



# sunday pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

Published From: VIJAYAWADA HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN



**Siddaramaiah built house on site allotted to Dalit**


5



India committed to developing **RESILIENT** agri systems: Minister

8

Scaling heights of **WORLD** music with LSD



10

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**

The 'Sreeja Milk Production Center' is an associate of former Minister T. Harish Rao's proxy and the frauds he committed using that are coming to light one by one. The Congress Government is striving for the development of Mother Dairy. Collectors will ensure that Mother Dairy's products are supplied to all government offices. I told

**Endowment Minister Konda Surekha to buy the ghee required to make Yadagirigutta Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple's laddu from Mother Dairy.**

- Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Minister, Telangana

P3

## DON'T MISS...

### Govt invites tenders for...

The Andhra Pradesh government has invited tenders for the construction of the Unity Mall project in Visakhapatnam, poised to transform the city into a vibrant hub of cultural and commercial activity. The project, backed by a substantial Rs 172 crore grant from the Union government, will be built on a sprawling five-acre land parcel along the picturesque beach road near Rama Naidu studio in Madhuravada. The concept of the Unity Mall in Visakhapatnam revolves around uniting the cultural...

-PAGE: 3

### Yeluru flood havoc caused...

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) senior leader and MLA Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy has attributed the Yeluru flood havoc to the indifference of the previous YSRCP regime for setting aside the modernising of the rivulet. Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy described the Yeluru rivulet's ravage as a 'man-made mistake' and 'Jagan made mistake'. He accused the Jagan Reddy-headed YSRCP regime of setting aside the modernisation of...

-PAGE: 4

### 'No competition between Hindi...

There can never be a competition between Hindi and other Indian languages as they are friends and complement each other, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday. Addressing the fourth Akhil Bharatiya Rajbhasha Sammelan on Hindi Diwas, Shah said the promotion of Hindi cannot happen until all other Indian languages are strengthened and the official language establishes a dialogue with all of them. "There can never be a competition between Hindi and local languages because Hindi is a...

-PAGE: 5

### 'Duty hike on oils to hugely benefit...

The government's decision to hike customs duty on crude palm and refined sunflower oil to 20 per cent and 32.5 per cent, respectively will "hugely" benefit farmers as it will increase their income, a senior official said on Saturday. The government official also said that the decision to remove minimum export price and slashing of export duty on onion too would help farmers of the country. According to a finance ministry notification, the basic customs duty on crude palm, soybean and sunflower seed oil has been increased from nil to 20 per cent. Basic customs duty on refined palm, soybean and sunflower oil has been hiked from 12.5 per cent to 32.5 per cent. The effective duty on these crude and refined oils will increase from 5.5 per cent to...

-PAGE: 8

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

# CM, Gottipati to attend global investors' meet

The 3-day event begins tomorrow in Gujarat capital Gandhinagar

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Special Chief Secretary for Energy, K. Vijayanand, has announced that a high-level delegation, led by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, along with Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar, will participate in the 4th Global Renewable Energy Investors Meet in Gujarat. The Prime Minister of India, Chief Ministers from various states, and international delegates from countries such as Australia, Denmark, Germany, and Norway, as well as representatives from other national and international companies, will also be attending the event.

In line with the nation's objective to transform its energy landscape



and achieve a target of 500 GW from non-fossil sources by 2030, the 4th Global Renewable Energy Investors Meet is being organised by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) from September 16

to 18 in Gandhinagar. The event will highlight India's progress and commitment towards a sustainable future, focusing on innovation and global collaboration in the clean energy sector.

**Special Chief Secretary for Energy, K. Vijayanand said the event will highlight India's progress and commitment towards a sustainable future, focusing on innovation and global collaboration in the clean energy sector.**



During a review of green energy projects with officials from power utilities in the state, Vijayanand noted that Andhra Pradesh's electricity demand is expected to grow significantly, surpassing 1,15,067 MU annually by 2030.

Continued on Page 2

## Light to moderate rain likely in AP

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Light to moderate rain is likely to occur at a few locations in Coastal Andhra Pradesh over the next seven days, according to the Meteorological Centre's report on Saturday.

The daily weather update also forecasts similar conditions in Rayalaseema on September 19 and 20, with dry weather expected in the region over the coming five days.

Strong surface winds, with speeds ranging from 30 to 40 kmph, are likely at isolated places in both Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next five days.

The southwest monsoon remains weak in these regions. Over the last 24 hours, rainfall was recorded at a few locations in Coastal Andhra Pradesh, while dry conditions prevailed in Rayalaseema, the report noted.



## Panic spreads as fire breaks out at Vizag container terminal

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A fire erupted at the Visakhapatnam container terminal on Beach Road on Saturday afternoon, causing widespread alarm among workers and staff. The blaze, which began in a container holding lithium batteries from China, sent thick smoke into the air and forced workers to flee. "We heard a loud noise and then saw thick black smoke rising from the container. Everyone immediately ran for safety," said a terminal worker, still shaken by the incident. "It was chaotic, and we're just thankful no one was hurt."

Firefighters arrived quickly and brought the fire under control in a short time. "As soon as we received the call, we rushed to the scene and managed to contain the fire swiftly," said a fire department spokesperson. "The situation is now under control, and fortunately, no casualties have been reported."

The container, which had been at the terminal since last month, was identified as holding lithium batteries, a highly flammable material

**"We heard a loud noise and then saw thick black smoke rising from the container. Everyone immediately ran for safety," said a terminal worker, still shaken by the incident. "It was chaotic, and we're just thankful no one was hurt."**

under certain conditions. Authorities have launched an investigation to determine the cause of the fire. "We are working to find out how the fire started and to ensure that all safety protocols were followed," said a terminal official. "The safety of our workers and the public is our top priority."

The incident has raised concerns about the handling and storage of hazardous materials at the terminal. Authorities have assured the public that all necessary precautions are being taken to prevent such incidents in the future.

## Report on flood damage in NTR dist to be submitted today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr G. Srijana announced that her district administration would submit a report detailing the flood-related losses to the government on Sunday. She emphasised that the State government aims to ensure justice for all those affected by the floods, helping them overcome their financial difficulties.

To achieve this, a re-verification (cross-checking) of the flood loss enumeration programme was conducted in Vijayawada, she added.

Dr Srijana participated in the re-verification process at Vambay Colony in Ajith Singh Nagar, Vijayawada, on Saturday, personally overseeing the proceedings.

Speaking to the media, she stated that the flood loss enumeration programme had been carried out with full transparency.

She reiterated the State government's commitment to supporting every flood-affected individual. The district administration has now completed the enumeration process across the district, she noted.

Furthermore, she assured that families who, for any reason, were unable to register their flood losses would be given another opportunity to do so.

Continued on Page 2



## Min Narayana inspects sanitation works on bike

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development, P. Narayana, on Saturday, conducted a comprehensive visit to flood-affected areas in Vijayawada, including Kundavari Kandrika and Journalist Colony. Navigating the narrow, water-logged roads on a bike, the minister personally supervised sanitation efforts as hundreds of workers accelerated cleaning operations in flood-hit regions.

During his visit to Journalist Colony, Minister Narayana oversaw the use of heavy-duty pumps to remove water and reassured the public that the floodwaters in Vijayawada had nearly receded. He

expressed confidence that all 32 wards would soon return to normalcy but acknowledged the difficulties residents face due to mud accumulation in their homes. Fire engines have been deployed to assist with cleaning in the affected streets, and efforts are underway to remove silt from drains to restore proper drainage systems.

Residents voiced concerns about incomplete damage assessments in areas still affected by floodwaters. In response, Minister Narayana instructed officials to conduct re-evaluations to ensure accurate assessments. He also addressed the damage to essential infrastructure, including roads crucial for floodwater evacuation, such as the bypass and the 100-foot road.

Continued on Page 2

## 'Special focus on Gannavaram airport'

### Union Min Rammohan opens new approach road to airport

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Union Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu has announced that Gannavaram Airport will receive special attention for development. The Minister inaugurated the new approach road at Gannavaram Airport and launched the Vijayawada-Delhi Indigo services on Saturday. He highlighted that four new services have been introduced in Andhra Pradesh within the past three months.

Minister Naidu also revealed that the Visakhapatnam-Delhi service will commence on 27 October. Additionally, he noted that services to Sharjah are currently operational, with plans to extend to state Dubai and Singapore soon.

He emphasised the government's commitment to enhancing air con-



nectivity, aiming to make Andhra Pradesh a focal point for the entire country. Efforts are underway to boost passenger traffic across all state airports. The Minister announced that a new service from Vijayawada to Pune will begin on 26

October, and a new terminal at Gannavaram Airport is expected to be operational within a year. Minister Rammohan Naidu further stated that there are plans to establish 200 more airports across the country.

## Minister vows to make AP accident-free

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Transport Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy has announced that strict measures will be implemented to make Andhra Pradesh an accident-free state, and the NDA coalition government is committed to fulfilling its electoral promises.

Speaking to the media at a press conference at the Jana Sena party office in Dharmavaram town on Saturday, the Minister expressed grief over the recent tragedy in Mogali Ghat in Bangurapalem mandal of Chittoor district, where eight



people died and 33 others were injured. He stated that accident-prone areas across all 175 constituencies in the state would be identified, with special measures put in place to prevent future accidents.

Continued on Page 2

**Rs 2.86 cr released for Dravidian varsity staff: Lokesh**

P2

## 'Swachhata Hi Seva' fortnight from today

### Swachhandhra MD Gandham says his year's theme is 'Swabhav Swachhata - Sanskaar Swachhata'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Swachhandhra Corporation Managing Director Gandham Chandrudu chaired a high-level preparatory meeting with stakeholders on Saturday. During the meeting, he issued specific directives to the Commissioners of the Municipality and Municipal Corporations.

MD Chandrudu explained that 'Swachhata Hi Seva' (SHS) is held annually to honour Mahatma Gandhi on his birthday, October 2, and is observed as Swachh Bharat Diwas. Since 2017, the fortnight-long 'Swachhata Hi Seva' has been organ-

ised to enhance the volunteer system and collective action for a cleaner India.

He noted that the annual SHS campaign, which runs from September 15 to October 2 (Swachh Bharat Diwas), is centred around a specific theme. This year's theme for SHS-2024 is "Swabhav Swachhata - Sanskaar Swachhata."

The campaign's activities will be based on three main pillars: Swachhata Ki Bhaagidari, which promotes public participation, awareness, and advocacy throughout the campaign; and a range of events such as marathons, cyclothons,



**The campaign's activities will be based on three main pillars: Swachhata Ki Bhaagidari, which promotes public participation, awareness, and advocacy throughout the campaign; and a range of events such as marathons, cyclothons, human chains, plantation drives, and other beautification efforts.**

human chains, plantation drives, and other beautification efforts. The Sampurna Swachhata initiative includes mass cleanliness drives at high-traffic public places and the clearing of "Cleanliness Target Units"

(black spots). The Safai Mitra Suraksha Shivir aims to protect the welfare and dignity of sanitation workers and their families, providing health camps, a single window for welfare schemes,

safety training, and PPE kits. MD Chandrudu announced that the campaign will commence on September 17 and continue until October 1, with the annual Swachh Bharat Diwas celebrations scheduled for October 2. Awards will be given to the best performers at both state and district levels. All activities will be reported on the SHS portal: <https://swachhatahiseva.gov.in/>. MD Gandam Chandrudu emphasised that the campaign will involve collective efforts from all departments, with active participation from ministers, public representatives, celebrities, and the public, to create a healthier environment.

## OBTUSE ANGLE



PRABHU, SHALL I ASK THEM TO CLEAN UP THE LAKE FIRST BEFORE THEY DO IMMERSION?

## Dutiful daughter Kavitha to bounce back in 10 days

Ever since Kalvakuntla Kavitha walked out of jail, the buzz around her has only grown louder. People are eager to know what's next for the BRS MLC. But behind the scenes, it's been a quiet yet tender family affair. Her mother, Shobha, hasn't been keeping well, and after a brief hospital stay, she's been spending time with Kavitha. Ever the dutiful daughter, Kavitha has been balancing her responsibilities while caring for her mother. Meanwhile, her brother KTR had flown abroad to attend to his son's studies, but with his return, insiders are already whispering about Kavitha's grand comeback. Word on the street is that in just 10 days - it seems she's about to make quite the splash once again!

the speech, talk of values and ethics quickly became the hot topic among journalists. While some nodded along, one outspoken journalist remarked that preserving these values might depend more on the government's governance than anything else. He pointed fingers at a growing nexus between politicians, officials, police, and journalists, hinting that this under-the-table collaboration might be speeding up the decline in journalistic integrity. The room may have been quiet during the CM's speech, but the conversations that followed were anything but!

### BRS MLAs' Drama Steals Spotlight from Ganesh Poojas

This year's Ganesh Navaratri in Hyderabad didn't get the usual media fanfare, and TPCC working president Jagga Reddy is not happy about it. Traditionally, Khairathabad Ganesh poojas and the darshan of VIPs dominate TV screens during the festive season, but this year, something else grabbed the atten-

for the reasons he might have expected. While KTR claimed that "Bullabba" is a common term in Hyderabad, it seems many Hyderabadis were left scratching their heads. The word is more commonly used in coastal Andhra, and locals in Hyderabad are quick to point out that it's not a part of their everyday lingo. In fact, some have taken it a step further, humorously asking which Hyderabad, KTR is living in. They suggest his non-local advisors might be generalizing too much, forgetting that Hyderabad has its own unique flavor. People were quick to note that while Hyderabad is known for its cosmopolitan nature, attributing non-native words to the city doesn't quite sit well. And let's just say, the way the word "Bullabba" is mocked locally isn't exactly publishable! Looks like this job missed the mark in more ways than one!

### Defectors Use Flood Donations to Catch Naidu's Eye

With the TDP-led NDA government now steering Andhra Pradesh, several YSRCP leaders are trying to make their way into the ruling party's good books. But TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu isn't making it easy. He's carefully vetting defectors, ensuring no unwanted elements sneak in, leaving many YSRCP hopefuls on the sidelines. The recent flooding of the Krishna and Godavari rivers has thrown a new twist into the mix. Naidu has been calling for donations to help the State recover, and this has opened a door for opportunistic leaders. Some YSRCP defectors, eager to win over Naidu, are turning their generosity into a political strategy. Take former minister Siddha Raghava Rao, for instance. A loyalist from Naidu's past, he took the chance to make a Rs 50 lakh donation to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. But it wasn't just the money—Rao also used the moment to inquire about Naidu's health and rekindle their old ties. Word on the street is that Naidu responded warmly, possibly paving the way for Rao's smooth re-entry into the TDP. Looks like for some defectors, flood donations are becoming a handy political tool!

(With Inputs from Naveena Ghanate, K Venkateshwarlu and Pradeep Kumar)

### CM's PRO Office Shift Sparks Buzz

In a move that's got everyone talking, the Chief Minister's PRO office has become more accessible than ever. Previously tucked away on the sixth floor of the Telangana Secretariat, the office has now been shifted to the fifth floor, thanks to a decision made by the CM Revanth Reddy himself. The reason? The sixth-floor office is being turned into a visitors' waiting room, but the real change is that anyone can now reach the fifth floor, unlike the restricted access on the sixth. The renovations of the office is underway while the team and setup has largely shifted already and started operations. What's even more interesting is the chatter that the number of visitors to the CM PRO under the Congress regime is much higher compared to the BRS days.

### Journalists Buzzing After CM's Talk on Ethics

The recent event where Chief Minister Revanth Reddy handed over land document to the Jawaharlal Nehru Journalists Housing Society turned into quite the buzz. Instead of just the routine speeches, the CM, alongside Telangana Media Academy chairman K Sreenivas Reddy, gave journalists a lecture about the fading values and ethics in their profession. The message was loud and clear—the media's image is in trouble, and it's up to them to restore it. After

## REPORTERS' DIARY

tion – a political showdown among BRS MLAs. Jagga Reddy didn't mince words, slamming the BRS MLAs for their public spat that, according to him, distracted people from the devotional fervor of the festival. He sarcastically remarked that the live telecast of the BRS MLAs' drama seemed to entertain viewers for two days, leaving no room for the usual coverage of the Ganesh poojas. He expressed frustration over the fact that while police officers were busy maintaining law and order at the mandapams, the KCR family members were busy stirring up political chaos. For Jagga Reddy, the timing couldn't have been worse, and he blamed the BRS leaders for taking the focus away from the much-revered Khairathabad Ganesh festivities.

### Did KTR's 'Bullabba' Jab Miss the Mark?

KTR's recent dig at CM Revanth Reddy, where he referred to him as "Chitti Naidu" and "Bullabba", has stirred up quite the conversation, but not

# VSP future secure: Sribharat

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a strong show of support for the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, MP M Sribharat reaffirmed his commitment to the plant's long-term viability. During a meeting with employees and unions, Sribharat stated, "We will keep our word and work to protect the steel plant. There is no room for misconceptions about the plant's future. We will ensure its long-term prospects."



Sribharat emphasised the importance of collaboration between the government, local communities, and the plant's workforce to revitalise the plant. "Raising funds is only a temporary solution. The real challenge is in ensuring that the plant operates at full capacity, especially the three furnaces, which are key to turning a prof-

it." He stressed the need for "transparency, efficiency, and coordination" in the plant's management, essential for achieving long-term success. "We need to work together to ensure the plant's future. I am committed to doing my part, and I urge everyone involved to do the same."

The meeting concluded with a renewed sense of determination among workers, local leaders, and plant officials to work collaboratively in securing the future of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. "We are grateful for MP Sribharat's commitment to the plant," said Gajuwaka MLA Palla Srinivasa Rao. "We will work together to ensure the plant's long-term viability."

### Ganesh laddu at TDP hqs fetches Rs 27,000

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

An important highlight of the Vinayaka Chavithi celebrations unfolded at the Ganesh pandal erected at the TDP headquarters on Saturday. TDP leaders and office staff vied to acquire the most illustrious laddu, which was auctioned during the event deemed highly auspicious.

The laddu was eventually sold for Rs 27,000, with the proceeds going to the programme committee staff of the TDP central office. Notable attendees included AV Ramana, Dharapaneni Narendra, Rambabu, Harsha, Dhamodar, Sampath, and other office staff.

The immersion of the Ganesh idol (Vinayaka Nimajjanam) is scheduled for Sunday. Leaders and office staff have urged everyone to participate in the event and seek the blessings of Lord Ganesh.

