



# sunday pioneer

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

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

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**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

— Harish Rao, BRS MLA, Telangana

P4

**DON'T MISS...**

**Cockfights banned in Andhra Pradesh**

Ahead of Sankranti, the Andhra Pradesh government has intensified efforts to prevent cockfighting, a traditional yet illegal practice in the state. Specialised teams comprising Animal Husbandry Department officials, local police, and revenue officials have been formed to enforce the ban. Public awareness campaigns will be conducted, highlighting animal cruelty laws and penalties for violations. Cockfighting is prohibited under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, which mandates...

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**'Kadiyam to be a tourism hub'**

Minister for Tourism Development, Kandula Durgesh, has pledged to develop the Kadiyam area as a prominent tourist destination. The Minister, accompanied by MLA Gorantla Butchaiah Chowdary, laid the foundation stone for the construction of a road at Kadiyapulanka village in Kadiyam mandal, with an investment of Rs 1.85 crore on Saturday. Addressing the gathering, Durgesh reiterated that the coalition government is committed to the State's overall development. He praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister...

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**'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..."

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**Apparel exporters seek tax incentives**

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...)

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## Now, mid-day meal for Inter students

Education Minister Nara Lokesh launches scheme in Vijayawada



- 475 government colleges in AP covered the scheme with Rs 86 cr annual investment
- Emphasis on restoring trust in government institutions through the Andhra Model of School Education
- Stronger internal assessments, EAMCET and NEET materials from next year, extended college hours, and collaboration with IIT Madras
- Rs 944 crore allocated for Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Student Kits for Classes 1-12
- Lokesh launches 'Drugs Vaddhu Bro' to raise awareness against substance abuse

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Education, IT, and Electronics Nara Lokesh launched the Dokka Seethamma Midday Meal Scheme for intermediate students at the Government Junior College in Payakapuram, Vijayawada. He emphasised the government's commitment to

restoring the former glory of government educational institutions.

Minister Lokesh highlighted the declining student enrolment in government schools and colleges, attributing it to a lack of trust in the system.

"Government school and college teachers provide better education than private institutions, yet the stu-

dent count keeps decreasing due to parents' distrust," he said.

He stressed the need for comprehensive reforms, stating, "Before strengthening intermediate colleges, we must reform government schools. That is why we are introducing the Andhra Model of School Education.

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### CS inaugurates scheme in Kurnool

PNS ■ KURNOOL

Chief Secretary K Vijayanand launched the Dokka Seethamma Midday Meal Scheme for government junior college students at the Government Junior College in Kurnool. The scheme, covering 475 junior colleges across Andhra Pradesh, will benefit 1,48,149 students.

The Chief Secretary expressed his happiness in being part of the initiative, which has already been implemented for Classes 1 to 10. He mentioned that Rs 28 crore has been allocated for this academic year and Rs 86 crore for the next, ensuring nutritious meals for junior college students to support their physical, mental, and intellectual growth. In Kurnool district alone, 8,678 students from 23 junior colleges will benefit.

The meal menu will vary daily, offering balanced options like vegetable pilaf, egg curry, peanut-jaggery mix, pulihora, and vegetable rice, ensuring a diet rich in protein, fibre, and carbohydrates.

Encouraging students to excel in all fields, Vijayanand urged them to work hard and make the state and country proud. District Collector P. Ranjith Basha praised the initiative and assured smooth implementation.

Following the launch, the Chief Secretary joined the students for a communal lunch and interacted with them about their studies and goals. Joint Collector Dr B. Navya, Adoni Sub-Collector Maurya Bharadwaj, Assistant Collector Ch. Kalyani, DEO Samuel Paul, and other officials attended the event.

### 2 IPS & 2 IAS officers promoted

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has promoted senior IPS and IAS officers, as per orders GO Rt Nos 19 and 20 issued by Chief Secretary K Vijayanand on Saturday.

According to the orders, two IPS officers of the 1994 batch, Kumar Vishwajeet and Dr A Ravi Shankar, have been elevated to the rank of Director General of Police. Kumar Vishwajeet will continue as Principal Secretary to the Home Department, while Dr Ravi Shankar has been re-designated as Director General of Police, Crime Investigation Department (CID).

Similarly, another order announced the promotion of two IAS officers of the 1995 batch, G Jayalakshmi and A Vani Prasad.

Jayalakshmi has been re-designated as Chief Commissioner of Land Administration and Special Chief Secretary, while Vani Prasad continues as Principal Secretary and has been re-designated as Special Chief Secretary of the Labour, Factories, Boilers & Insurance Medical Services Department.



### CM failed to fulfil key promises, alleges Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Chief Minister and YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has strongly criticised Chandrababu Naidu for failing to fulfil key promises made during the elections, accusing him of betraying the people.

In a scathing post on X, Jagan listed several instances of deceit, pointing out the TDP's disregard for its manifesto and the negative impact of its inaction on women, children, farmers, and the general public. Jagan highlighted the TDP's failure to implement the "Thalliki Vandanam" scheme, which promised Rs. 15,000 annually per child. Despite holding multiple cabinet meetings, the TDP has failed to provide clarity on when it will be launched, with the scheme now deferred to next year. In contrast, Jagan pointed to the success of his government's "Amma Vodi" scheme, which disbursed Rs. 26,067 crore to 44.48 lakh mothers and 84 lakh children, ensuring education for the underprivileged. He accused the TDP of betraying the trust of mothers and school-going children by abandoning the programme.

Regarding the "Rythu Bharosa", Jagan criticised the TDP for promising Rs. 20,000 annually to farmers as input support but failing to release any amount despite the completion of both Kharif and Rabi seasons.

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## Naidu to launch 'Organic Kuppam' project tomorrow

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF) initiative, which has already enlisted 10.37 lakh farmers in Natural Farming practices, is set to launch the Organic Kuppam project in the Chief Minister's constituency on January 6, 2025. Led by the Rythu Sadhikara Samstha (RySS), the initiative aims to transform agriculture in the region by promoting sustainable and climate-resilient farming methods.

The Organic Kuppam initiative is in tune with the Chief Minister's vision to create a model of compre-



The 'Organic Kuppam' initiative is in tune with the Chief Minister's vision to create a model of comprehensive agricultural reform that enhances farmers' livelihoods, public health, and environmental well-being.

hensive agricultural reform that enhances farmers' livelihoods, public health, and environmental well-being.

Through the promotion of natural farming, the project seeks to address a range of challenges faced by farmers, such as economic pressures, environmental concerns, and health issues

aggravated by the climate crisis. Kuppam, situated in Chittoor district, consists of 95 Gram Panchayats (GPs) and covers a total cultivable area of 1,15,055 acres. Of this, 62,888 acres are under cultivation, while 52,167 acres (approximately 45%) remain fallow.

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### Navy's spectacular 'Op Demo' dazzles crowd at RK Beach

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Indian Navy's Operational Demonstration (Op Demo) at Ramakrishna Beach mesmerised thousands with a breathtaking showcase of naval strength, featuring warships, aircraft, submarines, and the elite MARCOS commandos.

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu, the Chief Guest, and Vice Admiral Rajesh Pendharkar, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, attended the event, which highlighted the Navy's critical role in safeguarding India's maritime borders.

The demonstration included a traditional Beating Retreat



Ceremony, a seamless Continuity Drill, and concluded with a stunning Laser and Drone Show, leaving the audience in awe. The event was attended by lakhs of people, including the Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh, MPs, MLAs, dignitaries, locals, and tourists.

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### AP's electricity plan approved

PNS ■ KURNOOL

The 10th meeting of the State Coordination Forum (SCF) was held at the APERC office in Vidyuth Niyantana Bhavan, Kurnool, to formally approve the State Electricity Plan for the 5th Control Period, covering the financial years from 2024-25 to 2028-29.

