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After Majaka, filmmakers know where I can fit: ANSHU SAGAR

the pioneer It is surprising that KTR did not participate in the caste census. However, he and his family are now speaking about a re-survey. It is ridiculous on the part of KTR to speak about weaker sections. BCs were subjected to immense injustice during BRS's 10-year rule. The BRS and the BJP have compromised in MLC elections. The BRS does not have candidates to field in MLC elections. So it is indirectly supporting the BJP as it did during the 2024 Parliament

QUOTE OF THE DAY

- B Mahesh Kumar Goud, TPCC Chief and MLC

Mary Matha Fest off to grand start

The three-day annual feast of Gunadala Mary Matha began on Sunday with great enthusiasm and devotion. Devotees from far and wide flocked to the Gunadala shrine to offer prayers. Vijayawada Catholic Diocese Bishop Most Rev. Telagatoti Joseph Raja Rao, Monsignor Fr. Muvvala Prasad, Fr. M Gabriel, Rector Fr Yelati William Jayaraju, and other clergy members lit the ceremonial lamps, officially inaugurating the festivities. The celebrations commenced with a special 'Samishti Divya Pooja Bali' (Holy Mass) at 7:00 AM...

How Yamuna issue sank AAP

The Yamuna factor seemingly played a significant role in the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections. reshaping voter sentiment and helping the BJP script history by defeating AAP. A key driver of this shift was the backlash from Haryanvi-origin voters who viewed AAP's narrative on Yamuna pollution as an attack on their home state. The BJP, which bagged 48 out of 70 sets, fielded 14 candidates of Haryanvi descent and 12 of them won. The Aam Aadmi Party had 10 such candidates but...

Dry spell in Shimla

Spin great R Ashwin has called India and New Zealand the strongest sides heading into the Champions Trophy but warned teams against taking Australia lightly despite the loss of key players to injuries as they "bring their A-game" into marguee tournaments. The ICC event starts in Pakistan on February 19 with India playing all their matches in Dubai under a hybrid model agreement. "India has the home advantage in Dubai, and it almost like every other team is playing an

31 Naxals gunned down

Fierce encounter ensued between 650 cops and Maoists in Bijapur dist of Chhattisgarh

PNS ■ BIJAPUR (CHHATTISGARH)

In one of the deadliest blows to Naxalites in Chhattisgarh, security forces on Sunday gunned down 31 rebels, including 11 women, in a fierce encounter in the state's Bijapur district, police said.

Two security personnel were also killed and as many injured in the faceoff, they said.

More than 650 security personnel entered the Indravati National Park area from different sides and eliminated 31 Naxalites in their den, Chhattisgarh's Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma said. With this success, 81 Naxalites have been neutralised by security forces in separate encounters in Chhattisgarh so far this year, compared to 219 in 2024.

CM Vishnu Deo Sai said the end of Naxalism in Chhattisgarh and the country is certain. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the state will get rid of Naxalism by March 2026, he asserted. The latest gunbattle took place on a forested hill along the border of Madded and Farsegarh police station areas when personnel from different security forces during an anti-Naxal operation, Inspector General of Police, Bastar Range, Sundarraj P said.

Acting on inputs about the presence of Maoists belonging to their national park area committee, person-



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nel from state police units District Reserve Guard (DRG), Special Task Force (STF) and Bastar Fighters had launched the operation on February 7, he said. At around 8 am on Sunday, an intense exchange of fire broke out on the hill, a part of the Indravati National Park. The intermittent gunfight lasted till around 4 pm, he said. So far, bodies of 31 Naxalites, including 11 women, clad in 'uniform' have been recovered from the encounter site. Besides, a huge cache of weapons, including AK-47, INSAS, SLR and

.303 rifles and Barrel Grenade Launchers (BGL), and explosives have also been seized from the scene," ed to be out of danger.

the official said.

DRG Head Constable Naresh Dhruv and Constable Vasit Ravte from the STF were killed in the gunfight and their mortal remains have been brought to Bijapur district headquarters, he said. While Dhruv was a resident of Balodabazar-Bhatapara district, Ravte hailed from the Baldo district in the state.

Constables Jaggu Kalmu (DRG) and Gulab Mandavi (STF) suffered injuries during the encounter. They were airlifted to Raipur and admitted at a hospital there, Sundarraj said, adding that their condition was stat-

Naxals will be eradicated by March 31, 2026'

Reinforcement of DRG, STF, Bastar Fighter and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has been rushed to the spot and a search operation is underway in the area, he added. Maintaining the success achieved in the anti-Naxal offensive last year, bodies of 65 Naxalites have been recovered in the first 40 days of this year following separate encounters in the densely forested Bastar region com-

Bijapur, he said. As per the intention of the government and people's wishes, different units of state police and paramilitary forces deployed in Bastar have been dedicatedly working towards establishing peace, security and development with strong morale and clear

prising seven districts including

CM to chair key meet with ministers, secys tomorrow

Focus to be on implementation of welfare schemes, particularly 'Super Six' initiatives

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The agenda is expected to include discussions on major projects such as Amaravati's development, the Polavaram irrigation project, the Visakhapatnam railway zone, and recent MoUs signed for investments. Secretaries will outline their respective department's milestones, challenges, and resource requirements across sectors like infrastructure, education, health, and

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu will chair a high-level meeting with department secretaries and ministers on February 11 to review ongoing projects and future plans. The meeting will provide a platform for secretaries to present their achievements, ongoing initiatives,

and future strategies through detailed

PowerPoint presentations. A key focus of the meeting will be the implementation of welfare schemes, particularly the 'Super Six' initiatives promised during the elections. The agenda is expected to include discussions on major projects such as Amaravati's development, the Polavaram irrigation project, the Visakhapatnam railway zone, and recent MoUs signed for investments. Secretaries will outline their respective department's milestones, challenges, and resource requirements across sectors like infrastructure, education, health, and

As the chair, Naidu is expected to assess the effectiveness of ongoing initiatives and provide strategic direction. Known for his emphasis on technologydriven governance, he will guide discussions to align departmental efforts with the state's long-term development goals.

worries farmers

A prolonged dry spell has got Shimla farmers worrying about the apple crop, which is now threatened by a hampered production Desired cooling hours (1,200 to 1,600 below 7 degrees 600 hours for early varieties have not come by this season. Farmers were also restricted from new plantations due to unfavourable weather conditions, Fruit Vegetable Flower Growers Association President Harish Chauhan said on Sunday. About 90 per cent of apple orchardists.

-PAGE: 8

New Zealand is one of strongest team

away match against..

Four women farm workers killed in tractor mishap

Four women agricultural workers were killed and eight others injured in a tragic accident on Sunday when the tractor-trolley they were travelling in overturned at Bollavaram village in Muppalla mandal of

The incident occurred as approximately 20 agricultural labourers were returning to their native village, Chaganti Vari Palem, after harvesting chilli in a field. The tractortrolley overturned while travelling on a narrow irrigation canal bund, leading to the fatalities.



Engineering student raped; 3 accused identified

PNS VIJAYAWADA

A second-year engineering student was allegedly raped in Paritala, Kanchikacherla mandal, NTR disaccused identified Shaik Hussain, a local painter, is alleged to have exploited the victim's trust, feigning a romantic

Police reports indicate the vic-Paritala, is a B.Tech student at a assault took place. local engineering college in



finance

relationship before assaulting her. Kanchikacherla. Hussain allegedly lured her to a room belonging tim, who resides in a hostel in to his friend, Sidhu, where the

Purandeswari opposes KK Line merger with Rayagada Divn

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

In response to a report published in The Pioneer titled "Public fury erupts over KK Line transfer to Odisha," BJP Andhra Pradesh unit president Daggubati Purandeswari on Sunday expressed strong concerns regarding the decision to merge the Kothavalasa-Kirandul (KK) line with the newly formed Rayagada Division of East Coast Railway.

Purandeswari, along with leaders from the party's Visakhapatnam district unit,

took up the matter with Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, emphasizing the strategic and economic significance of the KK line. She pointed out that the railway line generates an annual revenue exceeding Rs 10,500 crore for the Waltair Division and plays a crucial role in the transportation of raw materials and finished goods to major

public sector industrial establishments in Visakhapatnam, including Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, NTPC, and Hindustan Shipyard.

BRIBERY SCANDAL

NAAC debars KLEF for 5 years

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has debarred the Guntur-based Koneru Lakshmaiah Education Foundation (KLEF) for five years following a bribery scandal involving its accreditation process.

The action comes just days after the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) arrested three KLEF officials and members of the NAAC inspection committee for allegedly accepting bribes to grant the institution an

Along with KLEF, the seven arrested members of the NAAC inspection committee have been permanently barred from participating in future accreditation assessments.

NAAC announced in a statement that KLEF's current accreditation process had been cancelled, and the university would not be eligible to apply for re-accreditation for the next five years.

NAAC's Executive

previous inspection visits to the university and take further action if required.

Along with KLEF, the seven arrested members of the NAAC inspection committee have been permanently barred from participating in future accreditation assess-

The NAAC has also initiated a review of their past evaluations of other institutions to ensure the credibility of its accreditation

Continued on Page 2



Manipur CM N Biren resigns ahead of no-trust motion

PNS IMPHAL

Amidst rumblings within the state BJP seeking a change of leadership, Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Sunday tendered his resignation to Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla at the Raj Bhavan in Imphal, officials said.

The Governor accepted Singh's resignation, along with that of his council of ministers, and requested that he continue in office until alternative arrangements are made. The development comes hours

after he returned from Delhi. Earlier this week, a new con-

troversy erupted after the Supreme Court sought a sealedcover forensic report on the authenticity of leaked audio clips alleging the role of Singh in the ethnic violence.

The tapes reportedly included conversations where Singh allegedly suggested that Meitei groups were allowed to loot arms and ammunition from the state government during the unrest, which has so far claimed 250 lives.

APSRTC flags off 3 special buses for Kumbh Mela

PNS KAKINADA

The Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) has launched three special buses for the convenience of pilgrims travelling to the ongoing Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh.

The buses two Star Liner buses and one Super Luxury bus were flagged off by District Public Transport Officer M. Srinivasa Rao at a brief ceremony held at the RTC bus station complex here on Sunday.

During the journey, the buses will pass through Bhubaneswar, Puri, and Konark before reaching Prayagraj. After allowing the pilgrims to take a holy dip at the Triveni Sangam, the return journey will include stops at Varanasi, Gaya, and Bodh Gaya for darshan.

Tirupati JSP in-charge 'dupes' woman of Rs 1.20 cr Pawan Kalyan orders internal probe into charges against Kiran Royal Jana Sena has

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena Party (JSP) chief K Pawan Kalyan has ordered an internal inquiry into serious allegations against Kiran Royal, the party in charge of Tirupati. The directive comes after a woman from Bairagapattudugu, Tirupati, accused Kiran Royal of cheating her of over Rs 1.20 crore in cash and 25 tulas of

In a video that has gone viral on social media, the woman claimed she had lent large sums of money to Kiran Royal over time, believing his promises to return double the amount after the coalition government came to power. However, she alleged that he only issued cheques and bonds worth Rs 30 lakh and



assured transparency in the inquiry, and further action . against Kiran Royal will be determined based on the findings. Meanwhile, Kiran Royal has denied all allegations

demanded full repayment. She further claimed that he warned her against pursuing the matter, even allegedly threatening her children.

The controversy intensified after an audio clip, purportedly of Kiran Royal threatening the woman over

The woman, reportedly overwhelmed by debt, attempted suicide and is currently undergoing treatment at Vellore CMC Hospital.

Following the allegations, Pawan Kalyan instructed the party's conflict committee to conduct a thorough later threatened her when she a phone call, also surfaced online. probe and temporarily relieved

Kiran Royal of his duties until the inquiry is completed. He has also been directed to avoid all party activities during this period. The decision was officially announced by Pawan Kalyan's political secretary, P. Hariprasad.

Pawan Kalyan urged party members to focus on issues that directly impact society and not be distracted by matters that do not serve public welfare. He emphasised that the ISP leadership must prioritise addressing public concerns and uphold the party's core objectives of social and political progress.

The party has assured transparency in the inquiry, and further action against Kiran Royal will be determined based on the findings. Meanwhile, Kiran Royal has denied all allegations.

1.12 cr kids to benefit from deworming drive today uted through Anganwadi centres

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Health and Family Welfare Department has finalised arrangements for administering Albendazole tablets to 1.12 crore children and students aged 1 to 19 across the state on National Deworming Day (NDD). G. Veerapandian, Commissioner of the Department of Health and Family Welfare, announced on Sunday.

He confirmed that the tablets have been dispatched to all districts, and distribution arrangements are in place. Awareness campaign materials, including posters and pamphlets, have also been distributed.

Veerapandian stated that 34% of children and students in the state suffer from intestinal worms. To combat this, 400mg

Albendazole tablets will be distrib-

and government and private educational institutions. The aim is to reach 1.12 crore children. The primary distribution will take

place on Monday, targeting children enrolled in Anganwadis and those not attending school. A mop-up round for those who miss the initial distribution is scheduled for February 17.

Anganwadi workers and teachers will administer the tablets, following government guidelines.

The health department, in collaboration with ASHA workers and ANMs, has coordinated transportation, infrastructure, tablet availability, IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) materials, and safe drinking water.

Monday Mirchi

LIST VS. SPONSORED VACATION?

An RTI query with the Embassy of India in Switzerland has set off a storm, revealing that 18 members travelled as part of Telangana's delegation to the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos. While the opposition had a field day pointing out a string of unknown names with no official positions, a little bird tells us the real story is far more interesting. The list disclosed through RTI pertains to those who received official WEF ID cards, allowing them access to the event. But here's the twist - the government-approved list, sanctioned by the Chief Secretary for state-sponsored travel, is a different document altogether. And guess what? Several political names don't even figure in it. So, while critics are questioning how certain individuals ended up as part of the official delegation, the bigger mystery is who got a fully funded Swiss vacation under the radar. Looks like Telangana's Davos diaries are far from over - expect more fireworks as the real list surfaces.

DON'T OVERACT: HYDRAA CHIEF TO LAWYER HYDRAA Commissioner AV Ranganath

met with members of the Ailapur Rajagopal Nagar Association in Aminpur Municipality, Sangareddy district, where discussions centred around concerns raised by residents who had purchased plots in the area. Among those present was Mukhim, a Supreme Court lawyer and a resident of Ailapur village, who engaged in a pointed exchange with the commissioner. During the meeting, Mukhim questioned Ranganath about his background, asking if he knew Telugu. The remark did not sit well with the commissioner, who firmly responded, "Say what you want, don't overact" The brief but intense interaction drew attention, with some seeing it as a momentary lapse in decorum. Whispers noted that while such discussions are crucial for addressing grievances, maintaining a respectful tone remains essential. Critics argue that adherence to decorum is not just for officials but applies to every lawabiding citizen, including politicians.

NO ROOM FOR BUREAUCRATS AS **CONGRESS LEADERS TAKE OVER EVENTS**

It's a familiar scene these days—press meets and inaugurals in the Congress regime have turned into a crowd fest, leaving bureaucrats struggling to even find a place to sit. With almost every Congress leader making it a point to show up, there's barely any space left for top officials, let alone a dignified seating arrangement. Chief Secretary Santhi Kumar has already had her share of awkward moments. More than once, a chair had to be hurriedly arranged for her during press meets, sometimes so close to the stairs that it seemed like he was on the verge of exiting rather than presiding. The situation isn't any better at inaugurations, where the sheer number of political attendees, combined with heightened security and jostling, has resulted in top bureaucrats,

including secretaries, being subtly moved aside. But here's the real kicker-they aren't making a fuss. No pushing, no complaining, just silently stepping back as the political crowd swells. The question is, how long before the administration decides enough is enough? Or will they just keep adjusting, one

GHMC CHIEF MISSING IN ACTION? **ACTIVISTS COMPLAIN, CM KNOWS**

The buzz around the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) corridors is that activists are having a tough time meeting Commissioner Ilambarithi. They claim he is unavailable even during visiting hours, raising questions about accessibility. But here's the twist—what if the visiting hours coincide with meetings called by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy himself? Activists, in their frustration, tagged their complaint straight to the CM, pointing out that GHMC's top boss is nowhere to be found when they try to meet him. The irony? The CM already knows, because if Ilambarithi is in a closed-door meeting with him, how is he supposed to be outside meeting activists at the same time? Now, while the CM is aware, the real question is—who's going to tell the activists that their timing might just be off? With civic issues piling up and GHMC under scrutiny, it remains to be seen whether Ilambarithi will tweak his schedule or if activists will have to rethink their strat-

NTR DISTRICT TOP COP

'SITS' ON 'TOP SHELF' Senior IPS officer and NTR District Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhar Babu has landed himself quite a 'spirited' assignment — overseeing the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing irregularities in the Andhra Pradesh State Beverages Corporation Limited (APSBCL). If handling law and order wasn't enough, now he has the added task of untangling a financial mess that allegedly brewed between October 2019 and March 2024. Leading a crack team of six senior officers from enforcement and vigilance departments, Rajasekhar Babu has been handed sweeping powers under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023. From search and seizure to grilling witnesses and making arrests, this SIT means business. And with the Director General of Police (CID) watching over their shoulders, there's no room for 'on the rocks' investigations. The government, in a rare show of urgency, has directed all departments to extend their full support—technical, legal, and presumably, moral—to the SIT. The team will submit progress reports every fortnight, ensuring that this probe doesn't just fizzle out. With a case involving APSBCL, financial loopholes, and a senior IPS officer in charge, one thing is certain—this investigation won't be short of twists, turns, and perhaps a few sobering revelations!

--Yours truly

NAAC debars...

Continued from Page 1

The scandal came to light after allegations ti surfaced that KLEF officials had bribed NAAC inspection members to secure a top accreditation rating. The CBI arrested 10 individuals in connection with the case, including Samarendra Nath Saha, chairman of the NAAC inspection committee, as well as KLEF Vice Chancellor G.P. Saradhi Varma, Vice President Koneru Raja Hareen, and Hyderabad campus director A.

introduce new accreditation measures later

strengthen the evaluation framework. The upcoming system, based on recommendaclassify institutions into two categoriesaccredited and non-accredited—based on key benchmarks such as infrastructure, learning resources, and the startup ecosystem.

Additionally, a Maturity-Based Graded Levels (MBGL) system will rate institutions on a scale from 1 to 5, assessing their progress over time. NAAC Executive Committee Chairman Prof. Anil D. Sahasrabudhe stated that digital verification Amid the controversy, NAAC is set to methods would be integrated into the new system to minimise reliance on physical this year to enhance transparency and inspections and improve data accuracy.

CM to chair key meet...

Continued from Page 1

The participation of ministers is expected to enhance coordination between departments and government objectives. Their interactions faster implementation of policies and projects.

with secretaries will facilitate collaboration and expedite decision-making. The meeting is seen as a crucial step in ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective governance, enabling

Four women...

Continued from Page 1

The deceased women have been identified as Gangamma, Samrajyam, Madhavi, and Padma. The injured workers were immediately transported to the Government General Hospital (GGH) in Sattenapalli for treatment. The police used an earthmover to recover the bodies, which were trapped under the overturned trolley. A case has been registered in connection with the accident, and the bodies were sent to the GGH in Sattenapalli for postmortem examina-

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu expressed his condolences over the deaths of the women. "It is painful to note that the accident took place when they were going home after completing work at an agriculture field," he stated. He assured that the government would provide necessary support to the bereaved families. The Chief Minister also directed Palnadu district officials to ensure the injured receive the best possible medical care.

BJP wins after 32 yrs where Naidu campaigned

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu campaigned for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Shahdara Assembly constituency of Delhi on February 2, marking a historic political shift as the saffron flag returned to the constituency after 32 years.

In the recently concluded elections, BJP candidate Sanjay Goel secured victory, breaking a long streak of non-BJP rule in Shahdara. The constituency last witnessed a BJP win in 1993, when Ramnivas Goel emerged victorious. Since then, Congress won in 1998, 2003, and 2008, followed by the Shiromani Akali Dal in 2013 and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in 2015 and 2020.

