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**'India not looking at US-China tension as source of benefit'**

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**MITHYA 2: ELEVATING MURDER MYSTERY GENRE**

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**Sundeep Kishan's Tantrums Disrupt Majaka SHOOT**

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**QUOTE OF THE DAY**

**The pioneer**

**How can you be scared of a single WhatsApp status, Chitti Naidu? How can police beat a BRS karyakarta with a belt for questioning election promises on Whatsapp status? No one needs to fear intimidation from hollow leaders like Revanth Reddy. Congress-backed police should be mindful of their actions. Once BRS returns to power, every injustice will be addressed**

**- KTR, BRS MLA P4**

**DON'T MISS...**

**Govt plans to double income of...**

The Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD), P Narayana, emphasised that detailed information about the socioeconomic status of citizens is essential for the successful implementation of welfare and development schemes targeting underprivileged communities. He added that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is committed to supporting members of DWACRA and MEPMA. Training attendees at a one-day training programme on the MEMPA Self Help...

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**Lightning strikes firecrackers...**

Two women workers were killed five others were injured when lightning struck on a firecracker making unit on the outskirts of Surya Rao Palem village in Undrajavaram mandal in East Godavari district on Wednesday. Police said that when firecrackers were being made, lightning struck on a coconut tree located on the premises of the unit resulting in the firecrackers exploding killing two women on the spot. Five women were injured in the incident and they were admitted to the GGH at Nidadavole...

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**India's gold imports jump to...**

The country's gold imports, which have a bearing on the country's current account deficit (CAD), rose by 21.78 per cent to USD 27 billion during April-September this fiscal due to strong domestic demand, according to the government data. The imports stood at US\$ 22.25 billion in April-September 2023-24. An industry expert said that the ongoing festival demand is helping the increase in imports. In 2023-24, India's gold imports surged 30 per cent to US\$ 45.54 billion. Switzerland is the...

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**Easwaran, Nitish Reddy, Prasidh...**

The outings of Abhimanyu Easwaran, Nitish Kumar Reddy and Prasidh Krishna will be the primary focal points of India A's four-day match against their Australian counterparts, starting here on Thursday. Easwaran, Nitish and Prasidh have been included in India's squad for the five-Test Border-Gavaskar Trophy series, beginning on November 22, and the thinktank will be eager to know how they fare in Australian conditions. Easwaran's performance will, however, have far more significance...

**-SPORTS**

## 25 lakh diyas lit, 1,121 people performing aarti

PNS ■ AYODHYA

Two Guinness World Records - most people performing aarti simultaneously and the largest display of oil lamps - were set at the eighth edition of Deepotsav here on Wednesday.

The two records were set in the holy city with over 25 lakh earthen lamps (diyas) lit together and 1,121 'vedacharyas' (teachers of religious texts) performing aarti simultaneously.

Pravin Patel, the adjudicator at Guinness World Records, who visited Ayodhya with Guinness Consultant Nischal Bharot for

### AYODHYA LIGHTS UP GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS



verification, announced the new records here on Wednesday evening. "With a total of 1,121, UP Tourism, District administration of Ayodhya and Saryu Aarti Samiti, you are the Guinness World Records title holder for most people performing diya rotations simultaneously. Congratulations!" Patel declared. On the second record, the Guinness adjudicator said, "With

a total of 25,12,585, which translates into just over 25 lakh, UP Tourism, Govt of UP, District Administration of Ayodhya, and Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Avadh University, you are the new Guinness World Records title holder for the largest display of oil lamps!"

Patel said he was "absolutely delighted" to verify not one but two Guinness World Record titles - most people performing aarti simultaneously and the largest display of oil lamps.

He said that "most people performing diya rotations (aarti) simultaneously" is a brand new

record. "This could not have been set up with just one diya so a minimum target of 250 was set," he said. For the largest display of oil lamps, the previous record was 22,23,676. "While it is important that we have the numbers it is also important that you follow the guidelines. You have met the guidelines for both records," Patel noted.

Deepostav -- a glowing spectacle marked by the lighting of diyas -- is being organised in Ayodhya on a day prior to Diwali since 2017 on the banks of the Saryu river that passes through the holy town revered as the birthplace of Lord Ram.

## DEEPAM GLOWS IN AP

As Deepavali gift, CM releases funds for super six scheme

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The supply of free cooking gas cylinder scheme, which is part of the Super Six promises, has come into force as the State government has released the necessary funds for the Deepam-2 scheme.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, on Wednesday, handed over the funds to representatives of the gas companies. The Chief Minister handed over the subsidy amount to the representatives of Bharat Petroleum, Hindustan Petroleum and Indian Oil Corporation at the first block in the State Secretariat.

The State government has decided to supply three cooking gas cylinders per year for



all the eligible women in the State as promised by Chandrababu Naidu during the recent election campaign. The Cabinet, at its recent meeting, gave its consent for the total expenditure of Rs 2,684 crore per annum for the supply of these free cylinders.

The Chief Minister handed over the cheques to the petroleum company representatives for an amount of Rs 894 crore as the current month's subsidy. The govern-

ment will be supplying a free cylinder every four months as part of the Deepam-2 scheme and will be releasing the necessary funds as and when necessary.

The eligible beneficiaries can now book the cylinders from Tuesday. An amount of Rs 876, excluding the Central subsidy of Rs 25, spent for the cylinder will be credited to the personal account of all the beneficiaries in just 48 hours.

## 'Find permanent solution to floods in Vijayawada'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has ordered the representatives of insurance companies and government officials to complete the pending applications for insurance payments to motorists, affected by the Budameru floods, within 15 days.

The CM held a review meeting with officials at the Secretariat on Wednesday on the flood relief measures and the compensation distributed to the victims. A video conference was also held with the collectors of the flood-affected districts to review the situation in those districts.

The officials briefed the CM that the government's assistance of Rs 625 crore has been provided to 4,21,698 people.

Continued on Page 2

## Indian youth among the best in innovation and technology: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Wednesday that the Indian youth is among the best in innovation and technology after GitHub's CEO Thomas Dohmke said India's rise as a global tech titan is inexorable.

Dohmke, whose firm is a leading developer platform, said on X, "Of course, I have to show some love to India. Now the fastest growing developer population on the planet, India's rise as a global tech titan is inexorable."

He said India's developers have gone a leap further as they are increasingly using AI (artificial intelligence) to build AI. "India has the second-highest number of contributors to public generative AI projects. This makes it ever more likely the next great AI multinational is borne on the continent," he added.



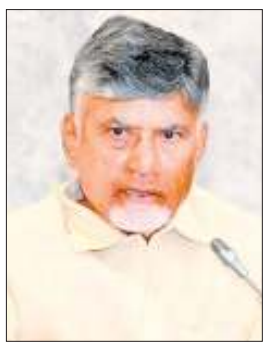
## AP sets goal to become \$2.4 trillion economy by 2047: CM

Swarnandhra Vision Document 2047 prepared with aim of achieving 15 pc growth rate per annum

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has met NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam and discussed issues related to Swarnandhra Vision Document 2047. On the occasion, the CM said that the State aims to be a \$2.4 trillion economy by 2047 and achieve a growth rate of 15 per cent per year through Swarnandhra Vision Document 2047.

The meeting took place at the State secretariat in Velagapudi, and was attended by Subramanyam along with the Advisor and Directors of NITI Aayog, State Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav and senior officials from various



departments. The meeting mainly discussed the implementation of Central government schemes. CM Chandrababu explained that the Swarnandhra Vision Document 2047 has been prepared with the aim of achieving a growth rate of 15 percent per annum.

Chandrababu added that the vision document has been prepared at State, district and constituency-levels with the aim of developing AP into a 2.4 trillion dollar economy by 2047. The CM explained to the CEO of Niti Aayog that an action plan has been prepared to achieve development in agriculture, aqua and other sectors. These plans are designed to achieve growth rate with growth engines like poverty alleviation, ease of living, development of social infrastructure, demographic management, data centre and artificial intelligence, and activities have been done to implement them effectively.

Continued on Page 2

## Be partners in thriving AP

Lokesh seeks support of Indra Nooyi to build 'Brand Andhra'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Observing that Andhra Pradesh is developing swiftly by implementing investor-friendly policies under the leadership of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, Minister for IT and Electronics Nara Lokesh has asked the IT companies to become partners in rebuilding the State in technology and manufacturing sectors.

Lokesh had a meeting with the former Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Pepsico, Indra Nooyi, on the campus of the IT Survey Synergy Summit in Las Vegas in the United States. He sought the support of Indra Nooyi in the efforts being made by the State government to achieve sustainable economic growth.

Lokesh asked Nooyi to showcase Andhra Pradesh government's commitment to the industrial community in implementing the policies on renewable energy projects, green initiatives and environmentally friendly industrial policies. "The State government is sincerely working to encourage women in leadership roles," he said, and asked Indra Nooyi to share her views on empowering women in various fields.

"There is a need to improve a healthy lifestyle with regard to public health, particularly in wellness programmes," Lokesh said. Maintaining that the State government is moving forward with the aim of empowering the youth by improving the skills in education and technology, Lokesh asked her to formulate mentoring programmes for the youth to achieve these targets.

Lokesh said that the State government is expecting the support of IT companies in encouraging investments in the State and building Brand Andhra Pradesh. Indra Nooyi responded positively and promised to extend her cooperation to get investments to the State.



AP IT Minister Lokesh with Pepsico, former CEO of Indra Nooyi

## Impart training to youth in AI-based industries

Lokesh urges Salesforce CEO

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

"We are focusing on smart governance and Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven economy. We need your cooperation to launch AI-skilling programmes in Andhra Pradesh," the IT and Electronics Minister, Nara Lokesh, has told the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Clara Shih, at a synergy summit held at Las Vegas in the United States.

Lokesh asked Clara Shih to prepare the work force to impart skill development in the youth for AI-based industries and become partners with educational institutions to impart hands-on training to the youth in Salesforce AI certification programmes. The Minister also asked the CEO to become mentors in local start-ups and supply AI tools to them.



## 6 AP MLAs star in Jagjivan Ram biopic

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Six MLAs from Andhra Pradesh are going to showcase their acting talents in the Babu Jagjivan Ram biopic. Film director Dilip Raj announced that Dr. Chandolu Nagamalleswara Rao, currently practising in Jamaica, is producing the biopic titled Jagjivan Ram, in which six members of the AP Legislative Assembly are set to act. During a press conference held at the 'MAA-AP' office in Tenali on Wednesday, he informed that regular shooting will commence in Tenali on November 9.

Dilip Raj stated that the film will depict key scenes from the freedom movement, highlighting Jagjivan Ram's two imprisonments by the



Prathipadu MLA B. Ramanjaneyulu will portray role of Bhagat Singh, while Parvathipuram MLA Vijay Chandra is Chandrasekhar Azad

British. Prathipadu MLA B. Ramanjaneyulu will portray the role of Bhagat Singh, while Parvathipuram MLA Vijay Chandra will take on the role of Chandrasekhar Azad. Chintalapudi MLA S. Roshan Kumar will play the British Governor-General, and other MLAs like Varla Kumar Raja,

Dastagiri, and Jayasurya will play additional roles. Dilip Raja mentioned that the production of the film, which aims to recreate authentic events from a century ago, demands substantial time and budget. He further stated that the titular role of Jagjivan Ram will be played by

Military Prasad, and senior actress Talluri Rameshwari will portray former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar. Other cast members include Kannada actors Markali, Jeeva, Narasimha Raju, Annappurna, Kavya Keerthi, Divija, Padmini, Rajya, Errababu, Bhanu, and Haribabu.

Produced under the banner of Pedaravuru Film Studio by NRIs including Dr. Nagamalleswara Rao, the film is coordinated by Kaleeb Raju, with story, lyrics, screenplay, and direction by Dilip Raj. After post-production activities, the film is slated for a worldwide release in 2025 in Telugu, Hindi, Kannada, and Malayalam, as revealed by unit controller Pradeep Donepudi.

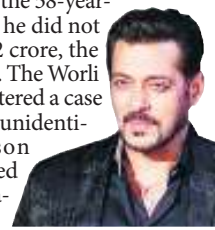
## Salman Khan gets death threat again

RS 2 CRORE DEMAND

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan received yet another death threat along with demand to pay up Rs 2 crore, prompting police to launch a probe and arrest a resident of Mumbai's Bandra on Wednesday, an official said.

The Mumbai traffic police on Tuesday received an anonymous message wherein the sender threatened to kill the 58-year-old actor if he did not pay up Rs 2 crore, the official said. The Worli police registered a case against the unidentified person and launched an investigation.



# Politics and sensationalism collide in Janwada farmhouse raid

The recent controversy surrounding a police raid on the Janwada farmhouse linked to the family of Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president KT Rama Rao (KTR) has sparked a heated political standoff, reflecting the intensifying rivalry between the ruling Congress and the opposition BRS in Telangana. The farmhouse raid was rife with sensationalism, with allegations, rumors, and political mudslinging overshadowing the actual details revealed by the police.

The farmhouse in question belongs to KTR's brother-in-law and has long been under public scrutiny. Reports quickly surfaced in the media, with allegations flying thick and fast, that it was the site of a "rave party" with rampant drug usage. Local media swiftly escalated these claims, circulating unverified details that included the presence of drugs and even

asserting that KTR's spouse was also present. As the story unraveled, it became apparent that initial media coverage might have been orchestrated to embarrass KTR and his family.

The official press release from the police, however, did not support many of the more scandalous claims. It simply stated that a few bottles of both Indian and foreign liquor were found at the venue. According to the statement, one attendee tested positive for cocaine, yet there was no mention of a large drug seizure, nor any indication that a rave party was in progress. Regardless, the authorities filed cases under narcotics, excise, and gaming laws.

Technically, under the Excise Act, permission is required to serve alcohol at private events, including house parties, a requirement often disregarded. House parties in Telangana rarely involve obtaining a

**The Janwada farmhouse itself has a complex history that adds a layer of intrigue to the recent events. In 2020, then Congress leader (and now current CM) Revanth Reddy accused KTR of owning the property under a "benami" arrangement and even attempted to fly a drone over the farmhouse to expose what he alleged was an illegal acquisition.**

licence, making the situation legally ambiguous but socially commonplace. The raid found just five foreign liquor bottles and 10 loose IMFL (Indian Made Foreign Liquor) bottles—a minimal amount compared to what could likely be discovered at many similar gatherings in the region, especially in influential circles.

Following the raid, tensions mounted as politicians across party lines leapt at the opportunity to turn the incident into

a fierce public debate. Leaders from both the ruling Congress party and the opposition BRS accused each other of harboring malicious intent. BRS leaders criticized the Congress for what they described as politically motivated harassment, while Congress leaders pointed to the raid as evidence of the BRS's moral failings, adding fuel to the ongoing rivalry.

The Janwada farmhouse itself has a complex history that adds a layer of intrigue to the recent



**RAMESH KANDULA**  
Chief Editor Swatantra TV and author

events. In 2020, then Congress leader (and now current CM) Revanth Reddy accused KTR of owning the property under a "benami" arrangement and even attempted to fly a drone over the farmhouse to expose what he alleged was an illegal acquisition. Reddy was subsequently jailed for 14 days for this drone incident, a punitive

measure that many interpreted as BRS retaliating against one of its fiercest political opponents.

In light of this back story, some speculate that this latest raid is the Congress government's way of getting even. For those closely following Telangana's power politics, the situation has echoes of an eye-for-an-eye approach, especially since KTR's party was known to be aggressive with opposition leaders while it was in power. Accusations of phone tapping and setting up "sting" operations to implicate opponents have been leveled against the BRS over the years. Now, KTR claims that his party is under similar attack, with more alleged abuses of power on the horizon. He has publicly stated his concern that his family and other BRS leaders are being specifically targeted by the Congress, warning of further "weaponization" of the government apparatus against his

party in the run-up to the elections.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, however, seems unperturbed by such accusations and has been vocal about his intention to root out BRS influence in Telangana. He vowed to dismantle BRS's foothold in the state, leveraging this situation as a means of emphasizing his government's commitment to transparency and justice. Reddy's stance suggests that the ruling Congress is prepared to take a hard line approach in its dealings with the Opposition, even if it means crossing ethical boundaries.

For Telangana, this escalation of politically motivated actions and responses presents a troubling picture. The state, which emerged with the promise of prosperity, development, and unique identity, is now being tarnished by a political climate characterized by vendettas and rivalries. The line between law

enforcement and political retribution appears to be increasingly blurred, with each side accusing the other of using government resources for personal vendettas.

While the controversy surrounding the Janwada raid could ultimately fade, it highlights a troubling trend in Telangana's political landscape, one that continues to drift further from the principles of transparency and public service. Voters are left to wonder whether politicians are genuinely committed to the state's welfare or if their focus is solely on one-upping their rivals. As BRS and Congress continue their verbal-and-legal-skirmishes, many in Telangana hope for a return to the collaborative, development-oriented governance they were once promised. Whether that hope can withstand the state's current climate of political hostility remains to be seen.

# Govt will ensure journalists' welfare: Minister Narayana

**CM committed to helping journalists achieve their dream of owning a home**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Municipal Administration & Urban Development (MA&UD), P Narayana, has said that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is committed to helping journalists fulfil their dream of owning a house. He assured that the State government will ensure that all eligible journalists receive the opportunity.

Minister Narayana, along with Vijayawada Central MLA Bonda Uma Maheswara Rao, participated in 'Deepavali Sambharalu' organised by the Telugu Journalists Forum at the Andhra Pradesh Non-Gazetted and Gazetted Officers (APNGGO) Association hall at Gandhinagar on Wednesday. During the meeting, the Minister discussed various issues being faced by journalists. Speaking on the occasion, he



Municipal Minister Narayana addressing in the 'Deepavali Sambharalu' programme organised by the Telugu Journalists Forum at the APNGGO Association hall at Gandhinagar on Wednesday

said that the government focuses on ensuring journalists' welfare by addressing various concerns, including the provision of housing sites, improved health services, and streamlining accreditation processes. Narayana reaffirmed that all the issues will be resolved.

He added that all the concerns raised by journalists will be brought to the attention of

the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister is also supportive of providing homes, house sites, and other benefits to all eligible journalists in the State. He emphasised that journalists play an important role in uncovering irregularities, scams, and public issues, which helps the government stay and fosters good governance.

Meanwhile, he mentioned that the previous government imposed restrictions on the media and suppressed freedom of the press. Still, the journalists fought against the YSRCP government courageously and pointed out its failures, scams and irregularities. As a result, the voters limited YSRCP to just 11 seats. The TDP-led NDA government is taking the responsibility of initiating welfare schemes for them, he explained.