## Rs 2.86 crore released for Dravidian varsity staff: Lokesh

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Education, IT, and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, has announced that the State government, led by Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, is implementing all measures to improve educational standards. The Minister confirmed that the Naidu government has released Rs 2.86 crore in pending salaries for the staff of Dravidian University, Kuppam.



Minister Lokesh stated that over the past five years, the government has been taking steps to revitalise the higher

education sector, which had been weakened under Jagan's administration. He further mentioned that the staff at Dravidian University had been

denied their salaries for a year, causing significant hardship. Lokesh remarked, "As soon as the employees brought this issue to my attention, an order was issued to release the pending salaries amounting to Rs 2.86 crore. The government, under Chandrababu Naidu's leadership, is committed to enhancing educational standards."

The Secretary to the Government (Finance), Janaki Muthusamy, issued G.O.R.T. 2094, releasing 2.86 crore as a grant to clear the pending wages of 254 staff members at Dravidian University, Kuppam.

## Report on...

Continued from Page 1

She explained that the collected data had been recorded in the App after field-level verification. Dr Srijana also mentioned that families residing on the second floor, and not just those on the ground floor, would be considered for relief.

She also highlighted that insurance facilities would be provided for all assets, including vehicles. The insurance facilitation centre at the Sub-Collectorate would remain open even on Sunday, despite the holiday. Over 20 representatives from various insurance companies are assisting victims in settling claims, she added. Vijayawada North Tahsildar Ch. Sirisha Devi, Special Officers A Harikrishna and Bharathi, Revenue Inspector G Vara Prasad, and others were also present.



Workers Attempt to Remove the Damaged Boats on the 5th Day at Prakasam Barrage in Vijayawada on Saturday. Photo: Ch. Vijaya Bhaskar

## Efforts to remove boats at Prakasam Barrage continue

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Efforts to remove the sand boats stuck at the Prakasam Barrage gates on the River Krishna continued into the fifth day on Saturday. Under the supervision of Visakhapatnam-based Bekem Infra and led by boat extraction expert Abbulu from Kakinada, the team has intensified their operations to lift the boats from the river.

On this fifth day, Abbulu and his team successfully untangled the knot connecting the three boats, which were intertwined.

After separating the boats, the team attempted to pull them 200 metres away from the barrage gates. Moving forward, the team plans to extract the boats from the river using iron chains, aiming to resolve the issue efficiently and minimise further damage to the barrage structure.

## Minister vows...

Continued from Page 1

The Minister also highlighted the difficulties faced by RTC employees following the merger of RTC with the state government by the previous YSRCP administration. He noted that 1,400 new buses have already been purchased, with 600 currently in operation; the remaining buses will be deployed soon. Additionally, electric buses are expected to be introduced by RTC shortly.

Minister Mandipalli urged former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy to avoid engaging in negative politics against the NDA government. He mentioned that public issues unresolved for the past five years have been addressed, including the provision of pensions over the last three months. He also announced that a free RTC bus service for women would be launched statewide shortly.

Regarding the recent floods in Vijayawada, the Minister reported that approximately 300,000 people were affected. The government, under the Chief Minister's guidance, is working diligently to support those impacted. Ministers, MLAs, MPs, and senior officials are also contributing their efforts.

**TODAY ALMANAC**

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha

Tithi: Dwadashi: Sep 14 08:41 PM to Sep 15 06:12 PM

Trayodashi: Sep 15 06:12 PM to Sep 16 03:10 PM

**Nakshatram:**

Shravana: Sep 14 08:32 PM to Sep 15 06:49 PM

Dhanishta: Sep 15 06:49 PM to Sep 16 04:33 PM

Rahukalam: 4:43 PM to 6:14 PM

Yamagandam: 12:11 PM to 1:42 PM

Varjyam: 10:26 PM to 11:53 PM

Gulika: 3:12 PM to 4:43 PM

Amritakalam: 09:10 AM to 10:39 AM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:46 AM to 12:35 PM

**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**

Forecast: Partly Cloudy

Temp: 34°C

Humidity: 63%

Sunrise: 5:56 AM

Sunset: 6:09 PM

Updated: September 14, 2024 5:00 PM

## Guntur Rly Station upgraded to NSG-2 category

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Guntur railway station has been upgraded to Non-Suburban Group-2 (NSG-2) status, following its achievement of an annual revenue of Rs 110 crore and handling 5.92 million passengers during the 2023-24 financial year. Guntur Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) M Ramakrishna announced that the Railway Board, after a recent review, has granted this elevated status to the station.



He explained that an NSG-2 station generates annual passenger earnings between Rs 100 crore and Rs 500 crore or handles between 10 and 20 million outward passengers each year. DRM Ramakrishna remarked, "In the latest review conducted by the

Railway Board, Guntur railway station generated Rs 110 crore in outward passenger earnings, leading to its reclassification as NSG-2 from the previous NSG-3 category. We are proud to achieve this status, which acknowledges our efforts to enhance infrastruc-

ture and services. We will continue to strive to meet the growing demands of our passengers."

Due to its geographical and strategic importance, Guntur is now one of the top 11 railway stations in the South Central Railway zone to hold NSG-2 status, noted Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Ch Pradeep Kumar. Currently, the Guntur Division includes 5 stations under NSG-4, 11 stations under NSG-5, 40 stations under NSG-6, and 4 halt stations.

## Govt betrayed students by rejecting addl medical seats: Ex-minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Minister Seediri Appalaraju has criticised the TDP coalition government for betraying students and their parents by rejecting additional medical seats. In a press conference in Palasa on Saturday, Appalaraju questioned whether any state government had ever previously declined extra medical seats in the public sector. He accused Chandrababu's government of taking a step that no other administration in the country has. He stressed that it is the government's duty to ensure that medical education is accessi-

ble to a broader section of the population. However, he found it unusual that the state government was challenging the central government's offer of additional medical seats.

Appalaraju also expressed astonishment at recent comments made by Health Minister Satyakumar Yadav concerning Pulivendula Medical College. He referred to a news article and noted that no health minister in the country's history had made such a severe statement. He even pointed out that during British rule, no minister had issued such a derogatory comment. He elaborated that the

central government had provided the state with an opportunity to upgrade infrastructure in the colleges and promised additional seats if the state submitted an undertaking letter. According to Appalaraju, the state government rejected this chance, attributing this decision to Chandrababu's administration. He urged intellectuals, educated individuals, and the student community to seriously consider this issue and called on the parents of numerous students to respond. He concluded by declaring it shameful that, for the first time in the country's history, a government has had to decline medical seats.

## Min Narayana...

Continued from Page 1

To prevent further damage and enhance future flood resilience, the minister highlighted the need for temporary pipelines in affected areas and committed to constructing culverts on roads to ensure unobstructed water flow in future flooding events.

His visit underscored a proactive approach to flood recovery, focusing on immediate cleanup and long-term infrastructure improvements. Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner H.M. Dhyanchandra and other officials were present.

## 'Bharat Gaurav' tourist train flagged off at V'wada rly station

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Sapta Jyotirlinga Yatra Bharat Gaurav tourist train received an enthusiastic send-off from rail tourists in and around Vijayawada. A total of 124 passengers embarked on this spiritual journey to the Seven Jyotirlingas on the first Bharat Gaurav Train originating from Andhra Pradesh on 14 September 2024. The passengers were given a traditional welcome, and the station was filled with spiritual fervour. This marks the second Bharat Gaurav Train from Andhra Pradesh and the 23rd from the South Zone.



Vavilapalli Rambabu, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager of the Vijayawada Division, South Central Railway, flagged off the "Sapta Jyotirlinga Yatra Bharat Gaurav Tourist Train" from Platform No. 10 at Vijayawada Railway Station.

The train will cover renowned Jyotirlinga destinations in the northern and western parts of India. It will provide boarding and de-boarding facilities at seven key stations in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Maharashtra, including Secunderabad, Kazipet, Warangal, Khammam, Madhira, Dornakal Junction, Mahububabad,

Kamareddy, Bhongir, Nizamabad, Dharmabad, Mudkhed, Nanded, and Purna. The train will visit major pilgrimage sites such as Ujjain (Mahakaleshwar and Omkareshwar), Dwarka (Dwarkadish Temple and Nageshwar Jyotirlinga), Somnath, Nasik (Triambakeshwar), Pune (Bhima Shankar), and Aurangabad (Grishneswar Temple). Addressing the media, Vavilapalli Rambabu described the Bharat Gaurav Express journey through these revered cities as a golden opportunity for pilgrims to visit all the sacred sites in one trip. He expressed great joy at flagging off the second Bharat Gaurav Train from Vijayawada and indicated that, in response to demand, more Sapta

Jyotirlinga Darshan Yatra Specials will be planned to accommodate passengers. Rambabu noted that earlier trains from the zone have enjoyed overwhelming patronage, with nearly 100% occupancy. He presented gift hampers to the passengers and wished them a memorable and safe journey.

Rambabu also reviewed catering arrangements, accommodation, and safety measures put in place by officials. He congratulated IRCTC staff for their excellent arrangements for the boarding devotees. The event was attended by Kishore Satya, IRCTC Manager; M Raja, Supervisor, IRCTC; Ravi Prakash, SM; MSP Srinivas, CCI, Vijayawada; and the ticket-checking staff.

# 5 years of Jagan's rule a big disaster: Manohar

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, Nadendra Manohar, criticised the five-year rule of the YSRCP, led by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, calling it the biggest disaster for Andhra Pradesh. Speaking to the media at a programme in Mangalagiri on Saturday, the minister said that the previous YSRCP government had not paid a single rupee under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.

He further expressed frustration that the YSRCP is wasting time with baseless criticism, adding that YS Jagan has no clue how to assist the flood victims, who are in dire need. He remarked that there is no record of Jagan visiting the victims at the grassroots level. Nadendra Manohar highlighted that Jana Sena activists are at the forefront whenever people are in trouble.

The minister also noted that anyone can participate in government assistance programmes and pointed out that leadership can be learned by observing Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan. The Deputy CM extended a donation of Rs 1 lakh to each panchayat and Rs 1 crore to each Telugu state. At the age of 74, CM Chandrababu Naidu is working tirelessly for the people of the State.

Minister Manohar added that efforts are being made to prevent water seepage from repaired breaches. He also mentioned that action would be taken against those involved in the illegal transportation of PDS rice.



## Vedic students should be model to others: TTD EO

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The Vedic students should stand as a role model to others and act as the custodians of the Hindu Sanatana Dharma, glorifying the reputation of the institution, asserted former CS of AP and TTD EO LV Subramanyam. He participated in the Ganesh Navahnikam celebrations held at Dharmagiri Veda Vignana Peetham at Tirumala on Friday, along with the

Additional EO Sri Ch Venkaiah Chowdhary. Addressing the students on the occasion, he said Dharmagiri happens to be one of the oldest institutions in the country imparting Vedic knowledge to hundreds of students. He called upon the students to first have the knowledge about the great history of their educational institution. In the last one and a half centuries this great centre has produced many stalwarts in the field of Vedas.

# Mysore MP unveils Molla statue in city

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Yaduveera Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar, the Maharaja of Mysore and Member of Parliament from Mysore, unveiled a bronze statue of Atukuri Mollamba (Molla), who authored the Ramayana in Telugu, at the Tummalapalli Kshetraya Kalakshetram in Vijayawada on Saturday. The statue was commissioned by the Andhra Pradesh Kummari Shalivahana Sangham under the leadership of its president and former MLC, Ilapuram Venkaiah.

During the ceremony, MP Wadiyar, former MLC Ilapuram Venkaiah, former Information Commissioner Ilapuram Raja, Kummari Shalivahana Sangham State Working President Ilapuram Srinivasa Rao, Krishna District President Bommina Srinivasa Rao, and others paid floral tributes to Molla. Addressing the gathering, MP Yaduveera Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar praised poet Molla for her bravery, noting that she composed the Ramayana in Telugu during the reign of Sri Krishnadevaraya. He remarked that many poets during that period relied on royal patronage, but Molla composed her work indepen-

dently, without any support from the dynasty.

He further highlighted the enduring relationship between Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, which dates back several decades. This connection has continued since the reign of Sri Krishnadevaraya, he said. Molla dedicated her rendition of the Ramayana to Lord Srirama, he added. He also acknowledged that many Telugu people held important positions in the Mysore Kingdom.

Expressing concern about the decline of regional languages due to modernisation, he commended former MLC and Kummari Shalivahana Sangham leader Ilapuram Venkaiah for his initiative in

installing Molla's bronze statue in Vijayawada.

Minister for Mines, Geology, and Excise Kollu Ravindra stated that Molla is a source of pride for the Telugu people. Her version of the Ramayana, written in Telugu, made it accessible to a wider audience, he said. He urged young women and the youth to draw inspiration from Molla and aim for excellence in their future endeavours.

Krishna district MLAs Mandali Buddha Prasad, Yarlagadda Venkata Rao, Gadde Rammohana Rao, Varla Kumara Raja, MLC KS Lakshmana Rao, Duvvarapu Ramarao, and other dignitaries were present at the event.

## NCC and Red Cross observe World First Aid Day at Loyola College

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



The NCC units of Andhra Loyola College, including the 17 (A) Battalion NCC Army Wing, 8 (A) Naval Unit, 8 (A) Air Squadron NCC, and the 3 (A) Remount & Veterinary Regiment, in collaboration with the Indian Red Cross Society, AP State Branch, organised a programme at the Bishop Mummadi Seminar Hall in Andhra Loyola College to commemorate World First Aid Day.

In his presidential address, Rev Fr Kiran Kumar, Vice Principal of Andhra Loyola College, emphasised the importance of acquiring First Aid knowledge to assist individuals in emergencies. He urged the Red Cross to conduct programmes on campus to raise awareness about life-saving techniques and CPR among students.

BVS Kumar, State Coordinator of Blood Banks & Projects for the AP Red Cross, highlighted the necessity of learning life-saving techniques from a young age and advocated for the inclusion of First Aid as part of the curriculum. He noted that First Aid, using locally available resources with-

in the critical golden hour, can save lives before professional medical care is available. Kumar assured that the Red Cross would conduct numerous First Aid programmes at Loyola College to ensure that all students and staff are proficient in First Aid and prepared to save lives in emergencies.

Priyanka, a Licensed Master Trainer from St John Ambulance, New Delhi, provided the NCC cadets with training in life-saving techniques, demonstrating how to handle emergencies and administer First Aid to victims.



Krishna District Principal Judge Aruna Sarika addressing the Lok Adalat in Machilipatnam on Saturday

## PENDING LEGAL CASES

# Importance of reconciliation stressed

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The National Lok Adalat held at the Nyaya Seva Sadan within the Machilipatnam Courts Complex underscored the significance of reconciliation in addressing pending legal cases. Organised by the Andhra Pradesh State Legal Services Authority (APLSA) and the Krishna District Legal Services Authority, the Lok Adalat took place on Saturday.

During the event, Justice Aruna Sarika, Principal Judge of Krishna District, highlighted that resolving cases through reconciliation is often the most effective approach. She urged litigants to utilise the Lok Adalat for settling long-pending disputes. Justice Sarika noted that

Lok Adalat is conducted across 41 benches in the Krishna district, with six benches specifically set up in Machilipatnam. Of these, two were led by district judges, one by a senior division bench, and three by junior division benches.

She further encouraged parties to resolve their long-standing cases through the Lok Adalat, despite recent challenges caused by heavy rains and flooding, particularly in Vijayawada, which have affected relief efforts. The district remains focused on maximising case resolutions through this platform.

Justice Sarika stressed that, despite these challenges, the commitment to using Lok Adalat to its fullest potential

continues. She highlighted that settlements made through Lok Adalat are final and cannot be appealed, urging greater awareness of its benefits.

First Additional District Judge Justice Chinnamshetty Raju also emphasised the importance of ensuring that both parties adhere to the law in these settlements. He noted that no further appeal is allowed once cases are resolved through Lok Adalat.

The event was attended by Krishna District Legal Services Authority Secretary and Senior Civil Judge KV Ramakrishnaiah, along with judges S Chinababu, Sujatha, Bar Association President Buragadda Ashok Kumar, and other officials.

# Pothina sees Rs 4 cr scam in awarding parking, contracts at Durga temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP leader Pothina Mahesh has revealed a Rs 4 crore corruption scandal at the Kanaka Durga Temple in Vijayawada, alleging that within three months of the TDP government coming to power, TDP leader and former MLC Buddha Venkanna misused his position to award parking and toll contracts to his benami without following proper rules and regulations.

Speaking to the media in Vijayawada on Saturday,

Mahesh accused temple officials, including the Executive Officer (EO) and the Endowments Commissioner, of supporting Venkanna in extending contracts without the mandatory 10% increase and advance payment. He further claimed that Venkanna had collected toll and parking fees for six months without remitting the money to the temple.

Mahesh also pointed to irregular rental agreements for shops within the temple premises, alleging that rents

were reduced by 40% against regulations, and agreements were extended for three years. He asserted that Venkanna had collected Rs 5 lakh from each shop owner in this process.

Additionally, Mahesh accused Buddha Venkanna of securing another contract worth Rs 1.35 crore without a tender.

He challenged TDP leaders to a public debate on these corruption charges, expressing his readiness to discuss the matter on any platform.

# IIIT- Nuzvid student achieves 2<sup>nd</sup>-place finish at global event

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies (RGUKT), Nuzvid (IIIT) student, Nageswara Rao Potla, has achieved an impressive second-place finish at the "Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) - Youth Endeavours for Social Innovations Using Sustainable Technology 12, 2024 (YESIST12)" Grand Finale. This prestigious event was held in a hybrid format at Tunis Science City in Tunisia, North Africa, on September 7 and 8.

A total of 95 universities from nine countries participated in the competition, with 260 teams competing under the Innovation Challenge Track. Out of these, 32 teams were selected for the finals. Nageswara Rao Potla, a final-year ECE student at RGUKT, presented Agri-Alliance, a smart and sustainable agricultural system that integrates functions such as crop recommendation, smart irrigation, disease prediction, and fertiliser and pesticide recommendations, alongside weed detection. This all-in-one solution aims to enhance crop production and sustainability by automating key agricultural

processes. RGUKT, Nuzvid Campus Director Prof. M. Chandrasekhar praised Nageswara Rao and ECE Department Assistant Professor P. Shyam on Saturday

YESIST12 provides an international platform for students and young professionals to showcase ideas and solutions to social issues. The event was organised by IEEE's Special Interest Group on Humanitarian Technology (SIGHT), Madras IEEE Education Society, and Madras SSIT, along with IEEE Young Professionals, IEEE Women in Engineering (WIE), and other affinity groups. It was hosted by local IEEE volunteers, typically involving universities or technology institutions from various regions.