During the campaign, Chandrababu Naidu shared the stage with Union Minister for Urban Development, Manohar Lal Khattar in

Speaking at the rally, Sanjay Goel criticised AAP's involvement in a liquor scam and promised to work closely with Chandrababu Naidu to resolve issues faced by Andhra Pradesh

Roads, welfare priorities: Min BC Janardhan Reddy

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Roads, Buildings, Investments, and Infrastructure, BC Janardhan Reddy, asserted that the state's development and welfare could progress only under the leadership of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and the NDA coalition government. He made these remarks on Sunday while inaugurating the new BC Gurukula School for Girls in Atmakur, alongside BC Welfare Minister S Savitha, Ministers P Narayana, Anam Ramnarayan Reddy, and NMD Farooq. As part of the event, the ministers distributed clothing to the students and participated in the midday meal. They later interacted with the students in a meeting.

Speaking at a press conference afterwards, Minister Janardhan Reddy emphasised the government's commitment to restoring Andhra Pradesh's past glory and attracting industrial investments. He criticised the previous administration for driving industries away to

NEW GURUKUL SCHOOL FOR GIRLS INAUGURATED





Referring to the deteriorated condition of roads, the minister blamed the previous leadership of the Roads & Buildings (R&B) department, stating that the poor state of roads had led to ridicule from other states. He highlighted that under CM Chandrababu Naidu's leadership, Rs 1,066 crore was allocated to repair over 21,000 km of roads, most of which were in poor condition. So far, 80% of the work has been completed, with nearly 18,000 km made

Minister Reddy remarked that while contractors once worked with pride, they faced

pothole-free.

difficulties under the previous YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government. He noted that the previous administration had left unpaid dues of Rs 2,500 crore to institutions like NABARD and NDB for road projects, which were cleared after the current government took charge.

He further announced plans to develop 10,000 km of roads under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. Over the next two to three months, roads will be upgraded to double-lane and four-lane highways through various agencies.

Updating on the pothole-free road initiative, Minister Reddy said that in Nellore district alone, 4,000 km of roads had been repaired at a cost of Rs 37 crore. With 80% of the work completed, the remaining repairs, delayed due to rains, would be finished by the end of the month. He assured that there would be no compromise on quality and that action would be taken against officials if necessary.

MP Vemireddy Prabhakar Reddy, ZP Chairperson Anam Arunamma, Collector Anand, State TIDCO Chairman V Ajay Kumar, State Waqf Board Chairman Azeez, NUDA Chairman Kotamreddy Srinivasa Reddy, and other local representatives were present.

Minister Durgesh calls for unanimous support to Rajasekhar in MLC election

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister Kandula Durgesh has urged the people of East and West Godavari districts to ensure the resounding victory of Perabathula Rajasekhar, the alliance candidate for the MLC election. He announced that Rajasekhar will file his nomination on February 10. Speaking at a meeting held at the JanaSena Party office in Eluru on Sunday, Durgesh called on alliance leaders to work diligently for Rajasekhar's success. The minister highlighted that

the alliance government is committed to generating employment for the youth through tourism and industrial development. He expressed happiness over the BJP's historic victory in the Delhi elections, stating that people across the country are increasingly supporting coalition governments. He urged gradu-ate voters to back Rajasekhar, asserting that the alliance government has laid the foundation for significant progress in the coming five years. He criticised the previous government for fail-



ing to fulfil its job creation promises and urged voters to trust the coalition, which has already initiated the DSC process to provide employment.

Durgesh, who is a member of the cabinet sub-committee on employment generation, stated that the committee is working towards creating job opportunities in both government and private sectors. He reiterated the government's commitment to creating 20 lakh jobs in the state over the next five years through industrial and tourism development. The minister emphasised that

Rajasekhar would serve as the people's voice in the Legislative Council and play a key role in ensuring government welfare schemes reach the youth. He criticised the previous government for its lack of development initiatives and reminded the public that it was reduced to just 11 seats, showing its disconnect with the people.

Durgesh concluded by expressing confidence in the coalition government's longterm success, asserting that it will remain in power for the next 30 years. He urged the people to support Rajasekhar in the MLC election, stating that his victory would pave the way for development and welfare in the region.

YSRCP slams Naidu, Dokka for 'political opportunism'

PNS VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leaders strongly criticised Chandrababu Naidu and Dokka Manikya Vara Prasad, accusing them of political opportunism and betrayal.

YSRCP spokesperson Kommuuri Kanaka Rao lashed out at Dokka, stating that he has a habit of switching parties for personal gain. He pointed out that YS Jagan Mohan Reddy made Dokka an MLC, but in return, he betrayed Jagan. Now, in desperation for political positions, Dokka has aligned with Chandrababu Naidu, believing that criticising Jagan will secure him opportunities.

Kanaka Rao further alleged that Dokka is using caste politics for his benefit and described his career as one filled with opportunism and betraval. He also took a dig at Chandrababu Naidu, stating that both he and Dokka have a history of back-stabbing and misleading the public with false promises like the "Super Six" schemes.

Meanwhile, in another press

conference, former MLA TJR Sudhakar Babu accused Chandrababu Naidu of being obsessed with Jagan Mohan Reddy. "Whether in Delhi, Davos, or his party meetings, his day doesn't pass without mentioning Jagan," he remarked.

Sudhakar Babu slammed the TDP-Jana Sena-BJP alliance, stating that while they initially supported the 'Super Six' welfare schemes, they are now opposing them. "If they now find welfare 'tiresome,' why did they promise it in the first place?" he questioned. He also criticised Naidu's history of alliances and betrayals, citing his flip-flops with Modi, Congress, and Communists. He further attacked the appointment of anti-Jagan figures as Speaker and Deputy Speaker, raising concerns over the Assembly's fairness.

Exposing financial mismanagement, Sudhakar Babu questioned, "Where did the Rs 1.45 lakh crore borrowed by the previous government go?" He concluded by calling TDP's failure to implement 'Super Six' a betrayal of public trust.

Continued from Page 1

District medical and health officials have been tasked

Special booths will also be set up at transport hubs like bus stands and railway stations to maximise coverage. The programme will also promote awareness about hygiene practices, such as avoiding open defecation and proper

Health authorities and independent monitors will supervise the programme's implementation.

Health centres will be on alert and prepared to coordinate with emergency services (108 and 104) in case of adverse reactions.

Mr. Veerapandian appealed to school managements and the public for their cooperation in ensuring the success of this initiative, which aims to improve children's health

PNS VIJAYAWADA

1.12 cr kids to benefit... Purandeswari opposes... impact on the Waltair Division.

Continued from Page 1

The movement of essential minerals like iron ore, bauxite, and coal through this railway line is vital to sustaining the region's industrial operations.

Addressing concerns raised by opposition parties, particularly the Left, Purandeswari clarified that BJP leaders had discussed the matter in detail with the Railway Minister and formally submitted a letter seeking reconsideration of the merger. She further stated that Minister Vaishnaw assured them that the issue would be reviewed in light of the economic and logistical implications for Andȟra Pradesĥ. The proposed merger has

triggered widespread reactions from various political and public stakeholders. Several trade unions, industrial representatives, and civil society organizations have voiced their opposition, arguing that shifting the KK line to the Rayagada Division could weaken the economic interests of Visakhapatnam. Additionally, leaders from different political parties have urged the Centre to reconsider the decision, citing concerns over the potential administrative and financial

The BJP state leadership's intervention highlights the broader debate surrounding railway division reorganizations and their implications for regional development. Many view the move as part of a larger restructuring plan initiated by the Indian Railways, but local leaders and citizens insist that such decisions should not come at the cost of economic stability and regional progress. With tensions mounting, all

eyes are now on the Railway

Ministry's response and the

possible reconsideration of the

merger decision.

TODAY **ALMANAC** Sukla Paksha Feb 09 07:25 PM to Feb 10 06:57 PM Trayodashi Chaturdashi: Feb 10 06:57 PM to Feb 11 06:55 PM

Nakshatram: Punarvasu: to Feb 10 06:00 PM Pushya: Feb 10 06:00 PM to Feb 11 06:34 PM Rahukalam 8:14 AM to 9:39 AM 11:05 AM to 12:30 PM Yamagandam: 02:11 AM to 03:50 AM Varjyam: 1:55 PM to 3:21 PM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 12:07 PM to 12:53 PM VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Sunny **Temp:** 32°° **Humidity:** 70% Sunrise: 6:35 AM Sunset: 6:08 PM



03:36 PM to 05:12 PM

Updated: February 9, 2025 5:00 PM

Engineering student...

Continued from Page 1

Police further allege that Hussain took nude photographs of the victim and shared them with Sidhu and another person Prabhudas. These images were then allegedly used to threaten and harass her.

The victim subsequently filed a complaint at the Kanchikacherla Police Station. Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Nandigama, Tilak, confirmed that a case has been registered. The three accused have been identified as Shaik Hussain (the primary accused), Sidhu (alleged to have aided in the crime), and Prabhudas (accused of supporting Hussain).

Sidhu is currently being interrogated to determine his involvement in the alleged capture of the compromising photographs. Police are pursuing legal action against all three accused. An inves-

tigation is on.

NTR District City Task Force and Law & Order teams arrested two persons and seized nine kg of ganja, valued at about Rs 50,000. NTR District Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhar Babu, supervised an operation under Task Force ADCP A Srinivas Rao gathered information related to the transportation, sale, purchase, and distribution of ganja while also establishing stringent surveillance on individuals who have evaded arrest in previous drug-related cases.

Based on the information received by the City Task Force and Law & Order teams, a woman and a man were apprehended in the Nandamuri Nagar area under the jurisdiction of the



Two arrested, 9 kg ganja seized

Ajith Singh Nagar Police Station. During interrogation, approximately nine kilograms of ganja were seized from their posses-

The Ajith Singh Nagar Police Station arrested Yoganaanda

Suneetha (36 years), resident of Nandamuri Nagar and Chebrolu Naveen Bal Prashanth Kumar @ Baalu (25 years), resident of P&T Colony, Singh Nagar, Vijayawada.

The police said Prashanth

Kumar had completed his ITI and was working in a clothing store while occasionally attending events as a photographer. He met Suneetha at an event a year ago. With bad habits such as smoking ganja and consuming alcohol, Prashanth would visit Suneetha's home to indulge in these activities. They would procure ganja from areas along the Andhra-Odisha border, bring it to Vijayawada, and sell it to the youth in various localities, using ne proceeds for their enjoyment.

Based on reliable information regarding the illegal possession of ganja in the Nandamuri Nagar area, the Task Force and Ajith Singh Nagar Police, along with their teams, apprehended the two, seized nine kilograms of ganja.

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Gunadala Mary Matha Fest off to a grand start

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The three-day annual feast of Gunadala Mary Matha began on Sunday with great enthusiasm and devotion. Devotees from far and wide flocked to the Gunadala shrine to offer prayers. Vijayawada Catholic Diocese Bishop Most Rev.
Telagatoti Joseph Raja Rao,
Monsignor Fr. Muvvala Prasad,
Fr. M Gabriel, Rector Fr Yelat William Jayaraju, and other clergy members lit the ceremonial lamps, officially inaugurating the festivities.

The celebrations commenced with a special 'Samishti Divya Pooja Bali' (Holy Mass) at 7:00 AM, followed by a cultural programme at the Bishop Grassi High School grounds.

Bishop Raja Rao announced that 2025 has been designated as the Jubilee Year by Pope Francis. He described the Gunadala shrine as a place of miracles, where devotees find solace and blessings. He emphasised the importance of seeking the intercession of the Virgin Mary, particularly during times of hardship and suffering, stating that her prayers

bring God's grace.

Fr. PK Joseph delivered a message on the power of divine miracles, citing the biblical story of Jesus turning water into wine at the wedding in Canaan. He also commemorated the 1/7/1 ed the 167th anniversary of the miraculous apparition of Lourdes's Mother to Lourdes's Mothe Bernadette in France.

Following the spiritual discourse, a Holy Mass was celebrated by Bishop Joseph Rajarao, Monsignor Fr. Muvvala Prasad, Fr. M Gabriel, Fr. Yelati William Jayaraju, Fr. Kolakani Marianna, Fr. Thota Sunil Raju, and other diocesan priests.

In the afternoon, a grand procession, led by Fr. William Jayaraju, made its way through the streets of Gunadala, with devotees reverently carrying the statue of Mother Mary.

The evening celebrations included another special Holy Mass at 6:00 PM, presided over by Bishop Dr. Karanam Daman Kumar of Nalgonda and Bishop Joseph Rajarao of the Vijayawada Catholic Diocese, along with other cler-

The day was enriched by



NTR CP oversees security arrangements

PNS VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Police Commissioner SV Rajasekhar Babu inspected the crowds of devotees participating in the three-day Gunadala Mary Matha celebrations, which commenced in Vijayawada on Sunday. He monitored the situation via closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras from a temporary Command Control Room set up at Gunadala and offered valuable suggestions to police officials and personnel.

Addressing the officers, Commissioner Rajasekhar Babu stressed the need for seamless collaboration between all departments and the implementation of robust security measures to ensure a smooth experience for the visiting devotees. He pointed out that this year, enhanced security protocols have been put in place, incorporating advanced technol-



ing vigilant given the anticipated surge in devotees, urging security personnel to be on high alert to prevent any untoward incidents. He directed that subordinate staff be regularly briefed on their duties and encouraged them to interact courteously with all attendees, fostering a peaceful and pleasant atmosphere for the devotees.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Gowthamishali, Trainee IPS Manisha, ADCPs, ACPs, Inspectors, and other staff ogy like CCTV cameras and drones around the Mary Mata Temple.

He emphasised the importance of remain
Gowthamishali, Trainee IPS Manisha, ADCPs, ACPs, Inspectors, and other staff members were present during the inspection.

These included performances Gunadala, cultural presenta- Christian devotional songs, by the youth centre, a Kolatam tions by students from the and performances by music

raditional dance) from Carmel Nagar Blind School, groups from Machilipatna

and Gunadala, all contributing

BJP MLA launches scathing attack on Jagan

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

BJP MLA Vishnu Kumar Raju launched a sharp attack on former chief minister and YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, mocking him for living in an "imaginary world" and referring to himself as "2.0." Addressing a press conference at the BJP office in Visakhapatnam on Sunday, Raju alleged that Jagan is facing mental issues and asserted that as long as he remains at the helm of YSRCP, the alliance has

nothing to fear. Raju further remarked



that with AICC leader Rahul Gandhi leading at the national level and Jagan in Andhra Pradesh, there is no substantial threat to the BJP-led alliance, either at

the centre or in the state. Expressing confidence in his party's electoral prospects, he stated that the BJP is poised for victory in upcoming elections, spanning from Delhi to local constituencies. He also ridiculed Jagan's political statements, suggesting that they may be more suited for cinema rather than real-

life governance.
The BJP MLA also took a stand against ministers who use inappropriate language, emphasizing that such individuals should not be included in alliance parties. Additionally, he shared his personal opinion on the

bench at Rishikonda Palace, highlighting the importance of judicial accessibility in the region.

Furthermore, Raju criticised the YSRCP, accusing it of persistently covering up its failures, whereas the BJP and its allies remain focused on future successes. He underscored that the opposition's rhetoric does not pose a challenge to the alliance's political aspirations. His remarks come at a time of heightened political tensions in Andhra Pradesh, setting the stage for an intense electoral battle in the coming days.

5K run, walkathon on Feb 12

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Customs Commissionerate, Vijayawada, will hold a 5K run and walkathon on February 12, aimed at promoting awareness about leading a healthy lifestyle and highlighting the crucial role of Customs in facilitating global trade.

The event is scheduled to begin at 6 AM from Dr BR Ambedkar Statue, PWD Grounds, MG Road, Vijayawada and all the employees of Central government departments in ment departments in Vijayawada are invited to participate, with categories designed to accommodate various age groups, said Sadu Narasimha Commissioner of Customs (Preventive), Vijayawada, in a release on Sunday. In addition to promoting health and wellness, the event will also commemorate the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Indian Constitution, adding further significance to the occasion.

This event will also mark observance International Customs Day 2025. It provides a unique opportunity for government employees and the public to come together, embrace fitness and celebrate a major milestone in the country's history. A commemorative poster for the event was released by Commissioner Narasimha Reddy.

Central government officers and staff are encouraged to participate with enthusiasm, ensuring the success of this event while promoting both healthy living and national pride.



MP launches 'Vikasit Panchayat' to develop 294 villages

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath, popularly known as Chinni, has launched the 'Vikasit Panchayat' initiative in collaboration with the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NÎRDPR) to develop 294 villages in the Vijayawada Parliamentary constituency. As part of this programme, 100 young individuals have been selected for self-employment training, with 33 youths from various mandals sent to NIRDPR, Hyderabad, for a week-long training session from February 10 to 16. On Sunday, Andhra Pradesh

Building and Other Construction Workers Advisory Committee Advisory Committee (APBOCWAC) Chairman G Raghuram Raju, Arya Vysya Development Corporation Chairman Dundi Rakesh, and former Vijayawada Mayor Koneru Sridhar flagged off a bus carrying the trainees from

the MP's office, NTR Bhavan, at Gurunanak Colony.

Speaking on the occasion, the leaders highlighted that the training aims to equip the youth with essential skills to promote self-employment and entrepreneurship, contributing to the socio-economic development of their communities. They emphasised that the partnership between the Vikasit Panchayat initiative and NIRDPR underscores a commitment to strengthening rural economies through targeted skill development programmes.

They also noted that MP Kesineni Chinni had person-ally attended a one-day train-ing session at NIRDPR, underscoring his vision to transform villages into model settlements. As part of his commitment, he has allocated Rs 15 lakh for the week-long training and is providing a monthly stipend of Rs 10,000 to participants through the Kesineni Foundation. Upon completing their training, these youths will work in their respective villages, identifying key development prior-

Meanwhile, MP Kesineni Chinni has been holding meetings with youth and Self-Help Group (SHG) leaders at district and mandal levels, in coordination with NTR District Collector Dr G Lakshmisha and other officials. He has facilitated the participation of 64 SHG leaders to raise awareness about self-employment schemes. The MP has also devised a plan to develop all villages simultaneously by forming clusters in each man-dal and leveraging central government schemes with support from NIRDPR.

Several leaders, including VMC Corporator Chennupati Usha Rani, former TDP floor leader Y Ramana, TDP SC Cell president S Sanjay Varma, Minority Cell president Sk Karimulla, and TNSF general secretary Sai Charan, were

Private colleges accused of charging exorbitant fees for practical exams

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

Several private colleges in the district are facing allegations of exploiting students by charging exorbitant fees for practical examinations. These institutions are reportedly demanding Rs. 2,000-Rs. 5,000 per stufees" or other charges, promising higher marks in return.

The alleged scheme takes advantage of the current system where practical exams are conducted in the students' own colleges, rather than a jumbled system used previously. With intermediate marks crucial for EAMCET rank-

They demand Rs. 2,000-Rs. 5,000 as "lab fees" or other charges, promising high marks in return

ing with examiners to guarantee full marks for students who pay the demanded fees. The collected money is then reportedly distributed to the examiners.

Practical exams for MPC and BiPC students are scheduled to begin on Monday. A total of 29,791 MPC students and 4,888 BiPC students will

ings, students are under appear for the exams across against college managements if immense pressure to score 146 centres. While examiners students file complaints. He well. It is alleged that some col- will be appointed in a jumbled also warned of departmental lege managements are collab- manner, concerns remain that action against any staff found private colleges have already collected substantial sums from students to influence the evaluation process. Estimates suggest that over 33,000 students from private institutions may

> Regional Inspection Officer (RIO) Muralidhar stated that strict action will be taken

have collectively paid up to Rs.

Despite these assurances, students and parents remain concerned about the fairness and transparency of the upcoming exams. They are urging authorities to take immediate steps to prevent further exploitation and ensure a merit-based examination sys-

SRM-AP's Infinitus'25 Fest concludes



SRM University - AP's four-day Techno-Cultural Infinitus'25, concluded successfully. The final two days featured performances by music composer duo Salim-Sulaiman, comedian Hoody, singer Ram Miryala, and DJ Akram. The artists entertained the audience with their performances.

