilateral relations. Positions are poles apart. As there is no road map to RSQA with timelines, one will never know the progress on the three Ds: Disengagement, De-escalation and De-induction. Chinese will engage in endless military and diplomatic talks, making India the supplicant. We will continue to grope in the dark as we have for the last five years about the situation along the LAC. For example, no one knew about the establishment of a Buffer Zone on Kailash Heights after we foolishly vacated it till Ladakhi graziers revealed that the Rezangla Memorial and other man-made forms had been obliterated. The loss of patrolling and grazing rights was revealed at a police conference where an



LAST TIME VERIFICATION OF THE STATUS OF THE GALWAN POST RESULTED IN A HORRIFIC MEDIEVAL CLASH WHICH LED TO THE QUESTION OF NEW PROTOCOLS/ AGREEMENTS. WILL TROOPS BE ARMED AND HAVE AMMUNITION IN THEIR CHARGERS?

ITBP officer mentioned losing 26 of 65 patrolling sites. The government has said frequently Chinese had amassed troops in violation of border protocols and "attempted to alter status quo". They have altered it. True, there is a difference in the perception of LAC; there is no mutually recognised LAC but an Indian and Chinese perception of it. One precaution above all is paramount. Go by Chinese deeds, not their words, and verify before trust. Last time verification of the status of the Galwan post resulted in a horrific medieval clash which led to the question of new protocols/agreements. Will troops be armed and have ammunition in their chargers? Former NSA Shivshankar Menon had suggested that a new modus vivendi is required for restoring trust as the one agreed between Rajiv Gandhi and Deng Xiaopeng after the Sumdorongchu imbroglio that took ten years to resolve but compared to intrusions in East Ladakh it was a single point intrusion. The government has a fair idea of the framework agreement China calls the 'solution' and India's 'RSQA'. It must share it with Parliament as any agreement on full disengagement must not create a 2017 Doklam-like situation where the Chinese hoodwinked India and Bhutan and established full control over the

plateau- with fortifications, infrastructure and dual-use villages- which leads to the Siliguri corridor. India has gone cold over its treaty commitment with Bhutan even as Thimphu was on its way to clinching a Doklam package deal with China which would have been a big strategic setback for India. Our non-strategic economists must be cautious about Chinese FDI contrary to what the Chief Economic Advisor has suggested - a carte blanche inflow of FDI. It must be verified case by case as per Press Note 3. Ban on Chinese apps must stay and Chinese 5G, 6G, Huawei and ZTE blocked. The trade deficit with China has rocketed to USD 105bn which is more than India's defence budget of 2025-26. What India has achieved on the LAC is just a baby step in the restoration of RSQA in April 2020. Chinese have obliged in disengaging from Demchok and Depsang friction points because these pre-date the April 2020 intrusions. Let India not be under any illusion that it has overpowered Chinese coercion through deterrence. Far from it. (The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### THE MENACE OF DIGITAL ARREST

Madam — The PM Narendra Modi has chosen a most relevant topic in his latest episode of "Mann ki baat" programme to alert the people against the menace of digital arrest. While the digital age has brought about incredible convenience, it has also given rise to a new class of cyber-criminals who use technology to trick innocent people. One of the most dangerous scam is the "Digital Arrest". It is a type of sophisticated cyber fraud where cyber-criminals impersonate law enforcement officials or other authorities. Criminals play into the victims' fear by threatening them with imminent arrest, legal consequences, or public humiliation if they don't cooperate with a series of urgent demands. Fraudsters behind digital arrests are masters of psychological manipulation. They understand that fear and urgency are powerful motivators that can cloud judgment and lead people to act against their best interests. By creating a fabricated sense of crisis, they pressure victims into making hasty decisions without the chance for rational thought or verification. Hence, digital arrests are a stark reminder of the need for constant vigilance in the digital world. By understanding the tactics, staying informed, and taking precautions, we can drastically reduce our vulnerability. Additionally, spreading awareness and collective action are vital in the fight to dismantle the global networks behind these devastating scams. N Sadhasiva Reddy | Washington

### HATHRAS ADULTERATION SCAM

Madam — The Hathras adulteration scandal has put forward critical concerns over food safety to the vanguard. In a recent raid, authorities captured large proportions of adulterated ghee that was being sold as top-quality product. Analysts found out that the supposed "ghee" was excessively diluted with poor-quality oils and some other substances, making it undoubtedly hazardous to consumers' health. This exposed a prevalent racket where traders were profiting by doing

### Who cares about Delhi air pollution?



Apologues news item, "AAP, BJP spar over plunging air quality", published on Oct. 28, this is my response. Like every year, the national capital is under the spell of air pollution at the start of winter this year. The air quality of Delhi and cities in the National Capital Region (NCR) has reached the

poor and very poor categories. The cause of Delhi's severe air pollution is primarily due to geographical and local factors. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), because of the calm winds, the polluted gases, smoke, and dust particles spread in the local environment are not spreading to distant places and are polluting the local air. Adding to the woes, Delhi's toxic air is caused by vehicles and industrial emissions. Stopping trucks from plying within Delhi city limits between 6 AM and 6 PM, doing construction activities with proper draping, enforcing a total ban on bursting fire-crackers, and moving brick kilns outside Delhi are some of the means by which the local government can fix the air-pollution problem. Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

malpractices. The incident raised alarm about the commonness of such practices, especially with essential ingredients like ghee, which holds a lot of nutritional value in Indian households. This scandal is a portentous event and a wake-up call for stricter regulations, increased food examination, and heightened public awareness to corroborate safety in the food sector. Neha Tomar | Ujjain

### FOLLOW THE PROCESS

Madam — M S Dhoni very often in his post match presentations used to emphasize 'the importance of following the process right'. As the saying goes 'all that starts well ends well'. In the Bangalore when the sky is over cast after having lost the first day's play in a rain affected pitch which was visibly moist, Rohit opting to bat after winning the toss was more than a gamble and without application of mind. Here the absence of experienced Ravi Shastri or a mentor like personality Rahul Dravid was felt. The score of 46 all out was a morale sagging innings and los-

## The forgotten legacy of Odisha's unsung iron lady

Pallavi Rebbapragada unveils Nandini Satpathy's profound journey of resilience and lasting impact in her book 'Nandini Satpathy, The Iron Lady of Orissa'

Women have played a critical and active role in shaping the political future of India. But unless they have risen to positions of power, most of them have remained unsung and forgotten. It is then a paradox that Nandini Satpathy, one such spunky politician who governed her state of Odisha as its first woman chief minister and never lost an election as a member of the legislative assembly, faded out of not just public memory but also found little or no mention in many official records of her time in office. Why is so little known about Satpathy, the astute politician who legislated several groundbreaking state land reforms and was a passionate conservationist, poet and author? Despite being a Rajya Sabha member and minister of Information and Broadcasting in former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's cabinet, why was her legacy largely confined to her family and friends? Was she deliberately isolated because she dared to oppose the imposition of the Emergency despite being a trusted friend and



close aide of Indira Gandhi? Did this step sound the death knell for Satpathy's association with Indira Gandhi? Answers to these questions can be found in Pallavi Rebbapragada's well-researched book on the second woman to become chief minister of a state in India. Titled 'Nandini Satpathy, The Iron Lady of Orissa', Rebbapragada, a journalist and public policy consultant, chronicles the story of a girl who first defied odds to be born and then, went on to show not just Cuttack, the city where she was born, but also her state and the country that her birth would one day herald new beginnings. The first time she made her presence publicly known was when she did the unthinkable by pulling down the Union Jack flag atop

her Ravenshaw college and hoisting the national flag. Satpathy, then just 15, showed no remorse even though she was imprisoned by the British police for this act of defiance. It was also to be a turning point in her personal life. It was in jail that she met activist Devendra Satpathy whom she later married. While she accomplished several milestones during her stint in office including the setting up of the Free Bangla Radio as I&B minister in Indira Gandhi's first government during Bangladesh's struggle for independence, her contribution when out of power is no less significant. Except perhaps for students of law, not many know about her case. PL Dani, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Vigilance, led to a historic 1978 Supreme Court judgment that expanded the scope of the right against self-incrimination and provided guidelines for police interrogation, ensuring individuals could not be compelled to provide evidence against themselves at any stage. This came about when Satpathy, then former Chief

Minister of Odisha, refused to answer certain questions invoking her right against self-incrimination under Article 20(3) of the Constitution when she was called for police interrogation in connection with a corruption case. The police contended that her refusal to answer questions constituted an offence under Section 179 of the Indian Penal Code. The case reached the Supreme Court and paved the way for reaffirmation of the Right to Silence as a fundamental right, protecting individuals from being compelled to answer incriminating questions during police interrogation and the Right to Legal Assistance allowing individuals to consult with a legal practitioner before answering any questions during police interrogation, promoting fair treatment and safeguarding against coercive practices. Importantly, the judgment continues to remain a key reference today for ensuring the protection of individual rights during the investigative process. (The writer is a social activist and freelance writer; views are personal)



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com





## FIRST COLUMN

### MERGE YOURSELF IN LIGHT OF LIGHTS

This Diwali, light a lamp of love, blast a chain of sorrow and shoot a rocket of prosperity and happiness



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

The biggest and the brightest of all the festivals celebrated across India as well as the whole world is about to arrive and fill our lives with joy and happiness. Yes! We all know that's none other than "Diwali" or as we say "Deepawali" in India. Such is the magic of this festival that throughout the 4-day celebrations, illuminates the whole nation with its brilliance, and dazzles all with its joy. Though each of the four days during Diwali is separated by a different tradition, what remains true and constant is the celebration of life, its enjoyment and goodness. We all know that as per the Hindu calendar, Diwali is celebrated on the darkest night of the month of Kartik. That is why it is also considered an occasion of victory of light over darkness or good over evil. Kartik month is the 8th lunar month of the Hindu calendar.

This month is considered the holiest of all the months in the Hindu calendar. Kartik Snaan (Bath) is given a lot of importance by Hindus wherein it is customary for people to go to the holy rivers or oceans because it is a general belief that your sins or bad karmas are washed away or forgiven when you perform this ritual, but all these are only symbolic. However, Kartik means change or transformation from the old to the new.

It is the last festival in the year that is celebrated as the conquest



of the virtues over the vices by 'bathing in the ocean of knowledge' i.e. 'Gyaan Ganga' to cleanse the soul of all the impurities accumulated in the dark ages. It is thus a unique process to change a man (Nar) from ordinary to an elevated perfect man or deity called "Narayan".

Going by history, the festival of Diwali can be traced back to ancient India, when it was probably an important harvest festival. However, various legends are pointing to the origin of Diwali or 'Deepawali.' Some believe it to be the celebration of the marriage of Shri Lakshmi with Lord Vishnu. Whereas in Bengal the festival is dedicated to the worship of Mother Kali, the goddess of strength. Lord Ganesha, the elephant-headed God, the symbol of auspiciousness and wisdom, is also worshipped in most Hindu homes today. In Jainism, Deepawali has an added significance to the great event of Lord Mahavira attaining the eternal bliss of nirvana.

Diwali also commemorates the return of Lord Rama along with Sita Ji and Lakshman Ji from his fourteen-year-long exile and vanquishing the demon-king Ravana. In joyous celebration of the return of their king, the people of Ayodhya, the Capital of Lord Rama, illuminated the kingdom with earthen diyas (oil lamps) and burst crackers.

