


# sunday pioneer

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**'Some people trying to disturb peace in name of caste politics'**



5

**Agri minister EXPECTS 3.5-4 pc growth**



8

**Jayasudha: A star who shone BRIGHT in cinema and life**



10

**QUOTE OF THE DAY**  
The pioneer

Only Rs 12,000 for Rythu Bharosa to turn into Rythu Gundekotha (a stab on the farmer's heart). This is the pinnacle of Congress's deceptive politics, and Revanth Reddy has emerged as a synonym for betrayal. The government turned loan waiver into a half-hearted effort, failed to deliver on bonus promises, and neglected crop insurance. The Congress' promises of bonuses remain hollow, and their crop insurance scheme has disappeared without a trace



P2  
-Harish Rao, BRS MLA

**DON'T MISS...**

**No hMPV cases in TG: Health Dept**

Amid reports of a Human Metapneumovirus (hMPV) outbreak in China, the Telangana Health Department has confirmed that no cases of hMPV have been reported in the state. The Director-General of Health Services and the Director of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) under the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH & FW), issued a statement on January 3, clarifying that hMPV is a respiratory virus causing ...

-PAGE: 3

**Govt will fulfil promises: Ponguleti**

Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy on Saturday announced that 3,500 Indiramma houses would be allocated to each Assembly constituency in the first phase. The Minister, along with Khammam MP Ramasahayam Raghurama Reddy, toured Kusumanchi mandal, laid the foundation stones for several road construction projects, and distributed Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) cheques to beneficiaries in Kusumanchi and Nelakondapalli mandals. The Minister laid the ...

-PAGE: 4

**'Life sprouts in space', says ISRO**

ISRO on Saturday said the cowpea seeds it had sent to space onboard the PSLV-C60 POEM-4 platform have germinated under microgravity conditions within four days of the launch of the mission. The space agency sent eight cowpea seeds as part of the Compact Research Module for Orbital Plant Studies (CROPS) experiment conducted by the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) to study plant growth in microgravity conditions. "Life sprouts in space! VSSC's CROPS experiment onboard PSLV-C60 POEM-4 successfully sprouted cowpea seeds in 4 days. Leaves expected ...

-NATION

**Apparel exporters seek tax incentives**

Apparel exporters body AEPCC on Saturday urged the government to announce tax incentives, including removal of a provision requiring payments to MSMEs within 45 days to claim deductions and customs duty exemption on garment machinery imports. The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPCC) has also requested that an interest equalization rate of 5 per cent be announced in the Budget, scheduled to be unveiled on February 1 by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Other demands include extension of concessional tax rate for ...

-MONEY

## Govt gives Bharosa to farmers

Announces financial aid of Rs.12,000 annually under Rythu Bharosa scheme

Indiramma Athmeeya Bharosa and the issue of new ration cards will be launched on January 26



CM A Revanth Reddy addressing the media at Secretariat on Saturday after the Cabinet meeting in Hyderabad

**KOLISHETTY VENKATESHWARLU**  
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■ HYDERABAD

The Congress government has decided to give a financial assistance of Rs 12,000 per acre per year under the 'Rythu Bharosa' scheme to the owners of all arable lands.

The government decided not to give Rythu Bharosa to lands taken over for real estate projects, Nala converted, Industrial, lands which have hills and mountains, Mining, Roads, and Residential lands used for com-

➤ **NO 'RYTHU BHAROSA' FOR REAL ESTATE, RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, MINING, NALA, INDUSTRIAL, HILLS AND MOUNTAINS AND GOVERNMENT ACQUIRED LANDS**

➤ **RS 12,000 PER YEAR FOR LAND-LESS FAMILIES (FARM LABOURERS) UNDER THE 'INDIRAMMA ATHMEEYA BHAROSA' SCHEME**

mercial activities and government acquired lands for various projects.

Addressing the media after a three-hour Cabinet meeting at the Secretariat on Saturday, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that the government has decided to give a financial assistance of Rs 12,000 instead of the Rs 15,000 financial assistance for farmers under Rythu Bharosa. He said the Congress government is increasing the financial assistance amount to farmers from Rs.10,000 per acre per year to Rs.12,000 per acre per year.

Continued on Page 2

**'Revenue officials will collect info about cultivable lands'**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that Revenue officials will visit villages and collect information about cultivable lands and create awareness among farmers by conducting grama sabhas.

The CM said that revenue records have not been updated even though some other activities are taking place on agricultural lands. But Rythu Bandhu was given to those lands. They have to come forward and give details voluntarily to the government. As of now, the government's objective is to help real farmers. The government will implement these schemes with the information the officials have, the CM said.

The CM appealed to the media to explain these things clearly to the public and not to give scope for unnecessary problems and controversies.

## Will fill all vacant posts in govt: Sridhar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Government remains committed to filling all vacant posts in government service, said IT and Industries Minister Sridhar Babu.

Addressing the Passing Out Parade of 196 Fire Driver Operators at the Telangana State Fire Services and Civil Defence Training Institute in Vattinagula Pally in Rangareddy District, he stressed the government's efforts to strengthen its workforce and streamline the recruitment process.

"Under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, the recruitment process, which had been stalled during the last decade, has been revived. Our government is systematically addressing legal and procedural challenges, issuing appointment letters and ensuring transparency in filling vacancies," Sridhar said.

He added that special emphasis has been placed on filling posts in

critical departments like the Home Department.

Commending the Fire Department for its dedication, he acknowledged its crucial role during the recent floods in Khammam. "The Fire Department personnel have always been at the forefront in safeguarding lives. Their service reflects a true sense of duty and brotherhood," he said.



Last year, the government recruited 878 personnel across various divisions of the Fire Department, demonstrating its focus on enhancing operational capacity and infrastructure

Last year, the government recruited 878 personnel across various divisions of the Fire Department, demonstrating its focus on enhancing operational capacity and infrastructure. Sridhar Babu assured continued efforts to bolster the department's resources to enable swift and effective responses to emergencies.

Addressing the newly inducted Driver Operators who completed a rigorous four-month training programme,

Continued on Page 2

**IMPACT OF POLAVARAM PROJECT ON TG**

## Revanth seeks detailed report

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Chief Minister directed the Irrigation Department to collaborate with IIT Hyderabad and prepare a detailed report on the impact of the Polavaram Project on Telangana.

Emphasising the urgency of the matter he asked officials to submit a comprehensive report within a month. A Special Officer will be appointed to coordinate with the IIT-Hyderabad team to facilitate this.

The CM also called for a study on the threat posed to the historic Bhadrachalam Temple by the Polavaram Project. Officials briefed him on the flooding of the temple town in 2022 when 27 lakh cusecs of water submerged the area.

The Chief Minister stressed the



need for proactive measures to prevent a repeat of that.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy was speaking at a meeting with top officials of the Irrigation

Department on Saturday, focusing on the potential threats posed by the Polavaram Project and other projects on the Godavari River.

Continued on Page 2

## KCR will call shots at Centre like CBN & Nitish, says KTR

PNS ■ SIRCILLA

BRS Working President Sircilla MLA Kalvakuntla Taraka Rama Rao said that he is confident that KCR would once again play a pivotal role in national politics.

Addressing a gathering of BRS leaders and workers at the Telangana Bhavan in Sircilla on Saturday, KTR predicted a resurgence of KCR's influence in shaping the nation's governance.

KTR said, "Just like Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar, there will definitely come a day when KCR will call the shots in national politics"

KTR criticized the Congress government led by Revanth Reddy, accusing it of administrative failures and betrayal of promises. "While KCR's administration ensured Rs 80,000 crore in Rythu Bandhu assistance to farmers in over 12 instalments, the current government hasn't even provided Rs 7,500 per farmer as promised. Instead, they're busy tarnishing farmers with baseless allegations," KTR said.

Lashing out at the handling of the Kaleshwaram Project, KTR remarked, "It's not the Medigadda Barrage that's collapsing; it's Revanth Reddy's intellect." He accused the Congress of

Continued on Page 2

## Man behind India's nuclear tests Rajagopala Chidambaram dies



### Centre must allot funds to promote green manure: Tummala

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao requested the Central Government to provide financial assistance to promote green manure.

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan held a video conference with the Agriculture Ministers of all the states on Saturday. Telangana Agriculture Minister Tummala attended this meeting. Thirumala disclosed that 53,617 metric tons of Soya was collected this year due to encouragement by the Centre.

Speaking on this occasion, Minister Tummala said that in the next five years, oil palm cultivation will expand to 4 lakh acres. He said the minimum support price should be given for oil palms to win the oil palm bunches. He asked also to announce support prices for turmeric and chilli crops. Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao asked the Centre to amend the Seed Act to pay compensation to farmers.



## Hyd emerging as global tech hub, says CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy showcased Hyderabad's rapid transformation into a global city during his speech at the American Progressive Telugu Association (APTA) Global Business Conference. He highlighted the city's immense potential for growth and investment across multiple sectors.

Revanth emphasized Hyderabad's growing reputation as a cosmopolitan hub. "Hyderabad is not just a city; it's a global destination brimming with opportunities in cinema, business, politics and more," he stated, urging global investors to capitalize on the city's vibrant ecosystem.

The Chief Minister outlined MANY projects aimed at boosting the city's

## Priority to mother tongues in New Education Policy: Kishan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Centre will give top priority to mother tongues in its New Education Policy which will be revealed soon, Telangana BJP President G. Kishan Reddy said. He said the Centre has decided to ask courts to ensure that all arguments and judgements are in Telugu.

Addressing the World Telugu Confederation Conference at HICC on Saturday, Kishan said that everyone has the responsibility to protect Telugu. He hoped that primary education, governance affairs and official orders would be issued in the Telugu language.

"In the past, the Telugu film industry used to name films in Telugu. However, now they are using English names for their films.

It would be appropriate to give Telugu films names in Telugu," Kishan said.

The Union Minister said that there is a need to transmit the Telugu language to future generations by digitizing it. He said that there is also a need to digitalise Telugu books available to ensure that they are not destroyed. He said that Telugu schools have been closing down due to the lack of students these days.

"Everyone should think about these consequences. The current generation's language contains only 30 per cent Telugu words. The remaining are English words. It seems that Telugu may disappear in due course. Telugu should be protected by speaking and writing the language," Kishan said.



Union Minister G Kishan Reddy was addressing the World Telugu Confederation Conference at HICC on Saturday

## Ahead of Trump's inauguration, debate on H1B visas intensifies

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Three weeks ahead of Trump's inauguration here on January 20, the debate on foreign guest workers visas for highly skilled professionals, the H-1B, has intensified which has literally created divisions in both the Democratic and the Republican parties.

Indians are the main beneficiaries of the H-1B visas, which bring in the best of the talent and brains from across the world. Highly skilled professionals from India walk away with the overwhelming number of H-1B visas - which is Congressional mandated 65,000 every year and another

20,000 for those who received higher education from the US.

President-elect Donald Trump, who will be sworn in as the 47th President of the United States on January 20 in front of the US Capitol, has come out in support of the H-1B, so has two of his close confidants, Tesla owner Elon Musk and entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy, both of whom have been tasked to head the newly created Department of Government Efficiency.

"I've always liked the visas, I have always been in favour of the visas. That's why we have them," Trump told the New York Post over

the weekend.

"I've always felt we have to have the most competent people in our country. We need competent people, we need smart people coming into our country, we need a lot of people coming in. We're going to have

jobs like we've never had before," Trump told reporters at a New Year's Eve party hosted by him at Mar-a-Lago.

Both Musk and Ramaswamy have argued that H-1B visas are essential to attract



"I've always liked the visas, I have always been in favour of the visas. That's why we have them," Trump told the New York Post over the weekend

**OBTUSE ANGLE**



# Promise of Media Centre inside Secretariat yet to be realised

Nearly a year has passed, yet the new state secretariat continues to be a fortress for reporters, much like it was during the KCR regime. Despite the buzz around open governance, the promise of a dedicated media centre within the secretariat remains just that—a promise. Whispers suggest reporters still rely on “inside help” to gain access, a far cry from the open-door policy of the pre-2014 era.

“The media centre? Oh, it’s like a mythical creature now—everyone’s heard of it, but no one’s seen it,” joked one senior journalist. The delay in implementing what was deemed the simplest of promises has left many scratching their heads. Will the gates finally open, or will reporters continue their treasure hunt to get the most basic access? Only time will tell.

## Farmers likely for another data collection drive, recall KCR’s 2018

Back in 2018, when Rythu Bandhu was first implemented, even KCR’s government sought applications from farmers despite having data from the Samagra Kutumba Survey. Farmers dutifully filled Aadhaar declarations and provided details to be uploaded to the portal. Now, as the Revanth Reddy government plans to initiate a similar exercise, farmers are raising a familiar question: “Why ask again when the data is already in place?” Despite their frustrations, farmers acknowledge they will provide the required information if it’s mandatory.

“At the end of the day, beneficiaries don’t want to risk losing out on a scheme,” admitted a farmer from Suryapet. This sentiment reflects the reality of rural beneficiaries—compliance over protest, no matter how repetitive the process. This, however, isn’t the first or even the second time such data collection has been carried out. From Praja Palana Data, the caste survey, One State One Card, and now this latest effort, it seems the cycle never ends. But as one farmer put it with resignation, “We’ll give the data again. What choice do we have?”

## Scribes in limbo over ‘own house’ in Hyderabad

Scribes in Hyderabad are disappointed following the Supreme Court’s verdict on house sites. They are now hoping for a positive outcome from the review petition filed by their association. The State government had earlier assured that it would do justice by allotting plots to the scribes. In the meantime, the government has offered those interested the opportunity to purchase flats in Rajiv Swagruha apartments at reasonable prices, following a request from Housing Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy.

However, many scribes remain uncertain whether they will receive house sites or not. This doubt has intensified with

the government’s offer to buy flats, which some consider a viable option. However, for many, this offer comes after they paid Rs 2 lakh 17 years ago. Numerous scribes are now unable to afford the Rajiv Swagruha flats, as they feel deceived by promises unfulfilled over the years. Tragically, nearly 100 scribes have passed away without ever owning a home.

Additionally, many scribes may not be eligible for bank loans, given their age and salary, further adding to their uncertainty. For those who paid the initial Rs 2 lakh, the question of whether they will ever own a house in their lifetime remains unanswered. However, it is worth noting that many scribes within the fraternity have already secured their own homes, villas, or flats.

(With inputs from Naveena Ghanate, Kolishetty Venkateshwaru)

# REPORTERS’ DIARY

## KTR’s Rs 1000-cr tweet sparks Congress jibe, insiders roll eyes

KTR’s tweet claiming a whopping Rs 1,000 crore was spent on changing ‘TS’ to ‘TG’ landed him in hot water, with Congress swooping in to mock the figure. “It’s just Rs. 1 crore. He couldn’t even read it properly,” sniped a Congress spokesperson, turning the debate over necessity into a war of numbers. But the drama doesn’t stop there. Even within BRS circles, murmurs about KTR’s Twitter game are growing louder. “Those rhyming Telugu tweets? Nobody believes it’s him. It’s too staged,” confided a close aide, adding that KTR’s natural, unfiltered style is what people truly admire. He should ditch the ghostwriters and stick to his authentic voice

# Congress betrayed TG farmers with reduced Rythu Bharosa: Harish Rao

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA Harish Rao strongly criticized the TG Congress government, accusing it of betraying farmers through its latest Cabinet decision. He said that the Congress, led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, had made false promises to farmers to gain power and has now turned its back on them. “The Congress came to power by promising to increase investment support under Rythu Bandhu and to provide Rs 15,000 per acre annually under Rythu Bharosa. During the election campaign, Revanth

boasted that while Rs 10,000 is being given now, his government would increase it to Rs 15,000. However, after coming to power, they have ruthlessly slashed the amount to Rs 6,000 per season dashing the hopes of farmers,” Harish said in a statement.

He described the decision as a severe betrayal, turning “Rythu Bharosa into Rythu Gundekotha” (a stab on the farmer’s heart). “This is the pinnacle of the Congress’s deceptive politics, and Revanth has emerged as a synonym for betrayal,” he added.

Harish also pointed out that

the Cabinet completely ignored tenant farmers, breaking their promise to provide Rs 15,000 annual support even to those without land ownership. “They didn’t even discuss tenant farmers’ issues in the Cabinet meeting, showing utter disregard for their struggles,” he said.

Demanding immediate action, he urged the government to compensate for the missed support during the Kharif season by paying Rs 15,000 per acre, combining it with the Rabi season payment.

He criticized the government for turning loan waivers

into a half-hearted effort, failing to deliver on bonus promises and neglecting crop insurance.

“The Congress’ promises of bonuses remain hollow, and their crop insurance scheme has disappeared without a trace,” he said.

Harish warned that Telangana’s farmers will not forgive this betrayal. “The Congress’ outright lies and deceit will come back to haunt them. The people who trusted and voted for them will ensure they are held accountable for their broken promises,” he concluded.

## KCR unveils ‘Andariki Amma’ paying tribute to Telangana Talli

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Several former BRS ministers, MLAs, MLCs, ex-legislators and public representatives from the BRS met BRS Chief K. Chandrasekhara Rao (KCR) on Saturday to extend their New Year greetings.

During the gathering, KCR unveiled the book ‘Andariki Amma,’ authored by former Sahitya Akademi Chairman Jyoti Basu and former Union Minister G. Jagadish Reddy, which pays tribute to Telangana Talli.

Among those who met KCR were former ministers G.

Jagadish Reddy and Vemula Prashanth Reddy, MLCs Tata Madhu and M.C. Kotireddy, ZP Chairmen Banda Narendar Reddy and Elimineti Sandeep Reddy, and former MP Badugula Lingaiah Yadav.

Prominent ex-MLAs present were Kancherla Bhupal Reddy, Ramavath Ravindra Kumar, Bollam Malliah Yadav, Gongidi Sunitha Mahender Reddy, Gadarla Kishore Kumar, Kandla Upender Reddy, Nallamothu Bhaskara Rao, Kuskuntla Prabhakar Reddy, and Budida

Bhikshamaiah Goud.