The competition featured six categories, including Innovation Challenge, Junior Einstein, Maker Faire, We

Power Track, Special Track, and Engage Track. Nageswara Rao Potla participated in the Innovation Challenge, which initially held a preliminary round at Aditya Engineering College in East Godavari district on 13 and 14 February 2024. In that round, 60 teams competed, and RGUKT-Nuzvid secured first place.

The team was guided by P. Shyam, Assistant Professor in the Department of ECE. The university's leadership, including Director Prof. M. Chandrasekhar and Administrative Officer Dr. B. Lakshmana Rao, celebrated the team's success and extended congratulations for their outstanding global performance.

# Transfer rush intensifies at EPDCL amid bribery charges

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The extended deadline for employee transfers has sparked fierce competition for key positions within the Eastern Region Electricity Distribution Company (EPDCL), with officials racing to secure coveted posts using recommendation letters and bribes. "The demand for Assistant Engineer (AE) positions, particularly in high-income regions, has skyrocketed. These posts offer significant perks, especially when it comes to sanctioning free agricultural electricity connections for farmers," a senior EPDCL official revealed anonymously.

Ministers, MPs, MLAs, and their allies are making house visits to lobby for the best positions on behalf of their candidates, with the transfer rush not limited to the EPDCL. "Many transfers are happening not based on the employees' merit or needs, but on the strength of political connections," another official said.

Securing a transfer to a desired location or role comes with a hefty price tag, with sources revealing that transferring to a specific AE seat in a lucrative area can cost up to Rs 5 lakh. "Money is not the only factor; political clout and social equations also play a crucial role," the source added.

Leaders from districts like Srikakulam are keen on securing postings in Visakhapatnam, given its strategic importance. "We are reaching out to multiple people to push for our candidates. In many cases, a single recommendation is not

enough. You need letters from several influential figures," a local leader commented. "The process has moved beyond the control of senior officials. It's no longer about who is qualified for the job, but about who can please the most political leaders," an AE remarked.

Political interference has reached a level where even leaders from allied parties are reportedly getting involved. "It's no longer just about work, but about satisfying political demands," an insider said. As the deadline approaches, the transfer system, once relatively transparent, now seems driven by financial contributions and political manoeuvring. It remains to be seen how these power dynamics will unfold and who will ultimately secure the sought-after posts.

# Sreeja Milk Center is Harish's proxy biz: Venkat Reddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said that the "Sreeja Milk Production Center" is BRS MLA T. Harish Rao's proxy enterprise and that the frauds Harish committed using that are coming out one by one.

He said the BRS government had looted not only in the name of buffaloes and sheep but also through the production of milk. However, the Congress admin is trying to develop Mother Dairy, he said.

Elections were held in Mother Dairy, the dairy of the farmers of Nalgonda and Rangareddy districts on Saturday. Gudipati Madhusudhan Reddy was elected as the chairman of

Mother Dairy. Minister Venkat handed over certificates to the winners.

Speaking on the occasion, Venkat said the Congress won all the six director posts. He directed Collectors to supply Mother Dairy products to all government offices. He also asked Endowment Minister Konda Surekha to buy the ghee needed to make Yadagirigutta Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple's laddus from Mother Dairy and to scrap the GO issued by the BRS government regarding this.

He appealed to Konda Surekha to start using Mother Dairy Ghee immediately and added that by doing so the Rs 60 crore debt of Mother Dairy can be paid off.

# 64,99,340 cigarette sticks worth Rs 6.49 Cr seized

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



The officers of the Customs Commissionerate (Preventive), Vijayawada, seized 64,99,340 cigarette sticks worth Rs 6.49 crore on Friday. Based on a tip-off that contraband cigarettes of foreign origin are stored at a residence, the officers conducted a thorough search in Kamineni Nagar. They found 649 carton boxes stored in three rooms within the house premises. In total, 3,24,967 cigarette packets containing 64,99,340 cigarette sticks with markings of Paris brand were found in the cartons.

On each packet, there are wordings in foreign language and also the packets did not contain the statutory pictorial warnings, caution and the details of the manufacturing company. The packets appear to be of foreign origin and brought into India in contravention of

various provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 as well as the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003 (COTPA).

# Govt invites tenders for Unity Mall project

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Andhra Pradesh government has invited tenders for the construction of the Unity Mall project in Visakhapatnam, poised to transform the city into a vibrant hub of cultural and commercial activity. The project, backed by a substantial Rs 172 crore grant from the Union government, will be built on a sprawling five-acre land parcel along the picturesque beach road near Rama Naidu studio in Madhurawada.

The concept of the Unity Mall in Visakhapatnam revolves around uniting the cultural facets of Andhra Pradesh and other states, bringing together the Indian cultural palette and celebrating cultural diversity," an official from the project stated, highlighting the mall's core objective.

As per the Detailed Project Report (DPR), the Unity Mall will boast 36 commercial

spaces, each representing a different state or union territory, showcasing GI-tagged products and unique architectural styles reflective of each region's cultural heritage. Additionally, 26 retail stores will promote local products from each district of Andhra Pradesh, providing a platform for artisans and local businesses to thrive.

"The project follows a circular planning concept to foster unity and social interaction," the official added, emphasizing the mall's design focus on creating a harmonious blend of Andhra Pradesh's natural and cultural heritage.

The mall's layout has been carefully crafted to dedicate 40% of its floor space to retail, with the ground floor featuring key sections such as retail outlets, restrooms, administrative areas, and a service core. A striking double-height ceiling at the entrance will enhance the aesthetic appeal, providing visitors with a grand visual experience.



"The Unity Mall is envisioned as a key element in promoting local products, attracting tourists, and boosting economic growth in Visakhapatnam," a govern-

ment official remarked, underscoring the project's significance. With its strategic location and focus on cultural integration, the Unity Mall is poised to become a land-

mark destination for both residents and visitors alike, setting the stage for Visakhapatnam to emerge as a thriving hub of cultural and commercial activity.

# Yeleru flood havoc caused by 'Jagan-made mistake': Somireddy

PNS ■ NELLORE

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) senior leader and MLA Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy has attributed the Yeleru flood havoc to the indifference of the previous YSRCP regime for setting aside the modernising the rivulet.

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy described the Yeleru rivulet's ravage as a 'man-made mistake' and 'Jagan made mistake'. He accused the Jagan Reddy headed YSRCP regime for setting aside the modernizing the Yeleru rivulet in the name of 'reverse tendering'.

"The officials' high alertness and constant vigil and monitoring have avoided human loss due to Yeleru floods. Chandrababu Naidu spent time among the flood victims till the normalcy returned. Jagan Mohan Reddy has no moral right to criticize Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu," Somireddy flayed. He recalled that the Yeleru rivulet in Kakinada district received over 47,000 cusecs of water due to 15 mm of rainfall and the flood wreaked havoc in several mandals inundating residential colonies and crops to a large extent.

"In 2020 during the YSRCP



**"In 2020 during the YSRCP regime, the Yeleru rivulet received 17,000 cusecs of water which inundated several villages. Now the same rivulet received over 47,000 cusecs of water but the devastation was minimized due to efficient steps taken by the government," Somireddy claimed**

regime, the Yeleru rivulet received 17,000 cusecs of water which inundated several villages. Now the same rivulet received over 47,000 cusecs of water but the devastation was minimized due to efficient steps taken by the government," Somireddy claimed.

"In 2019, the TDP led regime had invited tenders for the modernization of Yeleru rivulet

at a cost of Rs 292 crore. The tender process was completed and when the works were about to begin, the YSRCP came to power. It introduced a 'reverse tendering' system which halted the modernization works," he lambasted. The Jagan Reddy headed government had not tried to begin the Yeleru rivulet modernization works during its five year tenure, Somireddy, the

former Agriculture minister lamented.

Somireddy ridiculed Jagan Reddy's demand for President Rule in AP stating that the people of the state had given a clear mandate, restricting the YSRCP for only 11 MLA seats. The TDP MLA explained that during the 2014-19, the TDP regime had spent over Rs 63,000 crore on irrigation projects. But during 2019-24, the YSRCP government had spent only Rs 20,000 crore on the irrigation sector, he said, adding that it reflects how the YSRCP regime neglected the irrigation sector.

Somireddy ridiculed that the Irrigation Minister in the YSRCP regime confined himself to dancing to the cinema songs without focusing on irrigation projects. At the same time, the former Chief Minister was busy with playing Pubji games, he lambasted.

"By leading the relief operations in the flood ravaged areas, Chandrababu Naidu has emerged as a hero, a role model and exemplary. The nation has lauded Chandrababu Naidu on how he mitigated the flood havoc. The YSRCP leaders have no moral right to blame Chandrababu Naidu," Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy made it clear.

## YSRCP leader constructing bldgs without permission: Dhulipalla



PNS ■ GUNTUR

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) senior leader and MLA Dhulipalla Narendra has alleged that YSRCP leader Ambati Murali is constructing buildings in Guntur illegally without taking approvals.

Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, Dhulipalla Narendra said that Ambati Murali unsuccessfully contested the Assembly from Ponnuru constituency. Under his direction, the construction of the 'Green Grass' apartment building is taking place in the middle of Guntur city without prior approvals from the Municipal Corporation.

"Ambati Murali took permission in 2015 to construct a five-storied building with cellar. He had applied for approvals to construct another three buildings in 2017 but the permission was not approved.



## 50 trap cameras installed, 4 cages set to capture leopard: DFO

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Forest officials are making every effort to capture a leopard that strayed into the Diwan Cheruvu area on the outskirts of the city.

Speaking to the media on Saturday, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) N. Bharani stated that 50 trap cameras had been installed and four cages set up in various locations to capture the leopard. The animal's movements had been recorded by CCTV cameras on only four occasions in the area.

To expedite the capture of the wildcat, 50 trap cameras have been deployed, and four cages positioned where the leopard has been spotted roaming. Officials have also employed thermal drones, which are capable of capturing images even at night, to assist in tracking the animal.

The DFO urged residents, particularly those travelling between Autonagar and Lalacheruvu, as well as in the Housing Board area on the national highway, to exercise

caution. The DFO advised two-wheeler riders to remain vigilant, paying close attention to roadsides and bushes as they travel. Leopards often stray into residential areas in search of food and water, she noted. The leopard has not been seen in any residential colonies on the outskirts.

It is worth mentioning that the leopard was first spotted on the national highway near the Diwan Cheruvu area five days ago, prompting forest and police officials to launch efforts to capture the wildcat.

## India's first MedTech University to come up in Vizag

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Andhra Pradesh Medical Technology Zone (AMTZ) in Visakhapatnam is establishing a pioneering 'Global MedTech University,' the first-of-its-kind in India. Set to commence operations in the 2025-26 academic year, this institution will focus on academic programmes related to medical technology and regulatory affairs, offering courses such as an MBA (medical regulatory approvals and entrepreneurship), MTech (medical technology devices), MTech (bioengineering), and PhD programmes.

"A significant portion of India's medical equipment demand is unfortunately met through imports. One reason for this could be the lack of proper educational avenues and research opportunities in medical technology and regulatory affairs," said Prof. Hanumanthu Purushotham, founding director of the university. "This university aims to bridge the gap between the growing manpower require-

ments of the medical technology device industry."

In a public-private partnership model, AMTZ will collaborate with industry players to ensure students receive hands-on training within the



campus. With nearly 140 companies housed in the MedTech Zone, industry experts will serve as faculty members and potential recruiters. The university will launch with an initial intake of approximately 250 students.

"Despite the presence of hundreds of medical technology companies, these organizations often recruit regular

graduates and postgraduates, training them later to meet industry-specific needs. This institute will directly address the unique requirements of the industry. Hundreds of recruiters are eagerly waiting for skilled students who can meet the demands of this specialized field," said Prof. Purushotham.

The university will partner with leading international institutions to expand its global reach. "Admission criteria and other modalities will soon be finalized. Industry experts will not only serve as faculty but also provide students with real-world, hands-on training, ensuring they are perfectly suited for the industry's needs," added Prof. Purushotham.

This new chapter in Visakhapatnam marks a significant step forward in medical technology education, promising to reshape the landscape of India's MedTech sector. With its pioneering approach, the Global MedTech University is poised to create a skilled workforce, driving innovation and growth in the industry.



## CREDAI Vizag chapter launches brochure for 10th 'Property Expo'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI) Visakhapatnam Chapter has officially launched the brochure for its highly anticipated 10th Property Expo on Saturday. The three-day event, scheduled to take place at Gadiraju Palace and Convention Center on Beach Road from November 29 to December 1, aims to provide a comprehensive platform for homebuyers and real estate stakeholders.

"Our goal is to bring all stakeholders under one roof, making it easier for potential homebuyers to make informed decisions about their dream homes," said CREDAI Chapter Chairman Sri KS RK Raju (Sai). "The property expo will cre-

ate awareness about eco-friendly apartment and house construction happening in the city, allowing prospective homebuyers to choose their preferred flats based on their income group," said CREDAI President Sri V. Dharmender.

Expo Convenor Ch Govinda Raju stated that the expo will feature 80 stalls showcasing over 100 projects, including flats, plots, villas, luxury homes, and gated community buildings. Banks will offer special discounts, deals, and instant loan approvals, making it a one-stop destination for all home buying needs.

The event is expected to attract strong participation, with footfalls at every CREDAI expo steadily rising. "Visakhapatnam CREDAI has become a household name, and we expect strong partici-

ation this year as well," said Hon. Secretary V Sreenu.

Chief guest Pankaj Kumar, DGM of SBI-Visakhapatnam, highlighted the real estate sector's vital role in India's economy, remarking, "Real estate contributes approximately 7.3% to the country's GDP and has a high potential for job creation and supporting allied industries." He reiterated SBI's commitment to supporting CREDAI Visakhapatnam by promoting awareness about home financing options during the expo, acknowledging that owning a home is a universal aspiration.

B Srinivas Rao, AP State general secretary, emphasised the expo's comprehensive nature, catering to all aspects of homebuying, particularly benefiting retirees seeking affordable housing options in Visakhapatnam.

## Use of drones in farming should be encouraged: DC



PNS ■ ELURU

West Godavari district Collector Chadalavada Nagarani opined that farming could be made more profitable by using drones in farming.

Collector Nagarani inspected the programme of spraying pesticides in the agriculture fields at Yendagandi village and spoke to the farmers. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that the government intends to make the farmers aware of the method of spraying by drones to reduce agricultural expenses.

The Collector informed that the Central government had selected six self-welfare groups in the district under the 'NaMo Didi' programme and with the help of the Central government, 6 drones worth

about Rs 60 lakh were given to the six groups free of cost by Coramandel and Mahendra and Mahendra companies. DRDA has given pilot co-pilot training to six members through Andhra Pradesh NG Agriculture University, adding that arrangements have been made to get employment by spraying farmers' fields using these drones.

Collector Nagarani said that the government is determined to educate the farmers of West Godavari district about spraying to reduce agricultural costs and steps would be taken to bring the six drones in the district into use.

The trainees would be provided with work through drones, she said, stating that some people would be sent for training.

## 566 candidates get placements at 'job mela'

PNS ■ ELURUU

A 'job mela' was organised here on Saturday in the Girijan Bhavan for which 1,226 candidates attended and MP Putta Mahesh Kumar handed over appointment letters to the selected candidates.

As many as 1226 candidates attended the job mela of which 566 candidates were selected. MP Mahesh Kumar handed

over the appointment letters to the selected candidates. Speaking on the occasion, the MP said that 11 companies had come forward to select the candidates based on their qualifications and technical skills. He said that the companies were facing problems with the candidates who were devoid of proper technical skills.

The MP observed that it is their responsibility to provide



jobs and it is the responsibility of the students to learn the

skills required for various jobs. "Companies working for prof-

are looking for skilled youth. We will bring more companies in the coming days to participate in Job melas. Just by sending resumes, you will not get jobs but you must have technical skills. The major IT companies will be brought in the coming days to the job mela to select candidates," MP Putta Mahesh Kumar promised, adding that his mission is to create jobs for all.

## Indigenously developed submarine escape training facility commissioned in Vizag

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a notable advancement for India's defence capabilities, the Kalvari Submarine Escape Training Facility, named 'Vinetra', was commissioned on Saturday at INS Satavahana in Visakhapatnam. Vice Admiral Rajesh Pendharkar, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, officiated the ceremony, underscoring the nation's increasing self-reliance in defence technologies under the 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' initiative.

The indigenously designed and developed Vinetra facility aims to improve the escape capabilities of crew members aboard Kalvari-class submarines in emergencies.



Constructed by M/s L&T Defence as a turnkey project, the cutting-edge facility includes a five-metre escape tower integrated with an adjacent diving basin. This infrastructure will provide both basic and refresher escape training to submarine crews, ensuring their proficiency in

emergency escape procedures. "The commissioning of Vinetra is a proud moment for the Indian Navy and the nation," remarked Vice Admiral Pendharkar during the event. "It not only enhances our operational readiness but also highlights our growing self-reliance in defence technologies, aligned

with the vision of 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat'."

Vinetra, meaning 'trainer', symbolises the Navy's dedication to improving the safety and preparedness of its submariners. This advanced facility will play a vital role in instilling confidence among crew members, ensuring they are well-equipped to respond to any underwater emergency with precision and skill. "This facility is a testament to India's technical expertise and unwavering commitment to safeguarding the lives of our naval personnel," stated a senior Navy official. "With Vinetra, we are not only protecting lives but also bolstering the nation's defence infrastructure."

## 2 youths drowned in waterfall

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

Two youths drowned in a waterfall at Sariya Waterfalls at Ananthagiri village in the district on Saturday.

Police said that a group of eight youths went to the Sariya waterfall on a joy trip from Vizianagaram.

One of the deceased Venkata Sai (22) slipped and fell into the water and started drowning. Another deceased Dilip Kumar went to his rescue but he too drowned in the water. The police pressed expert swimmers to trace the bodies.

Prohibition and Excise Department officials performing a symbolic ritual 'Palabhishekam' by pouring milk over the portraits of Chandrababu Naidu and Ravindra in Vijayawada on Saturday

## Excise officials perform 'Palabhishekam' to CM Naidu, Kollu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Officials from the Prohibition and Excise Department on Saturday performed a symbolic ritual, 'Palabhishekam', by pouring milk over portraits of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Excise Minister Kollu Ravindra.