The meeting was chaired by Thakur Rama Singh, Chairman (i/c) and Member/Tech of the Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (APERC). Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh, K Vijayanand, who is also the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of AP Transco, convened the session.

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### Ticket hike is justified, says Pawan Kalyan

'Don't drag film industry into politics'

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj K Pawan Kalyan has urged that the film industry should not be dragged into politics and defended the hike in cinema ticket prices.

Speaking at the pre-release event of Ram Charan's upcoming film 'Game Changer' on Saturday, Pawan Kalyan justified the ticket price hike, stating that GST is paid on each ticket sold.

He argued that ticket pricing is determined by supply and demand and pointed out that the government benefits from GST collections when ticket prices increase. He condemned the spread of false narratives regarding ticket hikes.

"Only those involved in film production should comment on the industry. Heroes have no role in discussing ticket price hikes. The Chandrababu Naidu-led government

has always respected the Telugu film industry," Pawan Kalyan asserted. He added that while some film personalities did not support the coalition government, they never opposed it either.

Recalling his younger days, he shared that he once bought tickets in black to watch a film by renowned director Shankar and questioned what was wrong with higher ticket prices for blockbuster releases. He appealed to producer and Telangana Film Federation president Dil Raju to focus on Andhra Pradesh as well by setting up film studios and stunt schools in the State.

Tourism and Cinematography Minister Kandula Durgesh announced that a new film policy would soon be introduced to attract more film industry investments. Director Shankar, actor Ram Charan, producer Dil Raju, and others including actors Srikanth, Prudhvi, music director Thaman, and actress Anjali also attended.

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

P5

## 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.

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**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?”

## 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

### 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 Venkateshwarlu)

# ‘Naidu govt promoting drone technology in farm sector’

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Agriculture K Atchannaaidu has stated that the coalition government led by Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu is committed to advancing agricultural mechanisation and effectively implementing drone technology in farming practices. He emphasised that modern technology would be used for soil testing, calling it essential for improving crop yield.

The ‘Abhyudaya Rythu Puraskaram - 2025’ ceremony, jointly organised by Vignana’s University and Rythu Nestham Foundation, honoured 250 progressive farmer couples from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana as part of Sankranti celebrations on Saturday. Minister Atchannaaidu presented awards and felicitated the farmers. He highlighted that drone technology has significantly benefited agriculture by enabling precise pesticide spraying only in affected areas, reducing damage from pests. He noted that drones, once used primarily for events like weddings, have now become valuable in farming.



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The minister urged farmers to adopt drone technology and conduct soil tests before planting crops, assuring that the

government would provide comprehensive soil test reports using satellite and cloud technology.

He added that organic crops can better withstand floods and storms and that organic fertilisers are in high demand. Atchannaaidu also announced subsidies for drip irrigation and sprinklers and emphasised that automation tools

are now available to help farmers manage crops from seed to sale.

Narasaraopet MP and Vignana’s Vice Chairman Lavu Srikrishna Devarayalu encouraged farmers to double crop yields and reduce water and chemical usage by adopting innovative methods.

He noted that the university motivates students to focus on agriculture with specialised labs and faculty from across the country.

Dr Lavu Rathaiah, Chairman of Vignana, stressed the importance of new technologies in agriculture and advocated a gradual increase in organic farming, citing Sri Lanka’s challenges with a sudden shift.

He also recommended integrating AI and IoT in farming to provide real-time updates on pest control and crop health through mobile phones.

## VAIKUNTHA DWARA DARSANAM

# TTD EO inspects arrangements

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

TTD Chairman BR Naidu inspected the ongoing arrangements at Tirumala for the upcoming Vaikuntha Dwara Darsanam on Saturday evening.

Accompanied by EO J Syamala Rao, Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdary, and other officials, the Chairman first inspected the SSD token issuing counters at the Community Hall in Balaji Nagar.

He later inspected the various parking areas designated for the upcoming festival, along with the queue lines and



other arrangements at the Outer Ring Road and Krishna Teja Rest House.

Subsequently, he held a review meeting with TTD, district, and police officials at Annamaiah Bhavan regarding the arrangements. He instructed all officials to work

in coordination to ensure a comfortable and hassle-free Vaikuntha Dwara Darshan for devotees.

JEOs Goutami and Veerabrahmam, CVSO Sridhar, SP Subbarayudu, CE Satyanarayana, and others were also present.

## Navy’s...

Continued from Page 1

It was also live-streamed for a broader audience. Chief Minister Naidu praised the Navy’s courage and technological advancements, stating, “The Navy’s contributions in protecting our maritime borders continue to inspire us. Andhra Pradesh shares a proud and long-standing bond with the Navy.”

Vice Admiral Pendharkar thanked the State government and local authorities for their support, acknowledging the overwhelming public participation that made the event a grand success. The Op Demo not only showcased the Navy’s operational excellence but also strengthened its bond with the people of Andhra Pradesh, leaving a lasting impression of national pride and inspiration.

# RPO Vijayawada enhances service delivery

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Regional Passport Officer (RPO) Siva Harsha stated that the year 2024 has been a milestone year for RPO Vijayawada, as it has significantly improved the citizen experience in passport-related services. He shared that in the calendar year, the office delivered an impressive 3,23,553 passport services through the efficient operations of two Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) in Vijayawada and Tirupati, along with 13 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSKs) serving the central and Rayalaseema regions of Andhra Pradesh.

As part of ongoing efforts to enhance service delivery, RPO Vijayawada has undergone substantial infrastructure upgrades. In June 2024, the office was awarded the “Best Office in its Category” for exceptional service standards maintained during 2023-24. Additionally, the Passport Seva Kendra (PSK) in Vijayawada is currently undergoing expansion, with the upgraded facility expected to be fully



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RPO Siva Harsha expressed his gratitude to the dedicated team at RPO Vijayawada and to key stakeholders, including the Andhra Pradesh Police, the Department of Posts, and Tata Consultancy Services, for their vital support. He specifically praised the Andhra Pradesh Police for its prompt police verification process, ensuring timely passport issuance. He also

acknowledged the Postal Department for facilitating additional appointments at POPSKs and ensuring faster passport deliveries to citizens’ doorsteps.

In January 2025, the Passport Seva Kendra (PSK) in Vijayawada will launch a special drive on Wednesdays, offering 250 additional appointments to streamline the passport application process. Furthermore, the number of Police Clearance Certificate (PCC) appointments at the 13 POPSKs has been increased. RPO Vijayawada urged citizens to avoid using touts or agents for

passport services and reminded applicants that they can schedule or reschedule appointments through the official passport website: [www.passportindia.gov.in](http://www.passportindia.gov.in).

Reflecting on the achievements of 2024, Siva Harsha reaffirmed the office’s commitment to delivering excellent service to citizens. With ongoing infrastructure improvements, special drives, and a continued focus on efficient processing, RPO Vijayawada is set to maintain its high standards of service in the years ahead.

# Now, mid-day meal for Inter...

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Restoring the past glory of government schools is my responsibility, with parents, students, and teachers as brand ambassadors.”

The Minister expressed his desire to see government school students’ success highlighted alongside private institutions during board exam results. He encouraged students to focus on education, emphasising that a degree is essential for better

career prospects. Sharing his personal experience, Lokesh mentioned that he was an average student until Class 10 but succeeded with perseverance and mentorship. He urged students to stay committed to their education and aim for higher achievements.

The Minister also announced major reforms in the intermediate curriculum, including stronger internal assessments and the introduction of EAMCET and NEET

preparation materials from next year. College hours have been extended by 90 minutes to improve pass rates, with students grouped based on their learning levels and additional caretakers appointed for extra study hours. Question banks have been provided, and pilot projects are being conducted in collaboration with IIT Madras.