Each day of Diwali has its tale, legend and myth to tell, but one should not forget the fact that behind each of these legends, myths and stories lies the significance of the victory of good over evil; and it is with each Deepawali and the lights that illuminate our homes and hearts, that this simple truth finds new reason and hope. So, this Diwali, merge yourself into the light of lights who is Supreme of all and enlighten yourself from within.

(The writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist, views are personal)

# The web of conspiracy theories and the US election



SANTHOSH MATHEW

Conspiracy theories have captivated society for centuries, spinning intriguing narratives that challenge our sense of truth—and the recent US elections are no exception



In every era, conspiracy theories have captivated the public imagination, creating a whirlwind of suspicions, accusations, and intrigue. Today, with the American presidential election in the rearview mirror, the air is thick with conspiracy theories, some rooted in historical patterns and others fueled by recent global events.

From ancient prophecies to modern speculations, these narratives show how deeply conspiratorial thinking is woven into society, even influencing one of the most powerful democracies in the world. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a wave of theories dominated headlines, each offering a different perspective on the virus's origin and spread. For example, when former U.S. President Donald Trump labelled COVID-19 the "Wuhan virus," he fanned the flames of speculation that the virus was the result of Chinese bio-engineering. Simultaneously, however, a counter-narrative gained traction, suggesting that the virus was an American creation, designed and disseminated as part of an alleged biological warfare program.

Even within the conspiracy community, viewpoints diverged: was COVID-19 a lab-born pathogen or a consequence of environmental manipulation? A particularly unique theory even claimed the virus spread through the electromagnetic signals of 5G towers, resulting in people burning down cell towers in the United Kingdom. The COVID-19 narrative was far from alone in raising eyebrows. Conspiracy theorists link current fears to past events—from the HIV/AIDS epidemic to natural disasters. Some hold that HIV was an engineered product of the U.S. military's biological weapons division, first tested on prisoners in the 1970s before it spread outside government control.

Others go back further in history, believing that HIV stemmed from scientific mutations, a theory allegedly supported by Russian virologists who argue that HIV was a modified form of the VISNA virus, created in a laboratory setting. Nobel laureate Wangari Maathai also claimed in 2004 that

AIDS was no accident, attributing its origin to American laboratories.

Natural disasters, too, have not escaped the lens of conspiratorial imagination. In the wake of the catastrophic 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, rumours spread that U.S. military tests were to blame. The claim was that sophisticated nuclear weapons testing off the coast of Indonesia could manipulate the weather and disrupt seismic activity. Alongside such theories, another narrative has taken shape, labelled the "Thucydides Trap"—a concept rooted in the belief that rising powers, such as China, often seek to destabilize dominant powers, exemplified by the release of COVID-19 as an alleged bio-weapon against the United States. Conversely, some assert that COVID-19 was a means for the U.S. to undermine China, spurring a dramatic escalation of mutual suspicion. Even the 9/11 attacks are rich ground for conspiracy theories. There are over four million articles online dissecting and speculating on every aspect of the attack, including claims of prior U.S. knowledge and deliberate inaction. Such theories propose that the tragedy served as a pretext for increased American military involvement in the Middle East, bolstering the economic interests of defence industries.

In such an environment, it is hardly surprising that suspicion surrounds recent American presidential elections. Election season in the United States has always been a prime opportunity for conspiracy theories, with the latest election being no exception. In this context, Nostradamus, the French astrologer and reputed seer of the 16th century reappears in the collective imagination. Nostradamus is often cited as having "predicted" world events, from the rise of Hitler to the terror of 9/11. As American political dynamics shift, believers inter-

pret Nostradamus' cryptic prophecies to suit contemporary issues, citing his supposed foresight about Trump's ascension and even a second term. Such theories proliferate because they tap into pre-existing beliefs, adding layers of mystery to the already intricate political landscape. One particularly respected figure in the American election-prediction community is historian Allan Lichtman. Dubbed the "Election Nostradamus," Lichtman has accurately forecasted the outcomes of multiple presidential elections over the past few decades.

Although Lichtman's predictions are based on a well-formulated system, his track record and the nickname he's acquired seem to lend credence to the idea that prophecy and foresight have a place even in the most rational domains. Lichtman's projections of a Democratic victory fueled hope among Biden and Harris supporters, while some conspiracy theorists proposed that the "powers that be" were covertly steering the election outcome to align with Lichtman's track record. In the age of social media and instantaneous communication, conspiracy theories spread rapidly.

The adage, "A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes," aptly describes how quickly misinformation can take hold. The rise of the internet has only amplified this effect, granting conspiracy theories a global platform.

Notably, the Flat Earth Society has found new life online, continuing to challenge the scientifically accepted fact that the Earth is round. The society's followers persist in their belief, interpreting satellite imagery and NASA's findings as government propaganda. Similarly, speculation surrounds the historic 1969 moon landing. Despite NASA's documentation

and evidence, sceptics argue that the moon landing was an elaborate hoax staged to one-up the Soviet Union in the Cold War space race. Believers insist that the televised moonwalks were filmed on Earth, attributing the iconic image of Neil Armstrong to American propaganda efforts.

The moon landing controversy may be one of the most persistent conspiracy theories, as it continues to captivate audiences more than 50 years later.

As much as conspiracy theories focus on the United States, they are not exclusive to any single nation. Still, America's global influence and extensive media presence make it especially susceptible to scrutiny. Government mistrust underpins many of these theories, exemplified by the Roman historian Tacitus, who posited that the actions of untrustworthy rulers breed public suspicion.

According to Tacitus, regimes that lose the faith of their citizens tend to fuel the fires of conspiracy, using public confusion as a tool to maintain control. In the current political climate, where truth is elusive and media narratives frequently conflict, conspiracy theories are likely to thrive. They emerge not only from a need to question authority but also from an inherent fascination with the unknown.

For every piece of verified information, there is a counter-theory that rejects it, and conspiracy theories transform historical and current events into captivating narratives for believers and sceptics alike.

As American democracy continues to face these claims, it's clear that conspiracy theories are not going away any time soon. Rather, they will evolve, adapting to each new event and generation with the same intensity that has fueled them for centuries.

(The writer is an associate professor; views are personal)



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## Bootstrapped startups: The resilient path to sustainable growth

By starting small and reinvesting profits, bootstrapped startups prioritise sustainable growth and operational agility over rapid scaling

Entrepreneurship is a dream journey for many young minds full of innovative ideas and pioneering thoughts. And many times, they are left to fend for themselves. Before the world believes in their ideas, entrepreneurs have to believe in themselves and their ideas first. For their entrepreneurial ventures to see the light of the day, entrepreneurs, therefore, first turn towards themselves and become their investors. This idea is known as bootstrapping, which is the process of developing a business with limited resources, without the financial and managerial support of an investor, more particularly an angel investor. So, in this case, the entrepreneur starts his business with little or no money, all the while



HIMA BINDU KOTA

ploughing back the funds generated by customer-driven business into the operations to achieve growth. A bootstrapped startup is characterized by full control of the founder over the business without the pressures of outside investors. This provides the founder with elbow room to be flexible and agile in decision-making. The challenge to sustain

the startup brings out creativity and resourcefulness in problem-solving. Combined with lean operations and focus on revenue generation, the founder manages to survive and thrive which leads to high founder satisfaction, self-reliance and long-term sustainable growth. Although it is difficult to dampen the spirit of entrepreneurship, the statistics sure leave us disheartened. According to an article in Harvard Business Review by Prof. Tom Eisenmann, nearly 63 per cent of startups never end up with a positive return. By another metric, only 15 per cent of startups ever see through their first round of funding. So, in situations where the survival of startups is difficult, being bootstrapped

can make it even harder. While bootstrapping provides entrepreneurs with increased financial independence and control, there can be several disadvantages. Liquidity crunch is one of the major disadvantages of a bootstrapped enterprise. A steady flow of funds is essential for any operation and all the more important for a startup.

A bootstrapped company has to generate enough profits to cover the daily operational expenses and more often than not, because of lack of financial cushion, it is difficult to withstand sudden economic crises, disruptions, and market downturns. Secondly, it is difficult for bootstrapped companies to attract and hire talented employees with limited budgets. Additionally, in such



situations, founders end up multi-tasking even though they may lack specialized skills in some of the key function areas of a business, like production, sales and marketing, new business development, and daily operations, which may affect long-term growth prospects.

So, are bootstrapped companies less valuable than funded companies? This is a quintes-

sential question. Well, to answer this, let's try to see what is value. For starters, a company is valuable if, irrespective of its size, can develop a product or service and generate revenue.

By doing so, over some time, the revenue base starts helping the company to grow organically and lo behold, it manages to cross the 'valley of death'. So, a company that can grow with its revenues and survive and sustain on a long-term basis is far more valuable than a funded company that can show growth metrics only on the backing of funding received, which may be short-lived, if it is unable to generate revenue-backed growth quickly. Therefore, in a start-up world where 9 out of 10 startups fail, bootstrapped startups have a

greater chance of survival as they are 55 per cent more likely to establish positive cash flows within the first three years of operations and generate a sustainable revenue stream.

This makes their failure rate 47 per cent lower than VC-funded startups. What one cannot ignore is the fact the value of a bootstrapped startup also comes from the intangible qualities of the founder like determination, passion, grit, resourcefulness and agility. These qualities are the mainstay of any bootstrapped startup that navigates it through the uncertain world of entrepreneurship. They are like the secret ingredients for the success of a bootstrapped startup — a battle between the wit and creativity of a founder versus

the deep pockets of a VC. By focusing on customer acquisition and revenue generation, bootstrapped startups demonstrate their qualities of innovation, resourcefulness, flexibility and agility, in navigating the uncertain world of entrepreneurship. By keeping themselves lean and using cost-effective strategies, bootstrapped startups facilitate higher profit margins that in turn lead to long-term sustainable growth.

In a startup world that is fixated with high growth fancy ideas and flamboyant entrepreneurs, bootstrapped startups stand out as beacons of efficiency, proving that sometimes slow and steady truly does win the race.

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



IN BRIEF



**SBI Card profit down 33 pc to Rs 404 cr**

SBI Cards and Payment Services Ltd (SBI Card) on Tuesday reported a 33 per cent fall in net profit to Rs 404 crore for the September quarter on increase in delinquency. The pure-play credit card company, promoted by the country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI), had reported a net profit of Rs 603 crore in the previous quarter a year earlier. However, SBI Card said in a regulatory filing that its total income in the second quarter of the current fiscal year rose 8 per cent to Rs 4,556 crore, from Rs 4,221 crore a year ago. Interest income grew 20 per cent to Rs 2,290 crore, while income from other sources declined 2 per cent to Rs 2,131 crore. There was slight deterioration in the company's asset quality with the gross non-performing assets rising to 3.27 per cent of the gross advances as of September, from 2.43 per cent a year earlier.



**Canara Bank profit rises to Rs 4,015 crore**

State-owned Canara Bank on Tuesday reported an 11 per cent rise in its net profit to Rs 4,015 crore in the second quarter ended September 2024. The Bengaluru-based lender had earned a net profit of Rs 3,606 crore in the same quarter a year ago. Total income increased to Rs 34,721 crore during the quarter under review against Rs 31,472 crore in the same quarter last year. Canara Bank said in a regulatory filing. The bank reported an interest income of Rs 29,740 crore during the quarter, higher than Rs 26,838 crore in the same period a year ago. On the asset quality front, the bank witnessed improvement with gross Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) declining to 3.73 per cent of the gross loans by the end of September 2024 from 4.76 per cent a year ago. Similarly, net NPAs or bad loans moderated to 0.99 per cent from 1.41 per cent at the end of the second quarter of the previous fiscal. Provision Coverage Ratio (PCR) rose to 90.89 per cent as of September 2024 against 89.22 per cent as of June 2024 and 88.73 per cent as of September 2023.