APNGGO NTR district president A Vidyasagar, Vijayawada city organising secretary VV Prasad, Telugu Journalists Forum State general secretary Koneru Kranthi Kumar, vice-president UVS Kumar, combined Krishna district vice-president Y Vara Prasad, Women's Wing president M Leelavathi and others were present.

## Polavaram Dam to be built at 45.72 m

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Water Resources Nimmala Ramanaidu has emphasised that the Polavaram Dam will be constructed at a height of 45.72 m. He asserted that the TDP-led NDA government will not compromise on this matter. The alliance government has proposed storing water at a level of 150 feet, and they are committed to maintaining the original dam height of 45.72 m. Ramanaidu criticised the previous YSRCP government for suggesting the construction of the project in two phases, and also for reducing the dam height to 41.15 m.

Speaking to reporters at the Secretariat's publicity centre, Minister Ramanaidu pointed out that the previous YSRCP government had submitted proposals to lower the dam height from 45.72 m to 41.15 m. He mentioned that, according to approvals from the Supreme Court of India and the Godavari Tribunal, the Polavaram Dam will indeed be built at a height of 45.72 m, allowing water storage at the 150-foot level.

# Jagan extends support to farmers and party cadre on day 2



PNS ■ PULIVENDULA

On the second day of his visit to Pulivendula, former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy engaged with party workers, leaders, and the general public at the camp office in Bhaskarapuram. Jagan listened to people's hardships, extending his support and encouragement, assuring them that he stands by their side. Several individuals brought to his attention that YSRCP workers and leaders have been facing attacks following the coalition gov-

ernment's rise to power. In response, he advised the YSRCP cadre to face TDP's actions with resilience and reminded them that challenges are temporary. He called upon every member to embrace a fighting spirit and move forward. Jagan urged party representatives to stand firmly behind the workers during these difficult times.

Onion farmers expressed their struggles, stating that despite investing around Rs 1 lakh per acre, they could barely cover transport costs. Jagan inquired about the Minimum

Support Price, to which the farmers lamented that they had received no such support. He assured them of YSRCP's support and promised to hold the government accountable for their well-being.

As part of the visit, Jagan also met with family members at the residence of YS Prakash Reddy. He extended his wishes to newlyweds at DE Sridhar Reddy's home and congratulated the couple, Madhuri and Narendra, at the residence of YSRCP leader Vidyand Reddy.

## AI to be used in Amaravati constructions

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister P Narayana has said that experts in artificial intelligence will be involved in the construction of Capital Amaravati and the government will finalise all the tenders and restart the Amaravati construction work from January. He said that the government has formed two committees to give suggestions for the construction of the capital and the committees will give their reports by the end of this month. He further said that we will put the reports in the CRDA authority, AP Cabinet meeting and will get approval.

Minister Narayana said that this whole process of Capital Amaravati reconstruction works approval and finalisation will end on November 15, all tenders except one and two will be called by December 31 and all construction works will restart from January.

# Vijaya Sai's return ignites firestorm of reactions within YSRCP

**MP has been reappointed as north Andhra coordinator of the party**

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The reappointment of Rajya Sabha member Vijaya Sai Reddy as the North Andhra coordinator of the party has sparked a fierce response within YSRCP, casting a spotlight on deep-seated rifts and unresolved grievances. For some, Reddy's return signals a potential revival of party morale and renewed energy at the grassroots-level. For others, however, it dredges up bitter memories of a tenure they argue led to a significant dent in the party's image in Uttar Andhra.

"The decision to reinstate Vijaya Sai Reddy is baffling to many of us," remarked an insider, speaking on condition of anonymity. "His past behaviour was not only controversial but resulted in widespread complaints within party ranks. There was real hope for fresh leadership, particularly after the disappointing election



**"It felt like the voices of many local leaders were systematically silenced. Decisions that should have reflected a broader consensus became one-sided."**

results." Critics point to Reddy's previous stint before the 2019 elections, when he wielded unprecedented influence in Uttar Andhra. He replaced YV Subba Reddy in a high-stakes shift and reportedly dominated everything from administrative appointments to land allocations. "It wasn't just influence—it was absolute control," commented a senior party leader. "In Visakhapatnam, Reddy held all the power. Ministers and MLAs were there, but it felt like Reddy was calling the shots. Major decisions and postings

seemed to go through him alone." Allegations of dubious land deals and favouritism toward certain inner-circle party members further fuelled discontent, with local representatives often feeling marginalised. Visakha MP M VV Satyanarayana openly criticised Reddy, stating, "It felt like the voices of many local leaders were systematically silenced. Decisions that should have reflected a broader consensus became one-sided."

In response to mounting frustrations, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, YSRCP president and

the then Chief Minister, replaced Reddy with YV Subbareddy two years ahead of the 2024 elections. However, the recent decision to reappoint Reddy has reignited the anger within the party, with some members questioning why a senior local leader from Uttar Andhra wasn't chosen instead. "After the elections, we were hopeful the party would opt for a figure from the region, like Botsa Satyanarayana or Dharmana Prasada Rao, to help repair the damage," said a disillusioned party activist.

Not everyone is dismayed. For some, Reddy's return is seen as a necessary shift to reinvigorate the YSRCP base. "Under Subba Reddy, energy levels among workers flagged, and we felt the impact at the polls. With Sai Reddy back, there's a renewed sense of purpose in the ranks," claimed a party spokesperson.

## Govt gears up for CM's visit, Deepam scheme launch

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

Agriculture Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu has called upon local authorities to enforce stringent measures in anticipation of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's visit on Friday. This visit is set to mark the launch of a crucial initiative by the coalition government aimed at providing free gas cylinders to every household, with the inauguration taking place in Iddapuram, located in the Ichapuram mandal of the district.

Atchannaidu stated, "I will not accept any losses during this important event. It is crucial that we facilitate a seamless process as we introduce this vital service to our citizens." His remarks underscore the government's dedication to effectively implementing this welfare initiative, which is anticipated to benefit many families in the community.

Addressing the potential challenges of large gatherings, the Minister urged vigilance from relevant departments. "It is crucial that we prevent large gatherings at the venue. Security forces must remain alert and report any suspicious activities to higher authorities, as there will be many opportunities for citizens to come voluntarily for the CM's visit," he asserted. Atchannaidu's directive highlights the importance of maintaining safety and order during the event.

Additionally, he underscored the essential role of law enforcement, stating, "It is the duty of the police to facilitate the reception of representatives from both the district and other regions at the assembly premises while adhering to the established protocols."



# TTD launches one-day Annaprasadam donation scheme

**Donor should contribute Rs.44 lakh towards Annaprasadam on one day**

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The TTD SV Annaprasadam Trust has launched a one-day donation scheme to provide delicious and hygienic Annaprasadam to lakhs of devotees visiting Tirumala for Srivari Darshan. A donor should contribute Rs.44 lakh towards Annaprasadam for a whole day. Also, they can contribute Rs 10 lakh for breakfast, Rs 17 lakh for lunch or Rs 17 lakh for dinner.

The donor's name will be displayed in the Vengamamba Annaprasadam complex on that particular day. They shall also get the opportunity to serve Annaprasadam for one day of their choice. TTD is distributing Annaprasadam at Tirumala and Tirupati for a multitude of devotees. At Tirumala, apart from Matrusrri Tarigonda

Vengamamba Annaprasadam Complex (MTVAC), TTD serves Annaprasadam in Compartments of Vaikuntam Q Complex-1, 2, PAC-4 (Old Annaprasadam), PAC-2 etc.

TTD also distributes Annaprasadam at the food counters in Tirumala, besides the waiting complex for elderly and disabled persons, and the Rs.300 Special Entrance Darshan Complex. In addition, milk is distributed to children and beverages to other devotees.

At Tirupati, Annaprasadam is being distributed at Sri Govindaraja Swamy Temple, Srinivasam, Vishnu Nivasam Complexes, Ruita Hospital, SVIMS, SV Maternity Hospital, BIRDS, SV Ayurvedic Hospital, and the Annaprasadam building in Tiruchanoor.

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH PANCHAYAT RAJ DEPARTMENT E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTIFICATION**  
 NIT No. 14 to 21/2024-25 Date: 23-10-2024  
 The Panchayat Raj Superintending Engineer, Srikakulam has been inviting online tenders for execution of eight works with an estimated cost of Rs 4052.42 lakh.  
 Date of availability of tenders would be after 04-11-2024 in the e-procurement platform. For details, contact <https://pmsgtenders.gov.in/cnigceplapp>  
 Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Panchayat Raj, Srikakulam  
 P.O.No: 14113/CMO/VT/1024-25 Dt: 20.10.2024

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# Govt plans to double income of each citizen: Narayana

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD), P Narayana, emphasised that detailed information about the socioeconomic status of citizens is essential for the successful implementation of welfare and development schemes targeting underprivileged communities. He added that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is committed to supporting members of DWACRA and MEPMA.

Addressing attendees at a one-day training programme on the MEMPA Self Help Groups (SHG) profiling app at the Amaravati Convention Hall in Vijayawada, Minister Narayana spoke about the State government's goal to double the income of each citizen. He underscored the role of data profiling in ensuring that welfare programmes are directed to the people who need them most, based on a thorough understanding of their social and economic conditions. He stated that the government will begin implementing schemes based on this data in January, after completing the data collection by December.

## CM mulls establishing shopping complex to generate employment for SHG members



Narayana criticised the previous administration for neglecting Self Help Groups and failing to deliver TIDCO houses meant for low-income families. He also mentioned that the CM plans to establish shopping complexes to generate employment for SHG members, facilitating financial inde-

pendence for these groups. Narayana further noted that "unlike the identification system in America, India relies on Aadhaar numbers for comprehensive data collection, which is crucial for policy-making". He added that new tenders for capital projects in Amaravati

will be issued with Cabinet approval in the coming months after previous tenders expired without action. The new process aims to commence capital works by January. The event was attended by MEPMA Managing Director Tej Bharat, project directors from across the State, and other officials.

# CM set to visit Visakhapatnam on Nov 2

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad has announced that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is scheduled to visit the district on November 2 to review ongoing development projects, the 100-day plan, and other important initiatives aimed at enhancing the district's growth and infrastructure.

In a preliminary briefing with district officials, Prasad emphasised the need for meticulous preparation ahead of this critical visit. "All officials have been instructed to prepare comprehensive progress reports on the development work completed thus far and the items included in the 100-day plan," Prasad stated. "It is

## To review ongoing developmental projects



crucial that we are ready in all respects for the Chief Minister's visit."

To facilitate thorough preparations, the meeting focused on closely examining departmental reports and discussing necessary changes and additions to

ensure the Chief Minister receives a complete overview of project progress and ongoing initiatives. "The focus should be on prioritising issues related to the progress of the district," Prasad emphasised during the meeting. "Reports must be concise, and we must be prepared to provide detailed answers to any questions raised by the Chief Minister."

Officials were instructed to address any pending decisions and required State-level permissions within their departments by the end of the day. Prasad also underscored the importance of clarity and accountability in regards to every aspect of their responsi-

bilities. The District Revenue Officer was advised to take a proactive approach in arranging logistics for the visit. "We must ensure that everything is in place for the CM's visit," Prasad added, reiterating the need for a well-coordinated effort.

District Revenue Officer BH. Bhavani Shankar, CPO Srinivasa Rao, district-level representatives from various departments, and Collectorate AO Eswar Rao attended the meeting. While the official schedule for the Chief Minister's visit has yet to be announced, preparations are in full swing to ensure a seamless experience.

# PCB Chairman urges steps for coastal cleanliness

## 'Need clear plan to redirect wastewater reaching the sea'



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board (APPCB), P Krishnaiah, has called upon officials from the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) to prioritise cleanliness along the city's coastline. During an inspection at RK Beach alongside GVMC Commissioner Dr P Sampath Kumar, Krishnaiah emphasised the need for effective waste management to combat pollution and maintain an inviting atmosphere on the beach.

"We need a clear plan to redirect wastewater reaching the sea," Chairman Krishnaiah stated. "By piping it up to one kilometer offshore, we can maintain a clean and pleasant coastal area, enhancing the experience for both locals and visitors." Dr Sampath Kumar responded positively, assuring that a robust sewage management plan is currently in

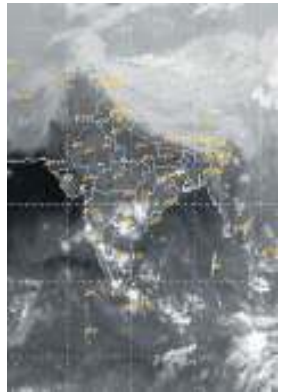
development and is projected to be completed by 2025. "Our goal is to have effective wastewater treatment in place by then, ensuring that only treated water reaches the sea."

The inspection also included a tour of the Kapulupadda Dumping Yard and the Jindal Waste to Energy Plant. GVMC officials, along with representatives from Jindal, provided insights into the waste collection process. They revealed that approximately 1,100 metric tonnes of waste from the surrounding areas is processed daily to generate electricity. "This initiative is a step towards sustainability, converting waste into energy and reducing landfill dependency," a Jindal representative noted

during a PowerPoint presentation outlining the plant's operations.

Krishnaiah interacted with rag pickers at the Kapulupadda Dumping Yard, enquiring about their working conditions. He proposed establishing a dedicated shelter for these people, directing GVMC Supervising Engineer Govinda Rao and Chief Medical Officer Dr Naresh Kumar to ensure that "these hardworking individuals have a safe, sheltered space to operate".

The inspection was attended by various GVMC officials, including Chief Engineer P Shivaprasad Raju and Supervising Engineer KVN Ravi, as well as personnel from the APPCB and Jindal.



## Cyclonic circulation over Southwest Bay of Bengal

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Another upper air cyclonic circulation lies over the Southwest Bay of Bengal off the South Andhra Pradesh coast between 1.5 and 3.1 km above mean sea level, the Meteorological Centre said on Wednesday.

In a daily weather report here, it said that Tuesday's upper air cyclonic circulation over south Chhattisgarh and adjoining Odisha, extending up to 5.8 km above mean sea level and tilting southwards with height has become less marked.

Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are likely to occur at isolated places in Rayalaseema during the next 48 hours and in coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next 24 hours.

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers is likely to occur at a few places or at one or two places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next seven days. Rainfall occurred at one or two places over Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the last 24 hours, the report added.

# Enforce free sand policy rigorously: Collector



Krishna District Collector DK Balaji conducting a meeting, along with Joint Collector Geethanjali Sharma, on the implementation of the free sand policy on Wednesday

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Collector DK Balaji has directed officials to enforce the free sand policy rigorously, warning that any violations will lead to strict action. At a sand committee meeting held at the collectorate conference hall in Machilipatnam on Wednesday, Balaji emphasised the importance of fully implementing the sand policy, cautioning that deviations will result in appropriate penalties.

During the review with Joint

Collector Geethanjali Sharma, Balaji underscored that sand extraction should be carried out exclusively through manpower, prohibiting the use of JCBs and excavators at sand reaches. He instructed officials to seize any machinery used illegally and take firm action against those involved.

To prevent environmental impact, Balaji advised officials to take measures to protect the river bund while excavating sand from River Krishna. He recommended collaboration with tahsildars and mandal

surveyors to ensure compliance. Additionally, he highlighted that indiscriminate sand excavation at certain points could create holes in the riverbed, advising residents to only take sand based on personal needs rather than for commercial purposes.

Additional SP B Satyanarayana, RDOs K Swathi, BS Hela Sharone, Mines AD Srinivasa Rao, Irrigation SE Gangaiah, DPIJ Aruna, DWAMA PD Sivaprasad, and others were present at the meeting.

# Karumuri seeks immediate reinstatement of free crop insurance

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Minister Karumuri Nageswara Rao has strongly urged the TDP coalition government to immediately reinstate the free crop insurance scheme, warning that ignoring this demand may lead to discontent among farmers.

Speaking at a media conference at the party office in Tadepalli on Wednesday, he said that the government neglected farmers' welfare. He criticised the government for not providing the promised annual amount of Rs 20,000 under the Super Six programme and for suspending the free crop insurance scheme that had been in place for the past five years. He highlighted that due to the delay in payment of Rs 930 crore towards the 2023-24 season premiums, farmers who suffered crop losses due to recent rains missed out on a compensation amount of Rs 1,385 crore. He recalled that during the YSRCP's five-year tenure, a total premium of Rs 3,022.26 crore was paid on behalf of farmers, covering 52 lakh acres and benefiting an average of 40 lakh farmers annually.

# Minister optimistic about growth of fisheries sector



PNS ■ PARVATHIPURAM

Minister for Women, Child Welfare, and Tribal Welfare, Gummidi Sandhyarani, has expressed optimism regarding the growth potential of the fisheries sector in the district. The event, held at the Vengalaraya reservoir, was part of a broader initiative under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana aimed at bolstering local fisheries.

Minister Sandhyarani, on Wednesday, released three lakh fish fingerlings sourced from the Vizianagaram fish fingerling production centre. "We are hopeful that the schemes provided by both the Central and State governments will significantly

enhance the fisheries sector," she stated, emphasising the need to improve the livelihoods of local fishermen. "Our aim is to improve the livelihoods of local fishermen and bring prosperity to their families."

The Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to the fishing community and praised the dedication of Fisheries Department officials. "We appreciate the hard work of the department in the district, which plays a critical role in the success of this initiative," she added.

In addition to the fisheries initiative, Sandhyarani outlined plans to supply essential resources to the Scheduled Tribes (ST) community. She noted, "We will ensure that

hunting equipment, nets, boats, two-wheelers, and bicycles are made available through the Parvathipuram Integrated Tribal Development Authority (ITDA)." This initiative aims to enhance the livelihoods of tribal populations and promote sustainable practices within the community.

Vizianagaram District Fisheries Deputy Director N Nirmala Kumari, Parvathipuram District Fisheries Officer Vemula Thirupathaya, Salur Fisheries Development Officer E Sridevi, local leaders such as Shambhara MPTC President Tiyala Naidu and Chin Cheipuruvulasa Fish Cooperative Society President Surapati Adinarayana were present.

# SRM University-AP team conquers Everest Base Camp



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a remarkable feat, SRM University-AP has etched its name in the annals of history by becoming the first private university in India to send a student expedition to the iconic Mount Everest. A team of 18 resilient students and faculty, led by Prof Sidharth Shankar Tripathy, Director of Entrepreneurship & Innovation, was today honoured in a public event for successfully completing the tough 15-day expedition to the Everest Base Camp, located at an awe-inspiring 5,364 m. The felicitation ceremony was held in the presence of representatives from esteemed media houses, Deans, Directors and Students.