He further mentioned the allocation of Rs 944 crore for Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Student Kits, benefiting stu-

dents from Classes 1 to 12. The Dokka Seethamma Midday Meal Scheme, with an annual investment of Rs 86 crore, will cover 475 government intermediate colleges, ensuring nutritious meals aligned with regional food preferences.

Minister Lokesh also spoke about efforts to combat drug addiction through the ‘Drugs Vaddhu Bro’ (No to Drugs) awareness campaign, aimed at educating students on the dangers of substance abuse.

# Naidu to launch ‘Organic...

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The region is home to 60,031 landholdings, with 95% belonging to small and marginal farmers who own 78% of the agricultural land. Additionally, 17,328 farmworker families, considered among the poorest, rely on agriculture for their livelihood.

Under the Organic Kuppam initiative, APCNF will be implemented across all villages in the constituency, aiming to integrate every farmer and every acre of land into Natural Farming practices.

This effort is expected to rejuvenate fallow lands and enhance the agricultural landscape. The project also highlights the role of women’s self-help groups in building capacity for Natural Farming, strengthening traceability, and certifying produce. By 2028-29, the target is to have 70% of farmers, 50% of cultivable land, and 20% of fallow land in Kuppam engaged in Natural Farming.

By 2035, the initiative aims to transition 40% of the constituency to sustainable farming.

In 2024-25, the initiative will expand from

79 panchayats to all 95 panchayats by 2025-26. The number of Village Organisations (VOs) will also increase from 100 to 200, broadening the reach for farmers adopting Natural Farming.

Additionally, RySS plans to boost the incomes of small and marginal farming families by promoting Natural Farming Pre-Monsoon Dry Sowing (NF PMDS) as an entry point and encouraging crop diversification.

The program is expected to create 37,000 rural jobs through high-value farm models, ensuring a regular income of Rs 10,000-25,000 per month for beneficiaries. By 2035, RySS aims to improve soil health across 53% of the cultivable land, reduce water usage by 50%, and ensure that 66% of farmers have access to safe and diverse food, contributing to improved public health.

This transformative project is set to position Kuppam as a national model for sustainable agriculture, ensuring economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and better health outcomes for the region.

## CM failed...

Continued from Page 1

He pointed out that during his tenure, Rs. 13,500 was regularly provided to over 53.58 lakh farmers each year, amounting to a total of Rs. 34,378 crore. Jagannadha Reddy accused the TDP of neglecting farmers by cancelling free crop insurance, weakening Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs), and failing to ensure the Minimum Support Price (MSP). He also condemned the government for not supporting the families of farmers who have committed suicide due to financial distress.

Jagan further criticised TDP governance for being marred by scams and exploitative policies. He mentioned several unfulfilled promises, including Rs. 18,000 for women above 18 years, Rs. 36,000 in unemployment benefits, and Rs. 48,000 for women above 50 years.

# SAAP chief felicitates Koneru Humpy

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chairman of the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP), Animini Ravi Naidu, made a courtesy visit to World Women’s Rapid Chess Champion Koneru Humpy at her residence in Kolanukonda, Mangalagiri Assembly constituency, on Saturday. During the visit, he felicitated Humpy and extended his warm congratulations on her victory in the World Women’s Rapid Chess Championship.

Following her win, Koneru Humpy arrived at Gannavaram Airport near Vijayawada, where she received a warm welcome from SAAP officials and several sports personalities. She was then escorted to her home in Kolanukonda.

In his meeting with Koneru Humpy and her father, Dronacharya Awardee Koneru



Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh Chairman Ravi Naidu felicitated World Women’s Rapid Chess Champion Koneru Humpy at her residence in Kolanukonda, Mangalagiri Assembly Constituency, Guntur district, on Saturday

Ashok, SAAP Chairman Ravi Naidu discussed the New Sports Policy and sought Humpy’s support and valuable suggestions for the development of sports in the state. He praised Humpy’s perseverance, dedication, and determination, stating that her achievement in the World Women’s

Rapid Chess Championship is a proud moment for the entire Telugu community. Humpy, in turn, expressed her intention to meet Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu soon. She also promised to continue her efforts for the advancement of sports and games in the state.

# AP’s electricity plan...

Continued from Page 1

As the State Transmission Utility (STU), AP Transco is responsible for preparing and publishing the State Electricity Plan every five years, following the guidelines provided by APERC’s Load Forecast and Resource Plan. AP Transco, in coordination with AP Genco and AP Discoms, formulates the plan to promote the generation, transmission, distribution, and supply of electricity.

The State Electricity Plan serves as a reference document for all stakeholders and helps the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) in preparing the National Electricity Plan and other state-level plans. The plan is typically published at the start of each Control Period, ahead of tariff reviews.

In line with these regulations, APERC issued an order on Load Forecast and Resource Plans for the 5th Control Period (2024-25 to 2028-29) on June 27, 2024. During a meeting on October 21, 2024, APERC instructed AP Transco to include the new Integrated Clean Energy Policy (ICE)-2024 in the State Electricity Plan. This policy aims to make Andhra Pradesh a hub for renewable energy and pumped

hydro storage. As a result, AP Transco revised the plan, adding 10,800 MW of load to the previously approved Resource Plan.

The forum reviewed the updated plan thoroughly and approved its publication.

Thakur Rama Singh, Chairman of APERC, emphasised the importance of completing pending substation and transmission line works to ensure an uninterrupted power supply during the upcoming Rabi season and summer months. He also expressed concern about the rising number of electrical accidents and stressed the need to improve safety measures while upgrading the distribution system. Utilities were instructed to reduce accidents and ensure compensation for the families of deceased victims, as per existing regulations.

The meeting was attended by PVR Reddy, Member/Finance of APERC; Ravi Pattanshetti, CMD of APCPDCL; Keerthi Chekuri, JMD of Commercial & HR at AP Transco; Prudhvithej Immadi, CMD of APEPDCL; K. Santosha Rao, CMD of APSPDCL; Ashok Kumar Reddy, Chief Engineer of Generation at AP Genco; and Rohit Chhabra, General Manager from NTPC.

# Ahead of Trump’s...

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Both Musk and Ramaswamy have argued that H-1B visas are essential to attract 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 Siram 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 federal 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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# V'wada to be turned into traffic-free city: MP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada MP Kesineni Chinni has announced plans to transform Vijayawada into a traffic-free city by addressing congestion through improved road infrastructure. He stated that the state government is developing a comprehensive Master Plan to ensure smooth transportation and better connectivity in the city.

On Saturday, MP Chinni, along with Vijayawada East MLA Gadde Rama Mohana Rao, laid the foundation stone for the renovation of Canara Bank Road and two other roads at Mogalrajapuram near Jamma Chettu Centre, with a budget of Rs 40 lakh. Special 'poojas' were performed during the event.

Speaking on the occasion, MP Chinni said that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu had directed the preparation of a special Master Plan for Vijayawada City, focusing

Speaking on the occasion, MP Chinni said that Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu had directed the preparation of a special Master Plan for Vijayawada City, focusing on the construction and widening of roads. He reaffirmed his commitment to making Vijayawada a model city in traffic management and infrastructure development

On the construction and widening of roads. He reaffirmed his commitment to making Vijayawada a model city in traffic management and infrastructure development.

He noted that development works in the city were progressing under CM Naidu's leadership. Over the past six months, he has been attending several foundation stone-laying events across various divisions of the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC). He also mentioned that multiple public concerns were being addressed. Recalling the TDP

government's tenure from 2014 to 2019, he stated that around 34 roads were constructed in the city during that period.