This ceremony, held at the department's office in Gurunanak Colony, Vijayawada, was intended as a gesture of gratitude for the leaders' efforts in revitalising the Prohibition and Excise Department. The event was led by B. Narasimulu, President of the State Excise Wing Executive Officers Association. During the ceremony,

Narasimulu voiced concerns about the Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB), established by the previous government, which he claims significantly diminished the powers of the Excise Department. He argued that the creation of the SEB resulted in a decrease in the department's effectiveness, causing a substantial loss of government revenue and an increase in ganja smuggling and illegal sand transportation.

Narasimulu reminisced about the period before 2019 when the Excise Department effectively tackled illegal ganja and illicit liquor operations. However, he contended that the formation of the SEB, which occurred without con-

sulting Excise Department officials, undermined the department's operations.

Looking ahead, Narasimulu pledged that the Excise Department would work to enhance revenue and prevent the entry of Non-Duty Paid liquor into the state. He also emphasised their commitment to eradicating ganja in Andhra Pradesh, while adhering to state government policies.

Several notable figures from the department, including VSSSN Varma, Kameswara Rao, RV Rama Siva, GSK Dhanaraj, S. Srinivas Reddy, and V. Sriram, President of the NTR District Head Constables and Constables Association, were present at the event.

## Student stabbed while watching film in theatre

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

In a cinema-style incident, a university student was stabbed when he was watching a movie in a cinema theatre here on Saturday.

Police said that the victim Lokesh was studying at MB University. He, along with his girlfriend, went to the PGR cinema theatre to watch a movie.



When the duo was watching the movie, the accused Karthik pounced on Lokesh and stabbed him with a knife. He collapsed in the seat bleed-

ing profusely. He was immediately taken to the Ruia hospital where he was undergoing treatment.

Interestingly, the girlfriend of the victim fled with the accused after the stabbing incident. The stabbing incident took place as per the preplan of the accused Karthik and the girl. The police registered a case and launched a search to arrest Karthik and the girl.

ACROSS THE STATES



Code violation case: UP minister surrenders in court

Uttar Pradesh minister Kapil Dev Aggarwal surrendered before a local court on Friday after a non-bailable warrant was issued against him in connection with a Model Code of Conduct violation. The special MP/MLA court also issued a non-bailable warrant against Anil Kumar, another minister, for failing to appear before it in a related poll code violation case. Special Judge Devendra Singh Fauzdar recalled the non-bailable warrant issued on September 4 and ordered Aggarwal's release after he furnished two sureties of Rs 25,000 each. Aggarwal, the BJP MLA from Muzaffarnagar constituency, is minister of state (independent charge) of vocational education and skill development.



Kejriwal visits Hanuman temple with wife

A day after his release from Tihar, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal sought the blessings of Lord Hanuman, and said his blessings were with him during his "fight against injustice". He visited the iconic Hanuman temple in Connaught Place along with his wife Sunita Kejriwal and sought blessings from God for the well-being and prosperity of all. The temple's Mahant welcomed him with a tilak, presenting the Delhi chief minister with Bajrang Bali's mace and a sacred triangular flag. Senior leaders of the party, Manish Sisodia, Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh and Delhi minister Saurabh Bharadwaj accompanied him. Kejriwal meditated with his wife and offered water to 'Shivling'. He also shared a video of his visit on X. "Today, along with my wife Sunita Kejriwal and other companions, I visited the ancient Hanuman temple in Connaught Place and worshipped Lord Hanuman and received his blessings."



Railway min hops on local train, chats with commuters

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Friday travelled by a local train, the lifeline of lakhs of Mumbaiers, and chatted up with commuters. Vaishnaw boarded the suburban train at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus in south Mumbai at 2.34 pm and alighted at Bhandup station at 3.18 pm after his 27 km-long journey. Railway officials said Vaishnaw, who was in the city for an awards ceremony, boarded a second class coach of the Ambernath-bound slow local train. While interacting with the minister, commuters sought increase in the number of services and expressed concern over frequent disruptions. Speaking to mediapersons on board the train, the Union minister said 12 projects underway in Mumbai metropolitan region costing Rs 16,240 crore will add 301 kilometres of tracks to the network, among the densest in the world, and go a long way in improving commuter experience.

Culture key to unlocking economic growth

India at BRICS meet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI  
A top official of India's culture ministry has emphasised the need to place culture at the heart of global development strategies and use it as a tool for empowerment, inclusion and mutual understanding. Union Culture Secretary Arunish Chawla said this during the 9th BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting in St Petersburg, Russia, the ministry said on Saturday. In his statement, the culture secretary reiterated India's commitment to harnessing the power of culture for sustainable development and global cooperation. This aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of convergence between cultural creativity, commerce and collaboration for building an equal, sustainable and inclusive world, the ministry said in a statement. During the key meeting in St Petersburg, Chawla "emphasised the need to place culture at the heart of global development strategies, to use it as a tool for empowerment, inclusion and mutual understanding". Continuing with its stance in G20 while chairing the influential bloc in 2023, India advocated for recognising culture as a standalone goal in the post-2030 global development agenda, highlighting its transformative potential in driving economic growth, social inclusion and sustainable development, the ministry said.



It is three dynasties versus youths

PM Modi at first election rally in J-K

PNS ■ JAMMU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that the upcoming assembly election is a contest between the young leadership devoted to Jammu and Kashmir's development and the three dynastic families that "destroyed" the region by "encouraging" corruption and "depriving" the people of their rights.

Addressing an election rally in support of BJP candidates in Doda district of Jammu region, Modi said terrorism is taking its last breath and reiterated his government's promise of restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. However, he cautioned the

people against bringing the NC, Congress and the PDP back to power, alleging their policies had prepared the ground for terrorism, stifled young leadership and "hollowed out" J-K, and stressed that the election would decide the future of Jammu and Kashmir which has "remained the target of foreign powers".

This was the maiden election rally by the prime minister in Jammu and Kashmir ahead of the first phase of the assembly polls on September 18, which will cover 24 seats spread across the three districts of Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban in Jammu and the south Kashmir districts of

Trains to reach Srinagar 'very soon': Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday promised to connect unlinked areas of Jammu and Kashmir through the railway network, announcing that trains will soon reach the Kashmir valley.

Addressing an election rally in the Doda district in support of the BJP candidates earlier in the day, Modi said

work on the railway line between Srinagar and Ramban is complete and the trial runs have begun.

We are working to connect the unlinked areas of Jammu and Kashmir through rail. Soon, the people of Ramban, Doda, Kishtwar, and Kashmir will be able to travel directly to Delhi by train.

Anantnag, Pulwama, Shopian and Kulgam. Modi began his nearly 45-

minute speech by welcoming the people who attended the rally in the Kashmiri language.

'No competition between Hindi and local languages'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There can never be a competition between Hindi and other Indian languages as they are friends and complement each other, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday.

Addressing the fourth Akhil

other. Therefore, the relationship between Hindi and all local languages will be strengthened," he said.

The home minister said the 'Hindi Diwas' is an occasion to take a pledge to make Hindi a communication language, a common language, a technical language and now an interna-



Bhartiya Rajbhasha Sammelan on Hindi Diwas, Shah said the promotion of Hindi cannot happen until all other Indian languages are strengthened and the official language establishes a dialogue with all of them.

"There can never be a competition between Hindi and local languages because Hindi is a friend of all local languages. Hindi and all local languages complement each

tional language. "We are celebrating the Diamond Jubilee to mark the completion of 75 years of Hindi as the official language. By accepting Hindi as the official language and connecting all the local languages of the country through Hindi, we are moving towards preserving and promoting our culture, languages, literature, art and grammar," he said.

'Unfortunate' to refer to Gyanvapi as mosque: Adityanath

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR (UP)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said it is "unfortunate" to refer to Gyanvapi as a mosque and called Gyanvapi an "embodiment of Lord Vishwanath himself".

Adityanath made these remarks while inaugurating an international seminar on "Contribution of Nath Panth in Building a Harmonious Society" at the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gorakhpur University, where he also highlighted the spiritual significance of Kashi and the revered site of Gyanvapi.



"It is unfortunate that some people refer to Gyanvapi as a mosque while it is the embodiment of Lord Vishwanath himself," he said, and also

made a detailed reference to legendary sage Adi Shankar, narrating an anecdote about his "encounter" with Lord Vishwanath in Kashi.

CENTRE TO SUPREME COURT

'Sensitive' inputs delaying HC chief justice appointments

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has told the Supreme Court that "sensitive material" with the government is delaying the implementation of the SC Collegium's recommendations for appointments of chief justices to high courts.

Attorney General R Venkatramani told a bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra that he has received certain inputs from the Union government which are sensitive in nature.

He also told the top court



that revealing these issues in the public domain would neither be in the interest of the institution nor of the judges involved. "I would

like to place the inputs and my suggestions in a sealed cover for perusal by the judges," Venkatramani told the bench.

Siddaramaiah built house on site allotted to Dalit

Alleges Union Min Kumaraswamy



PNS ■ BENGALURU

Union Minister and JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy on Saturday accused Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah of building a house illegally on a site allotted to a Dalit with a disability during his tenure as the deputy chief minister.

He said the allegations against the CM regarding illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife in a layout by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA), in connection with which the Governor has given approval for investigation against him, were not the only ones committed by

Siddaramaiah in Mysuru. "...haven't we now seen what he has done for the farmers? Are we not seeing (developments) in Mysuru (referring to MUDA site allotment scam)? Let these 15 sites (14 actually) be there on one side. As the Deputy CM, he had built a house. On whose land did you build the house. Do you want records of it? I'm asking the chief minister," Kumaraswamy said.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, "Who built the house illegally on a MUDA site allotted to a Dalit? Taking 15 sites is not the only thing against you (Siddaramaiah), you have a series of things in Mysuru.

Maharashtra can lead way in promoting Buddha's values: Rijiju

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday said Maharashtra, with a substantial Buddhist population, can lead the way in promoting the Buddha's values.

He was delivering the keynote address at the 'Buddha's Middle Path - Guide for Global leadership', a conference organised jointly by his ministry and the International



Buddhist Conclave, here.

Buddhist population, Maharashtra stands as a pivotal region where any movement for spreading Buddha's values can resonate nationwide. The state can lead the way in promoting Buddha's values," the minister said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent initiatives including extensive celebration of Buddha Purnima by the Government of India underline a commitment to promoting Buddhist values, he said.

Onam encourages all to promote social harmony: President Murmu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday greeted citizens on the eve of Onam and said the "festival of prosperity" encourages all to promote social harmony. This festival of joy and enthusiasm is celebrated to mark the harvesting of crops, she said.

"It is also an occasion to cel-



brate the rich cultural heritage and traditions of Kerala. On this occasion we also express our deep gratitude to the farmers, who work tirelessly to feed our nation. This festival of prosperity also encourages us to promote social harmony," Murmu said in her message on the eve of Onam.

"May the peace and unity of the country continue to be strengthened and we work together for making India a developed nation," she said.

The President extended warm greetings and best wishes to all citizens, "especially the brothers and sisters of Kerala living in India and abroad", on Onam.

Hindu marriage not to be dissolved as contract: HC

PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ (UP)

The Allahabad High Court, in a significant judgement, has ruled that a Hindu marriage is not to be dissolved or terminated as a contract.

The sacrament based Hindu marriage may be dissolved (in law), in limited circumstances and too only on the strength of evidence led by the parties, it said.

Following the appeal filed by a wife against dissolution of marriage, a division bench of justices Sammitra Dayal Singh and Donadi Ramesh was of the view that even in "granting the divorce on the strength of mutual consent, the learned court below may have dissolved the marriage between the parties only in the event that consent continuing to exist on the date of the order being passed".

"Once the appellant claimed to have withdrawn her consent and that fact was on the record, it never became open to the learned court below to force the appellant to abide by the original consent given by her that too almost three years later," the court said.

IFFI introduces new category to honour debutant filmmakers

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Saturday announced a new category to the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) that will celebrate the work of debutant filmmakers.

The new category, called the best debut Indian film section, will be introduced in the 55th edition of the prestigious festival, which is slated to be held in Goa from November 20 to 28.

As part of the segment, a new award will be handed out -- best debut director of Indian feature film, carrying a cash prize of Rs 5 lakh and a certificate.

The best debut Indian film section will showcase a diverse

55th INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF INDIA  
20th - 28th November, 2024, Goa  
Call for Entries  
BEST DEBUT INDIAN FEATURE FILM SECTION

OVERVIEW  
• Featuring top 5 debut feature films by new Indian directors  
• Best Debut Indian Feature Film of a Director Award with Cash Prize: ₹5 Lakhs

ELIGIBILITY  
• Debut Film in any Indian language or script  
• Director must be an Indian citizen  
• The Film should be a Debut Film of the Director

Deadline: 23rd September, 2024 till 6 PM

SUBMIT YOUR ENTRIES TODAY  
To know more, visit: www.iffi.org

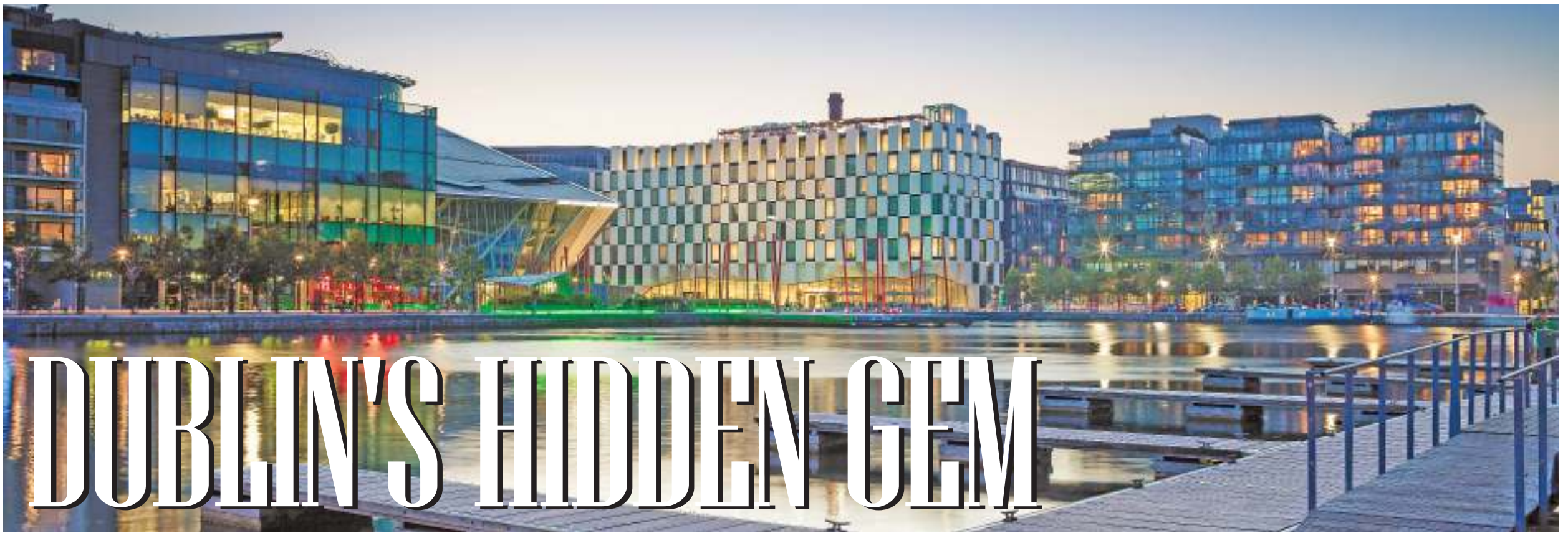
The best debut Indian film section will showcase a diverse range of narratives and cinematic styles from across the country, the ministry said in a statement.

"These selections will highlight the creative vision and unique storytelling approaches of young filmmakers. This aims to provide a platform to the young talent, showcasing the work of new directors. A maximum of 5 debut feature films showcasing the work of new directors who are contributing fresh perspectives and stories to

Indian cinema shall be selected in accordance with the rules and regulations and shall be shown in the Best Debut Indian Film section," it added.

The new award, the best debut director of Indian feature film, aims to honour the creativity and potential of first-time directors, acknowledging their contribution to the evolution of Indian cinema, the statement said.

The entries for the new category of awards are open now and the film can be submitted by September 23.



# DUBLIN'S HIDDEN GEM

Discover a hidden gem in the Irish capital overlooking the water in the revitalised Silicone Docks. Here, a unique facet of Dublin unfolds, where the historic charm of the city seamlessly intertwines with modern vibrancy

BY AKANKSHA DEAN

## MODERN ELEGANCE AWAITS

Even for locals, this area feels distinctly refreshing, offering a different perspective of Dublin while ensuring that all of its iconic landmarks remain conveniently accessible. Embrace the fusion of old and Dublin's Docklands, affectionately dubbed the 'Silicon Docks,' serve as the European headquarters for tech giants like Facebook, Google, and Airbnb. At the heart of this dynamic district stands Anantara The Marker Hotel, a striking geometric marvel that has become its unofficial emblem. The name 'The Marker' pays homage to the Grand Canal's rich trading history. The canal, stretching 82 miles, was once adorned with cast iron markers indicating the distance to the journey's end. The hotel stands proudly at the site of the last of these markers. Situated on the south bank of the river Liffey, the hotel commands stunning views of Grand Canal Dock and the vibrant Grand Canal Square, featuring the striking Bord Gais Energy Theatre, designed by Daniel Libeskind. At night, the plaza comes alive, illuminated in captivating hues of red and green. This dynamic locale is at the heart of Dublin's thriving tech industry, with one area even dubbed 'Googletown'. Conveniently, the hotel is just a 20-minute drive from Dublin Airport and a mere 15-minute stroll to the city centre, making it an ideal base for exploring the capital's rich offerings.