Other notable attendees are BRS leaders Kancherla Krishna Reddy, Narsimha Reddy, Palvai Sravanthi, Regatte Mallikarjun Reddy, Mandadi Saidi Reddy, Chintala Venkateshwar Reddy, Palle Praveen Reddy, Nevuri Dharmender Reddy, Valamala Krishna, and Nukala Yugandhar Reddy.

The event underscored the party’s unity and focus on cultural preservation, with ‘Andariki Amma’ serving as a reflection of the rich heritage and spirit of Telangana.



Munugode MLA Komati Reddy Rajgopal Reddy

## CM generous towards KCR, KTR and Jagadish: Raj Gopal

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is generous towards former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao and former Ministers KT Rama Rao and G. Jagadish Reddy, the Congress’s Munugode MLA, Komati Reddy Raj Gopal said.

“If I had been in the place of Chief Minister, I would have sent KCR, KTR and Jagadish Reddy long ago to jail,” Raj Gopal said.

He made it clear that the BRS’s Suryapet MLA G. Jagadish Reddy, a former BRS Minister, must go to jail along with KCR and KTR. He said the Congress government is in no way engaging in vengeful acts.

Raj Gopal said that the KCR family and BRS leaders looted Telangana and that the BRS tried to ensure that there would not be any opposition in the state.

## VH asks Kavitha why BRS govt cut quota for BCs in local body elections

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior Congress leader V. Hanumantha Rao asked BRS MLC Kavitha why the BRS government had reduced reservations for BCs in local body elections when it was in power.

Addressing the media on Saturday at the Gandhi Bhavan, VH said that Kavitha has been showering fake love on BCs suddenly. He asked Kavitha to explain why she failed to make the BRS admin’s Comprehensive Family Survey details public. “Why did the BRS government reduce reservations for BCs in local body elections when it was in power?” he asked.

VH asked Kavitha to reveal at least one thing which the BRS government had done for BCs when it was in power. He said reservations were introduced in IITs and IIMs for BCs when the Congress was in power at the Centre.

“The Congress Government



Congress senior leader V Hanumantha Rao addressing the media at Gandhi Bhavan on Saturday

in Telangana would implement all its assurances given to the people. Kavitha, KTR and Harish Rao should settle their own fight. The Congress fought for the Indira Park Dharna Chowk when the BRS government abolished it. However, BRS leaders are using it now,” VH said.

He said the Congress changed the name of Pragathi Bhavan as Jyothirao Phule Praja Bhavan and that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had already said that he would accept the opposition’s good suggestions. Nobody knows where opposition leader KCR

is now, he added. “Development is Congress culture. It was the Congress which gave the Telangana state,” VH said.

Demanding that the Centre should conduct a caste census across the nation, VH said the Congress government is committed to the welfare of weaker sections and would do everything for the development of BCs.

He said the Congress government is committed to the Kamareddy BC Declaration and is ready to increase reservations for BCs to 42 percent in local body elections.

# BJP asks CM to apologise to public for failing to meet electoral promises

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP’s Telangana spokesperson, NV Subash, strongly criticised Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and the Congress Government for failing to honour the promises made during their 2023 Assembly election campaign.

He accused the Congress Government of misleading voters with grand promises and is now blaming financial problems for not implementing the promises.

He highlighted the Chief Minister’s admission during a review meeting held on Friday that the state requires approximately Rs 22,500

crore to manage its administration effectively, while its current monthly revenue is just Rs 18,500 crore.

The BJP asked why guarantees like Rs 3,000 monthly assistance for women were promised in the Congress manifesto despite an apparent revenue shortage.

“The Congress’s election guarantees were deceptive and now, instead of taking responsibility, they are blaming the BRS government for inheriting empty coffers,” Subash stated.

He pointed out that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had acknowledged the challenges of paying government employees’ salaries, clearing

debts and funding welfare schemes.

Subash said the Chief Minister admitted that Rs 6,500 crore is allocated monthly for salaries and allowances, Rs 6,500 crore for debt repayments and Rs 5,500 crore for welfare schemes.

The BJP criticised the Congress Government for revenue falling short of the Rs 22,500 crore required to meet these commitments leaving a deficit of Rs 4,000 crore.

“Despite these financial realities, the Congress continues to use hollow rhetoric and false assurances, much like their counterparts in Karnataka,” Subash said, referring to challenges faced

by the Congress Government in that state.

He demanded that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy should issue an unconditional public apology for failing to honour electoral promises and wilfully misleading the public.

“The people of Telangana are growing increasingly frustrated, and the government will face the consequences of its actions in the days to come,” Subash said.

The BJP reiterated its commitment to holding the government accountable and advocating for transparent governance which prioritises public welfare over political rhetoric.

## Will fill all ...

Continued from page 1

the Minister urged them to uphold professionalism, efficiency and public respect in their roles. “Your dedication and integrity will define the trust the public places in you. Perform your duties with unwavering commitment,” he advised.

The event was attended by Rajendranagar MLA Prakash Goud, MLC Dayanand, Special Chief Secretary of the Home Department Ravi Gupta, and Fire Services DG Nagireddy along with other dignitaries.

# Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme to be named after Jaipal Reddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Cabinet has decided to name the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme after former Union Minister Sudini Jaipal Reddy, recognizing his contributions to the state.

Additionally, the Singur Project will be named after the late minister Raja Narsinha, the father of Minister Damodar Raja

Narsimha, as a tribute to his legacy.

The Cabinet also approved the formation of a technical expert committee to explore the option for utilizing Krishna water from the Jurala project to irrigate new ayacut areas in Mahbubnagar district.

The committee will assess water availability, potential sources and possibilities for constructing new reservoirs

to enhance the capacity of existing projects.

The Cabinet gave the green light for Phases 2 and 3 of the Godavari Drinking Water Supply Scheme. Initially planned at 15 TMCs, the scheme’s capacity has been increased to 20 TMC, considering future needs.

This project aims to supply Godavari water to Hyderabad for drinking pur-

poses via Mallanna Sagar.

The Cabinet also approved the upgrade of Kothagudem to a municipal corporation, marking a significant step in the region’s urban development.

The decisions stress the Telangana government’s focus on honouring its leaders, improving irrigation facilities, ensuring sustainable water supply, and fostering regional development.

## KCR will call ...

Continued from page 1

spreading misinformation about the project while failing to take corrective measures to sustain its benefits.

On Congress’s six guarantees, KTR mocked that not even half of one guarantee had been implemented. He reiterated his earlier promise to take political retirement if the Congress fulfilled its pledge to waive Rs 2 lakh in farm loans.

KTR also condemned the government’s actions against Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan workers, the lack of support for marriage schemes like Kalyana Lakshmi, and cuts to welfare programs like Rythu Bandhu for government employees and IT professionals.

He accused the Congress of plunging the state into debt within a year of governance. “In 10 years, BRS incurred Rs 4.17 lakh crore in loans, but we

have shown visible development. In contrast, Congress borrowed Rs 1.37 lakh crore in one year without any tangible outcomes,” he pointed out.

KTR called on party workers not to fear legal threats and to actively counter misinformation. “Even if you fall, rise again and fight. This is what defines a true warrior,” he said.

He also announced plans for party membership drives and committee formations and urged leaders to engage with the public on initiatives like Rythu Bharosa.

Ending on a fiery note, KTR criticized the Congress for its dependency on Delhi and accused it of turning Telangana into an ATM for the national capital.

“It’s time we think about farmers and development while they continue to focus on political vendetta,” he said.

## Hyd emerging as ...

Continued from page 1

infrastructure and development, including:

- ◆ The revival of Musi River
- ◆ Expansion of the Metro Rail network
- ◆ Development of Future City and AI City
- ◆ Establishment of Skills University and Sports University
- ◆ Creation of an EV Hub and Green Energy Hub
- ◆ Construction of the Regional Ring Road

Revanth stressed the government’s commitment to attracting significant investments, ensuring sustainable development and creating large-scale employment opportunities.

“Our policies are clear and progressive, designed to make Telangana the preferred investment destination,” he said.

Urging the business community to invest in Telangana, the Chief Minister invited them to become partners in the state’s growth story. “Come to Telangana, invest in Hyderabad, and join us in shaping a prosperous future for all,” he concluded.

## Revanth ...

Continued from page 1

Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy and Government Advisor (Irrigation) Adityanath Das participated in the high-level discussions.

During the meeting, irrigation officials raised concerns about the construction of the Godavari Banakacharla Project by the Andhra Pradesh Government. They informed the Chief Minister that Andhra Pradesh had recently given a PowerPoint presentation on the project which aims to tap floodwaters without obtaining permissions.

Taking a firm stance, Revanth asked officials to lodge Telangana’s objections with the Andhra Pradesh Chief Secretary. He also directed them to take the issue to the Godavari River Management Board and, if necessary, to the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti.

## Ahead of Trump's ...

Continued from page 1

the best of the talent, as the US falls short in many of the specialised fields.

They have been joined by Indian American Democratic lawmakers including Ro Khanna, Raja Krishnamoorthi and Shri Thanedar who have come out in support of H-1B visas, after a sudden backlash against it as soon as Trump appointed Sriram Krishnan as his Senior Policy Advisor for Artificial Intelligence.

Such a backlash initially came from the supporters of Trump who argued that this is eating away at the jobs of Americans. Both Musk and Ramaswamy immediately weighed in and supported the H-1B visas. On Thursday, influential Democratic Senator Bernie Sanders asserted that the two close confidants of Trump are wrong.

“Elon Musk and a number of other billionaire tech company owners have argued that this fed-

eral programme is vital to our economy because of the scarcity of highly skilled American engineers and other tech workers. I disagree.

“The main function of the H-1B visa programme and other guest worker initiatives is not to hire ‘the best and the brightest’, but rather to replace good-paying American jobs with low-wage indentured servants from abroad. The cheaper the labour they hire, the more money the billionaires make,” Sanders said on Thursday.

His own party colleague Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi disagreed on Monday.

“The number one competitive advantage America has is our workforce. The H-1B programme attracts the best and brightest talent from around the world and strengthens that advantage as we also invest in American workers,” he told CNN as he supported Musk and Ramaswamy in the debate.

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# City Pioneer

sunday pioneer

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03

## CYRA opens largest global innovation centre

Customer Testing and Monitoring software platform will create 200 jobs for AI engineers

**SAMUEL JOSHUA**  
samueljoshuajmc@gmail.com  
■ HYDERABAD

Cyara, a US-based customer testing and monitoring software platform, has opened its largest Global Innovation Center (GIC) in Hyderabad, creating 200 jobs for AI engineers.

During a roundtable here on Saturday, Cyara CEO Rishi Rana shared that Cyara is the leading assurance centre for customer experience (CX). "Seeing the right talent in Hyderabad, we have established this innovation centre," he said. Rana explained that Cyara provides end-to-end assurance through phone, email, SMS, browsers, and

chatbots.

He shared that its clients include major companies like Microsoft, Google, Apple, and banks. He noted that Cyara's self-serviceable products are used by contact centers globally, with a network in 80 countries and 250 carriers. The company tests and monitors call centers, ensuring high-quality CX solutions.

Rana highlighted that we have created our own IP technology, which helps to track calls worldwide, ensuring independent quality checks. He mentioned ICICI Bank as a client and Amazon as their largest customer, noting that Amazon's Black Friday sales are managed through Cyara's contact

centers.

The CEO stated that the company currently serves Fortune 1000 companies and aims to reach \$ 210 million in revenue within two years. He said, "we are a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) provider and are now integrating GenAI for improved efficiency. He noted that the company plans to hire 150 AI engineers by March 2025, with a goal to reach 200 by the end of the year. Rishi said that employees can adopt a hybrid work model, requiring in-office attendance three days a week. Meanwhile, General Manager Yogesh More added that Cyara is seeking AI and software engineers to strengthen its telephonic, IVR, and software products.



Cyara CEO Rishi Rana along with General Manager Yogesh More at the inauguration of the Global Innovation Centre in Hyderabad on Saturday

## Politics should focus on serving people: Shashi Tharoor

Lok Sabha member inspires young minds on politics at IIM UN Hyderabad 2025 Conference

■ HYDERABAD

Emphasising that politics should be pursued only with a passion for serving people, Lok Sabha member, former diplomat and author Shashi Tharoor said, while inaugurating the three-day India's International Movement to Unite Nations (IIMUN) Hyderabad 2025 conference on Friday. Held at Johnson Grammar School - ICSE, Kuntloor, LB Nagar, the conference saw over 1,000 students from 100 plus educational institutions across the city.

Addressing the students, Tharoor shared his insights on politics, calling it a profession rooted in integrity and responsibility. He urged students to choose careers driven by purpose, not just convenience. Engaging with participants in an interactive session, he discussed life lessons, his love for reading, and how books shaped his worldview.

Speaking about his recent books, including *Battle of Ideas* and *Wonderland of Words*, he



Former diplomat and author Shashi Tharoor at IIMUN Hyderabad 2025 conference in Hyderabad on Saturday

highlighted the importance of language, vocabulary, and critical thinking in effective communication. He also stressed the role of reading in discerning truth from misinformation in an era of fake news and encouraged parental oversight of children's social media use.

Tharoor concluded with a fun exercise, sharing the meaning of a word and inviting students to do the same, highlighting the joy of learning.

Meanwhile, Lt. General Neeraj Varshney also addressed

the gathering, emphasising truth, discernment, and leadership, quoting the Rigveda to underline that truth always triumphs. He encouraged students to engage critically with literature and shared quotes to inspire them.

On Saturday, various committees debated national and international topics, with students representing global leaders and diplomats. These sessions developed skills like public speaking, research, and analytical thinking, nurturing future global leaders.

## City Cybercrime unit busts Rs 48.38 L extortion scam, three arrested

■ HYDERABAD

The Cybercrime Police of Hyderabad City have successfully cracked a cyber extortion case involving Rs 48.38 lakh, arresting three individuals, including the main conspirator. The arrested accused, Aman Joshi from Ramkoti, Prashanth from Shahinayathgunj, and Rohit Sharma from Pandu Ranga Nagar, executed an elaborate scheme to defraud a woman by impersonating police officers and exploiting her emotionally.

The case unfolded on August 22 last year, when the victim lodged a complaint with the Cybercrime Police. She had initially met Aman Joshi on Snapchat, where he borrowed Rs 15,000 from her and failed to repay.

Later, fake police impersonators contacted her, falsely accusing her of being involved in illegal gold possession linked to Aman.

Under threats of arrest, the victim paid Rs 2 lakh initially, but the demands escalated to Rs 48.38 lakh. Overwhelmed by distress and fearing damage to her reputation, she attempted suicide before approaching the police.

Investigations revealed that Aman Joshi built trust with the victim before conspiring with the other accused to extort money.

Prashanth handled financial transactions, including managing bank

accounts and withdrawals, while Rohit Sharma coordinated logistics, fund transfers, and communications with the fake police impersonators.

The accused used multiple bank accounts to launder the extorted money and pawned gold to generate additional funds.

The police seized three mobile phones, five cheque books, five debit cards, one credit card, and three SIM cards during the operation.

The investigation, conducted under the guidance of Hyderabad City Police Commissioner CV Anand, and led by DCP Cyber Crimes Dara Kavitha, was carried out by a team comprising ACP Siva Maruthi, Inspector S Naresh, and other officials, including Sub-Inspectors B Manmohan Goud and several Head Constables and PCs.

CV Anand commended the team's efforts and emphasised the importance of public awareness in preventing such crimes.

He urged citizens to be cautious while engaging with strangers on social media platforms like Snapchat and Instagram.

He advised people not to share personal or financial information and to verify the authenticity of any individual posing as an authority.

Suspicious activities should be reported immediately to the Cybercrime Police or the nearest police station.

## No hMPV cases in TG: Health Dept

■ HYDERABAD

Amid reports of a Human Metapneumovirus (hMPV) outbreak in China, the Telangana Health Department has confirmed that no cases of hMPV have been reported in the state.

The Director-General of Health Services and the Director of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) under the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH & FW), issued a statement on January 3, clarifying that hMPV is a respiratory virus causing common cold and flu-like symptoms among vulnerable groups like the children and the elderly.

The Telangana Health Department analysed data on respiratory infections within the state and found no significant increase in cases in December 2024 compared to the same period in 2023. While there is no cause for alarm, citizens have been urged to follow precautionary measures to protect themselves against respiratory infections.

DOs:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or a handkerchief while coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use alcohol-based sanitisers.
- Avoid crowded places and maintain a safe distance from people with flu symptoms.
- Stay home if you have a fever, or cough, or is sneezing, limit contact with others.
- Drink plenty of water, consume nutritious food, ensure adequate ventilation and get enough sleep.

DON'Ts:

- Avoid shaking hands, close contact with sick individuals, and frequent touching of your face.
  - Do not reuse tissues or handkerchiefs, spit in public places, or self-medicate without consulting a physician.
- The state Health Department assured citizens that it is closely monitoring the situation in coordination with the NCDC and MoH & FW in New Delhi.

"There is no cause for panic, but preventive measures are essential for everyone's safety," said Dr B. Ravinder Nayak, Director of Public Health and Family Welfare, Telangana.

## Seminar on civil services held

■ HYDERABAD

A seminar on "How to Crack Civil Services in the first attempt UPSC Master Class" was organised by VINGS Media and G5 Media Group in association with 21st Century IAS Academy at Little Flower Junior College, Uppal, on Saturday.

Dr Bhavani Shankar, Chief Mentor of 21st Century IAS Academy, shared key insights on preparing for the civil services examination starting from the intermediate level. He provided an overview of the UPSC examination process, explaining its various stages and essential preparation strategies.

Dr Shankar encouraged students to develop leadership qualities, emphasizing the role of civil servants as problem-solvers and agents of positive societal change. Additionally, he discussed the different academic courses available to students after completing intermediate studies.

