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**Yogi defines law and order:**  
**Dhankhar**



**'DAIRY IS SENSITIVE SECTOR; NO PLANS TO OPEN UP IN ANY FTA'**



**'Sree Vishnu plays four characters in SWAG,' utters director**  
**HASITH GOLI**

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
The pioneer

**Our 24-year-old BRS party must stand strong for the next 100 years. We must prepare ourselves for the long haul, like the DMK party in Tamil Nadu, which has dominated politics for 76 years. Though we've been in power for a decade, this role in the Opposition is new to us. We spent 14 years as a movement party before achieving 10 years in power. We are in a critical period of transition.**

**- KT Rama Rao, BRS working president**



P4

**DON'T MISS...**

**Many developmental projects sanctioned...**

Minister for Social Welfare Dola Bala Veeranjaneeya Swamy has revealed that many development projects including construction of three social welfare hostel buildings at a cost of Rs 10 crore have been sanctioned by the government to Prakasam district. The Minister, accompanied by Collector A Thameem Ansariya, participated in the 'Idi Manchi Prabutwam' programme in Kondapi town on Wednesday. They visited some houses and pasted the 'Idi Manchi Prabutwam' sticker and distributed pamphlets. They explained to the people...

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**It will ruin Haryana with its...**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday launched a blistering attack on the Congress saying if it comes to power in Haryana even by mistake, stability and development will be at stake because of its 'infiting' and this will ruin the state. Addressing a poll rally in Gohana in this district for the October 5 assembly polls, he also lashed out at the Congress over the issue of reservation, alleging opposing reservation and hatred towards it are in its DNA. Slamming the main opposition party, he...

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**AI global market may touch \$990...**

The global market for artificial intelligence (AI)-related products and services is expected to grow at an annual rate of 40-55 per cent, and can reach up to USD 990 billion by 2027, a report has said. Bain & Company's 5th annual Global Technology Report said AI workloads could grow about 25-35 per cent per year through 2027. "Bain estimates that the total addressable market for AI-related hardware and software will grow between 40 per cent and 55 per cent annually for at least the next three years, reaching..."

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**Pant re-enters top 10; Rohit, Kohli...**

Riding on a sensational century in his Test comeback, wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant on Wednesday re-entered the ICC rankings at an impressive sixth position but India skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli slipped in a major shake-up in standings. Pant (731), who smashed a stunning century in the opening game of the two-Test series against Bangladesh in Chennai, was placed sixth, while opener Yashasvi Jaiswal (751), moved up to fifth thanks to a half-century in the first innings of...

-SPORTS

## AP suffered Rs 7,600 cr loss

**Flood relief distributed in record time of 15 days: CM**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, on Wednesday, said that flood relief for those who suffered heavy losses in the recent cyclone is distributed to the victims in a record time of just 15 days. Maintaining that the State has suffered a total loss of Rs 7,600 crore due to the recent cyclonic storm, the Chief Minister also handed over the formal letters to the flood victims on the relief distributed to them at the District Collectorate in Vijayawada.

Later, Chandrababu told media persons that besides those who suffered losses in Budameru floods, relief amounting to a total of Rs 602 crore is also credited to the personal accounts of other affected persons. Chandrababu claimed that the relief paid to the flood victims is perhaps the highest in the country and those victims who did not receive the compensation on Wednesday will be paid the relief latest by September 30. "We will see to it that the last victim of the floods receives the amount, as promised," he said, and stated that the list of the affected has been prepared in the most transparent way, which was displayed at all the village secretariats.

Chandrababu pointed out that the previous TDP regime had released Rs 57 crore for modernisation of Budameru, but the YSRCP government totally ignored it and abandoned



these works with political discrimination. He also said that the Prakasam Barrage, too, received a record inflow of 11.43 lakh cusecs while it has a capacity of only 10.9 lakh cusecs. Recalling that he camped at Singh Nagar along with the District Collector on learning about the sit-

uation, he said that he was very much hurt on watching the ground reality. Each affected district was released Rs 3 crore to take up emergency works. He directed the officials to spend the amount immediately without waiting for any kind of orders. "Overnight we got six NDRF

Previous TDP regime had released Rs 57 crore for modernisation of Budameru, but the YSRCP government totally ignored it and abandoned these works with political discrimination.

Continued on Page 2

## Rs 602 cr compensation released for 4 lakh flood victims

**Enumeration completed in record time using technology**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Over four lakh households were affected by the devastating floods that struck Vijayawada and surrounding areas in September. The affected areas could not be accessed till September 10 and it was not possible to commence any enumeration activities for purposes of

compensation. However, immediately after the water receded, the Government of Andhra Pradesh under the leadership of Nara Chandrababu Naidu set about the challenging task of enumeration and managing the compensation disbursement. A tech-based solution was designed with a front-end app



and a back-end database operating on a hand-held device that could manage the enumeration process.

Continued on Page 2

## 30% cash advance for small businesses: MP Sivanath

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has directed to give 30 per cent cash advance through the MSME Corporation and insurance companies to help the small businessmen who have suffered losses due to recent heavy rains and floods, said MP Kesineni Sivanath.

MP Sivanath spoke to the media on Wednesday after CM Chandrababu released the compensation to the flood victims.

Continued on Page 2



## Vizag India's next economic powerhouse: Lokesh

**UNVEILS PLANS TO ESTABLISH CITY AS A GLOBAL HUB FOR IT, DATA CENTRES, AND AI**

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

HRD, IT Electronics & Communication Minister, Nara Lokesh, has unveiled the State's vision to catapult Visakhapatnam to the fifth largest economic city in India, up from its current 10th position. Speaking at the AP Infrastructure Summit 2024, organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Lokesh emphasised the goal of transforming Visakhapatnam into a trillion-dollar economy and a global destination.



"We aim to make Visakhapatnam a leading economic capital and industrial centre in India," Lokesh stated, highlighting plans to establish the city as a global hub for IT, Data Centres, and Artificial Intelligence. The city is

also poised to become a world-class pharmaceutical hub, with sectors such as Defence, Aero Facilities, and a dedicated Freight Corridor. Key developments include the operationalisation of the cargo freight

corridor and the upcoming Bhogapuram Airport, expected to create numerous employment opportunities and contribute substantially to the region's GDP growth.

Discussing the comprehensive development plans for various regions across Andhra Pradesh, Lokesh stated, "Anantapur is to become a mobility hub within the next five years, with operations of KIA in full swing, while Kurnool will focus on renewable energy projects, including hydro, wind, and solar energy."

Continued on Page 2

## YSRCP calls for State-wide temple pujas

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP president and former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will visit Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala. He is expected to arrive in Tirumala on the night of Friday, September 27, and will offer prayers to Lord Venkateswara the following day, September 28.

YSRCP has urged devotees across the State to participate in temple pujas on Saturday, aimed at restoring the sanctity of Tirumala, which was 'tarnished' by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.

Jagan Mohan Reddy took to the social media platform X, urging people to stand against the

**Jagan to offer prayers in Tirumala**

'false claims' made by Chandrababu. "The CM allegedly spread misinformation, claiming that Tirumala's sacred laddu prasadam was adulterated with animal fat, which misled devotees and tarnished the revered image of Lord Venkateswara."

YSRCP leaders said that this act, driven by political motives, deeply hurt the sentiments of devotees. In the light of this, the party is calling for participation in temple pujas on September 28 to purify Tirumala's sacredness and restore the honour of Lord Venkateswara's prasadam.

**YS JAGAN POSTED:** "The sanctity of Tirumala, the significance of Swami's prasadam, the glory of Lord Venkateswara, the fame of TTD, and the sacredness of the laddu prasadam of Lord Venkateswara were all defiled by Chandrababu Naidu, who, with political malice, deliberately spread lies that the prasadam was adulterated with animal fat and that devotees had consumed such tainted prasadam. In order to cleanse this sin committed by Chandrababu Naidu, YSRCP is calling for participation in pujas across temples State-wide on Saturday."



**BHARAT IS UNSTOPPABLE**



**PM Modi on Make in India's 10th anniversary**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On the 10th anniversary of his government's 'Make in India' drive, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday affirmed that the flagship initiative to boost manufacturing has transformed a dream into a powerful movement and its impact shows that "Bharat is unstoppable".

In a blog on LinkedIn, he lauded everyone who played a role in making the initiative a "roaring success", saying each of them is a pioneer, visionary and innovator, whose tireless efforts have fuelled the programme's success, making India the focus of global attention as well as curiosity.

"It is the collective drive, relentless in nature, which has transformed a dream into a powerful movement. The impact of 'Make in India' shows that Bharat is unstoppable," he said.

Asserting that a lot goes in India's favour today as it is a perfect blend of democracy, demography and demand, Modi said the country has what it takes to be a key player in the global supply chain seen as a reliable partner for business.

## AP shuffles 16 IPS officers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vineet Brjlal (RR: 2001), Inspector General of Police, SIB, Intelligence, is transferred and posted as Inspector General of Police, CID in the existing vacancy. In all, 16 IPS officers were transferred across the State through GO Rt No 1640 issued by Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad on Wednesday.

The officers who were transferred are: M Ravi Prakash (SPS: 2006) Inspector General of Police/Director, SEB is transferred and posted as Inspector General of Police (P&L) vice PHD Ramakrishna (SPS: 2006). PHD Ramakrishna is posted as Inspector General of Police, Intelligence, in the existence vacancy. Fakeerappa Kagineelli (RR: 2011) Joint Commissioner of Police, Visakhapatnam city, is transferred and posted as SP, Intelligence vice Babujee Attada, (RR: 2011) transferred.

RN Ammi Reddy (SPS: 2009) who is waiting for posting is posted as Deputy Inspector General of Police, Admin, O/o DGP (HoPF) in the existing vacancy. Ch Vijaya Rao (RR: 2010) is posted as Deputy Inspector General of Police (Road Safety) in the existing vacancy. Siddharth Kaushal (RR: 2012)

is posted as AIG (L&O), O/o DGP (HoPF) in the existing vacancy. D Mary Prasanthi (SPS: 2013) is posted as DCP L&O-II Visakhapatnam City vice Tuhi Sinha (RR: 2017) transferred.

On transfer, Tuhi Sinha (RR: 2017) is posted as SP Anakapalli vice M Deepika (RR: 2014) transferred. On transfer, M Deepika (RR: 2014) is posted as Commandant, 3d Battalion, APSP, Kakinada in the existing vacancy.

GR Radhika (SPS: 2014) is posted as Principal, Dr KV Srinivasa Rao (NC) of Police Training College, Ongole, transferred. K Arif Hafeez (RR: 2015) who is waiting for posting is posted as SP, ISW Intelligence in the existing vacancy.

KSSV Subba Reddy (SPS: 2015) RV & E O Rajahmundry is transferred and posted as SP, PTO in the existing vacancy. On transfer Babujee Attada (RR: 2011) is directed to report at Police Headquarters, Mangalagiri for further posting. K Tirumaleswar Reddy (SPS: 2017) is posted as DCP Crimes, NTR Police Commissionerate, in the existing vacancy.

On transfer, Dr KV Srinivasa Rao SP (NC) is directed to report at Police Headquarters, Mangalagiri, for further posting.

## AP getting ready for Dasara celebrations

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A review meeting on Wednesday led by Special Chief Secretary and Commissioner of the Endowment Department, S Satyanarayana, alongside Chief Engineer GVR Sekhar, focused on ensuring smooth arrangements for the upcoming Dasara Sarannavaratri festivities at Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam from October 3 to 12. The meeting took place on the seventh floor of the Mallikharjuna Maha Mandapam on the premises of the temple in Vijayawada.

The officials discussed the progress of critical infrastructure works, including the retaining wall and queue lines. They emphasised maintaining efficient darshan ticket scanning, organising VVIP movements, and providing facilities for senior citizens and differently-abled devotees. The arrangements for lighting, tonsuring centres, bathing ghats, prasadam counters, and

## Officials review progress of arrangements



Endowment Department Special Chief Secretary and Commissioner S Satyanarayana and Chief Engineer GVR Sekhar holding a review meeting at the Mallikharjuna Maha Mandapam atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada on Wednesday

The arrangements for lighting, tonsuring centres, bathing ghats, prasadam counters, and other essential services were also reviewed. Satyanarayana urged officials to prioritise the devotees' experience, ensuring swift darshan and efficient handling of the nine-day celebrations. He stressed that negligence would not be tolerated.

Durga Temple Executive Officer KS Rama Rao, Executive Engineer KVS Koteswara Rao, Vyakunta Rao, L Rama Devi and other key officials attended the meeting.

## TIRUMALA GHEE SCANDAL

# Political blame game overshadows facts and tradition

The Tirumala ghee adulteration scandal has sparked a heated political debate, with both left- and right-wing factions framing the issue to suit their narratives. Beyond the controversy lies a deeper exploration of political motives, mismanagement, and evolving alliances in Andhra Pradesh's political landscape.

The recent revelation that animal fats were found in the cow ghee used in the iconic Tirumala laddus has sparked a nationwide controversy, with reactions deeply coloured by political and ideological biases. As expected, both the left and right wings have jumped on the issue, each interpreting the situation through their respective lenses, often disregarding the actual facts and the circumstances surrounding the scandal.

The right wing, known for its defence of Hindu traditions, seized upon the controversy to further its long-standing demand for temples to be freed from government control. For them, this scandal was

yet another example of what they see as an ongoing attack on sacred Hindu institutions by anti-Hindu governments. Since the current Government of Andhra Pradesh, led by Nara Chandrababu Naidu, pointed fingers at the previous YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) regime under YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, the right wing saw a conspiracy behind the ghee adulteration. Given that Jagan is a practising Christian, right-wing commentators fueled the debate by suggesting a communal angle, insinuating that this was a deliberate attack on Hindu traditions.

On the other hand, the left wing, which often aligns itself against anything related to the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was quick to dismiss these allegations. Instead, they took the stance that the whole issue was manufactured by Naidu's government, which recently entered an alliance with the BJP. For them, the timing of the announcement seemed too convenient, coming just ahead of elections in

**The right wing, known for its defence of Hindu traditions, seized upon the controversy to further its long-standing demand for temples to be freed from government control. For them, this scandal was yet another example of what they see as an ongoing attack on sacred Hindu institutions by anti-Hindu governments**

some states, and they argued that the entire controversy was politically motivated. The left's narrative was that Naidu was trying to make a mountain out of a molehill to score political points and distract from other governance issues.

In the midst of this political slugfest, the real facts of the matter have largely been overshadowed, and the broader context has been ignored. Let's break down some of the critical questions surrounding this controversy.

Why did Chandrababu Naidu wait nearly two months after the lab reports were submitted to talk about the adul-

teration? Was this purely for political gain?

It's essential to understand that Naidu's comments about the ghee adulteration came up almost spontaneously during a National Democratic Alliance (NDA) meeting. He mentioned it in passing as an example of the previous government's incompetence. Interestingly, the Executive Officer of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) had already addressed this issue in a press conference on July 22, 2024, but it did not garner significant media attention at the time. It was not until Naidu specifically mentioned "ani-

mal fat" that the issue gained traction, triggering a massive uproar.



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

mal fat" that the issue gained traction, triggering a massive uproar.

It is also important to note that the Naidu government had focused on investigating TTD issues from day one, driven by mounting complaints about the temple board's management. In fact, an inquiry into TTD affairs by the Vigilance Department was ordered as early as June 2024. Given this backdrop, it would be inaccurate to suggest that

Naidu's government suddenly invented the controversy for political mileage. The issue was already under scrutiny; Naidu's comments simply brought it to the forefront.

Was the previous YSRCP government under YS Jagan Mohan Reddy responsible for the adulteration, and how does Jagan's religious background factor into this?

While it's easy to speculate, it is unfair to lay the blame for the ghee adulteration directly at Jagan Mohan Reddy's feet or imply that his Christian faith played a role in this scandal. However, Jagan's tenure as Chief Minister was marked by a series of controversies involving the TTD. His administration's decision to appoint close relatives and allies to the temple board raised serious questions about the politicisation of the TTD. It is this mismanagement, coupled with Jagan's overall lack of credibility, that has led many to suspect that such misdeeds could have occurred under his watch.

It is also important to recall

that Jagan himself had never shied away from using the TTD for political gain. His party once accused Chandrababu Naidu of stealing a pink diamond belonging to Lord Venkateswara, a baseless claim aimed at damaging Naidu's reputation. This lack of integrity on Jagan's part has only deepened public suspicion, though direct links between his faith and the ghee controversy remain unfounded.

**PAWAN KALYAN'S EMERGENCE AS A DEFENDER OF HINDU INTERESTS**

One of the more fascinating aspects of this controversy is the evolving political role of Pawan Kalyan, the leader of the Jana Sena Party and Deputy Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. Initially known for his left-leaning politics and admiration for Che Guevara, Kalyan has now positioned himself as a staunch defender of Hindu traditions. He made strong statements condemning the adulteration issue, and in a dramatic ges-

ture, performed penance to "wash away the sins" committed under the previous administration. Kalyan's transformation into a champion of Sanatana Dharma has clear political undertones, particularly as he strengthens his alliance with the BJP.

This shift suggests that Kalyan is preparing to play a more significant role in the state's politics, possibly as the BJP's face in Andhra Pradesh. His statements and actions in the wake of the ghee controversy indicate that the political landscape in Andhra Pradesh is evolving, with new alignments and power dynamics coming into play.

In conclusion, the Tirumala ghee controversy has become a battleground for political factions to push their agendas. While the facts remain murky, what is clear is that the scandal has far-reaching implications, not only for the governance of sacred institutions like the TTD but also for the political future of Andhra Pradesh.

Rs 35,491 cr given to AP in 10 yrs: Centre

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

According to the Union Finance Department, Rs 15.81 crore has been released under the AP Special Category package and Rs 35,491 crore, under the Reorganisation Act, to Andhra Pradesh in 10 years. Replying to the RTI query submitted by I Ravi Kumar from Vijayawada, the Union Finance Department (Expenditure) disclosed the details.

The Union Finance Department stated that Rs 15.18 crore was released under Special Assistance in 2018-19 and as interest on loan between 2015-20 under EAP projects. The Central government has clarified that Rs 16,078 crore was released under the resource gap in the AP RA Act, Rs 1,750 crore for seven backward districts from 2014 to 2020, Rs 2,500 crore for infrastructure and Rs 15,147 crore for Polavaram. According to the RTI information, the Central Finance Department has given funds of Rs 35,491.57 crore to AP in 10 years after bifurcation.

30% cash...

Continued from Page 1

The MP said that Chandrababu is talking to insurance companies and bank officials to help the flood victims in all possible ways. The CM has told the insurance companies and banks to complete the insurance claims and loan rescheduling by September 30. He also said that 6,000 television sets were damaged in the flood. So far, 4,500 TVs have been repaired under the directions of the State government. The repair of the remaining 1,500 TVs will be done in a week.