All the design elements at Anantara The Marker tell a story, much like the vibrant neighbourhood surrounding it. The Docklands continues to evolve as a thriving part of the city. As I step into The Marker, I'm immediately struck by its vibrant atmosphere that resonates throughout. The luminous lobby leads into colour-infused bedrooms, each exuding modern elegance. I notice young Dubliners gathering in the atrium for drinks, fostering a lively social scene that pulses with energy. On sunlit days, the rooftop bar becomes a buzzing hub, offering breath-taking views—a perfect retreat amid the city's bustle. Originally opened in 2013 and recently rebranded under Anantara in 2023 after an extensive renovation, this hotel stands as a beacon of modernity. Its striking chequerboard façade, inspired by the Cliffs of Moher, welcomes me into a mesmerizing 67-meter-long atrium with a cantilevered ceiling reminiscent of the Giant's Causeway, where public spaces, including a bar, lounge, and restaurant, invite relaxation and enjoyment. Embodying the Anantara philosophy, the hotel seamlessly integrates the brand's three core pillars—Indigenous, Expertise, and Authentic Luxury—throughout its offerings. Each of the 187 rooms and suites offers breath-taking views of the city, Grand Canal, Dublin Bay, or the mountains, enhanced by floor-to-ceiling windows. The accommodations are thoughtfully designed with ergonomic furnishings, cutting-edge



technology, and luxurious bathrooms for an indulgent experience. The Junior Corner Suite proved to be the perfect refuge for my stay. With ample space to work, unwind, or simply relax, I enjoyed the gentle sunlight streaming onto my Eames-style chair at the desk. A freshly brewed espresso awaited me, a delightful touch to start my day. I was pleasantly surprised to find a bar of Co Wexford's Bean and Goose chocolate by my bedside, boxy on the breakfast menu, and an 'Irish Wine Geese' section on the wine list. The fusion of striking architecture and local storytelling in this 187-bed haven feels refreshingly new. I balanced work and rejuvenation effortlessly. Prioritizing wellness, the award-winning spa provides an array of rejuvenating body treatments and massages, complemented by a 75-foot indoor infinity pool, a steam room, a eucalyptus-infused sauna, and a whirlpool tub. This was the perfect way to begin my mornings before venturing out. One of my favourite retreats was the chic rooftop bar and terrace, which



boasts breath-taking panoramic views. Each evening, I found myself captivated by the skyline, capturing the stunning sunsets that bathed the city in warm orange hues. At the heart of Marker's culinary journey is the vibrant new Forbes Street by Gareth Mullins. As a fan of Gareth's weekly cooking segment, I eagerly anticipated the experience. I began with exquisite Flaggly Shore oysters on crushed ice paired with a delightful Bloody Mary. Next, the marbled rib-eye, flawlessly seared, accompanied by zingy Chimichurri, house-cut chips, and a rocket salad, was a delight. For dessert, creatively

presented North County Dublin rhubarb, with smoked vanilla and crispy potatoes, encapsulated the essence of simple yet exceptional dining.

## STORIES OF DUBLIN

Unlike the traditional luxury of the Merriem, Westbury, and Shelbourne, The Marker embraces bold architecture while ensuring substance accompanies its style. Anantara's mantra, 'Life is a journey,' resonates through its various activities like docklands walks and sea swimming. What truly distinguishes are its unforgettable bespoke experiences, meticulously designed to immerse visitors in the local culture and lifestyle. For food enthusiasts, the signature Spice Spoons journey with Executive Chef Gareth Mullins is a delightful highlight. Guests spend the day with Mullins exploring the charming fishing village of Howth, just 30 minutes from Dublin, and embark on a chartered fishing boat around Dublin Bay, where they might spot dolphins and seals. Afterward, a visit to Kish Fish, one of Ireland's

premier salmon smokehouses, precedes an enriching lesson in baking traditional Irish soda bread back at the hotel. Other curated experiences include Wild Swimming in a popular local spot under the guidance of an open-sea coach, an insightful deep dive into equine culture at the Irish National Stud and Gardens with a renowned horse trainer, and Afternoon Tea: Poetry and Places, which celebrates Ireland's literary heritage. For me, the highlight was the Docklands Storytelling Tour led by Derek Brennan, the hotel's Irish storyteller and guest experience manager. His captivating narratives weave together the rich history of the Docklands, bringing the area's past to life through his engaging tales, a connection forged since the hotel's inception in 2013.

## SIP, STROLL, EXPLORE

A trip to Dublin is incomplete without exploring its rich offerings. A must-visit is EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum, conveniently located within walking distance of the hotel. This interactive museum delves into the history of the Irish

diaspora and emigration. Just around the corner lies The Ferryman Townhouse, a lively pub where locals warmly welcome visitors, eager to share a table and demonstrate the art of enjoying a pint in under ten seconds. For those with a sense of adventure, Grafton Street, The Temple Bar, and Trinity College Dublin are a leisurely 30-minute stroll away. Be sure to reserve an evening for the renowned Guinness Storehouse, where a guided tour reveals the brewing process, and guests can even create a 'stoutie,' a selfie on the frothy beer head. This fusion of modernity and community encapsulates the essence of Dublin's evolving urban landscape, making it a must-visit destination for locals and travellers alike.

*Akanksha Dean is an independent food & travel writer, a chef and a catalyst and is the first Indian to have trained at Osteria Francescana, in Modena, Italy, rated as the world's best restaurant in the World's 50 Best Restaurants, in 2016 and 2018 and currently in the Best of The Best Category.*

## CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF INDIAN ACCENT

# A Journey Through Taste and Tradition

Indian Accent's 15th anniversary marked a memorable evening, celebrating its rich legacy with a blend of nostalgic classics and inventive culinary creations, says SAKSHI PRIYA

As Indian Accent New Delhi celebrated its 15th anniversary, the occasion paid tribute to its remarkable culinary journey. With softly dimmed lighting and elegant candlelit tables, the ambiance set a warm and inviting tone for the evening. The sophisticated atmosphere, combined with a touch of nostalgia, created a perfect backdrop for a dining experience that was both refined and memorable. Walking into Indian Accent felt like stepping into a space where the charm of tradition and the excitement of modernity seamlessly merged, crafting an unforgettable experience. The evening featured a nostalgic look back at Indian Accent's inaugural tasting menu from 2009, allowing guests to revisit beloved classics that had been instrumental in shaping the restaurant's journey. Dishes like the Whole Wheat and Semolina Puchkas, Paneer Tikka Chaat and Khakra Mille Feuille served as a heartwarming reminder of the restaurant's evolution and enduring appeal. The journey began with Chef Shantanu Mehrotra at the helm, who crafted a menu that would soon become a

sensation. Reflecting on those early days, Chef Mehrotra recalls the excitement and challenges of the original menu. While some dishes met with mixed reviews, others quickly captured the hearts of diners. Today, Indian Accent is celebrated for its pivotal role in bringing modern Indian cuisine to the global stage. The celebration commenced with a sensory feast, beginning with the Blue Cheese Naan. This dish was a revelation, a delightful twist on a classic favourite. The crisp texture combined with the bold, creamy blue cheese offered a unique start to the evening. Paired with the Mushroom Shawarma, subtly spiced with garam masala, it was a comforting yet adventurous introduction that set the tone for the meal to come. The evening begins with a nod to the beloved classics that had been instrumental in shaping the restaurant's journey. Dishes like the Whole Wheat and Semolina Puchkas Chaat and Khakra Mille Feuille served as a heartwarming reminder of the restaurant's evolution and enduring appeal. The journey began with Chef Shantanu Mehrotra at the helm, who crafted a menu that would soon become a



traditional elements with modern sophistication. Chef Shantanu Mehrotra's talent was unmistakable throughout the tasting menu. His creations, such as the Paneer Tikka Chaat and Khakra Mille Feuille, were perfect examples of his ability to blend textures and flavours in imaginative and delightful ways. The Beetroot and Peanut Tikki with Caper Wasabi Chutney was particularly memorable, showcasing his knack for transforming humble ingredients into something truly remarkable. The main courses continued to impress with their inventive twists on both classic and global flavours. The Bharwan Mirch with Goat



Cheese Mousse and Chilli Aam Papad Chutney was a revelation, blending bold flavours with finesse. The Paneer Lasagna with Smoked Aubergine and Goji Berry Makhni offered a creative and comforting take on a beloved classic. The Turkish Sultanas and CousCous Ki Tahiri with Anar Avocado Raita was a brilliant example of how global influences can be seamlessly integrated into modern Indian cuisine. The grand finale of the evening was nothing short of a dessert lover's dream come true. The Indian Accent Kulfi Sorbet was like a refreshing burst of icy goodness, cleansing the palate with a playful, creamy touch. But hold on tight,

things got even sweeter with the Kinnaur Apple Shakarpara Crumble. Imagine the crunch of perfectly baked apple crumble mingling with the smooth, homemade vanilla bean ice cream—every bite was a joyous celebration of texture and flavour. And just when you thought it couldn't get any better, the Coconut and Jaggery Brulee with Ruby Grapefruit Pops Amarula Ki Chuski arrived, turning dessert into an art form. The rich brulee, with its luscious coconut and jaggery notes, paired with zesty grapefruit pops and a hint of Amarula, was an explosion of taste that left us craving more. Complementing this was the Daulat Ki Chaat, which emerged as a standout. Its saffron-infused elegance, adorned with almonds and a hint of sugar, was both a visual delight and a burst of refined flavours. This dish exemplified the restaurant's commitment to creative excellence and its ability to elevate even the most familiar flavours into something extraordinary. Each dessert was a playful, indulgent end to a meal that was nothing short of spectacular! Reflecting on this milestone, it

became clear that the 15th anniversary was not just a celebration of Indian Accent's rich history but also a vibrant showcase of its future. The event honoured the restaurant's legacy while highlighting its ongoing dedication to culinary excellence and innovation. Chef Shantanu Mehrotra's passion and creativity were evident in every dish, underscoring the restaurant's status as one of New Delhi's most cherished culinary destinations. Indian Accent's 15th anniversary celebration was a memorable reflection on its past, with a touch of nostalgia, while also offering a glimpse into its future. The evening was all about elegance, creativity and exceptional flavours. Chef Shantanu Mehrotra's innovative approach and remarkable talent shone through in every dish, proving that Indian Accent is more than just a restaurant - it's a symbol of innovation and sophistication in the culinary world. This anniversary wasn't just a milestone, it was a celebration of a remarkable journey filled with flavour, creativity and lasting excellence.





Photo: Pankaj Kumar

# FROM WHEELS TO WINGS

The story of transport through time is showcased meticulously at the *Heritage Transport Museum* and is a nostalgic journey for the grownups and curious potent for the young, writes **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

**N**estled in the heart of Gurugram, the Heritage Transport Museum offers a vivid glimpse into India's rich transport history. It is not merely a museum but a living narrative of how India's transportation systems have evolved over the years. From early bullock carts to vintage cars, each display in the museum is a portal to a time when travel wasn't just about the destination but the experience itself.

India's transport history offers a vivid reflection of the country's broader cultural and social transformations. The evolution of transportation—from traditional bullock carts and hand-pulled rickshaws to modern vehicles and advanced public transit—parallels significant societal, technological, and economic changes. Various modes of transport illustrate the evolution of cultural practices and daily life. For example, traditional transport methods like palanquins and bullock carts reveal historical social structures and regional customs, while the advent of motorized vehicles signifies a shift toward modernization and globalization. The Heritage Transport Museum is a treasure trove of historical gems, each piece providing a unique window into India's transport legacy. The Museum in Gurugram offers a fascinating glimpse into the evolution of transportation in India. As India's first comprehensive transport museum, it showcases a wide array of unique items that reflect the country's rich history in this sector.

Among the standout exhibits is an extensive collection of vintage cars, including iconic models like the Ford Model T and the Rolls-Royce Phantom. Each vehicle tells a story, with plaques detailing their origins, ownership histories, and their journeys through India's roads.

The museum also houses an impressive collection of two-wheelers, featuring everything from early Royal Enfield bikes to classic Vespa scooters. These vehicles capture the changing dynamics of transportation in India, from rural commutes to urban lifestyles.

A particularly unique feature is the railway exhibit, which includes vintage carriages,

## We hope to instil a respect for our heritage: Tarun Thakral

**T**arun Thakral, the founder & managing trustee of Heritage Transport Museum is also the Executive Director at CJ International Hotels Ltd, New Delhi that owns and manages Le Meridien New Delhi. Tarun started his career in the Hospitality business in 1986. In 1990, he won the French Government scholarship to pursue MBA program in International Hospitality Management from Institut de Hotelier Management International, Paris.

To pursue his hobby and passion in vintage and classic cars, in 1996 Tarun founded Heritage Transportation Trust (HTT) - a registered not-for-profit trust to promote the preservation of modes of transportation that have been used in India. As its Founder and Managing Trustee, HTT has developed India's first comprehensive Transport Museum, Heritage Transport Museum, which opened to visitors in December 2013.

Since its opening Museum won many prestigious awards - The National Tourism Award for being the most innovative and unique tourism project in the country, the 2016 and 2018 Travellers Choice Award by TripAdvisor, International PATWA award for innovation at ITB, Germany, the BITB Tourism Excellence Award, SATTE Tourism award for innovation, and more. He talked to Gyaneshwar Dayal about his

passion and labour of love, The Heritage Transport Museum: **What inspired you to create the Heritage Transport Museum? Was there a specific moment or experience that ignited your passion for preserving India's transport history?**

India did not have a comprehensive transport museum until the Heritage Transport Museum opened its doors to visitors. Given the presence of remarkable transport museums worldwide, I often wondered why India didn't have one of its own. As my personal collection of transport memorabilia expanded, managing it became increasingly difficult. We launched the Heritage Transport Museum in December 2013, and it remains India's sole transport museum to this day.

**How did you go about collecting such an impressive and diverse array of transport artefacts? Were there any particularly challenging or memorable acquisitions?**

In 1994, I purchased my first vintage car from Ramgarh Shekhawati, Rajasthan, which was in a state of disrepair. The process of restoring this vehicle over nearly a year brought me immense joy and ignited a passion for collecting and preserving vehicles from being scrapped. My collection soon grew to include cars, two-wheelers, bicycles, carriages, and carts. In 2002, I came across an advertisement from Indian



Railways about scrapping several 1930s railway saloons. I quickly contacted the Railway Board, expressing my interest in purchasing and preserving one of these saloons. Since the Railways had never before sold such items to private individuals, it took over a year of negotiations. Ultimately, I succeeded in acquiring and restoring the saloon, which now proudly stands at the museum on a recreated vintage railway platform. **What criteria do you use to select the items displayed in the museum?**

The Heritage Transport Museum features a diverse array of transportation modes used for both private and public transport throughout history. Our aim is to display the full range of transportation, encompassing cars,

buses, two-wheelers, traditional transport methods, non-motorized vehicles, railways, trams, aviation, and maritime. We choose items based on their historical importance, popularity, and how they complement our existing collection. We also carefully evaluate how each object will engage and benefit our visitors. **What are the biggest challenges you've faced in preserving and restoring some of the older or more delicate items in the museum's collection?**

Many items, especially those that are decades or even centuries old, face natural deterioration over time. Components can become fragile or worn, making the restoration process both meticulous and delicate. For vintage vehicles and machinery,

locating original or compatible parts can be extremely challenging, often necessitating custom fabrication or innovative solutions to replace missing or damaged components. Restoring complex items, such as early aviation or railway equipment, requires specialized knowledge and skills, and finding experts with the necessary experience can be difficult.

**What are your future plans for the Heritage Transport Museum? Are there any upcoming exhibitions or expansions that visitors can look forward to?**

We have several exciting initiatives in store for the Heritage Transport Museum to enrich its offerings and continue captivating our visitors. One of our key plans is to introduce an experience centre that will provide a unique, multisensory experience. We're also expanding our exhibitions to feature rare artefacts that showcase various aspects of transportation history. To keep up with the latest technological advancements, we aim to incorporate more interactive and immersive technologies, such as virtual reality, augmented reality, and advanced simulation tools, to make the exploration of transport history even more engaging.

**What drives your passion for curating and expanding the museum's collection? How do you stay motivated in continuing this labour of love?**

A deep passion for history, culture, and education, coupled with a strong commitment to preserving and sharing important stories and artefacts for future generations. The continual excitement and inspiration of discovering new ways to present these treasures and enhance the museum's narrative. The joys of seeing visitors engage with, learn from, and appreciate the museum's offerings. The profound personal fulfilment derived from working in a field I genuinely love and enjoy. And, of course, the pride in contributing to the museum's enduring legacy.

**What kind of experience do you hope visitors take away from the museum? Is there a particular message or feeling you want them to leave with?**

One of the greatest compliments we've received is being recognized as a world-class museum in India. Many visitors leave with a profound sense of nostalgia, feeling moved, inspired, and reflective. They depart with a deeper understanding of the evolution of transport, and the museum continues to ignite curiosity and further interest in its visitors. We hope to instil a respect for our heritage, encouraging visitors to think about ways to preserve it for future generations. For younger visitors, we aspire to inspire them to develop hobbies that bring them fulfilment and satisfaction.

signaling systems, and detailed replicas of early Indian trains. Visitors can explore the interior of these carriages and get a sense of the grandeur of rail travel during the colonial period.

For aviation enthusiasts, the museum features models and artifacts from India's early civil aviation history, including scaled replicas of early Indian aircraft. Another intriguing exhibit is a full-size 1950s Piper J3C Cub aircraft, providing a rare close-up view of mid-20th-century aviation.

One of the more immersive experiences is the display of

maritime memorabilia, with detailed models of ships and boats that were integral to India's naval history and trade routes.

The museum's art and design installations also deserve mention, with sections devoted to the design evolution of vehicles, showcasing how aesthetics and functionality have shaped modern transport. Besides, the Museum has also a 3D virtual reality ride on a rickshaw over the China wall which is a big hit with the children and elders alike.

The development of transportation also mirrors India's economic progress. The transition

from horse-drawn carriages to trains and automobiles highlights the country's industrial growth and enhanced connectivity, which has facilitated trade and mobility. Additionally, transportation innovations have been crucial in driving social change. The introduction of public transportation systems such as buses and metro rails has influenced urbanization, accessibility, and social integration, affecting how people live and work.

The Heritage Transport Museum plays a crucial role in enriching our understanding of India's

history by preserving and showcasing these transportation milestones. Through its diverse collection of transport artefacts, the museum offers visitors insights into how transportation has both shaped and been shaped by the broader socio-cultural context. It effectively connects the past with the present, providing a tangible link to India's rich history and its ongoing evolution. The museum houses an impressive collection, thoughtfully curated to spark fascination. The assortment ranges from classic vintage cars to steam engines, traditional

bicycles, and even airplanes. Visitors can explore artifacts that depict the evolution of transport—centuries old, others representative of the industrial age. There is also a segment dedicated to maritime history, complete with beautifully preserved models of ships, giving the experience an almost encyclopaedic richness. What truly sets the Heritage Transport Museum apart is the meticulous passion with which it has been curated. The layout of the museum is designed not just to showcase relics but to narrate stories. Interactive displays,

lifelike dioramas, and thematic galleries transport visitors into the very eras these machines were part of. Each exhibit is placed within a larger cultural and social context, enabling visitors to appreciate its significance beyond the mechanics.