## HYDRAA launches 'Prajavani' every Monday

■ HYDERABAD

HYDRAA (Hyderabad Disaster Response and Management Authority) has announced a new initiative to directly address public grievances, focusing on the protection and restoration of lakes, nallas, government lands, parks, and other public spaces. HYDRAA Commissioner AV Ranganath stated on Friday that this programme aims to foster community participation in safeguarding public resources while providing support during natural calamities. The programme, named 'HYDRAA

Prajavani', will be conducted every Monday, except on government holidays. Citizens can present their grievances and suggestions to HYDRAA officials at Buddha Bhavan, Ranigunj, between 11 am and 2 pm, and again from 3 pm to 5:30 pm. Commissioner Ranganath emphasised that citizens must bring all necessary documents and detailed information related to their complaints to ensure swift action. The initiative also encourages public involvement in the preservation of natural and public resources, making them stakeholders in the process.

## Guv stresses importance of preserving India's cultural heritage

■ HYDERABAD

Governor Jishnu Dev Verma welcomed the 10th International Convention of SPIC MACAY (Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Amongst Youth) 2025, to be held for the first time at IIT Hyderabad from May 26 to June 1.

During the Advisory Board Meeting at Raj Bhavan on Saturday evening, the Governor emphasised the importance of preserving India's cultural heritage and engaging the youth. He shared his long-standing association with SPIC MACAY and appreciated its transformative role in connecting younger generations with heritage over nearly half a century.

Highlighting SPIC MACAY's journey, he noted its success, beginning with handicrafts and cultural activities, which very few organisations have managed to achieve by connecting with young people on a deeper level.

He assured full support from the state government to make the convention a success and appreciated the movement for providing youth with a platform rich in cultural diversity. Later on, Founder Kiran Seth discussed creating an



Governor Jishnu Dev Verma speaking at the Advisory Board Meeting of 10th International Convention of SPIC MACAY in Hyderabad on Saturday.

"ashram-like" atmosphere at the convention to inspire youth to become well-rounded individuals.

He highlighted the link between science and music, citing scientists like Einstein, Max Planck, and CV Raman, who were classical music practitioners.

He highlighted their Vision 2030 to reach every child in the country, with around 4,000 programs conducted for students and by the students.

Meanwhile, Prof BS Murthy, Director of IIT Hyderabad, welcomed participants to IIT Hyderabad for the convention and announced performances by renowned artists, including Padma Vibhushan Hari Prasad Chaurasia, Padma Bhusan awardee Amjad Ali

Khan, Shabana Azmi, and Javed Akhtar, and Padma Shri artists like A Kanyakumari and Venkatesh Kumar.

Convenor Lakshmi Valli Kona stated that this convention aims to unite thousands of students, artists, and cultural enthusiasts worldwide, creating opportunities for artistic exchange, learning, and cultural immersion.

Special Chief Secretary of the IT Department, Jayesh Ranjan; Dean of ISB Hyderabad, Prof. Madan Pillutla; Director of IIT Hyderabad, Prof. PJ Narayanan; VC of NALSAR Hyderabad, Prof. Srikrishna Deva Rao; Chairperson of FICCI FLO, Priya Gazdar; and many others participated in the meeting.

## SBI disburses Rs 10 cr loans to Self-Help Groups

■ HYDERABAD

J Hussain Nayak, a member of the National Commission for ST, visited the SBI Bibi Nagar Branch on Saturday. The event was attended by Ravi Kumar Verma, General Manager NW-1, along with other senior bank officials. During the visit, Nayak interacted with the staff members of the branch, and Verma provided an overview of the bank's commitment to customer service. He highlighted various initiatives such as the Contact Centre, WhatsApp Banking, and Cyber Fraud Awareness programs. Shri Verma also informed about the bank's efforts in preventing digital fraud, citing recent instances where SBI employees successfully protected inno-



Member of the National Commission for ST J Hussain Nayak at SBI in Hyderabad on Saturday

cent customers from fraudsters. Later, Nayak and Verma participated in a Self-Help Group (SHG) customer outreach programme, where loans totaling Rs 10 crore were disbursed to members of 69 Self-Help Groups.

In his welcome address, Verma discussed various initiatives aimed at improving rural livelihoods, including

PMSVANIDHI, PM VISWAKARMA, PMEGP, PMMY, Stand Up India, and financing for Self-Help Group members.

During the program, IK Gangadhar Rao, Additional Collector, commended SBI's efforts in financing Self-Help Groups and praised the community coordinators for ensuring timely repayment.

## SUDHAMA, AN EMBODIMENT OF VERSATILITY

Sudhama, (Allamraju Venkata Rao), is a poet, writer, cartoonist, critic, orator, crossword puzzle maker and a columnist of repute. His literary career spans more than five decades and he has had a long association with broadcasting and numer-



ous literary organisations, garnering both popularity and respect. His compilation of *Sapthagiri*, an anthology of poetry, will be released at Ravindrabharati conference hall on January 11.

Sudhama is a versatile genius who has brought out five compilations of poetry, two volumes of essays, three books of his columns published in various vernacular dailies and he has

close association with stalwarts of the time in Akashvani like Dasaradhi, Cinare, Diwakarkla, Seshendra Sarma and the like.

His contribution as the editor of *Yuva Bharati* is immense. As an editor of *Yuvamitra* monthly, Sudhama established himself as a cartoonist too, and there was no looking back. In free verse, his first volume *Veechikal* went on to get him name and fame, with



received many awards for his literary works. Always pleasant in demeanor, he has been acceptable to everyone irrespective of their age and a worthy guide to the future generations. Imbibing the effervescence of ancient Telugu literary works, he has made a niche for himself in the field with his

Cinare commenting, "He draws a picture in poetry and writes poetry in pictures!" His works have appeared in all the vernacular weeklies and he takes the credit of getting his cartoons published in the famous Shankar's Weekly. Being the only Telugu poet to be invited to the national Akashvani

Kavi Sammelan in 1983 goes to prove his calibre. His verses are replete with satire and humour which can be gauged in his work 'Exercise'. He has defined the prosody of sound and rhythm in poetry. Though young at heart, his canvas of poetry is far and wide and he received the accolades of the stalwarts of his time in no mean manner. His songs for the children have also won him acclaim and echo in their hearts for years together. His essays in 'Kaalam Venta Kaalam' kindle a new awareness among the readers. He opines in a subtle manner that the modern novel has not grown upto

the mark and that there is much scope for short stories to come out in the near future.

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## Two dead as car hits motorbike

PNS ■ NALGONDA

In a tragic road accident on Saturday morning in Nalgonda district, two persons from the Miryalguda region died on the spot. According to details, the incident took place when a motorcycle which was on its way from Nalgonda to Miryalguda was hit from behind by a car. The collision occurred near the Tiphpati Mandal center.

In the accident, the motorcycle rider, identified as Srinivas (33), and a woman in the car died on the spot. Two more individuals sustained serious injuries and were rushed to the Nalgonda Government Hospital for treatment. Srinivas was a resident of Dilawarpur village under the Miryalguda mandal.

The police have registered a case and are investigating the circumstances surrounding the accident.

# Govt will fulfil promises despite financial hurdles: Ponguleti

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy on Saturday announced that 3,500 Indiramma houses would be allocated to each Assembly constituency in the first phase.

The Minister, along with Khammam MP Ramasahayam Raghurama Reddy, toured Kusumanchi mandal, laid the foundation stones for several road construction projects, and distributed Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) cheques to beneficiaries in Kusumanchi and Nelakondapalli mandals.

The Minister laid the foundation for the construction of cement concrete roads in Lokya Tanda village under Kusumanchi mandal with MGNERGS funds of Rs 15 lakh, in Kokyatanda village with Rs 20 lakhs, and Lingaram Tanda village with Rs 19 lakh.

Subsequently, in the Kusumanchi camp office, the Minister handed over CMRF cheques worth a little over Rs 16 lakh to 42 beneficiaries from Nelakondapalli mandal and Rs 18.80 lakh to 64 beneficiaries from



Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, along with Khammam MP Ramasahayam Raghurama Reddy, laying the foundation for a CC road at Kusumanchi mandal in Khammam district on Saturday

Kusumanchi mandal.

Speaking on the occasion, Srinivas Reddy wished happiness, peace and prosperity to people in the New Year. He said he had prayed the god to bestow his divine blessings on people.

Despite financial challenges, the government is committed to fulfilling every promise made, said the Minister. He mentioned that 80 lakh people had applied for houses across the state, and the survey for 64 lakh applications

had already been completed through the app, and the remaining survey would be completed in the next four days. He assured the people that double-bedroom houses, which are under construction, would be completed before Sankranti by allocating funds.

He also instructed officials to take urgent action for drinking water supply in villages.

He stated that the government is working sincerely for the welfare of farmers, youth, and women, and informed that there would be good news for farmers in today's Cabinet meeting.

Roads and Buildings Superintending Engineer Hemalatha, Irrigation Superintending Engineer Venkateswara Rao, Khammam Revenue Divisional Officer Narasimha Rao, PR IE Venkat Reddy, Divisional Panchayat Officer Rambabu, Assistant Director of Agriculture Saritha, Kusumanchi MPDO Venugopal Reddy, In-charge Tahsildar Karunasri, public representatives, and concerned officials participated.



Girl students at Polytechnic College staging a protest demanding punishment to a student who allegedly recorded girls in college toilet on Saturday

## Student arrested for 'recording' girls in toilet

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

A controversy has erupted at Mahabubnagar Polytechnic College after videos of girls were allegedly recorded in the college toilet. Siddharth, a third-year student, used his mobile phone to record videos over the wall of the girls' toilet. This was noticed by a student, who immediately informed the college staff. The principal confiscated the phone and informed the college security team. After the examination, the accused student, Siddharth, surprisingly lodged a complaint stating that his mobile phone had been stolen.

Suspicious of his actions, the principal decided not to let him leave and kept him there until the police arrived. The police took him into custody.

Following this, students, under the leadership of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, staged a massive protest demanding strict action

against the accused. Students also alleged that a similar incident had occurred earlier, but their complaints had been ignored.

Upon reaching the scene, the police assured the student that the accused was in their custody and that they would take strict legal action against him. With this assurance, the protest was called off. The Deputy Superintendent of Police Venkateshwarlu mentioned that awareness programmes would be conducted in the future to prevent such incidents.

Students are demanding justice and are concerned about the content that was recorded. The principal stated that the phone was immediately confiscated and handed over to the police as soon as they were made aware of the situation. The incident of video recording in the college toilet has now become a major scandal, and there is a strong need to take preventive measures to avoid such occurrences in the future.



Minister for Panchayat Raj Seethakka distributing loans to women self-help groups in Shadanagar constituency

## Seethakka stresses importance of women's empowerment

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Panchayat Raj, Tribal, and Women and Child Welfare Minister Seethakka emphasised the importance of empowering women for the nation's progress during her visit to Seriguda village in Shadnagar constituency in Rangareddy District. Participating in a series of developmental programmes, along with Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar, she highlighted the Congress Party's commitment to uplifting women and rural communities.

Minister Seethakka laid the foundation stone for a two-lane bitumen road connecting Seriguda and Kammanad villages, worth Rs 8 crore, and inaugurated newly constructed Mahila Samakhyas and community buildings. She also distributed a Rs 50 crore loan to women's associations in the constituency, reiterating the government's focus on promoting women's empowerment through schemes such as free bus services, 500-kilo gas cylinders, and free electricity.

Adding to the development programmes, Minister Seethakka, MLA Veerlapalli Shankar, former MLA Choulapalli Pratap Reddy, and other party leaders participated in the foundation stone laying ceremony for the Gram Panchayat building in

Appareddy village of Nandigama Mandal. The initiative underscores the Congress Party's dedication to rural infrastructure development in the region.

Seethakka stressed that women have the power to transform society if given opportunities. She announced the government's plans to provide free electricity of up to 200 units for the poor, allocate Indiramma houses, and distribute fine rice through ration shops. She criticised the opposition for mocking women's empowerment effort.

She assured that the government would soon provide Rs 12,000 annually to agricultural laborers and expedite the distribution of ration cards. The minister highlighted the creation of 15 business opportunities for women, including running women's canteens, tailoring, organising events, and manufacturing school uniforms. She also announced a Rs 10 lakh loan for women in the fishing industry, with Rs 6 lakh waived, and introduced 150 buses across 32 districts for women drivers. She encouraged women to seize these opportunities and grow into entrepreneurs and business leaders.

Minister Seethakka praised MLA Veerlapalli Shankar for his dedication to the constituency's development. She commended his efforts in

securing funds for Seriguda's progress, emphasizing his accessibility and commitment to addressing the needs of his constituents.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Veerlapalli Shankar expressed gratitude to Minister Seethakka for her unwavering support and pledged to make Shadnagar an exemplary constituency. He announced future development plans and called for continued efforts to strengthen Congress's presence in the region.

Minister Seethakka received a grand welcome from women carrying traditional "bonas" and enthusiastic Congress workers. Former MLA Pratap Reddy, Market Committee Chairman Sulochana Krishna Reddy, Vice Chairman Mohammad Ali Khan Babar, and several senior leaders participated in the event. The programs, which included the inauguration of BT and CC roads and government buildings with funds amounting to Rs 35.13 crore, showcased Congress's commitment to infrastructural development.

The minister expressed satisfaction with her visit and acknowledged the enthusiasm of Congress supporters in the constituency. She urged party workers to protect the constituency's interests and ensure a strong Congress legacy for future generations.

## Rice millers directed to deliver CMR by Jan 25

PNS ■ WANAPARTHY

Additional Collector J Venkateswarlu on Saturday directed the rice millers to deliver custom milled rice (CMR) as per time schedule.

During the meeting, the Additional Collector instructed that the CMR due for the 2023-24 Rabi season should be completed and delivered to the Food Corporation of India by January 25. Similarly, for the 2024-25 Kharif season, the CMR due to the Civil Supplies Corporation must also be completed by the rice millers immediately.

He warned that if the rice millers fail to meet the deadline, legal actions would be taken against them. He urged the millers to avoid delay and complete the delivery of CMR on time to avoid legal consequences.

He further mentioned that many mill owners are not providing bank guarantees despite being instructed, and if this attitude continued, there would be no hesitation in shifting the rice to other parties.

The meeting was attended by Civil Supplies Officer Kashi Vishwanath, Civil Supplies DM Ramesh, leaders and members of the Rice Millers Association, and other officials.



Additional Collector J Venkateswarlu speaking at a rice millers' meeting in Wanaparthy on Saturday



Patancheru MLA Gudem Mahipal Reddy distributing Kalyana Lakshmi cheques to beneficiaries in Patancheru on Saturday

## MLA distributes Kalyana Lakshmi cheques

PNS ■ PATANCHERU

Patancheru MLA Gudem Mahipal Reddy stated that welfare schemes are being provided to every eligible individual. At a meeting held at the MLA camp office in the Patancheru division, he distributed cheques worth Rs. 1.25 crore under the Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak schemes to 125 beneficiaries from various villages, divisions, and municipalities in the Patancheru constituency.

During the occasion, he mentioned that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is working towards the economic development of the poor. He also emphasised that government welfare schemes are being provided transparently to every eligible person in the Patancheru constituency.

The event was attended by Ameenpur Municipal Chairman Tummala Pandurangareddy, Patancheru Corporator Mettu Kumar Yadav, Tahsildars Rangarao, Radha, Councilors, and others.

## One dead, eight injured in blast at Premier Explosives company

PNS ■ YADADRI BHUVANAGIRI

An explosion occurred at Premier Explosives in Pedda Kandukur under Yadadri-gutta mandal in Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri district, on Saturday morning, leading to the death of one person and injuries to eight others. The blast, which was heard from a distance, forced workers to flee the scene as the factory

management activated an emergency siren to alert them.

Emergency response teams, including police and fire services, rushed to the site to conduct rescue operations. The injured were promptly transported to the hospital, where one worker, identified as Kanakayya from Bachannapet in Janagaon district, succumbed to his injuries. One other injured



An injured worker being ferried to hospital from the premier Explosives Company at Kandukur on Saturday

worker is reported to be in critical condition.

As family members of the victims and local villagers gathered at the factory, protests erupted, demanding justice and accountability.

Authorities have launched an investigation into the cause of the explosion, and a case has been registered to determine the circumstances behind the tragic incident.

Among the injured, the condition of two workers,

Kanakayya and Prakash, was reported to be critical.

The injured were immediately rushed to the hospital for urgent medical treatment. Kanakayya succumbed to his injuries during treatment, according to reports.

Police reached the spot and investigation is on to how the explosion occurred. Premier Explosives is into manufacturing industrial explosives and detonators.

## Three girls go on joyride on RTC bus, keep police on tenterhooks

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

The news of three girls missing caused quite a stir at Navipet. The three students, who had left their homes saying they were going to school, went missing. On Thursday (January 2), three students from the local government girls' school, who were in the 10th grade, left their homes but did not return. When they did not come home by night, their parents went to the school to inquire. Since they were not there, the parents immediately contacted the police for help.

The Naveepet police registered a missing case and formed teams to search the entire town. During the search, one of the girls was spotted by the police at the Nizamabad bus station. She was found at around 3 am and was taken into custody and handed over to her parents. However, the whereabouts of the other two girls remained unknown, and



the police intensified their search efforts.

According to the police, the girls had skipped school and were riding free buses for fun. They had planned to travel on the free buses, taking their Aadhaar cards with them when they left home.

They left their school bags at a friend's house in Naveepet and boarded a bus to Bodhan. From there, they traveled via Naveepet to Nizamabad. After that, they went to Kamareddy, returned to Nizamabad, then traveled to Jagtial, and finally returned to Nizamabad. The police apprehended them and

handed them over to their parents.

Locals are now criticising the students for skipping school and traveling on buses. The Telangana government provides free bus services for women, girls, and transgender people on RTC buses, and in the past, some students have also traveled without informing their families.