On behalf of all the people, MP Kesineni Sivanath thanked the Chief Minister for not only bringing the city of Vijayawada back to normalcy, which was severely damaged due to floods, but also releasing financial assistance for the flood victims within a short time.

TODAY	
<b>ALMANAC</b>	
Month & Paksham:	Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Navami:	Sep 25 12:11 PM to Sep 26 12:25 PM
Dashami:	Sep 26 12:25 PM to Sep 27 01:20 PM
<b>Nakshatram:</b>	
Punarvasu:	Sep 25 10:23 PM to Sep 26 11:34 PM
Pushya:	Sep 26 11:34 PM to Sep 28 01:20 AM
Rahukalam:	1:36 PM to 3:06 PM
Yamagandam:	6:09 AM to 7:38 AM
Varjyam:	08:09 AM to 09:52 AM
Gulika:	9:08 AM to 10:37 AM
Amritakalam:	09:02 PM to 10:43 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	11:43 AM to 12:31 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER	
Forecast:	Cloudy
Temp:	33°
Humidity:	76%
Sunrise:	5:57 AM
Sunset:	6:00 PM
Updated:	September 25, 2024 5:00 PM

## People are watching, CM tells new chairpersons

Posts have been allotted only for a few in the first phase

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has told the newly-appointed chairpersons of various corporations that they are in public service, and should not be egoistic. Chandrababu congratulated all those who are nominated to various posts, at the State Secretariat here on Wednesday. The CM warned the corporation chairpersons that the people always observe their style of functioning.

"All our movements, discussions and the style of work should be in a very dignified way. As promised, we have nominated leaders from all the three partners of the NDA to these posts," he said. The CM said that as a special system was adopted in the selection of candidates in the recent elections, excellent results were achieved. Even in case of these nominated posts, a lot of exercise was done before making the announcement, he added. Chandrababu made it clear



that posts have been allotted only for a few in the first phase. Some more posts are still vacant and the list is ready. Without naming anyone, he said some people are acting in haste, which is not correct. "We should always keep in mind that the party gives top priority for discipline and those who could not be allotted party tickets in the recent polls were given the preference while announcing the first list," Chandrababu told the chairpersons.

"Those who got the opportunity in the first phase should not feel that others have not worked hard and are not qualified," he remarked.

Pointing out that there are leaders who have gone to jail, lost their assets and also those who are facing various kinds of cases, Chandrababu told them that he has the entire list consisting of all those who had worked hard and how they functioned. "Justice should be done for all those who strive hard for the party," he said.

"Following social justice, Backward Classes (BCs) are given priority in the nominated posts as per the population ratio," the Chief Minister said, and advised them to do better work in their respective wings. He is of the opinion that the Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation

## Low pressure area over north coastal AP

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Widespread light to heavy rainfall has been reported across various regions in north coastal Andhra Pradesh following the development of a Low Pressure Area (LPA) over the northwest Bay of Bengal. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecasted that this precipitation will continue for the coming days.

The LPA, situated between north coastal Andhra Pradesh and south coastal Odisha, has resulted in significant rainfall in several areas. Kasimkota in Anapalli district recorded 159.2 mm of rain-

fall in the 24 hours preceding Wednesday morning. According to IMD officials, "The rainfall is anticipated to persist, and isolated thunderstorms with lightning are likely in the region until September 28. Additionally, strong surface winds reaching speeds of 30-40 km/hour may occur in certain areas during this period."

Fishermen operating along the coast have been advised to avoid venturing into the sea until the weather conditions improve. "Safety is paramount, and we urge all fishermen to remain ashore until the weather stabilises," said an IMD spokesperson.

## Vizag India's next...

Continued from Page 1

Kadappa will be developed as a hub for electronics manufacturing, Prakasam for biofuels, Krishna-Guntur as the capital region, and the Godavari region will emphasise the aqua industry and petrochemical corridor.

Meanwhile, MP M Sribharat emphasised plans to position Bhogapuram Airport among the top 10 air traffic destinations in India. He commended APEPDCL, Andhra

Pradesh's power distribution company, for its uninterrupted power supply and highlighted the proposed 12 flyovers along the Anakapalle-Bheemili route, which will be transformed into three elongated elevated expressways to improve traffic flow and connectivity.

BC Janardhan Reddy, Minister for Roads & Buildings, Infrastructure & Investments, spoke on the potential of the Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) model in driving infrastructure development. He noted that Andhra Pradesh's growing road and economic corridors present immense opportunities for port development.

## AP tops in Swachhta Hi Seva-2024

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Gandham Chandradu, Managing Director of Swachha Andhra Corporation, has said that Andhra Pradesh State stood first in the implementation of Swachhata Hi Seva-2024 programme.

On September 17, the fortnight-long Swachhata Hi Seva programme was launched across the country, and AP secured the first place across India for the works done to keep the cities and villages in the State clean.

The Swachhata Hi Seva programme was launched simultaneously in 123 municipal corporations in all rural areas with the theme of "Swabhava Swachhta, Sanskara Swachhta".

Programme was launched simultaneously in 123 municipal corporations in rural areas

As part of Safai Mitra Suraksha programme, 76,730 medical camps were organised for sanitation workers in Andhra Pradesh, which is the largest number across the country.

The MD said the Central government has confirmed that the State has secured first place in this category. The next positions were secured by Tamil Nadu (58,817 medical camps), Bihar (42,415), Maharashtra (29,611) and Gujarat (20,808).

He added that Andhra Pradesh secured the second place in the category of people voluntarily participating in the Swachh Andhra pro-

gramme. Particularly the youth and students are participating in the Swachhta Hi Seva programmes.

As many as 25,82,348 people from Andhra Pradesh participated in the programme, winning second place for the State. Gujarat bagged the first place with 29,32,465 volunteers. The next positions were secured by Odisha (11,72,411 volunteers) and Maharashtra (10,87,297).

As the programme will go on till Gandhi Jayanti on October 2, Gandham Chandra expressed hope that more records could be achieved.

## AP suffered Rs 7,600 cr loss...

Continued from Page 1

Thousands of people took part in the relief operations. Drinking water bottles and food packages were distributed on time. He added that the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) received a record amount of donations worth Rs 400 crore. "It is really inspiring that the donors have come forward with humanity. Even children donated their savings and I thank all of them profusely," the CM remarked.

Stating that 17,000 applications

were received in the past two days of which 4,000 were found to be fake, the Chief Minister said that the remaining 14,000 applications will be cleared after examining them thoroughly.

Eligible people will certainly get the relief and the reasons will be explained to those who have not received it, he added. Chandrababu said it has become a habit for some persons to cause destruction and pass the blame onto others. "It is our primary duty to safeguard the lives of the people and maintain law and order.

## APICDA approves to notify three industrial corridors

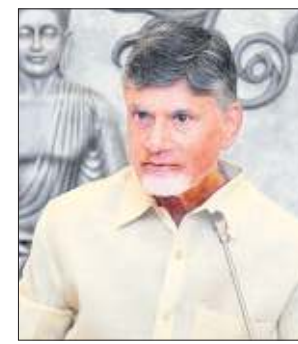
Nod for final master plans of Krishnapatnam Node, Orvakal Node

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The first Board Meeting of the Andhra Pradesh Corridor Development Authority (APICDA) was held at Amaravati on Wednesday. Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu said that pivotal steps were taken for AP's industrial and economic growth trajectory during the meeting.

The APICDA Authority constituted by the AP Government consists of a Board and an Executive Committee. The Board, chaired by the Chief Minister, has 12 other members including the Industries & Commerce Minister, Finance Minister and six Secretaries of major infrastructure and Revenue departments.

At its first meeting, after detailed deliberations, the APICDA Board agreed to notify three industrial corridors viz, Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor (CBIC), Hyderabad-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor (HBIC) and Vizag-Chennai Industrial Corridor (VCIC) and the nodes thereon viz, namely



Krishnapatnam Node (10,834.50 acres) under CBIC, Orvakal Node (9,718.84 acres) under HBIC and Kopparthi Node (6,740.44 acres) under VCIC.

Further, the APICDA Board approved the final master plans of the Krishnapatnam Node under CBIC and the Orvakal Node under HBIC. Also, the Board approved the publication of the Draft Master plan of the Kopparthi Node being developed on 6,740.44 acres, under VCIC.

Besides, the APICDA approved the proposal of the Department to accord approval of Industrial,

Residential and Commercial Layouts within these Industrial Master Plans of three Nodes, by the Authority under relevant provisions of the ACT. The chairman ordered the APICDA and MA&UD / DTCP to work together to bring the SOPs in this regard.

Naidu stated that after the bifurcation of the State, the Government of Andhra Pradesh envisioned forming an authority to notify industrial corridors and nodes along with approval of master plans. He further stated that in 2017, the needs to expedite the development of Industrial Clusters and external infrastructure under the VCIC with the financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) were felt.

Chandrababu said that accordingly, the Andhra Pradesh Industrial Corridor Development (APICDA) Act was promulgated w.e.f from 10.10.2017, for the Establishment, Planning, Development, Operation, Maintenance, Management and Regulation of Industrial Corridors in the State.

## Rs 602 cr compensation...

Continued from Page 1

This handheld device was given to the enumeration teams, who then went into the field and commenced this process.

About 1,600 teams fanned out in the affected areas and the entire enumeration was completed in a matter of three working days. As part of the enumeration, no bank account data was collected. Aadhaar data was collected, and this was used to arrive at the validated bank account details of each of the beneficiaries.

On September 22, which was a Sunday, the list of proposed beneficiaries was put up so that they could seek changes or register grievances. On September 24 evening, Rs 602 crore funds were mobilised and transferred to an online gateway. The bank account data of four lakh households was also integrated through the UPI portal so that the payments could be made instantly. In comparison, the compensation amounts are in far excess of the NDRF norms prescribed.

On September 25, the compensation disbursements were successfully transferred, within a timeline of just 15 days from the date of the flood. This is the fastest timeline for compensation disbursement in recent times, and AP has been successfully able to achieve this. In comparison, when the previous AP government led by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy managed the compensation process for Michuanga cyclone which struck on December 1, 2023, the compensation was disbursed on May 17, 2024, or over 5.5 months after the event.

On the speedy compensation process, RP Sisodia, Special Chief Secretary (Revenue), said: "Under the leadership of CM Chandrababu Naidu, we were motivated to provide immediate and sufficient compensation. Our CM led by example during the relief efforts. We are happy about this unprecedented speed in disbursing the compensation amounts. We hope our efforts can serve as a successful template for future disaster management initiatives."

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH**  
**ROADS AND BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT**  
**E-PROCUREMENT SHORT TENDER NOTICE**  
No.6(43)/TO/2024-25 Date: 23-09-2024  
Tenders are being invited for execution of 43 emergency repairs to roads during 2024-25 with an estimated cost of Rs. 1257.75 Lakh. The commencement of downloading of tender schedules: At 3:00 P.M. on 07-10-2024. For details, www.aprocurement.gov.in or contact: 08672-252500.  
Sd/- Executive Engineer, R & B Department, Machilipatnam.  
E.O.No: 1493/CLAD/11/10201-22, Dt: 25.09.2024

## Dementia prevalence in AP reaches 7.7 pc: Experts

Projected dementia cases to reach 8 lakh by 2036

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As World Alzheimer's Day raises global awareness, the focus in Andhra Pradesh shifts to an alarming rise in dementia cases. Currently, 7.7 per cent of individuals aged 60 and above in the State are affected, surpassing the national average of 7.4 per cent. Experts say by 2036, approximately 8 lakh people are projected to develop dementia in Andhra Pradesh, highlighting the urgent need for specialised rehabilitation centres and innovative care models.

Vivek Srivastav, CEO of HCAH, elaborates on their mission: "Our goal is to transform healthcare by bringing professional care into environments where patients feel most comfortable. By understanding the cultural and emotional needs of our patients, we not only focus on improving the physical aspect but follow an holistic approach to look after the emotional needs of one's life, especially in our Assisted Living home in Gachibowli, Hyderabad. We strive to create a space for seniors with dementia where they are defined by the illness but are embraced and supported. We follow a person-centered approach to care for seniors with dementia or any other mental issues." A patient reflects on his experience with HCAH, "They say you never forget the important moments of your life. For me, seeing my father's smile after two years was one such moment. It was a reminder that he was in capable hands, receiving care that no other place could provide."

# Aqua farmers to form cooperative societies

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Collector DK Balaji has suggested that aqua farmers form cooperative societies to benefit from the State government. The State government is giving top priority to aqua culture and is supporting cultivators in exporting aqua products, he said.

Collector Balaji visited the Harshith Aqua Tech Company at Chinnagollapalem in the Krishna district on Wednesday. He inspected the production of the prawn and fish seeds and spoke to the farmers regarding the use of feed, medicines, and other details.

In this connection, the local fishermen met the collector under his leadership and



Krishna District Collector DK Balaji speaking with aqua farmers at Chinnagollapalem on Wednesday

explained their problems. During the meeting with the Collector, fishermen expressed their concerns about the sea mouth being filled with silt, which resulted in decreased incomes for them. They asked for dredging to enhance their livelihood and requested the Collector to release compensation for the time fishing ban

period. Speaking on the occasion, Balaji said that the government would release compensation for the fishermen for the recent fishing banning period in the sea. He instructed the fisheries department officials to take steps to distribute nets, ice boxes, aerators, and other necessary items to fishermen.

Later, Collector Balaji inspected the cultivation of Vannamei Prawn at Garisapudi and also visited the Fish Caze Culture at the Garisapudi Under Tunnel.

Fisheries Joint Director A Chandrasekhar, Assistant Director Naga Babu, Tahsildar KGN Someswara Rao, MPDO Madhusudana Rao, and others were present.

## Durga Temple officials conduct Nava Harathulu trial run

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada, officials conducted the Nava Harathulu ritual trail run at the Durga Ghat in the river Krishna on Wednesday. Temple Executive



Officer (EO) KS Rama Rao has witnessed the prestigious ritual. The state government is mulling reinstating the Nava Harathulu ritual at the Durga Ghat during the Dasara Sarannavaratri Festivities. For that, officials under the supervision of EO Rama Rao, the ritual was performed successfully.

Meanwhile, NTR district collector Dr G Srijana along with the family members took the goddess Durga Devi darshan and later performed special pujas. Later, she attended the Pancha Harathulu ritual. After that, the temple priests gave blessings to collector Srijana and her family members.



## PCCM inspects Kakinada Town station, Goods Shed

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

K Padmaja, Principal Chief Commercial Manager (PCCM), South Central Railway, inspected the Kakinada Town railway station and the Kakinada New Goods Shed Complex on Wednesday. R a m b a b u Vavilapalli, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Vijayawada, and the Commercial team accompanied the PCCM throughout the inspection.

Padmaja examined passenger amenities, Booking Office and Parcel Office. She spoke to the Parcel Office staff and hamaals regarding due care and safety precautions like emptying of fuel tanks to be taken while loading of vehicles, and instructed them to strictly adhere to safety protocols.

The PCCM interacted with various freight customers and officials based at Kakinada, such as Kakinada Sea Port Limited, Coromandel Fertilisers,

Nagarjuna Fertilisers etc., on the safety aspects to be followed during the loading of rakes. She emphasised on the loading system to be followed as approved by RDSO, so as to ensure even loading and to ensure safety. The customers, supervisors, loading staff and labourers were sensitised regarding the safety aspects. Later, Padmaja inspected Coromandel Fertiliser Company. She also inspected loading procedures and interacted with the field staff, loading supervisors, in-charges, and labourers and advised them to ensure the approved pattern of loading with strict adherence to the permissible carrying capacity of wagons.

# Collector issues stern warning over delayed housing projects

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad has issued a stern warning to officials, emphasising that any negligence towards the State's initiative to provide housing for the poor will not be tolerated. He expressed dissatisfaction with the slow progress despite clear deadlines, urging officials to accelerate the work.

"Despite the availability of materials like sand, cement, iron, and bricks, the progress is unacceptably slow," the Collector stated, adding that officials can no longer make excuses for the delays. "We are not prepared to accept any more reasons. If this lack of progress continues, there will be consequences."

At a meeting held at the Collectorate on Wednesday

afternoon, the Collector conducted a mandal-wise review of housing construction projects, involving officials, engineering assistants, and amenity secretaries. He insisted that construction must begin in all layouts by next Monday. "We cannot afford further delays," he said, directing officials to ensure

## Officials can no longer make excuses



active participation from beneficiaries through awareness programmes on September 27, 28, and 29. He stressed that beneficiaries should be made aware that this is their final opportunity to benefit from this housing scheme.

The Collector also urged the officials to ensure that the set

targets are met. "From now on, we must update the progress of at least 100 houses daily," he instructed, adding that any local issues must be resolved immediately to avoid disruptions. He highlighted the importance of completing the geo-tagging process swiftly and providing full support to the beneficiaries. "We need a special plan to ensure the construction of all houses is completed

within the given timeframe," he remarked. The goal is to bring all layouts to the RC stage by March 2025, leaving no room for delays. As part of his directives, the Collector stressed the importance of infrastructure development alongside housing construction. "If there are any infrastructure issues, they should be brought to my attention immediately."

## Irregularities uncovered in MGNREGS implementation in Srikakulam District

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

Allegations of irregularities have surfaced regarding the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in Kotabommali and Santhabommali mandals of Srikakulam district. Officials and staff have allegedly exploited their extended tenures at the mandal level, sparking concerns among local stakeholders about the scheme's core objectives.

At the heart of the issue lies the District Water Resources Management Agency (DWMA), responsible for overseeing MGNREGS works at the district level. The Project Director (PD) of DWMA supervises these works, ensuring adherence to guidelines. However, in Kotabommali mandal, officials and staff have served in the same positions for over eight years, exceeding the recommended time limit.

"Officials overstaying at a single location is against the rules, and such situations often foster conditions ripe for corruption," said a local source, speaking on condition of anonymity. Allegations also suggest that these officials, in collusion with district authorities, have extorted bribes from wage seekers, disguising them as 'expenditure' for inspection officials and social audit teams. A resident from Kotabommali revealed, "Whenever the inspection authorities or social audit teams visit, arrangements are made to provide

lunch and other perks. This has become a regular practice."

In Santhabommali mandal, critical documents like muster sheets and muster registers have gone missing. Allegations point to local officials' involvement in making these documents disappear, potentially to conceal wage payment irregularities and fictitious beneficiaries. A source familiar with the inquiry noted, "The aim of making muster sheets disappear is to conceal wage payment irregularities, which also involve fake beneficiaries."

These irregularities undermine the Central Government's mission to provide guaranteed employment through MGNREGS. A local social activist emphasized, "These actions at the mandal level, with the alleged involvement of district officials, are defeating the very purpose of the scheme."

Both Kotabommali and Santhabommali fall within the Tekkali Assembly constituency, represented by Agriculture Minister K Atchannaidu. DWMA Project Director GV Chitti Raju responded to the concerns, saying, "We are looking into the allegations and will take appropriate action after conducting a thorough inquiry. Steps will be taken to prevent such irregularities in the future." As the investigation unfolds, the public awaits updates on actions taken to address these violations and ensure MGNREGS serves its intended purpose - providing sustainable employment and fair wages to rural workers.