**RBI ups domestically-held gold by another 102 mt**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) added another 102 metric tonnes to the domestically held gold in the April-September period, as per a disclosure made on Tuesday. The overall quantity of the precious metal stored in local safes stood at 510.46 metric tonnes as of September 30, which was up from over 408 metric tonnes as on March 31, 2024. The central bank said it added another 32 metric tonnes of gold reserves in the six-month period to take the overall tonnage to 854.73 metric tonnes, as per the half yearly report on management of foreign exchange reserves. India has been gradually moving gold reserves to local vaults – said to be located in the financial capital and Nagpur – over the past few years. In FY24, it had moved 100 metric tonnes more from the UK to domestic locations. The movement of the commodity, happening at time of increased geopolitical tensions globally, was said to be one of the biggest movements of gold undertaken by India since 1991, when it had to pledge a substantial part of the gold holding to tide over a foreign exchange crisis.

**Looking forward to advancing EU-India FTA talks: Pedro**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Spanish President Pedro Sánchez on Tuesday said he looks forward to advancing EU-India FTA negotiations, highlighting the "enormous" potential for a stronger relationship between India and the 27-nation European Union bloc, including Spain.

The European Union (EU)-India proposed a free trade agreement (FTA) aimed at further boosting bilateral trade and investments between the two regions. The two sides are negotiating FTA, investment protection treaty and agreement on geographical indications (GIs).

"The potential for a stronger relationship between India and the European Union (including Spain) is enormous. Spain is one of the largest economies in the world and has invested USD 4.2 billion in India... We look forward to advancing negotiations on a European Union-India free trade agreement. This will help our markets grow in size and diversity," Sánchez observed while addressing the



**The European Union (EU)-India proposed a free trade agreement (FTA) aimed at further boosting bilateral trade and investments between the two regions**

CII Spain India Business Summit in Mumbai, a statement issued by the industry body said.

"This is Spanish President Sánchez's first visit to India. "We have a lot to offer to India with our experience in solar and wind power. Our expertise can help India reach its goal of 500 gigawatts of renewable energy by 2030. We are committed to partnering with India to boost its energy security and green transition. By combining

Spanish innovation with India's potential, we can make a big impact on the global economy and the environment," President Sánchez said. He further said Spain's advanced railway systems, subway networks, and transport solutions can greatly benefit India's infrastructure projects. He expressed willingness on the part of Spanish engineering firms in terms of sharing their expertise in creating efficient and sustainable transport systems.

During the summit, Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport and Highways of India, said, "Our Prime Minister's dream is to make India carbon neutral by 2070. Whether it's fossil fuel or energy, green energy and green mobility are now priorities. There is great potential for wind and solar power. I am pleased that many technologies are available in Spain that have great potential in India. Joint ventures can reduce costs and increase competitiveness in the global market."

**GST returns to be time-barred after 3 yrs from early 2025**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

GST Network on Tuesday said beginning early next year, GST taxpayers will not be able to file monthly and annual GST returns after three years of the original filing due date.

In an advisory, Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) said GST outward supply returns, besides returns related to payment of liability, annual returns and tax collected at source, will become time-barred after the expiry of a period of three years from the due date of furnishing the said return.

"The said changes are going to be implemented in the GST portal from early next year (2025). Hence, the taxpayers are advised to reconcile their records and file their GST returns as soon as possible if not filed till now," GSTN said.

AMRG & Associates Senior Partner Rajat Mohan said the recent GSTN update concern-

ing the barring of GST return filings post a three-year deadline introduces a significant compliance shift.

"This move aligns with a broader intent to ensure timely compliance, enhance data reliability, and potentially reduce the backlog of unfiled returns within the GST system. By capping the period for delayed filings, taxpayers are motivated to reconcile and rectify their records promptly."

"However, it may also create challenges for taxpayers with historically unfiled returns, especially those facing administrative or logistical constraints in consolidating older records," Mohan said. Businesses are advised to proactively audit their filing history and address any outstanding returns within the remaining window, he said, adding that the action will prevent future compliance issues and penalties that may arise once the portal enforces this three-year limit.

**HDFC Standard Life buys PNB Housing Fin's shares**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

HDFC Standard Life Insurance Co on Tuesday bought shares of PNB Housing Finance worth Rs 90 crore through an open market transaction.

According to the block deal data available on the BSE, HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company Ltd purchased a little over 10 lakh shares or 0.4 per cent stake in PNB Housing Finance.

The shares were picked up at an average price of Rs 900 apiece, taking the transaction value to Rs 90 crore. Meanwhile, a foreign investor Asia Opportunities V (Mauritius) Ltd trimmed its stake by offloading shares of PNB Housing at the same price. After the transaction, Asia Opportunities V holding in PNB Housing has come down to 0.94 per cent from 1.34 per cent.

**Sensex advances 364 pts on buying in banking, oil shares**

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex recouped its early losses to close higher by nearly 364 points on Tuesday, extending gains to the second day on the back of late buying in banking and oil shares.

The 30-share BSE barometer climbed 363.99 points or 0.45 per cent to settle at 80,369.03 with 16 of its components ending higher and 14 closing lower. The index opened lower and fell by 583.69 points to 79,421.35 in late-morning deals. However, buying in banking, financial and oil shares in the second half helped recoup losses and close the day higher. The index hit a high of 80,450.48 in day trade. The NSE Nifty rose 127.70 points or 0.52 per cent to 24,466.85.

Firm global trends and unabated buying by domestic institutional investors (DIIs) helped in the rebound, traders said. From the 30 Sensex pack,



The BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.74 per cent and smallcap index went up by 0.71 per cent. Among sectoral indices, bankex jumped 2.20 per cent, financial services (2 per cent), realty (1.46 per cent), capital goods (1.28 per cent) and utilities (1.26 per cent). Consumer Discretionary, telecommunication, IT and tech were the laggards. A total of 2,242 stocks advanced while 1,623 declined and 126 remained unchanged on the BSE. "The Nifty started on a negative note, but resilience in select heavyweights, particularly in the banking sector, spurred a steady rebound as the session advanced," Ajit Mishra – SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 3,228.08 crore on Monday, while DIIs bought equities worth Rs 1,400.85 crore, according to exchange data.

**Sugar industry demands hike in price to help cut losses**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sugar industry body ISMA has demanded that the minimum selling price (MSP) of the sweetener should be increased to Rs 39.14 per kg from the current Rs 31 per kg as millers are facing losses due to high production cost.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Indian Sugar and Bio-Energy Manufacturers Association (ISMA) called for an increase in the Minimum Sale Price (MSP) of sugar, which has remained unchanged at Rs 31 per kg since February 2019.

During this period, it said the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane has increased five times, with the FRP now standing at Rs 340 per quintal for the 2024-25 sugar season.

Under the Sugar Price (Control) Order of 2018, MSP



determination should account for FRP levels, but the current MSP fails to reflect these rising costs.

"As sugar contributes over 85 per cent of the industry's revenue, ISMA stresses that the ex-mill price of sugar must be sufficient to cover cane purchase costs and support financial viability," it said.

Present ex-mill sugar prices average Rs 36.5 per kg, which falls below the calculated production cost of Rs. 41.66 per kg.

To address this, ISMA has advocated for an MSP of Rs

39.14 per kg. "This adjustment would ensure mills can remain financially viable and make timely payments to farmers, avoiding arrears that strain the rural economy," ISMA said.

The association said the increase would have minimal impact on consumers, as over 60 per cent of sugar is used by industries capable of absorbing the cost. ISMA President M Prabhakar Rao, said, "We need urgent support from the Government to increase the MSP of sugar to reduce losses being faced by the industry."

The increase of MSP will protect the minimum ex-factory price particularly during the crushing season during which the prices tend to go below the cost of production, bleeding the mills and making them financially unviable, he added.

**Manufacturers told to cut price of 3 anti-cancer drugs**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has asked the companies to reduce prices of three anti-cancer drugs to pass on the benefit of customs duty exemption and GST reduction to the consumers.

In line with the government's commitment to ensure the availability of drugs at affordable prices, the National Pharma ceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has issued an office memorandum directing the concerned manufacturers to reduce the MRP on three anti-cancer drugs, Trastuzumab, Osimertinib and Durvalumab.

This is in pursuance to the announcement made in the Union Budget for the year 2024-25 exempting these three anti-cancer medicines from customs duty.

**Gold rises Rs 300 to Rs 81,400 per 10 grams**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price rose by Rs 300 to Rs 81,400 per 10 grams, near its record high level, in the national capital on Tuesday due to heavy demand for Dhanteras by jewellers and retailers, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Silver increased by Rs 200 to Rs 99,700 per kg on rising demand by industrial units and coin makers. It had closed at Rs 99,500 per kg in the previous close on Monday.

Traders said they are preferring silver coins for token buying while ignoring the traditional purchases of gold at existing levels.

Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity jumped Rs 300 to near an all-time peak of Rs 81,000 per 10 grams.

On Monday, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity had closed at Rs 81,100 and Rs 80,700 per 10 grams.

In futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for December delivery appreciated by Rs 178 or 0.23 per cent to Rs 78,744 per 10 grams. "Gold prices in MCX remained positive, with Dhanteras adding enthusiasm for long positions. More buying

occurred on this auspicious day, pushing the prices on the MCX and trading above Rs 80,000 in the physical jewellery market," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

Silver contracts for December delivery bounced Rs 786 or 0.81 per cent to Rs 98,210 per kg on the MCX. Globally, Comex gold futures rose 0.23 per cent to USD 2,762.20 per ounce.

"Gold advanced toward a record in the European trading hours on Tuesday amid concerns about the US Presidential election and escalating US debt crisis continue to fuel safe-haven demand, pushing flows into the precious metal," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

According to Pranav Mer, VP - Research (Commodity & Currency) BlinkX and JM Financial, gold continues to trade positively with buying seen at every small correction over the past three trading sessions.

Focus this week will remain on the US Presidential elections and the Federal Reserve's monetary policy outcome next week, Mer said.



**India fastest growing major economy: Murmu**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is the fastest growing major economy and is likely to become the third largest economy soon, President Droupadi Murmu said on Tuesday.

Addressing an event in Delhi, she said the Indian economy had been demonstrating resilience in the face of geopolitical challenges and the country's economy was likely to grow tenfold by 2047.

"India is the fastest growing major economy and is likely to become the third largest economy soon," Murmu said.

According to the latest World Bank estimate, India contributed 16 per cent to global economic growth in 2023.

"Our economy is likely to grow tenfold by 2047," the president said, addressing probations of the Indian Trade Service and the Indian Cost Accounts Service who had called on Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

With a rapid economic growth of 8.2 per cent in 2023-24, the Indian economy has been demonstrating resilience in the face of geopolitical challenges, she said.



India needs to attract private investment to increase per capita income levels and get to continued high levels of

growth, even amid a turbulent global environment, Murmu said. The Indian government has

an investor-friendly policy, where most sectors are open for 100 per cent FDI (foreign direct investment) under the automatic route, she said.