MP Chinni stressed the importance of collaboration with the NTR District Police, VMC officials, and community representatives to find effective solutions for traffic congestion. "During our visits to different city divisions, we convey the issues to officials and work towards resolving them. Our goal is to ensure smooth traffic flow without disruptions," he said.

He also reiterated CM Naidu's vision of making

Vijayawada a traffic-free city and mentioned that the Master Plan for road development was underway as per the CM's instructions. He assured that he would seek funds from the Union Government for the development of roads, drainage, and drinking water facilities, highlighting CM Naidu's special interest in these issues.

Vijayawada East MLA Gadde Rama Mohana Rao pointed out that the existing flyovers in the city were built during the TDP regime and added that the government was now focusing on developing roads on the city's outskirts, including the extension of Mahanadu Road to facilitate smoother truck movement.

The event was attended by VMC Corporators Chennupati Usha Rani, Mummaneni Prasad, Executive Engineer Samrajyam, DEE Shanta Kumari, AE Nageswara Rao, and others.

# Priority to modernisation of temples, says Minister Anam

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Endowments Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy has emphasised that the State government is committed to modernising and developing temples while ensuring enhanced facilities for devotees. He stated that these efforts aim to uphold the sanctity of temples while making them more accessible and welcoming for devotees across the state.

On Saturday, Minister Ramanarayana Reddy visited Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada. He was warmly received by Kanaka Durga Temple in-charge Executive Officer Ramachandra Mohan and temple priests, who facilitated his darshan of Goddess Durga Devi.

Speaking to the media later, the Minister directed officials



to take necessary measures to improve the overall experience for visitors, including steps to ensure the comfort and safety of devotees. He also stressed the importance of a devotee-friendly approach,

instructing security personnel to be courteous and respectful towards visitors.

Minister Reddy later held discussions with officials regarding the development of the Durga Temple and

instructed them to provide additional facilities for devotees. During the visit, he interacted with devotees waiting in the queue to inquire about their experiences with the available facilities.

# Cockfights banned in AP under animal laws

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Ahead of Sankranti, the Andhra Pradesh government has intensified efforts to prevent cockfighting, a traditional yet illegal practice in the state. Specialised teams comprising Animal Husbandry Department officials, local police, and revenue officials have been formed to enforce the ban. Public awareness campaigns will be conducted, highlighting animal cruelty laws and penalties for violations.

Cockfighting is prohibited under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, which mandates strict penalties for causing pain or suffering to animals. Section 11(a) prohibits torturing animals, while Section 11(m)(ii) forbids inciting animals to fight. Organising such events or providing venues for them is also punish-



able under Section 11(1)(n).

Additionally, the Andhra Pradesh Gaming Act, 1974, criminalises cockfighting, with Section 9(1) penalising gaming in public spaces and Section 9(2) targeting those setting animals to fight, with penalties including fines and imprisonment. Section 10 empowers the police to arrest offenders and seize related items.

The District Society for

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (DSPCA), led by the District Collector, along with the Superintendent of Police, District Animal Husbandry Officer, and other officials, will oversee the enforcement.

Authorities have urged the public to report cockfights, emphasising the importance of protecting animal welfare and maintaining public order during the festival season.

# Traffic curbs in city for 'Haindava Shankharavam'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna district police have implemented extensive security and traffic management measures ahead of the 'Haindava Shankharavam' public meeting, scheduled for Sunday near Kesarapalli in Gannavaram mandal. Organised by Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), the event is expected to attract a large crowd from Andhra Pradesh and neighbouring states, focusing on advocating autonomy for Hindu temples. To ensure safety, 3,300 police personnel will be deployed for security duties, and the area has been designated a no-fly zone, prohibiting drone usage due to its proximity to Gannavaram Airport.

In light of anticipated traffic congestion, the police have issued specific traffic diversion plans. Vehicles travelling from Visakhapatnam to Chennai should use a route via Kakinada, Yanam, Amalapuram, and Ongole. For Chennai to Visakhapatnam routes, diversions include Ongole, Bapatla, and Repalle. Vehicles travelling to and from Hyderabad via East Godavari, Eluru, and Krishna districts will follow designated routes such as Sathupalli, Jangareddy gudem, and Nuzvid.

# Amarnath says TDP's membership claims fabricated



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Former minister Gudivada Amarnath has strongly rejected the TDP's claims of 100 per cent membership registration in Muchearla village, calling the reports of 1,400 individuals joining the party "fabricated" and accusing Nara Lokesh of spreading false narratives for political gain. In a statement to the media, Amarnath said, "The claims that 1,400 people have taken TDP membership in Muchearla are completely baseless and fabricated. Nara Lokesh is trying to mislead the public with false narratives for his own political gain."

Amarnath emphasized the enduring strength of the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) in the region. "YSRCP has a strong presence in Muchearla," he said. "The Sarpanch and MP/MLA positions in the village were both won by YSRCP candidates. In the recent MLA elections, the TDP trailed us by only 150 votes out of 1,350 cast—this shows where the true support lies."

# Govt committed to brighter future for disadvantaged students: Dola

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Social Welfare Minister and Visakhapatnam district In-charge Minister Dola Bala Veeranjaneeya Swamy announced the State government's commitment to providing a brighter future for economically disadvantaged students. As part of these efforts, the government has introduced the Dokka Seethamma Mid-Day Meal Scheme in government junior colleges, ensuring quality nutrition for students. The scheme was officially launched on Saturday morning at the Government Women's Junior College on Old Jail Road, with local MLA Vamsi Krishna Srinivas and District Collector Harendhira Prasad in attendance.

Minister Veeranjaneeya Swamy emphasized the government's dedication to improving the prospects of students from economically backward communities. He highlighted the importance of the mid-day meal program as a crucial step towards ensuring proper nourishment for students, leading to better academic performance and overall well-being.

The Minister encouraged students to make the most of



this opportunity, remain focused on their studies, and strive towards their goals with determination. He assured that the government would continue to provide the necessary infrastructure and support for education. In a gesture of solidarity, Minister Veeranjaneeya Swamy distributed meals to the students and joined them for lunch, further demonstrating his commitment to their welfare.

District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad explained how the Dokka Seethamma Mid-Day Meal Scheme aligns with the state government's broader efforts to improve education and its accessibility. He noted that the initiative

aims not only to provide nutritious meals but also to increase enrolment in government junior colleges, particularly among economically disadvantaged students. The collector shared that the scheme is already benefiting 5,600 students across ten junior colleges in Visakhapatnam district, implemented with the support of the Akshaya Patra Foundation.

The event was attended by several dignitaries, including RDO P. Srilekha, MLA Vamsi Krishna Srinivas, MLC Rama Rao, DEO Prem Kumar, Social Welfare DD Rama Rao, Principal of Women's Junior College J. Vijaya, as well as teachers and students.

# 'VUPPC seeks clarity on mine allocation from PM Modi'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Chairman of the Visakha Ulku Parirakshana Porata Committee (VUPPC), Ch. Narasing Rao, has demanded a clear statement from Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding allocating captive iron ore mines to the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant during his visit to the city on January 8. Addressing the media at the CITU office in Jagadamba Junction on Saturday, Narasingrao announced that Left parties would organise 'dharanas' on January 7 at the GVMC Gandhi statue and the steel plant, urging public participation to support the steel struggle.

Narasingrao pointed out that while the Centre has mandated captive iron ore mine allocation for major steel plants, the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant lacks its own mines despite operating for over 30 years. This compels the plant to procure ore at a steep cost of over Rs 8,000 per tonne, compared to Rs 600 per tonne for plants with captive mines, resulting in an additional annual expenditure of Rs 3,500 crore. He alleged that this financial strain was part of a plan to privatise the plant.