Recently, the students from Naveepet caused distress for their parents due to their free bus journeys.

However, since the girls have safely returned home, everyone is relieved.

## Mystery shrouds suicide of Class 10 student

PNS ■ RAJANNA SIRGILLA

Greeting are exchanged on New Year's Day. Not only children but also adults share New Year wishes with friends, colleagues, relatives, and neighbors. In the past, greeting cards were the tradition, but now, with the influence of social media, everyone is sharing wishes via WhatsApp status and messages. However, with schools having a holiday on January 1, many children went to their friends' houses to convey their New Year wishes.

In one such instance, a 10th-grade student wished a classmate, a girl, on the New Year. After the holiday was declared, Shiva Kishore, a 17-year-old student from Bhimuni Mallareddy village in the Gambiaraoepet mandal, directly went to the girl's house to wish her. However,

the girl's family members and relatives misunderstood his gesture and attacked him, asking why he had gone to the house to wish her. Not only did they beat him in front of everyone, but they also warned his mother.

Shiva Kishore became deeply disturbed by this. He felt humiliated and feared that the incident would become known at school, making it impossible for him to hold his head high again. Believing he could no longer face his friends, he made a drastic decision. Alone, he took his own life.

The local people are demanding action against the girl's family members and relatives for assaulting the student and thus abetting him to commit suicide.

Upon receiving the information, the police have registered a case and are investigating it is underway.

## High egg prices hit midday meal scheme

PNS ■ CHENNUURU

The frequent increase in egg prices has led to a disruption in the mid-day meal scheme in government schools, affecting the nutritional intake of students. Under the scheme, eggs are supposed to be served on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, but many schools are unable to meet this schedule due to the rising cost of eggs. As a result, students are receiving eggs only once or twice a week, instead of three times as required.

Currently, the market price for a single egg is Rs 7, while the government reimburses mid-day meal agencies only Rs 5 per egg. This price gap has created a financial strain on the agen-

cies, making it difficult for them to provide eggs as part of the meals. The price hike is reportedly burdening these agencies by at least Rs 24 per student, further compounding the issue.

Egg prices have been on the rise over the past few months. In August, the cost of an egg was Rs 5.50, but it has now climbed to Rs 7.

To cope with the increased costs, some schools have started offering alternatives to eggs. Despite these challenges, Mancherla District Education Officer Yadaiah reassured the students that the Education Department is closely monitoring the situation. Surprise inspections are being conducted regularly, and efforts are underway to ensure that eggs are served consistently.

ACROSS THE STATES



Six workers killed in explosion in Tamil Nadu

Six workers were killed following an explosion at a firecrackers manufacturing unit near here on Saturday, an official said. The blast occurred in the morning when the workers were engaged in mixing chemical-raw materials, as part of the manufacturing process, leading to the deaths of 6 men and 4 rooms in the factory premises were flattened in the impact. A worker, Mohammed Sudeen was injured and he was rushed to a government facility in nearby Madurai. Police have registered a case and are investigating. The deceased were identified as S Sivakumar (56), S Meenakshi Sundaram (46), R Nagaraj (37) and G Velmurugan, S Kamaraj and R Kannan, all the three were aged 54.



132 foreigners deported from Delhi for overstaying

Delhi Police deported 132 foreign nationals for overstaying in the capital without valid documents in 2024, an official said on Saturday. The deported individuals included 116 Nigerians, seven from Ivory Coast, three each from Guinea and Uzbekistan, two each from Ghana and Uganda, and one from Senegal, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka), Ankit Singh, said. "Among them were five Nigerian women and three Uzbek women. These illegal immigrants were staying in slums, unauthorised colonies, and high-density migrant huts in the Dwarka area," the officer said. The Anti Narcotics Cell, which accounted for 73 deportations, spearheaded the year-long operation, followed by Uttam Nagar police station (48), Mohan Garden police station (8), and Dabri police station (2), he said.



Arunachal minister seeks reforms in agri sector

Arunachal Pradesh agriculture and horticulture minister Gabriel D Wangsu on Saturday said allocating central funds based solely on population metrics is detrimental to the state. Participating in a virtual discussion on agriculture reforms, chaired by Union agriculture minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan, Wangsu called for a framework that considers the state's vast land resources and the socio-economic condition of its farmers while allocating central funds. "Our state's huge potential for agricultural development, combined with the need to uplift the livelihoods of our farmers, must be reflected in the allocation criteria," he pointed out. Wangsu presented a thorough case highlighting the unique agricultural needs of the state and addressed the specific challenges and opportunities faced by the region.



3 soldiers killed, two hurt as Army vehicle falls into gorge

Three Army personnel were killed and two were injured when their vehicle fell into a gorge in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora district, officials said on Saturday. An Army vehicle skidded off the road and fell into a gorge near SK Payen in the north Kashmir district, they said. The officials added that three soldiers lost their lives while two were injured. Army's Chinara Corps said in a post on X that while performing duty in Bandipora District, a vehicle of Indian Army skid and fell into the gorge due to inclement weather and poor visibility conditions. "Injured soldiers were promptly evacuated for medical care with assistance from Kashmiri locals, for which we express gratitude towards the citizens in providing immediate succour," they said in a post on X. "Tragically three bravehearts lost their lives in the unfortunate accident. Indian Army extends heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families," the Army said.

'Some people trying to disturb peace in name of caste politics'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said some people are trying to disturb peace in the name of caste politics and called for thwarting such designs to preserve the social harmony in rural parts of the country.

Inaugurating the Grameen Bharat Mahotsav, the Prime Minister exuded confidence that villages will play a key role in pushing forward the dream of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Without mentioning any names, Modi said certain people are trying to disturb peace by spreading the venom of caste politics. "We have to work to strengthen the heritage of peace and harmony of villages," he said.

Recalling the steps taken by the NDA government since 2014, for rural development,

PM Modi calls for thwarting such designs



Modi, quoting an SBI research report, said poverty in rural India came down to below 5 per cent from 26 per cent in 2012.

He said the previous government had neglected the people living in rural India, and even

after decades of independence, villages were deprived of basic necessities.

But his government is empowering villages, and focusing on those who were neglected before, the Prime Minister said.

Without mentioning any names, Modi said certain people are trying to disturb peace by spreading the venom of caste politics. "We have to work to strengthen the heritage of peace and harmony of villages," he said

Speaking on the occasion, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said banks have undertaken saturation drive for 16 government schemes, including Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, PM Mudra and PM SVANidhi.

My life not more important than farmers: Dallewal

Stresses entire country needs MSP

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Fasting Punjab farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal on Saturday appealed to farmer outfits in other states to fight the agitation seeking legal guarantee to MSP strongly in their states to send a message to the Centre that it is not Punjab's fight alone.

During his over 11-minute address at the "Kisan Mahapanchayat" at Khanauri, Dallewal tried to send across a message that his life was not more important than farmers.

Seven lakh farmers have committed suicides in the

country and he knows what their families have to go through, Dallewal said at the two forums which is spearheading the ongoing agitation.

The 70-year-old farmer leader was brought out in a stretcher and addressed the gathering of farmers while lying on a bed from a stage at the protest site.

He referred to farmers' demands, including the MSP guarantee, indicating that he understands the enormity of the task at hand but that does not mean one will sit and do nothing.



Cong launches 'Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' campaign

Demands resignation of Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress has announced the launch of a 'Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' campaign to press for the resignation of Union Home Minister Amit Shah for "insulting" BR Ambedkar, the principal architect of India's Constitution.

Congress leader Pawan Khera said under the campaign, party leaders will organise 'Chaupals' in every district and tell people how the BJP-RSS has been insulting Ambedkar and demeaning the Constitution for decades.

Launched on January 3, the

campaign will culminate on January 26 with a grand rally at Mhow in Madhya Pradesh, the birthplace of Ambedkar, commemorating 75 years of the Constitution and the Republic, Khera said.

"To safeguard his legacy and values, a 'Samvidhan Bachao Rashtriya Padayatra' will be held from January 26, 2025, to January 26, 2026 -- connecting villages and towns across India with a powerful message of unity and social justice.

"We reiterate our demand to sack Home Minister Amit Shah for his derogatory remarks against Dr



Ambedkar," Khera told reporters.

The Congress leader also accused the BJP leadership of trying to "normalise the demonisation" of national leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Babasaheb Ambedkar and Jawaharlal Nehru, who left an indelible mark in the country's history.

CHHATTISGARH JOURNALIST'S MURDER

3 held, main accused absconding; SIT set up

PNS ■ RAIPUR

Three persons were arrested on Saturday in connection with the murder of journalist Mukesh Chandrakar in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, while Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma announced the setting up of a Special Investigation Team to probe the case.

The Deputy CM also claimed the main accused was a Congress leader.

Chandrakar (33), a freelance journalist, went missing on January 1, and his body was found on Friday in a septic tank on a property owned by civil contractor Suresh Chandrakar at Chattanpara Basti in Bijapur town, as per police.

While Suresh Chandrakar is absconding, his kin Ritesh

Chandrakar and Dinesh Chandrakar have been arrested along with supervisor Mahendra Ramteke, the deputy CM told reporters.

Suresh Chandrakar is the



main accused in the case. He is a Congress leader and office bearer of the party in Bijapur. Four police teams have been formed to nab him. The process to freeze his bank

accounts and that of other accused has begun. We have put on hold three accounts of Suresh Chandrakar," Sharma said.

The administration has also initiated action against the accused's illegal properties and encroachments, Sharma added.

Hailing Mukesh Chandrakar, the deputy CM said he was known his reporting in the interiors of the Maoist-hit region and had deep understanding of local issues.

"His murder is a major dent in efforts to establish peace in Bastar Region. The Chhattisgarh government has set up an 11-member SIT under IPS officer Mayank Gurjar to probe his murder.

Man behind India's nuclear tests Rajagopala Chidambaram dies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Eminent physicist Rajagopala Chidambaram, who played a key role in the nuclear tests of 1974 and 1998, passed away on Saturday, according to the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). He was 88.

Chidambaram, who was also associated with the nuclear weapons programme, breathed his last at Jaslok Hospital in Mumbai, a DAE official said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was "deeply saddened" by the demise of Chidambaram.

"He was one of the key architects of India's nuclear programme and made



ground-breaking contributions in strengthening India's scientific and strategic capabilities. He will be remembered with gratitude by the whole nation and his efforts will inspire generations to come," the prime minister said.

Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh extended his condolences to Chidambaram's family.

"Saddened to learn about the passing away this morning of eminent nuclear scientist Dr. Rajagopala Chidambaram, who led India's Atomic Energy Commission and played a key role in the development of strategic weapons.

"Dr. Chidambaram's role in the two nuclear tests conducted by India was memorable. He also had the distinction of being Principal Scientific Advisor to the Govt of India for 17 years," Singh said.

Chidambaram held numerous prestigious positions dur-

ing his six-decade career, including Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India (2001-2018), director of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (1990-1993), chairman of Atomic Energy Commission, and secretary to the government of India, DAE (1993-2000).

He also served as chairman of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) (1994-1995).

"The nation owes greatly to this brilliant scientific mind, and we shall forever cherish his tremendous contributions," Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge said in a post on X.

Fraudsters posing as ED officials loot Rs 30 lakh

PNS ■ MANGALURU (KARNATAKA)

Mangaluru (Karnataka) Jan 4 (PTI) A group of six unidentified individuals, posing as officials from the Enforcement Directorate (ED), allegedly raided a house in Bantwal town, Dakshina Kannada district, and fled with nearly Rs 30 lakh in cash, along with five mobile phones, police said on Saturday.

The incident took place on the night of January 3.

According to the complaint lodged by Mohammad Iqbal (27), a resident of Kolnada and an agriculturist, the accused arrived at his residence at around 8.10 pm in a vehicle with a Tamil Nadu registration. Introducing themselves as ED officials, they claimed to have orders to search the house. After entering the premises, they confiscated five mobile phones from the family members before searching.

"During the inspection, the accused allegedly took away Rs 25-30 lakh in cash that had been kept in a cupboard for business purposes. They reportedly told the family that keeping such a large sum of money at home was not permitted and threatened to arrest Iqbal," a senior police officer said.

Rijiju offers 'chadar' at Ajmer dargah

PNS ■ AJMER

Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday offered a ceremonial 'chadar' sent by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Ajmer dargah on the 'Urs' of Sufi saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti and read out the prime minister's message which called on people from across religions to work together in harmony.

Khadim (caretaker) Afshan Chisti offered prayers on behalf of the prime minister at the shrine.

Rijiju said in different peri-

Reads out Modi's message



ods in India, various saints and fakirs went among the people and illuminated their lives and left their indelible mark with the message of humanity.

"One of them, Khwaja Garib

Nawaz, played an important role in increasing love and harmony in the society. His ideals dedicated to peace and brotherhood will continue to inspire generations. It will continue to inspire to do everything possible for the creation of a strong country and society," he said while reading out Modi's message.

The minister also launched a web portal of the dargah, the 'Garib Nawaz' app for pilgrims and an operations manual for the conduct of 'Urs'.

DELHI POLLS

Parties go tech-savvy, use AI for creative campaigns

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With Assembly elections in Delhi due in February, political parties are using Artificial Intelligence to churn out creative ads and visuals -- projecting their leaders as heroes and targeting rivals with sharp jibes.

From calling its supremo Arvind Kejriwal the "GOAT" (Greatest of All Time) to portraying him as "Delhi ka Beta" (Son of Delhi), the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is creatively leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) in its campaigns.

On the other hand, the BJP is labelling Kejriwal as the



"Original Mahathag" (master conman) in AI-generated videos and posters.

In one instance, a scene

from Amitabh Bachchan's movie "Baghban", which depicts parents enduring neglect from their children

In one instance, a scene from Amitabh Bachchan's movie "Baghban", which depicts parents enduring neglect from their children despite their sacrifices, was modified with AI to feature Kejriwal, emphasising that "Delhi ka Beta" will never abandon the people.

Delhi BJP's X handle also has multiple ad clips, including videos featuring Kejriwal and Chief Minister Atishi.

In one such video, Atishi is shown praising Kejriwal for his announcement to provide a monthly allowance of Rs 18,000 to Hindu temple priests and granthis of gurdwaras if re-elected in Delhi.

# EXQUISITE DINING WITH A VIEW

When it comes to food that excites the senses, *Resaca* in the heart of Central Delhi offers an experience that perfectly balances sophistication with flavour. This newly opened 12,000 square-foot space is a culinary palace where every dish is designed to captivate both the eyes and the taste buds. Whether you're craving an intimate dinner or a lively gathering with friends, *Resaca* has it all.

The indoor dining area, affectionately known as the "Resaca Playground," is a chic and stylish setting, offering sleek, modern furniture that's both practical and comfortable. With spacious tables thoughtfully arranged to cater to different dining styles, guests can enjoy private, intimate meals or social gatherings with equal ease. Each corner of the restaurant is designed to create a relaxed yet refined ambiance, perfect for any occasion.

However, what truly sets *Resaca* apart is its stunning rooftop - "Resaca Aero." This rooftop has quickly become the talk of the town, offering guests panoramic views of the Delhi skyline. Whether you're dining in the golden light of day or under the twinkling stars at night, the experience is nothing short of magical. The breathtaking views and elegant atmosphere create the perfect setting for a memorable dining experience.

Behind this visionary space is *Mayank Sehgal*, a renowned menswear designer who has brought his creative flair to the world of fine dining. As the creative director, *Mayank's* attention to detail and aesthetic sensibilities are reflected in every aspect of *Resaca*, from the décor to the curated dining

A sophisticated dining experience with flavours, stunning views and elegant ambiance for every occasion, says **TEAM AGENDA**

experience. *Resaca* is a destination where food lovers can indulge in both culinary delights and a beautiful atmosphere.

When it comes to the food, *Resaca* excels in offering an array of innovative and mouthwatering options. For those who enjoy small plates, the *Kataifi Dahi Kebab* (spiced yoghurt and crispy kataifi kebab) is a must-try. The *Magnum Kebab*, featuring panko crumbed assorted veggies with warm tomato chutney, promises a delightful burst of flavours. If you're a fan of rich and smoky flavours, try the *Lababdar Paneer Tikka*, silky chunks of cottage cheese served with house-special gravy and fried shallots. For a lighter yet equally satisfying option, the *Stuffed Mushrooms*, served with roasted red pepper coulis, are divine.

The menu also includes delectable platters for sharing. The *Arabic Mezze* is a fantastic choice for anyone who loves Mediterranean flavours, with an assortment of *falafel*, *hummus*, *baba ganoush* and warm *pita bread*. For a meatier version, the *Arabic Platter* with *chicken shish tawook* and *lamb fatayer* is equally tempting.

No meal at *Resaca* is complete without indulging in their sweet offerings. The *Rum-Based Tiramisu*, a no-bake dessert soaked in rum, offers a rich, indulgent finish to your meal. Other fan favourites include the *Mango Cheesecake*, *Banoffee Pie* and the innovative *Kunafa Cheesecake*, which combines the best of both worlds.

Of course, no visit to *Resaca* is complete without sampling their signature cocktails, such as the *Katana*, made with vodka, coconut and matcha or the refreshing *Green Park*, which features Hendricks Gin, celery infusion, and elderflower syrup.

*Resaca* offers an experience that goes beyond a meal. From its stunning interiors to its carefully crafted cocktails and mouthwatering dishes, this restaurant has quickly become a go-to destination for those looking to indulge in style.

PHOTOS: PANKAJ KUMAR



## FROM THE ITALIAN FEASTS

At *Toscana*, traditional flavours and premium ingredients transport you to Tuscany, writes **Team Agenda**



With its gates in the centre of Saket's Select City Walk Mall, *Toscana* welcomes you on a Tuscan food adventure. *Toscana* offers a genuine dining experience that satisfies the sophisticated palates of its esteemed patrons by fusing traditional culinary methods with premium, fresh ingredients and unusual cheeses.