It's not just a collection of vehicles; it's a carefully woven tapestry of India's transport evolution, enhanced by attention to detail. For anyone with an interest in history, innovation, or transport, the Heritage Transport Museum is a must-visit, where every exhibit is a labour of love, offering a journey through time.

## THE MONSOON'S WHISPER IN EVERY NOTE

Vidushi Sunanda Sharma's *Boondan Phuhaar* concert celebrated the monsoon with enchanting Indian classical music, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

**T**here is something undeniably timeless and evocative about Indian classical music, especially when performed by an artist as deeply rooted in tradition as Vidushi Sunanda Sharma. On a beautiful evening at the Stein Auditorium in New Delhi, Sharma brought the monsoon season to life with her performance, 'Boondan Phuhaar.' The concert was not merely a display of musical mastery but a heartfelt celebration of nature, tradition and the human spirit.

Sharma, a vocalist of the Banaras Gharana, captivated her audience with her soulful

voice that seemed to capture the very essence of the rainy season. Each note felt like a raindrop, each melody a breeze dancing through the trees. She was accompanied by a gifted ensemble, including Pt. Vinay Mishra on the harmonium, Pt. Mithilesh Kumar Jha on the tabla and U. Ghulam Ali on the sarangi, who together created an atmosphere that was almost spiritual. Their performance reminded everyone present of the unique power of live music to evoke deep emotions and transport listeners to another world.

What stood out most was not just the technical excellence on display but the depth of



Photo: Pankaj Kumar

feeling in every note. There was a genuine joy and emotional connection to the monsoon season that resonated throughout the performance, making the audience feel the beauty and poignancy of the rains. In a world that often feels dominated by digital and impersonal entertainment, this concert was a poignant reminder of the impact of live music and its ability to make people feel truly alive.

The evening was also a celebration of India's rich cultural heritage. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's reflections on Varanasi's spirit and its deep-rooted connection to the classical

arts underscored the importance of preserving these traditions. Sunanda Sharma's commitment to her craft and her work with the Girija Darshan Trust, named after her revered Gurus, Smt. Girija Devi ji and Pt. Sudarshan Sharma, is commendable. Through her efforts to nurture young talent and provide a platform for established artists, she ensures that this exquisite form of music remains vibrant and relevant, not just a relic of the past.

More than just a concert, 'Boondan Phuhaar' felt like a journey into the heart of the monsoon - a gentle escape from the rush of daily life.

The performance offered a rare chance to slow down, to be present and to savour the profound beauty of music that is so intricately connected to nature. Sunanda Sharma's devotion to her heritage and artistry was evident in every note, making the evening a memorable and moving experience. In an age where life often moves at a relentless pace, this event was a timely reminder of the importance of taking a moment to appreciate the simple, yet profound joys - a rain-soaked evening, a beautiful melody and a shared experience that brings people closer to the essence of life itself.

IN BRIEF



Lumax to acquire majority stake in GE Solutions

Lumax Auto Technologies on Saturday said it has inked a pact to acquire a majority stake in Greenfuel Energy Solutions from its existing shareholders for an undisclosed amount. The proposed acquisition will enable the company to enter into the green and alternate fuels segment which is expected to witness strong and accelerated growth in the coming years. Lumax Auto said in a statement. Greenfuel is a supplier of high-pressure fuel delivery and storage systems primarily for CNG and hydrogen automobiles. It also supplies fire and smoke alarm, detection and suppression systems for the automotive industry. It is a supplier to key OEMs, including Maruti Suzuki, Tata Motors and Volvo Eicher Commercial Vehicles, among others.



India's oil exports to Bangla remain unaffected

Despite political unrest in Bangladesh, India continues to export diesel to Bangladesh and the business remains unaffected, chairman of the firm selling oil said on Saturday. Numaligarh Refinery in Assam exports diesel to Bangladesh through a pipeline. "There is no disruption," Oil India Ltd (OIL) chairman and managing director Ranjit Rath told reporters here. Numaligarh Refinery is a subsidiary of OIL and Rath is the chairman of the refinery as well. Diesel continues to be exported through the Siliguri (Assam) to Parbatipur (Bangladesh) pipeline, he said. The pipeline passes 5,156 kms in India whereas it passes 124,346 kms in Bangladesh. "Letter of credit is in place for supplies to Bangladesh," he said. While the pipeline has a capacity to transport 1 million tonnes per annum of diesel, currently about 400,000 tonnes is exported.



Air India cancels Ho Chi Minh City-Delhi flight

Air India on Friday cancelled its flight from Ho Chi Minh City to the national capital due to operational issues. An Air India spokesperson said arrangements are being made to fly the passengers to Delhi at the earliest while options of cancellation with full refunds and complimentary rescheduling to another date have also been offered to passengers. "Air India flight AI389 operating from Ho Chi Minh City to Delhi on September 13, 2024, has been cancelled due to operational reasons," the spokesperson said in a statement and added that hotel accommodation has been provided to the passengers. A source said there was some technical issue with the aircraft and later the crew exceeded the flight duty timings. Subsequently, the flight was cancelled. The spokesperson also regretted the inconvenience caused to the passengers due to the unforeseen disruption.

India committed to developing resilient agri systems: Minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is committed to developing resilient agricultural systems and ensuring food security on the global stage, Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare Ram Nath Thakur said. He made the remarks while representing India at G20 Agriculture Ministerial Meeting in Cuiaba, Brazil on September 12-14, 2024.

India also emphasized enhanced international trade's contribution to food security at the meeting.

"Our approach not only focuses on productivity but also ensures economic, social, and environmental sustainability, enhancing farmer prosperity and embodying a comprehensive vision for development," an official statement quoted him as saying.

The minister also pointed to India's implementation of "the world's largest food-based safe-



**Our approach not only focuses on productivity but also ensures economic, social, and environmental sustainability, enhancing farmer prosperity and embodying a comprehensive vision for development**

ty net programmes" to ensure food security and nutrition.

He stressed the need for Special and Differential Treatment for developing and least-developed countries, particularly to empower small and marginal farmers, the statement said.

"This is crucial for enabling their effective participation in global trade discussions," he added.

The G20 meeting focused on four key priority areas -- sustainability of agriculture and food systems; enhancing international trade's contribution to food security; elevating the role of family farmers, smallholders, and indigenous communities; promoting integration of sustainable fisheries and aquaculture into value chains.

On the sidelines, Thakur held bilateral meetings to strengthen India's agricultural relations with other nations. He reiterated India's willingness to collaborate on addressing global food system challenges.

Congratulating Brazil on its G20 Presidency, Thakur acknowledged the continuation of initiatives launched under India's previous presidency.

PRICES DROP IN MAJOR CITIES

Govt's subsidised onion sale brings relief

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government's subsidised onion sale initiative, launched on September 5, has led to price drops in major cities within days, the consumer affairs ministry said on Saturday.

In Delhi, retail onion price fell from Rs 60 to Rs 55 per kg, while Mumbai saw a decrease from Rs 61 to Rs 56 per kg. In Chennai, the retail price reduced from Rs 65 to Rs 58 per kg, the ministry said in a statement.

The government initiated the sale of onions at a subsidised rate of Rs 35 per kg through mobile vans and outlets of NCCF and NAFED.

The program, which began

in Delhi and Mumbai, has since expanded to other major cities including Chennai, Kolkata, Patna, Ranchi, Bhubaneswar, and Guwahati.

Responding to the growing demand, the government has decided to increase the quantity of subsidised onion and expand distribution channels to include e-commerce platforms, Kendriya Bhandar outlets, and Mother Dairy's SAFAL stores.

The government has also initiated wholesale disposal of onion in major cities. It has already commenced in Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai, with plans to extend to Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Kolkata and eventually all state capitals.



'MoU between India, Iran to boost cooperation'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A memorandum of understanding between the tourism authorities of India and Iran to boost cooperation in the sector is in the pipeline, Deputy of Tourism in the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Iran, Aliasghar Shalbafian, said as he underlined the similarities between the two civilisations.

In an interview to PTI on the sidelines of the Iran Tourism Roadshow here, Shalbafian also said he, along with his Iranian delegation, had a "very fruitful" meeting with Indian tourism ministry officials in New Delhi.

"Iran and India have great similarities during their thousands of years of history. We are going to revitalise these

connections through tourism and, somehow, facilitate mutual tourism cooperation," Shalbafian said.

In this regard, Iran last year "unilaterally waived visa" for Indian tourists coming to Iran. In the first four months of the year, there was a 39-per cent increase in the number of Indian tourists coming to Iran, exceeding the more than 58,000 Indian tourists who visited Iran last year, the Deputy of Tourism in the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts said.

"Of course, India has a lot to offer to Iranian tourists. Last year, more than 13 million (1.3 crore) Iranian people went out for diverse tourism purposes. India can enjoy from these good markets.



Oil India to invest Rs 25,000 crore for net zero emissions by 2040

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil India Ltd plans to invest Rs 25,000 crore in clean energy projects to help achieve the net zero carbon emission goal by 2040, its chairman Ranjit Rath said on Saturday.

OIL's net zero plan includes a combination of cutting down the flaring of gas and commercialisation of stranded gas as well as setting up renewable electricity generation capacity, building green hydrogen plants and constructing biogas and ethanol plants.

The net zero plans will go alongside its target to raise crude oil and natural gas production to 9 million tonnes of oil and oil equivalent gas by 2025-26 from 6.5 million tonnes produced in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2024, he told reporters here.

The company also plans to lay an 80-kilometer pipeline to bring natural gas from fields in Arunachal Pradesh to Assam to help replace polluting liquid fuels in transport as well as industries.

"Achieving a net zero target involves a bouquet of activities," he said.

It already has firming up plans for 640 MW of solar projects in Assam and another 150 MW in Himachal Pradesh, he said.

OIL joins fellow state-owned firms who are investing billions of dollars to help



India as a nation achieve net zero emissions by 2070.

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the nation's biggest oil firm, is targeting net zero by 2046 while oil and gas producer ONGC has announced Rs 2 lakh crore investment to achieve the same goal by 2038.

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and gas utility GAIL (India) Ltd too are targeting 2040 to achieve net zero carbon emissions from their operations while Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) wants to do so by 2046.

Rath said OIL is drilling more wells and intensifying exploration in a bid to raise crude oil production to over 4 million

tonnes and gas output to 5 billion cubic metres.

"Last year we drilled 61 wells and the year before that 45 wells. This year's drilling plan is for 75-plus wells," he said.

While drilling more wells will reverse the 12 per cent decline in production that has set in the mature fields, the company is also increasing exploration to tap newer reservoirs as well as using technology to increase output from existing fields.

On its subsidiary Numaligarh refinery in Assam, Rath said expansion of capacity, from current 3 million tonnes per annum to 9 million tonnes at an estimated cost of Rs 28,000 crore, is planned to be completed by December 2025

Redington to offer iPhone 16 series at 7k retail locations

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Integrated technology solutions provider Redington Ltd will offer its iPhone 16 smartphones at its retail locations across the country, the company said on Saturday.

US-based Apple Inc., recently unveiled the latest range of smartphones; Apple Watch Series 10, Watch Ultra 2, Air Pods 4 among many others.

In a statement on Saturday, Redington said it would offer the iPhone 16 and iPhone 16 Plus equipped with a host of features at its 7,000 retail locations across the country.

All the new models can be pre-ordered, and they will be available from September 20, 8 am onwards, the statement added.

NCLT recalls order on Zee-Sony merger

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has allowed withdrawal of its order approving the merger of Zee Entertainment and Sony Pictures Networks India and recalled its earlier order passed in this regard.

The Mumbai bench of the NCLT had last week recalled its order passed on August 10, 2023, in which it had approved the merger of Zee Entertainment with Sony Pictures Networks India.

The bench observed the parties have "mutually consented" to withdraw the scheme on account of the settlement agreement and the board of directors has passed the resolutions to withdraw the scheme of amalgamation.

"Accordingly, this Bench allows the withdrawal of the Scheme of Amalgamation and hereby recalls order dated 10.08.2023 in C.P.(CAA) No. 209 of 2022," said NCLT order, a copy of which was

Allows withdrawal of scheme



shared to bourses by Zee on Thursday.

Zee, which applied for withdrawal, submitted the Composite Scheme of the Merger Cooperation Agreement executed to give effect to this scheme stands terminated and accordingly the closing date has not occurred and the scheme has not attained any effectiveness.

Earlier on August 27, ZEE Entertainment and Sony

Pictures Networks India announced settling their six months long dispute related to the failed USD 10-billion merger and agreed to withdraw all claims against each other. As part of that, both had mutually agreed to withdraw all respective claims against each other in the ongoing arbitration at the SIAC and all related legal proceedings initiated in the NCLT and other forums, a joint statement stated.

'Duty hike on oils to hugely benefit farmers'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government's decision to hike customs duty on crude palm and refined sunflower oil to 20 per cent and 32.5 per cent, respectively will "hugely" benefit farmers as it will increase their income, a senior official said on Saturday.

The government official also said that the decision to remove minimum export price and slashing of export duty on onion too would help farmers of the country.

According to a finance ministry notification, the basic customs duty on crude palm, soybean and sunflower seed oil has been increased from nil to 20 per cent.

Basic customs duty on refined palm, soybean and sunflower oil has been hiked from 12.5 per cent to 32.5 per cent.

The effective duty on these crude and refined oils will increase from 5.5 per cent to 27.5 per cent and from 13.75 per cent to 35.75 per cent, respectively.

"These are big support for soya and oilseed farmers. Farmers from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh will get hugely benefited as they account for significant production of these oil seeds," the official said.

The official added that these measures were possible because of the effective management of

the government to contain domestic prices of edible oil, which have been falling continuously for nearly two years now.

"These are very smart moves by the government to support soya farmers without affecting market sentiments," the official said.

Besides Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, the other major oil seed producing states are Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu.

The government had previously fixed USD 550 per tonne as the minimum export price (MEP), which essentially meant that farmers could not sell their produce overseas lower than this rate.

A Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) notification issued on Friday removed the MEP with immediate effect.

The government has also slashed the duty on onion export to 20 per cent from 40 per cent. There is no export duty on 'Bangalore rose onion.'

Last week, Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare noted that the outlook for onion availability and prices in coming months remains positive as the kharif (summer) sown area has increased sharply to 2.9 lakh hectare till August from 1.94 lakh hectare in the year-ago period.



DGGI detects Rs 2.01 lakh crore GST evasion

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investigation arm DGGI has detected 6,084 cases involving Rs 2.01 lakh crore of GST evasion in 2023-24 fiscal, with online gaming and BFSI in services and iron, copper, scrap and alloys in goods emerging as the sectors most prone to evasion.

The amount is double of over Rs 1.01 lakh crore detected in 2022-23 in 4,872 cases.

Out of these, voluntary taxes of Rs 26,605 crore was paid in 2023-24, up from Rs 20,713 crore in 2022-23.

As per the annual report of the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI),

about 46 per cent of the evasion cases related to non-payment of tax (through clandestine supply and undervaluation), 20 per cent related to fake Input Tax Credit (ITC), and 19 per cent to wrong availment/non-reversal of ITC.

In 2023-24, online gaming sector saw maximum evasion with Rs 81,875 crore in 78 cases, followed by Banking, Financial and Insurance (BFSI) with Rs 18,961 crore evasion in 171 cases. Works contract services and pharmaceutical had 343 cases and 22 evasion cases with tax evasion involving Rs 2,846 crore and Rs 40 crore, respectively.

In 2023-24, 1,976 cases of

Online gaming, BFSI most prone



Goods and Services Tax (GST) evasion were detected in iron, copper, scrap and alloys sectors involving Rs 16,806 crore of tax evaded.

Pan masala, tobacco, cigarette and bidi came second with 212 cases involving an evasion of Rs 5,794 crore. Plywood, timber and paper

had 238 cases involving tax evasion of Rs 1,196 crore. Electronic items saw 23 cases (Rs 1,165 crore), followed by marble, granite and tiles 235

cases (Rs 315 crore).

During 2023-24 fiscal, the total GST evasion detected by DGGI officers and Central GST zone was over Rs 2.37 lakh crore in 20,576 cases. This includes Rs 2.01 lakh crore detected by DGGI in 6,084 cases and Rs 35,377 crore by CGST zones in 14,492 cases.

The detection of GST evasion by DGGI has been steadily rising since the roll-out of GST in 2017.

In 2017-18, Rs 7,879 crore was detected, followed by Rs 19,319 crore in 2018-19, Rs 21,739 crore in 2019-20, Rs 31,908 crore in 2020-21 and Rs 50,325 crore in 2021-22.



# VENKATAGIRI LOOMS REAWAKEN

SHIKHA DUGGAL  
shikhaduggalwork@gmail.com

Venkatagiri, a small town in Tirupati district that has a history stretching back to the 1700s, was formerly well-known for producing fine-count cotton sarees, sometimes referred to as "woven air." These sarees have borne high as the 200s. In order to revitalise the Venkatagiri cluster, WeaverStory has collaborated with Tata Trusts' Antaran for a number of months. In the first stage of this project, team Antaran collaborated with past Venkatagiri saree purchasers and conducted archive and museum research in order to document the revival designs in Andhra Pradesh. The cluster's lost design language is being revived along with the recreation of these sarees with the help of what's known to be as *The Venkatagiri Revival Project*.

Nishant Malhotra, CEO of WeaverStory, points out in an exclusive interview that "Tata Trust had long-term plans for the Venkatagiri project. In order to gather information, they essentially began to establish archives, go over some old designs that were found in a few books, or make contact with persons who had possessed a portion of Venkatagiri throughout their lifetime. Therefore, it was intriguing that Venkatagiri itself was being taken over, as documentation is a crucial component that is lacking in the majority of clusters. As a result, the tradition that you are familiar with erodes with each weaver or craftsman that continues to do so. Thus, the craft involves a number of people. Thus, it's not only a weaver; you also know how the pattern was intended to be made, how the loom was set up and what the dyeing and other processes entail. Every situation presents a difficulty. Each of them therefore needs a specific set of skills and what made them intriguing was that they were prepared to put in the

time and energy to have that documented. We have therefore endeavoured to bring back to life a few more weaving traditions in Banaras and other states as well. It was noteworthy that the Tata Sons had started these weaving traditions in the southern region of India and that they had been chronicled."