# 6 NTR district science projects selected for State-level science fair

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Six innovative science projects from NTR district have been selected for the State-Level Science Fair, showcasing remarkable talent and creativity. The selected projects include: Automatic Solar Tracking System and Trolley Robot in the individual category; Protecting Vehicles and Bridges from Floods and Automation of Fans and Lighting with Image Recognition in the group exhibits; and Underground Flood Tunnel System and Rube Goldberg Machine in the teacher exhibits. These projects secured their place at the state level by excelling in the Southern India NTR District Level Science Fair, demonstrating innovative solutions and engineering expertise.

The Southern India NTR District Level Science Fair 2025 was held on Saturday at the MK Baig Municipal Corporation High School in Ajith Singh Nagar, Vijayawada. Vijayawada Central MLA and Government Whip Bonda Uma inaugurated the science fair by lighting the lamp. Over 100 projects were displayed at



the event.

Addressing the gathering, Bonda Uma Maheswara Rao highlighted the state government's efforts to upgrade government schools with modern infrastructure and technical facilities, on par with private schools, to enhance educational standards. He commended the experienced and talented teaching staff working in government schools and encouraged students to make the best use of their services to achieve better results in public examinations. He also urged students to aim for higher positions in the future.

In the evening, NTR District

School Education Officer (DSEO) UV Subba Rao presented prizes to the first- and second-place winners, whose projects will represent the district at the state-level science fair. He congratulated the winners and encouraged them to showcase their talent at the state level and aspire to be selected for the national-level science fair.

NTR District Science Officer M Hussain, Mandal Educational Officers A Venkata Ratnam, Sambasiva Rao, MK Baig School Headmaster Parasa Venkateswara Rao, and other dignitaries were present at the event.

# CM calls upon Navy to study ocean economy

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday appealed to the Indian Navy to study the aspects of the ocean economy and guide governments (state) to tap its potential.

The CM said this during the Navy's operational demonstration by Eastern Naval Command's (ENC) at Visakhapatnam. "Ocean economy is a big asset. We did not go forward in the ocean economy until now. You (Navy) study these aspects and guide the governments," said Naidu, addressing Vice Admiral

Rajesh Pendharkar, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, ENC and the wider audience.

The CM said, besides protecting the nation, the Navy should come forward to help the southern state develop financially.

Further, he noted that futuristic technologies such as drones, Artificial Intelligence (AI), deep tech and others are equally necessary for the Navy.

Reminding of the key role played by the Navy in the 1971 war with Pakistan, Naidu also recalled the support he received from it during the Hudhud cyclone in 2014.

# 'Small project made big impact in Rayalaseema'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav has stated that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has emphasised the need to support the displaced families of the Polavaram project. Speaking to the media in Vijayawada on Saturday, Keshav highlighted the broader impact of the Polavaram project on the state.

"Polavaram is not just a project for one district; it is a blessing for Rayalaseema, North Andhra, and farmers across the state. Before the Pattiseema project, water disputes were common in Rayalaseema. When the



Tungbhadra High-Level Canal received insufficient water, farmers in Anantapur would protest, demanding that two TMCs of

water be diverted from Kurnool. People from Kurnool would also protest, leading to a tense situation. After the completion of the

Pattiseema project, protests reduced significantly and discussions about droughts became rare in the Legislative Assembly. A small project has brought about several positive changes in the Rayalaseema region," Keshav said. The Minister also noted that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has focused primarily on completing the Polavaram project and ensuring water supply to areas like Banakacharla. "Banakacharla is crucial for irrigation in Rayalaseema. Water from there will benefit Kurnool, Nandyal, Kadapa, Chittoor, Anantapur, and other regions. We are also planning a river interlinking project to supply water to

Banakacharla. That's why completing the Polavaram project is a top priority," Keshav added.

Minister Keshav also criticised the opposition, asking, "Who stopped the work on Polavaram for the last five years? It is for YS Jagan Mohan Reddy to answer. We are aware of our promises and do not need anyone to remind us. After we took charge, we revived 74 central schemes that had been stalled by the previous regime. If our state is in a financial crisis, YS Jagan is responsible for it. We are ensuring that farmers receive payments within 48 hours of delivering their produce (paddy)."



# Mid-day meal scheme to benefit 1.48 lakh Inter students: Kollu

PNS ■ MACHILIPATNAM

Minister for Excise and Mines, Kollu Ravindra, has announced that mid-day meals will be provided to over 1.48 lakh Intermediate students across 475 junior colleges in the State.

The Minister inaugurated the Dokka Seethamma mid-day meal scheme for Intermediate students at Lady Amphill Government Junior College, in the presence of district Collector Balaji, on Saturday. During the event, Ravindra interacted with the students and later shared lunch with them. Addressing the students, he stated that this is the first time the Government is introducing the scheme to serve mid-day meals to Intermediate students.

"The mid-day meal scheme for Intermediate students was



launched under the leadership of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan,

and IT Minister Nara Lokesh. The Government is focused on developing Government educational institutions to match

the standards of corporate institutions," he said. The Minister recalled that the late Chief Minister N.T.

Rama Rao had introduced the 'one kg rice for Rs 2' scheme, which helped alleviate hunger for the poor. He further

informed that there are 44,119 schools in the State, where over 33.81 lakh students are being provided mid-day meals under the Dokka Seethamma mid-day meal scheme. With the launch of the new scheme, over 1.48 lakh Intermediate students across the State will also benefit. Ravindra also mentioned that notebooks, textbooks, and study materials are being provided to college students, and efforts are being made to supply uniforms as well. He encouraged the students to set clear life goals and work diligently to achieve them.

Collector Balaji led the students in taking a pledge to stay away from drugs. District Intermediate Officer P.B. Salman Raju, MEO Durga Prasad, and DEO P.V.J. Rama Rao were also present at the event.



## Police trace missing minor girl, reunite her with parents

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

The West Godavari police successfully traced a missing minor girl within hours and reunited her with her parents.

SP Adnan Nayeem Asmi informed that a 12-year-old girl, a resident of the Vivekananda School area here, went missing on the night of January 2. Her parents complained with the Bhimavaram Town police on January 3.

SI B.Y. Ravi Kiran, along with his team, utilised advanced technology to trace the mobile location of the minor girl. With intelligence inputs, the police traced her location at Garagaparru village

in Palakoderu mandal around 11 p.m.

The police team proceeded to the village, located the girl, brought her back to Bhimavaram, and later handed her over to her parents.

It was revealed that the girl had left home without informing her parents, accompanied by her boyfriend, Inspector M. Nagaraju emphasised the need for parents to maintain constant vigilance over their teenage daughters.

The SP praised Inspector M. Nagaraju, SI B.Y. Ravi Kiran, and other police personnel for their swift action in tracing the missing girl and reuniting her with her parents.

## Kolusu launches scheme in Nuzvid

PNS ■ ELURU

Minister for Housing and I&PR, K. Parthasarathy, officially launched the mid-day meal scheme for Intermediate students at MT Government Junior College in Nuzvid on Saturday. He interacted with the students and shared lunch with them.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Parthasarathy stated that the Government had allocated Rs 27.39 crore for the implementation of the mid-day meal scheme for Intermediate students in the current academic year and Rs 85.84 crore for the year 2025-26.

"There are 19 junior colleges in Eluru district, with 3,734 students enrolled, of which 410 students are in Nuzvid. IT and Human Resources Minister Nara Lokesh has formulated plans to upgrade Government educational institutions to the standards of private institutions," the Minister said. He encouraged the students to make the most of the opportunities provided by the Government and excel in their studies. The Minister also highlighted that the Government had distributed free textbooks, notebooks, and school bags to over 2 lakh Intermediate stu-

dents studying in Government junior colleges, AP Model Schools, Kasturba Gandhi Vidyalayas, high schools, and other schools in the State.