The fest also included a

"Fresher" competition. Aashi: Aftab Md (first-year B.Tech) and Pratyusha Karmakar (firstyear MBA) won the Mr. and Ms. Fresher titles. Other events like Tech Tales, Cyber Vogue, Cyber Sway, Cyber Tunes, and Glitch Stage showcased student talent.

Infinitus'25 was organised by the Directorate of Student Affairs and the University

Indian Navy's mega exercise TROPEX 2025 underway

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

The Indian Navy's largest biennial exercise, Theatre Level Operational Exercise (TROPEX) 2025, is currently underway across the Indian Ocean Region, showcasing India's commitment to maritime security. This year's exercise, running from January to March, involves a significant deployment of naval assets and personnel, along with substantial participation from the Indian Army, Indian Air Force, and Indian Coast Guard.

TROPEX 25 is designed to test and refine the Indian Navy's operational readiness in complex, high-intensity warfare scenarios. The exercise is structured in phases, encompassing both harbour and at-sea operations, and covers a wide spectrum of naval activities. These include combat manoeuvres, cyber



weapon firings, and a major Amphibious Exercise (AMPHEX). AMPHEX is cru-Exercise cial for enhancing the Navy's capabilities to counter conventional, asymmetric, and hybrid threats in contested maritime environments

A formidable array of assets submarines, and advanced air-

and electronic warfare, live is participating in TROPEX 25, including approximately 65 Indian Navy ships, nine submarines, and over 80 aircraft. Among the notable platforms are the indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant, Visakhapatnam and Kolkataclass destroyers, Kalvari-class

craft like MiG-29K fighter jets, P-8I maritime patrol air-craft, HALE Sea Guardian drones, and MH-60R helicopters. These assets are undergoing rigorous operational testing to fine-tune strategies and tactics in line with the Navy's Concept of

Operations. A key focus of TROPEX 25 is the high degree of inter-service cooperation. The Indian Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard are playing integral

roles, contributing assets such as Sukhoi-30 and Jaguar fighter jets, C-130 transport aircraft, AWACS aircraft, flight refuellers, an infantry brigade of over 600 troops, and more than 10 Coast Guard ships and aircraft. This synchronized participation underscores the growing emphasis on jointness and interoperability among

India's armed forces. TROPEX has evolved into one of the most comprehensive maritime exercises in the

region, reflecting India's strategic ambitions and its pre-paredness to address evolving security challenges. The 2025 edition reinforces the Indian Navy's ability to project power, maintain maritime domain awareness, and execute credible joint operations to safeguard national interests at all times. The exercise serves as a powerful demonstration of India's commitment to a secure and stable Indian Ocean Region.

Attack on chief priest of Chilkur Balaji temple condemned

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Former MLA and YSR Congress Party (YSCP) Central Constituency Coordinator Malladi Vishnu expressed concern over the lack of protection for priests in temples across the Telugu states, affecting not only the Hindu religion but also the priests themselves. He strongly condemned the recent attack on the chief priest of

Chilkur Balaji Temple. Vishnu stated that it was horrifying for anyone to attack a priest engaged in the service of God. He stressed that priests, who perform daily rituals and prayers for the well-being of society, are regarded as divine messengers. However, the continuous attacks on priests are



disturbing. He stressed the need for society to universally condemn such incidents and demanded that legal actions be

taken against the perpetrators.

Vishnu also urged the
Telangana government to ensure proper protection for priests and take preventive measures to avoid such incidents in the future.

he pioneer



SP urges youth to shun drugs, focus on careers



District Superintendent of Police (SP) A R Damodar has appealed to young people to steer clear of drug addiction and safeguard their careers. He emphasised the detrimental effects of substance abuse during a 5km marathon organized jointly by Rise Krishnasai Engineering College and TechBulls on

The marathon, flagged off by

versed Mirayalapalem before returning to its starting point.

Addressing the participating youth, Damodar stressed the importance of avoiding harmful habits, particularly drug consumption. "Some youths have tragically ruined their lives by getting addicted to drugs like ganja," he lamented. He urged them to "cultivate good habits and lead a healthy

The SP reminded the stu-

and exhorted them to study diligently and bring pride to the district. He issued a stern warning against drug peddlers, stating that stringent action would be taken against them. He also cautioned against the dangers

link to cancer. Damodar also emphasized road safety, urging two-wheel-er riders to wear helmets. He pointed out that helmets can be life-saving in the event of acci-

of tobacco use, highlighting its

Later, the SP, District Collector A Thameem Ansariya, and Damacharla Janardhan distributed prizes to the marathon winners.

Among those present at the event were MLA BN Vijay Kumar, RICE College MD Bharat, Techbulls Chairman Bhaskar Reddy, Additional SP (Admin) K Nageswara Rao, DSP R Srinivasa Rao, and other

schools," she said.

She further announced that fine-quality rice would be supplied to social welfare hostels and that students would be served meals cooked with the same. Inverters, CCTV cameras, and RO plants are also being installed in all BC welfare hostels across

R&B Minister Janardhan Reddy said the government has taken up repairs for 27,000 km of roads, of which 18,000 km have already been repaired at a cost of Rs 1,120 crore. He noted that the Central government had sanctioned Rs 90,000 crore for the construction of national

MP Vemireddy Prabhakar Reddy said that 1,056 houses had been allocated to the Atmakur constituency under TIDCO. Municipal Administration Minister P. Narayana also

Secretary Satyanarayana, Director Madhavilatha, TIDCO Houses Chairman Vemulapati Ajay Kumar, and NUDA Chairman Kotamreddy Srinivasulu were among those present at the programme.

Interstate burglar gang nabbed, Rs 1.9 cr booty recovered



PNS ANANTAPUR

The police have arrested three members of a notorious interstate burglar gang from Madhya Pradesh and recovered stolen gold jewellery worth Rs 90 lakh and Rs 19.35 lakh in cash.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Jagadish informed the media on Sunday that the district police apprehended three members of the 'Dhar gang,' responsible for numerous burglaries and other offences in the district.

The gang had recently targeted the residences of Shiva Reddy, Shiva Shankar Naidu, and Ranjit in Rajahamsa villas, Srinagar colony, making off with jewellery and cash. Reddy

DC's appeal to govt

land encroachers

had stored the valuables in his home for his daughter's upcoming wedding.

After reviewing CCTV footage, the police identified the 'Dhar gang' as the perpetrators. SP Jagadish formed four special teams to track down the gang. Utilising advanced technology, a police team travelled to Madhya Pradesh, located the gang, and arrested three members.

The police recovered gold jewellery, diamonds, and other valuables worth Rs 90 lakh, Rs 19.35 lakh in cash, and three motorcycles. The 'Dhar gang' has a notorious reputation across the country for burglaries and thefts. Two other gang members are still at large, and a search is under-

way to apprehend them, the SP added

Among those arrested is the gang leader, Naru Pachavar, the SP confirmed. The gang's criminal activities span several states, including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, and Gujarat. As many as 32 criminal cases have been registered against the gang in South India, SP agadish stated.

The gang's modus operandi involves identifying locked houses during the day and then carrying out burglaries at night after conducting reconnaissance. The SP commended the police personnel for their success in apprehending the notorious interstate bur-

Man bludgeons father to death for refusing money for alcohol

PNS ■ ONGOLE

A 35-year-old man allegedly bludgeoned his father to death while he was asleep in Andhra Pradesh after the latter refused to give him money for alcohol, police said on Sunday.

P Mariadas smashed his 79year-old father, P Yesu, on the head with a metallic component from the chainsaw he used to fell trees. The incident occurred at around 2 am on Sunday in Indlacheruvu village, Prakasam district, police said.

"Mariadas bludgeoned his father to death with a metallic object from the chainsaw after he refused to give him money for alcohol," police said.

According to police, Mariadas, an alcoholic, had been on a drinking spree since Saturday morning. On Saturday evening, he asked Yesu for money to buy more alcohol, but when his father refused, it ultimately led to the murder. Due to the disturbance he was creating, police said Mariadas' wife and children had left their home a few days

Incidentally, both the son and father had been living together for a long time.

Anam announces massive projects in Atmakur segment

PNS NELLORE

Minister for Endowments Anam Ramanarayana Reddy has announced that several development projects will be undertaken in the Atmakur constituency to enhance amenities for the

Accompanied by Municipal Administration Minister P. Narayana, Roads and Buildings (R&B) Minister B.C. Janardhan Reddy, BC Welfare Minister S. Savitha, and MP Vemireddy Prabhakar Reddy, Anam performed 'bhoomi pooja' for the construction of a temple at a cost of Rs 20 lakh. He also laid the foundation stone for the construction of a Zilla Parishad office, which will be built at a on Sunday.

The R&B Minister inaugurated the renovated R&B guest house, while the BC Welfare Minister unveiled a statue of Goddess Saraswati on the polytechnic college campus. She also inaugurated the Jyotiba



Phule Gurukula School in Atmakur.

Addressing a press meet on the occasion, Anam lamented that Atmakur constituency had seen no development since 2014. He stated that he has now taken initiatives to complete

instructed officials to take up the Somasila high-level canal and

asserted.

various pending projects.

project was extensively damaged in the floods a few years ago, but no reconstruction work has been undertaken so far. Several works need to be carried out for the Somasila project. I have

apron works immediately," he

Anam noted that Jyotiba Phule Gurukula School and a polytechnic college had been established in Atmakur to address educational needs. He directed the District Collector to acquire 10 acres for constructbuildings for the polytech nic college. He also thanked the BC Welfare Minister and the R&B Minister for allocating

BC Welfare Minister Savitha reiterated her commitment to creating an entrepreneur in every household through the

BC Corporation. "The government has sanctioned Rs 100 crore for repairs to BC hostels. There are 105 BC residential

the State, she added.

highways in Andhra Pradesh.

BC Welfare Principal

PNS RAJAHMUNDRY East Godavari District Collector P Prasanthi has urged those who have encroached upon government lands to apply for regularisation under the newly introduced Land Regularisation

Scheme 2025.

In a statement on Sunday, the Collector said the state government has taken a decision to regularise encroached lands, providing an opportunity for applicants to streamline the process without visiting multiple government offices. Applications can now be submitted through Mee Seva Kendras and village and ward secretariats, with instructions already issued to fieldlevel staff.

The Collector stated that applications for regularisation would be accepted until December 31, 2025, as per GO No. 30, and titles would be women. She explained that ownership rights would be granted two years after issuing the title deed and conveyance deed. Applicants must upload their complete details along with the prescribed supporting documents through Mee Seva.



Encroachments made before October 15, 2019, will be considered for regularisation as per the rules.

She added that village and ward secretariat staff, under the supervision of Tahsildars, would inspect the encroached areas across the district. A list of eligible beneficiaries would then be displayed at village and ward offices. After resolving any objections, the Tahsildars would forward the final list to the Sub-Collector/RDO.

Once the list is finalised, ahsildars will send the det: to Sub-Registrars and District Registrars for further processing. The Chief Commissioner of Land Administration (CCLA) has advised eligible persons to apply at the earliest and not wait until the last



Agri college alumni get together to reminisce about happy days

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The memories of college life are truly timeless. The halcyon days between 1972 and 1976, spent by Agriculture students at Bapatla Agricultural College, continue to be cherished and relieved by those students, now in their sev-

A group of senior citizens, many of whom held senior administrative and research positions, gathered for a two-day reunion in Vijayawada to reminisce about their college days. They recalled significant events and amusing incidents from their time at Bapatla Agricultural College. Most attendees were accompanied by their spouses and all had grandchildren, the majority of whom live abroad. These alumni now lead relatively isolated lives after retirement, residing in settled locations far from their former peers.

Financially stable and enjoying a relaxed lifestyle, many are now pursuing personal interests.

For instance, KS Saibaba, a retired IFS officer who once held the highest position in Karnataka's Forest Department, now resides in Eluru. He oversees a school set up by the Kali Vana Ashramam in Ńamburu, where he mentors youngsters aspiring to join administrative services. BVS Kumar, a granite entrepreneur who pioneered value-added granite processing in the State, now coordinates Red Cross Blood Centres and Projects, working to ensure safe and quality blood for emergency victims.

K Satyanarayana Raju, an accomplished industrialist in the pesticide industry with a background in agriculture and Macter's Management, introduced vil-

lage-level water purification plants in India with the support of Ramalinga Raju of Satyam Computers. He also runs a training centre for rural graduates, focusing on advanced agricultural technology.

Caste survey was held transparently: Mahesh

PNS HYDERABAD

The caste survey was held transparently in Telangana, TPCC chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud said.

Countering the criticism of BRS Working President KT Rama Rao, he said that KTR has been stating that the caste lakhs of government employ-

KTR is criticising the government as it is getting a good name for conducting caste census, he said.

Declaring that the Congress government conducted the caste census as per the direccensus was not held properly tions of Rahul Gandhi, he without any evidence. He said warned KTR that BCs will not added. the government held the caste forgive KTR's comments on

census scientifically by using caste census. He said the caste census was held after 1931 and it will help BCs greatly.

Mahesh said the Congress government completed the caste census perfectly for the first time in the country. KTR cannot stomach the fact that BCs are going to get justice after the caste census, he "It is surpris-

not participate in the caste census. However, he and his

is ridiculous on the part of KTR to speak about weaker sections. The BCs were subjected to injustice during the BRS rule. The BRS and the BJP have compromised in MLC elections. The BRS have no candidates to field in MLC elections. So the BRS is giving indirect support to the BJP as it happened during the 2024 LS elections," he said.



Sea turtles dying in alarming numbers

PNS VIZIANAGARAM

The once-pristine coastline of North Andhra is rapidly becoming a graveyard for sea turtles, sparking serious concerns about marine biodiversity. These gentle creatures, essential for maintaining healthy fisheries, are dying in alarming numbers due to harmful fishing practices, pollution, and other environmental threats. Tourists have reported sightings of turtles entangled in nets, injured, or washed ashore lifeless. The crisis has escalated in recent weeks.

Since January 15, dead turtles have been found along the shores of Bhogapuram and Pusapatirega mandals. The Chennai-based Foundation Survey, along with district forest officials, documented 501 turtle carcasses in January alone. However, the real number is likely much higher, as many dead turtles drift out to sea. This surge in deaths coincides with the nesting season (December to March), making the turtles particularly vulner-

Harmful fishing practices, pollution lead to large-scale fatalities



able. Local fishermen, accustomed to occasional turtle deaths, admit they have never seen such large-scale fatalities

Experts attribute the deaths primarily to the use of hazardous fishing nets, including Kona (gillnets), Atuka, and Teak nets. These nets, which cover vast ocean stretches of up to 30 kilometres, trap and drown turtles that surface for air or come ashore to nest. Industrial waste pollution is also suspected as a contributing factor. "These nets are incredibly dangerous," a representative from the Tree Foundation Survey stated. "They cause severe damage to the turtle population, which is already under threat.' Despite legal protections,

enforcement remains weak. The Indian Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 prohibits the killing of turtles or consumption of their eggs, imposing penalties of up to seven years in prison and fines of Rs 25,000. Additionally, the AP Marine Fisheries Regulation Act restricts fishing within eight kilometres of the coast. However, these laws are frequently violated, prompting conservationists to demand stricter enforcement, a ban on harmful nets, and the promotion

of turtle-safe fishing methods. Sea turtles play a vital role in marine ecosystems. By feeding on jellyfish, which prey on fish eggs, they help sustain fish populations. Their extinction could severely impact the fishing industry. District Forest Officer Kondalarao acknowledged the role of fishing nets in the deaths and announced awareness programmes for fish-

Woman home guard jumps into canal with son; both die

PNS ANAKAPALLI

A woman Home Guard, Atta Jhansi (32) jumped into Yeleru canal along with her six-year-old son on Saturday, resulting in the death of both. Jhansi was employed as a Home Guard at the DSP office in Anakapalli. According to police reports,

year. On Saturday, Jhansi left her home with her son and subsequently jumped into the Yeleru canal. Their bodies were recovered from the canal on Sunday. The police have registered a case and taken Achyut Rao into custody. The bodies have been Jhansi had been experiencing shifted to the Government General Hospital (GGH) for marital discord with her huspostmortem examination.

alleged that Achyut Rao had

been harassing her for the past





PLAD funds for BC hostels

PNS TIRUPATI

BC and EWS Welfare Minister Savitha has directed BC Welfare Department officials to secure Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds and Members of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) funds, in addition to government allocations, for the development of BC hostels. She also advised them to approach industrialists within the district for CSR contributions.

The Minister reviewed the welfare measures for hostel students during a meeting with BC welfare officials at Padmavati Guest House on

Speaking on the occasion,

she instructed officials to coordinate with the District Collector to obtain MPLAD funds from MPs, which could be utilised for the development of BC hostels in their respective parliamentary constituencies. She noted that letters had already been sent to MPs across the state requesting MPLAD funds, and some had agreed to allocate funds for hostel develop-

Welfare Officer Chandrasekhar and other offi-

cials attended the meeting. Minister Savitha also directed social welfare hostel officials to ensure 100% pass results in the upcoming Class 10 examinations. She instructed them to provide study

materials, pay special attention to weaker students, and take necessary steps to support their preparation.

"The hostel staff should remain vigilant and avoid putting undue pressure on students. Teachers should adopt methods that help students understand lessons effectively," she said.

She emphasised that welfare department officials must organise special classes and focus on academically weaker students to improve results. She urged them to ensure that Class 10 results in BC hostels and Gurukul schools are on par with those of corporate educational institutions, thereby maintaining parents' trust in the system.

VIJAYAWADA | MONDAY | FEBRUARY 10, 2025

ACROSS THE STATES



Murmu to visit Maha Kumbh Mela today

President Droupadi Murmu will visit the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj on Monday and take a holy dip at the Sangam, her office said. Maha Kumbh, which began on Paush Purnima (January 13), is the world's largest spiritual and cultural gathering, attracting devotees from across the globe. It will continue until Mahashivratri on February 26. "During her day-long visit to Prayagraj, the President will take holy dip and perform Pooja at Sangam, perform Pooja and Darshan at Akshayvat and Hanuman Mandir, and also visit the Digital Kumbh Anubhav Centre," the Rashtrapati Bhavan said in a statement issued on Sunday. Sangam is the confluence of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the mystical Saraswati rivers. According to a Uttar Pradesh government release, Murmu will also offer prayers at the Akshayavat and Bade Hanuman Temple, with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath accompanying her. The country's first President, Dr Rajendra Prasad, had also taken a holy dip during the Maha Kumbh.



Cook beaten to death inside Delhi bus over spilled food

cook was beaten to death inside a bus in the northwest Delhi's Bawana area for allegedly spilling food on a seat, Apolice said on Sunday. The man, Manoj alias Babu, was beaten by three people, the driver of the RTV bus and his two helpers, one of whom shoved an iron rod in his private part, they said. When Manoj became unconscious, the three dumped him near Bawana flyover and fled. Police said they have arrested one of the assailants, while two others remain at large. Manoj, a native of Narela, worked as a wedding cook. On the night of February 1, he and a colleague of his, Dinesh, attended a wedding in Sultanpur Dabas. "After wrapping up work, they packed some leftover food and boarded a bus. During the journey, some food accidentally spilled onto a seat, enraging the driver and his associates." a police officer said. While Dinesh was allowed to get off at Bawana Chowk, the three held Manoj hostage and forced him to clean the seat with his shirt, the officer said.



Tripura to get five-star heritage hotel: CM

ripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Sunday said the state is all set to get a heritage five-star hotel. Addressing a programme of the State Engineers' Association (SEA) here, the CM said, "We have had discussions with the Tata group for setting up a heritage five-star hotel. This will be a gamechanger for the state as it proposes to have four to five exclusive rooms apart from hundreds of royal rooms", he said. Saha added, "Tata has a worldwide hotel chain and tourists can come from foreign nations by chartered flights and stay in the exclusive rooms." "The foreign tourists will not confine themselves to the hotel. They will visit tourist destinations like Rudrasagar. Unakoti archaeological site, Chhabimura and Dumber lake. There will be 200 direct employments," he said. The CM, however, did not specify where the hotel will be set up. In December, the CPI(M) and Tipra Motha had strongly opposed the government's plan for converting the Pushbant Palace, a royal property, into a five-star hotel. Built in 1917 by Maharaja Birendra Kishore Manikya, the palace was used as the Raj Bhavan until 2018.