"Several initiatives of the government of India are creating an enabling ecosystem for growth. India is the third largest start-up country, only after the US and the UK," Murmu said.

She also asked the officers to keep learning and updating themselves about the advancement of artificial intelligence and make the best use of related technologies in their functioning to contribute

towards increasing India's global competence.

Murmu said that with the government's enhanced focus on boosting manufacturing, "it will be your responsibility to facilitate the creation of an enabling environment and infrastructure for increasing trade across borders".

"You are expected to bring up new dimensions in trade negotiation, create innovative policies and provide new impetus to boost India's trade. I know that you will live up to the expectations of the country," the president told the officers.



# what's brewing?

## HRITHIK ROSHAN'S 'AGENT KABIR' TO MAKE EXPLOSIVE CAMEO IN ALPHA

Following a successful streak from 2012 to 2024 with movies like *Ek Tha Tiger*, *Tiger Zinda Hai*, *War*, *Pathaan* and *Tiger 3*, YRF is now preparing to release *War 2* and *Alpha* as the next installments in the franchise. *War 2* will see Hrithik Roshan reprising his role as smooth agent Kabir, alongside NTR Jr. *Alpha* will kick off the first female-led action franchise, starring Alia Bhatt and Sharvani.

*War 2* is nearing its end, with Hrithik Roshan and NTR Jr. preparing to film the climax action scene in late November. Prior to that, reports have discovered exclusively that Hrithik Roshan will be appearing as Agent Kabir in *Alpha* and filming will commence in Mumbai on November 9. "Hrithik Roshan as Agent Kabir is ready for a crossover in *Alpha*. The actor is excited as this would mark the first-ever crossover of his character in the YRF Spy Universe. He plays the part of Alia Bhatt and Sharvani's mentor as a long-term plan of the universe," revealed a source.

The source also mentioned that Hrithik will be filming a major action scene in *Alpha*, with Alia Bhatt and Sharvani also joining in.

"Aditya Chopra and director Shiv Raviwal have designed an extended cameo that does justice to the aura of Hrithik Roshan and the legacy of Agent Kabir. It's a well-written sequence, that comes in an apt situation through the narrative of *Alpha*. Hrithik will get a proper high octane introduction in the tale and the cameo will lead itself to a massive action block featuring the trio of Hrithik, Alia and Sharvani," the source added.



## Anupam Kher's Vijay 69 will move you

The trailer for the upcoming movie *Vijay 69*, which stars Anupam Kher in the lead role, was released by Netflix on Tuesday. Netflix uploaded the more than two-minute movie to its YouTube page. The video opens with 69-year-old Vijay, played by Anupam, becoming agitated and fighting with those around him.

Vijay states that he wants to be known for having accomplished something noteworthy as the trailer goes on. He shares his dream of competing in a triathlon and setting a new record in India with his friend, who is portrayed by Chunky Panday. Everyone laughs at him and chastises him when he tells his friends and family. He is shown receiving training assistance from Mihir Ahuja's character.

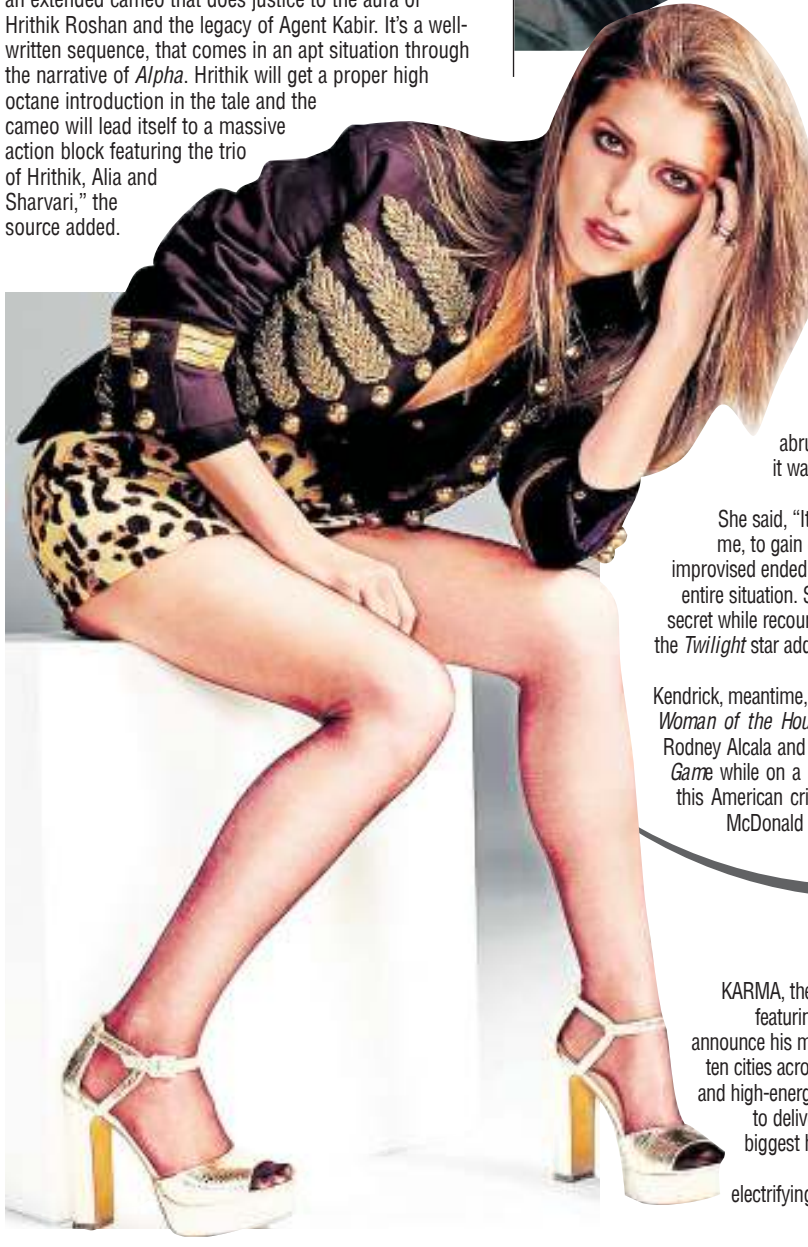
Akshay said in a statement,



"*Vijay 69* is about second chances and the gap between 'what we thought we'd become and what we actually became'; it is about passion, determination and that timeless ingredient called perseverance—whether you're overcoming life's hurdles or training for a triathlon."

Akshay added, "Working with Anupam Sir was a gift—not only did he commit himself fully to the part; he also brought a depth and authenticity to the role that only the rarest of actors can. It was also a pleasure to work once again with my producer, Maneesh Sharma, to bring this YRF Entertainment and Netflix collaboration to fruition. The intention has been to craft a feel-good film that will, hopefully, resonate with audiences across generations."

The movie, which is written and directed by Akshay Roy and produced by Maneesh Sharma, will be available on Netflix on November 8. *Vijay 69* sets the tone for an inspiring tale that inspires audiences to welcome second chances with a blend of tenacity, humour and moving moments.



## Director tries to embarrass Anna Kendrick, fails spectacularly

Anna Kendrick recalls how a film director mistreated her, making her appear horrible and humiliating her in front of numerous other set members. When she recently appeared on the *Happy Sad Confused* podcast, she talked about this encounter.

Kendrick claimed that during filming a scene with over a hundred extras present, the director instructed her to improvise. Following her execution of his order, the director abruptly yelled "cut" and angrily condemned her behaviour, claiming it was unnecessary. This behaviour upset Kendrick because it made her feel ashamed for no good reason.

She said, "It really felt like a very specific power move thing to embarrass me, to gain dominance. It was very icky." Ultimately, the moment she improvised ended up in the movie's trailer, which infuriated Kendrick about the entire situation. She kept the identity of the filmmaker and the movie itself secret while recounting the experience. Dissing the unnamed director back, the *Twilight* star added, "And then the thing that I improved ended up in the trailer. So f\*\*\* you!"

Kendrick, meantime, has assumed the role of ship captain after directing *Woman of the Hour*, her first feature film. The life of serial killer Rodney Alcala and his engagement in the comedy *The Dating Game* while on a murderous rampage are dramatised in this American criminal thriller film, written by Ian McDonald and released in 2023.

## GISELE BÜNDCHEN ANNOUNCES PREGNANCY, TWO YEARS AFTER TOM BRADY SPLIT

Gisele Bündchen and her fiancé Joaquim Valente are apparently expecting their first child. Exactly two years after Gisele filed for divorce from Tom Brady, she announced that a baby was on the way. The model is most likely nearing the end of her second trimester, according to insiders. Thus, sometime in the first few months of 2025, the baby will be welcomed.

An insider close to the model and her boyfriend told, "Gisele and Joaquim are happy for this new chapter in their life and they're looking forward to creating a peaceful and loving environment for the whole family." According to reports, the couple is waiting for the baby's birth to determine whether it will be a boy or a girl; therefore, there won't be a gender reveal party.

This will be Gisele's third child; she already has a 14-year-old son named Benjamin and an 11-year-old daughter named Vivian from her previous marriage to Brady. Brady and the supermodel decided to share custody of their kids in their divorce settlement. John "Jack" Edward Thomas, 17, is the child of the former NFL player and her ex-girlfriend Bridget Moynahan, whom she also stepsmother. But according to reports, this will be her first child with Valente.

When Valente was seen on vacation in Costa Rica with her and her kids on November 22, she was initially connected to him romantically. In June 2023, they started dating, according to reports. However, since their outing occurred just one month after her



divorce from the former NFL star, she denied dating the Jiu-Jitsu trainer at the time.

Although the couple made a concerted effort to conceal their developing romance, it was made public in February that they were "deeply in love." A source told, "They were keeping things quiet—but recently there's been more PDA; they're happy to be affectionate with each other in public." A month later, Gisele hinted to Robin Roberts about her new relationship with Valente but insisted on keeping her love life "private."

## STANDALONE

KARMA, the talented rapper from Dehradun known for his hit tracks *BADA* featuring KSHMR and *Karta Kya Hai* featuring Raitaar, is excited to announce his much-anticipated India tour, *The Warm Up Tour*. Spanning ten cities across the country, the tour will bring his signature sound and high-energy performances to fans nationwide. The tour is set to deliver an unforgettable experience with a mix of his biggest hits and tracks from his latest EP, *How Much a Rhyme Costs*. Fans can look forward to electrifying performances, stunning visuals and a concert experience.



## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



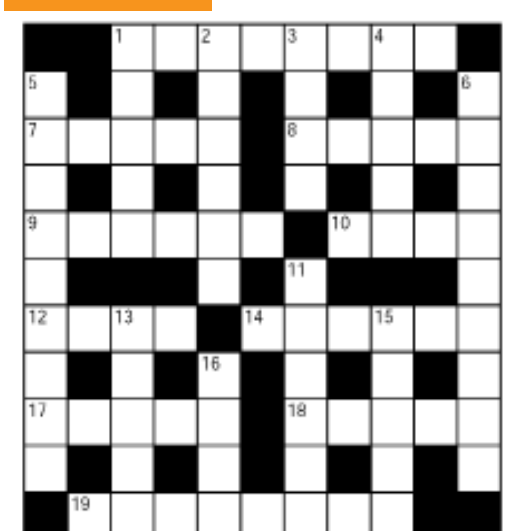
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### NANCY



### SUDOKU

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

ACROSS

- Fish tank
- Fewest
- Narrow shell
- Ottawa is the capital of this country
- Journey
- Slightly hot
- Thief
- Sweeten a drink with this
- A feeling of rage
- Obstinate

DOWN

- Once more
- Messy, disorganised
- Tumble over and over
- Beneath
- A watch's hands move in this direction
- Not permanent
- A red fruit used in salads
- Correct
- Start
- A creature with rippers

SOLUTION

P	L	A	S	T	A	N	G	E
U	N	I	G	O	L	I		
R	O	T	S	H	E	L		
C	H	I	S	H				
H	O	R	I	S	M	A	G	I
A	H	D	O	H				
S	H	O	E	S	C	O	O	L
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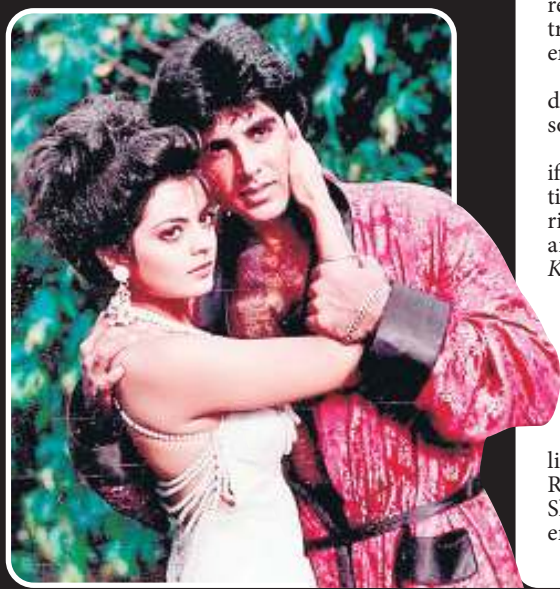
### GINGER MEGGS





## 'I'VE BEEN RECLUSIVE, NOT RETIRED'

**BEYOND THE GLITZ AND GLAMOUR OF BOLLYWOOD, SHEEBA AGARWAL SHARES HER TRUE SELF IN AN EXCLUSIVE CONVERSATION WITH THE PIONEER. WITH JIGRA MARKING HER SUPPOSEDLY RETURN TO THE BIG SCREEN, SHE REFLECTS ON HER JOURNEY, A NOT-REALLY COMEBACK AND ALSO HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL FITNESS AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE FILM INDUSTRY**



TEJAL SINHA  
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With a sparkle in her eyes and a flair for the dramatic, Sheeba Agarwal has established herself as a beloved and respected figure in Indian cinema. The queen of 90s Bollywood glamour with her timeless beauty has captivated audiences with her mesmerising presence in *Rangeela*, *Aar Ya Paar* and *Dil Ka Risha*. She once again reignited the silver screen with passion, drama and intrigue in the Alia Bhatt-starrer *Jigra*. With over two decades of cinematic excellence behind her, Sheeba's irresistible charm, wit and dedication to her craft promise an unforgettable experience.

Sheeba Agarwal plays the role of Mrs. Mehtani in *Jigra*. In a candid and insightful discussion, the renowned actress shared her thoughts on her remarkable journey in the film industry, offering a glimpse into her experiences, struggles and future endeavours.

But before anything else, she sits down with us to clear the air about her so-called "comeback" in Bollywood.

"I never really left the industry," clarifies the *Sanam Teri Kasam* fame. "I continued to act in films even after my marriage. I also had a great guest appearance in *Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahaani* last year."

"My journey hasn't been as gratifying as I would have liked it to be," she acknowledged, looking back on her career. Despite not achieving 100% career satisfaction, she takes pride in her extensive body of work, having collaborated with prominent actors like Akshay Kumar, Salman Khan, Rajinikanth, Saif Ali Khan and Suniel Shetty. "I worked with the entire generation of people," she added.

This film, in fact, saw her sharing

screen with her real-life husband. For the first time, folks!

When asked about breaking back into the industry, she emphasised the importance of choosing projects wisely. "When you do a very small part in a very huge film, you still get noticed," she noted. Her recent guest appearance in *Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahaani* and upcoming role in *Jigra* exemplify this strategic approach. "I did it mainly because of Dharma and Karan Johar and such a big ensemble cast."

*Jigra* marks her second collaboration with Dharma Productions, a partnership she cherishes. "To be seen with them, to work with them, is a very great high for an actor," she exclaimed. Praising Alia Bhatt, she added, "Today, Alia is one of the best in our industry. She's an actress who's very, very young, yet draws you into the scene." She expressed her admiration for women-led projects, citing *Jigra* as an example. "It's very satisfying to watch a woman helm a film, enact it and produce it. Alia is kick-ass in the film."

The actress frankly discussed the frustrations of an actor's life, including waiting for good roles, making mistakes and facing job insecurity. "Our mental health awareness is lacking. Do not work on your physical fitness; work on your mental fitness," she advised newcomers. She also highlighted the constant struggle to find meaningful work, saying, "It's not a part of an actor's journey; it's the actor's whole journey. Constantly waiting for good parts, constantly making mistakes and being jobless."

She condemned the prevalent body shaming and bullying in the industry. "People feel it's their right to say whatever comes to their mind because they feel you're public property... They don't understand that you're not a property." She recalled a recent instance of severe trolling faced by a young actress, say-

ing, "That girl will be heartbroken. She just started her journey."

She further acknowledges being selective about projects, choosing quality over quantity. "There's not a question of me going somewhere and then making my comeback. It's just that I have been reclusive and chose not to work a lot."

For now, her focus is on being part of good projects and ensuring decent releases. "I would like to be noble and say I'm focusing on the good parts, but good parts will come when I'm seen and when people know I want to work." She welcomed the seamless transition between film, TV and OTT platforms. "Today, an actor can make a transition from medium to medium, language to language, without compromising on the integrity of the actor."

Apart from *Jigra*, she mentioned her upcoming project, *Sonosuit Patel*, a thriller set against a Punjab-city backdrop, where she plays a poor Punjabi woman. However, she clarified that she opted out of *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3* due to a significantly reduced role.

Meanwhile, the actress reflected on her past projects, cherishing memories of films like *Suryavanshi*, *Hum Hain Kamaal Ke*, *Athisaya Piravi* and *Yeh Aag Kab Bujhegi*. Each film, she said, had its special moments and she cherished the friendships formed with her co-stars.

As the conversation concluded, it was evident that this veteran actress continues to navigate the industry's challenges while embracing new opportunities and championing women-centric storytelling.



## Dialogue with mortality

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Shadows of memory and delicate whispers of mortality filled Art Houz this past week, as *Memento Mori*, the striking solo exhibition by Nikil Inaya, transformed the gallery into a space of quiet reflection. Inspired by his late grandmother, Shanthanayaki Balasubramanian, Inaya's art drew viewers into an intimate world where every stroke seemed to echo both the fragility and the beauty of life. Grayscale portraits and symbolic still lifes blended classical finesse with a personal touch, evoking scenes both familiar and dreamlike. A centerpiece multimedia installation, an evocative tribute to his grandmother, resonated deeply, touching on the shared human experience of loss and remembrance.

Nikil Inaya, an artist known for his meditative approach to art, provides viewers with this much-needed pause. His latest exhibition, *Memento Mori*, goes beyond mere still-life or portraiture; it's a bridge to self-reflection, inviting viewers to ponder life, memory and mortality.

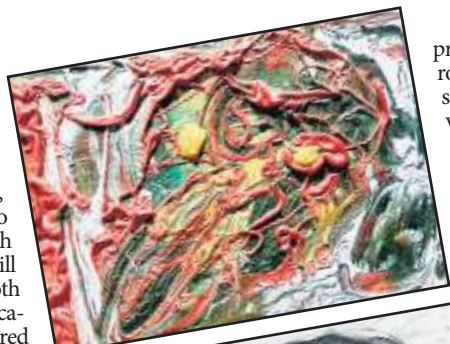
As the artist recounts, his artistic journey wasn't an intentional pursuit from childhood, but rather an organic evolution. "About ten years ago, I picked up a paintbrush," he recalls. Back then, he was chasing dreams of theater and drama in London, channeling his creative energies into auditioning for school plays and community projects. But even while immersed in the communal art of performance, Nikil found himself increasingly drawn to the solitary art of painting. Unlike theater, where countless individuals and moving parts contribute to the final production, painting offered him something precious—a "one-on-one conversation" with his own thoughts. It was just him, the canvas, and the silent language of paint.

This self-guided immersion in art is rooted in his family history. His mother, grandmother and younger sister are all artists in their own rights, trained in classical Indian music and Bharatanatyam. Art was simply "in the air," he says. Yet, the freedom of painting allowed Nikhil to distill his introspections into strokes and shades—a process that, as he describes, sometimes took on a life of its own.

In July, upon hearing of the passing of his grandmother Shanta Bala, the artist began a series of colored pencil works on paper as a tribute to their profound bond. For him, the series was more than a simple homage; it was a deeply introspective exploration of memory and loss. While odes felt overly formal and elegies transient, sonnets, with their rhythmic structure, inspired his approach. He envisioned these portraits as visual sonnets—not just capturing the subjects themselves, but the intricate relationships they shared with the ephemeral, encouraging viewers to find their own connections to memory and transcendence. In an accompanying multimedia installation, her essence is preserved in a photographic montage, depicting her surrounded by family, friends, and the broader community she touched. Set to David Lang's evocative composition *Just (After Song of Songs)*, the installation combines image and sound to create an ethereal homage, preserving her presence through a blend of visual and auditory storytelling.

One of the most defining moments of his creative journey came when he began working on *Memento Mori*. Initially a compilation of still-lives and portraits, the exhibit took on deeper meaning following the recent passing of his grandmother. The very act of collecting these pieces was both an homage to her memory and an exploration of the emotions that come with loss. "The flat seemed so empty," he shares, describing the profound silence that followed her departure. This empty space, both literal and emotional, formed the heartbeat of *Memento Mori*.

The exhibition title, *Memento Mori*, translates from Latin as "Remember, you must die." It's a theme heavy with historical and philosophical connotations, yet his approach is gentle rather than didactic. "I paint, but I don't want to dictate what viewers should feel," he explains. His aim is not to guide viewers across a



Delving into the heart of his artistic vision, Nikil Inaya speaks with THE PIONEER about *Memento Mori*, an evocative solo exhibition that not only honors his grandmother's memory but also illuminates the universal human experience of love, loss and legacy

predefined emotional journey but to leave room for their interpretations. The works, he suggests, are merely a bridge, a gateway to individual reflection. Themes like mortality, memory, and the brevity of life linger as undercurrents, providing a canvas for viewers to confront their personal narratives.

The ongoing portrait series, inspired by his last memories with his grandmother, alternates between abstract and figurative styles, capturing floral arrangements, perishables, busts and cherished items from his grandparents' collection. Each piece marks a distinct phase in his creative journey, as he used art to both reflect and express his evolving emotional landscape. Although most artists find their audience within themselves, for him, his grandmother was that audience. Her eclectic and discerning eye for art was a source of encouragement and insight, as she eagerly awaited each new piece and shared her unique interpretations.

The artworks themselves are reflections of Nikil's varied experiences with different artistic mediums. He has dabbled in oil, acrylic, and watercolors, each technique lending its unique texture and energy to his creations.

Watercolors, he says, respond to his very breath, carrying an ethereal quality that mimics life's transience. Oil painting, on the other hand, feels like a battle, its density and texture demanding a more assertive approach. "It's like attacking the board," he laughs, acknowledging the fierceness required.