Parthasarathy further emphasised that an Academic Guidance and Monitoring Cell has been established at the district and regional levels to enhance the education system. He added that from the next academic year, EAMCET and NEET exam materials, practical records, books, and student kits will be provided to Intermediate students.

"Under the 'Manabadi-Mana Bhavishyat' scheme, proposals worth Rs 307.76 crore have been

prepared to provide basic amenities in 447 junior colleges across the State. The Government has already released Rs 169.69 crore. We are also planning to implement reforms in junior colleges to ensure quality education," the Minister observed.

Minister Parthasarathy also revealed that Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu had sanctioned Rs 815 crore as a Sankranti festival gift for over 10,000 evacuees of the Polavaram project. DEO B. Prabhakar Rao and College Principal Swarnalatha were among those present at the event.



## 'Adivasi Sammelana Sabha' in city on Jan 19



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Adivasi Sammelana Sabha (Tribal Meeting) will be held in Vijayawada on January 19, 2025, announced Mallikarjuna Nayak, National Vice President of Girijana Praja Samakya (GPS), and Raju Nayak, State President. The announcement was made at a press conference on Saturday at the Vijayawada Press Club, with State ST Commission member Vaditya Shankar Nayak as the chief guest. During the event, Shankar Nayak unveiled the posters for the upcoming meeting.

Addressing the media, the leaders encouraged the tribal

community to actively participate in the event, which will take place at the Tummalapalli Kalakshetram in Vijayawada. They emphasised that the gathering would be an important step towards empowering the tribal people and improving their living standards.

Former Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu, will be the chief guest at the event. Other distinguished guests include Hussain Nayak, National Member of the ST Commission, Dr DVG Shankar Rao, Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh State ST Commission, IG of Kerala Lakshman Nayak, former MP Sitaram Nayak, and several other prominent leaders.



## 12 red sanders logs seized, one smuggler arrested

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Red Sanders Anti-Smuggling Task Force (RSASTF) seized 12 red sanders logs and arrested a smuggler in the Seshachalam forest on Saturday.

DSP G. Balireddy informed the media that, acting on the directions of Superintendent of Police L. Subba Rayudu, a task force team led by RI Suresh and RSI Vishnuvardhan conducted a combing operation in the Seshachalam forest. The team spotted an individual, who attempted

to flee as they approached. Members of the task force chased him and successfully apprehended him. Upon questioning, the suspect revealed the red sander logs, which were concealed behind a bush.

The task force seized 12 red sander logs and arrested the smuggler, who hails from Tamil Nadu. Both the logs and the smuggler were taken to the task force police station in Tirupati. Task Force Police Station CI Suresh Kumar registered a case and produced the smuggler before the court.

## Kadiyam area to be developed as tourism hub: Min Durgesh

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Minister for Tourism Development, Kandula Durgesh, has pledged to develop the Kadiyam area as a prominent tourist destination. The Minister, accompanied by MLA Gorantla Butchchiaiah Chowdary, laid the foundation stone for the construction of a road at Kadiyapulanka village in Kadiyam mandal, with an investment of Rs 1.85 crore on Saturday.

Addressing the gathering, Durgesh reiterated that the coalition government is committed to the State's overall development. He praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan for their leadership in advancing the State's progress, with a focus on public welfare.

"Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan has committed to the development of rural areas and the provision of basic amenities to all villages. Efforts are underway to release funds to each village panchayat, and roads connecting villages are being reconstructed," the Minister stated.

Durgesh also criticised the previous YSRCP government for neglecting the development



of roads, highlighting the coalition government's efforts to reconstruct and develop roads that had fallen into disrepair. He mentioned that the Tourism department had allocated funds for the development of the Kadiyapulanka road. "The roads in the State were in a deplorable condition due to the previous government's failure to allocate funds. Some roads had become unusable for motorists. Understanding the crucial role of roads in the State's development,

the coalition government has prioritised their reconstruction," Durgesh added.

Rajahmundry Rural MLA Gorantla Butchchiaiah Chowdary noted that development works were underway in various parts of the district, including the reconstruction of Yetigattu road, which connects to the national highway, at a cost of Rs 1.85 crore. He also mentioned that the Dosalamma road had already been reconstructed and that many projects had been

completed within the stipulated time.

Despite financial constraints, the government continues to implement schemes such as fee reimbursement, Talliki Vandanam, and Rythu Bandhu as promised, he said. Chowdary commended Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh for his efforts in promoting Kadiyam as a tourist hub. MPDO K. Ramesh, Panchayat Raj DE A. Ravi, and leaders from TDP, JSP, and BJP also attended the event.

## Tenant farmers seek 'Annadata Sukhee Bhava' benefits

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Representatives of the Andhra Pradesh Tenant Farmers' (Koulu Rythulu) Association, including State General Secretary P. Jamalaih, NTR District President Buddi Ramesh, and Vice President P. Venkateswara Rao, has urged the state government to extend the Annadata Sukhee Bhava Scheme to all tenant farmers in the state. They have demanded that the government provide financial support of Rs. 20,000 per farmer to assist with agricultural investments.

On Thursday, the leaders of the Andhra Pradesh Tenant Farmers' Association submitted a formal representation to NTR District Agriculture Officer DMF Vijaya Kumari at



Andhra Pradesh Tenant Farmers' Association leaders Jamalaih, Ramesh, and Venkateswara Rao submitting a representation to NTR District Agriculture Officer Vijaya Kumari at her office in Vijayawada on Thursday.

her office in Vijayawada. In their submission, they raised several issues, seeking prompt resolution from the authorities. Speaking on the occasion, the association's State General

Secretary, Jamalaih, stated that the government should extend support to every landless and tenant farmer in the state, emphasising that it is the government's responsibility.

He recalled that the NDA government had promised to implement the Tenant Farmers Protection Act and welfare schemes soon after coming to power. However, he lamented that the government has neglected the implementation of these promises for the past six months.

Jamalaih further highlighted the ongoing pest attacks affecting various crops, causing significant losses for farmers. He called on the government to implement the Free Crop Insurance Scheme for all tenant farmers to safeguard against such losses and prevent farmer suicides. He also demanded ex gratia for the families of farmers who had committed suicide due to financial distress.

## Science expos highlight talent of students: Eluru Collector

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector K. Vetri Selvi stated that science exhibitions help explore the innate talents of students and encourage them to excel in academics, particularly in science.

Accompanied by ZP Chairperson Ghanta Padmasri, the Collector inaugurated a science exhibition at the ZP High School campus in Kovvali, Denduluru mandal, on Saturday. She visited the exhibits and congratulated the students for their efforts.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Vetri Selvi said educational science exhibitions foster creativity among students. She emphasised that teachers play a crucial role in shaping students into future scientists, contribut-



ing to the nation's progress in science and technology. The Collector praised the students for researching various social issues, including flood prevention, road and fire accidents, crowd safety, eco-friendly waste management, and long-lasting

road maintenance. She expressed happiness in participating in the event and advised teachers to actively encourage scientific curiosity among students. She mentioned that 81 outstanding scientific projects prepared by school students

across the district were displayed at the exhibition, with the best entries to be selected for the state-level competition.

RDO Achyuth Ambarish, DEO Venkata Lakshamma, MPDO Sridevi, and other officials were present.



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 mahapanchayat called by 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 supreme 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.



'Life sprouts in space', says ISRO

Cowpea seeds germinate under microgravity conditions

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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 soon," ISRO said in a post on X.