The expedition, which took place from October 12-27, began from Amaravati and went via Kathmandu across the breathtaking landscapes of the Himalayas, culminating at the towering Mt. Everest Base Camp.

During the felicitation ceremony, Prof. Sidharth Tripathy, Director of Entrepreneurship & Innovation, who coached and led the group, shared insights from the expedition, detailing the resilience required to face the challenges of such an ambitious endeavour. Participants also reflected on their transamelling experiences, showcasing the personal growth and teamwork they developed throughout the journey.

# Municipal Commissioner warns sanitation staff

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Commissioner HM Dhyanchandra has expressed strong dissatisfaction with the sanitation staff for their lack of attention to cleanliness in the city. During an inspection of the Urmilanagar and Kabela areas in the 43rd Division on Wednesday, he observed poor sanitation standards, prompting him to issue a warning that negligence in maintaining city sanitation will not be tolerated.

Dhyanchandra instructed the sanitation staff to fulfil their duties diligently and directed officials to monitor sanitation activities consistently. He emphasised the importance of keeping the city clean and called on the Engineering,



Town Planning, Public Health, and other relevant departments to personally supervise sanitation efforts.

The Commissioner was accompanied by VMC Additional Commissioner (Projects) Dr. D

Chandrasekhar, Zonal Commissioner Ramya Keerthana, Chief Engineer R Srinath Reddy, Chief City Planner GGVSV Prasad, and In-charge Chief Medical and Health Officer Satyanarayana, among others.

## 'Deepavali' offers a unique twist on Diwali celebrations

Deepavali village, with around 1,000 residents, celebrates the festival over five days

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The village named after the most celebrated festivals in India 'Deepavali' is situated in the heart of Srikakulam district's Gara Mandal. This old fashioned village is rich in heritage and local customs, presents a unique celebration of Diwali that draws visitors intrigued by its captivating

traditions and history. The village's origins trace back to a local legend. Centuries ago, a god fearing king from the Srikakulam region frequently visited the revered Sri Kurmanadha Temple nearby. One day, while returning, he suddenly collapsed. The villagers rushed to his aid, lighting the surround-

ings with oil lamps and offering him water. Once he recovered, the king, touched by their compassion, learned the village had no formal name. In gratitude, he proclaimed, "From this day forward, this village shall be called Deepavali." Since then, the village has carried this name, forever connected to the festival of lights.

# Politics or progress: which of them matters the most?

We cannot and should not mix politics and development. Development is something that is beyond politics. Post elections in any state, political parties should focus on progress and development. Politics is essential for the survival of a political party, while development is vital for the all-around advancement of any state. Unfortunately, the line between the two is thin in the Telugu states.

Politicising everything, from developmental activity to flood relief measures, makes no sense as it could delay the process of reaching benefits to the deserved and benefits none of the parties. The fighting spirit should be shown in reaching out to the people rather than in scoring political points.

As things stand now, it seems every day is an election

day and political parties, instead of working in alignment with the ruling party on matters of public interest, make an issue out of everything. If this tug-of-war is going to continue indefinitely, what is the use of elections and political parties getting elected to rule with the support of the people? It also appears that no mandate of people matters for the defeated parties that are bent on keeping the ruling dispensation on tenterhooks on every conceivable issue without bothering about its implications.

In any democratic country, every political party has the right to take the ruling party to task and to keep it on track if there is any indication that it is going on the wrong side. This kind of opposition and criticism, being constructive, should be appreciated by one

**Politicising everything, from developmental activity to flood relief measures, makes no sense as it could delay the process of reaching benefits to the deserved and benefits none of the parties. The fighting spirit should be shown in reaching out to the people rather than in scoring political points**

and all, irrespective of political affiliations. Is this happening in the Telugu states? Opposition parties finding fault with the ruling party has become the order of the day, without giving any room for remedy or reconciliation.

Hitting the road at the drop of a hat is not at all advisable; for, it leads to an unwarranted situation, which may be a cause for concern. If we closely observe the fragile political situation in the Telugu states,

one can easily conclude that the same kind of political machinations and one-upmanship will continue till the elections come. Even after that, we cannot hope for change in the political conditions. If the opposition party fails to win again, the situation will worsen. This conflict will go on forever unless there is some kind of a realisation that politics should be for strengthening democracy and honouring the mandate of the people; not for



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scuttling it at the very start of the new government's journey. Ideologies, policies and programmes may not be the same for political parties. They vary from the very perspective of the parties. The variation in thinking and policy-making

and visualisation of the future should be considered from the context of the situation as well as the needs and requirements of the people.

The Revanth Reddy government in Telangana and the Chandrababu Naidu government in Andhra Pradesh are facing more or less the same situation. The Jagannathan Reddy-led opposition in Andhra Pradesh and the K Chandrasekhar Rao-led Bharat Rashtira Samithi in Telangana taking every issue to Himalayan heights so as to keep the respective governments on tenterhooks.

The Congress government in Telangana is facing severe criticism and castigation from the opposition parties with regard to HYDRABAD operations and the Musi beautification scheme. Even before the decisions could be implemented in

full, the allegations of corruptions have reached the zenith, making the issues politically vulnerable. Deficiencies in the decisions could be rectified as the programmes go forward.

The reason for the vulnerable situation of the Revanth government is that it has announced many probes and most of them are still going on, without any substantial progress in any of them. The government is going to complete one year very soon and there has not been any action regarding the corruption allegations it has levelled against the opposition BRS and no day is passing without new corruption charges. With this kind of politically uncertain situation, the Revanth government is getting blasted by the opposition parties, demanding action against the corrupt. The same is the situation in Andhra

Pradesh, where the government has launched a number of probes into corruption charges against the opposition YSRCP. But so far there has been no worthwhile forward move with regard to the charges.

Against the foregoing backdrop, people are forced to think whether there is substance in the allegations and the counter charges. Unless these tendencies are stopped immediately, the progress in the respective states will get affected and politicization of everything will intensify. It is high time the parties realised that giving political colour to everything is not going to benefit any of them, though it will affect the progress of the respective states by impeding developmental plans.

*(The writer is a senior journalist)*

PNS ■ ONGOLE

## COLLECTOR TO BENEFICIARIES

# Avail of free gas cylinder scheme in Prakasam

Prakasam district Collector A Thameem Ansariya has made it clear all arrangements were made to implement the free gas cylinder scheme.

The Collector held a meeting with the dealers of gas agencies, Joint Collector R Gopal Krishna and other officials and reviewed the arrangements made to implement the free gas cylinders scheme in the district.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector told the gas dealers and distributors to take required steps to deliver gas cylinders under the scheme without being cumbersome to the beneficiaries.

The District Collector said that the State Government would start providing free 3 gas cylinders per year to the eligible poor families under Deepam-2 scheme from October 31st onwards. She informed that there are 49 gas agencies in the district and 6,82,437 gas connections.

Under this scheme, those who have LPG connection, Aadhaar number, ration card and bank account number linked with Aadhaar number, are eligible to get 3 gas cylinders at free of cost in a year, the Collector asserted.

"In order to avail the benefit under this scheme, the beneficiaries have to book a gas cylinder with their gas agency and pay the cylinder price to them in full. Later the eligible beneficiaries will be refunded the money by crediting into their bank accounts



under DBT mode within 2 days," Collector Ansariya explained. Beneficiaries, who want to get

the first free gas cylinder under this scheme, have the facility of booking at their gas cylinder with the agency from October 31st to March 31st, 2025, she observed.

"The first free gas cylinder will be supplied to the beneficiaries within 24 to 48 hours of booking. The beneficiaries may go to the gas agencies and the gas agency managements should take steps to ensure that their work is done quickly and the beneficiaries do not feel inconvenience," she told the gas sup-

ply agencies. She advised the beneficiaries not to worry about getting a free gas cylinder under the Deepam scheme as there is plenty of time to complete the formalities.

The Collector appealed to the beneficiaries to avail the free gas cylinders scheme benefit and asked them to get their e-KYC done with the gas agencies. District Civil Supplies Officer Padmasri, IOCL Nodal officer Bhaskar Rao and representatives of gas agencies attended the meeting.

# ONDC should play vital role to promote e-commerce: DC

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K Vetri Selvi emphasized that the 'Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)' should play a vital role in promoting e-commerce and directed the officials concerned to formulate a special action plan to promote local products through the ONDC.

The Collector held a meeting with the district industries and exports promotion committee officials here on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector directed the authorities concerned to implement special activities to make available Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) services to promote local products and producers.

Collector Vetri Selvi said that agriculture, horticulture, DRDA, ITDA and other departments should identify those who are eligible to put a product for sale on the ONDC platform at mandal wise in the district.

"The DDs and LDMs of the Horticultural Department should play a major role in setting up food processing units under MSME and bringing those products to the ONDC platform. The women of self-help groups in the district make various pickles for their economic empowerment. The DRDA and the MEPMA officials should take steps to sell jute bags and other dishes



Speaking on the occasion, the Collector directed the authorities concerned to implement special activities to make available Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) services to promote local products and producers

through this system," the Collector told the officials.

The ONDC is a platform for small traders and producers in remote areas, she said, adding that the ONDC will play a key role in bringing this policy closer to consumers.

The Collector highlighted that Eluru district has earned a reputation for the carpet sector, and directed the officials to take steps to provide them with a special brand and bring them in the ONDC network.

Steps should also be taken to market 10 types of tribal products along with products made with amazing skill and creation from bamboo in the ITDA area of the district, Vetri Selvi told the officials.

The Collector directed the officials to make a special video to promote Open Network for Digital Commerce (My Stores) products, adding that steps should be taken towards creating the activity related to this within 10 days.

"Out of 110 industries in the district, 70 industries have so far set up child care and feeding rooms," the Collector said. Vetri Selvi ordered the officials concerned to complete the inspections of industries regarding safety measures by the end of November and submitted a report to her.

"Under the Prime Minister's Employment Guarantee Programme (PMEGP), steps should be taken to set up industries without any hindrance. A meeting should be held with the industrialists who applied under PMEGP and if there are any problems, they should bring them to the attention of the bankers and resolve them," the Collector told the officials.

Industries GM Pratap, Irrigation SE CH Dev Prakash, DRDA PD R Vijayaraju and LDM F Neeladri were among host officials who attended the meeting.



# Lightning strikes firecrackers making unit; two killed

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Two women workers were killed five others were injured when lightning struck on a firecracker making unit on the outskirts of Surya Rao Palem village in Undrajavaram mandal in East Godavari district on Wednesday.

Police said that when firecrackers were being made, lightning struck on a coconut tree located on the premises of the unit resulting in the firecrackers exploding killing two women on the spot. Five women were injured in the incident and they were admitted to the GGH at Nidadavole.

Sources said that the incident took place when over 15 workers were making firecrackers. Two women workers killed instantaneously, five women workers critically injured and five workers escaped with minor injuries. The identity of the deceased was being established, the police said.

Eye witness told the media that heavy rain accompanied by thunder occurred in the evening. Lightning struck on a coconut

tree located on the premises of the firecrackers making unit and an explosion took place.

The firecracker unit was being run by a person named Shiva.

Minister for Tourism Kandula Durgesh expressed shock and grief over the death of two women and injuries to five women workers in the explosion. He directed the officials to rush to the village where the accident took place and to carry out rescue operations.

The Tourism Minister, who is in Varanasi, now, sent a message in which he assured of extending all help to the bereaved families and to the injured persons.

Meanwhile, responding to the incident, Home Minister V Anitha expressed shock over the death of two workers in the fire accident in the firecrackers making unit. She described the death of two women workers as unfortunate and conveyed her sympathies to the bereaved families. She directed the officials to take steps to provide the best medical treatment to the injured women. She assured of extending all support to the bereaved families and the injured persons.

# Minister directs officials to take action against Brake Inspector

PNS ■ KADAPA

Minister for Transport M Ramprasad Reddy directed the Transport officials to take action against brake inspector Vijay Bhaskar Raju for indiscipline.

The Minister said that being an official, indulging in corrupt deeds is intolerable. Vijay Bhaskar Raju was working as a brake inspector in Kadapa transport commissioner's office. A video went viral on social



media in which brake inspector Vijay Bhaskar Raju was seen demanding money from the vehicle drivers.

The Minister warned of taking action, if the brake inspectors were seen on duty without uniform. The corrupt deeds of some officials discrediting the reputation of the entire department, the Minister lamented. The minister inquired with the transport officials on the brake inspector collecting money illegally from the drivers.

# RGIA registers 8 cases on bomb threats to Hyd flights

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

After 10 days of receiving bomb threats to Hyderabad flights there were no such threats on Wednesday. RGIA Police have registered eight cases related to the bomb threats. On Tuesday, there were five bomb threats to Hyderabad flights and every day the search is taking nearly two hours for the police officers.

Speaking to The Pioneer, K Balaraju of the RGIA Airport Police said, "For the past 10 days, we have been handling daily bomb threats every afternoon. On Tuesday, six flights were affected. Airlines in Delhi are alerting the states, prompting thorough searches. It's a concern for passengers, as we have to check individuals, their baggage and isolate flights, which takes nearly two hours each day."

# CM is scared of Whatsapp status: KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS working president KT Rama Rao expressed strong disapproval of an incident in Mahabubnagar where Bhaskar Mudiraj, a resident, was reportedly beaten by CI Appayya with a belt for questioning the election promises of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on WhatsApp. KTR spoke with Bhaskar over the phone, assuring him of support and seeking details of the incident, questioning the police's authority to assault individuals for raising concerns. BRS remarked, "How can you be afraid of a single WhatsApp status, Chitti Naidu!"

Reaching out to Bhaskar, KTR offered words of reassurance, asserting that no number of cases would intimidate



them and that he, as the Working President of the BRS, stands ready to support him in every way possible.

"No one needs to fear intimidation from hollow leaders like Revanth Reddy," KTR affirmed, pledging legal action against the CI involved

and announcing plans to approach the BC Commission and Human Rights Commission. He urged Bhaskar not to be deterred by these unlawful acts, assuring that the party stands firmly with him. KTR criticised the Revanth Reddy administration for allegedly using police force against individuals who simply sought answers on unfulfilled promises.

KTR further cautioned the police against behaving like ruling party workers, stating, "Congress-backed police should be mindful of their actions. Once BRS returns to power, every injustice will be addressed." He also held a conversation with former minister Srinivas Goud, indicating that the fight would continue until justice for Bhaskar is ensured.

# 408 kg of ganja, 2 liters hash oil seized; 6 peddlers arrested



PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

The police seized 400 KGs of ganja and two liters of hash oil while being transported in two vehicles at V Madugula village. SP Tuhin Sinha told the media here on Wednesday on a tip off that the police conducted checking of vehicles.

When the police team checked a lorry and a van, they found a huge quantity of 408 KGs of ganja and 2 KGs of

hash oil. The ganja and hash oil were being transported by the drug peddlers illegally to other states. The seized ganja and hash oil were worth Rs 21 lakh. The police also seized two vehicles and a motorcycle.

The police arrested six drug peddlers, three of them belonging to Kerala state. However the kingpin of the ganja smuggles was at large and a police officer launched a search for him.

# RSASTF personnel take out candlelight rally

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Red Sanders Anti Smuggling Task Force (RSASTF) personnel took out a candlelight rally here on Wednesday to pay tributes to the martyrs.

On the directions of district SP L Subba Rayudu, the Task Force personnel took the candlelight rally from the Task Force office which was flagged off by task force SP P Srinivas.

The candlelight rally went through the Nandi circle and concluded at the task force office.

Speaking on the occasion, SP Srinivas said that the candlelight rally was taken out remembering the martyrdom of police personnel and paying tributes to them.

Task Force ACF Srinivas, RI Suresh Kumar Reddy and CI Suresh Kumar were among those who took part in the candlelight rally.



# Students stage dharna at Collectorate

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Students affiliated to the PDSU staged a dharna in front of the Collector's office here on Wednesday demanding the release of fee reimbursement pending for the past one-and-half year.

The agitating students lamented that the previous YSRCP government did not release the scholarships and fee reimbursement amount to the tune of Rs.3,480 crores.

## FEE REIMBURSEMENT

Addressing the gathering, PDSU state Joint Secretary B Siddhu said that statewide in intermediate, IIT, Degree, B Pharmacy and engineering colleges students belonging to SC, ST, BC, OC and other sections were facing difficulties owing to non-release of scholarships and fee reimbursement.

The fee reimbursement and scholarships schemes introduced by the then Chief Minister Dr Y S Rajasekhara Reddy in the combined AP

State were diluted by his son Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy by diverting the amounts for other purposes, he alleged.

Students union leaders including M Saikiran, M Murthy, Satyasai, Sai Krishna, T Anilkumar and Manikanta warned of intensifying the agitation and to launch a statewide stir for fee reimbursement, if the present government failed to act to resolve the problem. Later they called on Kakinada District Joint

Collector Rahul Meena in a delegation and presented a memorandum.

The PDSU leader slammed the coalition TDP-Jana Sena-BJP government that it also failed to act even after four months of coming to power. The engineering students were discontinuing their studies as their fee for three quarters was not paid and the college managements were harassing the students for fee payment, he added.

ACROSS THE STATES



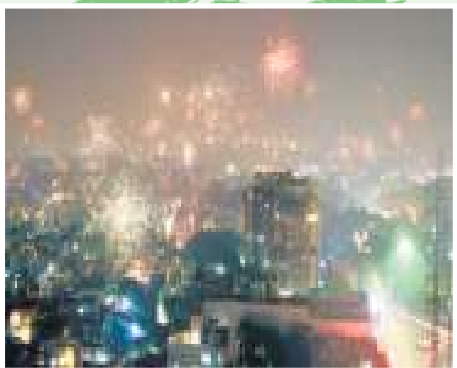
Tripura to soon get cyber crime police station: DGP

Cyber crime police station will soon be set up in Tripura to effectively deal with such cases, DGP Amitabh Ranjan said on Wednesday. Speaking to the press, Ranjan said insurgency was a closed chapter for the state after the mass surrender of NLF and ATTF militants. "Now, the CM wants the state police to focus on community policing, and law and order monitoring. Urban crime and urban extremism also need to be tackled effectively," he said. The DGP said the state government was planning for specialist training for Tripura State Rifles (TSR), which used to primarily deal with insurgency, to tackle new challenges. "Now, we will push for specialist training for TSR personnel for the upgradation of their skills. The TSR jawans will get training with forces like NSG and CISF to deal with new challenges," he said. Ranjan said steps were being taken to enhance capabilities of the state police force with help of the central schemes for modernisation.