Through this creative dialogue, he achieves a blend of styles that defy easy categorization. His works range from haunting grayscale portraits to carefully composed still-lives. He confesses, "I don't want to box myself into a style." This refusal to confine himself echoes his background in theater, where he learned the importance of versatility and adaptation.

The audience's response to *Memento Mori* has been both humbling and moving for the artist. During the opening, visitors shared personal stories of loss, connecting with the works not as mere spectators but as participants in a collective reflection. "It's an homage to my grandmother," Nikil notes, "but it's also so much more." In those exchanges, the exhibit took on a communal resonance, becoming a vessel for others to confront, mourn, and cherish memories of their own loved ones.

In a world often too hurried to dwell on life's fragility, *Memento Mori* serves as a gentle reminder that time is finite. Through his evocative works, Nikil Inaya encourages us all to pause, look closer, and remember the beauty and brevity of each passing moment. Nikil Inaya's work is not only an ode to memory but also an invitation to see art as a living, breathing relic of those who came before us.



## Surviving and thriving as working parent

For many families today, balancing work and parenting can be daunting, especially in light of establishing quality time between work and family. A proper work-life balance is conducive to the emotional comfort of both parents and children, averting prevalent symptoms of anxiety and stress conducive to care. Such balance should allow parents to enjoy their jobs while being available to their families. This is precisely how routines are set for toddlers: they need uninterrupted attention during play. Taking them out to play outdoors or engaging them in creative activities creates positive growth while strengthening family ties.

### Balancing act: Why it matters

This role of being a working parent does not create an individualistic concern but has also impacted society. The Pew Research Center states that 27% of the parents believe that this role as the working parent has stalled their career advancement. This challenge is particularly more significant in the case of mothers where 40% report that parenthood makes their career progression cumbersome compared to only 15% of fathers. This tension also builds up to bring in a feeling of inadequacy as a startling 38% of parents believe that, by working, they hinder effectiveness in being a good parent. A new study revealed that 55 percent of working mothers and their children under 18 are victims of work-family conflict, leading to forgoing personal and professional development. For many children, parenting plays an important role in well-being, but there's always that nagging decision weighing the fulfillments of work obligations against being available for significant family events.

### Ripple effects

This imbalance affects the entire community at the family level. Their stored stress experienced while trying to thrive in both spheres leads to burnout, anxiety, and depression among working parents. Studies have reported that work- and parenting-related stress can cause severe mental health problems in parents and among their children. The pressure of being a good parent and a perfect employee easily becomes a vicious circle of guilt and self-doubt easily heightened by parenthood's demanding nature.

### STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN BALANCE AT:

Parents can use a few strategies to chart a smooth course through the choppy waters of work and family life. Among the tips to achieve that elusive balance are:



- 1. Achieve realistic expectations:** No human is perfect. Strive for balance rather than perfection in both roles.
- 2. Prioritize and delegate:** Identify your most important tasks and delegate less critical ones. This will help focus your energy on what truly matters, both at work and at home.
- 3. Communicate openly:** Educate your employer about your needs and be open to flexible work arrangements. Most companies are flexible nowadays when adopting parents' needs.
- 4. Utilise networks of support:** Develop a good network of support of foster parents, family, and friends who can offer you the proper support at any given opportunity. This minimizes pressure on you as you pursue opportunities in your career.
- 5. Accept flexibility:** Should it be possible, seek flexible working arrangements with greater control over one's schedule. Work from home or flexible timings and compressed work weeks can be considered.
- 6. Care for your self:** Look after your body and mind. This tends to contribute not only to your well-being but also to that of your family as well.
- 7. Tolerate the imperfect:** Realise that it is perfectly okay to make mistakes. Parenting is a learning experience, and it's too stressful to be too hard on oneself.
- 8. Kids at work:** Many companies or workspaces allow parents to bring their kids to work. Bringing your toddlers to crèche at workplaces allows you to connect with them from time to time. This does not only allow
- 9. Stay connected:** Technology has reduced distance drastically. Nowadays, it is very easy to connect with people over FaceTime or via social media. Parents can use this to their benefit by calling their young ones at frequent intervals. This not only helps them to stay informed about their kid's well-being but also helps them to reduce stress after a strenuous meeting.

Balancing work and parenting is not only a personal challenge but also an imperative for society. The practice of conducting a family life and a professional career in harmony with each other can bring greater joy and health to your family relationships along with higher performance and achievement at your place of employment. The road is a tough one, but worth the effort. This helps parents balance work and family life more effectively through open communication and support. As we rethink the modern workplace, it's time to create family-friendly environments that benefit everyone and make life easier for parents and kids alike!

(The author, Preeti Bhandary, is the co-founder and director of Curriculum at Little Elly.)



# Maxwell reveals Kohli blocked him on Instagram for mocking his shoulder injury

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell has revealed that Virat Kohli had blocked him on Instagram after he mocked the Indian batting maestro following his shoulder injury during the 2017 Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Kohli and Maxwell were not the best of friends until the Australian joined IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bengaluru in 2021 for a whopping Rs 14.25 crore. Maxwell said that he tried to follow Kohli on Instagram, only to discover that he had been blocked by the former India captain. "When I knew I was going to RCB, Virat was the first guy to message me and welcome me to the team. When I turned up for the pre-IPL training camp, we obviously got chatting and



spent a fair bit of time training together as you do," Maxwell said during the Willow Talk podcast on LISTNR Sport.

"So, I go to his social media (to) follow him. Didn't even think about it before that. Never really crossed my mind.

I was like, 'I can't find him.' 'I'm sure he's on social media somewhere, so I didn't think anything of it. Not really that

maybe he wasn't savvy with Instagram. "Didn't really understand why he wasn't coming up, and then, someone mentioned that 'He might have blocked you. That is the only way you're not able to find him.' I was like, 'Surely not.'" During the 2017 Test series in India, Kohli suffered a shoulder injury while fielding during the Ranchi match. Later during the Test, Maxwell imitated Kohli by clutching his right shoulder. Kohli, who missed the subsequent Dharamsala Test due to injury, did not like it. "I went and asked him 'Have you blocked me on Instagram?' And, he was like, 'Yeah, probably. It was when you mocked me during that Test match. I think I got the sh\*\*\* and decided to block you,'" Maxwell continued. "I was like, 'Yeah, that's fair

enough'. So yeah, he (then) ended up unblocking me, and we became great friends after that." "WE'VE HAD QUITE A FUNNY RELATIONSHIP": Since then, the two have settled their differences, working together at RCB. "It was a nice little story to have as a little side note, but we've had quite a funny relationship leading up to playing the IPL together. Sharing that dressing room and sharing experiences, becoming parents, I suppose, around the same time," Maxwell said. "From the days we were both young and brash and going hard at each other on the field. We were in the front and centre of all that as well, sort of being the orchestrator like 'Maxi, get into his face. Say some words to him and get the young guy to do the hard work," he added.



## Harshit Rana to join Indian squad in Mumbai ahead of third Test

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rookie pacer Harshit Rana will join the Indian squad ahead of the third Test against New Zealand in Mumbai after starring in Delhi's first outright win of the ongoing Ranji Trophy season. Rana, who was already among the reserves, was released for Delhi's match against Assam before the second Test in Pune that India lost by 113 runs to concede an unassailable 0-2 lead in the series. This was the team's first loss in a Test rubber at home in 12 years. Rana will join the Indian squad in Mumbai on Wednesday, two days before the match gets underway at the Wankhede Stadium. But it remains unclear if his presence in the dressing room will be as a reserve or as a member. The 22-year-old has been picked in the main squad for the five Tests in Australia beginning November 22 in Perth. "Harshit will join the team tomorrow," said a BCCI source. With Indian team management carefully monitoring the workload ahead of the

Australia tour, there is a possibility that spearhead Jasprit Bumrah is rested from the third Test, raising the possibility of Rana's debut. Rana had taken a five-wicket haul against Assam in the first innings and followed it up with two wickets in the second essay. Delhi won the game by 10 wickets. Delhi head coach Sarandeep Singh said Rana is ready for the grind of Test cricket. "He is ready to play Test cricket. He is a positive guy, he knows what he is doing. He is ready for the highest level," Sarandeep, a former BCCI selector, told PTI. "He bowled his heart out for Delhi, he is always looking for wickets and is handy all rounder. He is like a horse, can bowl long spells. I hope he does really well in Australia," he added. Rana bowled 19.3 overs in the first innings for his five wicket haul against Assam before taking two wickets in 11 overs in the second. His 59 in the first innings helped Delhi take the first innings lead. Rana had also impressed in two games he played in the Duleep Trophy last month.



## Deepthi Sharma reaches career-high second spot in ICC ODI bowlers rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

India off-spinner Deepthi Sharma has been rewarded for her excellent recent form as she moved up two places to reach career-high second spot in the latest ICC women's ODI rankings for bowlers on Tuesday. On the back of some strong performances in the recent ICC Women's T20 World Cup in the UAE, Deepthi has been one of India's best players through the opening two matches of her side's ongoing white-ball series against New Zealand at home. Deepthi has three wickets from two matches against the White Ferns at a miserly economy rate of 3.42. It has seen Deepthi gain two places to move to second on the table, and the senior India spinner has closed in on England tweaker and No.1 ranked ODI bowler Sophie Ecclestone. There is also some movement outside the top 10, with the New Zealand trio of Lea Tahuhu (up three places to 12th), Amelie Kerr (up one

spot to 13th) and Sophie Devine (up nine rungs to equal 30th) building on their recent success at the T20 World Cup. Devine (up three rungs to eighth) and Kerr (up one spot to 11th) also gain some ground on the latest list for ODI bowlers, with compatriots Suzie Bates (up two spots to equal 15th) and Maddy Green (up seven places to 18th) making gains following some decent scores against India. Right-hander Jemimah Rodrigues (up three rungs to equal 30th) is the big winner on the ODI batter rankings from an India perspective, while Deepthi (up one place to third) and Devine (up two spots to seventh) both make some ground on the latest list for ODI all-rounders. There is also some joy for a pair of Zimbabwe players, with Chipo Mugeru-Tiripano gaining 21 spots to move to 28th on the batter rankings and teammate Josephine Nkomo improving 13 places to move to 32nd on the list for ODI bowlers after some impressive efforts in their recent series against the USA.

## Paine says he doesn't regret sledging Ashwin in 2020-21 Sydney Test

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former Australia captain and wicketkeeper batter Tim Paine doesn't regret sledging Ravichandran Ashwin during the third Test of the 2020-21 Border-Gavaskar Trophy, saying he did it to unsettle the India off-spinner, who was "annoying" him by getting his wicket frequently. After losing the series opener at Adelaide, India defied all odds to clinch the series 2-1. Ashwin played a vital role in drawing the third Test in Sydney, batting for 42.4 overs with an aching back alongside Hanuma Vihari. After failing to break Ashwin's resolve with the bat, Paine started poking the Indian from behind the stumps. "I can't wait to get you to the Gabba, Ash, I'll tell you what, woohoo," Paine said ahead of an over from off-spinner Nathan Lyon. But Paine does not regret it. "No, I don't because to this day Ashwin didn't play in that (Brisbane) Test match. I wasn't talking to the Indians, I was talking



to him. I said we cannot wait to get you to the Gabba. "...Because he was annoying us, fair to say. He is a fantastic cricketer. He was getting me out all the time and that was annoying me as well," Paine said in a podcast of 'thegradecricketer'. Ashwin too replied in kind to Paine, saying: "Just like we wanna get you to India. That will be your last series."