# TDP allegations an insult to crores of devotees: YSRCP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP leaders, including former ministers Perni Venkatramiah (Nani) and Kodali Sri Venkatramiah (Nani) along with party leader Vallabhaneni Vamsi, have condemned TDP for spreading false propaganda regarding the preparation of the sacred Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) laddu.

Speaking to the media at the party central office here on Wednesday, YSRCP leaders criticised Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for making baseless allegations that animal fat was mixed with the ghee used in the preparation of the laddu, calling it an insult to crores of devotees. They accused Chief Minister Chandrababu of using religious issues for political gain and also condemned Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan for supporting Chandrababu's statements. They announced that YSRCP workers across the State will perform special prayers at temples in every constituency on September 28 to cleanse the sins committed by the TDP leaders against Lord Venkateswara.

Former minister Perni Nani condemned the TDP alliance for spreading false claims about animal fat in Lord Venkateswara's laddu prasadam, calling it an attack on the sentiments of devotees. He criticised Chandrababu, his son Lokesh, and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan for misusing religious beliefs for political gain.

Kodali Nani criticised Chandrababu for dragging Lord Venkateswara's temple into pol-

## Chandrababu dragging Lord Venkateswara's temple into politics



itics. He said the Chief Minister is responsible for the supply of adulterated ghee during his previous term and questioned why he didn't take action at that time. Nani stated that the allegations regarding the laddu's quality surfaced only after Chandrababu came to power, yet he is now blaming the previous YSRCP government. Kodali Nani also condemned the lack of action against Jana Sena MLA Nanaji for attacking a Dalit professor and MP Ragu Rama Krishnam Raju for tearing down a poster of B.R. Ambedkar, accusing the CM of turning a blind eye to these incidents.

Meanwhile, speaking at a separate press conference in Rajahmundry, former YSRCP MP Margani Bharat strongly criticised Chandrababu Naidu for his unethical political practices. Bharat stated that Chandrababu has degraded the political atmosphere by engaging in the purchase of MPs,

comparing it to buying cattle in a market. He further accused the CM of hypocrisy, highlighting that he, who once blamed previous governments for misconduct, is now embroiled in similar controversies. Bharat emphasised that these actions have deeply hurt the sentiments of Hindus across the world and demanded transparency from the government regarding the allegations surrounding the TTD laddu.

Bharat also expressed his disappointment over MP R Krishnaiah's recent resignation, calling it an unexpected and unethical move. He criticised Krishnaiah's decision and suggested that it was a reflection of the deteriorating political standards under the influence of the current government. Bharat reiterated his call for an impartial investigation into the TTD laddu issue, expressing doubt over the credibility of the SIT formed by the government.

## 15 red sander logs seized; one smuggler arrested



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP city president and former MLA, Malladi Vishnu, has said that the attack by MLA Bonda Uma's followers on the flood victims is heinous. "It is a shame that the people of the city have lost everything due to heavy rains and floods and are left destitute. After the coalition government came to power, the people have lost their freedom of speech. The police lathi-charged the Karakatt and Bhavanipuram residents who hit the roads as the enumeration process was not done in their areas," he said.

He mentioned a recent incident in Ajit Singh Nagar, where a person who went for help was tied to a pole and beaten up. At a time when donors and voluntary organisations are coming forward to help the flood victims, it is sad that such incidents are taking place. He wondered how justice will be done to the people if the elected government does not listen the flood victims. They demanded that those responsible for the attack should be severely punished as there is no room for violence in democracy.



PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Red Sanders Anti Smuggling Task Force (RSASTF) personnel seized 15 red sander logs and arrested on red sander smugglers at Rapuru in Nellore district. DSP Muralidhar told the media here on Wednesday that a RSASTF team led by RI Chiranjeevulu and RSI M Muralidhar Reddy conducted combing in the Rapuru forest area on the night of Tuesday. When the team reached

Gonupalli, they noticed some people wandering suspiciously in the forest area. When the task force personnel were approaching them, they started fleeing.

However, the task force personnel chased them and apprehended one of them. On the information provided by him, the task force team seized 15 red sander logs dumped behind a bush. SI CH Ravi registered a case and shifted the arrested smugglers to the task force police station in Tirupati.

## One killed, 3 injured as car collides with auto rickshaw

PNS ■ KADAPA

One person was killed and three persons were injured when the auto rickshaw, in which they were travelling, was hit by a car at Pandillapalli village in Kamalapuram mandal in the wee hours on Wednesday.

Police said that the deceased Sheikh Abdul Hasan (23) and

three injured were going to Kadapa in the ill-fated auto rickshaw.

A speeding car collided with the auto rickshaw killing Abdul Hasan, who was the auto rickshaw driver, on the spot. The injured were admitted to the RIMS hospital. The police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH for postmortem.

# Koruprolu village waiting for basic road facilities for years

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

The tiny village of Koruprolu in Anakapalle district is once again in the spotlight, struggling to receive old-age pensions and basic road infrastructure. Home to 50 individuals from the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), Koruprolu's residents face daily challenges due to the absence of road facilities. For years, villagers have been agitating for road

access, traversing a canal and unpaved terrain to cover the three-km distance between Koruprolu and MK Patnam. This lack of connectivity hampers access to essential services.

"The villagers have been pleading for years for basic road facilities, and the delay in pension payments only highlights the broader neglect,"

said K. Govinda Rao, district honorary president of the Adivasi Fifth Schedule Sadhana Committee. In August, the Chief Minister's Office intervened, directing the Anakapalle District Collector to investigate the delays in pension distribution. Officials also confronted the long-standing road access issue.

A team from the District Rural Development Agency visited Koruprolu on August 3, and the villagers emphasised the need for a road. Panchayati Raj Engineering officials surveyed the area, with 50 tribal residents assisting by clearing jungle terrain. The initial cost estimate for the road's first phase was Rs 1.5 crore, funded through

MGNREGA. However, progress has stalled. On September 23, officials revisited the village, reporting that funds had not been allocated for road construction.

"Since 2018, no funds have been allocated for road construction, despite repeated promises and efforts by engineering authorities to submit estimates," Govinda Rao said.

He stressed that the ongoing rainy season is worsening the situation, leaving villagers isolated and struggling to access essential supplies.

Rao urged immediate intervention by the District Collector, calling for funds to be allocated without delay. "The government must prioritise road construction in these villages. It's not just about access; it's about the safety and well-being of these communities."



At the heart of the issue lies the District Water Resources Management Agency (DWMA), responsible for overseeing MGNREGS works at the district level. The Project Director (PD) of DWMA supervises these works, ensuring adherence to guidelines. However, in Kotabommali mandal, officials and staff have served in the same positions for over eight years, exceeding the recommended time limit

# Interlinking of rivers: Lasting solution to AP's calamities

What are permanent solutions to natural calamities like floods and droughts? Can't we overcome or at least mitigate their impacts on human life and property? The answer could be in the affirmative if proper and relevant steps are taken at an appropriate time. Droughts give us time for intervention, whereas floods don't; so, we must prepare for the challenges constantly. The way out is interlinking of rivers to prevent floods and droughts.

As the first Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru rightly said, dams are the 'modern temples' as they not only serve the nation but feed crores of people and make the nation drought-free and help it achieve self-sufficiency. Agriculture can be made more productive and profitable and the deadly impact of droughts

could be avoided by building more dams and reservoirs, apart from interlinking rivers.

The interlinking of rivers is a way to transfer surplus water from the regions that receive a lot of rainfall to the areas that are in drought. This is the surest way to control floods and droughts and help avoid water crises. The recent cloud-bursts and the resultant devastating floods in Andhra Pradesh have once again cautioned the administration as to how to avoid or at least mitigate the impact of floods and loss of crops and lives. The heart-wrenching humanitarian situation in the state further stresses the need to interlink rivers so that the impact of any amount of flood water can be controlled by diverting water flow into other channels.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu

**Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has been a strong proponent of the concept of interlinking of rivers and in his previous tenure as the Chief Minister did some groundwork in this regard. We know that administration runs on the strength of the political leadership. So, the stronger and visionary the leader; the better can be achieved for the good and welfare of the state and the people.**

has been a strong proponent of the concept of interlinking of rivers and in his previous tenure as the Chief Minister did some groundwork in this regard. We know that administration runs on the strength of the political leadership. So, the stronger and visionary the leader; the better can be achieved for the good and

welfare of the state and the people.

Interlinking rivers is a dire need across the nation and the need for it has been felt so many times. In this context, the state of Andhra Pradesh will benefit greatly if the plan to link rivers in the state comes implemented. We can specifically stress the need to com-



**BUDDHAVARAPU RAJESWARA PRASAD**  
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plete the Polavaram irrigation project, which is considered the lifeline of Andhra Pradesh to meet the state's needs for irrigation and drinking water. This multi-purpose project could allow Andhra Pradesh to make use of more than 3,000 tmc of water, which otherwise

would go into the ocean. The project can store 322.73 tmc of water which will surely make the state the real 'rice bowl of India' by providing sufficient amount of water for irrigation and meeting the drinking water needs of crores of people.

The state government has an ambitious plan to link Vamsadhara-Nagavali and Godavari-Krishna-Penna rivers. If this grand plan materializes, there won't be any scarcity of water from agriculture to industries to power generation. For this purpose, the government is aiming to prepare micro- and macro-level plans to appropriately use available water resources.

Chief Minister Chandrababu wants to involve everyone -- from experts to students -- in this ambitious plan-making so that it becomes

comprehensive with the consideration of different sections of people.

Apart from this, water tourism could be developed to attract national and international tourists. Governments may come and go, but ambitious projects like Polavaram should not be ignored as it will lead not only to cost escalation but also delay realization of intended benefits.

The Chief Minister's intention to release a White Paper on the project was perhaps to highlight the faults of the previous government concerning this multi-purpose project and to make it clear that he is hell-bent on pursuing the project. With the proactive involvement of the Central government, the project is going to see the light of the day. It is very redeeming that the Union government had also released

funds for the continuation of the project and assured all help.

The completion of Polavaram and interlinking of the rivers, as visualised by the Chief Minister, will help Andhra Pradesh overcome certain the bifurcation losses and surge ahead on the path of development both agriculturally and industrially.

As the groundwater levels have quickly dipped and as most people living in villages depend largely on groundwater for their agricultural and drinking water needs, there is a pressing need to undertake a Water Census. Such census will allow every state to properly assess the availability of water resources to formulate a better and more pragmatic plan for its utilization.

*(The writer is a senior journalist)*

## Min assures speedy of completion Chintalapudi Lift scheme

PNS ■ ELURU

Minister for Housing and I&PR K Parthasarathy has assured of completing the Chintalapudi Lift scheme at the earliest to provide water for irrigation.

The Minister participated in 'Idi Manchi Prabutam' programme at Pallerlamudi village in Nuzvid mandal on Wednesday. The Minister also inaugurated the Bommuluru road which was widened at a cost of Rs 23.40 crore. The Minister laid the foundation stone for construction of CC roads at Sitampuram, Pallerlamudi and Meerjapuram village at a cost of Rs 1.70 crore on the occasion.

Addressing a meeting on the occasion, Minister Parthasarathy said that the long pending dream of the people of the area, the completion of Chintalapudi Lift scheme, would be fulfilled and water would be provided for drinking as well as agriculture purposes soon. He reiterated



Addressing a meeting on the occasion, Minister Parthasarathy said that the long pending dream of the people of the area, the completion of Chintalapudi Lift scheme, would be fulfilled and water would be provided for drinking as well as agriculture purposes soon. He reiterated that the government is giving priority to reconstruct and repair the damaged roads.

ated that the government is giving priority to reconstruct and repair the damaged roads.

Parthasarathy criticised that the YSRCP led previous government had neglected the development of roads, and the roads were full of potholes everywhere in the state and road users faced various problems traveling on such roads.

"The transport facility and good roads will help the development of the State. The authorities have been instructed to take up the road development work and complete it quickly after the rains subside completely. The damaged roads at all the villages and urban areas of the districts will be developed expeditiously,"

the Minister pledged. He lauded Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for efficiently tackling the flood situation in Vijayawada.

The YSRCP led government put the state in doldrums, he flayed and appreciated Chandrababu Naidu for putting on efforts to put the state in the Wright place. The

Minister listed out the achievements of the new government including enhancing social security pension from Rs 3000 to Rs 4000 and conducting Mega DSP to fill up teacher posts. R&B SE John Moshe, RWS DE Bhaskar Reddy and other officials among those who were present.

## Many developmental projects sanctioned to Prakasam: Dola



PNS ■ ONGOLE

Minister for Social Welfare Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy has revealed that many developmental projects including construction of three social welfare hostel buildings at a cost of Rs 10 crore have been sanctioned by the government to Prakasam district.

The Minister, accompanied by Collector A Thameem Ansariya, participated in the 'Idi Manchi Prabutam' programme in Kondapi town on Wednesday. They visited some houses and pasted the 'Idi Manchi Prabutam' sticker and distributed pamphlets. They explained to the people about the progress, achieved during the 100 days rule of the Chandrababu Naidu headed Government.

Later the Minister laid the foundation stone for the construction of a cement road and drainage canals. The works would be carried out at a cost of Rs 50 lakh.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, Minister Dola Bala Veeranjanya Swamy said

that during the 100 days rule, the Naidu headed government had sanctioned Rs 10 crore to the district for the construction of 3 social welfare hostel buildings. Moreover, Rs 13 lakh was sanctioned for the construction of a residential school in Kondapi and Rs 14 lakh for the construction of a social welfare hostel.

"Under the National Employment Guarantee Scheme, Rs 143 crore has been sanctioned for the construction of cement roads and drainage canals in the district. Apart from this, Rs 15 crore has been sanctioned to set up five electrical sub-stations," the Minister revealed.

The Social Welfare Minister explained that during 2014-19, 13,616 people had constructed houses under the NTR housing scheme, verification is being done so that the bills due to them would be paid soon. Steps are being taken to pay the money to the beneficiaries soon, he informed.

The Minister stated that in order to extend social security pension to all eligible,

Grama Sabha would be conducted to sanction pensions at the village level. The government is working with the objectives of social welfare and development, he asserted.

The Minister highlighted that the Naidu headed new government had enhanced social security pension from Rs 3000 to Rs 4000 and reopened the Anna Canteens across the state to provide nutritious food at a cheaper price to the poor. The government has announced the mega DSC to fill up over 17,700 teacher posts, he noted.

The free gas cylinder distribution and free bus travel to women would be launched as Deepawali gifts, he announced.

The government has extended Rs 1,452 crore to the panchayats to take up development works and to robust the crippled village panchayats, Minister Bala Veeranjanya Swamy acknowledged. Collector Thameem Ansariya also spoke. Agriculture JD Srinivasa Rao and RDO Subba Reddy were among those who participated in the programme.

## Former MP Magunta Parvathamma passes away



PNS ■ ONGOLE

Former Lok Sabha member Magunta Parvathamma passed away in a private hospital in Chennai on Wednesday. She was 77 and is survived by one son and a daughter.

She was the wife of former MP Magunta Subba Reddy, who was killed by the then People's War Group Naxalites in 1995. She was also sister-in-law of incumbent MP Magunta Srinivasula Reddy.

Parvathamma had been ill for the last few months. While undergoing treatment in a private hospital in Chennai, she died today. She was elected to Lok Sabha in 1996 from Ongole constituency and she was also elected to Legislative Assembly in 2004 from Kavali constituency. The mortal remains of Parvathamma have been placed in her house located at Saraswati Nagar.

Family members told the media that the last rites of Parvathamma would be held in Nellore on Thursday. Minister for Energy Gottipati Ravi Kumar consoled her death, recalling that she had striven for the development of Prakasam district.

## KTR TO BRS LEADERS

# Tone up party amid transition

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtra Samithi working president KT Rama Rao on Wednesday gave a pep talk to party leaders and workers from Hanmakonda, offering a strategic outlook as the party transitions to its role as an opposition party.

In a meeting held at Telangana Bhavan, KTR reflected on the 24-year journey of BRS, of which the party had spent 14 years spearheading T movement before attaining and



being in power for 10 years. KTR emphasized the significance of the current phase, stating, "We are in a critical period of transition. Though we've been in power for a decade, this role in the Opposition is new to us. Many in the state are looking up to us now, and it is essen-

tial to strengthen the party from the grassroots level."

Highlighting the importance of party structure, KTR noted, "In one district committee alone, we can accommodate up to 800 individuals in various positions. We must prepare ourselves for the long haul, like the DMK party in

Tamil Nadu, which has dominated politics for 76 years. Our 24-year-old party must stand strong for the next 100 years." KTR took the opportunity to praise Vinay Bhaskar, a committed leader, and expressed surprise at his defeat. "Despite being readily accessible to people, Vinay Bhaskar's loss surprised me. Upon reflection, I realized we couldn't effectively communicate our achievements, including bringing IT companies and the Kakatiya Mega Textile Park to Warangal."

## Low pressure over West Central becomes less marked

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Tuesday's low-pressure area over West-Central & adjoining Northwest Bay of Bengal off north Andhra Pradesh-south Odisha coasts moved west north-westwards and has become less marked.

However, the associated cyclonic circulation now lies over southern Chhattisgarh & neighborhood and extends up to 5.8 km above mean sea level tilting southwards with height. Meteorological Centre said on Wednesday.

In a daily weather report here, it said that the southwest monsoon has been active over Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema. Under its influence, heavy rain is likely to occur at isolated places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next 24 hours.

Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and strong surface winds with speed ranging from 30-40 Kmph are likely to occur

at isolated places in North Coastal Andhra Pradesh during the next five days and in South Coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during the next 48 hours.

Strong surface winds with speed ranging from 30-40 Kmph is likely to occur at isolated places in South Coastal

Andhra Pradesh a n d Rayalaseema on September 27,28 and 29. Light to moderate rain or thundershowers is likely to occur at most places or at a few places in Coastal Andhra Pradesh a n d Rayalaseema during the next seven days.

Heavy rainfall occurred over Anakapalli, Bapatla, Guntur, Prakasam, Vizianagaram, West Godavari districts of Coastal Andhra Pradesh, YSR district of Rayalaseema and during the last 24 hours. Rainfall occurred at most places over Coastal Andhra Pradesh and at many places in Rayalaseema during the same period, the report added.

## One arrested in temple chariot torching case

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

One person was arrested by the police in connection with the burning of a temple chariot.

SP Jagadish told the media here on Wednesday that the chariot of Sri Rama temple at Hanakanahal village in Kanekal mandal in Rayadurg constituency was burnt on September 23.

The police registered a case and began an investigation. The police arrested Eeshwar Reddy in connection with the case. The SP said that the accused poured petrol on the temple chariot and set it on fire.