The PSLV-C60 mission placed two SpaDeX satellites in orbit on the night of December 30.

The fourth stage of the rocket carrying the POEM-4 platform has been orbiting the earth with 24 onboard experiments at an altitude of 350 km since Tuesday.

The CROPS experiment aims to understand how plants grow in the unique conditions of space, which is essential for future long-duration space missions.



# 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 atmosphere, 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 *Toscano*, 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, *Toscano* welcomes you on a Tuscan food adventure. *Toscano* offers a genuine dining experience that satisfies the sophisticated palates of its esteemed patrons by fusing traditional culinary methods with premium ingredients and unusual cheeses.

*Toscano* 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 cheesy Italian rice balls, crumb fried fresh mozzarella, carrots, zucchini, broccoli 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 *Toscano* 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:** Toscano  
**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 ambience, 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



## FOODFREAK



**Pawan Soni**  
Food critic and founder of the Big F Awards





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 Catalonian 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

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

## 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

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 Falaknuma 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



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,

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



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 Dvadesh 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. Emerge -- in any calendar year, demonstrating the growing confidence of investors in India's capital markets, NSE said.

Globally, the initial public offering (IPO) activity saw 1,145 listings in 2024 compared to 1,271 in 2023. Despite this, India proved to be a remarkable performer, contributing to about 25 per cent of all IPO activity in Asia, it added.

"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.

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.

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 in 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."

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.



**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 watertomakedough.
- 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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Bio Lamination restructures hair fibers from the inside out. Natural Goodness: Combines plant-based ingredients, babassu oil and coconut oil for intense nourishment. Formaldehyde-Free Formula: Safe and enriched with omega 3 & 6 for deep hydration. Tough Hair Solution: Ideal for henna-coated, virgin, and thick hair types. Silky, Shiny Results: Leaves hair frizz-free, smooth and glossy.

Price : Rs. 30,000



**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.

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**EMBRACING NATURAL CARE WITH PURPOSE**

Jungle Elements craft every product following the wisdom of classical Ayurvedic texts, ensuring effective solutions for your beauty and wellness needs. Its cruelty-free and eco-friendly formulations address a wide range of aesthetic concerns, allowing you to care for yourself and the planet with confidence and guilt-free indulgence.

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**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.

Shades: Brick Red, Red Brown, Peach Pink, Coral, Dewy Red

Price: Rs 890



**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



**TURNING EXERCISE INTO ADVENTURE**

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.

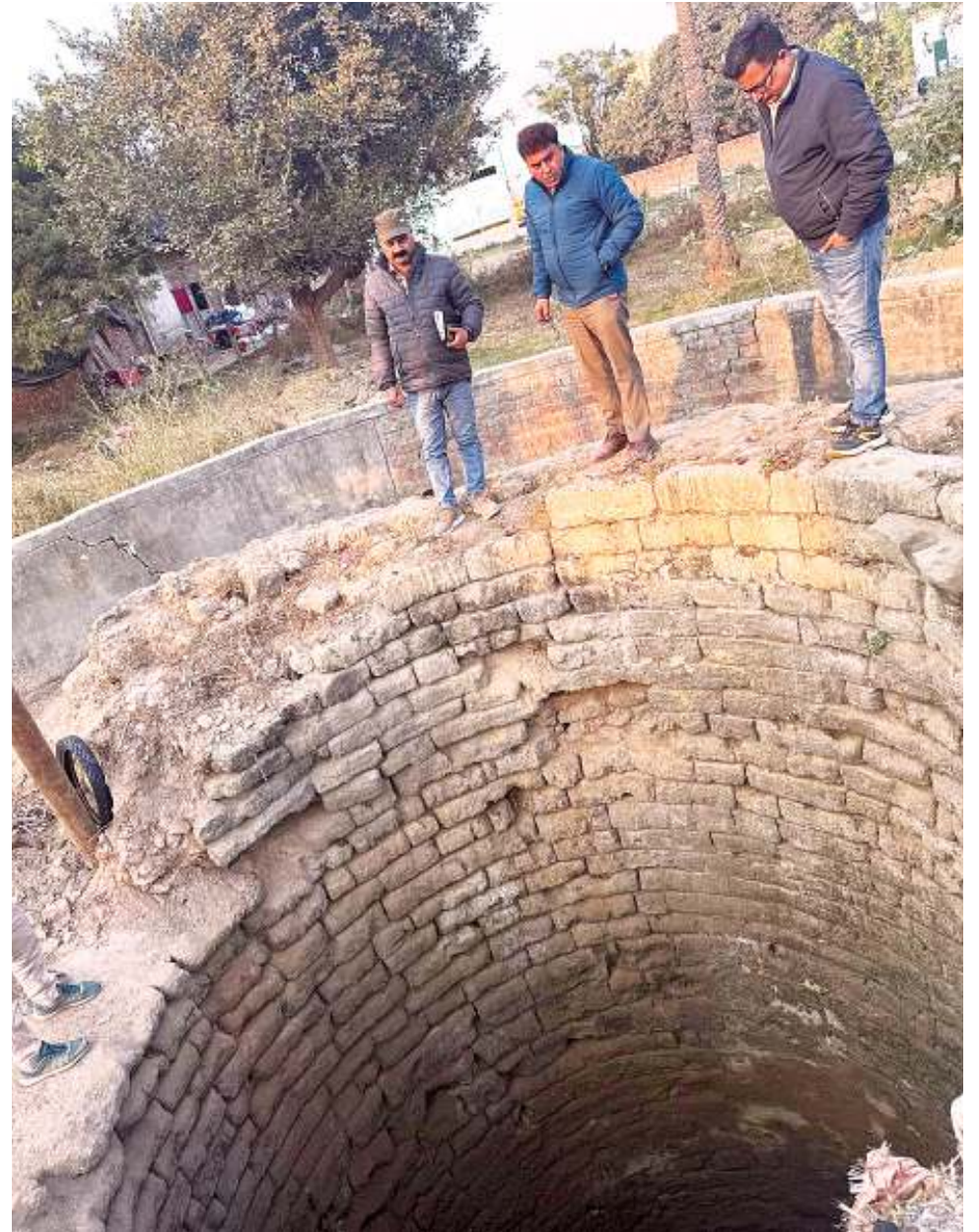
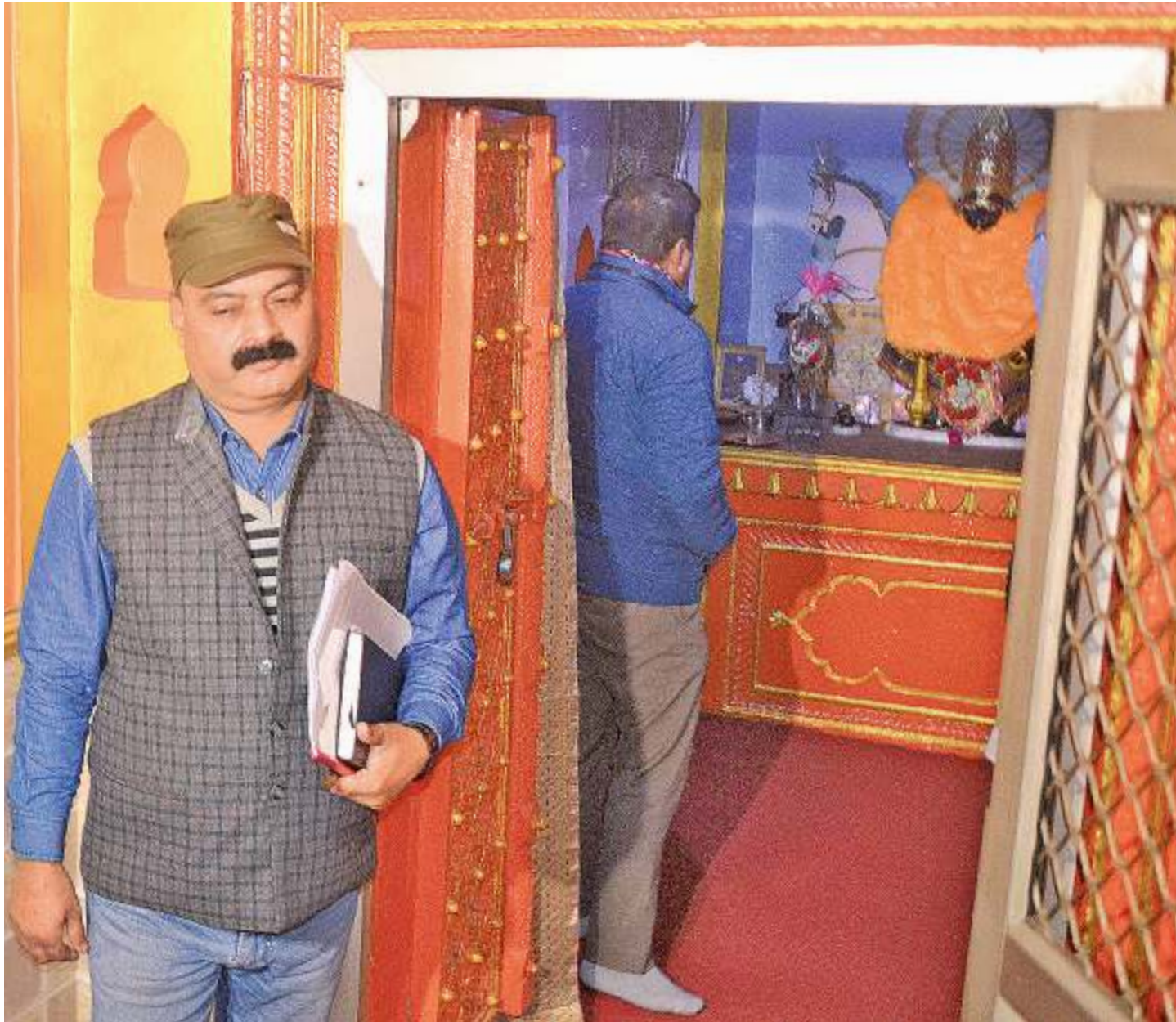