Paine said the sledge was aimed at the Indian spinner. "But no, that was purely directed straight at him and he pulled out of that Test match because of back spasm." "Did I have a great game in that match? No, but I fronted up. Actually day one of the Test match he (Ashwin) was jogging laps. Those back spasms couldn't have been that bad," he added.

## NZ batter Kane Williamson to miss third Test against India

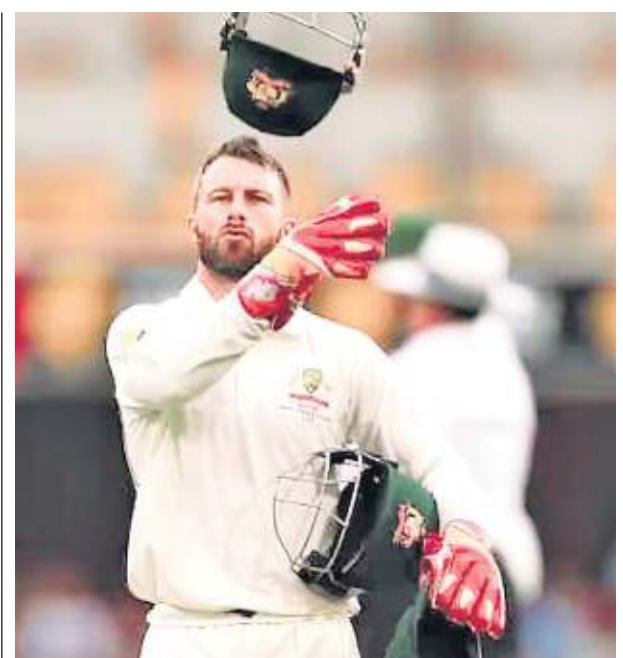
PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Senior batter Kane Williamson will miss the third Test against India at Mumbai to ensure full recovery from a groin injury ahead of the home series versus England, starting from November 28. Williamson did not play in the first two Tests against India, which the Kiwis won to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. It also ended India's 18-series winning streak at home dating back to 2012. The final Test of the rubber will be played at the Wankhede Stadium from November 1. "Kane continues to show good signs, but isn't quite ready to jump on a plane and join us,"



NZ head coach Gary Stead said in a media release. "While things are looking promising, we think the best course of action is for him to stay in New Zealand and focus on the final part of his rehabilitation so he'll be good to go for England," Stead

added. The first Test between New Zealand and England will be played at Christchurch. "The England series is still a month away so taking the cautious approach now will ensure he is ready for the first Test in Christchurch," Stead said. The series defeat against the Black Caps has pruned India's hopes of qualifying for next year's World Test Championship (WTC) final despite still holding on to the top spot with 62.82 percentage points. Now, they need to win the third Test against the Kiwis, and also ensure a series victory over Australia in the five-match rubber starting next month.



## Aussie wicketkeeper batter Matthew Wade retires, moves to coaching role

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Matthew Wade, a T20 World Cup winner in 2021, on Tuesday retired from international cricket, and will now start working in a coaching role in Australia's white-ball set-up. Wade, a wicketkeeper batter, will join Australia's coaching staff under Andre Borovec for the upcoming T20I series against Pakistan, and the Tasmanian will also be with the group for the ODI series starting at Melbourne next week. The 36-year-old has played 36 Tests, 97 ODIs and 92 T20Is in a career that spanned across 13 years, and his last appearance for the national team was in this year's T20 World Cup. However, Wade will continue to play domestic cricket for Tasmania and Big Bash League for Hobart Hurricanes at least for the next two seasons. "I was fully aware my international days were most likely over at the end of the last T20 World Cup. My international retirement and coaching have been a constant conversation with George (Bailey) and Andrew

(McDonald) over the past six months," Wade said in a statement released by Cricket Australia. "Coaching has been on my radar over the last few years and thankfully some great opportunities have come my way, for which I am very grateful and excited," he added. The left-handed batter thanked CA and teammates for the support throughout his career. "As my international career closes, I want to thank all of my Australian teammates, staff and coaches. I enjoyed the ride as challenging as it can be at international level," Wade said. "Without good people around me I would have never got as much out of myself as I did," he added. Cricket Australia CEO Nick Hockley said: "Congratulations to Matthew on what has been a wonderful international career during which his skill and versatility has made him an outstanding performer across all formats. "I'm delighted he will add to his massive contribution by coaching the next generation of stars."

## Rizwan was initially reluctant but later accepted Pak white-ball captaincy: Source



PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan's new white-ball captain Muhammad Rizwan, after initial reluctance, has agreed to the PCB's new selection policy and will not have any voting right in the short-listing of touring squads or the playing eleven, according to a source in the board. "After discussions with the (Pakistan Cricket) Board chairman, Mohsin Naqvi, and senior selector, Aaqib Javed, Rizwan agreed to the new system where his input in the selection process would be strictly advisory," a source said. Pakistan's white-ball head coach, Gary Kirsten, resigned on Monday as he did not agree to be a part of the selection process in an advisory capacity. He also had some other issues with the PCB. The source said that Rizwan had been assured by the PCB and Aaqib that he would be consulted in finalising teams but the final decision would rest with the five selectors. "Under the new policy, the selection committee is now responsible for selecting touring squads and the playing eleven," the source said. The new regime was introduced by the PCB after Pakistan suffered a massive defeat against England in the first Test in Multan earlier this month. Following the innings defeat, new selectors Aaqib, Azhar Ali and Aleem Dar were added to the committee and they were given sweeping powers to select the teams without the consent of the captain or head coach. The PCB is also sending national selector Asad Shafiq with the team to Australia for the white-ball matches to select the playing eleven after speaking with the other selectors in Pakistan.

## After Sumit's ton on day three, pacers power Delhi to 10-wicket win over Assam

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sumit Mathur's batting heroics coupled with pacers brilliant performance powered Delhi to a comprehensive 10-wicket win over Assam in their Ranji Trophy Group A match to notch up their first victory of the season here on Tuesday. Courtesy left-handed batter Mathur's 112 off 230 balls, Delhi posted 454 in reply to Assam's first innings total of 330, and reduced the visitors to 44 for 3 in their second essay on Monday. On the fourth and final day, Assam were bowled out for 182 in 42 overs with the Delhi pacers doing their job to perfection. The pacers accounted for eight Assam batters in their second innings at the Arun Jaitley Stadium. Just after the start of the day, Assam lost three wickets for the addition of a mere one run. Sibsankar Roy (4), Bhargav Dutta (0) and captain Danish Das (1), who retired hurt on Monday but came back to bat on Tuesday, were dismissed in the space of eight balls. Number 7 batter Sumit Ghadigaonkar (76 not out off 96 balls) made a spirited late-order resistance but his colleagues did not give him company and he ran out of partners in the end. Delhi pacer Harshit Rana, who has been named in the Indian squad for the



marquee Test tour of Australia starting next month, took another wicket on Tuesday to add to the one on Monday for innings figure of 2/61. His pace colleagues Siddhant Sharma (3/24) and Money Grewal (3/50) grabbed three wickets apiece to rattle Assam in the second innings. Off-spinner Jonty Sidhu (1/0) also got one

wicket, while the other was run-out. Assam added 138 runs for the loss of seven wickets on Tuesday and faced 27 overs. Set a target of 59 runs, Delhi openers Sanat Sangwan (34 not out) and Gagan Vats (25 not out) knocked off the required runs in 16.1 overs without losing any wicket.

Delhi made 62/0 in 16.1 overs in their second innings to collect seven points. Assam did not get any point. Delhi are in third place with 11 points in Group D, having drawn their earlier two matches. On Monday, all-rounder Mathur, ignored in the first two games, showed his prowess with a patient century to put Delhi in sight of an outright victory against Assam.

### BRIEF SCORES:

**IN DELHI:** Assam 330 and 182 all out in 42 overs (Sumit Ghadigaonkar 76 not out; Siddhant Sharma 3/24, Money Grewal 3/50, Harshit Rana 2/61). **Delhi** 454 and 62/0 in 16.1 overs (Sanat Sangwan 34 not out; Gagan Vats 25 not out). Delhi won by 10 wickets. **Points:** Delhi 7, Assam 0. **IN COIMBATORE: Chhattisgarh** 500. **Tamil Nadu** 259 and (f/o) 264/4 in 76 overs (Vijay Shankar 106 not out, Narayan Jagadeesan 60; Ajay Mandal 2/49). Match drawn. **Points:** Chhattisgarh 3, Tamil Nadu 0. **IN JAMSHEDPUR: Jharkhand** 202 and 130 all out in 50.3 overs (Sharandeep Singh 64, Virat Singh 30; Nishunk Birla 3/17, Raj Bawa 3/22, Vishu Kashyap 3/46). **Chandigarh** 290 and 45/0 in 3.3 overs. Chandigarh won by 10 wickets.



## Raghava Lawrence stars in *Kaala Bhairava*, his 25th film

Koneru Satyanarayana, famous for creating successful movies such as *Rakshasudu* and *Khiladi*, is currently occupied with the production of various projects. Not long ago, a movie was revealed to have Ramesh Varma as its director. The main actor in the movie is the multi-talented and energetic Raghava Lawrence. By the way, this movie will be Raghava Lawrence's 25th film as an actor after transitioning from being a choreographer. The same production house that collaborated with Director Ramesh Varma on *Rakshasudu* and *Khiladi* is also working on this Raghava Lawrence film.

The movie is said to be of the action-adventure genre and is currently being filmed. The initial glance and the headline were revealed on Tuesday. The film was named *Kaala Bhairava* and the first look of Raghava Lawrence was unveiled. The initial poster captivates with fascinating

features. This enormous venture is being executed with a substantial budget of 200 crores. Koneru Satyanarayana and Manish Shah have produced *Kaala Bhairava* on a large scale. The makers have been diligently and passionately working to offer audiences an unparalleled theatrical experience. *Kaala Bhairava* is set to have a big launch in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi languages. Filming will start in November 2024 and the movie is scheduled to be released in summer 2025.

## JATHARA TRAILER PROMISES SPINE-CHILLING EXPERIENCE

The thriller *Jathara* is set to hit screens soon. Directed by Satish Babu Ratakonda and produced by Radhakrishna Reddy and Shiva Shankar Reddy, *Jathara* promises an intense and raw drama with a unique storyline, as seen in the trailer released on Tuesday. The film is set against the backdrop of Chittoor district, according to the makers. The trailer was unveiled by renowned producer Raj Kandukuri at an event in Hyderabad.

In the film, mysterious incidents occur in a village where dark forces target the protagonist, a devoted follower of the goddess. Alongside suspense, the film weaves spiritual and action elements, as well as a compelling love story. The makers have assured viewers that the movie will deliver a truly thrilling experience, filled with goosebumps.

Based on true events, *Jathara* promises a nail-biting narration and stunning visuals. The trailer showcases exceptional performances and high technical standards. Satish Babu not only directs the film but also stars as the lead actor and serves as the writer. Deeya Raj plays the female lead. The makers are planning for a release next week.

## Jai Hanuman's first look drops today!



Tollywood fans, brace yourselves! Following the phenomenal success of *HanuMan*, which captured hearts and shattered box-office records, Prasanth Varma is back with a bang! The visionary director is all set to launch the eagerly awaited sequel, *Jai HanuMan*, part of his grand Prasanth Varma Cinematic Universe (PVCU). And with the powerhouse production of Mythri Movie Makers backing the project, the excitement is visible.