The SP ruled out any polit-



ical or communal angle in the temple chariot burning case. The SP said that Yerru Swamy Reddy and his brother had given the chariot to the temple in 2022. They spent Rs 20 lakh for making the chariot. The brothers did not collect donations for the making of the chariot but they spent their own money.

However, disputes erupted between the brothers on spending money for the chariot. Yerru Swamy Reddy's son Eeshwar Reddy burnt the chariot due to personal grudge on his paternal uncle. Accused Eeshwar Reddy confessed to the crime. Accused Eeshwar Reddy is the YSRCP activist.

The police are also investigating whether some others were involved in the burning of the temple chariot. The burning of chariot took place when the state was racking with the Tirumala laddu prasadam adulteration issue and Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu took the chariot burning issue seriously and instructed the police to conduct a comprehensive inquiry.

## Leopard spotted at a nursery in Kadiyam



PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

The leopard, which strayed into human habitations a few days ago, was spotted at a nursery in Kadiyam town on Wednesday. The forest officials warned the dwellers of Alamuru, Mandapeta and surrounding villages to beware of leopards as it is roaming at the area.

CCTVs set up by the forest officials captured the movement of the leopard at Diwan Cheruvu area, near here four days ago. However, the leopard was seen by people roaming at a nursery in Kadiyam town on Wednesday and the forest

officials also confirmed the presence of leopard in the area.

The forest officials collected the paw prints of the wildcat. People told the forest officials that they had seen the leopard on the Kadiyam-Veeravaram road. The forest officials were clueless about the leopard now.

There are numerous nurseries in the Kadiyam area and the forest officials feared that it had been hiding in one of the nurseries behind plants. The forest officials cautioned the people of the area to be alert and keep switching on lights on the outside of their houses.

ACROSS THE STATES



Teen poses with gun on social media; held

A 19-year-old was held for allegedly brandishing a gun on social media after being inspired by local criminals, police said on Wednesday. Police received information on Saturday that a person had posted a live video on his social media account with an illegal weapon, they said. Police traced Pritam Kumar's location and held him from the Ambedkar Nagar area on Tuesday. "During interrogation, Kumar disclosed that he was inspired by local criminals and one of them provided him with a pistol to create dominance in public," Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Ankit Chauhan said. The police recovered a pistol with a live cartridge from his possession. Further investigation is underway, the DCP said.



Odisha court allows polygraph test of cop

A court in the Odisha capital on Wednesday allowed the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to conduct a polygraph test on a suspended police officer in connection with the alleged torture of an army officer and sexual assault of his fiancée in custody. The court of Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate Somya Ranjan Nayak also granted permission to CID to take Dinakrushna Mishra, the suspended inspector-in-charge of Bharatpur police station, to Gandhinagar in Gujarat for conducting the polygraph test. Under polygraph test, also known as a lie detection test, a person's physiological responses to questions are analysed to determine whether the person is lying or telling the truth. Before granting permission to the CID for the test, the court sought consent of the accused police officer who said that he had no objection to being subjected to the scientific investigation. "I am innocent. I am not involved in the commission of the offences as alleged against me. I do not have any objection to undergo narco-analysis, polygraph or brain fingerprinting tests. I am giving my consent on my own accord and free will," the accused police officer told the court.



Delhi CM Atishi get 'Z' category security

Delhi Police has accorded 'Z' security cover to Atishi, days after she was sworn in as the chief minister of Delhi, official sources said on Wednesday. On Saturday, she was provided security cover, which include a pilot, in her convoy by the Delhi Police. According to protocol, Delhi's chief minister is entitled to 'Z' category security cover on the directions of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Delhi Police deploys 22 personnel in shifts for a 'Z' category protection. The 'Z' category security also include PSOs, escorts and armed guards. A police source said her security may be further reviewed by central agencies on the direction of MHA after threat assessment.

IF CONG COMES TO POWER EVEN BY MISTAKE

It will ruin Haryana with its infighting, warns Modi

PNS ■ SONIPAT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday launched a blistering attack on the Congress saying if it comes to power in Haryana even by mistake, stability and development will be at stake because of its "infighting" and this will ruin the state.

Addressing a poll rally in Gohana in this district for the October 5 assembly polls, he also lashed out at the Congress over the issue of reservation, alleging opposing reservation and hatred towards it are in its DNA. Slamming the main opposition party, he said Congress governments are known for "instability."

"In the past few years wherever it formed governments, chief ministers and ministers were involved in infighting. They have nothing to do with the pain



and problems of the people," Modi said as he cited the example of Congress-ruled Karnataka. "In Karnataka, its chief minister and deputy chief minister are busy in internal fighting. In Telangana and Himachal Pradesh, it is the same story," he

said in his second rally in the state, the first being over a week ago in Kurukshetra. Modi also mentioned about alleged infighting in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh when the Congress was in power there. "Therefore, Haryana has to be

cautious. Haryana has right over me. Remember, if Congress comes to power even by mistake, it will ruin Haryana due to its infighting," he warned. "The way infighting is rising in Congress, entire Haryana is watching," he said.

DOCTOR'S RAPE AND MURDER CASE

Records altered/falsely created

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Some records pertaining to the rape and murder case of a post-graduate trainee doctor at RG Kar medical college and hospital were "falsely created" and "altered" at the Tala police station in Kolkata, the CBI has alleged.

The central probe agency has told a special court in Kolkata that it has seized CCTV footage of the police station which has been sent to the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL), Kolkata, for examination, they said.

The CBI which interrogated Tala Police Station officer in charge Abhijit Mondal and medical college's former principal Sandip Ghosh in its custody informed the court that "new/additional" facts emerged in its probe showing that "some false records pertaining to the

CBI to special court in Kolkata



instant case were created/altered in PS Tala". The agency had arrested Monal on September 14 while Ghosh who was already in judicial custody in corruption was taken into custody in the rape and murder case on September 15 after the orders of the court, they said. The CBI had arrested prime suspect Sanjay Roy on August

10 on the next day of the gruesome incident after "his role in the commission of crime had already emerged".

It was alleged that an "unnecessary delay of two days" was caused in the seizure of his clothes and belongings that could have resulted in strong evidence against him, they said.

NCP to fight Maha polls with allies: Ajit

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Wednesday asserted that NCP would contest the upcoming assembly polls with allies BJP and Shiv Sena under the Mahayuti banner and there was no questioning of his party quitting the ruling coalition.

Speaking at the India Today Conclave here, the NCP chief also regretted the move to pit his wife Sunetra Pawar against his cousin sister and NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule in Baramati in the Lok Sabha polls.

Pawar's assertion about contesting the state polls together with his Mahayuti partners comes amid claims by the Shiv Sena (UBT) that the BJP and Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena are systematically working to oust his party from the ruling alliance.

Haryana will have Dalit deputy CM if INLD wins: Mayawati

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana will have a Dalit deputy chief minister if the BSP-INLD alliance comes to power after the October 5 polls, BSP supremo Mayawati said on Wednesday.

The Bahujan Samaj Party president said that if the alliance wins, Indian National Lok Dal leader Abhay Singh Chautala will be the chief minister and he will have two deputies.

Mayawati made the remarks while addressing a public gathering in Uchana in Jind on the occasion of 111th birth anniversary of former deputy prime minister late Devi Lal. She also raised the demand for a caste census.

"A deputy chief minister from the Dalit community will be from the BSP, while another will be from other backward classes or upper caste," she said.

"In the country's interest, I demand the Centre conduct a



caste census, which was kept on hold by the Congress government earlier and now by the present BJP-led Centre," she added. Abhay Chautala, who too was at the dias, announced a slew of welfare measures, such as free cooking gas cylinders, a cash dole of Rs 1,100 to households, free electricity, and implementation of the Old Pension Scheme, which his government will undertake if the alliance comes to power. If anyone falls ill and has to go for treatment in other states, he will get free treatment, Chautala said.

Yogi defines law and order: Dhankhar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Asserting that nothing was more important than law and order for investment, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Wednesday said Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath defines law and order.

He also said that Uttar Pradesh has transformed into "Uttam Pradesh" due to the synergy between Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision and Chief Minister Adityanath's execution.

Commending Adityanath, the vice president highlighted how Uttar Pradesh, once plagued with challenges, has been transformed into a beacon of progress and development.

"Nothing is more important for investment than law and order. Law and order defines democracy and the CM of UP Yogi Adityanath defines law and order," he noted.

He highlighted the same synergy is propelling India's transformation towards a 'Viksit Bharat'



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visits the stalls of Vietnam during the 2nd edition of Uttar Pradesh International Trade Show, in Gautam Buddha Nagar, UP

by 2047.

Inaugurating the second edition of UP International Trade Show at Greater Noida, the vice

president said India is now one of the most buoyant economies in the world and a favourite destination for global investment.

Dhankhar highlighted today India is a near USD four trillion economy that has eight per cent growth prospects for decades to come.

"India is now a global happening place and Uttar Pradesh, the state bubbling with activity," he said.

Lauding the country's infrastructure development, Dhankhar cited the addition of eight new airports annually, rapid expansion of metro systems and the daily construction of 28 km of highway.

He pointed to the 12 new industrial zones taking shape under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, which will boost manufacturing and position India to capitalise on emerging technologies like AI, electric mobility and semiconductors.

The vice president emphasised the significant advancements in India's infrastructure, noting we now have the world's second-largest metro network and the number of cities with airports has doubled from 70 to 140.

'GST, demonetisation used to clear roads for biz tycoons'

PNS ■ JAMMU

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday questioned the Centre's 'Make in India' project and alleged that GST and demonetisation were used as weapons to clear roads for business tycoons like Adani and Ambani.

Addressing an election rally in support of Congress-National Conference (NC) alliance candidates from 11 assembly segments of Jammu district, Gandhi accused the BJP of using central agencies like the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Income Tax (IT) to brow-beat opponents.

The Jammu district along with six other districts is going to polls in the third and final



phase of Jammu and Kashmir elections on October 1. "They (BJP) are talking about 'Make in India' and the defence industry but the reality is that all the contracts are going to people like Adani. An Israeli company is making weapons and Adani is pasting his label. "An Israeli company is making drones but the label is of Adani. They say it is 'Made in India' but how so? These are Israeli weapons made by Adani and not made in India and this

is the situation in the entire country," Gandhi said at the rally.

He alleged that the government is only working for billionaires like Adani and Ambani.

"The GST was a weapon to target Jammu entrepreneurs and small and medium businesses. The same way demonetisation was also used as a weapon.

"These are not policies but weapons and its target was to clear the roads for people like Adani and Ambani. The wrong GST implementation and demonetisation led to the destruction of lakhs of small businesses across the country," he said.

He said the airports, ports, roads, defence weapons and even the apple produced in Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh are controlled by Adani.

'Glitzy ads on Make in India cannot sugarcoat its failures'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday alleged that 10 years of the Narendra Modi government's 'Make in India' "stunt" has put a break on India's manufacturing and said that glitzy ads cannot sugarcoat its "colossal failures".

Kharge said that contrary to the BJP's high decibel propaganda, India's manufacturing sector has become de-industrialised.

"10 years of Modi Govt's Make in India Stunt has put Break in India's Manufacturing! 10 years ago, PM Narendra Modi crafted the slogan of 'Make in India' and claimed to build Aatm Nirbhar Bharat. Contrary to BJP's high decibel propaganda, India's manufacturing sector has got de-industrialised due to Modi government's FLOP policy initiatives,"



he said in a post on X.

Kharge listed five 'stark facts' which he claimed made India miss the bus on manufacturing.

"The average growth rate of the manufacturing sector between 2014-15 and 2023-24 is just 3.1% (BJP-NDA) whereas between 2004-05 and 2013-14, the average growth rate was 7.85% (Congress-UPA). The number of employees in factories grew at 6.2% annually during the Congress-UPA regime. This growth fell spectacularly to just 2.8% under the Modi government," the Congress chief said.

Dopamine does not cause placebo effect, says study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The placebo effect, or experiencing pain relief by anticipating it during treatment is not caused by dopamine -- the 'pleasure' brain chemical, according to a study.

Previous studies have suggested that dopamine-based reward and learning processes contribute to the placebo effect.

However, researchers from the University Hospital Essen, Germany, said that the exact role of dopamine in initially producing a placebo effect, and thereafter maintaining it, was unknown.

For their study, published in the journal PLoS Biology, the team recruited 168 healthy volunteers, who were divided into three groups.

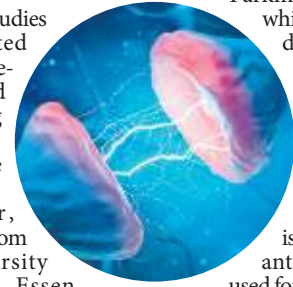
One group was given L-dopa, a drug used in treating Parkinson's disease, in which dopamine production is affected.

The drug is a precursor that converts into dopamine, once it enters the brain. The second group was administered sulpiride, an antipsychotic agent used for treating psychosis and schizophrenia. It works by suppressing the flow of dopamine, abnormal levels of which have been studied to contribute to psychotic symp-

oms. Both treatments have been proven in the past to change one's dopamine-related behaviour, such as motivation and social conduct, by altering levels of the brain chemical, the authors said. The third group was given an inactive pill, known to produce no effects.

All the participants were informed of the study's objectives. They were then exposed to painful heat on a small portion of their left forearm, which was treated with either a pain-relieving cream or an inactive cream prior to exposure. Their experiences were recorded as 'pain ratings.'

Contrary to previous findings, the researchers found that the drug-induced changes in dopamine levels did not alter a participant's expectation of pain relief.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## A new era for Sri Lanka

Dissanayake's presidency signals a departure from dynastic politics and centrist governance in the Island nation

Anura Kumara Dissanayake, the leader of Sri Lanka's left-wing Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), has been sworn in as the new president, marking a significant political shift for the island nation. A prominent leftist figure in Sri Lanka, Dissanayake's rise to power comes at a time when Sri Lanka is grappling with economic instability, post-war reconciliation challenges, and trust deficit with political parties. His presidency represents not only a new chapter for Sri Lanka but also has important regional implications, particularly for its closest neighbor, India. Dissanayake's election is symbolic of a larger political awakening in Sri Lanka. The country has been governed by a mix of family dynasties and centrist coalitions for decades. The Rajapaksa family's long tenure in power left behind a legacy of infrastructure development, but it also plunged Sri Lanka into deep economic turmoil, including a huge debt crisis. Dissanayake's presidency reflects a growing appetite for change among the Sri Lankan populace, particularly the youth,



who are seeking accountability, transparency, and a departure from nepotism and corruption. As a leftist, Dissanayake's ideology is rooted in socialist principles, advocating for wealth redistribution, land reforms, and a stronger welfare policies. His political platform laid emphasis on addressing economic inequalities, curbing corruption, and empowering marginalised communities. For a country with stark economic divisions and ethnic tensions, his approach signals a potential shift in how governance is conducted, focusing more on grassroots development and inclusivity. His presidency could usher in policies that prioritise social welfare over foreign investments. India

has long been a significant player in Sri Lanka's political and economic landscape. From the aftermath of the civil war to the island nation's economic collapse, India has consistently offered support, whether through financial aid, diplomatic backing, or humanitarian assistance. Dissanayake's presidency, however, may bring new challenges to this dynamic. Dissanayake may adopt a more cautious approach toward India. While he recognises the importance of India-Sri Lanka relations, he has also been vocal about maintaining Sri Lanka's sovereignty and avoiding over-reliance on any single foreign power. In his earlier speeches, Dissanayake has hinted at prioritising domestic economic reforms over international partnerships, potentially leading to more protectionist policies. This could mean that Indian investments might face more scrutiny. But it also means distancing from China. Dissanayake's presidency may open doors for deeper cooperation between the two countries, particularly in areas like agriculture, education, and social development. While India has been Sri Lanka's steadfast ally, regional dynamics involving China will also shape Dissanayake's foreign policy approach. Dissanayake has expressed concerns about Chinese debt-trap diplomacy which led to a lot of hardships for the people of Sri Lanka. It remains to be seen how he deals with China.

## India moves closer to 'one nation one election'

Momentum is building for simultaneous elections, but with constitutional and political challenges ahead, its successful implementation remains uncertain



KALYANI SHANKAR



The 'one-nation-one-poll' idea is moving towards Parliament and public debate, with the Modi government deciding to force the issue last week. The cabinet decided to bring a bill to Parliament in the coming session. The concept has been debated many times in the past, but no political consensus has evolved. The ruling BJP has been pushing to change the electoral system for a long time. Congress rejected the idea when approached by former Prime Minister A B Vajpayee and later BJP leader L K Advani in the past. The timing of the move was excellent, as it was on the day Modi completed 100 days in office in his third term last week. This is one of the critical electoral reforms the BJP has suggested in its manifestoes for about two decades. While the idea seems reasonable and doable, several questions have arisen. Is India ready for such a reform? Does Prime Minister Modi have the required two-thirds majority to get the bill to amend the Constitution passed in Parliament? Is there a political consensus? These are a few questions that need answers. The primary and most important thing is that the bill can only be passed by mobilising two-thirds of the majority in Lok Sabha. In the recent 2024 polls, the BJP was 40 short of a majority in the house

and could form the government only with the help of J.D. (U) and TeluguDesam. The BJP needs the support of the allies and also friendly parties. The BJP is for the reform as it would stop disruptions caused by the frequent changes in the election cycle. It would also help cut down on poll-related expenditures. Most Opposing parties reject the idea of simultaneous polls. They include the Congress, the Left parties, the Trinamool Congress, and regional and smaller parties. They reject it mainly to settle political scores and apprehension that they may benefit the BJP. Former President Ram Nath Kovind's committee to go into the issue has unanimously endorsed the proposal after eliciting opinions from political parties. Thirty-two parties supported the problem, and 15 rejected it. The panel also indicated that the Centre formed a panel to oversee the implementation of this proposal. Also, there should be a joint electoral roll for all elections so that voters will use the same list for national, state, and local polls. It would reduce errors in voter registration. The panel plans to talk with all the stakeholders. They also suggest having the votes in two parts. The first will be for Lok Sabha and

FORMER PRESIDENT RAM NATH KOVIND'S COMMITTEE HAS UNANIMOUSLY ENDORSED THE PROPOSAL AFTER ELICITING OPINIONS FROM POLITICAL PARTIES. THIRTY-TWO PARTIES SUPPORTED THE PROBLEM, AND 15 REJECTED IT

Assembly votes, and the second for local groups. Historically, from 1952, the first election that was held, to 1967, it was a synchronised poll. But this changed when Indira Gandhi came to power. She began invoking Article 356 to dismiss the Opposition-ruled governments and thus started the independent election. It is continuing till today. However, the bill faces constitutional, legal, and political challenges. The panel has recommended amending the last five articles of the Constitution to hold simultaneous polls in the country. They are amendments to Articles 83 and 172. The BJP does not have a majority, while constitutional amendment requires a two-thirds majority. Also, the Constitution is silent on whether polls should happen simultaneously. The ultimate test is how Modi would mobilise an adequate number of M Ps in Parliament. Second, a political consensus is yet to be made. The BJP has not tried to deal with or persuade the opposition parties to agree. The Opposition is in an aggressive mood and has yet to come on board because they believe simultaneous polls would mean an advantage for the BJP. Significantly bigger parties like Congress oppose it. The Left parties, Trinamool

Congress, Nationalist Congress Party and All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen have rejected the idea. The 15 opposing parties account for 205 MPs, while Modi requires 362 votes. A legal framework is also needed to meet the necessary changes for simultaneous polls. It could address problems with the state governments collapsing in the middle of the term and toppling games played by the Centre. Since the idea is good and checks the wastage of money and policy paralysis, as well as the occurrence of elections every two years, the Opposition must think twice before rejecting the idea. They should bring that for public debate if they have an alternate plan. On the whole, Modi is bringing this legislation to Parliament with a game plan. Win or lose, Modi gets the benefit. If he wins, it is the fulfilment of the poll promise. He can always claim that he brought the reform with good intentions if the bill is defeated, but the Opposition sabotaged it. While the bill may be delayed, it is still worth debating and finding ways to do so eventually. After all, election expenditure is also taxpayers' money. (The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

### PICTALK



A Zebra in an enclosure during the 150th anniversary celebration of Alipore Zoological Garden, in Kolkata

## Reflections from the Northeast: A call for peace amid violence

The deepening communal rivalry in Manipur demands urgent attention, dialogue and reconciliation for the future of this region

As part of my responsibilities as a Member of Parliament, I have had the opportunity to visit Northeast India to expand the community development programmes initiated by the Government of India. Given the evolving turbulence in the region, I find myself reflecting on those visits, struggling to reconcile my previous perceptions with the current unrest.