*Toscana* offers a warm and inviting atmosphere, where handcrafted pastas, carefully selected wines, and dishes inspired by Italy's heritage take the centre tables. The cosy setting is uplifted by soft yellow lighting, a striking wine wall, and painted patterned walls, creating the perfect backdrop to savour delightful moments with your loved ones.

You can initiate the tasty food by starting with the *Antipasti*, the small plates menu offering you *Arancini e Mozzarella Fritta* (Arborio rice balls & fried mozzarella) that has golden fried mozzarella, carrots, zucchini, broccolini and haricot verts served with arrabiata sauce as they melt in your mouth, enticing you to consume an increasing amount. Also, in *Bruschetta* you can go forward with *Pomodoro Classico* made out of fresh tomatoes, olive oil, basil & parmesan cheese.

From the *Insalata*, the salad menu, *Insalata di Quattro Fagioli con Cereali* (four bean salad with mixed grains) with selection of four beans, mixed grains, roasted pumpkin, cherry

tomatoes, red onion, romaine lettuce, roasted pumpkin seeds, feta cheese & sweet balsamic dressing to keep up with your fitness and taste. In the *Pane all' aglio*, the garlic breads menu you can go for *Classic Baguette Garlic Bread* with melting mozzarella cheese and *Rosemary Bread* with rosemary, pesto, olive oil made with rock salt pizza bread.

For pasta lovers, the *Artisan & Signature Special Pasta* menu is a feast of flavours that will leave you craving more. A recommendation is the *Ravioli di Spinaci e Ricotta*, featuring handmade spinach and ricotta ravioli, served in a fragrant basil-flavoured tomato sauce with olives, melting deliciously in every bite.

The *Dolce* (Dessert) menu at *Toscana* is a paradise for dessert lovers. The highlights include the *Classic Tiramisu*, perfectly paired with coffee ice cream, and the indulgent 55% *Couverture Chocolate Hazelnut Brownie*, served warm with creamy vanilla ice cream. Saving the best for last, the *Signature Chocolate Kahlua Mousse*, complemented by a delicate almond tuile and velvety *crème anglaise*, promises to be an unforgettable treat for your taste buds.

### FACT SHEET

**Restaurant Name:** Toscana  
**Address:** S-44, 2nd Floor, Nexus Select City Walk, MGF Saket Driveway, Saket, New Delhi.  
**Price for 2:** Approx. ₹1800

### FACT SHEET

**Restaurant Name:** Resaca  
**Address:** No. 7, 3rd Floor, Building, Pusa Rd, Block 11, WEA, Karol Bagh, Delhi, 110005  
**Price for 2:** Approx. ₹2000  
**Cuisine:** Multi-cuisine (Indian, Mediterranean, International)  
**Dining Experience:** Indoor and Rooftop seating



## SMALL PLATES LEAD THE WAY

Small eateries deliver bigger and tastier joys than mega restaurants



When it comes to dining out, bigger isn't always better. In a world where restaurants compete to offer a vast array of dishes, there's something uniquely charming and rewarding about *small eateries* that focus on just one or two specialties. They may lack the glitz of fine dining or the variety of a multi-page menu, but what they offer goes far deeper. Here's why these unassuming establishments are not only worth visiting but may also offer a far superior dining experience.

more attention on the quality and less temptation to rely on pre-made or frozen components. *Small eateries* usually shop locally and in small quantities, ensuring that what you eat was likely bought that very morning.

It's not uncommon to see these modest eateries sourcing their produce from the local market, even chatting with their vendors to get the best pick. This personal touch translates directly to the plate, where each ingredient retains its flavour, offering a sensory experience.

**MASTERY OVER MIEDOCRITY:** The biggest problem with an expansive menu is that it's almost impossible to do every dish justice. When a kitchen has to juggle diverse cuisines or multiple complex recipes, something inevitably gets lost in translation. Food often becomes standardised, stripped of any distinct personality, and made to cater to the average palate. Conversely, *small eateries* that specialise in a single dish or a couple of items have the luxury of focusing all their energy and skill on perfecting those few offerings. Each plate becomes a labor of love, honed through years of repetition and refinement.

**CONSISTENT FLAVOURS, EVERY TIME:** In smaller places, it's usually the same set of hands working in the kitchen day in and day out. There's no confusion, no passing the recipe from one chef to another. The cook knows exactly how much salt to sprinkle or how long to simmer the gravy. There's a sense of reliability, a promise that every time you visit, the dish will taste exactly as you remembered it. This consistency is one of the hardest things to achieve in a large restaurant where new chefs or cooks are frequently cycling in and out.

**THE ART OF FRESHNESS:** *Small menus* often mean fresher ingredients. When a kitchen isn't overwhelmed with a long list of ingredients for a sprawling menu, there's

**THE PRICE OF CONVENIENCE: QUALITY VS. QUICK FIXES:** In *large eateries*, the pressure to churn out diverse dishes at a rapid pace often means sacrificing freshness and authenticity. Many big restaurants, in an effort to streamline operations and manage

such extensive menus, have begun to rely on pre-made sauces and packaged ingredients laced with preservatives. These shortcuts may save time, but they take a serious toll on both flavour and nutritional value. A *small eatery*, with its focus on fresh, daily-prepared dishes, naturally provides a far more nourishing experience than the one that supports both health and taste without compromising quality.

dish can seem limiting. But there's joy in simplicity. Knowing you're about to eat a dish that's the pride and focus of an establishment, there's an unspoken promise of quality.

**SMALL IS THE NEW BIG:** As the trend toward slow, intentional dining gains momentum, *small eateries* with limited menus are emerging as champions of true culinary craftsmanship. These spots may lack the expansive spaces and curated ambiance, but they don't need it. They deliver exactly what matters: real, unforgettable food, born from expertise and commitment, served with the kind of warmth you can't find on any restaurant's oversized menu.

In the end, it's about quality over quantity, simplicity over spectacle. And maybe, just maybe, finding the heart in what's on the plate over the number of options in a menu.

**A PERSONAL TOUCH THAT'S HARD TO FIND:** Eating at a *small eatery* often means connecting with the person behind the food. They take pride in their craft, in the stories that accompany each dish, and in the relationships they build with regular customers. The proprietor might greet you by name, share the origins of a recipe, or remember just how spicy you like your curry. This connection adds a personal dimension to dining that large restaurants struggle to offer.

When you order from a restaurant with a lengthy menu, there's a transactional air to it. You're just another customer, another order to be fulfilled. But at a *small, specialised eatery*, you're part of a community, one of the lucky few who get to experience the authenticity that food can bring.

**A UNIQUE DINING ADVENTURE:** In an age where everyone seems to crave variety, the idea of returning to a place for the same



Pawan Soni  
Food critic and founder of the Big F Awards



By AKANKSHA DEAN

Imagine stepping back in time without sacrificing an ounce of modern comfort. At *Hotel Neri*, nestled in a 17th-century mansion and the only *Relais & Chateaux* property in Barcelona, my stay was a delightful blend of history and luxury. Picture this: a 17th-century mansion turned chic boutique hotel with just 22 rooms. This is *Hotel Neri*, where each corner oozes charm and every stay feels like a time-travelling adventure. This

enchanting 12th-century palace-turned-hotel, located beside the quaint *Placa de Sant Felipe Neri*, retains its historical charm with stone walls and archways that whisk you back in time. Though it lacks a gym, its distinct style and unbeatable location make up for it tenfold. The terrace overlooking a quaint, atmospheric square and the lush rooftop bar are just a couple of quirky touches you'll love. Given its quiet pedestrian street setting, you might have a slight hassle with heavy luggage, but don't let that deter you—this serene

# MEDIEVAL MARVEL IN BARCELONA



sanctuary is worth the extra steps. Inside, the décor has evolved from vibrant, bold palettes and plush velvets to a soothing symphony of creams and greys adorned with elegant black and white photos. My lucky pick was an Apartment with a breath-taking medieval ambience and charming views of the cobbled street buzzing with tapas bars. Talk about living the fairy tale! The room's ambience, a mix of sophisticated neutrals and delicate fabrics, made the stay luxuriously cosy. The sleep preferences menu—offering sheets in cotton, satin, or linen, and a variety of pillows—felt like a dreamy personal touch. And the bathroom! A peaceful oasis with both a bathtub and rain shower, mood lighting, and Molton Brown products.

## HISTORICAL CHARM AWAITS

Strolling through the *Gothic Quarter*, where the Romans once settled, feels like stepping into a storybook. Winding cobblestone streets lined with cosy shops, cafes, and residences lead to hidden plazas, each more picturesque than the last. *Hotel Neri's* central location is a dream for explorers. Just around the corner, the bells of the *Barcelona Cathedral* serenaded us from our room. Within a 5–10-minute stroll, we reached *Placa de Sant Jaume* and the iconic churches of *Santa Maria Del Mar* and *Santa Maria Del Pi*, famously featured in *Tom Holland's* 'Uncharted.' The waterfront and the bustling *Las Ramblas* were also close by, ensuring we never missed a beat of the city's vibrant life. Hop on the metro, only five minutes

away, and the rest of Barcelona unfolds at your feet. And for those with a sweet tooth, a quick five-minute amble took us to *Calle Petritxol*, a pedestrian haven brimming with chocolate and churro shops, including the famed *La Granja Dulcinea*. It is not just a place to stay; it's a historical adventure waiting to be experienced.

## THE LITTLE LUXURIES

Dining at the *A Restaurant* was a gastronomic delight. The menu, brimming with Catalan dishes and global influences, featured gems like the 'fougasse and Rum Baba.' It was a true feast for the senses. The rooftop, *Roba Estesa*, transformed into a romantically lit, lush retreat, was the perfect spot to unwind under the stars. Living in a medieval castle, even for a short while, feels like a vibrant, whimsical dream. *Relais & Chateaux* boasts nearly 600 luxury hotels and fine dining restaurants worldwide, renowned for unique accommodations, exquisite cuisine, and impeccable service. President Laurent Gardinier aptly described them as paragons of 'excellence, food, experience, and culture.' After the delight of staying in *Hotel Neri*, I can confirm this commitment is nothing short of remarkable. If you crave a unique and romantic historical refuge in the lively heart of Barcelona, *Hotel Neri* is your match. Though it comes with a boutique five-star price tag, the magical experience it offers is simply priceless. It's the little things that elevate a hotel stay from pleasant to unforgettable. At



*Hotel Neri*, these thoughtful touches were on par with the world's finest hotels, such as the *Ritz Carlton*, *Four Seasons*, and *Six Senses*. From the cosy throw blanket on the bed—so handy when we left the heat off—to the fresh clementines awaiting us upon check-in, each detail made our stay special. Turn-down service with chocolates, and our stylish glass water pitcher refilled twice daily, all contributed to a feeling of home away from home. Though our next visit to Barcelona might be a few years away, *Hotel Neri* will be my go-to choice. I

wholeheartedly recommend this gem—and any *Relais & Chateaux* property—to fellow travellers seeking a truly memorable experience.

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

## WINTER WONDERS OF DARJEELING



Darjeeling's misty mountains, scenic bus ride, and cosy Radhakunj Homestay offered the perfect winter escape amidst nature's charm, writes VISHESH SHUKLA



to see the famous *Sumendu Lake*. However, I missed the main route and ended up taking a secondary road, which stretched the distance to 50 km and took me around 4 hours to reach. The ride was not wasted, though, as I passed through beautiful tea gardens and stopped at a viewpoint called *Lepchajagat*. Finally, I reached *Mirik Lake*, spent some peaceful time there, and then started my journey back to *Darjeeling*. On the way, I also visited the Nepal border at *Pashupati Nagar* and enjoyed a quiet dinner before returning to my homestay.

## DARJEELING'S ICONIC LANDMARKS

Day 3 was all about sightseeing in *Darjeeling*. I started my day at *Tiger Hill* to witness the stunning view of *Kanchenjunga*. Next, I visited the serene *Ghoom Monastery* and felt the peaceful vibes of Buddhism. After that, I stopped by the *Peace Pagoda*, built to promote harmony, and had my lunch. My next destination was the *Rock Garden*, located 3000 ft below the main road, which had some dangerous turns but was worth the experience. Finally, I ended my sightseeing with a visit to *Batasia Loop* to watch the toy train and the *Zoological Park*, which had some unique animals.

In the evening, I did some shopping at *Mall Road*, treated myself to ice cream at *Keventer's*, and enjoyed delicious momos. I returned the scooter to the shop and headed back to my homestay to pack my bags because it was time to leave for home.

On the last day, I took a shared taxi for ₹400 to *NJP*. From there, I boarded the *New Delhi Poorvottar Sampark Kranti Express* to *Kanpur*. The 17-hour journey brought me back home, and I ended my vacation with empty pockets but a heart full of beautiful and tremendous memories

there. Coincidentally, the *Darjeeling Melotea Fest 2024* was happening nearby. I got to enjoy some amazing music by the famous singer *Girish Chand*. After that, I had dinner at a local restaurant near *Mall Road*. The meal was simple and tasty, costing me around ₹200. Feeling satisfied, I took a taxi back to my homestay for ₹100. Once I reached, I had a good sleep, ready and excited for the adventures the next day would bring.

## MIRIK'S SERENE SHORES

On Day 2, I woke up early in the morning and rented a scooter from 'Bike Wale Bhaiya' for ₹1500 for two days. I planned to visit *Mirik*, 34 km away,

In winter, the mountains are always beautiful, and hill stations are also enjoyable. So, I decided to visit one of the most beautiful hill stations in India, *Darjeeling, West Bengal*. I boarded the *Falaknema Express* from *Cuttack to Howrah*, and then I changed trains to the *Paharia Express*, heading to *New Jalpaiguri (NJP)*. The weather was very humid in nature, and for a moment, I thought I had chosen the wrong time to come to *Darjeeling*. But *Darjeeling* proved me wrong—cold waves and fog made me feel at ease. I took an auto to the *Siliguri* bus stand for ₹50, then boarded a bus to *Darjeeling* for ₹105. The 4-hour bus journey, with its beautiful views and

winding turns, made my heart swell with excitement. Finally, I deboarded and headed to my homestay, which was near *Batasia Loop*. I checked in at *Radha Kunj Homestay*, which offered very cheap accommodation, ₹4500 for three nights. The rooms were beautiful, and the window view in the morning, with *Kanchenjunga* in the distance, was nothing short of breathtaking. It was around 5 PM, so I decided to visit *Mall Road*. I took a taxi for ₹50 and went to explore the beautiful area. First, I roamed around the market, soaking in the lively atmosphere. Then, I visited the very famous *Glenary's Bakery* and enjoyed some delicious snacks



IN BRIEF



Tata Trusts chairman Noel Tata meets Maha CM Fadnavis

Tata Trusts chairman Noel Tata on Saturday met Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to discuss collaboration between the Tata Trusts and the government to accelerate the state's economic growth. Fadnavis tweeted about the meeting which took place at the chief minister's official residence in south Mumbai. "We discussed various projects where Tata Trusts and the GoM can collaborate to accelerate our state's growth," he wrote on X. The chief minister thanked Tata for expressing confidence about fostering a strong and enduring partnership between Tata Trusts and the state government. Noel Tata took over as chairman of Tata Trusts last year, succeeding Ratan Tata who died on October 9, 2024. Tata Trusts holds 66 percent stake in Tata Sons, the holding company of the salt-to-software Tata Group



Govt permits export of 2 lakh tonne wheat to Nepal

The government has permitted exports of two lakh tonne of wheat to Nepal, according to a notification issued on Saturday. The export is permitted through National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL), the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said in the notification. NCEL is a company set up with cooperative societies as its promoters. Though export of wheat is banned to maintain domestic supply, outbound shipments are allowed on the basis of permission granted by the government to certain countries to meet their food security needs and on request. In a separate notification, DGFT said inputs imported for synthetic knitted fabrics by advance authorisation holders, EOUs (export oriented units) and SEZs (special economic zones) shall be exempted from MIP (minimum import condition). There is a USD 3.5 per kg MIP on synthetic knitted fabrics, to discourage inbound shipments of cheap fabrics.



GST system is profoundly flawed: TN Minister

Tamil Nadu Minister P T Palanivel Thiaga Rajan on Saturday said the existing system to measure the Goods and Services tax is 'profoundly flawed' and can be corrected by 20 different steps without needing any new legislations. The Minister for Information and Technology and Digital Services, at an event here said if the government has to say something 'profound' it must say it in relevance to something. "At every quarter, we used to get this kind of statement from Delhi, we have record GST collections. And every quarter, I used to ask, so what? If GDP keeps going up every year, the total volume of (GST) transactions goes up every year, so the GST collections grow every year. That is just math. Inflation and GDP growth have been built into it," he said. Thiaga Rajan was making those comments at the Global Alumni Meet of NIT Trichy, 2025 here on Saturday.

Agri minister expects 3.5-4 pc growth

Reviews schemes with states ahead of Budget

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Agriculture minister Shivaraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday reviewed various schemes with state agriculture ministers and sought their suggestions on ongoing programmes and budget allocation ahead of the Union Budget.

During a virtual meeting, Chouhan expressed satisfaction over the agriculture and allied sector's likely higher growth rate of 3.5-4 per cent in the 2024-25 fiscal year, and urged state governments to work at a "faster pace", according to an official statement. He welcomed the State Bank of India's report showing that the rural poverty rate declined to below 5 per cent for the first time in FY24 from 7.2 per cent in FY23.

The minister said the Centre is implementing a six-point strategy to boost the farm sector, including increasing production per hectare through research by ICAR and release of new seed varieties. The government is also



focusing on reducing production costs, promoting micro irrigation, farm mechanisation, technology adoption, and new agricultural methods. Chouhan highlighted progress in key schemes, including PM-KISAN, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, DAP fertiliser subsidy, Kisan Credit Card, and Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PMAASA).

"There is continuous progress in the agriculture sector and we are all constantly making efforts for it... I have full faith that we will share suggestions together regarding the budget, improvement in schemes and move forward together in that direction," he said. Agriculture Secretary Dvish Chaturvedi and other senior ministry officials attended the meeting.