HC seeks Gopi's response on plea challenging election

The Kerala High Court on Wednesday sought a response of Union Minister Suresh Gopi on a plea challenging his election from the Thrissur Lok Sabha seat in June this year. Justice Kauser Edappagath issued notice to Gopi, the Union Minister of State for Petroleum, Natural Gas and Tourism, and sought his response to the plea by November 22. The election petition has been moved by Thrissur native Binoy A S, a leader of the All India Youth Federation, his lawyer Santhosh Peter said. In the plea, Binoy has alleged that Gopi engaged in "corrupt practices", including misuse of religious symbols, during his LS poll campaign. Gopi, also an actor, had scripted a historic win for the BJP by ending its over-seven-decades-long political drought in Kerala. He had won the Thrissur LS seat with a massive lead of over 74,686 votes.



TN govt allows two hours to burst firecrackers

Sticking to the usual 2-hour norm, people may burst firecrackers on Deepavali between 6 am and 7 am and from 7 pm to 8 pm, the Tamil Nadu government said on Wednesday. Citing a Supreme Court judgment of 2018, the government said people could burst crackers during the stipulated time on the day of the festival (October 31, 2024) and shall use green crackers. An official release here said bursting of firecrackers must be avoided in 'silence areas' including those housing hospitals. Also, it should be avoided near huts and other places that may easily catch fire. "Let us celebrate Deepavali, as a festival of lights in an environment friendly manner rather than bursting noisy and smoke emitting crackers," the release added.

Indian, Chinese troops complete disengagement

Exchange of sweets on Diwali: Army sources

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian and Chinese troops have completed disengagement at two friction points at Demchok and Depsang Plains in eastern Ladakh and patrolling is set to commence soon at these points, Army sources said on Wednesday.

Exchange of sweets between the two sides will take place on Diwali, they said.

Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong, who attended an event in Kolkata, in response to a question on the troops disengagement said, "I hope that under the guidance of this consensus, relations will be moving forward smoothly in the future and not be restricted and interrupted by specific disagreements between the two sides."

"The most important thing is how to handle the differences," he said.

The process follows the agreement firmed up between the two countries on patrolling and disengagement of troops along the LAC in eastern Ladakh, a major breakthrough to end the over four-year standoff.

The move marks a significant development in the pursuit of reduced tension along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh since the fierce clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 that marked the most serious military conflict between the

Meeting between Xi and PM Modi 'very important': Envoy

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Ambassador of China to India Xu Feihong on Wednesday called the recent meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of BRICS Summit at Kazan in Russia 'very important'.

The diplomat qualified the talks, the first formal one between the two leaders in the past five years, had reached an important understanding and set guidelines for further development of relations between the two neighbours.

Speaking at a session organised by the Merchant Chamber of Commerce and Industry here, the Chinese diplomat said both the leaders reached important common understandings on improving and developing Indo-China relations and set the course to steer bilateral ties back on the path of steady development.

The meeting between Modi and Xi was held in Russia's Kazan on October 23.

Responding to a question on the completed Indo-China border disengagement in Eastern Ladakh, the Chinese



Ambassador said, "I hope that under the guidance of this consensus, relations will be moving forward smoothly in the future and not be restricted and interrupted by specific disagreements between the two sides. The most important thing is how to handle the differences."

Referring to the resumption of direct flights between China and India, he said, "As an ambassador, I am looking forward to this as it saves time. I am also looking forward to smooth cooperation not only in politics but also in business."

two sides in decades.

The ties between the two Asian giants had nosedived following the clash.

The Indian and Chinese troops have completed dis-

engagement at the two friction points and patrolling will commence soon at these points, an Army source said.

The verification process post-disengagement is in progress and

patrolling modalities are to be decided between ground commanders, they said.

"Talks will continue at the local commander level," the Army source added.

Every Indian can be proud of India's journey in defence production: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday hailed the country's rise in defence production and export, saying every Indian can be proud of this journey, as he gave a passionate call to startups, manufacturers and innovators to be a part of the sector.

In a post on LinkedIn, he

told the youth, startups, manufacturers and innovators that India's defence sector is calling them. This is their moment to be part of history, he added.

"India needs your expertise and enthusiasm. The doors are open for innovation, the policies are supportive, and the opportunity is unprecedented. Together, we will make India not just Aatmanirbhar in

defence but a global leader in defence manufacturing," Modi said.

"Together, let's build a stronger, self-reliant Bharat," he said in a piece titled "India's Defence Revolution Takes Flight".

From a time when defence forces faced critical equipment shortages to today's era of self-reliance, this is a journey that

every Indian can be proud of, the prime minister said.

Days after inaugurating the C-295 aircraft manufacturing complex in Vadodara jointly with his Spanish prime minister Pedro Sanchez, Modi described it as a watershed moment in India's defence and aerospace journey.

"The speed of execution is breathtaking -- from founda-

tion stone to operational facility in just two years! This is a clear manifestation of a new work culture and the capabilities of the people of India," he said.

Giving out figures to back his assertion, Modi said India's defence production has soared to Rs 1.27 lakh crore (2023-24) and its exports have skyrocketed from Rs 1,000 crore in

2014 to Rs 21,000 crore today.

The production of over 12,300 items has been indigenised in just three years and over Rs 7,500 crore invested in domestic vendors by the defence PSUs, he said, adding that 25 per cent of the defence research and development (R&D) budget was dedicated to the industry-led innovation.

Don't vote for 'jaat' and 'bhaat'

Prashant Kishor tells people of Bihar

PNS ■ RAMGARH (BIHAR)

Jan Suraj founder Prashant Kishor on Wednesday urged the people of Bihar to give up supporting political parties in the name of 'jaat' (caste) and 'bhaat' (free ration), blaming the voting behaviour for the state's chronic backwardness.

Kishor, the political strategist-turned-activist, came out with the catchy rhyme at a rally in the Ramgarh assembly segment where a by-poll is scheduled next month.

The IPAC founder, who has worked with political leaders of all hues in a professional capacity, claimed that his home state has been given a raw deal by successive regimes in Bihar as also the Narendra Modi government at the Centre.

"(RJD leader and former CM) Lalu Prasad and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar kept the whole of Bihar trapped in 'jaat' for 35

years. For the past 10 years, Modi has been short-changing you in exchange for five kgs of 'bhaat'. You must stop voting for 'jaat' and 'bhaat' if you want a better future for yourself and your children," Kishor said at the rally.

Kishor, whose fledgling party hopes to hold its own in Ramgarh which the RJD wants to retain and the BJP is trying to wrest back, also asked the people not to vote for the saffron party "which has made clear it will back Nitish Kumar for another term in office after assembly polls due next year".

"Nitish Kumar has replaced the terror of criminals during the Lalu era with the terror of an unbridled bureaucracy. The ongoing land survey has led to turmoil. People are also witnessing excessive bills for electricity and disconnections without warning ever since the smart pre-paid meters have been made mandatory.



BJP wants to run UP through police: Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday said the BJP government has torn apart democracy and the Constitution, while alleging that the ruling party wants to run Uttar Pradesh through the police.

Yadav said the limits of injustice were being crossed in the BJP rule and the police did not spare even those who had the book of justice in their hands, according to a statement. "They (BJP) treated the lawyers in a barbaric manner. The police surrounded the lawyers in the courtroom and behaved violently. Many lawyers have suffered serious injuries," he said.

Yadav said when the police administration is behaving so ruthlessly with the lawyers, then one can imagine how its behaviour and conduct would be with the general public.

'NGT warns Ayodhya authorities of prosecution'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal has warned the district magistrate (DM) and regional officer in Ayodhya of prosecution for reportedly changing the members of a joint committee it had constituted.

A bench comprising NGT chairperson Justice (retired) Prakash Shrivastava, judicial member Justice (retired) Sudhir Agarwal and expert member Afroz Ahmad observed both officials had acted in "sheer defiance" of the tribunal's directions and appointed other persons to the committee.

The green body was hearing a case over the proposed construction of a rest house, which involved felling of 300 mango trees in an orchard in Sharwa Uparhar village, Faizabad Tehsil in Ayodhya district.

In September, the tribunal had formed a joint committee comprising the DM, the Uttar

Pradesh Pollution Control Board and the regional forest officer. It had directed the committee to submit a report within a month.

In its order dated October 16, the bench noted the panel's report, which showed several persons were made its members without being appointed by the tribunal which was "totally unauthorised."

"Neither the DM nor the regional forest officer was authorised to nominate anybody in their place and they had no authority to change the constitution of the committee. This act on their part is nothing but sheer defiance and non-compliance with the tribunal's order which is an offence under Section 26 of the NGT Act, 2010 and for such an offence both the officers are liable to be prosecuted," it held.

Section 26 deals with the penalties for not following the tribunal's directions, orders, decisions or awards.

8 naxals arrested in Sukma district

PNS ■ SUKMA

Eight Naxalites have been arrested from three different places in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, police said on Wednesday.

While six cadres were apprehended from the Chintalnagar police station area, one each was held from Konta and Chintagufa police station limits on Tuesday, a police official said.

Joint teams of the state police's District Reserve Guard (DRG), 165th and 150th battalions of the Central Reserve Police Force and 201st battalion of CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action- an elite unit of CRPF) and district police were involved in making the arrests, he said.

The arrested cadres, all male, are aged between 20 and 55 years, the official said.

MAHA KUMBH

Authorities race against time to complete 500 projects

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Authorities are racing against time to put things in place before the 2025 Maha Kumbh - the 42-day mega religious event -- unfolds in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj on the banks of the Ganga with the first 'shahi snan' being held on Makar Sankranti or January 14.

About 500 projects of central and state governments involving various departments, 15 of them from Uttar Pradesh alone, are at different stages of completion, officials said.

During his October 6 visit to Prayagraj, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had announced extension of the project-completion deadline by 15 days to December 15, ostensibly to make up for extended rainfall and

higher-than-normal water levels of the Ganga.

Usually during the Kumbh Mela, the water level of the Ganges is about 10,000 cusecs to facilitate devotees and saints from across the globe to take the holy dip in the holy river.

"However, when the chief minister had visited Prayagraj on October 6, the water level of the Ganges was about 1.25 lakh cusecs. The water level has now started receding and this has helped speed up various projects," an official associated with various Kumbh projects said.

"Usually the water level of Ganga starts receding around September 15. This time, however, it happened a month late," Kumbh Mela Adhikari Vijay Kiran Anand told reporters while expressing confidence that



all the projects would be completed within the deadline.

"The size and budget of the Maha Kumbh this time is almost

three times that of the 2013 Maha Kumbh," another official said.

According to officials, the

Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, Indian Institute of Information Technology Prayagraj and Motilal Nehru

2.37 lakh young volunteers to be trained as first responders to disaster

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan has launched a special scheme to train 2.37 lakh young volunteers in 315 districts across the country as the first responders to disaster preparedness and response.

The 'Yuva Apada Mitra Scheme' was launched at the 20th formation day function of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) here on Monday, an official release said.

According to the plan, under the 'Yuva Apada Mitra Scheme', 2,37,326 young volunteers such as National Cadet Corps (NCC), Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), Bharat Scouts & Guides (BS&G) and National Service Scheme (NSS) will be trained in 315 districts of 28 states as



a first responders to disaster preparedness and response.

Besides, 1,300 trainers will also be prepared under the up-scaling of 'Aapda Mitra Scheme' with an estimated total cost of Rs 469.53 crore.

The theme of the formation day event was 'Empowering Communities for Disaster Risk Reduction through Awareness for Behavioral Change'.

During the event, the union home secretary launched seven guidelines, SOP and handbook on disaster management.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Traffic mayhem

On the eve of Diwali, Delhiites found themselves stranded for hours as traffic jams clogged major roads

Diwali is the biggest festival in Delhi. It is awaited eagerly by one and all. While the festivities galore it is also during this time, the Delhiites suffer the most; high pollution levels and traffic jams dampen the festive spirit. On the eve of Diwali, thousands of commuters in Delhi found themselves trapped in an unending traffic nightmare. With the festive season in full swing, the city's roads, particularly around popular market areas, became scenes of frustration as vehicles moved at a snail's pace, leaving commuters stranded for hours. Despite pre-announced traffic measures by Delhi Police, congestion overwhelmed key roads, with frustrated citizens questioning the effectiveness of traffic management efforts. Heavy traffic jams were reported across several areas, including the DND flyway, Ashram Marg, and Sarai Kale Khan, stretching into congested points such as Karol Bagh, Taimur Nagar-Maharani Bagh Road, Punjabi Bagh, and Badarpur Mehrauli Road. As the festive rush built up on



Dhanteras, shoppers headed to market areas in droves. Many took to social media to share images and videos of the gridlocked streets, sparking discussions about the city's recurring traffic woes. In a bid to curb the chaos, Delhi Police had announced intensified road checks, anti-encroachment drives and measures aimed at keeping traffic flowing smoothly. Additionally, non-essential vehicles were restricted from entering the capital, and shoppers were instructed to park only in designated areas. Despite these efforts, the measures seemed insufficient against the overwhelming crowd of festival shoppers. Sarojini Nagar, Sadar Bazar, and Khan

Market saw an enormous influx, leaving shop owners struggling to manage both security and traffic. In some areas, the traffic snarls dampened the Diwali spirit. Ironically, the unexpected security measures, intended to reduce congestion, left sections of the market unusually empty on Dhanteras. As commuters endured bumper-to-bumper delays, voices of discontent grew louder and many people vent their spleen on social media. With Diwali celebrations continuing, these issues are likely to persist. Despite attempts to bolster security and traffic regulation, the administration's efforts seem to have fallen way short, leaving commuters to bear the brunt of another chaotic festive season on Delhi's streets. The traffic jams reflect poorly on the administrations capability to handle it. No denying that more cars are on the roads and given the limited capacity of roads, traffic jams cannot be completely eliminated. But having said that it is also true that the preparedness to deal with such a scenario were inadequate. At places there was no traffic police personnel to control the traffic and many signal lights reportedly did not work. We actively campaigned to bring this issue to the attention of relevant departments through a series of reports well in advance, right before the festive season began. Yet, as always, complacency prevailed.

### PICTALK



Artists dance on the Rampath ahead of Deepotsav celebrations, in Ayodhya

# 'Trophyisation' of weapon platforms

In the propaganda war, the symbolic power of "trophy" weapons extends far beyond the battlefield, reshaping the narratives of geopolitical rivalries



BHOPINDER SINGH

If Ukrainians made a public spectacle of captured Russian weaponry, the Russians did likewise in flaunting captured Western military hardware, from the British Husky tactical support vehicle etc., in a public park. The symbolism supports the Russian narrative that the 'West/NATO is attacking Russia, and yet the Russians are triumphing. However, the ground truth is more complex as the Russians had invaded Ukraine and the war status is a stalemate at best, as the envisaged '10-day operation' has gone on for over a year and a half. Such displays are common across militaries, and they understandably do not sit well with the other side.

Now, the Chinese have got riled over similar symbolism as the US Navy plans to exhibit a warplane, albeit of its own, that harks back to the 2001 Hainan Island incident that involved a midair collision of a Signal Intelligence aircraft i.e., EP-3E Aries II of the UN Navy, and a Chinese Air Force F-8 fighter plane. Flying over the tense and disputed South China Seas, the US plane had taken off from its Kadena Air Base in Japan and was intercepted by two F-8 fighters midway between the Hainan Islands and Paracel Islands. Whilst making aggressive passes, one of the Chinese fighter planes collided with the American plane and the Chinese fighter plane broke. The Chinese fighter pilot's body was never recovered. The damaged American plane along with its 24 crew members made an emergency landing at China's Hainan airbase without authorization and its crew were detained.

There was a counterclaim by the Chinese that the American plane had deliberately hit the Chinese fighter plane, but it was never substantiated, even though the Chinese had the data from the flight recorders of both planes. 10 days of hectic diplomatic parleys ensued with each side blaming the other for provocation and unreasonable conduct.



China insisted on the illegality of the American plane's presence claiming the region to be part of its exclusive economic zone as per the United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS)—whereas the Americans claimed patrolling rights under its right of Freedom of Navigation. But embarrassing delays in securing the release of American crew were publicly distracting from the more pressing foreign policy issue of launching the 'War on Terror' for the then US President, George Bush, in Afghanistan, following 9/11.

A due 'letter of the two sorries' (for the death of the Chinese fighter pilot and unauthorized landing) from the American side led the same to be conveniently interpreted as a 'letter of apology' by the Chinese media, and the same led to the release of American crew and the return of the disassembled aircraft. 23 years later, the Americans are bringing back the same plane i.e., EP-3E Aries II, at its Pima Air & Space Museum in Tucson, Arizona, for public display. The 'trophyisation' will be accompanied by a backstory explaining its significance in a historic incident that was fraught with risks of further escalation, for public consumption. The Chinese fear an American



THERE WAS A COUNTERCLAIM BY THE CHINESE THAT THE AMERICAN PLANE HAD DELIBERATELY HIT THE CHINESE FIGHTER PLANE, BUT IT WAS NEVER SUBSTANTIATED, EVEN THOUGH THE CHINESE HAD THE DATA FROM THE FLIGHT RECORDERS OF BOTH PLANES

narrative of 'capitulation' that paints the Chinese reaction in a dim light, even though it had the American plane and its 24 crew members, on its soil. As a riled Chinese social media commentator reacted, "It is not 2001. Wake up! It's 2024" — as if to suggest that the Chinese PLA was no minnow any longer, and it would give a befitting reply.

The unofficial mouthpiece of the Chinese regime i.e., Global Times, captured the reactionary mood in China, "Chinese people saw the incident as a painful memory for the nation and the reported plan to display the US warplane at a sensitive moment when China-US relations are delicate and face uncertainties, is like 'rubbing salt into the wound' and reflects an unfriendly stance by the US toward China".

However, the situation in the choppy South China Seas has not changed much with the Chinese belligerence continuing and growing by the day, and with the Americans still conducting reconnaissance air sorties and naval exercises to counter the same.

Countries like Taiwan, Japan and most recently Philippines, are in the direct line of competing territorial claims, against China. Symbolism with the conceptualisation of con-

cepts like QUAD (Quadrilateral of Sino-wary, Japan, US, Australia and India) or Naval Exercises are part of vital international optics and narrative building. In a dictatorial country like China where propaganda has been elevated to a fine art, Beijing understands the power of public perception, hence its discomfort with the re-posting of the Hainan incident, entailing the return of EP-3E Aries II in public imagination.