During my visits, I had the pleasure of meeting several tribes across different states in the Northeast. The warmth and hospitality of the people were touching. In many villages, I was welcomed with such affection that it left a lasting impression. The people of this picturesque region are generally peaceful, cultured, talented, and well-educated. Manipur, in particular, has a rich cultural heritage, with its people being tolerant and possessing high aesthetic values. Each tribe follows its traditions with pride and devotion, which I found remarkable. Traveling all the way from Kerala, I felt completely at home. However, it deeply saddens me to witness the current state

of Manipur, which has become a center of violence and atrocities committed by one community against another. This heartbreaking situation stems from a decision on April 20, 2023, when the Manipur High Court directed the state government to "consider the request of the Meitei community to be included in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list." This ruling enraged the Kuki community, who feared that granting the Meiteis ST status would allow them to purchase land in the hilly areas reserved for tribes. Tensions escalated, and the Meitei community became increasingly vulnerable to attacks by the Kukis. I view this crisis as more of a communal rivalry than a political or terrorist conflict.

In light of this, I believe that religious leaders, particularly those from the Church, such as the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI), as well as influential Cardinals and Archbishops, should step in to initiate a dialogue with the Central Government. Their involvement could help mediate and bring peace to this disturbed region. They could also appeal to Kuki rebel leaders to surrender their weapons and work towards eradicating illegal poppy cultivation, thereby contributing to lasting peace in Manipur. We've seen such successful strategies of surrender and reconciliation in other states like Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh in the past. At the same time, the authorities' seeming apathy towards those responsible for organized crime in Manipur raises concerns about incompetence or vested interests. Many criminals have fled the region, and it is crucial for the authorities to trace them and ensure they face the legal process. Additionally, those who have lost property or land due to the conflict must be compensated by the gov-

ernment. Delaying justice will only embolden the perpetrators and prolong the violence. The citizens of India expect prompt and decisive action to restore peace in Manipur. The region's significant involvement in opium cultivation has allowed certain groups to amass both wealth and power, fueling the cycle of violence. It is disheartening that despite their Christian faith, some are failing to adhere to the teachings of the Church and the laws of the land. Their actions not only perpetuate violence but also set a dangerous precedent for the younger generation, leading to a rise in drug addiction and moral degradation. The people of the Northeast yearn for peace, and the entire country prays for an end to this violence. The insurgency and militancy must cease. At this critical juncture, my heartfelt plea is that the Kukis, find it within themselves to share love, compassion, and respect for other tribes, so they may live together in peace. (The writer is a former Member of Parliament; views are personal)



RICHARD HAY

### MPOX TRIGGERS HEALTH ALERT

Madam — It is with reference to the news "India reports first case of Mpox clade 1 strain" September 24. Recently in India one Mpox case has been diagnosed in Kerala which matches with clade 1b strain infection which has triggered WHO public health emergency alert. While another person was found to have Mpox infection in Delhi earlier this month, it was clade 2 infection. This led to the WHO sending its highest level of alarm and declaring Mpox as a public health emergency of International concern (PHEIC). India has reported at least 32 Mpox cases and one death since 2022 when the infection was first detected in the country. Mpox is highly contagious and can spread through close contact with an infected person or contaminated materials. It can also be transmitted through contact with infected animals. The Health Ministry has to place strong emphasis on early detection, swift containment and preventing any potential outbreaks within the country. Four years ago a 20 years old youth was diagnosed with first Covid 19 infection in Kerala who returned from China. Since 2018, 22 people have died of Nipah virus infection in Kerala and its outbreaks are becoming more frequent. Indian Health Ministry and Kerala Government should enhance surveillance and establish more modern clinical laboratories for early diagnosis of Mpox and other deadly infectious diseases in Kerala. P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

### KANGANA'S LOAN ALLEGATION

Madam — Ref: "Himachal Pradesh Government takes loans and gives it to Sonia, alleges BJP MP Kangana Ranaut" (September 23). The recent claims made by BJP MP Kangana Ranaut against the Himachal Pradesh government have stirred a political controversy. During a BJP membership provision drive in the State, she alleged that the current government that the Congress party heads divert the loans given by the State to Sonia

## Historic chess triumph for India



India's chess masters have created history by winning team gold medals in both men's and women's competitions at the 45th International Chess Federation (FIDE) Chess Olympiad in Budapest. In addition to winning the team championships, India also walked away with four individual gold medals as the tournament wrapped up in the Hungarian capital. Wins for Gukesh Dommaraju, Praggnanandhaa and Arjun Erigaisi sealed gold in the men's event, known as the Open event, while Harika Dronavalli, Vaishali

Rameshbabu, Divya Deshmukh, Vantika Agrawal, and Tania Sachdev won their respective games to secure gold in the women's competition. Gukesh, Erigaisi, Deshmukh and Agrawal bagged individual gold medals on their respective boards. The feat was termed as extraordinary. It feels like a magical time for India. The men's team won 27 of their 44 games, losing just once and drawing six. Their final round of matches was against Slovenia, whom they defeated 3.5-0.5, while the women's team beat Azerbaijan with the same score. Gukesh, who has also qualified for the final of the World Chess Championship in November, said he was delighted that his team got over the line in a dominant fashion after having some close misses in the past. Eighteen-year-old Deshmukh was a standout performer in the women's competition and remained undefeated, winning seven of her 11 games and drawing four. Nikhil CK Subramaniam | Chennai

Gandhi leaving "hollow" the coffers of the State. From the above assertion, it was clear that Ranaut feels that the finances within the State are poor because of the high level of corruption and that the expensive behaviour of the Congress party during elections is not explained. She called upon people not to support the regime that misappropriated the funds meant for disaster relief. These appeals speak not just to the extent of political contestation today but also point toward bigger issues of governance and accountability in the state of Himachal Pradesh. Garima Singh | Kanpur

### LEADERSHIP CHANGE IN SRI LANKA

Madam — Apropos to "Dissanayake sworn in as Lanka's new President" published on September 24, here is my response. Sri Lankans swung to the extreme left by voting Anura Kumara Dissanayake, a leader with spotless image and humble origins. He will have to understand the nuances of this verdict, which means economic revival and leg-up to federalism.

His main fight would be against corruption, nepotism and reckless spending by the political establishment, which led to the 2022 economic fiasco. He will have to address all that but protect people from vulnerable sections of society. For economic revival he will have to take along the IMF, China as well as India. New President is expected to be ideologically closer to China, Sri Lanka's biggest investor and creditor. International spotlight would also be on Sri Lanka because of its geographical location, right in the middle of the Indian Ocean, as they will look at how China plays its cards now. The new President has said that he would not like to be sandwiched between two big powers and this could be a positive sign for India. As far as India is concerned, it is going through a challenging phase as far as its neighbours are concerned, it should make all efforts to build strong ties with the island nation. Bal Govind | Noida

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

## THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF GRATITUDE

This simple yet profound act of thanking others can deepen our connection with God



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Our natural inclination is to see faults in others. This has to do mostly with our egos; we feel better about ourselves. We could also be feeling insecure or jealous, etc., when we do that. This harms us, if we communicate such feelings either by words or gestures. Others are not pleased about it. Contrarily, if we look for something to appreciate in others or thank them for something, we make friends. It is so logical. Let us not forget that we are small souls, who are intrinsically ignorant, helpless and insecure. But we have been given brains to seek help to get over these shortcomings, especially from God. Let me take up how we can gain by saying thanks to others. We don't become a debtor, if someone has done us some favour, except when it is a loan.

Even then we should be very thankful. Our relationships with others will become sound. Others will feel that this person is naturally grateful – a great quality to endear ourselves to others. We, ourselves, will feel good, having done the right thing. Wouldn't we wish to be thanked if we do some favour? Rather we all expect to be thanked. So shouldn't we thank others whenever an opportunity presents itself? I am very serious about thanking others. Rather I am looking for opportunities to thank. A service is provided, even against payment; still, I thank you, which is well appreciated. Someone has given me time, and does not make me wait, I thank. If a loan is given by a bank, I show my gratitude even if they have oversecured themselves. Someone says encouraging words, I thank them profusely.

A gift, no matter what the value is, brings out heartfelt thanks from



me. My help—those who serve me, are thanked whenever they do something extra or better. This attitude has brought me enormous goodwill from those who I deal with. I register in their minds as a good person, who should be helped. This thanking propensity has especially brought me close to my Lord. I routinely pray for guidance. I have realised that my knowledge is extremely limited. Most importantly, I have no idea about what the future will bring; God does. He guides me through intuitions, and mediums like my family members, friends, etc.

God is very forthcoming in this matter because He is not taking away someone else's rights. The next reason for thanking God is the help He provides frequently. Nobody has to tell me that I am very small and mostly helpless. God must help, therefore, I pray whenever my efforts/duties take me only this far. God is very merciful; He helps if what I seek is 'dharma' (according to dharma). I deserve also to remain in God's shelter by doing spiritual practices like 'darshan' (seeing) a photo of my Lord, chanting Krishna and Ohm, doing 'namaskar' (obeisance), and thanking of course. I am slowly becoming positive from a very negative person. I am beginning to see the positive side of others and, of course, life; there is so much good in life.

By habit, we become judgemental, hateful, etc., which hurts the self mainly. Thanking is just one spiritual act; there are so many. The idea is to catch the attention of God somehow. When we do that, God becomes interested in us. He has so much to give, being the owner of everything. He does not need anything from us, and we cannot do any favour to Him. Isn't God the Creator, which He manages by Himself? The conclusion is: to develop a habit of thanking and turning positive.

(The writer is a spiritual guide; views expressed are personal)

## Molestation incident in Bhubaneswar sparks fury



SIDHARTH MISHRA

An incident of molestation inside a Bhubaneswar police station has sent shockwaves across the country and caused outrage among the Fauji fraternity



A most despicable and obnoxious incident has taken place in Bhubaneswar, which till the incident occurred was believed to be the safest place for people especially women. The incident involving molestation inside a police station of an Army veteran's daughter and a serving officer's fiancé has caused a turmoil within the community of the uniformed forces, which the government would find difficult to douse. The task has become more difficult with the IT Cell of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its troll soldiers adding fuel to the fire. Social media influencer Rishi Bagree, known outpost of the IT Cell, posted some videos of the incident trying to put the blame on victim for inviting outrage of her modesty by the cops.

While this video may have had thumps up from the IT Cell followers but it has further added to the anger within the Fauji (defence) community. A video released on the Daughter's Day last Sunday by a Fauji daughter and filmmaker Nidhi Sharma, admonished likes of Bagree on micro blog platform X saying, "Those who're outraged by the 'overconfident, arrogant' Army Daughter; who've convinced themselves she deserved to be assaulted, molested and flashed inside a police station because she dared the cops to do their job, and those what are now character assassinating her, need to know this. Fauji kids are no pushovers! And nor is the Fauji Fraternity. We stand together today."



IT'S TIME FOR THE PEOPLE IN THE POSITION OF POWER, WHO MAY BE YET TO REALISE THE ANGST THE INCIDENT HAS CAUSED AMONG PEOPLE IN GENERAL AND THE FAUJIS IN PARTICULAR, TO PUT THEIR EARS TO THE GROUND

The tweet has garnered more than 42K views. More damaging for the establishment is the fact that it has been circulated in the several thousand WhatsApp groups of the Fauji community, where the pain of a Fauji child being first molested and then berated is being severally expressed.

It's time for the people in the position of power, who may be yet to realise the angst the incident has caused among people in general and the Faujis in particular, to put their ears to the ground. The degree of anger is particularly high among the young officers and the armed forces brass has been working overtime to assuage the hurt feelings.

The petition before the Chief Justice of Odisha High Court was filed by the General Officer Commanding (GOC), Madhya Bharat Area, who on learning about the incident travelled from his headquarters in Madhya Pradesh to the Bhubaneswar for the purpose. This shows the enormity of concern which the brass had following the knowledge of the anger seething through the rank and file of armed forces.

In an extra-ordinary move to reach out the rank and file, a message purported to have been

released by the GOC was also circulated through the various WhatsApp groups explaining the course of action and the relief it brought for the harassed officer and his fiancé, including grant of bail by Odisha High Court. The message also gave the information that the police did its best to not let bail be listed for hearing and the High Court judge pulled up the Deputy Registrar for the oversight. This must have reassured the young officers.

However, this outreach initiative of the Army brass to keep the simmering anger under control would be thwarted if the IT Cell of the ruling party is left to its whims and fancies. Remember them calling the agitating farmers anti-nationals and terrorists. What did it end in, BJP being routed not just in Punjab assembly polls but all the farmer dominated seat in north India during the last Lok Sabha polls.

The Bhubaneswar incident came just a few days after the equally despicable incident in Indore. Earlier this month, two Army officers and their women friends were assaulted by six person at a picnic spot near Mhow cantonment. One of the women friends was also gang raped.

Though swift action followed and police arrested the alleged accused, what made the Fauji

angry was the local Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police announcing that a departmental enquiry has been ordered against the officers too. Why should police speak for an internal matter of the Army?

These incidents are adding to the long fermenting anger caused by the unresolved issues of one-rank-one-pension, Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS), Agneepath scheme and pay disparity among others. While the Narendra Modi government has emphasized national security and military prowess in its public messaging, many Indian Army officers feel that their professional concerns, particularly related to pay, promotions, and long-term welfare, have not been adequately addressed.

This has created a growing sense of disillusionment among the officer cadre. The government must realise that this disillusionment could get critical if its social media handles promote trolling of the Fauji families falling victim to civilian callousness. The government has lost faith of the Kisans, it should not lose trust of the Jawans.

(Sidharth Mishra is author & president Centre for Reforms, Development and Justice; views expressed are personal)

## Empowering women and nourishing children: Fight against unhealthy snacks

Through innovative interventions, families can be motivated to return to nutritious home-cooked meals

A couple of years ago, when CHETNA, a not-for-profit working on health and nutrition awareness among women, adolescents and children, was conducting a survey, it found a large number of children living in the urban slum of Vasna, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, almost addicted to packaged potato chips and other unhealthy snacks commonly found at grocery stores. They often skipped home cooked meals, preferring to eat such ultra processed food. As a consequence, many of them became undernourished and anaemic. One of the strategies CHETNA adopted to wean children away from packaged food, was to demonstrate how traditional Gujarati snacks and complementary foods like



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

shero, sukhdandi lads could be tasty as well as nutritious. Cooking them in the presence of mothers and caregivers helped them learn new ways of improving the nutrition levels of their children. For five weeks the underweight children of 1 to 5 years were also fed supplementary food which had protein, fat and iron. The CHETNA team visited families thrice a week at a fixed time and followed a

30-minute approach'. This meant ensuring that the child sat down for 30 minutes while caregivers fed them home cooked food. For each child, there were 36 home visits. Within seven to nine months of the intervention, the children were eating only home-cooked meals. To increase their calorie count, recipes from a mix of wheat flour and Bengal gram were also added to their menu. Slowly calories along with the other nutrients the children were consuming increased. At the end of nine months 166 initially underweight children were weighed of which 36% of children were found to be fully nourished. All 35 children who were eating only food packets started eating home-cooked food. To sustain this habit, CHETNA

hit upon the idea of skilling the mothers and other women from economically marginalized communities living in these slums to also be able to gain financially from making such nutritious snacks. In August 2023, they began training women living in these slums to do both— wean their children away from unhealthy snacks to homemade goodies and become nutri-entrepreneurs at the same time. The first batch of 25 women began with a few lessons on diets, the importance of healthy eating and adding nutrition to snacks. Besides enhancing their nutrition education, they were advised on packaging, marketing and business management. A kitchen was set up in the slum and the women were told



about the importance of being professional and maintaining hygiene. They learnt to make nutritious sweets like date laddoos, traditional khadi made from millets like ragi and beetroot shakarparas as well as savoury puffed millet and nachos. Women began selling their products to neighbours as well as shopkeepers. In the first three months of 2024, the 25 women were able to sell about 60,000 kgs of home-

made snacks. They are now earning Rs 4000 to Rs 5000 a month. For 35-year-old Champaben Makwana, a homemaker and mother of two, becoming a nutri-entrepreneur has made her dream of being financially independent come true. Her monthly income of Rs 5000 has given her the confidence to spread her wings and venture into online business through WhatsApp. She is not only able to contribute to the family's financial stability but more importantly, also stop her son's recurrent stomach aches by substituting packaged snacks with homemade alternatives. Becoming a nutri-entrepreneur has turned around the life of 18-year-old Bhavna Sargara. After failing in English, Maths and Science in

her 10th Board exam, Sargara lost hope and became directionless. The entrepreneurial training opened new doors and innovative culinary techniques and recipes have enabled her to earn Rs 5000 a month. This increase in income has given her the freedom to enrol in tuition classes to fulfil her educational aspirations. She is preparing to take her 12th Board exams. Additionally, she is also providing financial help to her family and encouraging her younger siblings to continue their studies. It is well known that ultra processed food such as chips and noodles contain unhealthy levels of fats, salt and sugar. One of the reasons for this is that emulsifiers, additives, preservatives and stabilizers that are not usu-

ally used in home kitchens can be found in these products to prolong their shelf life. Studies have shown that consumption of these contributes to increasing the risk of developing type -2 diabetes besides other lifestyle-related diseases. The biggest impact of aggressive marketing of unhealthy food products is among communities belonging to the lowest 20% income group who spend 5.5% on packaged foods, according to studies. However, the CHETNA initiative shows that all that is packaged does not have to be unhealthy. It can be nutritious and healthy. All it takes is will and nutrition education.