Silent rally in Kolkata demanding justice for RG Kar victim

PNS KOLKATA

Doctors and people from all walks of life on Sunday took part in a silent rally to mark the first birthday of the RG Kar hospital medic since her death last year, and demanded justice for her.

The rally, which started from College Square near the Calcutta University campus, was halted at the gate of the state-run medical facility in north Kolkata by security personnel. A large contingent of Kolkata Police personnel outside the hospital and CISF jawans inside its premises

were deployed. Officials spoke to the participants, who had wanted to walk to a point inside the premises, where a plaque was put up in memory of the medic by her col-

The CISF has been guarding the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on an order of the Supreme Court, following the post-graduate trainee's rape and murder that had sparked a nationwide out-

rage and protests. The day also marks completion of six months of the crime that took place on August 9, 2023.

US TREATMENT OF INDIAN DEPORTEES

Govt has taken note of 'objections', says Khattar

PNS BHOPAL

Union minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Sunday said the government has taken note of the "objections raised by everyone" over the manner in which illegal Indian immigrants were recently deported from the US.

There has been an uproar over the deportation of illegal Indian immigrants by the US in handcuffs during their 40-hour flight onboard a military aircraft.

The US military aircraft carrying 104 illegal Indian immigrants landed in Amritsar on February 5.

India on Friday said it has registered concerns with the US over the deportation of illegal immigrants in shackles and conveyed that this kind of treatment could have been

Khattar said, "America has deported people (to India) earlier also. This time, everyone had objections to the method, it (objection) has been registered and the issue will be resolved by talks. This issue is not good for any country and the govern-ment will discuss it further after giving due thought.



"Whether our people go or people from other countries come here, when such things happen, all countries engage in deportation. We have also deported many people from Assam."

There has been a constant demand that deportation (of illegal immigrants) be carried out, the Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs said. "There is a formality for it

(deportation), it also has its own sensitivity as to when to do it, how to do it and in what manner," he said.

During the press conference here, the minister was asked that when the US can deport people, why illegal migrants from neigh-bouring Bangladesh, who are an economic burden on India, are not being sent back.

Khattar said this is a serious problem and the people should not go to any country illegally. Whether our people go or people from other countries come here, when such things happen, all countries engage in deportation. We have also deported many people from Assam," he



'Naxals will be eradicated by March 31, 2026'

PNS NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday that Naxals will be eradicated by March 31, 2026 and no citizen of the country has to lose his life due to it.

Shah said this after the

security forces killed 31 Naxals in Chhattisgarh.

"I also reiterate my resolve that before 31 March, 2026, we will completely eradicate Naxalism from the country so that no citizen of the country has to lose his life due to it, he wrote on 'X' in Hindi. The home minister said in the direction of making India Naxal-free, the security forces have achieved a big success in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh.

He said that 31 Naxalites were killed in this operation and a huge amount of arms and explosives were also

SC urged to expedite disposal of cases against lawmakers

Nation 05

PNS NEW DELHI

With nearly 5,000 cases pending against sitting and former members of Parliament and members of legislative assemblies, the Supreme Court has been urged to issue directions to ensure expeditious disposal of cases against the lawmakers.

The latest affidavit filed by senior advocate Vijay Hansaria, who has been appointed amicus curiae by the apex court in a PIL seeking expeditious disposal of criminal cases against MPs/MLAs, said that legislators have great influence on the investigation and/or trial of cases against them, and trials are not

allowed to be concluded. "It is submitted that despite orders by this court from time to time and monitoring by the high court, a large number of cases are pending against the MPs and MLAs, which is a scar on the democratic setup of our country. The pendency of a large number

them for decades, shows that the legislators have great influence on the investigation and/or trial of cases against them, and the trial is not allowed to be concluded," Hansaria's affidavit

A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Manmohan will take up the PIL filed by Ashwini Upadhyay in 2016 seeking life ban of convicted politicians for hearing on Monday.

Hansari, in his affidavit filed

through advocate Senha Kalita, said a total of 4,732 criminal cases are pending against the lawmakers, including 892 cases registered in 2024 as of January

Referring to a report by the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR), a poll rights body, Hansari said that out of the 543 members in the

present Lok Sabha, 251 have criminal cases against them, of which 170 are serious criminal cases (punishable with five years imprisonment

How Yamuna controversy sank AAP in Delhi

PNS NEW DELHI

The Yamuna factor seemingly played a significant role in the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections, reshaping voter sentiment and helping the BJP script history by defeating AAP.

A key driver of this shift was the

backlash from Haryanvi-origin voters who viewed AAP's narrative on Yamuna pollution as an attack on their home state.

The BJP, which bagged 48 out of 70 sets, fielded 14 candidates of Haryanvi descent and 12 of them



won. The Aam Aadmi Party had 10 such candidates but only four won. In 13 constituencies with over 10 per cent Jat voters, the BJP secured 11 seats, a major reversal from seats, a major reversal from 2020. The saffron party also dominated 12 out of 13 seats where Haryanvi-origin voters account for over five per cent of the electorate and won nine out of 11 seats bordering Harvana. ing Haryana.

Flowing 52 kilometres through Delhi and passing through 15 constituencies, Yamuna has long been a symbol of environmental neglect.

Kejriwal had promised ahead of the Delhi elections in 2020 that he would clean Yamuna. Every year, as a thick layer of froth enveloped the river, especially around the Chhath all Indians".

cases, some of

lution during the election campaign, Kejriwal alleged that BJPruled Haryana had "poisoned" the river water to harm the people of Delhi. His remarks triggered a massive controversy as the BJP swiftly turned it into an emotional issue, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi calling it an "insult to Haryana and

Lankan Navy arrests 14 Indian fishermen



PNS ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lankan authorities have arrested 14 Indian fishermen and seized their trawlers for allegedly venturing into the territorial waters of the island nation, the Navy said on Sunday.

The arrests took place during a special operation conducted in the sea area north of Mannar on Saturday, the Sri Lankan Navy said in a statement.

"The Sri Lanka Navy seized 2 Indian fishing boats and apprehended 14 Indian fishermen while they were poaching in Sri Lankan

waters," it said. conduct regular patrols and operations in Sri Lankan waters to curb illegal fishing practices of foreign fishing boats, taking into account the impact of those practices on

the livelihood of local fisher-

men, the statement said. The arrested fishermen were brought to the Iranativu Island, where they will be handed over to the Assistant Directorate of Fisheries, Kilinochchi, for further legal action, the Navy said.

Kejriwal meets new MLAs, asks them to work for people

PNS NEW DELHI

A day after the AAP was ousted from power in Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday met its 22 newly elected MLAs at his Ferozshah Road residence here and asked them to work for the Addressing reporters

after the meeting, outgoing chief minister Atishi, who is among the 22 AAP leaders who weathered the BJP storm, said the party will play the role of a constructive opposition and ensure

NEW DELHI: The eighth Delhi

women members but a higher

uate degrees, according to a

report. The report by PRS

the assembly, the results of

Saturday, representing 7 per

cent of the House. Four women

MLAs are from the BJP while

member in the House. In 2020

eight women were elected. The

Atishi is AAP's only woman

BJP swept to power in Delhi

ning 48 of the 70 assembly

after more than 26 years, win-

which were announced on

number of lawmakers with grad-

Legislative Research found that

five women had been elected to

Assembly will have fewer



that the saffron party delivers on its promises. Kejriwal directed the

newly elected MLAs to

polls held on February 5. The

percentage of MLAs with gradu-

ate degrees has risen to 38 per

34 per cent in the seventh.

cent in the eighth assembly from

MLAs with postgraduate degrees

and above remain unchanged at

of the newly-elected MLAs listed

26 per cent. About 61 per cent

politics or social work as their

profession, compared to 67 per

The number of MLAs who listed

their profession as business also

per cent in the seventh assembly

registered an increase from 29

to 49 per cent in the eighth.

cent in the previous assembly.

serve the people and solve their problems, she said. "The AAP will play the

role of a constructive opposition and ensure that the BJP pays Rs 2,500 per **More graduates in the Delhi Assembly** month to women by March 8 as was promised by it, seats. AAP won 22 seats while provides 300 units of free the Congress drew a blank in the electricity and continues

> ple," she said.
>
> The MLAs will ensure that the BJP does not discontinue the free services and facilities that the AAP government provided in the

other facilities for the peo-

last 10 years, she added. Atishi said the leader of opposition will be nominated during the legislative party meeting of the AAP in the coming days.

The BJP won 48 of the 70 assembly seats, returning to power in Delhi after more than 26 years and dislodging the AAP after a decade.

BJP will come to power in Bengal in 2026 polls: Pradhan

Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday asserted that the BJP will come to power in West Bengal in the

The Union Education Minister also accused the Mamata Banerjee government of putting roadblocks to the implementation of central projects in West Bengal, while falsely accusing the Centre of ignoring the state.

'BJP's vote share in West Bengal has been around 30-40 per cent since 2019 and if the party gets another 10 per cent of votes, it will dislodge the Mamata Banerjee government from power," Pradhan said



while addressing a press meet here on the salient features of Union budget

Stating that the rout of Aam Admi Party (AAP) in Delhi assembly elections showed eople's overwhelming faith in the BJP and the rejection of the "corrupt" Arvind Kejriwal government, Pradhan said in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, BJP made its mark in West Bengal by bagging 18 of the 42 seats

BJP govt working to weaken Constitution: Priyanka

PNS ■ WAYANAD (KERALA)

Continuing her criticism of the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday alleged that, for the first time in history, a government is working to weaken both the Constitution and democracy of the country.

Addressing the party's booth-level leaders in Eranad Assembly constituency, the Wayanad MP said, "It's probably for the first time in our country's history, we have a government that is working to



weaken the Constitution and the democracy.

You must understand that today the fight we are fighting is not just a fight for our own politics and ideology but a fight for protecting the essence of India, everything that makes our nation what it is today," she added. On the second day of her

three-day visit to Wayanad, Priyanka addressed the issue of human-animal conflicts, stating that she would write to both the Centre and state governments to allocate more funds, as adequate funding is essential for effective protection measures.

Later, speaking to reporters after the meeting on the human-animal conflict issue, she said she has already raised it once and will continue to

Aero India 2025: IAF, Army chiefs take sortie in Tejas

PNS BENGALURU

Air Chief Marshal A P Singh and Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi on Sunday set the tone for the grand Aero India-2025 by flying in the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas here at Yelahanka based Air Force

The performance by the top brasses was the prelude to the biannual event, which com-mences on Monday and will continue till February 14.

All eyes were glued to the sky as the Air Chief Marshal flew the metal bird with the Army

Chief. After the successful sortie, General Dwivedi termed the experience as the best moment in his life.

For the Army Chief, the experience was such that he called the Air Chief Marshal his guru and even regretted why he

did not opt for the Indian Air

"It was the best moment in my life and as you are aware

"I am very much grateful to the IAF and I must admire the kind of a challenge the pilots of the IAF take and it takes a great synergetic approach from all of us and I am sure that it is a good start for the Aero India-2025."

that the Air Chief Marshal is my course mate. We have been together from the NDA (National Defence Academy) days. I wish he had met me earlier and I would definitely have changed my option to the Air Force. As I have said earlier, also if I had gone to the Air Force, I would have been fighter pilot," General Dwivedi told reporters.

"And I must say that from today onwards, the Air Chief Marshal AP Singh is my guru because he made me do lot of roles and other activities while

sortie as it carried a great challenge, the Army Chief said, "I am very much grateful to the IAF and I must admire the kind of a challenge the pilots of the IAF take and it takes a great synergetic approach from all of us and I am sure that it is a good start for the Aero India-2025. LCA Tejas is an Indian

combat aircraft designed by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) and manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Indian

in the sky," he added. Stating that he enjoyed the www.dailypioneer.com

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Delhi dislodges AAP

In a landmark political shift, the BJP has stormed to power in the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections, marking its return after 27 years

am Aadmi Party (AAP) that ruled for ten years has been ousted by the BJP. It is one of the major setbacks that AAP has suffered since its inception. Despite its Imisadventures it always remained voters favourite in Delhi. Now with the BJP making a comeback it has suffered not only a big jolt to the party morale but also to the brand Kejriwal. In a historic political shift, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has secured a decisive victory in the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections, ending the AAP's decade-long governance in the national capital. This marks the BJP's return to power in Delhi after 27 years. The BJP won 48 out of the 70 Assembly seats, surpassing the majority mark of 36 seats. In contrast, AAP managed to secure only 22 seats, a significant decline from its previous tally of 62 seats in the 2020 elections. The Congress party failed to open account, continuing its decline in the region. Notably, AAP's prominent leaders faced unexpected defeats. Aam Aadmi Party chief



Arvind Kejriwal lost the New Delhi seat to BJP's Parvesh Verma by a margin of 4,089 votes. Similarly, former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia was defeated in the Jangpura constituency. Senior AAP leaders, including Saurabh Bharadwaj in Greater Kailash and Somnath Bharti in Malviya Nagar, also lost their seats. After ten years in power, AAP encountered strong antiincumbency sentiments, with voters expressing a desire

Legal troubles and corruption allegations against key leaders, including Kejriwal and Sisodia, further diminished public trust in the party. Meanwhile, the BJP successfully leveraged AAP's shortcomings, presenting

a development-driven governance model that resonated with the electorate. This electoral outcome serves as a critical juncture for AAP. The party must undertake a comprehensive introspection. Perhaps it is time it realised that it would be a good idea to remain with the INDIA bloc and playing solo is not always a good idea. One of the major reason for its defeat might have been the division of votes. Congress though did not gain but pulled it down. Addressing the corruption allegations transparently and implementing internal reforms will be essential to rebuild credibility. Reassessing policy positions and strengthening grassroots connections can help the party reconnect with its core voter base. In his concession speech, Arvind Kejriwal acknowledged the defeat and extended his congratulations to the BJP, expressing hope that the new government will fulfill its promises to the people of Delhi. The results of the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections send a strong and clear message to all political parties—governance, credibility and adaptability matter more than rhetoric. The political parties cannot rely solely on past achievements; they must continuously evolve and deliver on public expectations. Ultimately, there are no shortcuts to winning voters' trust— even freebies have



Tourists take a ride on a hot air balloon in Manali

The new geopolitical communication era



With emerging technologies, evolving geopolitical alliances and the dominance of visual storytelling, the way messages are crafted and delivered is being redefined

ne of the critical areas where visible changes will be witnessed post-January 2025 is the communication landscape geopolitically. This era is positioned to redefine the very speedways of global communication, with a pivotal question arising: Are we on the verge of a 360-degree transformation in communication delivery content orientation, outreach mechanisms, and the tools we deploy? Geopolitically, the communication ecosystem will embrace a new language—a language of immediacy, focused messaging, results-driven delivery, and the prioritisation of measurable outcomes to identify realistic patterns and globa

As the world steps into this new chapter of geopolitical shifts, communication strategies are becoming more sophisticated, dynamic and multidimensional. The need of the hour is to analyse the new alliances afoot in the shifting political landscape and the major geopolitical developments. The evolving political climate is challenging traditional paradigms, compelling communication specialists, diplomats, and policymakers to rethink how messages are crafted, delivered, and received on a global stage. The era demands a communication framework that not only transcends borders but also bridges divides with precision,

creativity, and authenticity. In 2025, the phrase "a picture is worth a thousand words" takes on greater resonance. Visual communication has become the most impactful way to deliver messages. A single, well-composed image has the power to convey emotions, ideas, and narratives that words may struggle to encapsulate. Building on this, the explosion of short-form videos, and 30second reels, for instance, has transformed the landscape fur-

Their brevity and emotional decision-making. For comalleled influence in shaping public opinion, mobilising support, and even defusing tensions. This evolution places immense responsibility on communicators in the geopolitical arena. Diplomacy, once conducted primarily behind



sensitivity. As social media continues its rapid rise, many ask whether traditional media can still hold its ground in the face of this digital juggernaut. Social media has undeniably globalised and democratised communication, giving individuals, governments, and organisations a direct channel to their audiences.

It thrives on immediacy, engagement, and the power to go viral, making it an essential tool in geopolitical communication. However, traditional media is far from obsolete. In an era of information overload, its role as a trusted gatekeeper remains critical. While social media is the messenger of the moment, traditional media provides depth, analysis, and context-elements that are crucial for informed munication to be effective in this new geopolitical era, the two mediums must complement each other, creating a AUDIENCES holistic narrative that is both immediate and enduring. The rise of artificial intelligence



GLOBALISED DEMOCRATISED COMMUNICATION, GIVING INDIVIDUALS, **GOVERNMENTS ORGANISATIONS** A DIRECT THEIR

HAS UNDENIABLY

nication. AI-driven analytics enable unprecedented insights into audience behaviour, preferences, and sentiments, allowing for hyper-personalised messaging. These tools are invaluable for diplomats and foreign policy experts, who can now craft messages with immense precision and predict their impact with greater accuracy. However, with these advancements come ethical dilemmas. The line between strategic communication and manipulation can easily blur, necessitating robust frameworks to ensure accountability and fairness. As the communication landscape becomes more intricate, the demand for skilled specialists is growing. These professionals are not just channels for information, they are strategists, analysts, and creators who understand the nuances of messaging in a diverse and rapidly changing

complexity to global commu-

Traditional media must evolve to remain relevant, embracing digital innovations and audience-centric approaches. Meanwhile, social media must , striving to become a platform that unites rather than divides.

In this era, communication is no longer just about delivering a message; it is about shaping perceptions, building relationships, and driving action. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the ability to communicate effectively will be one of the most powerful tools in navigating the complexities of a neo-geopolitical era. In an era marked by shifting alliances and evolving global priorities, multilateral institutions face both challenges and opportunities.

The reworking of commitments by key nations to international frameworks has drawn notice to the fragility of global consensus, raising questions about the role and relevance of these institutions in addressing shared challenges like public health, climate change, and economic inequality. This shifting landscape calls for a more nuanced approach to diplomacy within multilateral spaces, with a renewed focus on collective responsibility. For these institutions to thrive in a complex geopolitical climate, they must everage communication technologies to foster transparency, engage diverse stakeholders, and amplify their ability to drive action. Whether through the lens of a camera, the reach grapple with issues of misinfor- of a tweet, or the depth of an mation, polarisation, and echo investigative report, the stories we tell and how we tell them will shape the world in ways we are only beginning to understand.

(The writer is a former civil servant. Views are personal. Inputs by Vaishnavie Srinivasan and Zoya Ahmad)

Flying faster-than-sound travel closer to reality



RAJNEESH BHANDARI

Boom Supersonic successfully tested its prototype supersonic aircraft, proving that supersonic commercial travel is not just a dream but an imminent reality

significant milestone in commercial aviation history has been achieved. Boom Supersonic, a Colorado-based startup, completed a successful test flight of its prototype supersonic aircraft XB-1, demonstrating that commercial air travel at faster-than-sound speeds is not only feasible but may soon be available for frequent flyers, cutting average intercontinental flight times in half.

When we think of supersonic commercial aviation, Concorde often springs to mind. Concorde was an iconic aircraft that flew passengers across the Atlantic in just three hours. It was the first commercial supersonic aircraft, and it flew twice the speed of sound for Air France and British Airways from 1976 to 2003. Concordes were retired in 2003 due to excessive costs, high fares and loud noise. Since then, aerospace giants like Airbus and Boeing have never delivered a commercial-scale replacement. So, what makes Boom differ-

ent? Boom's team didn't view past failures as insurmountable obstacles. Instead, they

saw them as engineering challenges to be overcome with a fresh mindset. Unlike traditional companies that would try to upgrade a subsonic plane to go faster, Boom's team designed every component, from the aerodynamic shape and propulsion system to the fuel system, specifically for supersonic travel.

The company exemplifies how ignoring legacy assumptions and knowledge can unlock groundbreaking solu-

Boom's engineers embraced the concept of "unlearning," jettisoning assumptions that certain design elements were necessary or that certain hurdles were insurmountable. Unlearning allowed Boom to innovate with advanced composite materials, wing design and a new noisereduction strategy.