The Chinese pipedream would like the new US exhibit to include, "calls from China and other countries worldwide to end US reconnaissance operations near their borders", but as the most encroaching, expansionist, and coercive neighbour — it would know better than to expect the American exhibit to be kind towards China's propaganda position. With many famous defections of fighter pilots towards 'enemy' countries (especially from China to Taiwan), the 'trophyisation' of weapon platforms is an old hat, and in that context, the thinned and hyper-reaction by the Chinese recently is churlish.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### POPULATION CENSUS 2025

Madam — Regarding 'Population Census Takes Off in 2025' (Oct 29), the census is far more than a political activity; it's a strategic framework for development as India progresses toward becoming a superpower. The proposed 31 questions for the census should encompass aspects such as the agricultural workforce, tribal and coastal populations, elderly and infirm populations, women's education and economic standing, the skilled youth workforce, informal sector engagement, child mortality rates, school and college enrollment, residents abroad, border-area inhabitants, those who have traveled or hold properties abroad, and OCI and NRI populations in India. The upcoming election delimitation should ensure fair population representation per constituency for MPs and MLAs.

Although caste census isn't constitutionally mandated, it is often used as a political tool that risks dividing society along caste lines. The lack of exact figures on castes and the absence of official caste records make the legitimacy of caste data contentious, often resulting in disputes and litigation. Furthermore, with the prevalence of inter-caste marriages, the caste census appears increasingly outdated.

Vinod Johri | Delhi

### DIGITAL FRAUD

Madam — When a Prime Minister warns citizens about digital fraud, it underscores the gravity of this issue and its deep infiltration at the grassroots level. According to available data, Indian citizens lost around ₹120 crores to digital fraud in the first quarter of 2024 alone—a conservative estimate, as many cases go unreported due to fear of police harassment or lack of awareness. The methods used by fraudsters vary widely and evolve constantly. A common tactic involves scammers posing as relatives to extract bank details, often from numbers originating abroad. This is particularly prevalent in Punjab, where many have relatives overseas, making

## Revisit West Asia policy



The editorial on the looming war clouds in West Asia (Oct 28) should resonate more deeply with India than with other nations, given India's critical stakes in the region. For decades, attacks and counterattacks in West Asia have been common, but the current wave of violent escalations and genocides on both sides has far-reaching implications globally. India, in par-

cular, faces a dilemma. The current administration leans ideologically toward supporting Israel, despite India's historical support for the Palestinian cause. Additionally, India benefits from affordable crude oil sourced from Russia, although these savings are primarily enjoyed by select private players in the oil sector rather than reaching the public. However, as tensions intensify, potentially drawing in the US and Russia, nations worldwide may find themselves compelled to align with one side. This situation could pressure the government to prioritize ideological support for Israel or risk trade disruptions that could affect India's economic stability—already challenged by an unfavorable trade balance. India, surrounded by a region of strained relations, cannot afford isolation in such turbulent times. It is essential for prudence to prevail.

AG Rajmohan | Anantpur

them easy targets.

These foreign-based numbers make tracing the criminals more challenging. While the Digital India initiative launched in 2015 has successfully propelled the nation toward digital empowerment, it has also exposed more citizens to cybercrime. This calls for increased caution, particularly among the elderly and those less familiar with digital technology. Only by staying vigilant can we protect ourselves from these evolving digital threats.

Yash Pal Raihan | Jalandhar

### RIISING CASES OF STROKES AMONG YOUNG

Madam — Countries worldwide are making significant investments to position themselves at the forefront of the semiconductor industry, with India setting aside \$11 billion and considering an additional \$5–10 billion. These are sizable figures, particularly when compared to the relatively lower investment in labor-intensive industries like leather and handicrafts. But what is the government's ultimate goal with such a massive investment? Is it to establish a base

for a larger electronics sector, or to support the expanding automobile supply chain? Unfortunately, the government's response has been unclear and less than satisfactory, with an emphasis on promoting "aatmanirbharta" or self-reliance.

However, self-reliance may not be entirely practical given the complex nature of global supply chains. Reducing dependence on allied nations like South Korea and Taiwan may not be necessary; rather, the focus could be on lessening reliance on China. A key challenge for the government in implementing this plan will be securing a skilled workforce. A more strategic approach would be to target specific, scalable segments of the supply chain, such as fabrication, design, assembly, and packaging. Instead of focusing solely on self-reliance, India should aim to establish itself as a key player in the global semiconductor supply chain, maximizing the impact of this significant investment.

Pratyush Tiwari | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## The benefits and reality of organic food choices

From freshly harvested crops to packaged foods, the organic label now commands a premium price; is it for real or just a sales gimmick

In recent years, a remarkable trend has emerged, with organic products now prominently displayed on supermarket shelves and featured on packaging across the board. It encompasses everything from freshly harvested crops to essentially packaged goods. And, given that the organic brand will cost significantly more, people are questioning if it is worth it. Organic foods offer health, aetiology, and environmental benefits. This type of food is promoted as a more wholesome and righteous option. The concept is straightforward: reduce pesticide use, eliminate synthetic fertilisers, and avoid genetically modified organisms. For numerous individuals, opting for cleaner and more organically cultivated produce justifies the expense. And yet, aren't we, in our way, being chipped away at our true worth as customers?



Our vegetables, once vibrant and full of flavour, are now coated in pesticides that strip them of their natural essence. We've all noticed it: the tomatoes don't taste like they used to, and a bell pepper is just... bland. With the essence of fresh vegetables fading from our experience, many sought refuge in the convenience of pre-packaged meals.

The appeal and taste of fast food or packaged snacks overshadow the presence of vegetables offered alongside them. It's hardly unexpected that many individuals find themselves torn between the less appealing, time-consuming superfoods and the quicker, more delicious meal alternatives. Yet, what is the price to pay? Here's the point: it's not about flavour or ease—it's about well-being. Even minimal exposure to pesticides has been linked to a variety of health issues, including hormone disruption and neurological complications. As time passes, these substances may build up within the human body, and despite increasingly stringent regulations, the long-term consequences remain largely unclear. This justifies the higher price tag, reinforcing the value of organic foods. Is that worth the investment?

It hinges on what you value most. Choosing organic is a positive move towards minimising chemical exposure and fostering sustainable practices. However, to truly enhance the flavour of your meals, seeking out local farmers and fresh produce that hasn't undergone excessive processing or long-distance transport could be a more effective solution to that issue. Embracing organic choices transcends mere financial considerations; it represents a commitment to your well-being, an enhancement of your culinary experience, and a forward-thinking approach to the future of our food systems.

(The writer is a motivator and a freelance journalist; views expressed are personal)



RACHNA LAKHPATRI



## FIRST COLUMN

### WHERE DO WE GO WRONG?

It is essential to recognise the diverse spiritual paths that humanity traverses



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

I am referring to our relationship with God. To understand this properly, clarity must be there about different classes of men. There are two main ones. The first one is of majority. In this, there are five types. Many do not know God, those who are living in the wilderness, and do have not much connection with civilization. The next are those, who are aware but have no opinion about God. They take a neutral stance in this matter. They are called agnostics. The next level is of those, who are aware of God, but are too lazy to have anything to do with Him, i.e., they don't do any spiritual practices to develop a link with God. The fourth category is of those, who are envious of God. Why is God superior to us, why should we take His shelter, why does He control everything, etc.? And the last category is atheists, who forcefully deny God's existence. Now I come to those, who have faith in God and His instructions, but are of different levels.

The first level is of those who do some spiritual practices as rituals. For example, someone has a murti of Lord Krishna in his home, which he has placed on a shelf. He lights an 'agarbatti' every morning after bath and places it near the murti. Someone else may be chanting Gayatri Mantra three times a day. Or someone maybe worshipping Suryadeva every morning with water. These are very nice activities and bring benefits, which are limited in extent. The worshiper has certain material desires, which he is keen on. He is superior to an ordinary man carrying out his material activities in pur-



suit of material goals like wealth, power, fame, etc. The next level is those who do some rituals and also have some faith in the Lord's instructions, as given in bonafide spiritual texts like the Bhagavad-Geeta. But they restrict themselves for two reasons what they can get from God. They don't do more to please God and become deserving, but displease God by their lusty, greedy, angry, hateful, etc. activities. Is this intelligent? They end up gaining some material benefits for the spiritual acts done, and also punishments for bad acts done. They don't cancel out, i.e., both come to fruition. The next level of faith is better. They do rituals and try to gain purity in action through their minds, senses, and words. This helps them enhance their mode of goodness. They reap many benefits as a consequence. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 14.6) Then, comes the next level, who can be called devotees. They desire to please God in addition to their senses, minds and bodies. They have faith in God's instructions, i.e., try to act accordingly. But they also don't go far enough. This happens due to many reasons like fault in nature (svabhava) and not great 'sanskars' (cultural training). They only come to a stage described by Lord Krishna. (6.41) Now we come to the highest level of devotees; he is helplessly attracted towards God due to practice done in the previous life. He transcends the ritualistic part of the Vedas. (6.44) Let us, therefore, not go wrong. We should stop ourselves from denying the existence of God staying neutral or being feeble about connecting with God. We have so much to gain even if we are not thinking of gaining liberation. God has so much to offer like opulence of all six kinds including success.

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

# India's shift toward competency-based hiring



DINESH SOOD

The focus on competency over credentials promises not only to improve employability but also to foster a more inclusive workforce



India is moving towards skills-based hiring over degrees, marking a significant shift in the job market. Companies increasingly adopt competency-based hiring practices, focusing on practical skills and inclusivity rather than traditional degrees. This change is influenced by the growing importance of industry-relevant competencies in today's digitised business landscape. IBM India is a notable example of this trend, as it has implemented a 'skills-first' policy, where a college degree is no longer a prerequisite for recruitment. Similarly, companies like TCS, Infosys, and Wipro are also shifting towards skills-based hiring, investing heavily in training programs in the digital economy.

This shift has broad implications for India's education sector, prompting universities and educational institutions to incorporate more industry-relevant training and competency-based curricula. Many Indian universities are partnering with businesses to offer specialized training in artificial intelligence, data analytics, cyber security, and beauty and wellness.

Recently, Medhavi University collaborated with Orane International, a pioneer global institute in beauty-wellness. Such collaborations aim to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and industry requirements, ensuring graduates are job-ready from day one. Reports have shown that such partnerships have significantly increased employability in specialized fields, highlighting the importance of aligning education with industry needs. Competency-based hiring is revolutionising university education and professional development in India. In today's technology-driven economy, continuous learning and upskilling are crucial for career advancement. Companies like IBM, TCS, and Infosys



THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT RECOGNISES THAT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IS CRITICAL TO NATIONAL PERFORMANCE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH. AS REFLECTED IN THE 2024 EDUCATION BUDGET, SIGNIFICANT FUNDING HAS BEEN DIRECTED TOWARDS DIGITAL PROJECTS TO PREPARE YOUNG INDIANS FOR A DIGITAL FUTURE

heavily invest in training programs on the digital economy. These programs often include online courses, certifications, and micro-credentials, enabling employees to acquire new skills efficiently.

The Indian government recognizes that skills development is critical to national performance and economic growth. As reflected in the 2024 education budget, significant funding has been directed towards digital projects to prepare young Indians for a digital future.

Over the next five years, approximately 2 million young people will receive skills training. Additionally, 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) will be modernized, with updated course content tailored to industry needs.

This government support is crucial for India's ambition to remain a talent hub. India stands at a critical juncture in its economic journey, with immense potential for growth but facing a significant challenge in bridging the unemployment-employability gap. As the world's fifth-largest economy, India's vision for "Viksit Bharat" by 2047 hinges on effectively skilling its youth to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving job market.

The Union Budget 2024-25 has highlighted this priority, allocating substantial funds for education, employment, and skilling initiatives. However, the task ahead is daunting, with nearly 73% of workers aged 15-59 years lacking formal or informal vocational training. A multi-pronged

approach is essential to harnessing India's demographic dividend and fueling economic growth. This includes bolstering institutional support, strengthening industry-academia connections, and leveraging innovative financing solutions like impact bonds. As India navigates this crucial phase, the success of its skill development efforts will play a pivotal role in shaping the nation's future and realizing its economic potential. Competency-based hiring transforms the job market and creates opportunities for diverse groups often excluded.

In India, many individuals seeking to re-enter the workforce—often in remote or part-time roles—benefit from this approach. During the pandemic, many women took online courses in digital marketing, content creation, and I.T. services while balancing home responsibilities. This shift towards skills-based hiring opens doors for a more inclusive and diverse workforce and paints an optimistic picture of the future of employment in India, full of opportunities and potential for growth.

India's thriving start-up culture is a testament to the adaptability and practical experience valued in skills-based hiring. Startups, often operating with limited resources, place less emphasis on educational background and more on the skills and potential of their employees.

As a result, startups are setting the pace in adopting skills-based hiring practices, inspiring more giant corporations to follow suit

and revolutionise the job market. Their innovative approach to hiring is not only inspiring but also a sign of the changing times in the Indian job market. Transitioning to skills-based hiring comes with challenges, including the need for accurate and unbiased skills assessments.

Traditional hiring, reliant on academic qualifications, is relatively straightforward. In contrast, evaluating practical skills requires sophisticated testing and assessment techniques. Additionally, companies must train their H.R. teams to recognize and nurture talent based on skills rather than credentials.

Acknowledging these challenges is the first step towards overcoming them, and it prepares us for the future of hiring. By acknowledging these challenges, we can better prepare for the future of hiring and ensure a more effective and inclusive job market.

Despite these challenges, the benefits of competency-based hiring are evident. Companies can access a broader and more diverse talent pool by focusing on skills, including individuals overlooked by traditional hiring processes. This approach helps fill critical skills gaps and fosters a more inclusive and innovative workforce.

(The writer is co-founder and MD of Orane International, a training partner of the National Skill Development Corporation and a network Member of India International Skills Centres, an initiative of GoI. The views expressed are personal)

## Reviving Bihar's libraries: Bridging the gap between tradition and technology

A well-conceived hybrid model could revitalise Bihar's libraries, providing a space where traditional and digital learning coexist

In today's era of rapid digital transformation, libraries in Bihar and across India are facing a critical challenge: how to remain relevant in a world increasingly dominated by digital content and online resources. Historically, libraries have been pillars of knowledge and learning, preserving history, culture, science, and philosophy for generations. However, with the rise of the internet, mobile technology, and social media, the traditional role of libraries is being questioned, especially in rural areas and smaller towns. The digital revolution has reshaped the way people, especially the youth, consume information. Where libraries were once the sole custodians of knowledge, the



RINKU KUMARI

Internet now offers instant access to vast amounts of data. E-books, online courses, and educational videos are available at the click of a button, challenging the need for physical spaces to access information. While this shift has opened new avenues for learning, it has also contributed to the neglect and decline of public libraries, particularly in states like Bihar. Bihar's once-thriving

library culture has dramatically deteriorated. Where there were once 540 public libraries in the state during the 1950s, only 51 remain today, according to a 2022 report from the Bihar Assembly Library Committee. Entire districts, including Arwal, Kaimur, Banka, Sheohar, Kishanganj, and Sheikhpura, now have no public libraries at all—neither in rural areas nor in urban centres. The closure of these institutions reflects a deeper cultural shift, where reading and communal learning spaces are no longer central to the lives of many. Muzaffarpur, highlights the concerning reality of the fading library tradition. Its few remaining libraries, such as

the Gandhi Smriti Library and Nav Yuvak Samiti Trust Library, are either poorly resourced or neglected. In a city of this size, there isn't a single well-functioning library that caters to literature lovers or cultural enthusiasts, leaving little hope for their counterparts in rural areas. Yet, as the world embraces digital transformation, the role of libraries must evolve rather than disappear. The challenge lies not in replacing libraries but in reimagining them as hybrid spaces—integrating digital resources with the physical charm and purpose of traditional libraries. Libraries, with their rich legacy of providing knowledge, can be transformed into community hubs that offer more than just



books. They can become centres for digital literacy, e-learning, and skill development, especially in areas where access to the internet and technology is still a challenge. In this context, Vinay, a social worker from Muzaffarpur, suggests a forward-thinking solution: modernizing libraries to meet the needs of the current generation. Libraries should be equipped with computers, internet access, and resources

for career counselling and education. "We need to reconnect young people, who are lost in the virtual world with the world of books," he explains. Libraries can offer both—the serenity and richness of traditional books and the practicality and excitement of digital resources. This transformation would not only make libraries more accessible but also relevant to today's youth, who are accustomed to

consuming knowledge digitally. The success of such an initiative would depend on concerted efforts by local leaders, communities, and governments. For instance, establishing a digital library in every Panchayat would bridge the urban-rural divide, bringing digital literacy to the forefront while preserving the cultural and intellectual heritage libraries represent. Panchayat representatives and village intellectuals can play a critical role in promoting the use of these modernized libraries, ensuring that the younger generation has access to both digital and physical forms of knowledge. The ongoing digital revolution has created an urgent need to rethink the purpose and structure of

libraries. The Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library in Patna, one of the few libraries still thriving in Bihar, is a testament to the potential of such institutions. However, unless libraries across the state are modernized to embrace digital tools and resources, their future seems uncertain. The decline of libraries in Bihar isn't just about the closure of physical spaces—it reflects the broader societal changes driven by technology. But rather than view this as the end of the library's role, it should be seen as an opportunity to redefine its importance in a digital-first world. (The writer is an educator in Muzaffarpur Bihar; views are personal. Charkha Features)

## IN BRIEF



### JTL Industries ramps up manufacturing capacity

Steel pipes maker JTL Industries Ltd on Wednesday announced increasing its annual manufacturing capacity to 2 lakh tonnes as part of its around Rs 350-crore expansion plan. With this addition, its cumulative pipe manufacturing capacity has reached a level of 6.86 lakh tonne per annum, the company said in an exchange filing. In a filing on Wednesday, JTL Industries said, "It announces successful expansion of its Raipur facility's capacity from 1,00,000 metric tonnes per annum (MTPA) (1 lakh tonne) to 200,000 MTPA. The company is aiming to complete its expansion plan of 4 lakh tonnes by the financial year 2026-27, taking its overall capacity to 10 lakh tonnes per annum, a company official had told PTI earlier. JTL Industries is a leading producer of electric resistance welded steel pipes in India. Besides Raipur, it owns manufacturing facilities in Malegaon in Maharashtra, and Mandi and Derahbasi in Punjab.



### Rupee falls 4 paise against US dollar

Rupee depreciated 4 paise to close at 84.09 (provisional) against US dollar on Wednesday, weighed down by weak domestic markets and month-end dollar demand from importers. Forex traders said suspected intervention by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) supported the local currency at lower levels. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.06 against the greenback. It traded in a tight range and ended the day at 84.09 (provisional), down 4 paise from its previous close. On Tuesday, the rupee gained 2 paise to settle at 84.05 against the US dollar. The local currency has been hovering around its all-time low level. Rupee touched its lowest closing level of 84.10 against the dollar on October 11. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.15 per cent lower at 104.16. Forex traders said the dollar declined on disappointing jobs data from the US. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.53 per cent to USD 71.50 per barrel in futures trade.