The cluster was eventually exposed to the Jamdani weaving technique, which the weavers took up and adapted to become their own. They created a distinctive language of buttas with flora and fauna that covered cotton fabrics in the Jamdani style, taking inspiration from commonplace objects. "Ann buttas" became the nickname for these unusual buttas. In order for the design he selected to succeed, it required a steady market. Therefore, even when it is produced and documented by CSR funding, if there is no means of support, it will remain a one-time event and eventually perish. That is what he kind of did, saying that since that is his area of expertise and he has connections in 20 various countries, Nikhil used to reunite with hands in order to bring that presentation and documentation to life and to an increasing number of individuals, which is how he has been involved in this entire adventure. "While Venkatagiri, originally known as

Kalimiri, is known for its weaving and the cluster has a rich history of its own, many of the forms and weaves that I previously mentioned have been lost to time or burned because they were unsure if it was grafts that they had inherited. Some of them, due to their age, had pure zari. Having said that, the tradition for its revival that we carried out was that Venkatagiri was typically worn by very powerful individuals due to its high cost and the usage of gold zaris. As a result, there was a clear distinction that anyone wearing Venkatagiri belonged to the officer class or hierarchy throughout the ecosystem. That's why I believe Tata Trust also took the initiative to contact the owners of those, working with the Craft Council to gather samples and

gain an understanding of their culture." However, a lot of it cannot be immediately replicated in the current structure for the craftsman's speed because it requires a lot of work and skill to weave a 300 count cotton sari; as a result, they have progressed him from a 70 to 100 count right now. They therefore have some modern adaptations, but as Nikhil pointed out, they are still in the process of getting there because the handlooms that are currently in use were made using a structure that requires some time to develop because few people are able to create the same handloom using the same structure. They discovered that the Tata Trust was able to find a single individual who, you know, made them a loom. After that individual became skilled enough to utilise the loom to manufacture an increasing amount, they increased the quantity. Therefore, the process of bringing it back will require several levels of intervention, and it will take time. That is not the conclusion.

The Venkatagiri weavers lost contact with their traditional design language due to the introduction of the powerloom, the drop in cotton's value, and a change in market preference toward Banarasi, Kanchipuram and Paithani patterns. In order to fit within the budget of a typical cotton saree, they were obliged to switch to weaving silks, completely giving up real zari and lowering the quality of their cotton to thicker counts, which ultimately led to their demise. When they decided the designs they wanted to work on and learned the backstories of each design, they came together. The decision to intervene and create something in silk was made jointly since silk is more widely accepted. Moreover, we hear, "Some of the interventions we made included designing the designs in silk rather than cotton to give them a more modern feel and we thought carefully about the colour palettes we selected, taking into account what is more likely to be worn by people in general and by Kanchivaram wearers in particular. The other aspect is that, as I already mentioned, the majority of empty caskets used to contain solely pure zari, or actual, genuine gold and silver."

The weavers who have stopped weaving, or those who have always believed that Venkatagiri is no longer alive, are restricted to weaving the standard sarees that they are currently making, which resemble toggles and everything else they weave. They have returned to their own origins and all those things have changed. An increasing number of weavers are being taught how to set up the loom used to make Venkatagiri sarees now. In practice, the social and especially the economic impact will be widely apparent if it becomes a large-scale project, on which they are currently working.



**WEEKLY HOROSCOPE**  
SEPTEMBER 15 - 21

**clickastro**  
#FuturePositive

**ARIES**  
Keep calm with siblings. Your drive ensures success. Emotions may affect health, so stay mindful. Stay focused and communicate effectively to avoid setbacks.

**TAURUS**  
Your charm attracts others and your loyalty brings support. Stay calm in emotional situations and manage insecurity. Be cautious with money in the coming trips.

**GEMINI**  
Your generosity attracts others, but avoid pessimism. Focus on introspection for joy. Balance moneymaking with creativity. Students should prioritize their studies.

**CANCER**  
Improve communication with siblings to avoid conflicts. Prioritize health, work, and family time. Stay focused, avoid rash decisions, and use your energy wisely.

**LEO**  
Relax as your hard work pays off. Stay calm, avoid emotional blowups, and focus on self-care. Women enjoy appreciation, and it's time to express love.

**VIRGO**  
You're energetic and successful. Beware of impulsive spending and relationship issues. Stay hopeful, take a break and focus on meaningful connections.

**LIBRA**  
Your energy attracts others, but avoid laziness. Offer support and stay self-reliant. Your efforts may be misunderstood; recognition will come eventually.

**SCORPIO**  
Your support benefits others and yourself. Avoid rash actions and ego-driven behaviour. Stay positive and define goals. Balance freedom with responsibilities.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Your tenacity drives success, but expect challenges and delays. Co-workers will support your goals. Focus on health and financial planning for better outcomes.

**CAPRICORN**  
Your restlessness hinders harmony. Siblings support your dreams and family time is key. Resolve spousal misunderstandings and embrace new opportunities.

**AQUARIUS**  
Be cautious of newfound attractions; they may cloud judgment. Focus on self-improvement and address relationship boredom. Watch out for health issues.

**PISCES**  
Be cautious with new attractions and verify before committing. If life feels chaotic, reflect calmly. Offer support to dear ones and address relationship doubts.

## WHAT'S NEW

**SCULPTURAL CANDLE COLLECTION**  
Seva Home proudly presents its latest collaboration with the celebrated artist Viraj Khanna. This exclusive partnership has birthed a limited edition of sculptural candles, where art meets functionality, seamlessly blending tradition with modernity. It is a confluence of tradition and modernity.

**PAYAL SINGHAL X MYARAA BY NAMRATA LODHA**  
Designer Payal Singhal partners with Myaraa to unveil the exquisite 'Blossom' hats collection, merging Myaraa's innovative headwear design with her aesthetic of timeless Indian artistry. This partnership brings the best of Myaraa's contemporary hat design with Singhal's signature blend of heritage and modernity, resulting in a collection that's both stylish and sustainable. The 'Blossom' collection is more than just headwear—it is a statement that celebrates nature's beauty, Indian craftsmanship and contemporary design.

**BIO-ESSENCE AGE' LUXE PRO-INTENSIVE EYE+ THERAPY**  
Experience Bio-essence Age' Luxe Pro-Intensive Eye+ Therapy, a rejuvenating 3-minute boost for tired eyes. The Duo LED Applicator, featuring red and blue lights, reduces eye bags in just 8 days. Red light enhances circulation, diminishing wrinkles, while blue light promotes antibacterial benefits for smoother eye contours.

MRP: INR 4599

**YARDLEY LONDON'S FLORAL GIFT COLLECTION**  
The Yardley London Floral Gift Collection is a delightful assortment of fragrant products designed to immerse you in the beauty of blooming flowers. Each item has been meticulously crafted to provide an indulgent experience.

MRP: INR 799

**JEANNOT CEUTICALS INTENSE FIRING AMPOULE**  
Experience transformative radiance with Jeannot Ceuticals Intensive Skin Renewal Ampoule. Unleash the power of rejuvenation with this ampoule, a skincare marvel designed to visibly transform your skin and elevate its vitality. It goes beyond traditional skincare, offering a multi-faceted approach that deeply hydrates, plumps, smoothens and firms your skin.

Price - Rs 1,340

**MICHAEL KORS'S EXCLUSIVE COLLECTION**  
In a groundbreaking move that redefines the luxury watch landscape in India, Bollywood's leading actor and Michael Kors watch ambassador Anushka Sharma unveiled her exclusive limited-edition timepiece. The collaboration marks a historic moment as it is the first time a female Indian celebrity has launched a commercially available signature watch.

**SUSTAINABLE LUXURY WITH PRACTICALITY**  
Marigold Satchel Bag by EUME, is a perfect blend of sustainable luxury and practicality. Meticulously crafted from premium vegan leather and lined with jacquard polysatin, this handbag offers both elegance and durability while being eco-conscious. The sophisticated design is highlighted by dome stud embellishments, adding a refined touch to any festive outfit.

**CHARMING GROOMING GIFT**  
The Enchanteur Charming Gift Bag is a stylish, easy-to-carry pouch packed with their most loved bath and body essentials.

MRP: INR 799



# the pioneer agenda

"Despite hanging up my racing wheels over a decade ago, I still get a buzz when we enter an Olympic and Paralympic year"  
— Tanni Grey-Thompson



## PARIS PARALYMPICS

# PARA ATHLETES BASK IN GLORY AND GOLD

The accomplishments of para athletes at Paris Paralympics are not just sporting success but a story of grit and determination, a story of indomitable spirit that soars high despite hardships and challenges, writes RISHABH MALIK

The Paris 2024 Paralympics will go down as one of the most celebrated sporting moments in India's history. The Indian contingent's extraordinary performances were not just a display of athletic prowess but also a powerful reminder of human resilience, willpower, and the ability to triumph against all odds. From setting new records to inspiring millions, the Indian athletes left a remarkable imprint on the global stage. India's Paralympians wasted no time in making their presence felt at Paris 2024. In 12 days of competition India registered 29 medals including 7 gold, 9 silver, and 13 bronze. India's medal count marked significant landmark and breakthroughs in Indian history of Paralympics.

India's first medal in the Paralympics came in the 1972 Games, with Murlikant Petkar winning a gold medal in swimming. Up to the recent 2024 Games, India have won 60 medals across all Paralympic Games, with the most successful Paralympic campaign being the Paris 2024 Games with 29 medals. Shooting has traditionally been one of India's strong suits in both the Olympic and Paralympic arenas. In Paris, India's para-shooters continued their stellar run from previous Games. Avani Lekhara, a name that had already become synonymous with Indian Paralympic shooting, won gold in the women's 10m air rifle standing SH1 category. Avani's calm demeanor and laser-focused concentration were on full display as she once again climbed to the top of the podium. This win made her a two-time Paralympic champion and reinforced her place among the world's elite shooters.

India's shooting success didn't end there. Manish Narwal, competing in the men's 10m air SH1 pistol event, clinched silver, narrowly missing out on gold. His performance was another testament to India's dominance in precision sports, along with Rubina Francis in the same women's 10m air pistol category clinched bronze in shooting. India witnessed some historic milestones in the Paralympics event. For the first time India won 17 medals in athletics, with Dharambir winning gold and Pranav Soorma taking silver in the men's club throw F51 event. Dharambir also established a new Asian record of 34.92 metres. Later, Praveen Kumar set an Asian record by winning the high jump T64 championship, giving India its sixth gold medal at the Paralympics. Mariyappan Thangavelu became the first Indian to win medals at three successive Paralympic Games when he won a bronze in the T42 high jump event. He took home silver in Tokyo 2020 and gold in Rio 2016. With a personal best time, Preethi Pal won bronze in the women's 100-meter T35 competition. It was the first-ever medal for India in a Paralympic track event. Being the only athlete from India to win two medals at the Games, her bronze in the 200m made her the most successful competitor. India finished the



Paris 2024 track season with four medals overall. Among them was Deepthi Jeevanji, who won a bronze in the women's 400m T20 class to become the first intellectually disabled Indian athlete to earn a Paralympic medal. In archery, records were also broken. In the ranking round, armless archer Sheetal Devi in short time broke the world record before coming in second. However, she later joined up with Rakesh Kumar to win the compound mixed team qualifying event with a world record score. Together with Rakesh, Sheetal, at just 17 years old, won bronze in the mixed team event to become the youngest medalist from India ever. Eventually, Harvinder Singh became the first-ever Paralympic archery champion for India.

Another athlete who made headlines was Sumit Antil, the javelin thrower who had previously set a world record in Tokyo 2020. In Paris, Sumit not only defended his title but also shattered his own record, throwing an unbelievable 70 meters in the F64 category. His performance earned him his second consecutive Paralympic gold, establishing him as a global force in the sport.

Delhi boy Navdeep Singh genetically short in height 4ft tall



“  
DELHI BOY NAVDEEP SINGH GENETICALLY SHORT IN HEIGHT 4FT TALL (DWARFISM) NAVDEEP WHO HAILS FROM HARYANA EMPLOYED AS INSPECTOR IN THE INCOME TAX DEPARTMENT. THE 23 YEAR OLD WON A HISTORIC GOLD IN DAY BEFORE THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF PARIS PARALYMPICS. FROM BEING BULLIED TO NATIONAL CHAMPION AT F41 JAVELIN THROW EVENT WHICH WAS A ASTONISHING TURN OF EVENT BEFORE THE PODIUM AFTER HE WAS CONFIRMED TO SILVER MEDAL HIS IRANIAN COMPETITOR GOT DISQUALIFIED BEFORE HIS THROW WHICH AUTOMATICALLY UPGRADED HIM TO GOLD MEDAL.”

(Dwarfism) Navdeep who hails from Haryana employed as Inspector in the Income Tax Department. The 23 year old won a historic gold in day before the closing ceremony of Paris Paralympics. From being bullied to national champion at F41 Javelin throw event which was a astonishing turn of event before the podium after he was awarded to silver medal his Iranian competitor got disqualified before his throw which automatically upgraded him to gold medal. There are ups and downs, there are also descents, Suyash Jadhav, (Asian para games gold medalist) in the men's 50m butterfly (S7) fell short in the competition finished fifth in Heat 1 with time 33.47 although he didn't qualify for final but his fight against the strong contenders from the U.S. and Ukraine gave a solid remark of ginger to younger athletes. IAS officer Suhas Yathiraj came in Paris to achieve the previous best in Tokyo Paralympics 2020 but restricted to silver medal in SL4 badminton. After returning from Paris on Tuesday with India's best ever medal tally

18th on team's tally athletes received grand welcome surrounded



by huge numbers of supporters greeted with showering of flowers on them. The Indian contingent met Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his residence on Thursday in New Delhi, where PM Modi interacted with all para-athletes of Indian contingent and congratulating the medal winners of Paris Paralympics 2024. Athletes shared their journeys and challenges to overcome the stereotypes of the society. Paralympic Gold Medalist Avani Lekhara gifted her signed jersey to PM Modi. Rewards were announced by Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya of 75 lakh to gold-medallists, 50 lakh to silver winners and 30 lakh to bronze-medallists in the games and pledges full support from Government for the LA 2028 campaign.

While the Paris 2024 Paralympics was a roaring success for India, it also showed the challenges that continue to plague the country's para-sporting ecosystem. Access to training, medical support, and sponsorships remains uneven, with athletes in rural areas particularly disadvantaged. A Movement, not just Medals Paris 2024 Paralympics should not be seen as an isolated success but as part of a larger movement towards inclusion, empowerment, and equality. India's Paralympians have shown that they are not defined by their disabilities but by their abilities. Their victories are symbolic of a changing India, one that is slowly

but surely starting to embrace diversity in all its forms. As India commemorates this new chapter in athletic prowess, the effect of these players will continue to resonate, pushing the Government to provide greater support, recognition, and growth for para-sports. India's achievement at the Paralympics is more than simply a moment of glory; it is the start of a future in which the country's differently-abled athletes will continue to smash barriers, demonstrating that with spirit and drive, nothing is impossible. Famous Columnist Khileswar Sahay stated in his article Khel Vaani India's Paralympic Rise: A Beacon for a More Inclusive Future

**NEXT STOP: MISSION TOP FIVE AND MISSION INCLUSIVE REVOLUTION**  
It's time to jumpstart two missions to be accomplished in four years: Mission Top Five Rank at Los Angeles and Mission Inclusive Revolution to make India disabled-friendly. For the first mission, India must broaden its participation base across the 550 events—both in terms of events participated in and the number of sportspersons per event. No country has a larger pool of disabled individuals than India, with "55 to 90 million," according to a recent World Bank estimate. This demographic presents a potential goldmine of "Khojo-Paralympians" and a driving force for "Khelo Paralympics". The lowest-hanging fruit? Track and field events, where the investment per sportsperson is low and the potential return high. All Bharat needs to join the elite Top 5 club is 100 medals at the Los Angeles 2028 Paralympics. It's eminently doable, and the time starts now. Considering that in the last three years (2021-2024), between Tokyo and Paris, Indian Paralympians have amassed 48 medals, 100 medals in 2028 is not a far-fetched dream.

CHAT-O-CINO

EVENT COVERAGE

# || MUKTI MOHAN: || SEQUEL TO GYAARAH GYAARAH UNDERWAY!

SHIKHA DUGGAL  
shikhaduggalwork@gmail.com

Actress Mukti Mohan has been trying out some extreme appearances. Well, into the world of the web, she's already creating a mark, especially with her latest performance in Zee5 original series *Gyaarah Gyaarah*.

"I really wanted to give my performance in *Gyaarah Gyaarah* more nuance," reveals Mukti, in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, as she candidly speaks to us about the series, which also stars Dhairya Karwa and Raghav Juyal. "Readers, let me tell you that I am from Delhi and that I completely comprehend the feelings and experiences that ladies have when they cannot walk freely through the streets. That over there is scary, dude! Why women are not safe in our country is something I detest. Why, in your opinion, are so many Me Too and Hema Committee reports making a comeback? For the character, I was living in a similar parallel universe and worrying about what would happen to me in a bad situation." Yes, that's how far an actor is sometimes expected to go to really inhabit the part.

However, she is a very upbeat woman in real life! She needed to actually feel unsafe in order to proceed with the depiction. For the actress, Dhairya Karwa's entire plot of the series added to its intensity. Through the combination of dancing and death, the director allowed her to pass away in the series like a phoenix! He is the one who brought popularity to this series, feels the choreographer-turned-actress.

"If the truth is to be known, I had no projects under my belt at the start of last year. My plate was empty! The very first project that I shot and signed was *Gyaarah Gyaarah*. Who

**Actress Mukti Mohan, who has currently been making some remarkable appearances, speaks to *The Pioneer* about getting on board for her latest *Gyaarah Gyaarah* series and more around it**

would refuse Karan Johar or Guneeet Monga? Go check out their filmography, please. I just signed *Gyaarah Gyaarah* without knowing how many scenes there would be or what role I would play. I basically jumped right in, giving my story an emotional twist and the idea of time travel," shared *Life the Hill Gayi* fame.

She continues, "Filmmakers are now noticing me at my plays, but before that, I used to wonder why I wasn't making it through the audition process. It caused me to doubt my abilities! I began to realise that it was time for me to take grooming classes. But in terms of successful meetings and auditions, last year proved to be a good run for me. In the past month, three of my series were released back-to-back, thanks to a series of miracles."