They rewrote the rules of the game, overcame longstanding technical barriers and ignited $\begin{array}{c} \text{The prototype aircraft} \\ \text{smoothly transitioned} \\ \text{through Mach 1 (the speed of } \end{array}$ fresh interest in supersonic flight. Established players like Boeing and Airbus often shy away from radical changes for fear of failing or canalising profitable products. Boom took calculated risks, embraced uncertainty, and refined each step through rapid data-driven iteration. Historically, supersonic jets are fuel guzzlers. Boom's approach combines aerodynamic optimisation with advanced high-performance materials and a propulsion system designed ground-up to minimise fuel consumption. The propulsion system (Symphony) will run on zero aromatic 100 per cent sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) for sustainable commercial supersonic flights. As a startup, Boom operates with lean teams. This contrasts sharply with the massive bureaucratic hierarchy within aerospace giants. Swift prototyping, quick feedback loops, and a willingness to pivot ensure that new technology is tested and integrated faster than what Boeing or Airbus might

sound) and touched Mach1.1. This technology demonstra-tion will help refine the design ahead of the company's next goal: launching a full-scale 60 to 75-seater supersonic jet called Overture. The founders' vision is that passengers can fly supersonically at tickets comparable to business class fares. Imagine cutting a 7-hour transatlantic flight to 3.5 hours. Suddenly, a business meeting in Delhi and a dinner date in London are feasible on the same day. Overture is being designed to fly 7800 km. It can fly nonstop on routes like Delhi to Frankfurt or New York to London. Faster travel time can be a game-changer for business travellers and highpriority cargo. While Airbus, Boeing, and other established players have the resources and legacy to make big moves, it often takes a nimble newcomer with a fresh perspective and first-principles thinking to challenge what's possible.

NeuroEquilibrium; views are personal)

(The writer is an author, innovator and founder of

WTO NEEDS REFORM

has added another layer of

Madam — It is with reference to the editorial page article "WTO is at a crossroads; Reform or perish"-February 8. WTO is the world's largest international economic organisation, established in 1995 with 166 members representing over 98 per cent of the global trade and global GDP. Before the WTO, there was the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), a global trade organisation with 23 countries. Every member country is obligated to follow the laws and policies framed by WTO rules. India is a significant member of the WTO. Trade disputes are addressed by the WTO's dispute settlement process. It is the WTO that makes efforts to promote transparency in decision-making by encouraging participation and, in partic-

ular, the use of the consensus rule. As an international platform, the WTO regulates and negotiates additional trade liberalisation. In recent days, the WTO has been facing many challenges related to changes in the global economy and geopolitical context. Its members have not been able to agree on new rules on agricultural goals, highlighting the conflicting interests between developed and developing countries. Difficult trade relations between the two largest world economies and WTO members-the US and China-also put a strain on the WTO. Unilateral trade measures such as raising tariffs on iron and steel threaten the multilateral trading system. This highlights the WTO might need to be reformed to meet current concerns such as national security, environmental standards, and the impact of technology on trade. If urgent reforms are not undertaken, the global trading system may soon witness the demise of the institution once

deemed indispensable.

P Victor Selvaraj | Tirunelveli

ZERO SEATS FOR CONGRESS IN DELHI

Madam — It will be painful for the Congress for the massive loss in the Delhi elections when people voted against them consistently for the last 3 terms 0-0-0. The most pathetic observation is that they

BJP returns to power in Delhi



The BJP's long wait of 26 years to return to power in Delhi has ultimately come to an end after it registered an emphatic victory in Delhi Assembly polls. In fact, Delhi was the only erstwhile BJP-ruled state where victory remained elusive for the BJP even under the strong Modi wave since 2014. Hence, this victory has come as a big relief for the saffron party, which faced unceremo-

couldn't manage even a single seat in the last 3 assembly elections. Capital is Congress's home ground under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi.

The greed for power and dynastic politics made Priyanka Gandhi run all the way from Delhi to Wayanad to come back victorious in the by-election. There's a saying in the villages that 'If one has to assess the quality and power of a person in the village, ask the locals. The same yardstick proved right when there were no takers for Congress locally in Delhi and scoring 0-0-0 in their report card reflects that the quality of the Congress party is under a scanner. For the Congress to survive, the realistic approach must be to keep Rahul and Priyanka from the main limelight and keep them in a low profile so that the party can rebuild the faith for a better future of the party.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

Madam —It is a first-rate cut in nearly five years by RBI and it signifies a shift in monetary strategy. With this cut, RBI has clear-

RBI CUTS INTEREST RATES

nious defeat at the hands of the AAP in two consecutive elections. On the other hand, the way the almost top leadership of the AAP, including former CM and party face Arvind Kejriwal and former Dy CM Manish Sisodia, licked the dust in the election reflects the deep anguish of the voters against the party.

No doubt that the anti-incumbency of 11 years and the corruption charges have led to the defeat of the AAP. The arrest of Kejriwal and Sisodia in the liquor scam and the Sheesh Mahal controversy dented the party's image deeply. Interestingly, 'theatrics,' the biggest tool of the AAP, also failed to impress the voters this time. But the BJP needs to be cautious, as the AAP, which was born out of the agitations, will prove to be a strong opposition.

Manoj Parashar | Ghaziabad

ly sent a signal that it wants to boost lending, stimulate consumer demand and nurture investment. In the recent months, core inflation has shown easing out, providing much-needed headroom to the RBI to implement this rate cut. And a slowdown in the economic growth forced the RBI to take the plunge now.

By lowering the borrowing cost, RBI wants to encourage businesses to expand, boost consumption, and help economic growth. Now banks will be happy to extend credit more freely, but they need to be wary of what they have witnessed with their microfinance and unsecured loan portfolios in recent months. In the real estate sector, SMEs will take a sigh of relief, and individual borrowers will see a reduction in their EMIs and, in turn, more money in their pockets, coupled with recent income tax cuts, which will create a positive environment for the consumption boom to take place.

Bal Govind | Noida

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FIRST COLUMN

LIFE IS A MOUNTAIN: CLIMB YOUR PEAK, YOUR WAY

Just like climbing a mountain, life's true joy comes from the ascent, not just the summit



OPSINGH

have come to believe life is a lot like climbing a mountain. It's not a race or a competition, and it's not about finding a shortcut. The absolute joy of life isn't standing at the summit—it's in the climb. It's in slipping on loose gravel, feeling the burn in your legs, and wondering halfway through if you should turn around. But when you catch your breath at a ridge or find your footing after a stumble, you realise something powerful: the climb isn't about the mountain—it's about who you become

Each of us has a mountain to climb. It doesn't need to be Everest or Kilimaniaro. It doesn't have to impress anyone else. What matters is that your mountain challenges you, excites you and pushes you to grow. And yes, the climb will be messy. The trail will disappear just when you think you're getting somewhere. The air will get thin. You might even feel like quitting. But that's the beauty of it—the mountain shapes you with every step. Every great climb starts with a dream—one so audacious it gives you butterflies. Don't let its enormity overwhelm you. Focus on taking the next step, then the one after that. Progress isn't about giant leaps but small, consistent efforts.

Moving forward, even a little each day, builds the path to big dreams. Mountains don't reward the fastest or most competent climber—they reward perseverance. Talent may get you started, but resilience carries you through fatigue, failure, and seemingly impossible moments. You don't need to be perfect; you need to keep climbing. Your journey is unique; not everyone will understand or agree with it. That's okay. When the trail disappears, create your path, even if it's



The best routes are discovered through improvisation and authenticity, not by meeting others' expectations. Slips and falls are inevitable, and they hurt. Yet, each stumble teaches something valuable about the terrain, limits, and strength. Mountains don't demand perfection—they demand persistence. Learn from every fall, and rise stronger. The mountain doesn't care who reaches the summit first. It isn't about trophies or comparisons. The climb is about pushing yourself, growing beyond your comfort zone, and becoming someone who belongs at the sum-

True success is transformation, not competition. The best climbers don't focus solely on themselves. They lend a hand, share tools, and cheer others on. Life's peaks are more meaningful when shared. Those you help will often support vou, making the climb richer for everyone. When you reach your summit, pause and reflect. Did your climb inspire others? Did you leave the path better for those who follow? Success isn't standing alone at the top; it's in the legacy you leave-the encouragement, improvements, and hope for others to climb higher. Ultimately, the climb makes life beautiful.

The summit is fleeting, but the slips, breakthroughs, lessons, and growth endure. These moments shape you into someone worthy of the top.lf your mountain feels daunting, don't let the height scare you. Start small. Take one step at a time. You don't need to move fast or know the whole path. Just keep climbing. One day, standing at your summit, you'll look back and realise it wasn't about the peak. It was about the person you became along the way. That's the valuable reward of the climb-knowing every inch of it was unapologetically yours.

(The author is DGP & Head of Haryana State Narcotics Control Bureau, with three books to his credit; views are personal)

Trump's vision for Gaza: Paradise or purgatory?



President Donald Trump's proposal for Gaza is more than just another audacious policy move—it is a collision of commerce, geopolitics and power

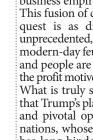


veryone saw it unfold. This is the harsh reality of life in the Devil's paradise, where desires are transformed into laws, ambitions become twisted ethics, and behaviour is coerced into the very fabric of the system. The truth? To survive here, one must bow to the powers that be, no matter the cost. Conscience and integrity are irrelevant— praise those in power or face annihilation. President Donald Trump welcomed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—an alleged war criminal wanted by the International Criminal Court—as the first foreign leader in his second term, declaring his grand vision to take control of Gaza, turning it into a "brave new Levantine Riviera" by cleansing over 2 million Palestinians.

Nevertheless, the proposal has sparked strong opposition. Saudi Arabia, a key ally of Trump, swiftly condemned it, insisting ARAB UNITY, HAS that no nation would recognise Israel without the creation of an independent Palestinian state. Jordan and Egypt also rejected the idea of accepting millions of displaced Palestinians. The mere announcement of this plan starkly illustrates the chaotic grandeur FISSURES, NEVER been further complicated by interof Trump's vision. Yet, his proposal, however audacious, was no accident of rhetoric. It was a calculated, methodical blueprint, crafted long before Trump's second term in office. With Netanyahu—a willing ally in these manoeuvres—Trump painted a picture of Gaza not as a refuge for the Palestinian people, but as a commercialised "paradise" defined not by its displaced residents, but by foreign investments and a transformation

into a luxury resort. Trump's proposition, laden with both visionary ambition and horrific repercussions, challenges the entrenched paradigm. This proposal, as reported, was not born of sudden whim, but the culmination of years of deliberation within Trump's inner circle—an enterprise in which his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, played a pivotal role in positioning the geopolitical and commercial components across Asia.

Kushner's claim, in a recent interview with the Financial Times, that his "ability to see trends before others" uniquely positions him to capitalise on opportunities others find unpalatable, resonates with the underlying logic of Trump's plan. It's a logic that blurs the line between statecraft and property development, where geopolitical ambitions are pursued not merely for strategic suprema-



THE ARAB WORLD, ONCE INTOXICATED BY

REPEATEDLY SUCCUMBED TO decades of political expediency, have reduced Palestinians from ITS INTERNAL champions of an independent cause to mere pawns in a game that has ABLE TO

REALPOLITIK AND SELF-INTEREST

cy but also as a means to expand a business empire throughout Asia. This fusion of commerce and conquest is as disquieting as it is unprecedented, conjuring images of modern-day feudalism, where land and people are subjugated to serve the profit motives of a privileged few. What is truly striking, however, is that Trump's plan could offer a rare and pivotal opportunity for Arab nations, whose history of disunity has long hindered their collective potential.

Regional players—Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, Qatar, Jordan, and others—have long danced to contradictory rhythms, using Palestine as a symbol to justify their betrayals, while failing to act with sincerity or consequence.

These rivalries, cultivated over nal rifts within Palestinian move-

OVERCOME THE For far too long, the Arab states have abandoned Palestine's plight in CORROSIVE favour of personal ambition and FORCES OF Palestinian cause into a commodity—moulded and shaped according to the whims of foreign powers. This latest manoeuvre must be understood within the context of the convoluted history of Arab disunityan entangled web of colonial subterfuge, sectarian fragmentation, and a legacy of betrayal that has persistently eroded Palestinian sovereignty and reduced their cause to a tragic geopolitical instrument.

The Arab world, once intoxicated by the idea of pan-Arab unity, has repeatedly succumbed to its internal fissures, never able to overcome the corrosive forces of realpolitik and self-interest. Behind the veneer of solidarity and proclamations of support for Palestinian self-determination, there lies a catalogue of secretive agreements, covert operations, and Machiavellian plots that have long entangled the region.

While the Sykes-Picot Agreement remains the most infamous symbol of colonial partition, it is far from the only clandestine accord that has shaped the fate of Palestine. Lesser-known pacts, such as the Husayn-McMahon

Correspondence, which promised Arab independence in exchange for rebellion against the Ottoman Empire, were later betrayed in favour of European imperial ambi-

Similarly, the post-World War II period saw Arab states engage in secret dealings with both Western and Soviet powers, each prioritising their strategic interests over Palestinian rights. Agreements such as the Baghdad Pact and the Eisenhower Doctrine—purportedly aimed at regional stability—left the Palestinian cause sidelined in favour of Cold War allegiances, perpetuating cycles of betrayal.

And perhaps most insidious of all were the secret negotiations between Arab leaders and Israel, at times tacit and other times more explicit, ofter involving quiet exchanges of territory, economic support, or even military cooperation, all under the guise of broader diplomatic manoeuvres. These acts of realpolitik—often driven by the selfish interests of a few at the expense of the many—have left Palestine isolated, its sovereignty forfeited in a game of geopolitical chess. The fractured nature of Arab leadership, perpetuated by sectarianism and divergent national ambitions, only serves to deepen the wound. While leaders such as Egypt's Nasser sought to rally the Arab world under a banner of unity, his efforts were consistently thwarted by rivalries and internal conflicts.

Today, these past betrayals reverberate in the region's collective psyche, leaving Palestinian aspirations still choked by the suffocating embrace of powers both external and internal, with the dream of a unified Arab world and a free Palestine rendered ever more elusive by the cynical. Yet, it is precisely this history that

makes Trump's audacious proposal so paradoxically compelling. Here lies an opportunity for the perennial exiles—the Palestinians not as pawns in a geopolitical chess game, but as potential agents for the reawakening of Arab unity.

For decades, Palestinian suffering has been wielded as a symbol of resistance, a poignant reminder of an exodus that began with the Nakba in 1948. However, the continued instrumentalisation of Palestinian tragedy by neighbouring Arab regimes—who have long used the plight of these people as a rhetorical tool without offering substantial solutions.

It is within this environment of ambivalence and simmering tension that Trump's proposal must be viewed as a paradigm-shifting moment. The convergence of state-craft and property development, epitomised by Trump and Kushner's ambitions, signals a departure from conventional geopolitical paradigms. We are stepping into an era ere the shifting garchies is increasingly driven by the convergence of economic gain and political opportunism—a transformation with far-reaching consequences for the future of West

Whether this radical reimagining of Gaza could catalyse Arab unity remains uncertain, inherently tied to the unresolved contradictions within the region's historical legacy. Trump's Riviera dream for Gaza is as much a test of American resolve as it is a crucible for Arab unity—a proposition that, if realised, could compel the Arab states to transcend their long-standing acrimony and

However, the likelihood remains that this bold gambit, with all its extravagant rhetoric and ambitious visions, will only serve to deepen existing rifts, leaving Palestinians once again at the mercy of external

(The writer is a journalist and a policy analyst. Views expressed are

Uttarakhand leads the way: The first state to implement Uniform Civil Code

Uniform laws that empower women will be the common thread binding the nation in oneness and uphold the constitutional spirit

ttarakhand has led the way in formalising laws for women of different faith as equal, upholding the spirit of the constitution. Babasaheb Ambedkar would have been a contented man knowing that Uttarakhand has become the first state in India to have put an end to the disparity in legal protection provided to women, as till now, they were governed by their respective personal laws based on religion and customary state practices.

By implementing the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) from January 26, 2025, with less than 2 per cent of total land area and less than 1 per cent of total population, Uttarakhand has taken the lead in reinstating the ethos of social equality, part of our syncretic cul-



GEETA BHATT

ture/constitution. The courageous step taken by this young state will pave the way as a paradigm for others to follow similar footsteps. For the first time post-independence, a legislative body has drafted rules for marriage, divorce, inheritance of property, and live-in relationships. UCC has been used as a political tool ever since it was women members of the con-

tabled for discussion in the Constituent Assembly when Babasaheb, as Chairman of Drafting Committee, had expressed need for uniformity-in fundamental laws, both civil and criminal. UCC was placed under a sub-committee which proposed to list it as a non-justiciable right hence, making it non-disputable in the courts.

Majority of the members of this sub-committee were in agreement with the proposal except Minoo Masani, Hansa Mehta and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur who wrote to Patel stating, "One of the factors that have kept India back from advancing to nationhood has been the existence of personal laws based on religion". The dissent observed by the

stituent assembly got support from Dr BR Ambedkar, KM Munshi and Alladi K Aiyyar. The opposition from the Muslim members ensued the UCC under Directive Principles Article 44, where the Constituent Assembly was not obliged to enforce the provision and at the same time, the provision could be implemented by the legislatures in the future. A compromise made between

those in support and those in disagreement of the UCC. The changing social milieu has seen a trend in rigorous churning to shed away repressive, orthodox practices so as to evolve a social structure which believes in equal rights. This led to the codification of matrimonial, inheritance, succession and adoption laws for the the



Hindus from 1955-56. The women's rights under Muslim Personal law were challenged by Shah Bano in 1985 demanding maintenance from her husband.

The landmark Supreme Court judgement in favour of Shah Bano was later overturned when the incumbent Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress govern-

(Protection of Rights on by bringing this act, there are marriage" with marriage age of Divorce) Act, 1986. The linger-miles to go as social customs 21 and 18 for man and women ing wait for gender rights saw a ray of hope after 30 years when on the plea filed by Shayara Bano and others, who were victims of matrimonial dispute, the Supreme Court declared "talaq-e-biddat," or instantaneous triple talaq as unconstitutional in 2017.

This time the government of the day stood by the rights of Muslim women and vindicated the crusade undertaken by Shah Bano by legally prohibiting triple talaq and protecting the rights of married

Muslim women by bringing The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act in 2019. Though the present government has asserted equal rights ment, under pressure, enacted the Muslim Women and status to Muslim women

of polygamy and Halala still looms large.

The judiciary has reminded the legislators to fulfil their obligation towards the Constitution and promote equal rights for women. A fivemember panel constituted in the chairmanship of retired justice Ranjana Prakash Desai diligently worked on the draft for two years besides holding public interactions, taking suggestions from people of the state and internal meetings of the panel to discuss the points to be taken under the draft. The bill in its four parts covers marriage and divorce, succession, live-in relationships. The section 4 of the bill outlines that "neither party has a

spouse living at the time of the

respectively, making polygamy and child marriage illegal.

The bill also requires compulsory registration of marriages within 60 days where the couple has equal right to dissolve the marriage through a decree of divorce only through court proceedings.

The Bill says that marriages can be dissolved only through the provisions of the law "notwithstanding any usage, custom, tradition, [or] personal law of any party to the marriage." This bill provides legal safeguards to protect women who cohabit in a live-in relationship.