*HanuMan* wasn't just a film; it was a sensation. This sleeper hit raked in a staggering Rs 350 crore worldwide, making it the second highest-grossing Telugu and South Indian film of 2024 and the fourth highest-grossing Indian film of the year. It even carved a spot as the eighth highest-grossing Telugu movie of all time!

As Diwali approaches, fans are buzzing with excitement for what's to come. The pre-look poster, recently unveiled, shows an awe-inspiring visual of Lord Hanuman walking toward an ancient temple, a sight that has only intensified anticipation for the first look, set to be revealed today. Prasanth Varma's grand vision for *Jai HanuMan* is not only expected to honour Indian mythology but also to kick-start what could be the biggest superhero universe inspired by the richness of Indian history.

With producers Naveen Yerneni and Y. Ravi Shankar promising high production values and cutting-edge technical standards, this Diwali teaser promises to be just the beginning. And with no lead actor announced yet, fans are eagerly speculating who will don the mantle of the mighty Hanuman!



## ANR AWARD IS CROWN JEWEL OF MY CINEMATIC JOURNEY: CHIRANJEEVI

SURESH KAVIRAYANI  
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Almost all Tollywood celebrities received awards at the ANR National Award ceremony for 2024, held at Annapurna Studios. Initiated by Akkineni Nageswara Rao (ANR) himself, these awards aim to perpetuate his legacy by honouring individuals who have significantly impacted Indian cinema. This year, the ANR National Award was presented to Megastar Chiranjeevi for his remarkable contributions to Indian cinema. The award was given by none other than the legendary actor Amitabh Bachchan.

In addition to many Tollywood personalities and other celebrities, the entire Akkineni family attended this prestigious ceremony. The event began with a musical performance by MM Keeravani. Singers paid tribute to ANR by performing his classic songs, evoking cherished memories. The atmosphere turned especially emotional when ANR's last words from the ICU were played, deeply moving everyone. The final visuals of ANR brought the audience to tears, creating a poignant moment that honoured his enduring legacy.

During the event, Nagarjuna shared, "The three letters ANR mean the world not just to me, but also to my family, friends, fans and well-wishers. My father believed in philosophy, humanity, empowering people, family and friendship in diversity. Most of all, he believed in cinema. Today, people strive to have just a few of these qualities. But he had all of them. That's why people like him remain a concept and a legend—a legend that lives on." Nagarjuna added that the ANR Award is an effort to honour such personalities and to thank them for setting an example for future generations, showing that a true hero shines even after the director says "cut."

At this event, Nagarjuna described the "ABC" of Indian cinema: "A, B and C—the legend who walks, Amitabh Bachchan Ji, and the Megastar, Chiranjeevi," he said. He shared that this year is especially meaningful to his family because the award was given to his dear friend and brother, Chiranjeevi. "The award has been presented by another legend whom I admired all my



life and who has also been a part of all your lives—our beloved Amitabh Bachchan Ji," said Nagarjuna. Interestingly, the ANR Award was given to Amitabh Bachchan a few years ago. "We thank you now for graciously agreeing to present it to Chiranjeevi Garu; it means the world to us, as this is the centenary year of ANR Garu," said Nagarjuna. He went on to praise Amitabh Bachchan for his portrayal of Aswathama in *Kalki* and other works. Recalling a memory from 1985, Nagarjuna shared, "When I was considering entering the film industry, Chiranjeevi and his team were shooting a song at Annapurna Studios. My father called me over and said, 'Chiranjeevi is dancing on that floor; go take a look. If you want to get into films, you might as well learn a bit of dance.' Radha was also there. Watching him dance with such grace and charisma left me in awe. I thought, 'Can I ever dance like that?' That's when I decided to make my mark in a different way. He's such a warm and hospitable person," he said of Chiranjeevi. Nagarjuna also commended Chiranjeevi's ongoing social work, especially during COVID-19, when he supported film industry workers through his charitable trust. Amitabh Bachchan praised Nagarjuna and his family for upholding ANR's legacy. "I want to express my gratitude to Nag, the foundation and the entire

family for keeping alive the legacies we had the privilege to observe—legacies that walked this earth, enriching Telugu cinema and the entire film industry with happiness, joy, entertainment and culture. It's challenging for anyone to match ANR's contribution to Indian cinema. Nag, to you and your family, I want to express my gratitude for carrying on your father's legacy," said Bachchan.

He also shared his admiration for Chiranjeevi's unwavering support over the years. "I'm deeply honoured that you've chosen me to present this award to my dear friend and colleague, Chiranjeevi. Now I proudly say that I'm a member of the Telugu film industry. I want to thank Chiranjeevi for his friendship, concern, love, affection, humility and hospitality. He sent me so much lunch that I could have fed the entire hotel. Please consider me a member of the Telugu film industry from now on," he added.

Upon receiving the award, Chiranjeevi expressed his admiration for Amitabh, calling him a guru, mentor and source of inspiration. "Whenever something good happens in my life or any occasion occurs in our family, he's the first to send messages of good wishes and blessings. Sometimes, he even graces these events with his presence. I feel incredibly fortunate to have such a prominent figure of India here with me as I receive this award," said Chiranjeevi. He recalled a fond memory from his Hindi film *Pratibandh* (1990), when Amitabh praised his performance as "powerful" and "purposeful." "Those words gave me immense energy. I felt like a child that day," said Chiranjeevi. During the making of *Sye Raa*, Chiranjeevi asked Bachchan to play a cameo as his guru and Bachchan immediately accepted, much to everyone's delight.

Chiranjeevi also recalled how Amitabh travelled to Hyderabad at his own expense for *Sye Raa* and completed his role without any formality, showing love and affection in his own way. "On the last day, I hesitantly asked him about fulfilling the formalities and he simply refused," said Chiranjeevi.

Reflecting on his journey, Chiranjeevi shared, "I once received the legendary award during the *Vajrotsavam* celebrations and while it made me incredibly happy, it didn't feel like a complete win. Receiving the Great ANR award from Amitabh Bachchan and hearing my friend say I have all the qualifications makes me feel like I have won both at home and beyond," he said.

Chiranjeevi also revealed that his mother is a big fan of ANR. "She's a senior fan of ANR. She was pregnant with me in Mogalthur when one of ANR's films released. Despite a minor accident, she insisted on watching the film. I feel my admiration for ANR came through her. I grew up dancing to his songs. ANR was my inspiration for dance. I'll never forget his words in an interview: 'I might have been the first dancer in Telugu, but Chiranjeevi brought grace to that dance,'" he said.

Chiranjeevi recalled working alongside ANR in several films, describing him as a fatherly figure. Over time, that affection extended to Nagarjuna, whom he credits with sharing health tips that keep him looking young. "He's not only my friend and brother but also a doctor to me. The principles he taught me are the reason I look so young. Their family feels like my own," he said. "Receiving this award after legends like Dev Anand, Lata Mangeshkar, Amitabh Bachchan, Shyam Benegal, Rekha and K Balachander completes my cinematic journey. I'll cherish this moment for a lifetime. I'm very grateful to Subbarami Reddy's committee for selecting me and I extend my gratitude to them as well," Chiranjeevi concluded.

## A SEQUEL COULD BE DEVELOPED FOR KA: PRODUCER GOPALAKRISHNA

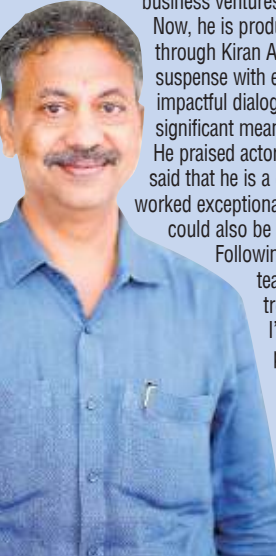
The film *KA* stars Kiran Abbavaram with Nayan Sarika and Tanvi Ram as the female leads and it is produced by Chinta Gopalakrishna Reddy. Sujith and Sandeep are the directors and the film is releasing on October 31.

Talking about the film, producer Gopalakrishna Reddy said that he hails from Rajahmundry from a farming family. "My passion for music since childhood sparked my interest in films," said Reddy. He produced a film titled *Ippudu Kaaka Inkeppudu* during the lockdown, aiming to support new talent. "My goal is not to make money, but I want to gain experience by producing smaller films. Recognition for creating quality cinema is what truly matters to me," said Reddy.

He then worked as a co-producer for the film *Yashoda* that starred Samantha. "I gained experience and recognition with that film. I entered this field with the intention of helping others and providing employment, so I believe I won't face difficulties as a producer. I balance filmmaking with my business ventures," he said.

Now, he is producing *KA* which he got through Kiran Abbavaram. "It combines suspense with emotional depth, featuring impactful dialogues that convey significant meaning," said the producer. He praised actor Kiran Abbavaram and said that he is a dedicated actor who worked exceptionally hard on *KA*. "A sequel could also be developed from this film."

Following the release of our teaser trailer, it became a trend, and as a producer, I'm thrilled that so many people are discussing our movie today," he said. Gopalakrishna Reddy is also co-producing a movie titled *Sarangapani Jatakam* with producer Sivalekha Krishnaprasad.



## Chandoo Mondeti takes up a challenge with *Rahasya Idam Jagath*

National Award-winning director Chandoo Mondeti released the trailer for *Rahasya Idam Jagath* on Tuesday. The trailer indicates that the movie is a blend of science-fiction, thriller and includes mythological elements. The promotional content hints at a mix of science fiction, ancient myths and epics. The movie is scheduled to be released on November 8.

The main roles are being played by Rakesh Galebi, Sravanthi Pratiapati, Manasa Veena and Bhargav Gopinatham. Komal R Bharadwaj directed the film and Padma Ravinuthala and Hiranya Ravinuthala produced it. "The concept of this film excites me, especially because it aligns with topics I personally connect with, read about and research. The idea of wormholes is fascinating to me," said Chandoo Mondeti, who attended as the chief guest and released the trailer.

He cited the example of the Malaysian Airlines 370, which disappeared in 2014. "A flight disappeared without a trace, despite our advanced technology. In my deep research, the concept of wormholes came up, and I found it intriguing to link it with mythology—stories of Hanuman, the Skanda Purana and Narada. Balancing these aspects has made this film a unique project. It's a challenge to make a film like this," said Chandoo. Director Komal R. Bharadwaj said that he made this film with the inspiration from Chandoo Mondeti's *Karthikeya*. "This film will provide a grand theatrical experience, blending mythological and science-fiction elements in a way that resonates with modern viewers. I believe it will offer audiences a novel experience with visually stunning scenes and engaging themes," said director Komal.

## Satya Dev's *Zebra* locks release date

Actors Satya Dev and Kannada star Daali Dhananjaya lead the cast in *Zebra*, directed by Eashwar Karthic and produced by SN Reddy and S Padmaja. On Tuesday, the filmmakers announced the release date as November 22. The teaser, released a few days prior, has generated anticipation and was well received. Satya Dev expressed high hopes for the film, calling it a promising break for the entire cast.

Promotions have already begun, and since many cast members come from different film industries, *Zebra* will also be released in multiple languages. The film stars Sathyaraj, Satya Akkala, Jennifer Piccinato, Sunil, and Priya Bhavani Shankar in key roles. Ravi Basur, famed for *KGF*, provides the music for the film.