She had chills when shooting *Gyaarah Gyaarah* in the rugged environment! While at Mussorie, she saw everything from the flurry of activity to an abrupt quiet. She admired the numerous waterfalls there once more. She felt the water shoot shiver down her spine. The excitement of being abducted was greatly increased by that atmosphere. She chuckled, saying that the location would never be the same for her because a little Mukti who used to visit and adore Kempty Falls is now afraid of it.

The actress concludes by saying, "*Gyaarah Gyaarah* took years to be formed. I can personally attest that, despite being a Korean remake, it is far superior to the original! My director substituted a character for me in the original and it worked out well for us. A sequel is on the way for all of you!

However, I'm done with this persona."



## Three-day conclave showcases art, innovation & sustainability

AARTI SREENATH  
aarti.sreenath9@gmail.com

Attending the Transforming India Conclave at SSVm Institutions in Coimbatore was nothing short of extraordinary. The three-day event was a dazzling display of creativity, culture and intellectual discourse, wrapped in the overarching theme of "Resilient Today, Sustainable Tomorrow." As I walked through the gates, the air was charged with anticipation and it was clear that something truly special was about to unfold.

The event kicked off with a grand inauguration by none other than Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma, India's first astronaut. Listening to him share his incredible journey into space felt surreal, as if he was transporting us beyond the earth's atmosphere with each word.

The day also featured an insightful session by Palki Sharma, the renowned journalist, who spoke about the power of storytelling in shaping our world. Her experiences in the field were eye-opening, reminding us of the impact media can have.

Dr. Manimekalai Mohan, the founder and managing trustee of SSVm Group of Institutions, also took the stage to passionately advocate for environmental responsibility. Her words resonated deeply, emphasising the urgency of sustainable actions for our planet's future.

Each speaker brought a unique perspective, making the first day a remarkable blend of history, innovation and a call to action for a sustainable tomorrow.

From there, the event only soared higher. The first performance I witnessed was by "The Miracle on Wheels" company. Watching these extraordinary individuals perform intricate dance routines on wheelchairs was nothing short of breathtaking. Their fluid movements, combined with sheer determination, embodied the essence of resilience. I found myself deeply moved, realising that they were not just dancing—they were redefining the boundaries of possibility.

The event then took a beautifully traditional turn with a fusion dance performance that blended the grace of Bharatnatyam with contemporary dance. The dancers moved with such precision and emotion that I could almost feel the energy pulsating through the air. It was a visual and cultural feast, perfectly balancing tradition with modernity.

One of the most visually stunning moments was the multi-sensory, multimedia act. It was more than just a performance; it was an immersive experience that engaged all my senses. The integration of light, sound, and movement was seamless, creating a spectacle that was both mesmerising and mind-bending. It felt like being transported into another dimension—a true feast for the eyes and soul.

The artistic flair of the event was further enriched by the "Art for Change" installations by Sylvi. Each piece was a conversation starter, using art to provoke thought and inspire change. As I wandered through the installations, I found myself engaging with the narratives they presented—each one challenging me to reflect on the world in new ways.

Workshops at the event were just as inspiring. Rajiv Kriplani's session on next-level content creation was a masterclass in creativity and innovation. His insights into the evolving digital landscape were not only informative but also deeply motivating, sparking new ideas on how to approach content creation in this ever-changing world.

"Power Up with Nature" by Arun Rebero was another stand-out workshop, offering a refreshing take on the connection between nature and human well-being. Through hands-on activities and insightful discussions, I was reminded of the importance of reconnecting with the natural world—a message that feels more urgent than ever in our technology-driven lives.



The evening reached a soothing crescendo with Voctronica's performance. Their harmonies were enchanting, blending seamlessly to create an auditory experience that was both calming and exhilarating. It was a moment of pure musical bliss, leaving me in a state of serene contentment.

For those passionate about photography, Amar Ramesh's workshop was an absolute gem. His ability to blend technical knowledge with artistic vision was inspiring, making it clear that photography is not just about capturing a moment but about telling a story. I left the workshop eager to apply his teachings to my own work.

As the event continued, Rakesh Sharma's words resonated through the halls: "There's an American expression called 'gobsmacked,' and ever since I've arrived here, that's exactly how I feel." His sentiment was shared by everyone present, as we marveled at the grandeur and inspiration that the conclave had to offer.

The second day brought even more wonder. It

began with an engaging sand art performance by Nitish Bharathi, once again captivating the audience with his storytelling in sand. His ability to convey complex narratives through such a simple medium was nothing short of magical. It was as if he were painting with grains of time, meticulously crafting the entire journey of SSVm in sand. His artistry was mesmerising, with each flick of sand revealing intricate images that told the story of the institution's history and achievements. The silence in the room was palpable, broken only by the collective gasp as his masterpiece unfolded.

Timothy Pinnow's session on the differences and similarities between studying in India and abroad was another enlightening experience. His talk urged us to broaden our horizons, to think beyond borders and to embrace the global opportunities that education can offer.

The day also included a unique photography workshop that blended science and art in a way that was both enlightening and engaging. It was a reminder of the intricate balance between technical skill and creative vision—an enriching experience for photographers of all levels. Environmental conservation took center stage with Arun Krishnamurthy's session. His journey from Google to cleaning India's lakes was both inspiring and eye-opening. His wit and wisdom made the session not just educational but also deeply personal, as he shared his passion for protecting our ecosystems.

Another workshop, "No Oil, No Boil" by Siva Kumar-Padyal, was a culinary revelation. He demonstrated how delicious and nutritious meals can be prepared without oil or boiling, offering a fresh perspective on healthy cooking. It was an eye-opener for health-conscious participants, including myself.

The second day of the Transforming India Conclave at SSVm Institutions was just as compelling, bringing together luminaries from diverse fields. The day kicked off with Srikanth Bolla, the renowned industrialist from his very own Machilipatnam, who delivered an inspiring lecture. His journey, from overcoming personal challenges to leading a successful enterprise, was a proof of resilience and determination. Listening to him, I couldn't help but feel a surge of motivation as he shared valuable insights on leadership and innovation. But the true crescendo of the event came with Suhani Seth's performance. The mentalist, magician, and YouTube sensation delivered a spellbinding act that blended mind games with magic, leaving us all both entertained and astounded. Her charisma and skill were unmatched, making her performance the perfect end to an extraordinary event.

Adding a literary flair to the day, Dr. Shashi Tharoor virtually launched his latest book, *A Wonderland of Words: Around the Word in 101 Essays*. His conversation with Ms. Shoma Chaudhury was profound, emphasising the power of ideas and the role of thought leadership in building a resilient nation. His words left us with much to ponder, reminding us that resilience is as much about intellectual and moral strength as it is about material prosperity.


As the curtains fell on the Transforming India Conclave, I was filled with a renewed sense of purpose. SSVm Institutions had created not just an event but a platform where ideas flourished, dreams were nurtured and the seeds of a sustainable future were sown. The experience was nothing short of transformative—a celebration of the resilience and creativity that will undoubtedly shape our tomorrow.



**TRENDING**

**PERSON**


**ARVIND KEJRIWAL**



The Supreme Court on Friday granted bail to Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal in the excise policy case.

**VIDEO**

**UNEQUAL TREATMENT AT LALBAUGHCHA RAJA**



In one video, a long line of devotees was filmed being shoved and manhandled by workers at the Lalbaughcha Raja Sarvajani Ganeshotsav Mandar, while a VIP family leisurely took pictures in front of the iconic idol.

**MOVIE**


**THE BUCKINGHAM MURDERS**



In *The Buckingham Murders*, an English-Hindi thriller centred on motherhood, mourning and murder, there is nary a flaw in Kareena Kapoor's performance. She nails the role with admirable felicity.

**SONG**

**MANASILAYO**



*Manasilayo* release has been met with enthusiastic praise, particularly highlighting Manju Warrier's dynamic presence.

**PICTURE**

**ASTRONAUT CAPTURED IMAGE OF NYC FROM SPACE AFTER 9/11 ATTACK**



On the 23rd anniversary of the September 11 attacks, NASA released a letter from the only American astronaut in space at the time who was reflecting on witnessing the tragedy from ISS.

# Scaling heights of world music

# with LSD



## WHEN HOME WAS INVADED & BURNED

Our home was invaded and set on fire in 1958 during the racial riots. We left everything behind as we escaped Sri Lanka and made our way back to Madras. We had to flee since everything was so awful and we made our way to a military facility by walking through a forest. One of the daughters of military officers was being taught by my father. During the severe riots, we spent a month there before departing for India and arriving in Madras. That was in 1958.



## GREW UP IN LOVING AND TRANQUIL HOME

As a child, I was quite composed. My mother would show me the moon while holding me by the waist. She used to show birds to me. She used to feed me rice after feeding the birds, one grain at a time. With an indulgent mother, I grew up in a really loving and tranquil home. Except for music, I never did well in school; I never enjoyed learning and I had no desire to attend college or university. I used to be Loyola College's number fifty-eighth out of sixty. However, I consistently represented our college and won accolades in every music competition. Thus, I managed to get away with it. They made me study physics because my father wanted me to have a second career. However, I never really liked it and thought it was a waste of time because I wanted to dedicate more time to music. The issue, in my opinion, is that parents in India and other cultures occasionally want their children to pursue their own goals. Really, you just have to let them be. Painting, art, poetry and music are all things we should support in children. For me, in order to be free to pursue my musical goals, I had to leave India. My father -- whom I do not hold responsible -- wanted to make sure that I had a backup career even though I was playing a lot in India.



My mother is from Ernakulam, my father is from Alleppey and I am from Kerala. All of my grandparents originated in Kerala. Thus, I was there for a long time. However, I also spent a few years growing up in Sri Lanka from the age of three, while my father was a professor at Jaffna College of Music. Later, I relocated to Madras (now Chennai). My father was a violinist and vocalist, while my mother was a singer and veena musician. His brothers, who are all musicians, were all trained by him. In addition, he instructed thousands of students from other locations. Thus, music was played throughout day and night. It resembled a musical temple.



## HOME A TEMPLE OF MUSIC

My mother is from Ernakulam, my father is from Alleppey and I am from Kerala. All of my grandparents originated in Kerala. Thus, I was there for a long time. However, I also spent a few years growing up in Sri Lanka from the age of three, while my father was a professor at Jaffna College of Music. Later, I relocated to Madras (now Chennai). My father was a violinist and vocalist, while my mother was a singer and veena musician. His brothers, who are all musicians, were all trained by him. In addition, he instructed thousands of students from other locations. Thus, music was played throughout day and night. It resembled a musical temple.

## LOWEST POINT OF HIS LIFE

The world stopped during the Covid pandemic, everything halted and my musical tour was cancelled, which was the lowest point. After working with numerous superstar musicians and progressive rock musicians to finish my album *Chappleiri Dream*, my record company informed me that I could not go on tour at this time. Nevertheless, I put the CD out. Although a lot of shows were postponed, it was the lowest point but studio work continued and the music continued.



## STUDIED ETHNOMUSICOLOGY FOR HIS PH D

Everyone was trying to be the first to get things going or be competitive, which is why there was so much turmoil at once. For me, there was never any rivalry because everything I needed was already there; all I had to do was to continue honing my craft, pursue my love and practice a lot. I believe that everyone is part of God's plan. I just went after what I wanted. I have always been fascinated by the cooperation between world music's east and west as well as south and north. Because my father exposed me to a wide variety of music, I have always educated myself. In addition, I studied ethnomusicology for my Ph D, learning about the music of other cultures. There is a wealth of music available in every culture and nation; no system is greater than the others. Only two types of musicians exist: excellent and terrible. Among the best systems are others and Indian music. Learning all these many elements would undoubtedly strengthen someone's ability to develop into a unique, innovative and creative musician. My father urged me to take in elements of both south Indian and north Indian music traditions. I had been exposed to a variety of Western genres since my early teens, including rock and pop music and he was also counseled to familiarise myself with Western classical music. I studied world music and became familiar with several cultural musical systems while attending Wesleyan University.

## RAPID FIRE

Your pinch-me moment of life: When I had to leave to the US for the first time, leaving my family...  
The latest thing you discovered about yourself: I enjoy cooking, I'm not a great cook but it's a peaceful time and that makes me happy.  
A musician that inspires you: Elvis Presley, Palghat Mani Iyer  
Proudest moment of your career: Every time I play a concert, that's the proudest moment for me.  
Favourite city/country to stay in: I have lived in so many countries, but the stage is my favourite place to be.



## HOLIDAYS BEST TIMES OF HIS LIFE

The best times to be with a large family are always during the holidays, New Year's Day, *Deepavali* and other occasions to celebrate. My mother prepared the festive delicacies every time and it was wonderful to spend time as a family. Those were the enjoyable times, but they also deserted India, which led to widespread uncertainty among the populace. There were always a lot of Muslims, Hindus amid the unrest. It has always led me to believe that, in one way or another, people are the same everywhere you go. Everybody is the same. Hindus, Muslim and Christians coexisted peacefully in India for ages, but the British attempted to use this situation and devastate the nation. Things were hardly tranquil during the war years while my father lived.



## DAD TAUGHT HIM A LOT ABOUT THE BRITISH IN INDIA

I learned a lot about the British in India from my father. They, in my opinion, exploited India to a great extent and robbed the nation of its wealth and glory. I am aware that they built the railroads and everything else, but they also deserted India, which led to widespread uncertainty among the populace. There were always a lot of Muslims, Hindus amid the unrest. It has always led me to believe that, in one way or another, people are the same everywhere you go. Everybody is the same. Hindus, Muslim and Christians coexisted peacefully in India for ages, but the British attempted to use this situation and devastate the nation. Things were hardly tranquil during the war years while my father lived.



## DOESN'T CARE ABOUT AWARDS!

With a busy touring schedule, I spend a lot of time travelling for rehearsals and recording sessions. But I stayed with the same guy within. Because I had no intention of being famous or wealthy when I first started! I don't care about awards and I don't hold onto them. Everything in my storage, including platinum records, accolades and the like, is stored far away. I am just a regular man. There will always be someone better than you, therefore in order to advance, you must put in a lot of practice, dedicate time to your music and work hard. Being at the beach, surrounded by birds and eagles, content, creative and quiet while working on your music is how my blissful weekend looks like. Usually, I work on that at my studio, which is just in front of the water. There, I occasionally have musicians perform with me and it is such a lovely place. Typically, on a tour, you don't have plenty of time, as you will be travelling.



## INVENTING CUSTOM STEREOPHONIC DOUBLE VIOLIN

I over-dubbed my vocals, violin, viola, cello and bass when I was in a London studio recording my first solo album for Zappa Records, which was produced by Frank Zappa. I used to own several violins for my various musical endeavours, including classical music for Shakti and other rock bands. Having to carry so much equipment was challenging. In order to play on the same instrument for every genre, I intended to design a single instrument. For this reason, I created the LSD, or L. Shankar's Double Violin! I spent two years perfecting the prototype's angle and separation between the two necks. It can produce the full spectrum of an orchestra in addition to the sounds of many other instruments, like the flute, guitar and synthesiser. I have the ability to play on one neck while the other produces a sympathetic sound. For many years, it has been such a wonderful instrument. I currently own the fourth edition of it. The instrument was first heard on Shankar's album *Who's to Know* and Phil Collins' critically acclaimed solo album *Face Value* in 1981. He ensured that both necks were equally robust to prevent a tendency to play on one more often than the other after he and Parker tested a variety of materials and shapes for hours. When playing, the horizontal rib can be placed under the chin or, in the Indian manner, pressed up against the chest. The bowing was different because of the instrument's wider angle and I added new methods, such as playing on both necks at once. Because the double violin can simulate the sound of an entire orchestra, it can be used for both pop and jazz genres as well as traditional classical performances. The double violin has been commissioned by Shankar four times to date; the most recent version was created by luthier John Jordan and is available now.



## FIRST CONCERT AT NALLUR KANDASWAMY TEMPLE

At the age of two, I started singing lessons with my father. I was able to hum intricate lines from classical Indian melodies in less than a year. My father, who can sing in five and a half octaves, frequently stresses the value of vocal training in addition to mastering an instrument in order to better understand Indian music's embellishments. "It makes you a better performer if you learn vocals and instruments and get an all-around education in music," he underlines often. I was five years old when I got my first violin and when I started playing, I rehearsed vocal melodies that I had learnt. My first public performance was at the Nallur Kandaswamy temple in Jaffna at a festival when I was seven years old. Until the age of 12 years, I pursued professional mridangam playing in addition to singing and violin playing. My father was adamant that you learn percussion in addition to your melodic instrument. However, as I started to get calluses on my hands, I had to stop at my father's advice!



## CHEATED WITHIN MUSIC BUSINESS

Although there are always wonderful people in the world, the music business is also full of crooks! Young musicians should frequently seek guidance if they are unsure, as they are frequently taken advantage of and the record business essentially keeps all the money while the musicians receive none. They must become knowledgeable about copyright, song registration and consulting with lawyers to ensure that they are not deceived into believing that someone else is the singer. With my music, I have also been cheated and taken advantage of a lot. These things regrettably do occur and at the time I was quite innocent and focused solely on writing, composition and music. I would like to know the opposite viewpoint. The fact that your music cannot be taken away is a plus. I consider myself to be a full-fledged musician as I have always been at ease with writing, creating, arranging, and playing the violin. Both the music and I have been served by it.

## MEETING JOHN LENNON

I'll tell you about John Lennon. I met him during George Harrison's tour at a party at the Plaza Hotel. It was amazing to meet every single one of the stars and throngs of people that were present. This occurred following the Madison Square Garden event! We are all different sections of the same tree, which makes me feel extremely at ease with the media. They are educating the public in the same way that I am and they are also doing a fantastic job of sharing the information with the public in order to help me promote my music. They hold great significance.



## CHART TOPPERS & LEGENDARY COLLABS

My talam-bending *Pancha Nadai Pallavi* CD from 1990 is the first traditional Indian record to hit the top ten world music chart on Billboard for three months. My 1995 album *Raga Abheri* received a Grammy Award nomination for Best World Music Album. I collaborated with Peter Gabriel on Peter Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) soundtrack, Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (2004), which took home the Instrumental Album of the Year Dove Award at the 36th GMA Dove Awards and the Grammy-winning album *Passion* (1989). Alongside Jonathan Davis and Richard Gibbs, I recorded eight songs for the *Queen of the Damned* soundtrack in 2002; five of those songs were chosen for the feature. In addition, Wendy & Lisa and I worked together on the original soundtrack for the popular TV show *Heroes* on NBC.