(The writer is a journalist writing on development and gender. The views are personal)

IN BRIEF



Reliance Power subsidiary Rosa Power prepays Rs 850-cr debt

Rosa Power, a subsidiary of Reliance Power, has prepaid Rs 850 crore of its debt to Singapore-based lender Varde Partners, sources said. Following Reliance Power's achievement of zero debt, Rosa Power is now on track to become debt-free. The company aims to settle its remaining debt in the next quarter, completing the process before the end of the current financial year, they said. Rosa Power, which operates a 1,200 MW coal-based thermal power plant in Rosa village near Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh, has Varde Partners as its sole lender. The strengthening of Rosa Power's balance sheet, along with a recent Rs 1,525 crore preferential issue, will support Reliance Power in exploring new business opportunities, particularly in the renewable energy sector. Reliance Power's board approved the preferential issue on Monday, with over Rs 600 crore coming from its promoter company, Reliance Infrastructure, and the remaining Rs 900 crore from Authum Investment and Infrastructure Ltd and Sanatan Financial Advisory Services.



M&B Engineering files draft papers for Rs 653-cr IPO

M&B Engineering Ltd on Wednesday filed draft papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to mobilise Rs 653 crore through an initial public offering (IPO). The proposed IPO is a mix of fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 325 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of Rs 328 crore by promoters, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP). At present, promoters hold 100 per cent stake in the company. Proceeds from the fresh issue to the extent of Rs 63.9 crore will be used for purchasing equipment and machinery for the company's manufacturing facilities, Rs 60 crore for payment of debt, Rs 110 crore to meet the company's working capital requirements and the remaining funds will be allocated towards general corporate purposes. The Gujarat-based company's total borrowings stood at Rs 204.84 crore as of March 2024, the draft papers showed.



AWS to provide cloud computing services

Amazon Web Services (AWS) India has been selected by the Public Sector Bank Alliance to offer cloud computing services to the country's public sector lenders. Public Sector Bank Alliance (PSBA) is an umbrella organisation formed by 12 public sector banks and acts as a nodal body to deliver end-to-end technology-enabled banking services to them. Its partner banks include SBI, UCO Bank, Union Bank, PNB, Central Bank of India, Canara Bank, Bank of Baroda, Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra, Indian Bank, Punjab & Sind Bank, and Indian Overseas Bank. "This empanelment will enable the public sector banks to seamlessly adopt AWS, the world's most comprehensive and broadly adopted cloud, through PSBA's Community Cloud Services, without a need to create separate procurement processes for their cloud computing requirements," a company statement said. AWS will provide services through its managed service providers (MSPs) Orient Technologies and Hitachi Systems, it added.



Chief economists bullish on India, cautious optimism for global recovery: Survey

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A majority of chief economists have shown a cautious optimism about the global economy with India's robust performance making South Asia the best performer worldwide, a survey showed on Wednesday.

"Easing inflation and strong global commerce are fuelling cautious optimism for recovery but elevated debt levels are becoming a growing concern in both advanced and developing economies," the World Economic Forum said in its latest Chief Economists Outlook. The report, based on a survey of leading chief economists from across the world, highlighted that debt

levels and fiscal challenges are placing significant pressure on economies worldwide leaving them vulnerable to future crises.

A growing concern is a potential fiscal squeeze, where rising debt-servicing costs limit governments to invest in essential sectors such as infrastructure, education and healthcare.

In developing economies, 39 per cent of economists expect an increase in defaults over the next year, the WEF said. Regionwise, the survey found that nearly 90 per cent of chief economists anticipate moderate or strong growth in 2024 and 2025 in the US reflecting confidence in a 'soft landing' after a period of tight monetary policy.

'Dairy is sensitive sector; no plans to open up in any FTA'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday said dairy is a sensitive sector in India as it involves livelihood issues of small farmers and there are no plans to give duty concessions under any Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in this area.

He said India has not given any duty concessions in the dairy sector even to Switzerland and Norway under the EFTA (European Free Trade Association) trade pact, which was signed in March.

With Australia also, he said, the sector was discussed but India clearly conveyed the sensitivities involved in this area.

"Our average holding with the farmer is small. It is 2-3 acre farm with 3-4 livestock whereas Australia's farm and dairy farms are both very large and it would be near impossible for these large and small farms to compete with each other on a common footing."

"We had discussed this issue even three years ago and on earlier occasions also, and dairy is such a sensitive sector that in any of our FTAs across the world, we have not been able to



"Our average holding with the farmer is small. It is 2-3 acre farm with 3-4 livestock whereas Australia's farm and dairy farms are both very large and it would be near impossible for these large and small farms to compete with each other on a common footing"

open up the sector with duty concessions," Goyal told reporters in a joint press conference at Adelaide with Australian Trade Minister Don Farrell.

The minister is in Australia for bilateral talks to promote trade and investments.

He said the sector is open for trade but there are certain customs duties imposed on that.

"We have neither opened up dairy for Europe nor planning to open up...nor have we opened it with Switzerland and Norway with whom we have recently signed EFTA trade

agreement," he said adding "This is the agreement that Switzerland has signed without any component of dairy in it".

Goyal was responding to a question on India's hesitancy on removing barriers to Australian exports in sensitive sectors like dairy.

On CECA talks, the Indian minister said that both the countries are aware of each other's sensitivities.

"So any issue that I can see Australia will be uncomfortable with, I would not like to push, press on that, and likewise our approach has been that if some-

thing is very sensitive to a large Indian population given our current status of development, Australia has been very gracious in their understanding of our sensitivities," he said.

Farrell said that Australia has a lot to offer to India in agriculture, as well as the emerging sectors.

Asked about the progress of talks on CECA, the Australian minister said that in terms of agriculture, "we are talking about the removal of all of the tariffs that weren't removed at the last process, so we've made significant progress".

Vedanta board to consider 4th interim dividend on Oct 8

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mining major Vedanta Ltd on Wednesday said its board will meet on October 8 to consider and approve the fourth interim dividend for 2024-25.

The record date for the purpose of determining the entitlement of the equity shareholders for the fourth dividend, if declared, is being fixed as October 16, 2024, the mining conglomerate said in an exchange filing. So far, the Anil Agarwal-led entity has approved a total dividend of Rs 13,474 crore for 2024-25.

On September 2, the company's board approved the third interim dividend of Rs 20 per share for the current financial year, taking the total dividend payout for FY25 to Rs 13,474 crore.

Vedanta fixed September 10 as the date for the purpose of payment of dividend.

No change in norms for Chinese investments in India: DPIIT Secy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investments from China into India are governed by the existing foreign direct investment (FDI) policy and as of now, there is no change in that, a top government official said on Wednesday.

FDI applications from countries sharing land border with India like China have to mandatorily seek government approval for all sectors. This policy was issued in April 2020.

"The policy with regard to investments (from China) is laid down in the press note 3, so we continue with that policy. As of now, there is no change in that policy. In case if any change comes in, we will let you know," Secretary in the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Secretary Amardeep Singh Bhatia told reporters here.

He was replying to a question about Chinese investments into India in terms of

promoting Make in India.

Bhatia also said the sentiments among foreign investors for India is positive.

"Investors are very enthusiastic about investing in India," he added.

In 2020, the government made its approval mandatory for FDI from countries that share landed border with India.

Countries that share land borders with India are China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, and Afghanistan.

On July 30, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has said there is no rethinking in the government to support foreign direct investments (FDI) from China.

These remarks assume significance as the pre-Budget Economic Survey on July 22 had suggested that instead of importing goods, focusing on FDI from China seems more promising.

Gold hits fresh all-time high of Rs 77,850

Silver soars Rs 3,000

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices surged Rs 900 to hit a fresh record high of Rs 77,850 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday amid a rally in precious metal rates in the global markets, according to All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 76,950 per 10 grams on Tuesday.

Silver soared Rs 3,000 to Rs 93,000 per kg on fresh offtake by industrial units and coin makers. It had ended at Rs 90,000 per kg in the previous close.

Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity also climbed Rs 900 to hit all-time high level of Rs 77,500 per 10 grams. The metal had finished at Rs 76,600 per 10 grams in the previous session.

Gold prices in the international markets is likely to surpass USD 3,200 per ounce in the near future, Surendra



Mehta, National Secretary at India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA), said.

"Gold's bull run continues as prices hit yet another all-time high at Rs 76,000 per 10 gm on futures."

"Prices remain supported by a weaker dollar, expectation of more rate cuts from global central banks, safe haven demand, and inflow of ETF funds," Pranav Mer, VP - Research (Commodity & Currency) at BlinkX and JM Financial, said.

According to traders, persistent buying by jewellers

and a strong trend in the international markets were among the factors that aided the rally in gold prices.

On the other hand, in the futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for October delivery hit a fresh record high of Rs 997, or 1.33 per cent, to Rs 76,000 per 10 gram on the exchange.

However, silver contracts for December delivery declined Rs 419, or 0.45 per cent, to Rs 91,974 per kg.

Globally, Comex gold is trading 0.15 per cent higher at USD 2,681.10 per ounce.

Ship-building clusters to come up in five states: Sonowal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ship-building and ship repair clusters will be established in five states including Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) Sarbananda Sonowal said on Wednesday.

Recognizing the strategic importance of shipbuilding and ship repair, the ministry is developing dedicated clusters in Maharashtra, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Gujarat, Sonowal said while highlighting the major accomplishments of his ministry in the first 100 days of the third term of the NDA government. In the next five years, the ministry projects container handling to reach an impres-



sive 40 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent unit), creating 2 million job opportunities across the country.

Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) alone will scale up its handling capacity from the current 6.6 million TEUs to 10 million, he added.

The minister also said that 3,900 acres of land has been allotted in Deendayal Port Authority (DPA) and V. O. Chidambaram Port Trust (VoCPA) for setting up of

hydrogen manufacturing hubs.

This will attract more than Rs 5 lakh crore worth of investment in the coming years, he added.

He also said JNPA is going to become the first Indian Port to attain a Container Handling Capacity of 10 million TEUs in the coming months.

Sonowal said International Container Transshipment Port (ICTP) at Galathea Bay, Great Nicobar Island, which will serve as a major transshipment hub.

After 25 years since the establishment of Kamarajar Port, the addition of Vadhan Port marks a significant milestone in India's maritime journey, alongside the recent notification of Galathea Bay as a major port," he said.

CAG plans its own AI for fast writing of audit reports

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Comptroller and Auditor General of India G C Murmu on Wednesday said the supreme audit institution is in the process of developing its own Artificial Intelligence (AI) protocol for faster writing of its audit reports. "For data analysis and various other things, we have our own system in place...for the writing (audit reports) we have now started, so we have to see," he said here. "Data is collected by our auditors at the field from the records...in some cases, we have to reclassify according to our requirement."

RBI DG SWAMINATHAN TO BANKERS

'Know your districts well' to deepen financial inclusion

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Having achieved success in improving access to banking services, there is a need to improve the usage of facilities, Reserve Bank Deputy Governor Swaminathan J has said.

The career commercial banker-turned-central banker exhorted bank officials to know their districts very well in the pursuit of the aim.

"India has made significant strides in enhancing 'access' to banking and financial services, reaching even the most remote areas. However, there is still considerable ground to cover in deepening financial inclusion. This requires greater focus on promoting 'usage' and improving the 'quality' of services," he said.

Addressing the Conference of Lead District Managers and District Development Managers in Hubballi last Friday, Swaminathan said it is imperative for bankers to follow the maxim of "know your district well" by having a deep understanding.

The district profiles should include detailed demographic

information, agricultural trends, banking penetration and activities, industrial profiles, and the various performance metrics under the Annual Credit Plans, he said.

Bankers should use data analytics and field surveys to gain insights into economic activities, local credit needs, and barriers to credit access, he added.

"A holistic understanding of your district will enable you to identify gaps in financial inclusion, assess the credit needs of different sectors, and design targeted strategies for intervention. It will also help you to identify the root causes of the various issues observed in your districts," he told the bankers.

The sound understanding of a district by a banker should lead to a granular bottom-up approach on creating a credit plan, he said.

"By staying attuned to your districts, you can provide invaluable feedback to the SLBCs, enabling the formulation of targeted and effective credit plans, and fostering sustainable economic growth and development," he said.



AI global market may touch \$990 bn with 40-55% growth rate

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The global market for artificial intelligence (AI)-related products and services is expected to grow at an annual rate of 40-55 per cent, and can reach up to USD 990 billion by 2027, a report has said.

Bain & Company's 5th annual Global Technology Report said AI workloads could grow about 25-35 per cent per year through 2027.

"Bain estimates that the total addressable market for AI-related hardware and software will grow between 40 per cent and 55 per cent annually for at least the next three years, reaching between USD 780 billion and USD 990 billion by 2027.

Fluctuations in supply and demand will create volatility along the way, but a long-term, durable trajectory seems like it is here to

stay," it said.

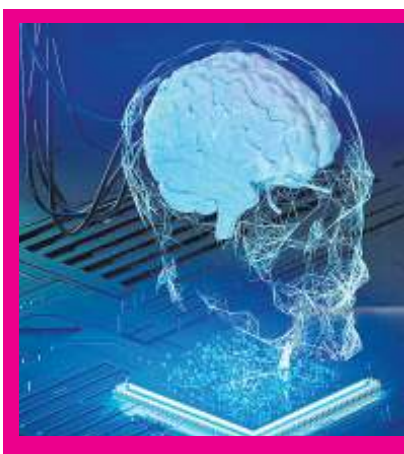
As AI expands, the need for computing power will radically expand the scale of large data centers over the next five to 10 years, it added.

"AI will spur growth in data centers, from today's 50-200 megawatts to more than a gigawatt.

means that if large data centers cost between USD 1 billion and USD 4 billion today, they could cost between USD 10 billion and USD 25 billion five years from now," the report said.

In addition to the need for more data centers, the AI-driven surge in demand for graphics processing units (GPUs) could increase total demand for certain upstream components by 30 per cent or more by 2026, the report projected.

However, these trends could trigger a scarcity of semiconductors, it said.



Fluctuations in supply and demand will create volatility along the way, but a long-term, durable trajectory seems like it is here to stay," it said.

"If data center demand for current-generation GPUs were to double by 2026, not only would suppliers of key components need to

increase their output, but makers of chip packaging components would need to nearly triple their production capacity to keep up with

demand," it noted, adding that large data centers could drive costs to USD 10-25 billion in five years.

AI's disruptive growth will continue to reshape the tech sector, as innovation spreads beyond the hyperscalers to smaller cloud service providers (CSPs), enterprises, sovereigns, software vendors, and beyond, the report said.

Storage technology will advance to accommodate the needs of generative AI, while the growing need for data preparation and mobility will spur growth in data management software.

The report further said tech services will be in high demand in the medium term while customers lack the skills and expertise needed for AI deployment and data modernisation, but over time, significant portions of tech services will be replaced by software.



# BHOOL BHIULAIYAA 3: MANJULIKA'S 'DARWAZA' TO OPEN THIS DIWALI

The anticipation is over! *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*, the 'main element' has been revealed and it comes with the thrilling tagline, 'Darwaza Khulega Iss Diwali'—setting the stage for a cinematic experience that will leave audiences on the edge of their seats. An Anees Bazmee film and initiated by the visionary Bhushan Kumar, this highly anticipated Diwali blockbuster promises to continue the legacy of the beloved franchise.

Following the massive success of its predecessors, *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3* brings a fresh storyline that's bound to capture hearts. With its spine-chilling elements, witty dialogues and catchy music, this Diwali release is all set to light up screens nationwide.



## Alia Bhatt's shocking Met Gala revelation target trolls

Remember the time when Ananya Panday became the subject of memes for discussing her challenges as a celebrity child? In a past interview, she revealed that her father, Chunky Panday, has never appeared in a Dharma film or been a guest on *Koffee With Karan*. Ananya continued by saying that each person experiences their own path and challenges. Siddhant Chaturvedi stated before jokingly, "Jahan humare sapne poore hote hain, wahan inka struggle shuru hota hai (Where our dreams come true, their struggle begins)." This humorous remark still lingers in our memories. Another star kid is gaining attention for her difficult journey. Well, this time it's Alia Bhatt.

Alia had appeared on an episode of *The Great Indian Kapil Show* with Kapil Sharma to promote her upcoming movie *Jigra*. In a segment of extra footage released post-episode, Archana Puran Singh, a regular guest, questioned Alia about managing bathroom breaks in her stunning Met Gala 2024 ensemble: an elaborate saree with a dramatic train designed by Sabyasachi. Alia replied, "I didn't go to the washroom for like 6 hours." The comment made by Alia has now turned into material for trolls and their jokes.

Under a paparazzi shared post about Alia making this statement, a sarcastic social media user joked, "Not going to washrooms for 6 hours is now her struggle... oh my god how hard her life must be," whereas another comment read: "Struggle hai bhai struggle."

## Janhvi Kapoor reveals Sridevi's fun side: 'Mom fought like a North Indian'



The *Great Indian Kapil Show's* latest promo features *Devara's* cast—Jr NTR, Janhvi Kapoor and Saif Ali Khan—appearing on Kapil's show to boost their movie. The stars recount funny stories from their time on set in the video.

Jr NTR is seen in a jovial mood, playfully mocking Kapil for conversing with him and Saif while standing instead of offering them chairs. The playful conversation goes on as Kapil questions Jr NTR about his favourite North Indian actress and he quickly replies, "Always Sridevi." Saif Ali Khan swiftly interjects with a clever comment, declaring, "That was my response for the Southern region."

The promotional material also includes Janhvi recalling the strong connection between her parents, Boney Kapoor and Sridevi. Even though Boney comes from a Punjabi background, Sridevi's origins are in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Janhvi amusingly talked about how they adopted each other's habits after getting married. "Papa had already converted. He would have *Idli Sambar* for breakfast instead of aloo parathas. By the end of it, Mom started fighting like a North Indian," Janhvi said.

Towards the conclusion of the video, Jr NTR humorously expresses annoyance towards Janhvi, mentioning how he made sure she had amazing meals during their time filming in Hyderabad, but she has not done the same in return. He says he has been in Mumbai for a day but hasn't had even a bite to eat yet.