DPIIT joins hands with Stride Ventures to help startups

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) on Saturday said it has joined hands with venture debt firm Stride Ventures to support high growth potential startups in their funding requirements. It said this collaboration will be instrumental in creating enormous opportunities for startups by integrating financial support with strategic mentorship and market access.

Highlighting the macro-economic impact of this collaboration, Joint Secretary in DPIIT Sanjiv said Stride Ventures will curate dedicated programmes and collaborate on engagements like the Bharat Grand Challenge to promote entrepreneurship, innovation, and investment. Ishpreet Singh Gandhi, Founder and Managing Partner, Stride Ventures, said "this partnership, coupled with our billion-dollar commitment to nurturing startups, reaffirms our resolve to strengthen India's startup ecosystem".

GOVT PUSH FOR QUALITY

Industry embraces QCO on plywood, MDF boards

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After initial resistance, the plywood and MDF board industry has agreed to implement the mandatory quality control norms as they have recognised the long-term benefits of adhering to high-quality standards, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has said.



He said India is introducing modern standards that are often harmonised with prevailing standards in other parts of the world, particularly the developed countries. India's continuous focus on quality is now recognised and appreciated within the country and internationally as well, the minister said.

The Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) had introduced quality control orders (QCO) for plywood, MDF boards, and other wooden products to boost domestic

manufacturing and cut imports of sub-standard goods. Due to the opposition of the domestic industry, the implementation of the QCO was extended. These mandatory norms will be for domestic and foreign players.

"Initially a lot of resistance was there from the industry. We held several meetings with them and now finally the industry themselves realised the merit in focusing on high quality standards particularly when they are making that quality," Goyal said.

He said 10-12 days ago, the entire industry representing all the manufacturing across the country met and requested that QCO should be put on these products. "I think that is the message that is gradually percolating down in more and more sectors that this (QCO) will help India's manufacturing sector to grow," Goyal said.

NSE tops IPO Chart in Asia; raises record Rs 1.67 lakh cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Stock Exchange on Friday said it has recorded the highest number of IPOs in Asia last year, which cumulatively raised about Rs 1.67 lakh crore, the largest-ever fundraising globally from the primary market.

The bourse registered the highest number of IPOs -- 90 on the mainboard and 178 on the SME platform. Among the IPOs, 90 companies were listed on NSE's mainboard, contributing Rs 1.59 lakh crore, while 178 SMEs collectively raised Rs 7,349 crore, it noted.

"The record number of IPOs during this calendar year highlights the resilience and potential of the Indian economy," Sriram Krishnan, Chief Business Development Officer at NSE.

"India led the chart with NSE facilitating 268 companies going for IPOs raising total fundraise of approximately Rs 1.67 lakh crore (USD 19.5 billion), including the Rs 27,735 crore (USD 3.3 billion) public issue of Hyundai Motor India, the largest-ever in India and the second-largest globally in 2024," the exchange said in a statement.

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"The record number of IPOs during this calendar year highlights the resilience and potential of the Indian economy," Sriram Krishnan, Chief Business Development Officer at NSE.

Committed to turning Air India into top-class airline: Tata Sons chairman

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran on Saturday said his company is fully committed to transforming Air India into a top-class airline, delivering exceptional service and performance on a global scale.

Tata Group acquired Air India in 2022 after the government had signed a share purchase agreement with Tata Sons for the sale of Air India for Rs 18,000 crore.

Chandrasekaran was responding to a query during a free side chat with TVS Supply Chain Solutions Ltd Managing Director Ravi Viswanathan at the Global Alumni Meet of NIT Trichy, here, on what people can expect from Air India following the acquisition made by Tata Group in 2022.

"My commitment is to take every effort to make Air India, an absolute top-class airline in the world. In terms of the hardware, the flight experience, customer experience, technology and in every which way," Chandrasekaran said.

On a lighter note, he appealed to the audience gathered at the venue to urge the aircraft manufacturers Boeing and Airbus to



deliver the aircraft as per the orders made by Air India.

"You all need to help me by pushing Boeing and Airbus to deliver me the planes," he said.

Air India Group has a total order of 470 planes -- 250 from Airbus and 220 from Boeing. In December 2024, Air India placed an order for 100 more additional wide-body A350 and 90 narrow body A320 aircraft including A321 neo.

Responding to another query from Viswanathan on the semiconductor industry, Chandrasekaran said there was a huge opportunity and the exposure of Tata Sons in the semiconductor sector was about USD 18 billion in precision manufacturing, semi-conductor assembly and testing.

"Our semiconductor fab should be operational in 2026. So, whether it is in the energy sector or in semiconductor sector, we have taken the lead and a head start. We have to build a whole ecosystem in the semiconductor sector and thousands of companies are coming up in the ecosystem in the next 18-24 months," he remarked.

Apparel exporters seek tax incentives to boost shipments

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Apparel exporters body AEPC on Saturday urged the government to announce tax incentives, including removal of a provision requiring payments to MSMEs within 45 days to claim deductions and customs duty exemption on garment machinery imports.

The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) has also requested that an interest equalization rate of 5 per cent be announced in the Budget, scheduled to be unveiled on February 1 by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

Other demands include extension of concessional tax rate for new manufacturing units to encourage setting up of new garment units; simplification in the procedure of



imports of trims and embellishments under IGCR (Import of Goods at Concessional Rate); and liberalizing e-commerce export procedures.

"Ready Made Garments (RMG) industry has also demanded removal of Sec43B (H) of IT Act in the ensuing Budget which pertains to payment to any MSME companies

within a maximum 45 days' time to claim any deduction in tax. This has increased tax liabilities and has disrupted the cash flow of exporters," it said in a statement.

It added that the cap per consignment of export value under e-commerce should be increased to minimum Rs 25 lakh and export realization period should be extended to 12 months. India's garment export sector relies heavily on imported machinery to maintain quality and global competitiveness, as domestic production is insufficient to meet demand. "High import duties make Indian garments exports less competitive vis-a-vis countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam. AEPC recommends not only continuing existing exemptions but also reducing the customs duty to zero on remaining garmenting machinery to enhance the sector's efficiency," it said.

AEPC Chairman Sudhir Sekhri said, "The Union Budget is a great opportunity where our demands for long-term policy support can be considered."

India is ahead of other countries in green hydrogen sector: Union minister Joshi

PNS ■ KHANDWA (MP)

Union Minister of New and Renewable Energy Pralhad Joshi on Saturday said India is ahead of other countries in the field of green hydrogen.

"High import duties make Indian garments exports less competitive vis-a-vis countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam. AEPC recommends not only continuing existing exemptions but also reducing the customs duty to zero on remaining garmenting machinery to enhance the sector's efficiency," it said.

AEPC Chairman Sudhir Sekhri said, "The Union Budget is a great opportunity where our demands for long-term policy support can be considered."

The Union government has floated a tender for the world's largest green ammonia demonstration project, he said during a visit to a floating solar plant in the Omkareshwar Dam in Madhya Pradesh's Khandwa district. Further, the work of offshore wind power projects is underway and tenders have been invited in Gujarat, the minister told reporters.

"When we talk about offshore wind power, it means installing windmills in the sea, which requires development and upgradation of ports and transmission infrastructure. Along with this, work on geothermal (power) is also underway, though it is at the primary stage," Joshi said.

A revolution is taking place in the field of solar energy, and India is becoming the world leader in renewable energy, he said. "India is ahead in the field of green hydrogen, compared to other countries. We have floated a tender for green ammonia which is the world's



biggest (project)," he said. The solar plant in Omkareshwar Dam is one of its kind and produces 278 megawatts of power, the minister noted.

"This plant is providing electricity to Delhi Metro. I am thinking about how can we do this in other parts of the country where there is potential. There is potential of 90 gigawatts power generation but very little has been done," he said.

Officials and leaders from other states and energy experts, especially from regions where there are large dams, should come here and see this project to replicate it elsewhere so that the target of 500 gigawatts (of non-fossil energy) by 2030 and 1800 gigawatt by 2047 could be achieved, the minister said. While India needs electricity, it should come from sustainable sources, Joshi said.

'Data protection rules balance regulation & innovation'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The draft data protection rules released by the government create a balance between regulation and innovation while protecting citizen rights, Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Saturday.

The government issued draft rules for the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act on Friday for public consultation till February 18.

"Rules have to be within four walls of the Act. It is within the ambit of the Act passed by Parliament. These rules have been framed to ensure a balance between regulation and innovation while completely

safeguarding the rights of citizens," Vaishnaw said in an interview.

The minister said earlier there was only one template available to the world -- the European data protection rule with a high level of regulation. However, Indian rules have attempted to balance the regulation with innovation to safeguard the boom in the innovation ecosystem developing among startups in the country.

He said extensive consultations have been held with the industry and systems such as complaint registration, their handling and distribution, interaction with digital plat-



"Rules have to be within four walls of the Act. It is within the ambit of the Act passed by Parliament. These rules have been framed to ensure a balance between regulation and innovation while completely safeguarding the rights of citizens," Vaishnaw said

forms, have been put in place. The minister said the final rules will be placed before Parliament in the monsoon session for approval and all entities handling data digital-

ly will get two years to calibrate their systems as per the law.

"All the entities covered under the Act will have to review existing consent within two years after the rules are

in place," Vaishnaw said. He said the rules will be improvised based on the experience of the new data regime.

"As far as possible, minimum prescription has been

kept in the rules to ensure simple implementation of the Act. The rules have carefully addressed the large harm that the digital world poses to the privacy of people, especially children," Vaishnaw said.

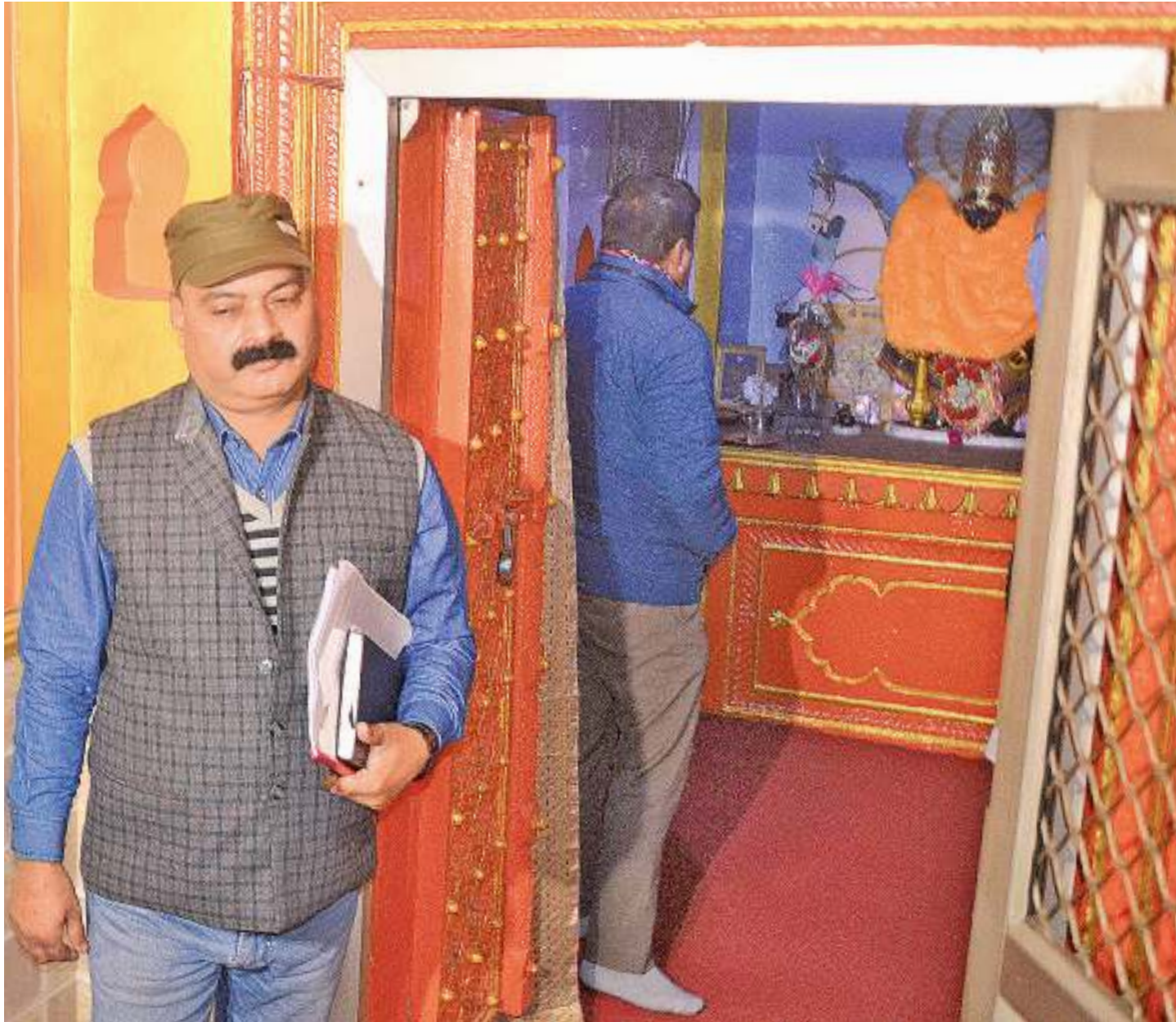
The DPDP draft rules specify that a parent's verifiable consent will have to be obtained by social media or online platforms before children can create any account.

Further, parents' identity and age will also have to be validated and verified through voluntarily provided identity proof 'issued by an entity entrusted by law or the government', as per the draft rules.

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 R.O.No: 8632/PV/LADVT/2024-25, Dt. 04-01-2025  
 Sd/- Executive Engineer  
 Division-11, (RJRNR), GHMC



"If you want to understand today you have to search yesterday"  
— Pearl S. Buck



## DISCOVERY IN SAMBHAL: UNEARTHING ANCIENT TEMPLES AND WELLS

A historic discovery in Sambhal reveals ancient temples, wells, and stepwells, offering valuable insights into the region's cultural heritage, says **BISWAJEET BANERJEE** and **SAJID KHAN**



What began as a routine inspection by district officials to check noise levels from loudspeakers and illegal electricity connections in the Muslim-dominated *Khaggu Sarai* area of Sambhal has turned into a historic archaeological discovery. On 14 December, a team led by the District Magistrate (DM) and Superintendent of Police (SP) stumbled upon a locked structure. Breaking open its doors revealed not just an abandoned Shiva temple but also a wealth of history hidden beneath layers of soil and silt. The discovery of the temple, which had been locked for 46 years, has prompted a flurry of activity, including surveys by the *Archaeological Survey of India* (ASI). Early reports suggest the temple, and other relics unearthed nearby, may date back several centuries, providing invaluable insights into Sambhal's rich cultural and religious history.

### Locked Temple, Unlocked History

Dr. *Rajendra Pansiya* recalled the unexpected nature of the find. "This discovery was purely accidental. We were investigating noise and electricity issues near a mosque, but what we found behind the locked doors was remarkable," he said. The temple, which had been shut since the 1978 communal riots, housed a Shiva idol and a statue of Hanuman. Nearby, a well contained three additional statues that were uncovered during excavation. The riots of 1978, which displaced many from the local Hindu community, had led to the temple being abandoned. "Local accounts suggest the temple is over 500 years old," Dr. *Pansiya* added. To confirm its antiquity, the district administration reached out to the ASI for carbon dating and further investigation.

### The ASI Steps In

Following the DM's request, a four-member ASI team from Meerut and Delhi conducted an extensive eight-hour survey of the site last week. The team examined the temple, the adjacent well, and five other pilgrimage sites, including *Bhadrak Ashram*, *Swargdeep*, and *Chakrapani*. During their survey, they documented their findings through photography and collected evidence for further analysis.



In addition to the temple, the ASI team identified 19 wells, including the historically significant *Chaturmukh Koop*, *Moksha Koop*, and *Dharma Koop*. The ASI's investigation aims to establish the historical and cultural significance of these sites. Dr. *Pansiya* expressed optimism about the findings. "Once we have the ASI's report, we will have a clearer picture of the historical importance of these sites. Based on their recommendations, we will prepare a plan for their preservation and development," he said.

### The Stepwell of Laxman Ganj

Adding to the list of discoveries, a 250-foot-deep stepwell, believed to date back to the First War of Independence in



ONCE WE HAVE THE ASI'S REPORT, WE WILL HAVE A CLEARER PICTURE OF THE HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF THESE SITES. BASED ON THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS, WE WILL PREPARE A PLAN FOR THEIR PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
— DR. PANSIYA



1857, was unearthed in Sambhal's *Laxman Ganj* area last week. Named *Rani ki Bawdi*, the stepwell came to light after the ruins of an ancient *Banke Bihari* temple were discovered earlier this month. *Kaushal Kishore*, the state publicity chief of the *Sanatan Sevak Sangh*, had written to the DM, pointing out the historical significance of the site. "The stepwell and the ruins are remnants of the royal family of Sahaspur. These finds are a testament to our history," Kishore said. The excavation, which involved two bulldozers, also revealed a two-storey structure near the stepwell. Work at the site is ongoing, with authorities halting operations at night due to visibility issues. "Encroachments on the site have been identified, and notices will be issued to families occupying the land illegally," Dr. *Pansiya* said, adding that the administration is committed to restoring and beautifying the area. The discovery of the ancient stepwell, or *Bawdi*, in Sambhal has brought to light the rich history of the region, linked to the erstwhile royal family of *Sahaspur State in Bilari*. Official records list the *Bawdi* as a pond spanning 400 square metres. However, recent excavations have revealed much more—a well-preserved three-storey structure featuring intricate architecture and significant historical relevance. "The *Bawdi* was constructed during the reign of the king of Bilari and is believed to be approximately 150 years old," Dr. *Pansiya* said. The structure includes two marble floors and one brick floor, along with a well and four rooms, all part of an elaborate underground complex. Signs of encroachment on the site have also been identified, and the

administration plans to address this issue promptly. The site, once a vital part of the *Sahaspur State*, served as a rest stop for soldiers and the royal family during their travels. *Shipra Gera*, a relative of the royal family, recounted the historical importance of the *Bawdi*. "This place was a strategic stopover for soldiers travelling from *Sahaspur (Bilari)* to villages under the State's control, which now fall in the *Badaun* district. The royal family also used the underground complex during their journeys to escape the scorching summer heat," she said. The *Bawdi's* corridors were manned by soldiers, and the site served both functional and leisure purposes. The underground chambers provided a cool retreat for the royals, while the stepwell itself ensured a steady water supply for their needs. As restoration and research continue, the *Bawdi* and its surrounding structures are set to become a beacon of Sambhal's historical legacy, offering locals and visitors alike a chance to reconnect with the region's storied past.