(The writer is Director, Non Collegiate Women's Education Board, University of Delhi; views are personal)

VIJAYAWADA | MONDAY | FEBRUARY 10, 2025

MONEY MATTERS



ESC unveils 'Ignite Tech Startups' programme

he Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council (ESC) has announced the 'Ignite Startups' mentoring programme that aims to catalyse the Indian tech startup ecosystem. ESC, in partnership with startup accelerator Marwari Catalysts (MCats), has unveiled a package of funding, global exposure, and mentoring support for innovative tech startups. "This programme is packed with transformative elements that can elevate the startup ecosystem to new heights," Veer Sagar, Chairman of ESC, said. Marwari Catalysts Founder and CEO Sushil Sharma will serve as the Chief Mentor for the startup programme of ESC and for the startup Pavilion at INDIASOFT 2025 -International IT Exhibition and Conference, scheduled to be held in March 2025. Through this partnership, Marwari Catalysts has earmarked a funding budget of Rs 35 million (Rs 3.5 crore) to nurture 10 to 12 selected tech startups. This financial lifeline will catapult startups into the fast lane, helping them bring innovative solutions to market," Sushil Sharma, MCats' Founder and CEO, said. Gurmeet Singh, Executive Director, ESC, pointed out that chosen startups will enjoy complimentary exhibit space at the MCats Pavilion during INDIASOFT 2025 scheduled in New Delhi from



Mcap of 6 of top-10 firms surges Rs 1.18 lakh cr

he combined market valuation of six of the top-10 most valu`ed firms surged Rs 1,18,151.75 crore last week, with HDFC Bank and Bharti Airtel emerging as the biggest gainers, in-line with firm trend in equities. Last week, the BSE benchmark climbed 354.23 points, or 0.45 per cent, and the Nifty went up 77.8 points, or 0.33 per cent. While Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, Infosys and Bajaj Finance were the gainers from the top-10 pack, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), State Bank of India, Hindustan Unilever, and ITC faced erosion from their valuation. Together these four firms lost Rs 1.15 lakh crore from their valuation. The market valuation of HDFC Bank jumped Rs 32,639.98 crore to Rs 13,25,090.58 crore. Bharti Airtel added Rs 31,003.44 crore taking its valuation to Rs 9,56,205.34 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Bajaj Finance surged Rs 29,032.08 crore to Rs 5.24.312.82 crore and that of Infosys rallied Rs 21,114.32 crore to Rs 7,90,074.08 crore. The mcap of Reliance Industries climbed Rs 2,977.12 crore to Rs 17,14,348.66 crore and that of ICICI Bank went up Rs 1,384.81 crore to Rs 8,87,632.56 crore



Standoff continues at Samsung India TN plant

he fresh standoff between a section of employees at the Samsung factory near here and the management continues with the CITU (Centre of Indian Trade Unions) spearheading the strike is planning to further intensify the protest, union officials said. Employees under the Samsung India Workers Union have been on a sit-in strike since February 5 demanding reinstatement of three of their colleagues who were suspended by the management. Samsung India spokesperson said Samsung does not condone any unlawful actions by employees that disrupt the industrial peace at the workplace. On Saturday evening at Sunguvarchatram about 2 km away from the factory in the Sriperumbudur district, CITU office-bearers led by its secretary E Muthu Kumar and supporters staged a demonstration demanding that the suspended employees who are office-bearers of CITU be reinstated and threatened to intensify the protest if their suspension was not revoked immediately. Leading the agitation, Kumar said Samsung India workers were observing a sit-in strike inside the factory since February 5, while CITU along with its supporters were staging the demonstration as part of expressing their solidarity to the striking employees.

'Govt looking at procedural easing to further promote FDI'

The government is looking at further easing of procedures in certain sectors to attract more foreign direct investments (FDI) into the country, a government official said.

The department for promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT) has held stakeholder consultations with differ-ent government departments, regulators, industry associations, advisory and law firms, pension funds, private equity and venture capitals.

The department sought their views on ways to further attract foreign direct investments into the country.

"We have completed the consultations. The department has received suggestions on different issues. Things have not yet been finalised...Looking at easing of norms at the procedural front," the official said

However, the official did not disclose the sectors where the government is considering the procedural easing.

In the consultations, issues which were raised included per-



mitting e-commerce players to receive FDI in inventory-based models of online trade for export purposes only; easing press note 3 by defining beneficial ownership; and some tweaking of the policy for single-brand retail

trading.
Under this press note, government approval is mandatory for investors from countries sharing land borders with India in any

Foreign direct investment inflows into India have crossed the USD 1 trillion milestone in the April 2000-September 2024

The key sectors attracting the maximum of these inflows include the services segment, computer software and hardware, telecommunications, trading, construction development, automobile, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals.

'Climate finance Taxonomy should be ready in 6 months'

Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth has said work with respect to developing a taxonomy for climate finance is going on and it should be ready in the next six months or

"Work is happening, and in fact, the steel ministry has completed their work. They have issued their taxonomy for the steel sector," said in an interview.

However, he said, a much more comprehensive exercise covering all sectors of the economy is going on and a concept paper has already been shared with stakeholders concerned and their views have been obtained.

"Various committees have been formed, one for each sector, and we expect that over the next six months that exercise can be completed," he added.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sithraman in her Budget 2024-25 had announced a proposal for developing a taxonomy for climate finance.

"We will develop a taxonomy for climate finance for enhanc-



ing the availability of capital for climate adaptation and mitigation. This will support achievement of the country's climate commitments and green tran-

sition," she had said Seth further said the government's prudent fiscal management may soften government securities yields and leave more funds for corporates to invest in the economy.

In absolute terms, he said, "We will be borrowing (for FY26) less than what we intend to borrow in the current year. Even the gross borrowings are also marginally more than what it was, signalling that the government will leave enough into the market for the private sector to pick up".

Money 08

The government has reduced its borrowings estimate for the next financial year to Rs 11.54 lakh crore on a net basis as it expects an improvement in tax collection. However, gross market borrowings have now been revised upward to Rs 14.82 lakh crore from Rs 14.01 lakh crore estimated for the current finan-

cial year. The government has to borrow by issuing dated securities to meet its fiscal deficit target. "So, I see that the fiscal consolidation this year and fiscal

consolidation road map next year should rather soften the

yield... there are other factors ilso in place," he said.

It is to be noted that softening of yield on G-secs would bring the burden of interest payment on the government.

The yield on 10-year government bonds is hovering around 6.7 per cent.

As per the government data, the weighted average yield softened to 6.94 per cent in the second quarter, relative to 7.14 per cent in the first quarter of

The government has lowered its fiscal deficit target to 4.8 per cent of GDP for the current financial year against 4.9 per cent estimated earlier.

K'taka expecting Rs 10 lakh cr investment commitments: Minister

PNS BENGALURU

Karnataka is expecting to sign investment commitments of about Rs 10 lakh crore with an array of industries at its biennial investor meet this week, aimed at showcasing the state's industrial potential, M B Patil, Minister of Large and Medium Scale Industries, said.

The Invest Karnataka 2025 --Global Investors Meet (GIM 2025), scheduled from February 11-14 in Bengaluru, aims to position Karnataka as a premier global investment hub.

"We are expecting around Rs 10

lakh crore in investments, with at least 70 per cent converting into reality (and) not just (remaining) on paper," he told PTI Videos.

On the theme of the summit 'Re-Imagining Growth', Patil said this "because today we are in a stage where our world is moving towards tech-driven, green, inclusive, and more importantly, resilient growth. Because we are in a situation... (these are) challenging times. There is a war in Ukraine and Russia, then the Israel-Gaza conflict, (US President) Trump's policies, China plus one, two years (post recovery from) Covid-19,



and more importantly, artificial intelligence, clean mobility coming

"EVs and green hydrogen will

take centrestage. Diesel, petrol, and all fossil fuels will be phased out. So these are challenging times, how do you adapt to that? We have a very strong system, which has to be resilient to all these changes. So we have this investors meet in

these challenging times," he said.
The inaugural session will be on February 10 at 4 pm.

"The governor will be there with his auspicious presence. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will be presiding, and Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will be inaugurating. Many central ministers are going to participate, some

on 12th, some on 13th, and some on 14th. State ministers, industrialists, and big names will all be participating in this meet," he said.

February 12 and 13 will feature business sessions, including a semiconductor summit. On February 12 evening, there will be an award function recognising industries that have contributed to Karnataka's growth.

On February 13, there will be multiple sessions and roundtables, including the Queen's City roundtable. The event will conclude on February 14 with awards for ventures and key contributors.

Bajaj Auto to ride into e-rickshaw segment

PNS NEW DELHI

Bajaj Auto is gearing up to segment by the end of this fiscal to tap a 'sizable opportunity' in a fast-growing but highly unorganised market, according to a top company official. The company expects to get regulatory clearances towards the end of the ongoing quarter for its e-rickshaw that will enable it to enter the segment which is about 45,000 units a month, Bajaj Auto Executive Director Rakesh Sharma told analysts. "By the end of this financial year, we also intend to launch a modern 'e-rick', which will set an absolutely new standard in the segment and bring a very high level of satisfaction to both owners and passengers.

'Right step to boost biogas industry' IBA on increase in MSME financing

PNS NEW DELHI

Indian Biogas Association (IBA) on Sunday said the proposed increase in MSME financing in the General Budget 2025 is a right step to boost biogas industry. With a strong push for and digital transformation, this Budget sets the stage for Aatmanirbhar and Viksit Bharat, an IBA statement said.

From the standpoint of the fledgling biogas/CBG (compressed biogas) industry, the announced increase to the MSME Credit Guarantee Scheme will significantly benefit the biogas industry, which often faces challenge in securing credit with reasonable terms, it noted. By expanding the credit guarantee cover from Rs 5-10 crore, the scheme ensures easier access to collateral-free loans, thus reducing financial barriers for the CBG developers, it pointed out.

Additionally, the revised MSME classification criteria

Indian LO CE Biogas Association

allow for almost 2-2.5 times higher investment and turnover limits as compared to earlier ensures that now even the larger-capacity CBG projects are eligible for these incentives, it noted.

While the recent Budget takes adequate steps in supporting the MSME sector, inclusion of specific policy measures for the CBG industry would have made it even more conducive for the

sector, it suggested. So, to foster the growth of the biogas and CBG producers, the IBA has already requested the Indian government for development of a framework that allows the biogas plant promoters to sell carbon credits in both international and domestic platforms, enhancing financial viability and aiding climate targets, it stated.

interest from Indian investors PNS NEW DELHI

Several Indian firms have shown a keen interest in investing in Diriyah, a USD 63-bilject, while some big names like Tatas and Oberois having already signed up, its CEO Jerry Inzerillo said

Diriyah, being billed as the City of Earth, is being built on the outskirts of Saudi Arabia's capital Riyadh and it will have homes for 100,000 people and office space for a further 100,000 plus.

This new city will include over 40 luxury hotels, more than 1,000 shops, over 150 restaurants and cafes, a university, arts and cultural assets, museums, an opera house, a 20,000-seater multipurpose event arena, a golf course and an international equestrian and polo centre, among other facilities.



The USD 63.2 billion real estate development and tourism project aims to restore the historic birthplace of the modern Saudi kingdom and the site includes the UNESCO World Heritage Site of At-Turaif.

Saudi's project Diriyah sees keen

"At Diriyah we are keen to enhance the impact of India as one of Saudi Arabia's biggest trading partners, ranking among the top in bilateral trade, with a trade volume of approximately USD 52.8 bilon in 2022-23," Inzerillo said. He was in Davos for the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2025.

Inzerillo said over 3,000 Indian companies are already operating in the Kingdom, contributing to sectors such as construction, IT, energy, and telecommunications, strengthening the economic partnership between the two nations.

CBG offers a sustainable solution to Delhi's pollution crisis: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The pollution crisis in Delhi calls for a large-scale shift in agricultural waste management and compressed biogas (CBG) offers a sustainable solution by tackling both stubble burning and vehicular emission, according to a report.

While vehicles contribute 20 per cent to Delhi's pollution in 16 per cent, these numbers rise to 30 per cent and 23 per cent in winters respectively, as per the report by Nomura Research Institute Consulting & Solutions

"Worse, during peak stubbleburning season, biomass-burning emissions frequently exceed 30 per cent," it said, adding that although the city's toxic air

summers and stubble burning comes from multiple sources' vehicle emissions, construction dust, biomass burning, including paddy straw stubble burning, and industrial emis-

Stressing that CBG can play a key role in tackling Delhi's air pollution, the report said, "A CBG plant producing 10 tons of CBG per day requires about 90 tons of paddy straw. By repur-

posing this biomass instead of burning it, we can prevent about 270 kilograms of PM (particulate matter) emissions every single day."

Citing several sources, the report said, "A staggering 67 per cent of the PM from stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana drifts into Delhi NCR, turning the region into a gas chamber



Markets to track inflation data, FIIs trading activity

PNS NEW DELHI

Investors would track a host of macroeconomic data announcements scheduled this week, including inflation numbers, and also monitor global market trends, and trading activity of foreign institutional investors, analysts said.

The ongoing quarterly earnings announcements and the rupee-dollar trend would also influence the markets.

This week is set to be dynamic for global and Indian markets, driven by key macroeconomic data releases and corporate earnings." Master Trust Group Director Puneet Singhania said.

"For India, inflation and industrial production data will be released on February 12," he Corporate earnings will also

companies reporting earnings include Eicher Motors, Grasim Industries, Vodafone Idea, Steel Authority of India, he added. "The sentiments in the Indian market are slowly improving in

drive market sentiment. Major

response to an excellent Budget and the rate cut by the MPC. The victory of the BJP in the Delhi elections is a major achievement for the ruling dispensation. This is likely to positively impact the market in the short run.

ry spell in Shimla worries apple farmers unfavourable weather condiproduction," Chauhan said. state receiving 16.2 mm of precipitation against a normal of 26.3

PNS SHIMLA

A prolonged dry spell has got Shimla farmers worrying about the apple crop, which is now threatened by a hampered production.

Desired cooling hours (1,200 to 1,600 below 7 degrees Celsius) for traditional varieties and 600 hours for early varieties have not

come by this season. Farmers were also restricted from new plantations due to

tions, Fruit Vegetable Flower Growers Association President Harish Chauhan told PTI on Sunday. About 90 per cent of apple orchardists in the state are still on traditional varieties, while the remaining have adopted high density plantations.

"Snow during winter months also kills insects and diseases but we are witnessing a one-month shift in weather for the past three years which has affected apple



The state saw a rain deficit of 97 per cent in October last year, 99 per cent in November, and 84 per cent this January, the ninth lowest since 1901, Meteorological expert Sandeep Sharma said.

In all, the rain deficit was 41 per cent in the post-monsoon season (October to December), with December the only exception with 21 per cent of excess rain. Rain deficit from February 1 to 9 was 38 per cent, with the

Sufficient chilling hours and moisture during winters is essential for a good apple crop, while hailstorms at flowering stage prove harmful. The temperature has to remain below 7 degrees for appropriate chilling, which varies

mm, the Met said.

with latitude as the apple growing area falls mainly in the temperate zone, according to scien-

EKTAA KAPOOR PRAISES PM'S WAVES

roducer Ekta Kapoor on Sunday praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his vision behind the World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES), saying she is excited to make her

what's brewing?



SALMAN KHAN CALLS SOCIAL MEDIA 'A BIG MIND SLAM'

ife was simpler without social media, believes Bollywood superstar Salman Khan, who says endlessly scrolling through posts online feels like a "big mind slam". The 59-year-old, who sat down for a freewheeling chat with his nephew Arhaan Khan and his friends on the 'Dumb Biryani' podcast, has a total of over 160 million followers across Facebook, X and Instagram.

"When there was no social media, you didn't know who went where with whom. Now you switch on the phone and if you are following someone, you get the whole (scrolling) account of where she went, whom she met, this post came, that post came. It's a big mind slam," Salman said during the season finale of the podcast shared on its official YouTube chan-

nel. The actor, known for films such as "Maine

Pyar Kiya", the "Tiger" franchise, "Bajrangi Bhaijaan", and "Wanted", also emphasised not carrying baggage and living in the present. "You don't need to carry your baggage, you need present. Learn from the past... I keep hearing people saying 'I gave it my best shot'. No, you didn't... If you had, you would have got it. It takes a lot of mental effort to do this," he said. Calling discipline "the worst thing" to have because it often gets boring, Salman said: "You need to fall in love with all the difficult things you want to achieve... When your body says no, your mind should say yes. When the body and mind both say no, you should say 'C'mon guys, one last round'."

contribution to the initiative. India will host the first WAVES in Mumbai from May 1-4 that will bring together media CEOs, entertainment icons and creative minds from around the globe. Ekta Kapoor was part of the extensive virtual meeting of the Advisory Board of WAVES, the global summit that brings together the world of entertainment, creativity and culture, which the prime minister presided over on Friday. "Your vision for India as a global entertainment hub is inspiring. We're extremely excited to contribute and be a part of this journey," she wrote on Instagram. Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Anil Kapoor, Anupam Kher, Mohanlal, Rajinikanth, Aamir Khan, AR Rahman, Diljit Dosanjh, Akshay Kumar, Ranbir Kapoor, Shekhar Kapur, Deepika Padukone, and Mithun Chakraborty, were other film celebrities who also attended the meeting virtually. Previously, Anil Kapoor said he was honoured to be part of the Advisory Board of WAVES. "We had a very insightful discussion with fellow members and we look forward to working towards making India a global entertainment hub! @narendramodi @MIB_India @sjaju1," he wrote on X on Saturday. Kher called WAVES an "amazing initiative". "It will positively make India - the global entertainment hub. Listening to your vision and the

participation of other distinguished members of the board was a clear indication that India will be the DAVOS of entertainment and cultural field globally in few years! @AshwiniVaishnaw (sic)" he said. "I have no doubts that #WAVES, the brain child of Shri Modi ji will Propel India's 'SOFT POWER' to its deserving heights in the world. Brace for all the Excitement and breaking new grounds very soon!!" added

Chiranjeevi. The WAVES summit is being positioned by the government as India's global event for the entertainment sector to what Davos is for the economic sector.

TOM CRUISE SAYS HE 'PASSED OUT' FILMING UPSIDE-DOWN PLANE STUN

Hollywood star Tom Cruise has revealed that he frequently passed out while performing a crucial stunt in his upcoming spy action film "Mission: Impossible 8," where he had to hang onto a plane while he was upside down at an altitude of 10,000 feet.

From shooting an action sequence on a speeding train to skydiving and scaling the top of the tallest building in the world, Burj Khalifa, Cruise has perhaps done it all when it comes to death-defying stunts. But it was this specific sequence in

"Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning" which wasn't a cakewalk even for the action legend. In an interview with the Empire magazine, Cruise, 62, said he experienced a

lack of oxygen during the stunt. "When you stick your face out, going over 120 to 130 miles an hour, you're not getting oxygen. So I had to train myself how to breathe. There were times I would pass out physically; I was unable to get back into the cockpit," he said.

The sequence, which saw the actor hanging from the wing of a 1930s Boeing Stearman biplane, was featured in the teaser trailer of the movie which was released two months ago.

On Friday, Cruise also shared a behindthe-scenes video of filming the same sequence on his X handle with a caption





ctor Anil Kapoor on Sunday said he can't wait for the audience to watch "Subedaar" as he finished working on his upcoming Prime Video movie.

The action-drama movie is directed by Suresh Triveni of "Tumhari Sulu" and "Jalsa" fame. Kapoor shared a video on his Instagram handle, calling the film a "testament to the passion and commitment of every single cast and crew member." The action-drama movie is directed by Suresh Triveni of Tumhari Sulu and Jalsa fame. Kapoor shared a video on his Instagram handle, calling the film a "testament to the passion and commitment of every single cast and crew member." "We did it... Your dedication and hard work brought this film to life, and I'm beyond grateful. Thank you for bringing your A-game every single day. I can't wait for the world to witness what we've created together in 2025," the actor captioned his post which featured pictures of the wrap party with the cast and crew on the sets. "From the bottom of my heart, thank you #TeamSubedaar @radhikkamadan @sureshtriveni_ @ivikramix @primevideoin @openingimageofficial @akfcnetwork @abundanti-aent #PrajwalChandrashekar @saurabhtop @eeshadanait @tiwari_ravvy," he continued. Kapoor announced the beginning of the filming of the project in October. Described as an "adrenaline-fuelled action drama", Subedaar follows former Army man Arjun Singh who grapples with civilian life, navigating a strained relationship with his daughter and societal dysfunction.