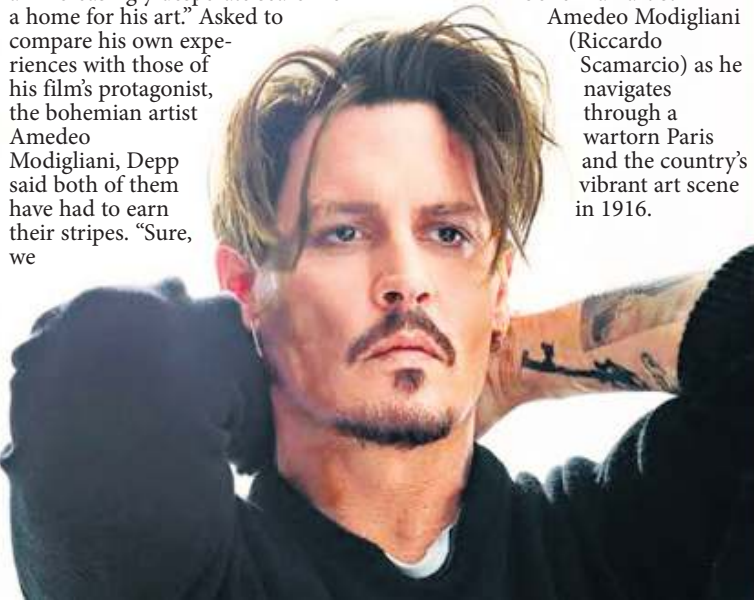
## 'Messy divorce' turned Johnny Depp's life into 'soap opera'

Johnny Depp's latest directorial outing *Modi-Three Days on the Wing of Madness*, was screened at the San Sebastian Film Festival. During a press conference, Depp reflected on the nearly three decades since his last feature outing, 1997's much-maligned *The Brave*, as per reports. The movie focuses on a 72-hour whirlwind during World War I in Paris as the protagonist Modigliani maneuvers "bombs, policemen, girlfriends and critics in an increasingly desperate search for a home for his art." Asked to compare his own experiences with those of his film's protagonist, the bohemian artist Amedeo Modigliani, Depp said both of them have had to earn their stripes. "Sure, we

can say that I've been through a number of things here and there, but I'm alright," he said.

Depp then seemed to allude to his recent legal battle with ex-wife Amber Heard, saying, "I think we've all been through a number of things, ultimately... Maybe yours didn't turn into a soap opera, televised in fact, but we all experience and go through what we go through."

The project unspools over 72 frantic hours in the life of bohemian artist Amedeo Modigliani (Riccardo Scamarcio) as he navigates through a wartorn Paris and the country's vibrant art scene in 1916.



## Leonardo breaks silence on appearing at Sean's wild parties

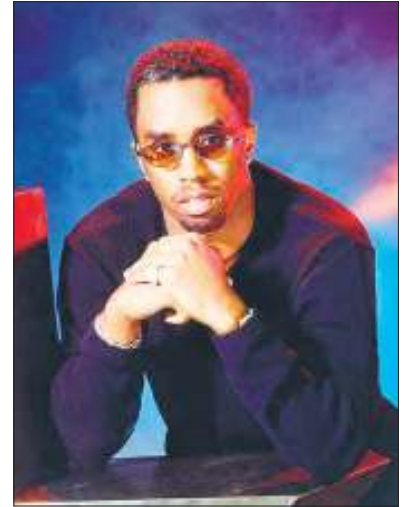
Sean Diddy Combs has been making headlines for a while due to the accusations of sexual assault. The music mogul was taken into custody earlier this month and is awaiting the court trial. In the past few weeks, Diddy has collaborated with top celebrities such as Jay Z, Prince Harry and Justin Bieber. Now, a photo surfaced online showing Leonardo DiCaprio with Combs at a party, reigniting discussions about the Hollywood star.

For those unfamiliar, in November of last year, his former girlfriend Cassandra Ventura accused him of sexual assault and initiated legal action. There, a can of worms was opened and now everything is finished. During the month of February of this year, music producer Rodney 'Lil Rod' Jones brought a \$30 million legal claim against P Diddy, accusing him of sex trafficking, sexual misconduct and grooming. The music mogul's ex-bodyguard has recently disclosed some serious information about him. According to reports, Sean Diddy Combs was taken into custody by law enforcement on September 16. He is accused of several offenses, such as sex trafficking, racketeering, and sexual assault. He has denied the accusations by pleading not guilty. The musician has been refused bail on two occasions.

Sean Diddy Combs was known for hosting exclusive 'white parties' at his home, known for the famous attendees and requirement of wearing all white. Currently, photos of Leonardo DiCaprio at those events have emerged on X.

A source close to the *Titanic* star told, "Leonardo DiCaprio has absolutely nothing to do with any of this. He attended a few of his parties back in the early 2000s—but literally everyone did."

The source further clarified, "They were big house parties. Leo was at the start of his career at the time and has moved way past his partying. He has nothing to do with any of that world, so for anyone to assume that he will get roped into this based on a few grainy photos that are more than 20 years old is ridiculous."



### FUN

#### ARCHIE



#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### GARFIELD



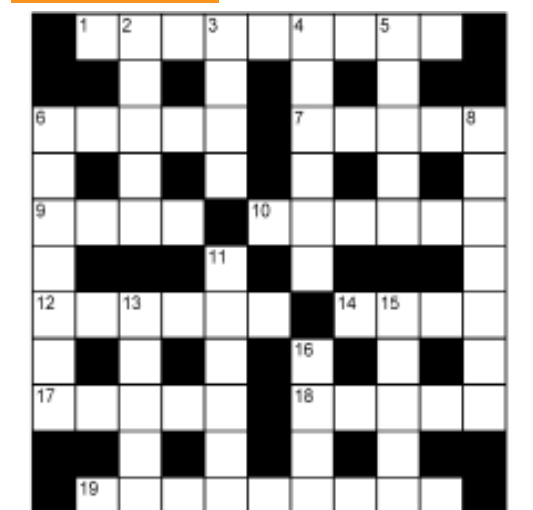
#### REALITY CHECK



#### SPEED BUMP



#### CROSSWORD



#### NANCY



#### SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

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

#### ACROSS

- A weekday
- Donates
- Smell
- Opposite of difficult
- Defeated
- Extreme fear
- Costing nothing
- Does a sketch
- Raises
- Spoke very quietly

#### DOWN

- 6 Welcomed
- 8 People in a marathon
- 11 Ride on these animals
- 13 Get to
- 15 A soldier's gun
- 16 Mix this with yellow to make green



#### GINGER MEGGS





## ENGULFING HYD'S TELUGU OPEN MIC CULTURE

TEJAL SINHA  
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For several decades and the time gone by, South India, especially the Telugu states, have been the ones who have relished different art forms and cultures. When we discuss art today, it's just not confined to dance and singing but way beyond. With a burgeoning number of people wanting to unleash their creative sides in the post-pandemic world, the open-mic culture is serving to be just the right platform for budding artists.

But what about the Telugu culture of open mic? Now here's when Oke Oka Jeevitham comes into the picture. A community promoting Telugu poetry, storytelling, standup comedy and music. A journey that began in September 2023 is on a quest to build the biggest Telugu culture community in Hyderabad. The brainchild of 25-year-old Harshith Digam, here's bringing you our chat with him for our special segment of Community Wise.

A writer as a whole who loves writing poetry, stand-up comedy scripts and stories, he noticed that the open mic culture in Hyderabad was booming over the past 2-3 years. "The culture was adapted from the north part of India into Hyderabad," begins Harshith with great regard. Going to different open mic events and performing there, he did not receive much appreciation as compared to the rest. "After doing my research, I found the reason to be my Telugu language. I realised there was a language barrier because the community was built up with English and Hindi languages, because of which they were not able to understand Telugu poetry. I was actually at the wrong place."

Further curious about finding a Telugu open mic community, to our dismay, he found none. So why not start something for himself? It was then the idea to start a community with Oke Oka Jeevitham. A community that began with 20 people has now grown up to 20k plus.

"When I started the first open mic event here in Hyderabad in a cafe, to my surprise, over 120 people had turned up," he recalls, which made him realise that there



Intending to create a Telugu community for the open mic culture here in Hyderabad, Oke Oka Jeevitham is on a quest to bring out the best of the Telugu talents. In an exclusive gabfest, *The Pioneer* connects with Hyderabad's very own open-mic community founder, Harshith Digam, as he takes us much in-depth through the same

was quite a huge demand for this community in Hyderabad. "It all began with the support that I received from my dear Hyderabadis, which gradually led to the biggest open mic community here. We have recently completed a season of 8 shows and are heading to start the second season. With this season, we want to make it much bigger with the Telugu cultures that are actually being extinct. Back then, we had so much Telugu storytelling, which is slowly becoming extinct. So, why not relieve them

through this?" Here he brings a fusion of the old traditional nineties way of storytelling with a modern way. His aim is to take the community global and thus, "I am actually planning to host these shows in the US and Australia. And we also want to go wherever people are there. We want to take up this culture and perform live shows over there because there is, people are one of the biggest art and entertainment lovers. Right now, the only source of art and entertainment is movies.

So I want to tell people that there is much more than movies."

The community is now being known as Ooj, an abbreviation of Oke Oka Jeevitham. Going ahead, things did not really come as a cakewalk to him, as he had to go through quite a few challenges. "The main challenge was the market because people never knew what this was about. This was a new format for people. It was tough for me to convince people that the show would be fun. Then, working on different types of narratives was definitely challenging for me. But again, there are people who are actually wonderful writers and we do have a wonderful crowd as well. To my surprise, these people were all from different industries, like IT and more. It was a bit tough for me to encourage all these people and build confidence in them. But right now, we are very happy that almost 10% of the people who have performed in our open mic are now writers in the film industry and are now singing songs in the film industry. They're all actually getting work, getting recognition and all."

But you know what? He reveals to us, "I was pretty surprised that more women showed up than men in the process of this open mic and building this culture. Though they were amazing writers, they did not want to come in front of the camera. They're still living in the stereotypical bubble."

However, now he is ecstatic that with season 2, they are bringing up equal opportunity to serve men and women.

Heading towards the end of the chat, he enthuses, "Not only open mic, all the budding artists who actually want to do something, I would definitely say that don't go for the barriers that are actually coming up to you. Never allow them to stop your talent. In this process, even I have faced a lot of social barriers and a lot of people humiliating me. People would be coming and going, but you got to continue to perform. Personally, I've undergone a remarkable transformation—from struggling with Telugu exams as a Telugu guy to establishing a thriving Telugu literature community. I hope my journey inspires others to pursue their passions and overcome challenges."

## From war to beatboxing thrills

AARTI SREENATH  
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Skand Sanjeev Thakur, the rising star of Indian cinema, astonishingly shines in his latest project, *Khalbali Records*, a film helmed by National Award-winning director Devanshu Singh. This film is set to be a unique blend of music and drama, diving deep into the underground rap scene of India. His journey in the entertainment industry has been nothing short of adventurous and his experiences range from portraying intense characters to working with renowned actors, including Yami Gautam in *Article 370*.

Reflecting on his early career, he shares how special his role in *Article 370* was, alongside Yami Gautam. "Working on *Article 370* was a defining moment for me. It wasn't just another film; it was a project with depth and Yami brought so much grace to the screen. I learned a lot from her professionalism and dedication." He also discussed how *Article 370* addressed critical socio-political issues, giving him a chance to portray a layered character, and that collaboration fuelled his passion for meaningful cinema.

His journey from *Article 370* to leading *Khalbali Records* is a demonstration of his versatility as an actor and his passion for storytelling.

When asked about *Khalbali Records*, he couldn't contain his excitement about working with a National Award-winning director. "It's been a game-changer. The director's vision is crystal clear and working under someone with such prestige has been an incredible learning curve for me. He understands the nuances of storytelling and his attention to detail has pushed me to explore new dimensions as an actor. The film is set in the vibrant yet gritty world of Indian rap music. It showcases the lives of underground artists trying to break free and make it big. I play a rapper struggling to find his voice in the industry, fighting both external pressures and inner battles. It's raw, real and a reflection of the independent music scene." Working with real-life rappers like Prabh Deep, Ahmer and EPR was an incredible experience for him. He went on to enthuse that they just live and breathe hip-hop. "They showed me how intense and personal their art is. We even did cyphers between takes on set—it was wild!"

Coming from a family with an army background, his connection with discipline and patriotism runs deep. He fondly recalls how his grandfather's legacy as a World War II veteran influenced his life. "My family taught me the importance of discipline, but I was always that kid who had a rebellious streak. I found my outlet in music, and rap, in particular, spoke to me."

Growing up listening to Divine, Naezy and MC Altaf, it was then that he began following hip-hop closely. "It's more than just beats and rhymes—it's a voice for those who aren't heard."

He also revealed some behind-the-scenes moments from *Khalbali Records*. "On the very first day of shooting, I had to perform one of the film's most emotional scenes. It was daunting, but once the camera started rolling, I was in the zone. The director's belief in me was a huge confidence boost."

He adds with a laugh, "But it wasn't all intense! In between takes, we would have impromptu rap sessions with the other actors and the crew. It was like being part of a live rap battle. Those moments made the experience even more unforgettable."

Playing the lead in *Khalbali Records* has been a transformative experience for the actor. "Being the leader comes with a lot of responsibility. You set the tone for the whole team and you have to bring your A-game every single day. This film has pushed me to grow as an actor and an individual."

"The most challenging part was to truly understand the underground rap culture in India. I've always been a fan of hip-hop, but living it through this role gave me a whole new perspective. The hustle is real, and the passion these artists have is infectious." He also discussed the emotional depth of his character in *Article 370*, where he portrayed a soldier. "Coming from an army family, this role was personal. The uniform, the discipline, the sacrifices—it was all too familiar. My grandfather's legacy as a World War II veteran was a constant source of inspiration while filming." For him, this role wasn't just another performance—it was a tribute to the soldiers who have served the nation. "Even though I never met my grandfather, stepping into that role made me feel closer to his legacy. It was one of the most rewarding experiences of my career."

His future looks as promising as his past work. He hinted at new, exciting projects, including potential collaborations in both Bollywood and Indie cinema. "There's a romantic film on the horizon and I can't wait to dive into it. I think it's time to show audiences a different side of me."

Skand Sanjeev Thakur, currently gaining much appreciation for his latest project, in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, speaks of his stint in *Article 370* alongside Yami Gautam, working on a project like *Khalbali Records* and more



## Overcoming holiday burnout and finding joy

The holiday season is often perceived as a time of celebration, togetherness and joy. However, for many, it can also bring feelings of anxiety or stress. This phenomenon of holiday burnout is very common. It is very important to understand its cause and recognise the signs so that appropriate practices could be devised to help individuals manage their mental and emotional health during this bustling time of year.

### RECOGNISING HOLIDAY BURNOUT:

Holiday burnout manifests in various ways, including emotional exhaustion and a feeling of detachment from holiday activities. Individuals can be overwhelmed by the pressures to fulfill expectations such as buying the perfect gift or maintaining festival traditions. Symptoms may include

**Emotional overload:** The mixed feeling of joy and stress can create feelings lots of anxiety or sadness making it hard to enjoy the festivities.

**Loss of interest:** Once enjoyable activities may start to feel like mundane activities and further leads to a sense of detachment.

**Emotional overload:** The mix of joy and stress can



create a feeling of anxiety and sadness, making it hard to enjoy the festival.

**Physical fatigue:** Continuously running and attending parties or preparing meals can lead to exhaustion

**Social withdrawal:** Some may retreat from social engagement and feel overwhelmed by expectations

### CAUSES OF HOLIDAY BURNOUT:

Several factors contribute to holiday burnout.

**Overcommitment:** very busy schedule filled with events, parties and family functions can leave little time for rest

**Financial strain:** The pressure for buying, gifts and decorations festivities can lead to financial stress and compounding thinking of anxiety

**Lack of self-care:** Neglecting personal needs in favor of holiday responsibilities can lead to physical and emotional depletion.

**Expectations:** Media portrayal can set unbelievable standards for personal celebrations.

### How we can manage festival fatigue?

Some implement strategies that promote balance in self-care. Here are some practical tips.

**Limit commitment:** Choose some meaningful activities rather than overloading your calendar. Saying No to some invitations can help you maintain your well-being

**Practice mindfulness:** Engage in mindfulness activities such as meditation or deep breathing exercises to manage your stress and connect with others.

**Connect with others:** Share your feelings your thoughts with your family and friends and discussing your emotions with your family can boost your support and understanding

**Prioritise self-care:** Take some time for yourself. Whether it's a quiet evening with a book or a short walk. Prioritise activities that are helpful for you.

**Set realistic expectations:** Accept that not every aspect of your holiday will be perfect. Focus on what truly matters connection and enjoyment.

Conclusion, during the holiday season it can be a joyful time. It can also lead to burnout if approached mindfully, by recognising the signs of festival fatigue and implementing these effective management strategies, individual can reclaim the joy of the season and price themselves.

(The author, Archana Singhal, is a counsellor, family therapist and founder of Mindwell Counsel.)

# PANT RE-ENTERS TOP 10; ROHIT, KOHLI SLIP IN ICC TEST BATTING RANKINGS

PTI ■ DUBAI

Riding on a sensational century in his Test comeback, wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant on Wednesday re-entered the ICC rankings at an impressive sixth position but India skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli slipped in a major shake-up in standings. Pant (731), who smashed a stunning century in the opening game of the two-Test series against Bangladesh in Chennai, was placed sixth, while opener Yashasvi Jaiswal (751), moved up to fifth thanks to a half-century in the first innings of the Test match. India skipper Rohit Sharma retained his place in the top ten, though he moved down five places with two underwhelming scores. He has 716 rating points. Kohli also dropped five spots to go out of the top-10 and he is now placed 12th in the standings. The Sri Lanka-New Zealand Test in Galle brought about top 10 bowling rankings shifts, with Prabath Jayasuriya solidifying his reputation as one of the game's best spinners, moving five spots into eighth after a nine-wicket haul. Jayasuriya (743) is the highest-ranked player representing Sri Lanka across the three disciplines, moving past Asitha Fernando, who slid down two spots to 13th (700). Kamindu Mendis, who moved up three spots to 16th in the batting rankings and



Dhananjaya de Silva, who climbed five spots to 18th on the All-Rounder Rankings (168) were other movers over note in the victory. In ODI rankings, young Afghan star Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Australian Travis Head leapt into the top 10 in the Batting rankings, thanks to quick-fire hundreds in action across UAE and England. Gurbaz continued his dream career start in ODI cricket, hitting his seventh century in the format before his 23rd birthday, and moving 10 spots in the process up to eighth (692) to become the first-ever Afghan batter to reach the top 10 positions of the ICC Men's ODI Batting Ranking. The previous best performer from the Asian country in the ODI Batting Rankings was Ibrahim Zadran, who had reached the 12th rank. Gurbaz edged Head, who moved seven spots to ninth (684) in large part thanks to his 154 not out (129) in the first of five ODIs against rivals England. Afghan leg-spinner Rashid Khan joined Rahmanullah in the rankings headlines, moving eight spots to third (668) in the ODI Bowling Rankings, claiming seven wickets across the team's two victories against South Africa in UAE. The contributions of the pair helped Afghanistan to an ODI series win over the Proteas, their first against a top five-ranked opposition in their history.