### A Shared History Unearthed

The discoveries in Sambhal are a poignant reminder of the region's layered history, which is often obscured by present-day tensions. The proximity of the temple to the *Shahi Jama Masjid*, where violence had erupted during a protest against a court-ordered survey, underscores the intertwined histories of communities that have lived together for centuries. Local historian and archaeologist *Dr. Arvind Sharma* highlighted the significance of the finds. "These discoveries provide a window into the past, showcasing Sambhal's role as a cultural and religious hub. The preservation of these sites is not just about protecting relics but also about understanding our shared heritage," he said. The district administration, in collaboration with the ASI, is now focused on ensuring that these historical sites are preserved and developed responsibly. Plans include creating tourist-friendly infrastructure while maintaining the integrity of the sites. The discoveries have sparked excitement and curiosity among locals. "We've always heard stories about these places, but seeing them come to light is incredible. It feels like a part of our history has been revived," said *Sunil Kumar*, a Sambhal resident. As excavation and research continue, the findings in Sambhal are expected to shed more light on the region's past, offering lessons for the present and inspiration for the future. The accidental unearthing of the Shiva temple and subsequent discoveries serve as a reminder of the hidden treasures that lie buried beneath the surface, waiting to be rediscovered and celebrated.

**RECIPE**

**MILLET CAKES WITH CARROTS & SPINACH**

**INGREDIENTS**

- 1 cup millet, rinsed
- 2 cups water
- salt and pepper
- 3 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 shallot, minced
- 6 ounces (6 cups) baby spinach, chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and shredded
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons curry powder
- ¼ cup plain yogurt (vegan version: ¼ cup + 1 tablespoon almond milk)
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten (vegan version: ¼ cup ground flaxseed)
- 2 tablespoons minced cilantro any sauce or chutney you like - I topped mine with greek yogurt, mixed with salt, pepper, chile flakes and a squeeze of lime, or use this recipe and make a similar vegan version.



Author: Jeanine Donofrio

**INSTRUCTIONS**

- Step 1:** Preheat the oven to 350 F and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Step 2:** Combine the millet, water and ½ teaspoon salt in medium saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer until grains are tender and liquid is absorbed, 15 to 20 minutes. Turn off the heat, let millet sit, covered, for 10 minutes; transfer to a large bowl.
- Step 3:** Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add the shallot and cook until softened, about 3 minutes. Stir in the spinach and carrots and cook until the spinach wilts, about 2 minutes. Stir in the garlic, curry powder, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Transfer the mixture to the bowl with millet.
- Step 4:** Add the yogurt, egg, (or flax + almond milk) and cilantro into the millet mixture and fold until well combined. Use a ½ cup measuring cup to scoop the mixture, then form into a ½-inch-thick cake and place on prepared sheet. Repeat. Refrigerate cakes until chilled and firm, about 30 minutes. (15 minutes for the vegan version).
- Step 5:** Drizzle the cakes with olive oil and bake 25-30 minutes or until the edges are crispy and cakes are cooked through.



Courtesy: Indian Institute of Millets Research

**SORGHUM SAMOSA**

**INGREDIENTS:**

- Sorghum flour – 1 cup
- Maida – 1 cup
- Potatoes – 1 cup
- boiled peas
- Onions
- green chillies
- curry leaves as required.

**PREPARATION METHOD:**

- Step 1:** Take one cup of sorghum flour and one cup of maida. Mix well and add required amount of water to make dough.
- Step 2:** Make small chapati balls and spread the dough with roller stick and cut into half's.
- Step 3:** Mash boiled potatoes, add chopped onions, green chillies and curry leaves.
- Step 4:** Make seasoning with chopped onions, green chillies, curry leaves and boiled mashed potatoes, boiled peas and salt to taste.
- Step 5:** Fill the above mixture in each half and fold in triangular shape and deep fry.
- Step 6:** Serve hot with tomato sauce or chutney.

**SORGHUM PONGAL (SWEET)**

**INGREDIENTS:**

- Sorghum flakes – ½ cup
- Moong dal – ½ cup
- Milk – 2 cups
- Jaggery – 1 cup
- Cardamom powder
- Ghee
- Cashew nuts,
- Dry coconut – as required.

**PREPARATION METHOD:**

- Step 1:** Cook ½ cup moong dal till it becomes soft.
- Step 2:** Add ½ cup flakes, 2 cups of milk and cook till it turns very soft.
- Step 3:** Add 1 cup jaggery and cardamom powder.
- Step 4:** Heat ghee, fry cashew nuts, dry coconut and add to sweet Pongal and serve hot.



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**BOLD, LASTING FINISH**

Revlon ColorStay Satin Ink Liquid Lip Color makes the perfect gift with its comfortable, 16-hour wear formula infused with black currant seed oil that keeps lips hydrated. Offering bold, long-lasting color and a luxurious satin finish, it's the ultimate beauty essential to elevate any holiday look, whether you choose a classic red or a chic nude. Price: Rs. 1,299

**WHAT'S NEW**

**EVOKING EMOTIONS, CELEBRATING INDIVIDUALS**

Cadini Italy, renowned for its exquisite Italian craftsmanship, has unveiled its exclusive perfume collection in India, blending heritage with sophistication. The collection features four distinct fragrances: Leonardo's Secret, Italian Renaissance, Roman Affair and Sicilian Romance. Leonardo's Secret 100ML: Price: Rs 4990



**WHERE FRAGRANCE MEETS FUN FOR KIDS!**

Kaawaii Cosmetics, a revolutionary creation by Pink Parrot Kids, brings to life vibrant, parent-approved perfumes that spark creativity and joy in children. These alcohol-free, water-based fragrances are enriched with Vitamin E, ensuring they're as gentle as they are delightful. Kaawaii isn't just a perfume—it's a burst of confidence, letting kids express their unique personalities while giving parents peace of mind. Price: Rs.299



**INNISFREE FRUITY SQUEEZE TINTS**

INNISFREE introduces the all-new Fruity Squeeze Tints, designed to give your lips a glossy, hydrating glow with each application. Infused with the innovative Shine Coating System, these tints boast 30% added moisture content, ensuring your lips stay hydrated, soft, and luminous, throughout the day. Price: Rs 890



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A thrilling prehistoric-themed mat made from eco-friendly, non-slip TPE material. Lightweight (700g) and easy to carry, it's ideal for children under 8 years, offering excellent cushioning and grip. Price: INR 1,999



**HOROSCOPE**



**ARIES**

Stay calm in challenges, nurture creativity and be determined in pursuits. Stay focused on your goals. Success earns respect; love and generosity will bring joy, but be mindful of expenses.



**TAURUS**

Siblings will support your dreams, but there will be workplace challenges. Balance your ego and rejuvenate. Family issues may delay plans, but disciplined efforts will bring success.



**GEMINI**

Stay confident in challenges, control your emotions and avoid self-pity. Romantic pursuits will thrive, but there may be delays in ventures. Family needs will be met. Good changes lie ahead.



**CANCER**

Stay calm during crises and overcome them with confidence. Romantic opportunities may arise. Avoid self-indulgence and foster teamwork. Planned trips may put a strain on finances.



**LEO**

Siblings reconcile, offering a fresh start. Embrace innovation, and focus on meaningful bonds. Consult your family while making decisions. Overcome uncertainty with self-discovery.



**VRIGO**

This is a favourable time to boost your ambition. Handle insecurities and marriage challenges calmly. Enjoy a pleasure trip, adjust to job changes and find optimism in new ventures.



**LIBRA**

Stay patient and avoid emotional outbursts. Embrace logic and change to overcome monotony. Manage ego and analyse situations carefully for success in ventures and relationships.



**SCORPIO**

Generosity brings harmony, while family commitment ensures love. Socialising will revitalise your life. A new contract offers career stability, along with the strength to overcome challenges.



**SAGITTARIUS**

Overcome your frustrations through meditation. Forgiveness will bring relief. Use analytical power effectively and fulfil family needs. Students should focus on attaining growth and success.



**CAPRICORN**

Stay calm and overcome insecurities with guidance. Avoid negativity, control thoughts, and act decisively. Express love promptly and manage finances wisely during planned journeys.



**AQUARIUS**

Rejuvenate your life with a vacation. Give value to emotional compatibility and focus on meaningful bonds. Unexpected family issues delay plans, but new experiences bring growth.



**PISCES**

Stay calm in critical situations, despite family disagreements. Embrace unexpected love and new opportunities. Manage emotions to avoid stress, and adapt to changes for success.

CHAT-O-CINO

# 'I'm not satisfied yet; still waiting for the role that will transform me'

With a career that has seen her portray a wide range of characters, actress Anupriya Goenka reflects on the nuances of her complex new role, the challenges of the mystery genre and delves deep into her latest venture, the suspenseful series *Khoj*

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Whether showcasing her strength in intense roles or bringing nuance to complex characters, Anupriya Goenka's talent shines through effortlessly. Her journey through the world of acting reflects not just her dedication, but her ability to connect with audiences on a profound level. With a natural ability to bring authenticity and depth to every character she portrays, Goenka has won hearts across various platforms.

Known for her notable performances in *Sacred Games*, *Aashram* and *Padmaavat*, has been receiving immense love for her latest venture, the intriguing series *Khoj*. In a candid conversation with *The Pioneer*, Anupriya takes us behind the scenes of her complex new role, the nuances of the mystery genre and her journey as an actor who's still hungry for more.

Anupriya's character in *Khoj* is one filled with secrets and uncertainty, revolving around the question of identity. "The crux of the story is whether my character is who she says she is, or if she's an imposter," she shares, speaking about the central mystery that drives the narrative. "People refer to her as someone's wife, but she's constantly proving her identity. It's a role that's both challenging and intriguing because of how mysterious her journey is."

While the *Criminal Justice* fame's previous projects have often been serious or emotionally intense, *Khoj* offers something different. "I think this is a lighter role compared to some of my past characters, but it's still layered and has a lot of depth. It's an experience that has been refreshing to explore. The series is not only entertaining but also complex in the way it engages with its themes of truth, perception and the complexity of human relationships," she explains. When asked about her preparation for the role, she reveals that this character required a unique approach. "There wasn't a heavy research component like I've done for some other roles. Instead, I focused on understanding the emotional turmoil of the character—whether she's genuinely who she claims to be or if she's hiding something. It's about getting the audience to believe in her and her journey." She adds that the scenes were emotionally challenging and required her to constantly walk a fine line between truth and deception. "It was crucial to make the audience question her authenticity. I worked closely with the director to build her inner world and make sure the mystery surrounding her character unfolded naturally."

As for her character's place in the larger narrative, she notes that her role is at the heart of the mystery. "The narrative revolves around her, and through her, the audience uncovers the bigger secrets of the story. Her journey is the key to unraveling many of the show's mysteries," she says. "My character has a strong emotional presence that makes the mystery unfold as she confronts the complexities of her own identity."

The actress also reflects on the emotional resonance of the story. "What makes *Khoj* stand out is that, even though



it's a thriller, it's not just about solving a mystery. There's a lot of emotional depth, and that's what I hope the audience connects with the most." Did Anupriya find any personal connections to the character? She shares that while the story is fictional, the themes of identity and self-awareness were something she connected with deeply. "I remember one particular moment that made me reflect on how we all sometimes try to prove our own worth or identity to others. It's something universal, and portraying that emotional struggle was incredibly powerful for me."

Despite the complexities of her role, the *Berlin* actress emphasises that the show is primarily about entertainment. "I don't think there's a major life lesson being preached here, but if there's one takeaway, it's the importance of communication. Sometimes, things happen in life that can't be explained, and that's something *Khoj* subtly explores. At the end of the day, I hope the audience enjoys the experience and finds a break from their hectic lives. It's meant to be a quick, engaging watch—something you can just sit back and enjoy." As for her future in the industry, Anupriya is ready for new challenges. "I'm always looking for characters that are dark, complex, and really push me as an actor. But at the same time, I also want to explore more romantic roles and diverse characters. I want to keep experimenting and growing," she reveals, her excitement palpable.

Having spent over a decade in the industry, the Panchali lead feels she's only scratched the surface of what she can do. "I'm not satisfied yet. I'm still waiting for that one role that will truly shift me as a person. There's so much more to explore and I'm eager to work with different directors and creative minds. I feel like I'm just getting started," she says with a smile. Reflecting on her decade-long journey, she speaks about the lessons she's learned along the way. "Acting has taught me the most about myself. It's a craft that's deeply personal—you have to use yourself as a tool. You're constantly learning and evolving with every role you take on. It's a very dynamic, ever-changing environment," she explains.

She's also grateful for the opportunities she's had to work with talented filmmakers and actors. "I've been lucky to be part of some beautiful projects and I've worked with incredible people. I've also been fortunate to choose roles that really matter. Even in big-budget films, I was able to play important characters that were given the depth they deserved," she adds.

However, she remains humble and focused on the future. "There's still so much more I want to do. I've worked on incredible projects, but I'm always looking for that next big challenge. I want to play roles that completely transform me and I'm excited for what's ahead." As *Khoj* premieres, the *Sultan of Delhi* fame continues to prove herself as one of the most versatile and passionate actors of her generation. With her commitment to constantly evolving, we can only expect more powerful performances from this talented actress in the future.

TRENDING

PERSON

MANU BHAKER



While initially Manu Bhaker failed to make it to the top 30 names shortlisted for the Khel Ratna Award, Bhaker has now been nominated to receive the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award.

DILJIT DOSANJH MEETS PM MODI

VIDEO



PM Modi met singer and actor Diljit Dosanjh and the two discussed a range of topics, from the vastness of India and its vibrancy to music and the benefits of yoga.

SANKRANTHIKI VASTHUNNAM

MOVIE



Senior actor Venkatesh has been all over, promoting his upcoming film, *Sankranthiki Vasthunnam*. The songs from the film have also been going viral.

DABIDI

SONG



The lyrical song *Dabidi* from *Daaku Maharaaj*, starring Balakrishna and Urvashi Rautela, was released by the makers.

MAHA NIRVANI AKHADA

PICTURE



The Maha Nirvani Akhada makes a royal entry at the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj.

## New hope for Parkinson's patients!

Scientists from the Institute of Nano Science and Technology (INST) Mohali, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), have made a breakthrough discovery that could offer new hope for treating Parkinson's disease (PD).

The team has demonstrated that a nano-formulation of melatonin—the hormone produced by the brain in response to darkness—could provide a potential therapeutic solution for this debilitating neurological disorder.

Parkinson's disease, one of the most common neurodegenerative conditions, is characterised by the loss of dopamine-producing neurons in the brain due to the aggregation of synuclein protein. While existing medications can help manage symptoms, they do not offer a cure, underscoring the urgent need for more effective treatments.

The latest studies have emphasised the role of Parkinson's-related genes in regulating a process known as "Mitophagy." This mechanism is responsible for identifying and removing dysfunctional mitochondria, reducing oxidative stress in the body. Previous research has also suggested that melatonin, commonly used to treat sleep disorders, could act as an inducer of mitophagy, potentially mitigating the effects of Parkinson's disease.

Building on these findings, the team at INST Mohali, led by Dr. Surajit Karmakar, set out to decode the molecular mechanisms behind melatonin's regulation of oxidative stress. To enhance the therapeutic potential of melatonin, the researchers utilized a biocompatible protein, human serum albumin (HSA), to create a nano-formulation of the hormone. This innovative approach allowed for targeted delivery of melatonin to the brain, improving the drug's bioavailability and ensuring a sustained release.

The results of the study, published in the journal *ACS Applied Materials and Interfaces*, show that nano-melatonin significantly improved antioxidative and neuroprotective properties in both in vitro and in vivo models of Parkinson's disease. By boosting mitophagy, nano-melatonin helps remove unhealthy mitochondria and promotes mitochondrial biogenesis. This enhanced activity was shown to counteract the toxicity induced by the pesticide rotenone in a Parkinson's disease model, demonstrating the potential of nano-melatonin to improve brain function.

The sustained release of melatonin provided by the nano-formulation results in increased therapeutic efficacy compared to traditional melatonin, making it a promising candidate for Parkinson's disease treatment. Furthermore, the upregulation of BMI1, a crucial epigenetic regulator, plays a significant role

in enhancing the antioxidative effect and reducing oxidative stress, which is a major contributor to the symptoms of Parkinson's disease.

This breakthrough in Parkinson's research offers new insights into how nano-technology can be harnessed to improve the delivery and efficacy of therapeutic agents. The findings open up exciting possibilities for the future of Parkinson's disease treatment and offer hope for those affected by this debilitating condition.

In conclusion, the development of nano-melatonin represents a significant step forward in Parkinson's disease therapy, with the potential to alleviate symptoms and improve the quality of life for millions of patients worldwide.