The man who once fought for the nation, must now fight enemies within to protect his home and family," read the official plot-line. Subedaar is produced by Abundantia Entertainment, Opening Image, Anil Kapoor Film & Communication Network Pvt. Ltd

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1 Very unsafe

2 Not as many

3 A sword fight

- 11 Sweeten food with this 15 Part of the foot 17 A tame animal 12 A large sea
- 13 A snake's poison
- 16 A light, soft type of cake 18 A small round piece of



5 A hot drink

10 Someone who

8 A way to cook eggs

prepares a sports

team for a match

14 These grow on fingers

GINGER MEGGS







Tiayawaaa

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Monday February 10, 2025

'My character in *Mission Grey House* is fearless and driven, just like me in real life'



IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE PIONEER, **ACTRESS PUJA SHARMA OPENS UP** ABOUT HER **INSPIRING JOURNEY** FROM CUTTACK TO **THE SILVER SCREEN, MAKING HER BIG-SCREEN DEBUT WITH MISSION GREY** HOUSE

I joined the gym to get physically fit and took action classes where I learnt kickboxing. Though my character doesn't have a lot of action sequences, I worked hard to perfect the ones I had

TEJAL SINHA tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

aking her big-screen debut with Mission Grey House, actress Puja Sharma is ready to captivate audiences with her compelling portrayal of a fearless cop. Having already and popular television shows like Choti Sardarni and Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah, as well as web series such as Johri

short of inspiring.

Initially, a career in entertainment was never part of her plans. Moving to Mumbai for her studies, Puja aspired to enter the corporate world. However, her adventurous spirit and eagerness to explore new opportunities led her down an unexpected yet rewarding path in acting and modeling.
"Since childhood, I always

wanted to learn horse riding, kickboxing, and be aware of everything around me, which wouldn't have been possible in my hometown," she shares in this exclusive chat with The Pioneer.

director approached me, and that's when I got to know how things work in acting and modeling," says Puja. Initially hesitant about how her family

would react, she found unwavering support in her sister-in-law. Encouraged, she participated in a beauty pageant - just for fun - only to emerge as the

The victory brought unexpected recognition. "My story was published in newspapers, including my hometown's local press, and people started congratulating my parents. When I went back home, I was even made a mark in the entertain-ment industry through ad films felicitated by my school," she recalls. That moment made her realise she wanted to pursue a career in entertainment rather

and Dus June Ki Raat, Puja's journey from Cuttack, Odisha, to the silver screen is nothing short of inspiring.

Cpon returning to Munical, she actively sought opportunities in acting and modeling. "I got my first break in an ad film, and that's how things started out for

television debut, she reveals, "I haven't told this in any of my previous interviews, but before Choti Sardarni, I had worked on a web show in Goa. It never got released, and honestly, now I don't want it to," she laughs. "Back then, I was a fresh actor with no knowledge of anything."

very 'bechari' type role, full of rona-dhona, and I learned a lot Her entry into acting was purely accidental. "A casting director approach of the second second the second the

Switching gears, she played a humorous role in Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah as

don't realize how they work, but on set, you observe everything. Watching Popatlal, I noticed how his expressions would instantly change when the director said 'action' and then go back to normal once the shot was over. In real life, he is an introverted person, which is so different from what we see on TV," she

Her versatility continued with Dus June Ki Raat, where she played a drug addict, and Johri, where she portrayed a love interest. "Both were fun and enriching experiences," says Puja. Now, than the corporate world.

Upon returning to Mumbai,

Upon returning to Mumbai,

> For her, Mission Grey House is a dream come true. "Every actor dreams of seeing themselves on the big screen, and I feel so lucky to get this opportunity so soon in my career," she says excitedly.

> Playing a cop was particularly thrilling for her. "I used to watch Chandramukhi Chautala as a kid, and I always felt that, given my height, I should play a cop at least once," she shares. However, her height initially posed challenges. "In television, most lead actresses are of short height, and I was often told that my height was too much-more than the lead actor's. I always thought I'd only get to play an inspector's role, and I didn't realize it was something I had manifested until I got this role in

Mission Grey House," she says. Her character in the film is a determined and confident offi-Popatlal's love interest. "When cer who will stop at nothing to you see actors on-screen, you complete her mission. "She's reveals."

fearless and driven, which I relate to in real life as well," says Puja. In the film, veteran actor Rajesh Sharma plays her father, who assigns her and the lead actor to investigate a mysterious house where multiple murders have occurred.

To prepare for the physical and emotional demands of the role, Puja underwent rigorous training. "I joined the gym to get physically fit and took action classes where I learned kickboxing. Though my character doesn't have a lot of action sequences, I worked hard to perfect the ones

I had," she explains.

One of the most cherished experiences from the shoot was working with Rajesh Sharma. "One day, I was exhausted from the heat and was sitting in my makeup room. He walked in, recited some shayari, and asked his spot boy to bring me buttermilk and nimbu paani. His positivity as a co-actor and a senior actor made a big impact on me," she recalls fondly.

While many cop dramas focus solely on the professional aspects of the role, she emphasizes that her character in Mission Grey House has multiple layers. "She's not just a cop - there are so many different aspects to her personality, which makes this role special," she explains.

Looking ahead, Puja is eager to explore more genres - espe-cially horror. "I haven't done horror yet, but it excites me the most. I've actually completed a web series based on paranormal activities, which is currently in post-production," she

Empowering women, sustainably

PNS|HYDERABAD

eing a hotelier gave Mohit the opportunity to interact Build a note for gave work the opportunity to interact with people from diverse backgrounds, each of whom has a distinct story and set of challenges. The tenacity, inventiveness and generosity of women who manage the responsibilities of the home, family and community, however, have continuously impressed him! These extraordinary people, in his opinion, should be given the chance to flourish, develop and follow their aspirations in addition to recognition. He is committed to establishing a workplace that embraces, encourages and inspires women and homemakers to thrive in their jobs and beyond, which is why he gave an exclusive interview to THE PIONEER. Notably, the director of Ananta Hotels & Resorts has also spearheaded two noteworthy projects in Udaipur: an inventive lavender laundry project and a state-of-the-art bottling plant.

The effort to hire housewives and women is impressive. What prompted this choice?

Beyond providing luxury, my idea also aims to promote empowerment and inclusivity. In order to reshape opportunities in the hospitality business and provide doors for individuals who have historically been underrepresented, the campaign to hire women and stay-at-home moms was born. In 2005, women accounted for just 8% of our workforce. They make up 15% now and by 2026, they want to make up 25%. This change has improved our workplace culture in addition to giving women greater financial independence and opportunities for professional advancement. Our conviction that diversity is crucial to creating a better future for hos-pitality has been strengthened by their distinct viewpoints and commitment, which have enhanced our guests' experiences with warmth, empathy and creativity.

You're combining sustainable practices with powerful work with your lavender laundry initiative. Could you explain the project's underlying concept?

The Lavender Laundry initiative is an example of the dedication to a considerate experience that blends sustainability with significant influence. In addition to its aesthetic appeal, the project gives local women and stay-at-home moms jobs that allow them to become financially independent and advance in their careers. Because sustainable procedures are used to limit the process's influence on the envi-

ronment, it also fits with an eco-conscious worldview!

The hospitality business has historically been controlled

by men. How have you managed to assure women's representation at all levels?

I'm determined to dispel myths and redefine the hospitality sector as a welcoming one. Since the beginning, the ownership has placed a high priority on giving women chances since they understand how their involvement improves the teams and visitor experiences. My resolve to change the narrative is evidenced by my target of 25% female representation by 2026. We aggressively fund mentorship and training initiatives, empower women in leadership positions and maintain a positive work environment. I have personally seen improved teamwork, inventiveness and resilience as a result of promoting diversity—elements crucial for success in the cutthroat hospitality industry. The goal is very clear: empower women to empower hospitality's

What difficulties do stav-at-home moms encounter when they decide to enter the workforce, in your expe-

Homemakers frequently encounter major obstacles when they return to the market, such as a lack of recent work experience, self-assurance and the ability to manage family obligations. The hotel wants to close this gap by fostering an atmosphere that supports their special abilities, such as empathy, organisation and multitasking.

The resort's natural attractiveness is enhanced by the Aravalli Hills, which provide a picturesque backdrop for The Ananta Udaipur. How does your approach to sustainability change as a result of your connection to

Arayalli Hills serve as a constant source of inspiration and a reminder of the value of living in harmony with the natural world. The sustainability efforts, which range from installing solar energy and gravity-fed water systems to employing eco-friendly building materials, are motivated by this relationship. In order to improve biodiversity and reduce our carbon footprint,

we are also committing to planting 50,000 trees in Rajasthan each year. We make sure that our visitors can enjoy the natural beauty while understanding that their stay helps to preserve it for future generations by building our resort to blend in with the hills.

> While your family has a long history of hospitality, what personal legacy do you hope to leave behind?

I want to leave a legacy based on sustainability and empowerment, even though the heritage of exceptional hospitality is a source of pride. This vision is embodied in the activities, such as

the aim to eliminate plastic and our goal of having 25% of women in the workforce by 2026. The ultimate test of success, in my opinion, is building a company that not only provides top-notch hospitality but also improves communities, safeguards the environment and establishes new benchmarks for social responsibility and diversity. I want my ventures to be remembered by future generations as a trailblazer of significant industry transformation.





DEWORMING IN CHILDREN:

A crucial step towards healthy growth

s parents, ensuring that our $% \left\{ 1\right\} =\left\{ 1\right$ children grow up healthy and strong is a top priority. One often overlooked but essential aspect of a child's health is deworming. Intestinal worms are common among children, especially in regions with poor sanitation. These parasites can cause a range of health issues, including malnutrition, poor growth, and developmental delays. Regular deworming plays a critical role in maintaining your child's overall well-

What Are Intestinal Worms?

Intestinal worms are parasitic organisms that live in the intestines. The most common types of worms affecting children include roundworms. hookworms, tapeworms, and whipworms. These worms can enter the body through contaminated food, water, soil, or contact with infected animals. In children, the risk of infection is higher due to their natural curiosity and tendency to

play in unsanitary environments. Why is Deworming Important?

Deworming is essential because intestinal worms can seriously affect your child's health. Some of the kev consequences of worm infestations

1. Malnutrition: Worms compete with the host for essential nutrients, which can lead to nutrient deficiencies.

2. Abdominal Pain and Discomfort: Worms cause irritation and damage to the intestines, leading to stomach pain and

discomfort. 3. Fatigue and Weakness: As a result of nutrient deficiencies, children may appear lethargic and tired.

4. Diarrhea or Vomiting: Some worms can cause gastrointestinal symptoms, leading to dehydration and loss of

Signs Your Child Might Have Worms

It is not always easy to spot an infection, as some children may not show obvious symptoms. However, some common signs to look out for

• Itchy Bottom: This is particularly common with pinworms, which cause intense itching around the anus, especially at night. Abdominal Pain: Complaints of stomach aches or cramps may indicate a

worm infestation. • Changes in Appetite: A sudden increase or decrease in hunger could be a sign. • Weight Loss: If your child is losing weight despite a normal appetite, it may

How Often Should You Deworm You

indicate the presence of worms.

The frequency of deworming depends on where you live, the local sanitation conditions, and your child's age. In many countries, health authorities recommend deworming children between the ages of 1 and 5 every six months. In areas with higher rates of worm infestations, children may need to be dewormed more frequently. Your doctor or pediatrician will provide guidance based on your child's specific needs.

Deworming treatment typically involves the use of anti-parasitic medications. These medications are safe and effective and they usually come in the form of a single dose or a short course of treatment. Over-the-counter deworming medications are also available, but it's essential to seek professional advice before administering them to ensure proper dosage and safety. In addition to deworming, practicing good hygiene is crucial to preventing reinfection. Teach your children the importance of washing their hands with soap and water, especially before meals and after playing outside. Avoiding contaminated food and water and ensuring that your child avoids playing in dirty or contaminated environments can further reduce the risk of worm infections.

(The author, Dr. Parimala V Thirumalesh, is a Sr. Consultant - Neonatology & Pediatrics, at Aster CMI Hospital.)

Real Madrid vs Atletico Madrid ends in 1-1 draw

ylian Mbappé scored in his first capital derby against Atletico Madrid as Real Madrid fought back for a 1-1 draw and kept its slim lead of the

Spanish league on Saturday. Next up for Mbappé and Madrid is a trip to Manchester City on Tuesday for the first leg of their Champions League knockout round playoff.
Julián Álvarez put Atletico ahead

from the penalty spot in the 35th minute. Mbappé equalised in the 50th for the hosts, which stayed one point ahead of Atletico in the

standings.
Jude Bellingham hit the crossbar with a header as Madrid searched for a second goal. Atletico goalkeeper Jan Olbak made saves to deny Rodrygo, Vinícius Júnior and Mbappé to split the points at the Santiago Bernabeu.

"We knew how to hang in there and had our chances," Álvarez said. "We are in the fight and will stay in it right to the end."

Atletico, which spent big last summer to acquire Álvarez and other reinforcements, is trying to add to league titles in 2021 and 2014 under coach Diego Simeone.

Barcelona, in third place, is five points behind Madrid before visiting Sevilla on Sunday. Mbappé had missed the first

Atletico derby of the season, a 1-1 draw in September, because of injury.
First half to Atletico

A spate of injuries left Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti relying on a makeshift backline of Lucas Vázquez, regular midfielder Aurélien Tchouaméni, youth player Raul Asencio, and Fran

A reckless stretch of his boot by Tchouaméni that ended up tripping Samuel Lino was spotted by a video review referee and sent Álvarez to the penalty spot. The former Man City striker

gently stroked his penalty down the middle as Thibaut Courtois dived to his left.

Antoine Griezmann showed again his great value to Atletico with precision passing even under duress. The French midfielder twice placed perfectly weighted balls that left Álvarez and Lino in good position to get off shots inside the area, but clumsy touches by both ruined the opportunities.

"It is a draw that leaves both teams thinking they could have



said. "We had some situations that we lacked the clarity we needed to resolve better."

Second half to Real Rodrygo sparked the Madrid comeback just after halftime

gotten a better result," Simeone when he dribbled past Javi Galan and Lino on the right side and slipped a ball to Bellingham in the heart of the box. Bellingham's scuffed shot hit a defender and fell to Mbappé to rifle home for his first goal against Atletico.

Mbappé had missed the first Atletico derby of the season, a 1-1 draw in September, because of

injury. Madrid poured forward searching for a second goal with Atletico rattled. Vinícius dribbled down the left side and scooped 14 consecutive rounds, dating woodwork.

Simeone changed both his full backs with Reinildo and Nahuel Molina in the 63rd, but Oblak still had to come to Atletico's rescue on three occasions.

"It is going to be a tightly contested league until the very end," Ancelotti said. **Changes for Man City**

Ancelotti hinted that he will make changes to his starting 11 for City, most likely in midfield since he has few options in defense other than including Ferland Mendy, and will find it hard to touch his attack. That means that Dani Ceballos could likely make way for Eduardo Camavinga or Luka Modric. Former Madrid defender Marcelo was honored before kickoff after he announced his retirement this week.

Sancet hat trick

Oihan Sancet scored a hat trick to lead fourth-placed Athletic Bilbao's 3-0 rout of Girona as the Basque club moved to within one point of Barcelona.

Ernesto Valverde's Athletic, which only fields players from or near the Basque Country region of northern Spain, hasn't lost in

the ball for Bellingham, who back to a defeat at Girona on smashed a header off the October 6.

Antony scores but Celta wins Antony scored his first goal since joining Real Betis on loan from

Manchester United, but Celta Vigo rallied from two goals down to earn a thrilling 3-2 comeback victory. Antony deftly curled in a shot from inside the box to put Betis

ahead before Diego Llorente headed in a second goal in the 22nd. Betis twice hit the woodwork before Fran Beltran started Celta's fightback with a powerful strike from outside the area in the 63rd.

Javi Rodríguez scrambled in the equalizer before Williot Swedberg got the 87th-minute winner. Support for Kirian

Alejandro Baena and Ayoze Pérez scored in Villarreal's 2-1 win at Las Palmas.

The teams stopped playing momentarily in the 20th minute to join the fans in applauding Kirian Rodríguez, who wears No. 20, in a show of support for the Las Palmas midfielder. Rodríguez announced this week that he will be stepping away from soccer for a second time to treat recurring

SRI LANKA CHAMPIONS

Australia secures first test series win in Sri Lanka in 14 years

PTI ■ GALLE

Australia wrapped up a comprehensive 2-0 series victory over Sri Lanka, sealing the second test with a commanding nine-wicket win in Galle on Sunday.

Top order batter Marnus Labuschagne flicked a delivery from retiring Sri Lankan player Dimuth Karunaratne to discipline and variety, putting mid-wicket to complete the relentless pressure on Sri triumph, just 15 minutes Lanka and paved the way for a before lunch on the fourth day. resounding 2-0 series win.

Lanka and paved the way for a unbroken 37-run stand. Alex Carev was named M. Alex C It's Australia's first test series win on Sri Lankan soil since

Their last success here came under Ricky Ponting's captaincy, a 1-0 victory in 2011. However, they suffered a 3-0 whitewash in 2016 under Steve Smith's leadership, and the 2022 series ended in a 1-1 draw. This time, with Smith standing in as captain for Pat Cummins, the victory was a

welcome redemption. "I thought it was a real good series and we played well from the outset," said Australia captain Steve Smith, who was named Player of the Series after his consecutive hundreds. "Everyone had their methods and stuck to it over a long period of time and to score that many runs was great.

"All our spinners and lone quick Mitchell Starc did quite well. Been a great series win." Australia approached the

planning — including a training camp in Dubai — and executed their strategies with

precision.

Their batters laid the foundation with big hundreds, allowing the bowlers to dictate terms with attacking fields. displayed

The tourists had set the tone early, winning the first test by an innings and 242 runs - Sri Lanka's heaviest ever test defeat. They remained clinical in the second match, ensuring there was no way back for the hosts.

Hosts unable to set a testing target

Sri Lanka resumed Sunday on 211-8, holding a slender lead of just 54 runs, with much riding on vice-captain Kusal Mendis, who had remained unbeaten overnight.

Mendis brought up his second half-century in the game by guiding Nathan Lyon to deep cover but perished in the same over, caught at short square leg by Steve Smith. The dismissal was a milestone

moment - Smith's 200th Test catch, a feat previously achieved by only four players: Kallis, Jacques Jayawardene, Rahul Dravid,

meticulous and Joe Root.

Beau Webster wrapped up the innings soon after, leaving Australia with a modest target of 75 runs.

Sri Lanka briefly found hope when Prabath Jayasuriya removed Travis Head (20) early, caught behind. However, Meanwhile, the spinners Usman Khawaja (27 not out) displayed remarkable and Marnus Labuschagne (26 not out) calmly guided the visitors home with an

Alex Carey was named M the Match for his outstanding 156 and four dismissals behind the stumps. His innings stands as the highest score by an Australian wicketkeeper in

This victory marks Australia's fourth consecutive test win. having also won the final two matches of its recent 3-1 home series against India. It plays South Africa in the final of the World Test Championship at Lords in June.

Karunaratne farewell Sri Lanka slumped to its fourth straight defeat and marked a disappointing end for 36-yearold opener Karunaratne in his

100th and final test. Very emotional day for me. It has been a long career," said Karunratne who scored 7,222 runs at 39.25 with 16 centuries. When I started my cricket, I Just wanted to play one test match. To go onto play 100 Tests was amazing.

MI Cape Town wins maiden SA20 title

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

Pace spearhead Kagiso Rabada produced an inspired bowling performance to lead MI Cape Town to their maiden SA20 title with a comfortable 76 runs win over two-time champions Sunrisers Eastern Cape in the final at the Wanderers here.

After finishing last in the previous two seasons, the Rashid Khan-led MI Cape Town hardly put any foot wrong in the third season. Rabada on Saturday night claimed 4/25 in 3.4 overs to dismiss Sunrisers Eastern

Cape for just 105 in response

to MI Cape Town's 181 for 8 – the second-highest score in a SA20 final. Rabada was ably supported by player-of-the-match Trent Boult, who took two wickets for just nine runs from his four

overs, spin twins George Linde

(2/20) and skipper Rashid

Chasing 182, the Aiden Markram-led Sunrisers, which had registered consecutive



wins over Joburg Super Kings and Paarl Royals in the last two matches, could not maintain the momentum and except Tom Abell and Tony de Zorzi, no other batter could live upto the expectations.
Leg-spinner Rashid, who had

surprised the cricket world by leading Afghanistan to the semifinals of the T20 World Cup last year, has added another feather in his already illustrious career.

Earlier, in the tournament, he became the highest wicket-taker in the

High on confidence after five wins on the trot before the final, MI Cape Town won the toss and chose to bat.