**PISCES**

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.



"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.



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*

TEJAL SINHA  
tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

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.

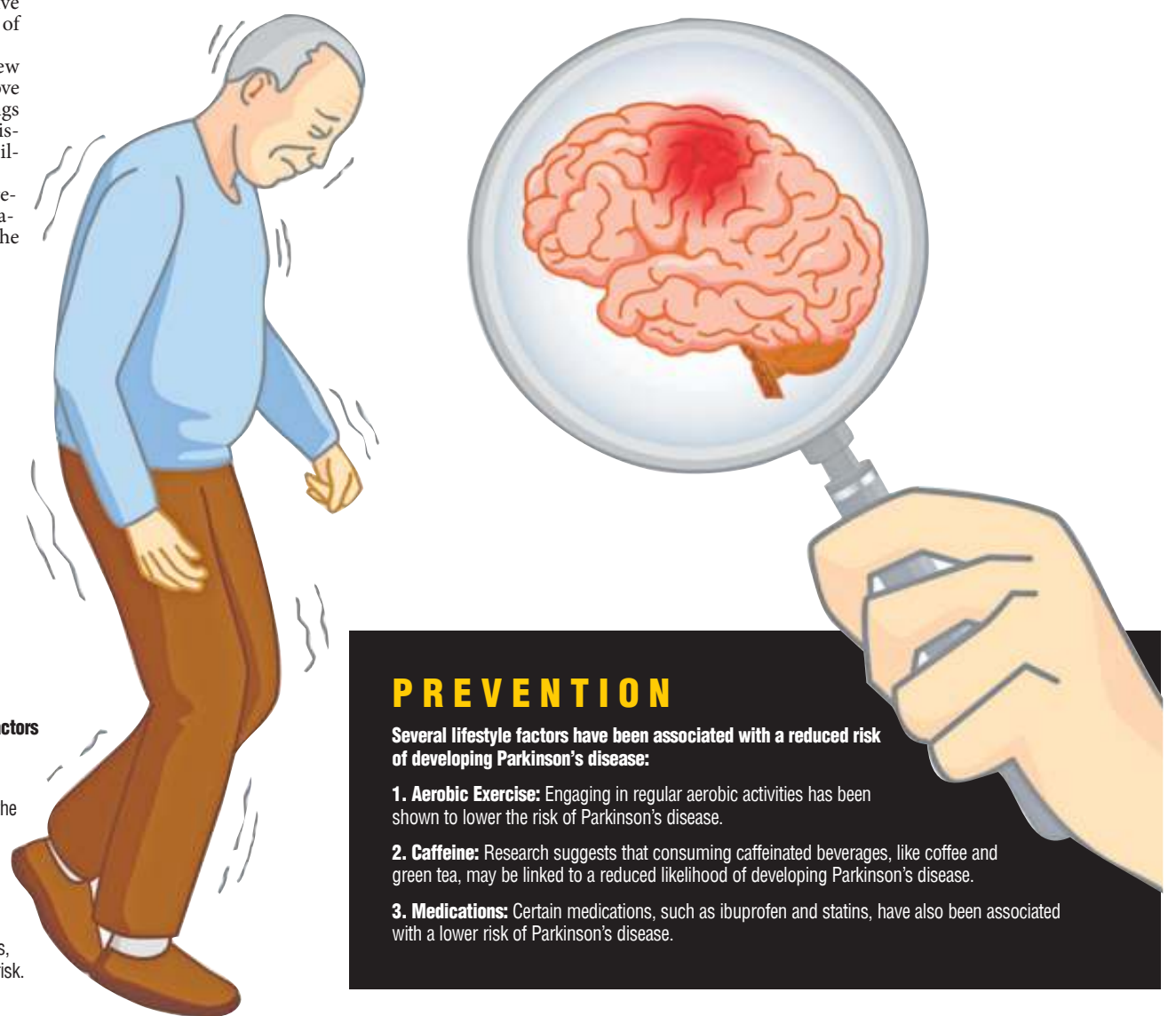
### SYMPTOMS

- 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



## 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

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.



### 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

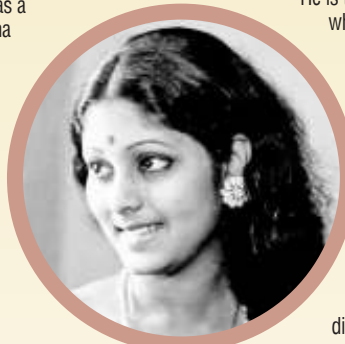
My mother is the daughter of Nidadavole Venkata Rao, a renowned literateur. On my father's side, we come from a family associated with the Brahma Samaj. This legacy stems from my great-grandfathers and our family has consistently upheld the values of education and progress.

### 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.

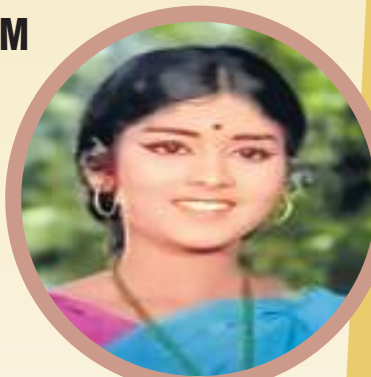
### MY FIRST LEAD ROLE

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 Joga 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 that 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.