### NTPC develops catalyst for methanol production

NTPC has developed a catalyst to produce methanol using gases emitted from fossil-fired power plant, an official statement said Wednesday. The catalyst has been developed by NTPC in collaboration with Indian Institute of Petroleum, the power ministry said. CO2 mitigation is one of a critical challenge faced by fossil-fired power plant. Therefore, capturing CO2 from the flue gas and converting it to valuable fuel and chemicals is in focus, globally. "NTPC Ltd develops indigenous catalyst for methanol production from flue gas CO2 in collaboration with Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP), Dehradun," it said. The purity of methanol produced by this catalyst is more than 99 per cent, the ministry said.

## Fiscal deficit at 29.4 pc of full-year target: Govt data

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre's fiscal deficit at the end of the first half of financial year FY25 touched 29.4 per cent of the full-year target, government data showed on Wednesday.

In absolute terms, fiscal deficit -- the gap between government's expenditure and revenue -- was at Rs 4,74,520 crore at September-end, according to data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA).

The deficit stood at 39.3 per cent of the Budget Estimates (BE) in the corresponding period of 2023-24.

In the Union Budget, the government projected to bring down the fiscal deficit to 4.9 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in the current 2024-25 financial year. The deficit was 5.6 per cent of the GDP in 2023-24.

In absolute terms, the government aims to contain the fiscal deficit at Rs 16,13,312 crore during the current fiscal. The revenue-expenditure

data of the Union government for the first six months of 2024-25 showed that the net tax revenue was Rs 12.65 lakh crore or 49 per cent of BE for the current fiscal.

The net tax revenue collection was 49.8 per cent at September-end 2023.

The central government's total expenditure in the six months through September stood at Rs 21.11 lakh crore or 43.8 per cent of BE. Expenditure was 47.1 per cent of BE in the year-ago period.

Of the total expenditure, Rs 16.96 lakh crore was in the revenue account and Rs 4.15 lakh crore in the capital account.

Commenting on the CGA data, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA said the Centre's fiscal deficit declining to Rs 4.7 lakh crore in H1 FY25 from Rs 7 lakh crore in April-September FY24 has been aided by the Reserve Bank's dividend payment in the early part of the fiscal as well as the continuing year-on-year contraction in capital expenditure.



## 'India not looking at US-China tension as source of benefit'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is not looking at the ongoing US-China trade tensions as an opportunity for its own benefit and the country stands on its strengths such as democratic institutions, robust rule of law, and talented youth, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Wednesday.

Speaking at the eighth Future Investment Initiative (FII) Plenary in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia), he said India offers huge opportunities and the world is building stronger ties with the emerging markets.

"India does not look at the US-China tensions as a source of benefit. We believe we can stand on our own feet, on the strength of our democracy, the rule of law that we offer, the strength of our young population, and our demographic dividend works well. It is talented, spirited and aspirational," the minister said.

He was replying to a question about huge economic potential in the country and India is one of the major beneficiaries of the developments in the world like US-China trade tensions. The US has raised customs



duties on a number of goods imported from China.

When asked if the multilateral trade system has failed, Goyal said it has not, but it is going through certain stresses. He said the World Trade Organization (WTO) is grappling with issues like a dysfunctional appellate body to resolve trade disputes among member countries.

"We have challenges on certain agendas where the developed world and the emerging markets think differently. We have not been able to reconcile those differences. But I am one who believes that the future is bright and I am very optimistic about these issues only making things better for all," he said. He added that India

and the US resolved their seven WTO trade disputes bilaterally.

"So we see a great opportunity for diplomacy playing a greater role in resolving the problems of the world and India's approach is that dialogue and diplomacy is the way forward whether it is conflict or economics," he said.

## PETROL, DIESEL COMMISSION HIKED

### No change in retail price

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Commission paid to petrol pump dealers on sale of petrol and diesel has been hiked without change in retail price but rates will go down in several places in states such as Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Himachal Pradesh on account of intrastate freight rationalisation.

Commission on sale of petrol has been hiked by 65 paise a litre and that on diesel by 44 paise per litre. Alongside, the state-owned firms also rationalised intrastate tariffs which could lead to a reduction in rates of up to Rs 4.5 a litre in some parts.

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) -- the state-owned market leader -- on October 29 wrote to dealers informing of



an increase in dealer margin for all categories.

"Considering the hardship of retail outlets selling less than Rs 170 per kilolitre per month, special care has been taken to alleviate the same," it said.

"You will be entitled to an upward revision of dealer margin of approximately Rs 0.65 per litre for petrol and Rs 0.44

a litre of diesel."

This is the first revision in commission paid to dealers in nearly eight years.

All the three state fuel retailers -- IOC, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) -- took to X to announce the revision in dealers' commission.

"IndianOil is pleased to announce a revision in the dealer margins (effective from 30th October 2024), following the resolution of a pending litigation. This will have no additional impact on the Retail Selling Price of products," IOC said in a post on X.

BPCL in a post said the revised commission will be effective October 30. This would be "at no additional cost to consumers".

## Govt steps up onion supplies via rail transport to control prices

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday said about 840 tonne of buffer onion arrived via rail at Delhi's Kishanganj railway station, as part of its multi-pronged strategy to control prices.

This marks the second major rail delivery after 1,600 tonne reached Delhi on October 20 through 'Kanda Express', an official statement said.

The shipment, procured by NAFED under the price stabilization fund, will primarily be released through Azadpur Mandi, with a portion earmarked for retail sale at Rs 35 per kg.

Retail prices of onion are ruling at Rs 60-80 per kg in the national capital depending upon the quality and locality.

In a first, the government has adopted rail transport for timely and cost-effective delivery of onions across regions.

NAFED earlier transported 840 MT to Chennai on October 26, while another consignment of similar quantity departed from Nashik for Guwahati early Wednesday.

The government had built a buffer of 4.7 lakh tonne during the rabi season and began releasing from September 5 through retail and bulk channels.

"Over 1.40 lakh tonne have been dispatched from Nashik and other centres via road transport," the statement said.

The National Cooperative Consumers' Federation (NCCF) has reached 104 destinations across 22 states, while NAFED covers 25 locations in 16 states. The agencies have partnered with SAFAL, Kendriya Bhandar and Reliance Retail for Rs 35 per kg retail sales.

Additionally, 86,500 tonne has been allocated to nine state governments and cooperative societies for retail distribution. The intervention has helped stabilize retail prices across major states including Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, UP, Tamil Nadu and Delhi, with the all-India average retail price remaining steady through October.

Wholesale rates at Nashik mandi have declined from Rs 47 per kg on September 24 to Rs 40 currently.



## Sensex, Nifty decline on selling in banking, financial stocks

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty declined on Wednesday, as selling pressure in banking and financial stocks amid a bearish trend in global markets unnerved investors.

Besides, weak earnings numbers and persistent foreign fund outflows hit market sentiments, traders said.

The BSE Sensex tumbled 426.85 points or 0.53 per cent to settle at 79,942.18. During the session, the index hit a high of 80,435.61 and low of 79,821.99.

The NSE Nifty dropped 126 points or 0.51 per cent to 24,340.85.

A moderation in FII selling and a slight correction in the valuation of the domestic equities are positive signals for the Indian market, traders said.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Infosys, ICICI Bank,



Kotak Mahindra Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, State Bank of India, HCL Technologies, Axis Bank, NTPC and HDFC Bank were among the laggards.

In contrast, Maruti, IndusInd Bank, Adani Ports, ITC and UltraTech Cement defied broader market trends and ended in positive territory.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Tuesday, as they offloaded shares worth Rs 548.69 crore,

according to exchange data.

"In the near term, the market will be influenced by two factors - one positive and the other negative. The positive is the sharp decline in FII selling to just Rs 548 crore on Tuesday. This is an indication that the FII tactical trade of 'Sell India, Buy China' is coming to an end.

"With more Domestic Institutional Investors (DII) and retail money coming to the market and FII selling tapering off, the market may get a near-term boost, aided by the festive mood. But the uptrend is unlikely to sustain since the Q2 earnings numbers indicate softness in earnings for FY25," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

The BSE smallcap gauge jumped 1.54 per cent and midcap index ended marginally up by 0.04 per cent.

## Tata Power net profit rises to Rs 1,093 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Power on Wednesday posted nearly 8 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 1,093.08 crore for the September quarter, mainly on the back of higher revenues.

The company had reported a net profit of Rs 1,017.41 crore in the quarter ended September 30, a BSE filing showed.

Its total income rose to Rs 16,210.80 crore in the quarter from Rs 16,029.54 crore a year ago. Praveer Sinha, CEO and Managing Director, Tata Power, said, "Our Generation, Transmission & Distribution, and Renewable businesses continue to witness sustained growth momentum as India sees record power demand and investment in the new Age of Electricity".

## India, Saudi discuss ways to increase cooperation in key sectors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and Saudi Arabia on Wednesday discussed ways to enhance cooperation in areas of fertilizers, petrochemicals, and mining to boost trade and investments.

These sectors were discussed during a meeting between Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Saudi Minister for Industry and Mineral Resources Bandar bin Ibrahim Alkhorayef in Riyadh.

Goyal is in Riyadh on an official visit.

"We further deliberated and explored potential areas for cooperation in the fertilizers, petrochemicals, and mining sectors," Goyal said in a post on a social media platform.

The minister also inaugurated the 'Lulu Wali Diwali' at the Lulu Hypermarket.

"From the Apple orchards of Ladakh to the markets of Riyadh! For the first time, Saudi Arabia gets to taste

these exotic home-grown delights," he said on X.

India is the second largest trade partner for Saudi Arabia whereas Saudi Arabia is India's fourth largest trading partner.

The bilateral trade between the two countries stood at USD 43 billion in 2023-24 as against USD 53 billion in 2022-23. Over 2,700 Indian companies are registered as joint ventures/100 per cent owned entities, with investments worth about USD 2 billion in the Kingdom.

Major Indian companies and corporate groups, including L&T, TATA, Wipro, TCS, TCIL, Shapoorji & Pallonji have established a strong presence in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi's direct investments in India amounted to USD 3.22 billion during April 2000 and June 2024.

Major Saudi investment groups include ARAMCO, SABIC, ZAMIL, E-holidays, and Al Batterjee Group.

## India's gold imports jump to \$27 bn

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country's gold imports, which have a bearing on the country's current account deficit (CAD), rose by 21.78 per cent to USD 27 billion during April-September this fiscal due to strong domestic demand, according to the government data.

The imports stood at USD 22.25 billion in April-September 2023-24.

An industry expert said that the ongoing festival demand is helping the increase in imports.

In 2023-24, India's gold imports surged 30 per cent to USD 45.54 billion.

Switzerland is the largest exporter of gold, with about 40 per cent share, followed by the UAE (over 16 per cent) and South Africa (about 10 per cent).

The precious metal accounts for over 5 per cent of the country's total imports.

The jump in gold imports pushed the country's trade deficit (difference between imports and exports) to USD 137.44 billion during the first half of the current fiscal com-



pared to USD 119.24 billion during April-September 2023.

India is the world's second-biggest gold consumer after China. The imports mainly take care of the demand by the jewellery industry. These ship-

ments declined by 10.89 per cent to USD 13.91 billion during April-September 2024-25.

The country's CAD widened marginally to USD 9.7 billion or 1.1 per cent of GDP in April-June 2024 against USD 8.9 billion or 1 per cent in the year-ago period. A current account deficit occurs when the value of goods and services imported and other payments exceeds the value of the export of goods and services and other receipts by a country in a particular period.

## Gold surges Rs 1,000 to breach Rs 82k-mark

Gold prices saw a steep surge of Rs 1,000 and breached the psychological Rs 82,000 per 10 grams mark for the first time in the national capital on Wednesday, amid robust buying by jewellers ahead of Diwali. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity soared by Rs 1,000 to hit a fresh peak of Rs 82,400 per 10 grams in Delhi.

The precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity also climbed Rs 1,000 to hit an all-time high of Rs 82,000 per 10 grams in the local markets. In the previous session, gold of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity had closed at Rs 81,400 and Rs 81,000 per 10 grams, respectively. Traders attributed the sharp jump in gold prices to massive buying by local jewellers.





# what's brewing?



## AAMAN DEVGAN, RASHA THADANI'S DEBUT IN AZAAD

Intriguing audience with the anticipation for the title of his next, director Abhishek Kapoor is set to give audiences a special gift this Diwali. The makers have finally revealed the title of his big-screen adventure - *Azaad*. Mounted to be an unforgettable experience, this exciting film marks the acting debut of Aman Devgan and Rasha Thadani, alongside Ajay Devgn in a powerful role and the dazzling presence of Diana Pentz.

Just as the title stirred excitement, the *Azaad* teaser is going to be a treasure hunt for audiences at the cinemas this Diwali. The teaser of this exciting new project will be seen with the Diwali big releases including *Singham Again* and *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3* in theatres and audiences can experience this cinematic world, created by Abhishek Kapoor starting November 1. Helmed by Abhishek Kapoor, celebrated for acclaimed films like *Kai Po Che*, *Kedarnath*, *Rock On* and *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui*, *Azaad* promises to be another captivating cinematic saga. Produced by industry stalwarts Ronnie Screwala and Pragya Kapoor, the film is already creating buzz and is set for a grand release on the big screen in January 2025.

ly begun for the much-anticipated masala action-drama *Subedar*, starring Anil Kapoor and the Radhikka Madan in lead roles. Directed by the acclaimed Suresh Triveni, *Subedar* features Radhikka Madan playing the pivotal role of Shyama, the daughter of Anil Kapoor's character, Subedar Arjun Maurya. Known for her versatile performances, Radhikka takes on the significant role of Shyama, the determined and courageous daughter of Arjun Maurya. This father-daughter duo is expected to bring a powerful emotional dynamic to the screen, enhancing the film's narrative depth. As Shyama, she brings to life a character that is both strong and emotionally resonant, adding a powerful layer to the

## 'Triptii Dimri wasn't first choice for Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3'

Triptii Dimri and Kartik Aaryan will be sharing the screen together for the first time in *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*. The producers released the romantic song *Jana Samjho Na*, showcasing their new chemistry. During an interview, director Anees Bazmee disclosed that Triptii was not the initial preference for the horror-comedy film. During the chat, Anees said, "It's not like we always had Triptii in our minds for (the movie). We had to consider a lot of factors. And then, one day, she came to my mind and we thought, why not? She did a fantastic job in *Animal*. But I don't think she was an overnight sensation. The success and growth she's seeing stemmed from years of hard work. She's been around for the past seven-eight years and she has done some really good work, be it in *Bulbbul* or *Qala*." He went on to add, "We had thought of a few other names for her character and they wouldn't have been bad choices but this choice was also very good. But let me tell you that she has a very good role too. She hasn't been cast just to feature in a couple of songs. She's going to shock everyone with her role and performance. They're sure to say, 'Oh, she has a role like this?' We had not thought like this."

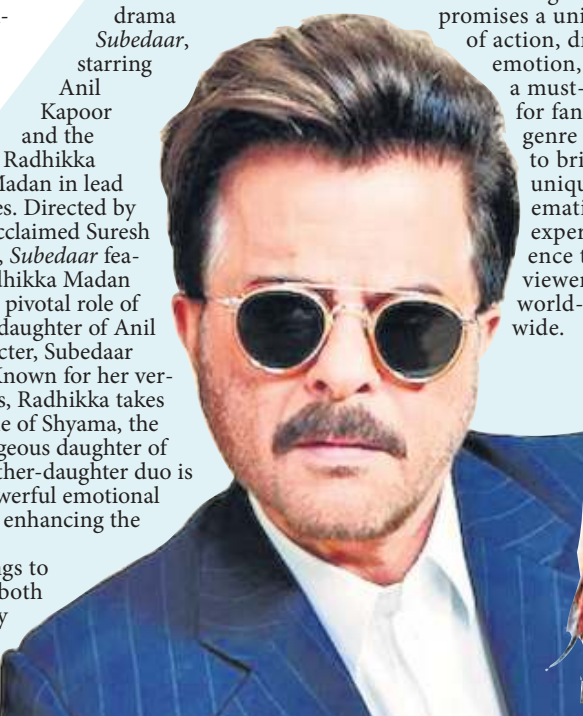


## Angelina Jolie's fresh start begins with new rules, no compromise!

Rumours have circulated that actor Angelina Jolie is in a relationship with rapper Akala. They have been spotted together for weeks and rumours have suggested that they recently shared time at her hotel suite in London. Nonetheless, according to a recent report, they may not be in a romantic relationship, but Angelina is definitely prepared to start dating again. A new report quotes a source close to the actor, saying, "Angie is ready to date again, although it's unknown if she and Akala are really an item. Whoever she dates next will have to adhere to her rules, though." When asked what rules Angelina has in mind for her future beau, the source told the publication, "The kids come first. She also wants to be wooed. Angie has been through a lot since she filed for divorce from Brad Pitt. She doesn't want to jump into anything; she wants to be courted and won over." Angelina Jolie has six children, ranging in age from 16 to 23, with three of them being adopted by the actor before her marriage to Brad Pitt. Angelina and Brad started a relationship following their meeting on the *Mr & Mrs Smith* movie set in 2005. The couple got married in 2014 but split up in 2016. Their marriage was officially ended in 2019. However, they have been involved in a legal fight regarding allegations of verbal and physical violence and a disagreement over property ownership.

## Anil Kapoor, Radhikka Madan team up for Subedar

The film's narrative. *Subedar* is a joint production by Opening Image Films and Anil Kapoor Film & Communication Network (AKFCN), with Vikram Malhotra, Anil Kapoor and Suresh Triveni as producers. This Amazon Prime Video original film promises a unique blend of action, drama, and emotion, making it a must-watch for fans of the genre and set to bring a unique cinematic experience to viewers worldwide.