In-form Ryan Rickelton (33 off 15; 1x4, 4x6s) and Rassie van der Dussen (23 off 25; 2x6s) showed their intent from the onset, giving an aggressive start to MI Cape Town's innings.

Craig Overton bowled an economical first over in which only three runs came but in the second over Rickelton smashed sixes over deep third man and fine-leg besides a straight four over Marco Jansen's head.

Overton too was not spared as Van der Dussen hit a six over square leg while Rickelton continued his attacking game against Jansen by hitting two brilliant sixes in the fourth

But MI Cape Town suffered consecutive blows which gave Sunrisers a chance to make a comeback in the game.

Rickelton was the first to depart, deceived by a slower ball from Overton and Liam Gleeson took a fine catch. In the very next over, Liam

Dawson dismissed Reeza Hendricks, who failed to open his account. MI scored 52 runs for the loss

of two wickets in the Powerplay. The wickets stemmed the flow

of runs as left-arm wrist spinner Dawson gave only four runs in the seventh over. Van der Dussen looked uncomfortable from the beginning and was the next to depart stumped by Tristan Stubbs off Dawson in the

and had to leave the field.

Fast bowler Matt Henry chipped in with 3-55.

No. 10 batter Abrar Ahmed hit

an unbeaten 25 that included

three successive boundaries

Phillips unleashed his power-

hitting against Pakistan's two

Shuttler Sindhu pulls out of **BAMTC 2025**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

¬wo-time Olympic medallist shuttler PV Sindhu has pulled out of the Badminton Mixed Asia Championships in China due to a hamstring issue, dealing a huge blow to the country's chances of improving the colour of their medal in the prestigious edition.

The tournament is set to be played in Qingdao from February 11-16 with the Indian shuttlers currently undergoing training at a camp in Guwahati. Besides Sindhu, the other leading players in the camp are Lakshya Sen, and HS Prannoy, along with the formidable doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty. Sindhu was a part of the squad that won bronze in the previous edition of the tournament.

"It is with a heavy heart that I share I won't be travelling with the team for BAMTC 2025. While training on the 4th (February) in Guwahati, I felt a twinge in my hamstring. Despite my efforts to pu through with heavy taping for our country, an MRI has revealed that my recovery will take slightly longer than I initially expected," said the 29-year-old Sindhu in a post on 'X'. Sindhu has grappled with injuries since winning her maiden women's singles gold medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

However, the star shuttler sustained a left foot stress fracture injury during the Games, which kept her out of all remaining tournaments in 2022, including the World Championships and the World Tour Finals.

India are placed in a tough Group D alongside runners-up South Korea and Macau. They will begin their campaign against Macau on February 12, which will be followed by a tough outing against South Korea on February 13.

New Zealand beat Pakistan ahead of Champions Trophy Khushdil Shah in the outfield

PTI LAHORE

Glenn Phillips warmed up for the Champions Trophy with his first one-day international century as New Zealand beat Pakistan by 78 runs in the opening game of the tri-nation cricket series on Saturday.

Phillips smashed an unbeaten 106 off 74 balls, including six boundaries and seven sixes, at a newly renovated Gaddafi Stadium. The No. 6 batter propelled New Zealand to 330-6 in its 50 overs on a flat wicket with Darvl Mitchell (81) and Kane Williamson (58) also getting the feel of the wickets for the upcoming Champions Trophy with half centuries.

In reply, Fakhar Zaman, playing his first international in more than seven months because of illness, made a belligerent 84 off 69 but the



rest of the top-order batters struggled against spin. Pakistan was bowled out for 252 in 47.5 overs. Perfect day

Phillips capped a perfect day by trapping Zaman leg before wicket with his off-spin and also took a brilliant diving catch to dismiss Babar Azam early in Pakistan's run chase. Babar struggled in his new role as opener in ODIs for the first

time since 2015 and scored a painstaking 10 runs off 23

New Zealand captain Mitchell

Santner (3-41) clipped the top-order with his left-arm spin

while Bracewell took 2-41. New Zealand, which is already sweating on the fitness of fast bowler Lockie Ferguson, had another injury scare when the ball hit Rachin Ravindra in the face as he misjudged a catch of

premier fast bowlers – Shaheen Shah Afridi and Naseem Shah -- in the last five overs that cost the home team 84 runs. Pakistan, which lost the toss, had kept New Zealand in check at 246-5 before Phillips cut loose

off Henry

Phillips power

against the two pacers. Williamson, playing his first ODI since November 2023, took his time to settle down. He reached the slowest ODI half century of his career in 82 balls before he edged Afridi after sharing a 95-run stand with Mitchell.

Pakistan, England's template worked, and the absolutely

trampled them. Brooke and

"I don't think the Champions

Trophy in Pakistan will have

such pitches. It will be far

from easy for bowlers, and

firepower would be back to

shooting blanks in the tournament.

The great off-spinner, who announced his retirement

from international cricket

during the Border-Gavaskar

Trophy in Australia, added, "90s kids would definitely

understand this fascination

'Now, South Africa, New

England's

Duckett scored heavily.

probably,

for tri-series.

After India, New Zealand is one of strongest teams in CT: Ashwin

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Spin great R Ashwin has called India and New Zealand the strongest sides heading into the Champions Trophy but warned teams against taking Australia lightly despite the loss of key players to injuries as they "bring their A-game" into marquee tournaments.

The ICC event starts in Pakistan on February 19 with India playing all their matches in Dubai under a hybrid model agreement.

"India has the home advantage in Dubai, and it almost like every other team is playing an away match against India. This is a problem for the other teams, for sure," Ashwin said on his Youtube channel.

With the long-forgotten triseries making a return after a gap of many years, Ashwin wondered if India should also have played in a tournament triangular instead of a bilateral series Boult are not playing, there is Mitchell Santner is the

against England for better preparation before Champions Trophy. "Is this preparation with

England enough for the Indian team ahead of CT in Dubai? Should we have played a tri-series too? Pakistan, New Zealand and South Africa are playing in Pakistan conditions, which would help them in the CT. "India only played against England in India, and moreover, we don't have a lot of pleasant memories of playing T20s in Dubai. The toss becomes really crucial in Dubai. I think winning the toss becomes crucial." Ashwin said New Zealand,

despite the absence of the long-serving pace duo of Trent Boult and Tim Southee, who have quit playing the 50-over format. will pose a challenge to India. "After India, New Zealand is Will it be Ben Sears? one of the strongest teams in the Champions Trophy. Since the likes of Southee and

a question mark about their bowling attack. Who will accompany Matt Henry? Will it be Will O-Rourke, who has the potential to be a runaway champion of next generation.

'They have an experienced spin attack with Michael Bracewell and Glenn Phillips. captain, how is he planning to marshall his resources. New Zealand is definitely a strong team. They are one of the challengers to India."

As far as Australia are concerned, Ashwin observed that they transform into a formidable outfit when the stakes are high in ICC events. "Steven Smith as captain is a

marriage made in heaven. Smith is going to captain the team in the Champions Trophy. Will Smith, Head, Maxwell and Labuschagne pull through the team to the semis. I always believe that Australia is a champion team that always brings its A-game in marquee tournaments.
"Considering Australia have department, a lot will depend on Smith's form and captaincy." Skipper Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood were on Thursday ruled out of the

a few issues in their bowling

Champions Trophy due to injuries. They are also without Mitchell Marsh, who is grappling with a back injury and was ruled out of the tournament on January 31,

and Marcus Stoinis, who announced on Thursday that he would be retiring from ODI cricket, removing himself from the squad. Ashwin also expressed his excitement at the return of tri-series tournaments after a gap of many years.

"Another moment happiness is the return of the tri-series. Yeah, there are bilateral series happening, including the India-England one. But it feels like England isn't playing serious enough cricket.

"In the recent series against

Zealand, and Pakistan have decided to reignite the interest in the tri-series and organise a tournament. The revival of tri-series tournaments would breathe life into the ODI format that is gradually overlooked. getting

The tri-series might be a perfect curtain raiser for what's in store for these teams at the Champions Trophy.

He called South African captain Temba Bavuma one of the "luckiest" cricketers. "South Africa also have an all-rounder conundrum. Will they play Wiaan Mulder, and can Rabada be the spearhead throughout the tournament? Will Marco Jansen leave an impact in Pakistan?

"South Africa is in the group

of death with England, Afghanistan and Australia. Will England play like how they did in India, or transform into something else entirely in CT 2025? "South Africa is going to be led by (Temba) Bavuma, who

I think is one of the luckiest cricketers. They have qualified for the WTC finals, and have played quite good cricket. "Will Tristan Stubbs be

benched? Will Mulder and Jansen play together along with one of Keshav Maharaj and Shamsi?'



Vijayawada | Monday February 10, 2025

tollywood

After *Majaka*, filmmakers know where I can fit: Anshu Sagar

MANMADHUDU FEMALE LEAD ANSHU IS BACK TO TELUGU CINEMA AFTER MANY YEARS AND SHE TALKS ABOUT HER SUDDEN **DISAPPEARANCE, HER STUDIES, MARRIAGE** AND WHAT MAKES HER COMEBACK...

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emember the classic film 'Manmadhudu' that stars Nagarjuna and Sonali Bendre, directed by Vijay Bhaskar and written by Trivikram Srinivas. The film was released in 2002 and another actress Anshu also played a female lead along with Sonali and she made her mark with it. Anshu acted then in 'Raghavendra' opposite Prabhas. Later, she acted in a Tamil film and then she

disappeared from the film industry.

After more than 20 years, Anshu is back to Telugu cinema and this time she is acting in a film titled 'Majaka'. She paired opposite Rao Ramesh in his entertainment film. When asked why people called her Anshu Anshu Tiwari or with some other surnames, the actress clarified about it. "The surname Ambani is a very popular one as well as known, but I have never been an Ambani. I have no idea how they added it to my name. I am Anshu, I married Sachin Sagar and if you want to add my surname you can call me Anshu Sagar, but I would be happy if everyone called me Anshu," said the actress.

one called me Anshu," said the actress.

Anshu acted in only three films and she disappeared suddenly from the industry, though she was successful. "Yes, because I was very young when I did 'Manmadhudu' and I was not mature enough to think at that time. If I was 24, I may have taken my career seriously, but I was hardly 14 or 15 at that time. So, I concentrated on my studies. I married Sachin Sagar at 24. I have two lovely children and I did my masters and now I am a qualified psychologist. I have my own clinic. I don't have any regrets," said Anshu about her disappearance.

ified psychologist. I have my own clinic. I don't have any regrets," said Anshu about her disappearance.

When asked what made her come back to films, Anshu said that it was after the rerelease of her film 'Manmadhudu'. "Actually, Annapurna Studios asked her to give a byte about 'Manmadhudu' and that's when Anshu changed. She came to India last February and did a couple of podcast interviews which went viral and people came to know that she was here. Actually it also opened up some doors and a few people contacted me for roles," said Anshu. That's how writer Prasanna Kumar contacted her and narrated this 'Maiska' in a zoom call and narrated this 'Majaka' in a zoom call.

When they saw Anshu's photos and also videos, they thought that she may fit in as the lead actress, sister or mother wherever she can fit. "When they asked me, I couldn't give them an answer, because I don't know where I stand, I am not like Madhuri or Kajol. I am younger than Deepika Padukone. But after 'Majaka', filmmakers have an idea where they can fit me, which I feel helps me to take the right decision also," said Anshu.

To accept 'Majaka', Anshu said that she liked the story. "When Prasanna Kumar narrated me on Zoom, I was laughing continuously. There is a lot of scope to perform and it's a heavy role. People might say that 'she is back' and I tried my best," she said. She added that the first day of the shoot where she faced the camera, she was nervous. "I haven't worked in a movie in the last 23 years, so I was very nervous and like a newcomer. But every-23 years, so I was very nervous and like a newcomer. But everyone was really nice on the sets, I know about the makers of the
film, because they are doing some good films. After day two and
three, I was fine and continued shooting without any trouble,"
said Anshu. She said that the biggest challenge she faced while
shooting this film was 'language'. "I am taking Telugu lessons
now. My teacher Surekha teaches me Telugu and I want to work

now. My teacher Surekha teaches me Telugu and I want to work for a long time, I want to connect with the Telugu audience fully. I am a British Indian, but now I am learning Telugu, and will keep doing my best," she said.

Talking about her role in this film, she said she played the role of Yashoda. "She is headstrong and stubborn, arrogant woman and at the same time she is emotional also. I just got into the character of Yashoda and tried my best to play the role," said Anshu. She paired opposite Rao Ramesh in the film "He is such a gentleman he is very sweet. He in the film. "He is such a gentleman, he is very sweet. He has completed his dubbing. He saw my performance and told me that I did very well, which I feel very happy about," said Anshu.

told me that I did very well, which I feel very happy about," said Anshu.

The actress said that a lot changed from then to now in these 23 years. "When I came back to London I was doing my studies and I wanted to sign up for an agency for any roles in British or American films. They would decline my applications, what films you did, we never heard about them, no value of South Cinema. But now, things have changed so much, it has become more united," she said. She added that her husband is now watching Telugu and Tamil films even though he doesn't know the language. "He is enjoying watching South films," said Anshu. Her family members are coming next week to watch her film here in Hyderabad.

"Whether I am playing a mother, lead actress or sister, if the role has some substance, then I just want to act again," she said the kind of roles she is looking for. Talking about the food, "Once or twice in a month, I had Hyderabad biryani and it's very good," she said. "I love doing the gym," she added. She did 'Raghavendra' with Prabhas and asked about him, Anshu recalls and that Prabhas has changed, but he didn't change much as a person. "He came in his second films for "Egypar' Learne of the Trabhabal."

but he didn't change much as a person. "He came in his second film after 'Eswar', I came after 'Manmadhudu'. At that time he was so sweet, shy, kind and calm. He is so good," said Anshu. She added that he is definitely a humble star.



feeling nervous

The film 'Pushpa 2' is still feeling nervous.

Speaking about the success, Allu Arjun thanked the 5, 2024 was a successful one. Allu Arjun played the lead, while Sukumar is the director. Mythri Movie Makers is the producer. Though the film released more than two months back, the team didn't celebrate its success till now Because there success till now. Because, there are few incidents that happened after its release. A woman passed away at the woman passed away at the Sandhya theatre stampede, after a few days Allu Arjun was arrested and he spent one day in Chanchalguda jail, making the makers not to hold any event of the film.

On Saturday, the makers held a success meet in a hotel, but it went quiet Generally.

but it went quiet. Generally Allu Arjun event means, it's more like loud noise from his fans, a lot of activity and so on. But this success meet went without any big noise as many of the actors and other unit members attended and spoke about the film's success.

Though the venue was

decided a couple of days back, the actor or the film PR didn't reveal about the venue even to the media. They revealed the venue at the last minute and requested not to forward the venue details to anyone as the fans may come in large numbers. So, they have taken every precaution for this success meet and it went smoothly. But if you look at Allu Arjun's body language, he



producers for backing this film for five years. "The producers Ravi and Naveen made this film possible - without them, 'Pushpa' wouldn't have happened. They have taken care of us for five years," said Allu Arjun. He added that music director Devi Sri Prasad made his songs reach billions. The actor thanked director Sukumar and he is the man behind the success of this film. "He always credits the team for success, but he himself is the reason behind it. My per-

formance has received a lot of appreciation, and the credit goes to Sukumar. I am his biggest fan - I get excited whenever he narrates a scene. He is a genius director," said Allu Arjun about Sukumar. "Pushpa is not just a film, it is an emotion. The five years we spent on this film will be remembered for a lifetime," said the actor. He talks about 'Pushpa 3' and he said he doesn't know what is in store for it, but it is going to be extraordinary.

"I cannot make films with-

out music director Devi Sri Prasad, and I never will," said Sukumar about DSP. Talking about Allu Arjun, he said, he believed in him even when he didn't have a proper story. "This entire success belongs to Allu Arjun," said the director.

SWASIKA'S LOOK UNVEILED FROM

pooja Vijay, better known as Swasika, is very popular in Tamil and Malayalam where she acted in many films. Now, she is doing this Telugu film, a horror thriller 'Shambhala', in which her look from the film is unveiled. Her recent Tamil film 'Lubber Pandhu' is very successful and even on OTT too it is a super hit. She is playing a very important role in the much-awaited supernatural horror thriller Shambhala: A Mystical World. The makers introduced Swasika's character, Vasantha, with a striking first-look poster that showcases her in an intense, gripping avatar. Swasika is also set to feature in Suriya's upcoming film directed by RJ Balaji and another Telugu film, Nithin's 'Thammudu' adding to her growing list of exciting projects. Talented actor Aadi Saikumar, known for his lively performances, is playing the lead in this project which has already generated excitement with its title and first look posters. The movie will see the actor in the challenging role of a geo-scientist. Directed by Ugandhar Muni, this film is produced by Rajasekhar Annabhimoju and Mahidhar Reddy under the Shining Pictures banner.



Sid Sriram's magic once again worked for Neevalle Neevalle song



id Sriram has a special place when it comes to Telugu songs as he always creates magic with his voice. Whether it's 'Samajavaragamana' from 'Ala Vaikuntapuram Lo', or 'Srivalli' from 'Pushpa' or 'Leharayi' from 'Most Eligible Bacherlor', not just one song there are many popular songs sung by Sriram. Now, the singer has come up with another one 'Neevalle Neevalle' from the upcoming film 'Tribanadhari Barbarik'. Directed by Mohan Srivatsa and produced by Vijaypal Reddy Adidhala, this film has an interesting cast by

Sathyaraj, Satyam Rajesh, Vasishta N Simha, Sanchi Rai, Udaya Bhanu, and Kranthi Kiran. The film has music composed by the Infusion

Band. The makers started the musical promotions by releasing the lyrical video for the first single, 'Neevalle Neevalle'. Lose yourself in the magic of the song, as the ever-magical Sid Sriram elevated it to extraordinary heights with his evocative and charismatic vocals. His voice lends the track an irresistible quality, making it an instant earworm. It's no surprise that this enchanting track is expected to top music charts in no time.



producer Rahul Yadav Nakka is coming up with 'Brahma Anandam', which is set to release on February 14. The film stars Brahmanandam and his son Raja Goutham are in lead roles, with Priya Vadlamani and Aishwarya Holakkal playing key roles. It is directed by debutant RVS Nikhil. "We struggled to find a perfect title, finally decided as 'Brahma Anandam.' The co-directors in our team helped design the title. I've produced every film of mine on my own, and this is no different," said Rahul. He added that he liked the grandfather-grandson relationship in the story. "My own grandfather also wanted to see me succeed, but he passed away just before I could return. I chose this story as a tribute to him," he said. "We approached several actors for the lead

actor, but Brahmanandam recommended

Vennela Kishore's name. We sent him the script, and after reading it, Vennela Kishore suggested that the character of Giri, a friend, would suit him better than the lead actor. That's when Raja Goutham's name came up. Initially, I had doubts, but after meeting him, my opinion changed," said Kishore about how Raja landed in this film. "As for Brahma Anandam, I won't talk about hits and flops. Everyone will come for Brahmanandam, but they will leave talking about Raja Goutham. They'll talk about his performance and acting. I'm sure of it," said Rahul about Raja. Rahul Yadav revealed that he is also working on a film titled 'Vibe' with Raja Goutham. The director who directed 'Agent Sai Srinivasa Athreya', is going to direct this film.

Madham is a raw and rustic film

hese days many directors are giving importance to realistic stories and director Vamsi Krishna Malla is coming up with a film titled 'Madham'. Surva Devara Ravindranath (Chinna Babu) and Ramesh Babu Koya are the producers, while Harsha Gangavarapu, Latha Vishwanath, and Inava Sultana are the lead actors. The film is set to release on March 14. "This is a raw and rustic film and is rare in Telugu cinema. Such content is more common in Tamil and Malayalam films. I truly connected with the story of 'Madham', and the climax is something that has never been seen in Indian cinema before," said the director. He added that to experience this film, one needs a lot of heart and courage. Inaya Sultana played a negative role in this film. "I love playing negative roles, and in this one, I had the privilege of portraying a significant character," said Inaya about her role. Another actress Latha Vishwanath said that she played a character very close to her real-life personality, so it was an easy and enjoyable experience. "I am thankful to the director and producer for giving me such a wonderful role", said Latha.