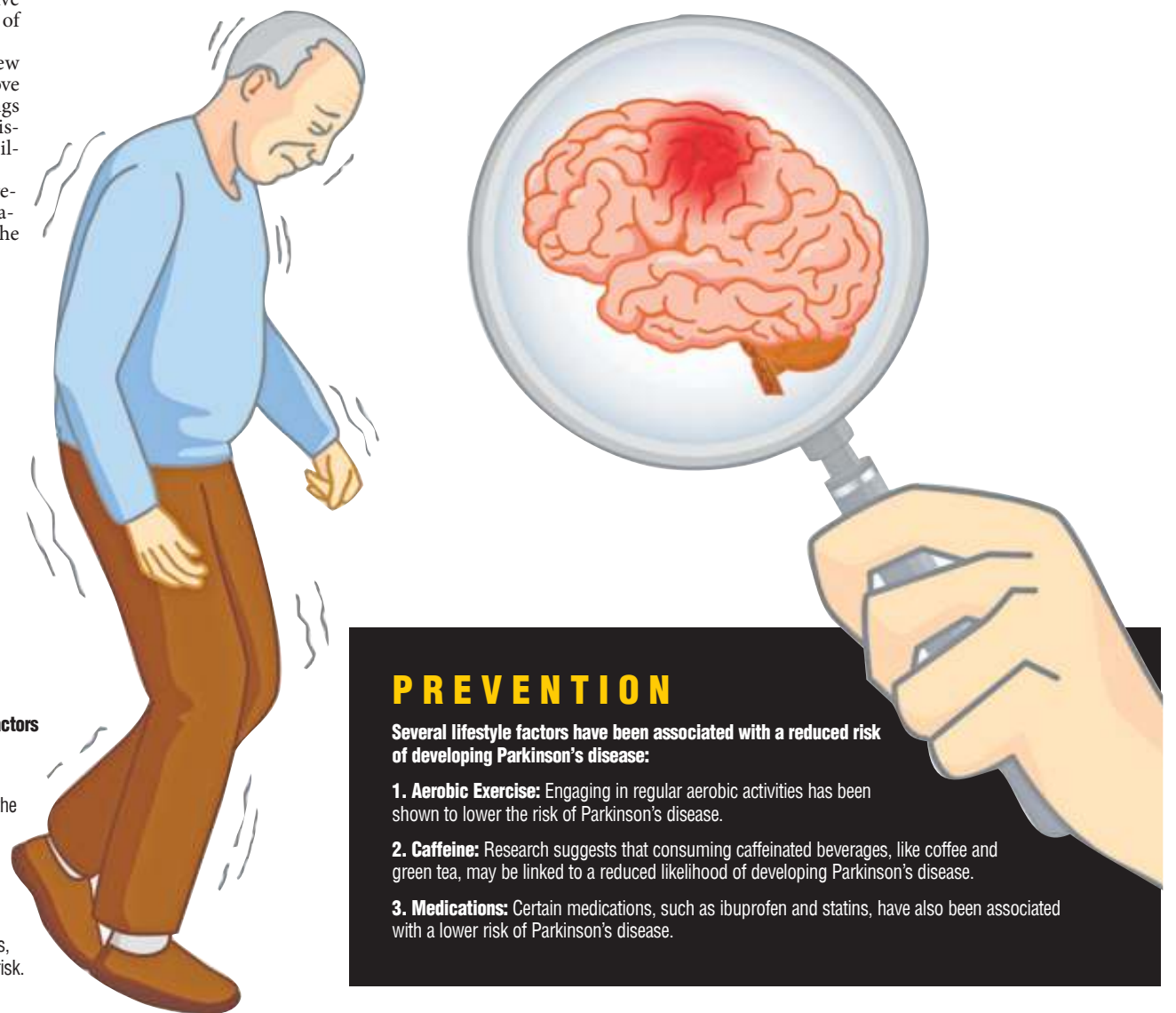
### SYMPTOMS

- Shaking
- Stiffness
- Difficulty with balance and coordination
- Difficulty in walking and talking
- Painful muscle contractions
- Difficulty in speaking
- Mental and behavioural changes

### CAUSES

The cause of Parkinson's disease is unknown, but some factors may increase the risk, including:

- Age:** Most people with Parkinson's first develop the disease after age 60, but about 5% to 10% experience onset before the age of 50.
- Genetics:** Early-onset forms of Parkinson's are often inherited, and some forms have been linked to specific alterations in genes.
- Environmental exposure:** Exposure to air pollution, pesticides, solvents, farming chemicals and heavy metals may increase risk.



### PREVENTION

Several lifestyle factors have been associated with a reduced risk of developing Parkinson's disease:

1. **Aerobic Exercise:** Engaging in regular aerobic activities has been shown to lower the risk of Parkinson's disease.
2. **Caffeine:** Research suggests that consuming caffeinated beverages, like coffee and green tea, may be linked to a reduced likelihood of developing Parkinson's disease.
3. **Medications:** Certain medications, such as ibuprofen and statins, have also been associated with a lower risk of Parkinson's disease.

# Jayasudha: A star who shone bright in CINEMA AND LIFE

Veteran actress Jayasudha's luminous presence in Indian cinema is celebrated for her remarkable versatility and timeless charm. With a career spanning over five decades, she has created an unparalleled legacy in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi films. Renowned as the "Sahaja Nati" (natural actress) in Telugu cinema, Jayasudha's performances are marked by a rare blend of authenticity and grace, bringing her characters to life effortlessly. Jayasudha holds the unique distinction of being the only actress in world cinema to have acted continuously for five decades, from her debut in 1972 to the present day, without taking a break. Starting as a child artiste, transitioning to a leading actress and now excelling as a character artiste, she has appeared in over 350 films. She has shared the screen with legendary actors like Sivaji Ganesan, Sivakumar (Suriya's father), NT Rama Rao, Akkineni Nageswara Rao, Krishna, Shobhan Babu and Krishnam Raju. She has also played the female lead opposite stars like Kamal Haasan, Chandra Mohan, Murali Mohan and Mohan Babu. In her later years, she has portrayed motherly roles for actors like Mahesh Babu and Vijay, bridging three generations of cinema. After the iconic *Mahanati Savitri*, Jayasudha is widely regarded as one of the finest actresses capable of delivering stellar performances in any role. Her contribution extends beyond acting, with forays into politics and humanitarian efforts, reflecting her multifaceted personality. Jayasudha's enduring legacy stands as a testament to her dedication, immense talent and the profound impact she continues to have on the world of cinema and beyond. In an exclusive and engaging interview with Suresh Kavirayani of *The Pioneer*, she takes us through her early days and creating a legacy of her own.



## RAPID FIRE:

**Describe yourself in three words:**  
Displained, God-fearing & caring.

**Driving Force:**  
Trusting in divine force.

**Favourite actor:**  
Vijay Sethupathy, Fahadh Fasil.

**Favourite actress:**  
Vidhya Balan, Radhika Sarathkumar.

**High phase in life:**  
All the time, so far (I am a fighter)

**Low phase in life:**  
All the time, Still surviving being positive

**Favourite cricketers:**  
Gavaskar, Imran Khan, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar



## GROWING UP NEAR CHENNAI'S ICONIC CRICKET GROUND

I was born in 1958 in Chennai and my house was located very close to the MCC (now MA Chidambaram Cricket Stadium). I lived on Bells Road in the Triplicane locality. I vividly remember that during my childhood, the area was home to a simple cricket playground without the large galleries that now surround the stadium. Whenever a cricket match took place, bamboo sticks were set up around the ground to allow the audience to watch the games.

## MARINA BEACH WAS JUST 5KM AWAY FROM MY HOME

Most of my childhood was spent around Bells Road and the Triplicane locality in Chennai. I attended Everest High School until the 7th Standard and later continued my studies at Nungambakkam High School, where I studied up to Plus 2. Marina Beach, a beloved landmark, was just five kilometers away from my home, adding another layer of charm to my cherished memories.

## LEGACY OF LITERATURE

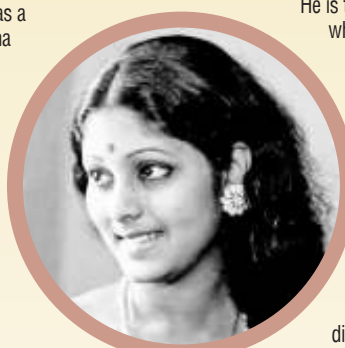
My mother is the daughter of Nidadavole Venkata Rao, a renowned literateur. On my father's side, we come from a family associated with the Brahma Samaj. This legacy stems from my great-grandfathers and our family has consistently upheld the values of education and progress.

## TELUGU TO TAMIL CINEMAS....

After my debut in Telugu cinema, I began receiving Tamil film offers, primarily from renowned director K Balachander. My first Tamil film was *Arangetrangam*, where I played one of the female leads. The film featured Kamal Haasan, Siva Kumar and others. Following that, I worked in his film *SollathaanNinaikkiren*. My third collaboration with him was in *Naan Avanillai*, where I played one of the female leads alongside Gemini Ganesan. The fourth film I worked on with him was *Apoorva Raagangal*, released in 1975. This film, featuring Kamal Haasan, Sundararajan, Srividya, Nagesh and Rajnikanth, which became a massive hit. Later, I appeared in *Idi KathaKadu*, where I shared screen space with Kamal Haasan, SarathBabu, Chiranjeevi and Saritha. Chiranjeevi played a negative role in this film.

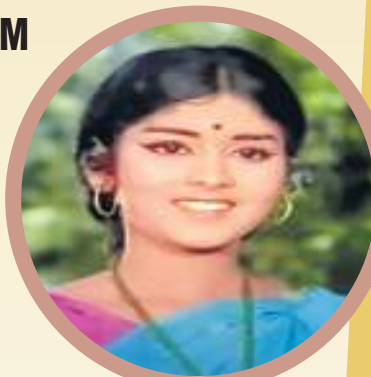
## MY FIRST LEAD ROLE

After my debut in the Telugu film *Pandanti Kapuram*, I acted in many Tamil films, mostly with K Balachander. My first Telugu film as a proper female lead was *Lakshmana Rekha*, directed by N Gopalakrishna. Senior actor Gummadi played one of the key roles in the film, and when the director introduced me to him, he expressed doubts whether I could carry my role properly. Prior to this film, the film became a commercial hit, proving Gummadi's doubts wrong and solidifying my position as a lead actress.



## ACTING IN A BALACHANDER FILM IS LIKE ATTENDING A SCHOOL

He is the superstar of his own film. As actors, we do whatever he instructs and act according to his guidance. If we accomplished even 50 per cent of what he asked of us, it felt like a great achievement. On his sets, there was always a serious atmosphere. Sometimes, he would write the scenes on the spot and show us exactly how to perform them. He would often scold everyone, but if he ever asked, "How are you?" or "Did you have your breakfast?" we would feel a sense of relief and realise that Balachander was in a good mood. He was the most disciplined director I've worked with and everyone learned the importance of discipline from him.



## SOBHAN BABU'S KINDNESS ON AND OFF-SCREEN

In addition to ANR, I had the privilege of working with other legendary actors like Krishnam Raju, Sobhan Babu and Chandra Mohan. Sobhan Babu was loved by all actresses for his understanding and compassion. He was the person we could turn to with our problems, and he would offer sound advice.

## MUSICAL HITS WITH ANR

I first acted with Akkineni Nageswara Rao in *Mahakavi Kshetrappa*, followed by roles in *Vichitra Jeevitham*, *Yedanthastula Meda* and *Sreevani Muchatlu*. Then came the massive blockbuster *Premabhishekam*, directed by Dasari Narayana Rao, where I shared the screen with Sridevi. My performance in *Premabhishekam* earned me the prestigious Nandi Award for Best Actress, as well as the Filmfare Special Jury Award. I worked with ANR in several films, most of which were musical hits. ANR is a jovial person who was always eager to learn and share knowledge on a variety of topics.



## FILM SETS TO LIFE PARTNER

Dasari Narayana Rao had worked on a few Hindi films, with Jeetendra playing the lead in most of them. At that time, Jeetendra's cousin, Nitin Kapoor, worked as an assistant to Dasari for these Hindi films. Jeetendra encouraged him to learn more about filmmaking, which led Nitin to join his films. Later, Dasari asked Nitin to work on his Telugu films as well. So Nitin moved to Chennai. It was through this collaboration that I met Nitin Kapoor. Our professional relationship soon turned into love, leading to our marriage. We have two sons, both of whom are now well settled.



## JUGGLING MULTIPLE SHIFTS

I was so busy with Telugu and Tamil films that most of the filmmakers approached me for both women-centric roles and other characters. At that time, I used to work four shifts a day. My schedule was intense. I worked for *Yugandhar*, a remake of the Hindi film *Don*. NTR's timings were available only from 6 pm to 9 pm. So I acted with him during the same shift. I struggled a lot for many days with these shifts, as I slept at 2 am and woke up at 6 am. While working with NTR, I noticed how disciplined and punctual he was. It was through him, I learnt the importance of discipline.

## SUPPORT FROM JAYALALITHA

After a successful stint as a leading actress in many films, I decided to venture into film production. I gained good recognition with films like *Kanchana Seetha* and *Kalikalam*, but unfortunately, I lost a lot of money after producing the film *Hands Up* in 1999. During that challenging time, Jayalalitha helped me get out of the financial crisis. She had started *Jaya TV*. After hearing my story, she advised me not to continue producing films and offered me the opportunity to do a serial on *Jaya TV*. Though I couldn't meet her personally again, Sasikala called me, and within 15 days, the serial was aired on *Jaya TV*. It became a huge hit, and that was a significant help she provided during that difficult time.

## MY PARENTS' TALE OF LOVE

My father's name is Ramesh Chander and he worked as a Range Officer in the Madras Corporation. His responsibility was to oversee the garbage vehicles and ensure that waste was handled properly. My mother, Jogulamba, affectionately called *Jogu Bai*, shared a beautiful love story with my father, as theirs was a love marriage.



## MOM WAS NEVER AN ACTRESS

There's a common misconception, even perpetuated by sources like Wikipedia, that my mother was an actress. In reality, she was not. She worked with Balananda Sangam, an institution where children learnt dance and singing. During this time, director KS Prakash Rao (father of the legendary director K Raghavendra Rao) was shooting a children's film. For one of the songs, he visited Balananda Sangam to film the children. My mother appeared in a single scene of that song. Although she was in her teens, her mature appearance led the director to add a large bindi on her forehead for that brief shot.



## MY SURNAME IS SAMARDHI, NOT NIDADAVOLE

However, there is a persistent error regarding my surname. Contrary to common reports and even Wikipedia, my surname is Samardhi, not Nidadavolu. Nidadavolu is my maternal grandfather's surname, which has been mistakenly attributed to me. My paternal grandfather passed away when I was born, but my maternal grandfather, Nidadavole Venkata Rao, witnessed my journey as an actress. This correction is important to honour the distinct legacies of both sides of my family.

## NEW NAME, NEW JOURNEY

My original name is Sujatha. It was writer and director VC Guhanathan who gave me the name Jayasudha when I entered the film industry. At that time, there was already a well-known actress named Sujatha. So, Guhanathan decided to change my name to avoid confusion. My father, who had a fondness for the letter 'J', chose Jayasudha for me. A significant influence on my entry into the film industry was my aunt, Vijayanirmala, the renowned actress, director, and wife of superstar Krishna. She is my father's first cousin, and it was through her that I found my way into cinema.

## DANCE PERFORMANCE THAT LED TO MY FILM DEBUT

Actress Vijayanirmala is my aunt, and she was a popular actress in her time. I attended the wedding of Vijayanirmala's younger brother, and during the event, I danced with other kids. Krishna uncle noticed my performance and told Vijayanirmala about it. I had the potential for films. I've always looked older than my age—when I was 13, I looked 16. When uncle Krishna was making the film *Pandanti Kapuram*, which required a teenage girl, my aunt suggested, "Sujatha is good" and that's how I was cast as a child artiste in the film. This is how my film debut came to be.



## CRICKET DREAMS TO SILVER SCREEN STARDOM

From my childhood, I watched cricket at the MCC and I would see many people come to watch the matches. Cricketers would wave to the crowd as they traveled in buses, and this sparked my deep fondness for the sport. I wanted to be a cricketer, even after making my debut in *Pandanti Kapuram* in 1972. However, my father told me that I could either pursue cricket and leave films, or focus on my film career and give up on cricket. I chose to continue in films and left cricket behind, but my love for the sport never faded.

## FIRST MAJOR AWARDS

After the success of *Lakshmana Rekha* and *Apoorva Raagangal*, director K Raghavendra Rao cast me in his film *Jyothi*. Similar to my earlier film *Lakshmana Rekha*, producer Kranthi Kumar expressed concern about me taking on such a strong role at a young age. Before *Jyothi*, I had appeared in a few films where I played modern and youthful roles, which may have fueled Kranthi Kumar's doubts. Once again, Gummadi, who had been part of *Lakshmana Rekha*, played a key role in *Jyothi* as well. When the film was released, it was a massive hit, and I received my first Nandi Award as Best Actress, along with my first Filmfare Award for Best Actress. From that point on, the rest is history. I went on to win awards for films like *Premabhishekam* and *Megha Sandesam*.



## CRICKET, RESPECT AND NTR

My first collaboration with NTR was in *Samsaram*, followed by a special song in his film *Eureeta*. I went on to work with him in *Adavi Ramudu* and several other films. NTR was known for his calm demeanor and respectful nature; even when we were young, he always addressed us as "garu". Being a huge cricket fan, I used to listen to cricket commentary during filming breaks. One day, when NTR enquired about me, the unit mentioned that I was listening to cricket commentary. He asked, "What, Jayasudha garu, where are you going?" I replied, "Sir, cricket, sir." From then on, NTR would ask me about cricket scores, showing a keen interest in the game. I have fond memories of the *Driver Ramudu* shoot in Araku, where NTR's sons—Balakrishna, Harikrishna and Ramakrishna—would play cricket during shooting breaks.

## COMFORT ZONES TO CAREER MILESTONES

I had the opportunity to act with most of the leading actors, but not with Krishna garu. Since Vijayanirmala is family to me and Krishna is my uncle, both of us were not very comfortable working together initially. However, I eventually worked with him in the film *Doctor Cineactor*. From then on, I played strong roles in a few of his films.