## WHEN RAIN, GUNS & GADGETS TOOK OVER ANKUR RATHEE'S REETA SANYAL SHOOT

Mumbai may be grappling with October heat now but the scene was quite different a month back. The unforgetting Mumbai rains did not just trouble the office goers and commuters but lashed on B-Town causing quite a bit of disruption. Ankur Rathee recalls shooting for gruelling action sequences of his show *Reeta Sanyal* which were scheduled in the middle of the monsoon mania. Ankur said, "The only recurring nightmare on this set was the monsoons. I'd be scaling a wall when suddenly the rain would come pouring down as if Zeus himself had been brought to tears. We'd quickly take off our harnesses as people rushed with umbrellas to save our costumes. Once we sat under a makeshift tent for an hour waiting for the rain to stop. It flooded the set and even began seeping into my shoes". Speaking about the action scenes Ankur added, "Packing punches to braving the rains, never a boring day on the sets of *Reeta Sanyal*. There is so much action in this show. We're either chasing someone or being chased. At gunpoint or pointing the gun. I'd come back from work bruised and bleeding some days, but loved every second of the action. However, some of the action sequences were so fantastical that they defied physics and that caused some friction between me and the action director, Ajay Thakur. He kept pushing the limits of what's humanly possible and I kept trying to insert logic into sequences where it



didn't belong. These clashing approaches lead to heated debate more than once on set, until I realised that this genre of action required more imagination than I was allowing. When I surrendered it made the scenes that much more fun to perform. At times I felt like a flying cop given how high I jumped with the help of a harness and 5 grown men pulling me up. Other times I went flying after getting stabbed by a kitchen utensil propelled by a magnetised weapon. It was bananas". He further added, "Ajay and I have worked together before on *Undekhi*. And that kind of gangster violence is shot and performed very differently than *Reeta Sanyal*'s comic book action sequences. We've got cartoon-style villains in this show and their weapons are equally as imaginative as their names. It's very fun once you buy into the world." "I have to say I really loved wearing a cop uniform. I'd put it on and something would transform within me. Walking around with a gun holstered gives you a strange sense of authority. Your body language changes. You lead with your belly and your gait becomes more deliberate. I'd keep going up to people and questioning them as if I was an actual inspector. Eventually, when the crew got annoyed with me, I had to make them comply at gunpoint, very unprofessional but equally fun", he signed off. Rathee plays the character of Jai, a dedicated yet whimsical police officer who shadows Adah's character Reeta Sanyal. Directed by Abhirup Ghosh and produced by Rajeshwar Nair, the show also stars Rahul Dev and Manik Papneja.

### FUN

#### ARCHIE



#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### GARFIELD



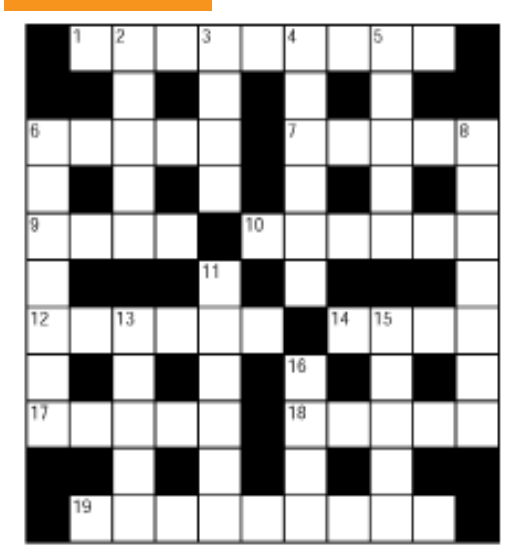
#### REALITY CHECK



#### SPEED BUMP



#### CROSSWORD



#### NANCY



#### SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution  
7 3 4 8 1 5 2 9 6  
2 1 9 3 4 6 8 5 7  
6 8 5 2 7 9 3 1 4  
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Rules  
• Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.  
• The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

#### ACROSS

- 1 Not sure
- 6 Grape plants
- 7 Get to
- 9 Utters
- 10 Choose
- 12 A passenger's document
- 14 Accompanying
- 17 Less wet
- 18 Finished
- 19 A big, important church
- 6 Called in on
- 8 Emerged from an egg
- 11 Look everywhere for
- 13 Porcelain
- 15 New Delhi is the capital of this country
- 16 No longer alive

#### DOWN

- 2 A nursemaid for children
- 3 A compass direction
- 4 This has a bull's-eye
- 5 Mirror reflection



#### GINGER MEGGS





## Lighting up Hyd with its culture and charity this Diwali



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This Diwali, *The Pioneer* shines a spotlight on the Uttarayan Socio-Cultural Association, Hyderabad's premier cultural hub that has been illuminating the city's festive landscape for over four decades. Through an exclusive conversation with Subrata Banerjee, General Secretary of the association, we explore the association's rich history, commitment to social causes and more

Hyderabad comes alive each year with the glow of Diwali lights and the warm spirit of community gatherings and the Uttarayan Socio-Cultural Association is a name synonymous with this festive magic. Established over four decades ago, this non-profit association has been a cultural beacon in Hyderabad, drawing together people of all backgrounds to honour the Indian tradition of Diwali with grand celebrations, authentic cultural experiences and charity initiatives that go beyond the lights. Each year, as the evening lights flicker on and the fragrance of incense drifts through Hyderabad, Uttarayan stands as a radiant symbol of community unity. Families gather under its twinkling canopy, young and old alike, drawn by more than just tradition; it's the promise of shared memories, of laughter carried on the cool evening breeze and the warmth of a festive bond that transcends generations. "Our club is a socio-cultural association and is one of the registered non-profit organisations in Hyderabad," shares Subrata Banerjee, General Secretary of Uttarayan. "With a history of over four decades, Uttarayan has been preserving and promoting literature, culture and sports, alongside charitable and philanthropic activities. Every year, the Deepavali festival brings the community together and has even been awarded one of the best celebrations in South India."

The first evening saw a joyful opening with the Ananda Mela, a unique feature of the Uttarayan celebration, blending the flavours of tradition with modern tastes. Local members, primarily homemakers and professional women from the community, set up 14-15 stalls brimming with homemade culinary delights. From Indian street snacks to exotic sweets and even European and Chinese dishes, there was something for every palate. "Our Ananda Mela showcases home talent in its truest form," he shares. "From Indian sweets to fusion foods, this evening celebrates the culinary artistry of our members and it gives them a chance to shine in front of thousands of guests." This year, Ananda Mela even featured a culinary contest judged by Hyderabad's renowned pharmacist Dr. Dibyendu Dey and the Culinary Director of Radisson Blu, John Biswas, ensuring the festive fun is sprinkled with a dash of competition.

On the cultural front, Uttarayan Square brings together a lively performance showcase, this year featuring 30-35 members in a multilingual, multicultural ensemble. "Uttarayan Square started small but has grown into a true celebration of the arts," Banerjee shares. The theme this year? "Taking Indian culture to the world," a mission that, while rooted in tradition, embraces the diversity of Telugu, Tamil and other Indian communities that now call Hyderabad home.

But Uttarayan's legacy goes beyond mere festivity. Each year, Uttarayan takes the spirit of Diwali beyond its festival grounds, reaching out to support those in need. In 2023, the association focused on an orphanage located in Moosapet, where they donated materials worth one lakh rupees, providing essential items to improve the daily lives of its residents. "There is an orphanage run by Shrivastava—perhaps called Vivekananda Shrivastava—where we coordinated with their team to understand their needs," he shares. Uttarayan's charitable efforts don't stop with one event.

Each year, the association allocates between one and 1.5 lakh rupees for similar donations, whether to orphanages, old-age homes, or other community initiatives that need a helping hand. The association believes these efforts amplify the festival's message of light, kindness and shared humanity. With a guest list of over 6,000 people per day, the Uttarayan celebration draws people from all walks of life and even offers an opportunity for local businesses and brands to showcase themselves. Major sponsors find a unique platform within the festive premises to connect with a spirited audience, adding a dynamic dimension to this community gathering.

Closing out the Diwali celebrations this year are 31 illustrious performers, singer Trisha Parui on October 31 and Sovan Ganguly on November 1, who promise to leave attendees with a musical finale that captures the soul of the celebration. Under the dynamic leadership of President Sri Aniruddha Sengupta and General Secretary Sri Subrata Banerjee, Uttarayan Club continues to thrive as a vibrant hub of cultural and charitable activities, uniting the community in celebration and service.

## MENOPAUSE, MINDFULLY MANAGED

Menopause is a significant life transition that literally affects every woman in this world for half of her life, at this time women grapple with 40+ harsh symptoms, including hot flashes, decrease in brain health, cardiovascular issues, aches & pains, low energy, skin & hair issues, gut problems and so many more. The emotional, physical and mental toll can be profound, in fact there are medically backed solutions, yet there is silence. With around one billion women globally experiencing menopause, its impact on health and well-being cannot be overlooked. Unfortunately, many women feel unprepared for menopause. According to an online survey published in PubMed Central, 94.1% of women had never received menopause education in school and nearly half felt uninformed about it (PMC). Understanding the challenges of menopause, including hot flashes, mood swings and bone density loss, is critical for women experiencing this transition. The right combination of supplementation, lifestyle changes and emotional support can make a significant difference.

### Role of supplementation in menopause relief

Many women have turned to natural supplements to manage menopausal symptoms. Research indicates that targeted supplementation can play a vital role in supporting hormonal balance and overall health. Trans-resveratrol, a powerful antioxidant, stands out as a promising option. Studies have shown that resveratrol supplementation can lead to significant improvements in cognitive performance, particularly among women aged 65 and older (Zaw et al., 2021). It may help alleviate common menopausal symptoms, including hot flashes and mood swings.

### Phytoestrogens for symptom relief

Incorporating phytoestrogens into the diet can also provide relief from menopausal symptoms. Found in sources like soy and flaxseeds, phytoestrogens mimic estrogen in the body, helping to balance hormonal fluctuations. This can be particularly beneficial for women experiencing symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, and mood swings. As a natural alternative, phytoestrogens can be a valuable addition to a woman's dietary regimen during menopause.

### Vitamins and minerals

Menopause significantly speeds up bone loss, increasing the risk of osteoporosis, with up to 20% of bone loss occurring during this stage. Osteoporosis affects approximately one in ten women over 60 globally, and studies show that women can lose up to 10% of their bone density in the first five years after menopause (better health). To counteract this, it is essential to focus on key vitamins and minerals such as vitamin D, calcium and magnesium. Targeted supplementation of these nutrients can reduce the risk of osteoporosis and support overall well-being. Ensuring adequate intake can help maintain bone density and overall health during this critical time.



### Lifestyle changes

In addition to supplementation and community support, lifestyle changes can enhance well-being during menopause. Regular exercise, a balanced diet and effective stress management techniques are crucial. Activities like yoga, walking and mindfulness practices not only improve physical health but also promote emotional stability and resilience. A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and healthy fats can help manage weight, which is often a concern during menopause. Regular exercise strengthens bones, improves mood and enhances overall health, making it an essential part of any menopausal strategy. Mindfulness and relaxation techniques can further alleviate stress, helping women maintain emotional equilibrium during this transition. Menopause can be tough, but women can manage it better by exploring new supplements and taking a holistic approach. This includes taking Transresveratrol, phytoestrogens and important vitamins, joining supportive communities and making healthy lifestyle changes. As awareness of menopause increases, it is important to focus on education and support for women going through this natural stage of life. By improving our understanding of menopause, we can help women take charge of their health and well-being during this significant transition.

### Holistic approach: Emotional and psychological support

A holistic approach to menopause goes beyond physical symptoms, addressing emotional and psychological well-being. Many women experience anxiety, depression, or feelings of isolation during this transitional phase. Engaging with supportive communities, specifically designed for women in perimenopause and menopause, can provide valuable emotional support. Sharing experiences and gaining insights from others facing similar challenges fosters a sense of belonging and understanding, significantly impacting women's mental health.

(The author, Sanjith Sheety, is the CEO of Miror.)

## Mithya 2: Elevating murder mystery genre

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ZEE5 is ready to begin November on a high note with the release of the second season of its hit series *Mithya*. Titled *Mithya: The Darker Chapter*, this psychological thriller guarantees to lead viewers through a journey full of drama, suspense, excitement and feelings.

### PLOT

*Mithya 2* picks up where the first season left off, with Juhi Adhikary (played by Huma Qureshi) seeking revenge against those who wronged her. The series explores themes of trauma, deception and the consequences of playing with fire. The plot thickens as Juhi's actions unleash a chain reaction, affecting those around her. Juhi, a renowned writer, faces a potential danger to her achievements from a mysterious character, Amit Chaudhary (played by Naveen Kasturia). Amit blames her for copying his work, establishing the mood for an exciting story. Season 2 gives the viewers a glimpse into more new and deep levels of conflict, this season.



### HIGHLIGHTS

*Mithya* stands out as a successful thriller, despite being a mediocre murder mystery, a genre that has been popular for a long time. The writer's certainty in their storytelling keeps readers intrigued, as they are constantly surprised by new plot twists that leave them questioning. *Mithya 2* has an intricate storyline with unexpected twists and turns, keeping viewers hooked. Though the series as a whole, the first and second seasons, touch on issues like toxic relationships, gaslighting and small-town societal pressures, this season buckles down to being more complex

and, as the title says, 'darker'. The unexpected smaller or bigger twists and turns, beyond a doubt, are the major highlights of the season.

### DRAWBACKS

Some viewers may find the pacing uneven in a few scenes here and there, feeling slow or dragged out. Being an ardent thriller and crime fanatic, a few scenes did feel to me a little overdramatic, taking away from the show's overall realism. Fans of fast-paced thrillers might find some scenes too slow. Viewers who prefer straightforward mysteries might

### REVIEW



find *Mithya 2*'s complex plot overwhelming. A few supporting characters seem to have a limited development. Though the twists and turns that this season brings might be a highlight to many, some would, however, get confused. Apart from all of this, as the series progresses, there feel some unresolved subplots.

### PERFORMANCES

Huma Qureshi, with her talent in acting and stunning curls, is certainly the best part of the whole series. Her acting keeps you hooked throughout, just like she does always. Post-season 1, it's a delight

to watch her as her character progresses. The intricate character development, particularly between the two sisters, is a notable strength of *Mithya*. Huma Qureshi, recognised for her impactful portrayals, makes a comeback as the elder sibling burdened with emotional baggage. Their connection with Avantika Dassani as Rhea Rajguru grows this season as their competition intensifies. Unlike in the first season, season 2 sees Avantika's character developing so well. You'll love the intensity she brings in.

Let's not forget that Naveen Kasturia is taking on a secretive role, and, although we cannot reveal much about his character, it's certain that he will cause a lot of excitement.

Meanwhile, the supporting cast—Rajit Kapoor, Indraneil Sengupta, Avantika Akerkar, Rushad Rana and Krishna Bisht, all make sure that each character contributes their own issues, resulting in a complex network of deceit and disloyalty.

### TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Apart from the plot this season, the location will also captivate you. The setting for Season 2 takes place in Darjeeling, providing a beautiful visual background

that enhances the psychological suspense. Kapil Sharma, the director, has assured that this season will feature eye-catching scenery that contrasts heavily with the dark, intricate storyline unfolding on screen. The soundtracks further enhance the overall experiences.

### VERDICT

*Mithya 2: The Darker Chapter* is a gripping thriller that excels with its intricate plot, unexpected twists, and outstanding performances, particularly by Huma Qureshi. Minor pacing issues aside, the series' captivating setting, soundtrack and direction make it a must-watch.

### Directed by: Kapil Sharma

Produced by: Applause Entertainment in association with Rose Audio Visual Production

Cast: Huma Qureshi, Avantika Dasani, Naveen Kasturia, Rajit Kapoor, Indraneil Sengupta, Avantika Akerkar, Rushad Rana and Krishna Bisht

Streaming on: Zee5

Rating: 4/5

# EASWARAN, NITISH REDDY, PRASIDH TO BE UNDER CLOSE SCRUTINY

PTI ■ MACKAY (AUSTRALIA)

The outings of Abhimanyu Easwaran, Nitish Kumar Reddy and Prasad Krishna will be the primary focal points of India A's four-day match against their Australian counterparts, starting here on Thursday. Easwaran, Nitish and Prasad are included in India's squad for the five-Test Border-Gavaskar Trophy series, beginning on November 22, and the thinktank will be eager to know how they fare in Australian conditions. Easwaran's performance will, however, have far more significance as the 29-year-old opener could potentially replace Rohit Sharma's replacement if the captain skips a match or two against Australia for personal reasons. Easwaran, who is also the vice-captain of India A here, is a vastly experienced campaigner having played 99 First-Class matches to score 7638 runs with 27 hundreds and 29 fifties. He has also been part of the India squad in the past but what inspires confidence is his recent form in First-Class

matches. The right-hander struck 157 and 116 for India B in the Duleep Trophy before making a 191 against Mumbai for Rest of India in the Irani Trophy and made another hundred in his final red-ball game before flying out to Australia - an unbeaten 127 against Uttar Pradesh in the Ranji Trophy. So, he has the body of work to feel in fine fettle ahead of the match against Australia A, though the conditions here will be vastly different from what he has experienced so far this season in India. On the other hand, Nitish does not boast of such impressive First-Class numbers, as he has been drafted into squad for his perceived ability as a pace-bowling all-rounder and, even in that, batting is his stronger suit. In the Duleep Trophy earlier this year, Nitish made two ducks with a highest of 40 in five matches while grabbing just two wickets. But the selectors have backed him ahead of senior names such as Shardul Thakur, who has resumed playing domestic matches after recovering from an injury.



INDIA A vs AUSTRALIA A

So, this will be a good opportunity for the selectors to check how the Andhra man measures up to a very capable Australia A side that includes the likes of Camrean Bancroft, Marcus Harris, Michael Neser, Cooper Connolly and Scott Boland. Prasad is a late addition to the India A squad in place of initially picked up Yash Dayal, and the Karnataka pacer needs to find some rhythm here. Since his return from injury, Prasad has picked up just seven wickets in as many innings across Duleep Trophy, Irani Cup and Ranji Trophy. But the selectors seemed to have been influenced by the theoretical advantage his height brings in on the Australian decks. Prasad can use this opportunity to keep himself ready if he gets a call-up to the first eleven as the third seamer behind Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj or if the management wants to rest one of the frontline pacers as part of workload management during the tour. Other than this aforementioned trio, the likes of skipper Rituraj Gaikwad, top-order batter B

Sai Sudharsan, pacers Yash Dayal and Navdeep Saini and middle-order batter Devdutt Padikkal can look forward to churn out some good efforts to keep themselves on the periphery of selection in case of an eventuality in the senior side. Ishan Kishan, the wicketkeeper batter, too will be eager to make the most of this chance after a finding his favour back with the powers that be. **TEAMS (FROM):** India A: Rituraj Gaikwad (capt), Abhimanyu Easwaran (vice-capt), Devdutt Padikkal, Sai Sudharsan, B Indrajith, Abhishek Porel (wk), Ishan Kishan (wk), Mukesh Kumar, Ricky Bhui, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Manav Suthar, Navdeep Saini, Khaleel Ahmed, Tanush Kotian, Prasad Krishna. Australia A: Nathan McSweeney (c), Cameron Bancroft, Scott Boland, Jordan Buckingham, Cooper Connolly, Ollie Davies, Brendan Doggett, Marcus Harris, Sam Konstas, Nathan McAndrew, Michael Neser, Todd Murphy, Fergus O'Neill, Jimmy Peirson, Josh Philippe, Corey Rocchiccioli, Beau Webster.