## Delhi Ranji Probables: Kohli, Pant named in 84, no Ishant

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Premier batter Virat Kohli and the flamboyant Rishabh Pant have once again been named in a jumbo 84-member Delhi Ranji Trophy probables list although the duo is unlikely to be available for any of the red ball games throughout the season. However, veteran pacer Ishant Sharma's name didn't figure in the list which has the country's fastest bowler Mayank Yadav along with another Team India contender Harshit Rana. Kohli had last played Ranji Trophy for Delhi in 2012 at Ghaziabad against Uttar Pradesh while Pant last featured in a red ball game for Delhi in the pre-COVID era.



"This is a protocol. They are our registered players and it is our duty to put their names in probables list in case they want to play," a DDCA official told PTI on conditions of anonymity. In case of the 35-year-old 100 Test veteran Ishant, it is understood that there is no point in him playing Ranji Trophy since he no longer figures in national team's scheme of things. Ishant didn't play in inaugural Delhi Premier League (DPL) either but it will be interesting to note if he makes himself available for Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament which will be held just before the IPL auctions.

A potential retirement from competitive cricket altogether can also not be ruled out. Member of Parliament Pappu Yadav's son Sarthak Ranjan has also made the cut. However, all eyes will be on Mayank, who captured global imagination with mid 150 click thunderbolts in the IPL before being ruled out due to abdominal muscle tear. Mayank, who now has a BCCI pace bowlers' contract, has been at NCA for better part of last five months and is now bowling at least 15 overs per day in simulation. He is expected to play for Delhi as the national selectors would be selecting the India A team for Australia and if he is fit, he remains a contender to make that team.



## If McCullum calls, it's a 'yes': Stokes on white ball return

PTI ■ CHESTER-LE-STREET (ENGLAND)

England Test skipper Ben Stokes is open to rejoin the white-ball set up, especially following the appointment of Brendon McCullum as the head coach for both limited-overs and Test cricket. McCullum, who has already transformed England's Test team, is set to take over the reins of the limited-overs squads when England tour India next January. "If I get the call and (Baz) says, 'Do you want to come and play?' Then obviously, it's definitely going to be a yes," Stokes told Sky Sports on the sidelines of the third ODI against Australia here, which the hosts won by 46 runs. "But, I'm not going to be too disappointed if I don't, because I can just sit back and watch everyone else go out and smack it." The 33-year-old last played for England in the limited overs format during their unsuccessful ODI World Cup defence in India last year. While he has not featured in a T20 International since 2022, England's selector Luke Wright has hinted that both Stokes and Joe Root remain in contention for future white-ball squads,

particularly with the upcoming Champions Trophy in Pakistan. Stokes however said there has been no formal discussion on this. For now, his focus remains firmly on England's Test team, with a three-match series against Pakistan scheduled to start next month. "I've played a lot of white-ball cricket for England, and I'm very happy with what I've achieved in that form of the game. But to be honest, we've not even spoken about anything like that whatsoever," he said. "I think he's just letting me concentrate on what I need to concentrate on, especially around the Test team." Stokes further heaped praise on McCullum's influence since taking charge of the Test team, expressing excitement over the prospect of the same approach being applied to white-ball cricket. "It's an amazing opportunity for the white-ball team to experience what Baz has brought to the Test team. He's an incredible coach who speaks with utter commitment, and it's nice to have all three teams now with the same messaging and the same philosophies towards playing cricket," he added.

## We did not do justice to our talent, potential: Hathurusinghe

PTI ■ KANPUR

Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusinghe on Wednesday said his players did not do justice to their potential in the opening Test against India but promised a better approach in the must-win second game beginning here on Friday. Visiting skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto (20) and veteran Shakib Al Hasan (32) got starts in the first innings but could not convert into big knocks. In the second innings not only Shanto (82), top-order batters Zakir Hasan (35) and Shadman Islam (35) also got starts they failed to convert, resulting in a heavy defeat. "We are a bit concerned. We normally talk about if you get a start, make it big. That's the biggest concern because some of the guys got 30 balls. And then in cricket, it's the hardest thing to get in. "But then this team, India, is posing different challenges. So we know that as well. So we have to bat for longer," Hathurusinghe told reporters here. Bangladesh have five left-handers in the squad including the top-four that has Mominul Haque. A left-right combination usually works better as it forces the bowlers to adjust their line and length

consistently. However, the Bangladesh team management will not pick the playing eleven thinking on those lines. "That's our best players, whether right or left. If there are any changes, it's depending on the surface tomorrow." "If we are making a change, whether batsman, or whoever is coming in, (we see) what he can bring and who will miss out. And we look at it holistically like that rather than left or right." It is likely to be a low and slow pitch at the Green Park stadium, favouring spinners. That may induce both the teams to probably drop a pacer for the addition of a spinner. Hathurusinghe said they are still not sure which track is going to be used for the match, so they will make a decision later. "We had a look at the pitch. But the groundsmen prepared two pitches. So he didn't indicate which one they are finally going to play on. So probably tomorrow we have to come and see which pitch they are going to prepare," he said. The pitch in Chennai offered assistance to fast bowlers initially and Bangladesh bowlers indeed troubled the famed Indian batting line up. That is not a usual sight that pacers dominate batters in the Indian sub-continent.

## IOA executive council to discuss 'threatening letters, additional expenses' incurred at Olympics

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Olympic Association's executive council meeting here on Thursday is expected to be a heated affair with its members adding contentious items on the agenda, including the alleged "threatening letters" issued by president PT Usha to them. The meeting will take place in the backdrop of growing tensions between Usha and IOA treasurer Sahdev Yadav. On Tuesday, Yadav threatened legal action against Usha for "defaming" his image after she issued a show cause notice to him on the basis of a complaint challenging his eligibility to hold the post. The 14 agenda points added by the executive council cover a discussion on "illegal and threatening letters issued by the President to the members of the Executive Committee from time to time". As per two more items concerning the president, the council will "discuss and deliberate upon the scope of powers of the president under the IOA Constitution and



will decide on the need for reporting the conduct of the president to the IOA Ethics Commission". The official communication on the meeting was jointly issued by 12 council members, including senior vice president Ajay Patel, vice-president Rajalaxmi Singh Deo, vice-president and former Olympic medallist Gagan Narang, member and former wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt among others. The members who did not sign the document included boxer M C Mary

Kom and table tennis player A Sharath Kamal, who are on the IOA athletes commission. Issues related to the recent Paris Olympics will also be a substantial part of the meeting. They include the sponsorship details of the Olympics, "additional expenditure" incurred in Paris covering the room upgrade expense of president at alleged cost to the IOA and "bring to knowledge the list of accreditation cards issued to various people at Paris Olympics including various Passes and Invites". Another discussion will pertain to the process followed for selecting the Sportsperson of Outstanding Merit (SOM) in November 2022 and their participation in the election of the IOA for elected posts. The athletes commission had picked eight SOMs back then including Usha, Yogeshwar Dutt, MM Somaya (hockey), Rohit Rajpal (tennis), Akhil Kumar (boxing), Shuma Sirur (shooting), Aparna Popat (badminton) and Dola Banerjee (archery).

# Root will go down as England's greatest in Tests: Ian Bell

PTI ■ JODHPUR

Joe Root will go down as England's greatest batter in Tests even if he is not able to break Sachin Tendulkar's gargantuan record of 15,921 runs, reckons his former teammate Ian Bell. Root went past Sri Lankan legend Kumar Sangakkara recently to move to the sixth spot in the list of highest run-getters in the longest format. "He's played incredibly well in the last 12 months. I don't think he's overthinking too much what's ahead. He's just sort of living in the moment as we are," Bell told PTI in an exclusive interview on the sidelines of Legends League Cricket. "To think that he can even get close to someone like Sachin, a real great of the game, someone that we've all admired growing up, as a hero to not just people and fans in India, but around the world. "To think that Joe could get close is an amazing achievement on his behalf. He'll go down as England's greatest batsman. There's no doubt whether he does get to Sachin or not," said the 42-year-old who played as many as 118 Tests for

England. With 12,402 runs, the 33-year-old Root is 3,519 runs away from breaking Tendulkar's record. **BAZBALL HAS UNLOCKED TALENT OF CURRENT PLAYERS:** Bell feels England's much talked-about Bazball approach has unlocked talent of the current players. "From a fan point of view, you have to look at the results. Since Brendon (McCullum) has come into this England side and (Ben) Stokes has taken over, the results have been absolutely fantastic. "What they've managed to do with the talent that they have is to unlock some of that... Zak Crawley's, Ollie Pope, Harry Brook, they've managed to get the best out of them. "I don't think you could ask a Crawley or Pope to try and be an Alastair Cook or a Jonathan Trott who played in a different style, but were very successful. It's important to identify what they've got and they're adapting that as we go on now." However, with England not featuring among contenders for World Test Championship final in the first two editions, Bell said



winning away would be as important as at home in the next cycle. "I'm sure they've got one eye on the next 12 months, which has five Test matches (against) India at home, which will be a huge challenge," he said. "India are probably the best team in the world at the moment, and then, Australia away. Those 10 Test matches on the road will be hugely important for that group of players and something they're gearing themselves up for. "We were the last team to win in India, which was obviously (a) part of the journey to get to No 1 and we

won in Australia. For this England side to get to No 1, there's no doubt, ability and talent-wise, they have that," he said. He also stressed on consistency shown by the Indian team which has won 17 series in a row at home and its last two series in Australia. "That's what we've seen with India at the moment. They've managed to be able to win away from home as much as anyone and that's the reason why they are the No 1 team in the world at the moment." **NEXT GENERATION OF ENGLAND PLAYERS GROWING UP WITH BIG T20 DIET:** Bell agreed while one could argue saying England's white-ball revolution has also seen diminishing batting averages of the players in Tests barring Root. "You could definitely have that argument. The next generation of players are growing up with a big diet of T20 cricket in early age and have a look at cricket in England at the moment, there's a lot of short format cricket in the early age group," he said. Himself known for his delightful cover drivers, Bell thinks Virat Kohli plays his favourite shot the best among his peers.

"It's very hard to look past Virat Kohli, that is for sure. Not just his cover drive, but the way he plays, his desire for batting, his desire actually in competition and how he goes about his cricket. "When he plays his cover drive, whatever format of the game, it's a good one to watch. You know, my kids who love cricket, I certainly get them watching as much cricket from Virat Kohli as possible," he said. Bell added the likes of Gus Atkinson and Matthew Potts have huge shoes to fill following the retirement of James Anderson and Stuart Broad. "It's very difficult for any players to come in and emulate straight away what Broad-Anderson have done for England for such a long time," he said. "It's probably very similar to when (Shane) Warne and (Glenn) McGrath finished at the same time for Australia. It took a little bit of time for Australia to adapt and adjust. "It's unfair for anyone who's to follow in those shoes to be seen in the same way. Hopefully people don't get too hard on them too much," he added.

## 'Sree Vishnu plays four characters in SWAG,' utters director Hasith Goli



Sree Vishnu is playing four characters in the film *SWAG* and the director is Hasith Goli. The director said Vishnu appeared in four generations of characters in the film.

Actor Sree Vishnu is going to play not one but four characters in the upcoming film, directed by Hasith Goli. "The story revolves around a dynasty and the longstanding issue of gender discrimination," Goli explained.

He emphasised that society often prioritises the paternal lineage, neglecting the maternal side. "People typically trace their family tree through their father, grandfather and great-grandfather, but rarely explore their mother's side. I tackled this issue in a humorous manner in my film."

The director drew inspiration from the persistent gender discrimination in contemporary society. "Despite progress, people still desire male children and perpetuate gender bias. I addressed this issue in a

lighthearted yet impactful way, without criticising or degrading anyone."

Although the subject is serious, Goli chose to approach it with humour. He collaborated with National Award-winning makeup artist Rasheed to transform Sree Vishnu into distinct characters using prosthetics.

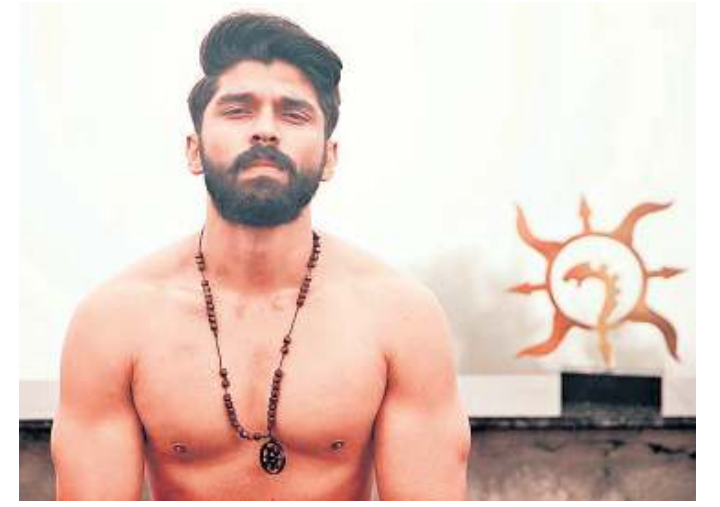
Each character speaks in a dialect specific to their time period, ranging from the present day to the 1970s. Goli ensured that the screenplay remained engaging and easy to follow.

*SWAG* marks Goli's second collaboration with Sree Vishnu, following their successful film *Raja Raja Chola*. Ritu Varma plays dual roles, portraying a queen and a modern-day girl.

Goli's favourite character among the four is Bhavaboothi, but he predicts audiences will connect with Yayathi. "The film has surprises in store; watch it on

the big screen to experience it."

Regarding sequels, popular in Tollywood, Goli stated, "I didn't write *SWAG* with a sequel in mind, but the story has potential. However, this film concludes as a standalone narrative."



## Ajay Bhupathi ropes in Dhruv Vikram for power-packed bilingual

SURESH KAVIRAYANI

Director Ajay Bhupathi, known for his films *RX 100* and *Mangalavaaram*, is preparing to take on a bilingual project for his next venture, according to a source. The source indicates that he is likely to collaborate with Dhruv Vikram, son of renowned Tamil actor Vikram. Ajay's last film, *Mangalavaaram*, was a box-office hit, cementing his reputation as a director and boosting his earnings as he co-produced the film.

The insider further shared that Ajay recently pitched a script to Dhruv Vikram, who was quite impressed and the project is nearing confirmation. "An official announcement could happen in a matter of days if things progress smoothly," the source stated. The film, which will be shot in both Telugu and Tamil, will also mark Dhruv's debut in the Telugu film industry. "During Vikram's promotional tour in Hyderabad for his film *Thangalaan*, Ajay seized the opportunity to meet with him and present the full story," added the source.

Meanwhile, Dhruv Vikram is currently working on a film titled *Bison*, helmed by Mari Selvaraj, where he stars alongside Anupama Parameswaran in this sports drama. The film is nearing completion, and once it's wrapped up, Dhruv is expected to move forward with Ajay Bhupathi's project.

## 'DON'T MISUSE MY OLD INTERVIEW TO MISLEAD PEOPLE,' CLARIFIES RASHMI GAUTAM

A few years ago, popular anchor and actress Rashmi Gautam openly discussed the issue of the casting couch in the film industry. In the interview, she pointed out that sexual harassment isn't limited to just films, but occurs across various industries. "Women are facing sexual harassment in many fields. They should say 'no' to such advances. Some may say 'yes' because they want to climb the ladder, but it's still wrong to harass them sexually," Rashmi said at the time.

Now, the video of this interview has resurfaced and gone viral on social media. Rashmi took to her Instagram to urge people not to misuse her old interview to mislead the public, drawing a distinction between the casting couch and more severe forms of exploitation.

"Sexually exploiting a minor is different from casting couch, where two adults might have consented. Please do not use this interview to mislead the audience. This was recorded before 2020. Workplaces should be comfortable and a woman's 'no' must always be respected," she emphasised in her post.



## Ram Charan steals march on Allu Arjun with *Game Changer* promotions

Ram Charan and Shankar's much-anticipated film *Game Changer* is gearing up for a December 20 release, though the date hasn't been officially confirmed yet. Despite this, the promotions are already in full swing, with the announcement of the second song's promo release on September 28. Directed by Shankar and produced by Dil Raju, *Game Changer* took a considerable amount of time to finish shooting, but now all eyes are on its potential December release. Music director Thaman even hinted at the release date on social media. What's even more intriguing is that Ram Charan's cousin, Allu Arjun, has his film *Pushpa 2* slated for release just two weeks earlier, on December 6. However, *Pushpa 2* is still in the middle of production, with key scenes yet to be shot. This puts the spotlight on the close release dates of the two cousins' films, especially amidst ongoing rumours that the Mega Family has been distancing itself from Allu Arjun. Industry insiders suggest that *Pushpa 2* might face a delay due to the unfinished shooting. "They need to wrap up shooting by October and complete post-production by November, which seems unlikely," said a source. With director Sukumar known for his perfectionism, it's believed he won't rush through the final stages, potentially pushing the release date further.

## COSTA RICA OPENS ITS DOORS TO TELUGU FILMMAKERS

Sofia Salas, who holds a law degree from the University of Costa Rica and a Masters in Human Rights from the University of Essex (UK), attended an event alongside Fuji Software and various film producers. Salas has previously served as Minister Counselor and Consul General at the Embassy of Costa Rica, representing the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the event, she expressed her gratitude, stating, "It is a great pleasure to meet Damodar Prasad, Prasanna Kumar and other producers. A special thanks to Mohan Mullanpudi for inviting me and facilitating my introduction to the prominent figures in the Telugu film industry."

Our country is among the most beautiful, and we offer single-window permissions for shooting."

Salas also extended an open invitation to Telugu filmmakers, saying, "Those interested in filming in Costa Rica can reach out to the Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce for more information."



## Prashanth Varma releases trailer for psychological thriller *Kali*

Director Prashanth Varma, renowned for *Hanuman*, launched the trailer for *Kali* on Wednesday. The film, written and directed by Siva Sashu and produced by Leela Gautam Varma, stars young actors Prince and Naresh Agastya in lead roles. "After watching the trailer, it seems the film has some thrilling

moments. The VFX are also of high quality," says Prashanth Varma.

Prince, Naresh Agastya and director Siva Sashu attended the trailer release event. Prashanth Varma praised the team, wishing them success.

The trailer reveals the story's premise: Shivaram (Prince), a kind-hearted man, faces difficulties that

lead to his wife leaving him with their child. As Shivaram contemplates suicide, he meets a mysterious stranger (Naresh Agastya), shifting the narrative to unprecedented heights.

The film features Priyadarshi's voiceover and Neha Krishnan as the female lead. *Kali* is set to release on October 4.



## CITADEL COMRADES SHARE LIGHT MOMENT IN LONDON

Priyanka Chopra and Samantha Ruth Prabhu shared a joyful reunion at an exclusive Amazon event celebrating the *Citadel* universe. They were joined by Matilda de Angelis, star of the Italian *Citadel* spin-off, at a special drinks reception held at Fitz's Russell Square.