## Need to be patient with Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, says Nayar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's assistant coach Abhishek Nayar on Wednesday insisted that they do not ask for tailor-made pitches in Tests and also backed out-of-form legends Virat Kohli and skipper Rohit Sharma, saying that they must be given "space and time to come back". After suffering their first-ever Test series loss at home in 12 years, India will strive to salvage their pride when they clash with New Zealand in the third and final Test from Friday. Playing on a track that assisted spinners, India lost the Pune Test by 113 runs. It is being speculated that the pitch at Wankhede Stadium here could again favour the spinners. Nayar refuted suggestions that turning tracks are being made at the behest of the team. "I wish we could curate pitches, but we don't. The curators do. Whatever we're provided with, we go on and play (whether) that'd be a pitch that seamed or a pitch that turned. We don't try and get conditions according to what we want," Nayar said on eve of the final Test. Both Rohit and Kohli are woefully out of form, and that has impacted team's performance. Nayar said there is nothing wrong with the modern-day greats and all they need is just a bit of time and backing. "I've seen nothing but love for them all over. When a top player, when someone who's been through the journey, goes through a lull, a lot of times it's about giving them their space and trusting that they will come back. They will put in the work," he said. "Everyone's worked really hard, everyone wants to do well, whether you're Virat Kohli or Rohit Sharma or even someone as young as Shubman Gill. The effort is there." "Sometimes, sometimes you've got to be a little patient, even with the greatest of players,



and they can have tough times. I'm pretty sure sooner rather than later, we'll have more to praise about Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma and everyone else as well," he said. Nayar said it would be "harsh" to say the current Indian batters do not play spin as well as those in the past. "That's a bit of a harsh statement. When you're trying to achieve something, there's always going to be a time when you take a certain dip because you're trying to play cricket in a different way and you're trying to push yourself out of the comfort zone," he said. "Sometimes the results don't go your way, but if you're patient enough and when that upward curve hits the team and hits an individual, then your purple patch lasts for really long." "We're hoping that the transition that we're trying to have in terms of the mindset and the approach of the players in Team India, (given) that we're facing this dip now, but once we start hitting the upward curve, it'll be a long curve." Nayar said the dressing room atmosphere hasn't changed over the last two matches. "There are going to be times when you don't do so well. When India lost the World Cup (final) in India, that was a low point in Indian cricket for everyone..." "In the same breath, a couple

(eight) of months later, we were world champions. Coming back is always a great journey. That's how stories and legacies are made. "Hopefully we can be part of creating something as special as that in the future, but the atmosphere is great. Still a lot of jokes and bubbly cricketers in the dressing room. You'll see our (training) sessions (are) filled with fun and nothing has changed. India have collapsed thrice so far in the series, starting with 46 all-out for lowest Test innings total at home in Bengaluru. After that, India made 156 in the first essay of Pune Test and crumbled to 245 all-out from 81/1. Nayar refused to read much into it and said, "I wouldn't call it a collapse, when you lose wickets in a bunch or when we pick wickets in a bunch - like we did in the last game as well, where we got seven wickets in 51 runs - I think that tends to happen in this game of cricket." "Sometimes it is the mindset. It may not be perceived from outside as trying to be aggressive or trying to have intent, but intent is not necessarily swinging at the ball. Intent is more about your approach towards the ball. "Is it worrying? Well, the only way we look at it is how we can get out of it. That's our thought process (and) mindset."

## India still have wood on New Zealand while playing on turning wickets: Ajaz Patel

PTI ■ MUMBAI

A first ever series loss at home to New Zealand notwithstanding, India still have the "wood on us" while playing on turning wickets, said Kiwis spinner Ajaz Patel here on Wednesday. New Zealand have outplayed India on all fronts in their backyard so far in the three-Test series, particularly in the spin department as they head into the third and final match starting here on Friday with an unassailable lead of 2-0. While New Zealand hammered India in a rain-truncated opening Test at Bengaluru by eight wickets, exposing their shortcomings on a challenging pitch at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, the world No 2 side was given a taste of its own medicine on a spin-friendly track in Pune in the second Test, which the hosts lost by 113 runs. Ahead of the final Test at the Wankhede Stadium, another spin-friendly track is in making despite the struggles of the Indian batters. Patel hoped that New Zealand,

who have an opportunity to inflict a 3-0 whitewash on India, would need to continue to make all the right moves despite the hosts being more adept in playing on such tracks. "India still have the wood on us when it comes to playing on turning wickets, and traditionally, the Indian batters have done well in turning surfaces," Patel told the media after New Zealand's training session. "Obviously, they haven't had maybe as much success as they would have liked in this series so far but they're certainly an opposition that are very, very skilled and not the easiest to come up against." "Their skill set is very vast and for us as a spin group, especially it's about being able to control what we can control and making sure that we can apply pressure for long periods of time and making sure that we're delivering the best balls on a given surface," he added. New Zealand's accuracy and recentness in attack, both with the bat and the ball, has been the feature of their first-ever



series win in India and Patel acknowledged that the visitors will need to stick to the basics. "It is really about continuing to challenge them. As a batter it's not easy out there when you're facing a ball that's turning as much, and so it's about us making sure we put the balls in good areas for long periods of time," he said. "On the flip side, India have got phenomenal spinners so our batters are trying to do the opposite and they're trying to create opportunities to score runs," he added. Patel, who created history here

"To be honest with you my memory is very poor so I don't exactly remember the surface that well but one thing I do remember was it looked a lot drier to start with," he added. Patel, who had to play second fiddle to fellow left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner in the Pune Test, said he was happy to keep exerting pressure on India from the other end. "It's (about) looking at what roles you're playing for the team when it comes to a bowling perspective," he said. "Mitch (Santner) was bowling exceptionally well from the other end so for me it was really important that from my end while I'm still trying to take wickets, I'm also performing the holding role and trying to restrict as many runs as possible so that pressure doesn't come back on us." "The way Mitch was bowling, there was no real need for me to try too many things. It was about trying to keep it as simple as possible. Once again, going into a new surface and a new game that may completely flip again," he said.

## CA extends coach Andrew McDonald's term till 2027

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Cricket Australia on Wednesday extended the tenure of men's team head coach Andrew McDonald till the end of the 2027 season, meaning he will oversee the team's defence of the one-day World Cup in South Africa. McDonald was appointed as head coach after Justin Langer's tumultuous departure in early 2022 and has since steered the men's team to notable achievements. Under his guidance, Australia secured the World Test Championship and the 50-over World Cup and also retained the Ashes in

England. The extension will help McDonald to be in charge of the side till the defence of the one-day World Cup title in 2027 and in their effort to regain T20 World Cup and Champion's Trophy next year. The period also includes 13 months of Test cricket, featuring away series against India and England and the 150th anniversary Test at the MCG. Cricket Australia CEO Nick Hockley said: "Andrew has proven to be an outstanding men's head coach who as well as delivering exceptional results has built a strong coaching team, methodology

and an excellent environment for the team to perform at its best. We are delighted to extend his tenure for a further two years." McDonald said: "I am very fortunate to have an exceptional group of leaders, players, coaches and staff who are fully invested in the ongoing well-being, success and development. "The professionalism, commitment and experience of my fellow coaches and the wider staff have ensured the journey has been extremely successful but just as importantly created a culture of unity, trust and inclusivity," he added.



## Shubman Gill takes pay cut to keep core in tact

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gujarat Titans captain Shubman Gill has decided to take a pay cut and will be the second player retained by the IPL franchise ahead of the October 31 deadline. Gill led Titans for the first time this season and both he and the management are now keen to retain the core group of players. The first retention for the franchise would be star spinner Rashid Khan, followed by Gill, Sai Sudharsan and two uncapped players in Rahul Tewatia and Shahrukh Khan. Titans will also have the option of retaining another squad member via the right to match card at the mega auction next month. Gill is seen a future leader in the Indian cricket setup. "Gill has decided to take a pay cut to ensure the core players are retained and build a stronger team," an IPL source said. As per the IPL retention

guidelines released ahead of the mega auction, a team will lose Rs 18 crore from the increased purse of Rs 120 crore for the first player retained, Rs 14 crore for second, Rs 11 for third while for the uncapped players, a team will have to shell out Rs 4 crore each. If a team retains five capped players, they will lose Rs 75 crore from the auction pot. The mega auction is likely to be held overseas in the last week of November. The auction purse has been increased to Rs 120 crore from the Rs 100 crore teams had at their disposal at last year's auction. The total salary cap now comprises an auction purse, incremental performance pay and match fees. The match fee, set at Rs 7.5 lakh per game, has been introduced ahead of the next season. The teams can retain up to six players, via retention or right to match, from the existing squad, the highest in IPL history.

## Retirement thought hit me after we lost to India in T20 WC: Matthew Wade

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former Australia wicketkeeper-batter Matthew Wade has revealed that his team's defeat to India in the T20 World Cup earlier this year was probably the moment that ended his career as it was the first time that the thought of retirement crossed his mind. India, led by skipper Rohit Sharma's superb 41-ball 92, defeated the Aussies by 24 runs in a crucial Group 1 Super Eight match at St Lucia to book a semifinal berth and eventually went on to bag the title. "It (the thought about retirement) probably hit home after we lost against

India. That was when I really sat down and reflected that that was probably the end of my career. That was an emotional moment," Wade, who announced his retirement from international cricket on Tuesday, told cricket.Com.Au Wade, who generally batted down the order in T20 Internationals, said the arrival of Josh Inglis as a wicketkeeper who could bat top of the order too influenced his decision. "The time was right for 'Ingo' (Josh Inglis) to come in. You can see what he's done in the last (few months) that he's been in the team as the No.1 'keeper. He was



certainly ready to come in and take that role. "They're looking for maybe someone who can bat more top to middle order now as well and that suits him really well." The Tasmanian also said he is unlikely to participate in the upcoming IPL mega auction as it will be tough to make himself available for the entire duration of the event. Wade has been a part of Gujarat Titans over the last two seasons. "I'm doing the ILT20 which will be straight after the BBL. I'm doing the (Abu Dhabi) T10, which leads straight into BBL. "So, I'm going over to Dubai at the end of this month. I've got some Tassie (Tasmania) one-dayers that I've been playing as well. I won't be in the IPL," said Wade, who will be Australia's wicket-keeping and fielding coach during the white ball series against Pakistan.



## 'I am not a failed actor': Kiran Abbavaram

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Actor Kiran Abbavaram got emotional at the pre-release event of his upcoming film *KA* delivering a strong response to his critics. He shared how he rose from a lower-middle-class background and has always given his best to every project. "I am not a failed actor," he asserted, addressing those trolling him. Last year, a filmmaker had mocked Kiran through a dialogue in a film, which hurt Kiran and disappointed his fans. This pre-release event marked his first public speech after a year-long break, where he addressed the incident.

"Eight of my films have been released and four were decent hits. No actor has a hundred percent hit rate; there are hits and failures. You can't troll me in your films," Kiran said in an emotional speech.

The actor also opened up about his mother's struggles to ensure he and his brother could attend an English-medium school. "My mother was a daily wage labourer and wanted us to go to an English-medium school. So, when I was a kid, she went to Kuwait. I don't know what she did there, but she used to send money back. I only spent two years with her during my childhood," he revealed. Kiran also shared that he made his second film, *SR Kalyanamandapam*, without financial help from anyone!

He further addressed the rumours surrounding his background. "What's your problem with Kiran Abbavaram? Some people say I'm the son of an MP or a politician. Don't you check before making such statements? I come from a labour-class background, so why

wouldn't I have the right to grow?" he asked, confronting his detractors.

Kiran also spoke warmly about Naga Chaitanya, who attended the event as the chief guest. "I met Naga Chaitanya for the first time in Chennai and we spent nearly two hours together. The way he received me and spoke to me was truly special, which is why I invited him to be the chief guest," said Kiran. He reiterated his commitment to his work, stating, "If people don't like *KA*, I promise not to make any more movies."

Following Kiran's speech, Naga Chaitanya expressed his admiration for Kiran's journey. "I'm a huge fan of Kiran Abbavaram's journey," said Naga Chaitanya. He shared that he doesn't often meet new people due to his introverted nature but felt an instant connection with Kiran. "I recently met Kiran in Chennai and felt like a close friend. I wanted to support him. I entered into this industry with my family support, while Kiran has risen on his own and his success story is truly inspirational and he deserves success," said Naga Chaitanya. He also added that Kiran is a role model for the newcomers!

# SUNDEEP KISHAN'S TANTRUMS DISRUPT MAJAKA SHOOT

PNS | HYDERABAD

Actor Sundeep Kishan is currently filming his upcoming project *Majaka*, directed by Nakkinä Trinadhä Rao and produced by Razesä Danda. Production began a few months ago, and recently the team has been shooting in Visakhapatnam. However, according to sources, Sundeep Kishan's on-set tantrums have been causing considerable disruption for the entire crew, including the producer.

When the shoot was in Hyderabad, Sundeep Kishan was expected on set at 9 a.m., but he often arrived around 2 p.m., causing filming to extend until 10 p.m., which put additional strain on the production. "This became a financial burden for the producer," a source from the production house revealed. Additionally, Sundeep Kishan's frequent angry outbursts have reportedly been directed at crew members, further impacting morale.

The situation has been particularly challenging in Visakhapatnam, where the team is working through a demanding schedule. "When the unit went outside cities for shooting, generally actors come early to complete their shooting. But Sundeep Kishan reached the shooting spot at around 2 pm in the afternoon, which everyone has to wait

for," said the source. He even didn't bother to tell the unit people or the producer, when he was coming to shoot also.

In one instance, it was almost a 15-day schedule in Visakhapatnam and one day, Sundeep Kishan suddenly is said to have disappeared from the shooting spot without informing anyone about his whereabouts. "The actor went to Tamil actor Suriya's film *Kanguva* event which was held in Visakhapatnam. He spent nearly two hours at the event and after Suriya left the event, Sundeep Kishan went back to the shooting spot. The entire unit was waiting for him and the shooting started at 10 pm in which the producer has to pay double the amount to all the employees who are working for the film," said a source from the production house. Because of the actor's behaviour the shooting is running very slow and the budget is also increasing for the producer.

The source also reveals that the producer had planned another film with Kishan, but due to these disruptions, the project has been shelved. Other producers who had previously announced projects with Kishan are also reconsidering, concerned about the potential strain on their budgets due to his behaviour.

The production house is reportedly planning to approach the Telugu Producers Council and the Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce to address these issues with Kishan's on-set conduct, according to the source.



## Ravi Teja's new film titled *Mass Jathara*

Irrespective of the result of his films, Ravi Teja is busy with multiple projects. Known as 'Mass Maharaja', Ravi Teja is now shooting a film with director Bhanu Bhogavarapu. Incidentally, this is Ravi Teja's 75th film. Popular production house Sithara Entertainments is producing this film and they revealed the title of this film on the occasion of Deepavali. The film title is *Mass Jathara* and they also announced the release date as May 9, 2025.

The makers said that this film is a massive entertainer and confident that it definitely enthralls Ravi Teja fans. They released a poster with Ravi Teja walking in a stylish way. The director Bhanu Bhogavarapu and the producers are confident that Ravi Teja will make a huge comeback with this film at the box office. Sreeleela, who worked earlier with Ravi Teja for the successful *Dhamaka*, is again pairing opposite him in this film. Bheems Ceciroleo is composing music and his combination with Ravi Teja has already proved successful. Suryadevara Naga Vamsi and Sai Soujanya are the producers.



## YVS Chowdary introduces NTR's great-grandson to silver screen

Director YVS Chowdary is returning with a film after a long gap, introducing Hari Krishna's grandson, also named N T Ramarao. Chowdary's wife, Geetha, is producing the film under their newly launched banner, New Talent Roars. On Wednesday, the director unveiled the look of the lead actor, NT Ramarao. Until now, Chowdary kept the actor's face hidden, choosing to reveal it to the public before the shoot commenced. Venah Rao has been cast as the lead actress in the film.

Interestingly, NTR is the fourth generation of actors from the Nandamuri family and is also

the great-grandson of the legendary actor, the late NT Rama Rao. The actor's uncles, Jr NTR and Kalyan Ram, are also notable actors.

"I told many times that I am a big fan of late NTR and I entered into the industry with the inspiration from him. Today I am making a film with the great-grandson of NTR which I believe is an honour to me," said YVS Chowdary on this occasion. He added that from the last 18 months he shared his knowledge with the young actor. "He was just 19 years old and he is dedicated and passionate about his work. His voice is mesmerising and I am sure he is going

to be a big star in the future," said YVS.

Senior producer Ashwini Dutt and veteran director K Raghavendra Rao attended the event as special guests. YVS has immense respect for both, having worked with them during the early days of his career. The young NTR looked captivating with his long hair and impressive physique. The makers have also brought on board Oscar-winning composer MM Keeravani as music director and Chandrabose as lyricist. Burra Sai Madhav is the dialogue writer, with YVS Chowdary handling the story and screenplay.

## SAI PALLAVI OPENS UP ON HER 'SITA' ROLE



Actress

Sai Pallavi is one of the superstars down south where she has a huge fan following. Her upcoming film *Amaran* is hitting the screens this Friday on the occasion of Deepavali. The story is based on Major Mukund Varadarajan and it is directed by Rajkumar Periasamy. The actress promoted the Telugu version of this film and spoke to different media channels in Hyderabad.

The actress revealed that she met Major Mukund family members and got to know many things. "The parents talk high about their son and also feel proud that their son laid down his life for the country," said Sai Pallavi. She added that the family members feel bad, but they never showed up on their faces. "When I got this offer, I didn't think about my role or length as I wanted to do this film," she reveals. She added that this is an important film for her, so she did it.

The actress also talks about her upcoming film *Ramayana* where she is playing the role of Sita. "I can't speak much about this role as I am in contract. But I feel lucky that I got Sita role in my career," said Sai Pallavi. She added that she has heard of the *Ramayana* from her childhood. "I am doing this Sita role as a devotee of Sita," she said. Ranbir Kapoor is playing as Lord Rama, while Yash is playing Ravana. Nitish Tiwari is directing this mythological film.