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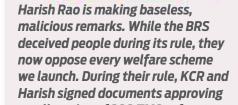


INDIA-OMAN FREE TRADE PACT LIKELY **DURING GOYAL'S MUSCAT VISIT**

I want to show non-violence thru my film: Padmavathi

MALLAD





QUOTE OF THE DAY

the pioneer

an allocation of 298 TMCs of water as per the Krishna Tribunal order, which led to severe injustice against

Telangana. They turned a blind eye to things like the Pothireddypadu and Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation projects

— Uttam Kumar Reddy, Irrigation Minister, Telangana

Officials directed to adopt villages

Eluru District Collector K Vetri Selvi has instructed district and mandallevel officials to adopt villages to foster development. Accompanied by Joint Collector P Dhatri Reddy, she chaired a meeting on Monday to review efforts to improve living standards in rural areas. The Collector urged officials to adopt villages and focus on providing essential facilities, including education, healthcare, employment opportunities, sanitation, drinking water, and infrastructure. She assured full support for developing the adopted villages, including constructing roads...

Withdraw draft **UGC** regulations

Several provisions in the draft UGC regulations were 'in conflict with the state's educational system and policies,' Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin claimed on Monday and urged Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to withdraw the said regulations. The state believed that many provisions in the draft regulations might pose serious challenges to the academic integrity, autonomy, and inclusive development of state universities, he said. "We therefore request that the Ministry of Education may withdraw the draft...

India at forefront of tech evolution

In an era defined by technological evolution, India stands at the forefront as one of the world's fastest-growing economies and a global hub for startups and digital innovation, the World Economic for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) India, liaison office of World Economic Forum (WEF) in India, launches its 6-year impact journey report on the inaugural day of the WEF Annual meeting 2025 here. The WEF said its partnership with India dates back more than 40 years...

-PAGE: 8

Pant named captain of LSG

Dynamic keeper-batter Rishabh Pant was on Monday named the captain of Lucknow Super Giants for the upcoming IPL and he vowed to give his "200 percent" to win the team's maiden title. Pant was picked at the mega auction for an IPL record Rs 27 crore by the franchise owner Saniiv Goenka "I will give my 200 percent. That's my commitment to you. I will try whatever is there in my power to repay the faith. I am really excited and looking forward to new beginning and new energy. And have a blast out there

CM woos Swiss investors

Naidu discusses regional development with TG CM Revanth at an unexpected meet

PNS VIJAYAWADA

On the first day of his visit to Davos on Monday, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu held a series of meetings with investors and business leaders. The Chief Minister, who is attending the World Economic Forum (WEF) summit, focused on showcasing the vast potential of Andhra Pradesh as a prime investment destination, according to a press release from the AP government .

Earlier, the Chief Minister met

with Indian Ambassador to Switzerland, Mrudul Kumar, at the Hilton Hotel in Zurich. The discussion centred on investment opportunities in Andhra Pradesh industrialists. Swiss Ambassador Mrudul Kumar informed Naidu that over 350 Swiss companies, including Nestle, Novartis, and ABB, have established units across India, and many more are keen to invest.

Naidu emphasised that Andhra Pradesh offers numerous opportunities in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, medical devices, technology, textiles, and rail component manufacturing. He also requested Ambassador Kumar's assistance in fostering closer ties between universities in Switzerland and Andhra Pradesh, as well as in promoting the upcoming skill development and AI-focused universities in the state.

The Chief Minister further highlighted that Andhra Pradesh's youth is highly skilled across varto work remotely.

Continued on Page 2 ious sectors and is readily available



promoting skill and Al universities Holds meetings with CEOs of Swiss companies to invite investments, focusing on skilled

Initiatives in research, innovation hubs, and joint ventures in aerospace, automotive, and energy highlighted

A warm reception was given at Zurich airport by TDP Forum and Indian diaspora

Unexpected meeting with Telangana CM Revanth Reddy, discussing regional development

DAVOS 2025: Will Naidu or Revanth steal the show?

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Discusses fostering

Swiss and Andhra

cooperation between

Pradesh universities and

workforce and business-

friendly policies

As the glitz of Tollywood's box office battles fades, a new contest is sparking public interest - who will emerge victorious at Davos 2025? With both Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy attending the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Switzerland from January 20 to 24, all eyes are on which leader can secure the most significant investments for their state.



favourable. Despite Revanth eral key advantages. Reddy's relative lack of administra-

For Telangana, the cards appear tive experience, the state boasts sev-



govt-funded access

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Advocating for everyone to adopt Artificial Intelligence, Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said on Monday in Zurich, Switzerland, that he envisions a setup where the government would pay AI providers to allow people to use those platforms for free.

Addressing a gathering of Telugu NRIs from a dozen European countries, Naidu encouraged the people of the State to make use of ChatGPT.

"I am thinking of a model where the Government of India or the Andhra Pradesh government can pay AI providers a lump sum amount to enable everyone to adopt AI," the CM said at a meeting with the Telugu diaspora before heading to Davos for the World Economic Forum (WEF).

According to Naidu, some AI platforms are currently free to use, while others require payment.

"At least one person, or everyone in a family, should adopt AI. At one point, I spoke about IT. Now, if you need to make a decision, immediately ask ChatGPT. Ask questions, and it will answer. Ultimately, your the world, you can win th mind will also be stimulated," said I do not doubt it," he said.

- Naidu encourages Telugu NRIs to use ChatGPT for better decision-making
- Highlights Andhra's green hydrogen potential and India's 2047 vision
- Inspires NRIs to excel globally while staying connected to India
- CM promoting 'Brand Andhra' at WEF and meeting investors

When arriving at a decision, he said that a person who consults 10 people will make the correct decision, unlike someone who doesn't consult anyone. Now, people who cannot talk to 10 people should consult ChatGPT or AI, he said.

Naidu, referring to Jews, said he had heard of their dominance wherever he went and challenged Telugu NRIs to achieve greater success in the future. "The Jewish population is only 1.2 crore, India's population is 145 crore, and the Telugu population is 10 crore. If three to four crore Telugu people spread across the world, you can win the world.



Trump promises 'golden age of America'

Becomes 47th president of the US

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Donald Trump, who overcame impeachments, criminal indictments and a pair of assassination attempts to win another term in the White House, will be sworn in Monday as the 47th US president taking charge as Republicans claim unified control of Washington and set out to reshape the country's institutions.

Trump's swearing-in ceremony, moved indoors due to intense cold, and began at noon ET. Festivities started earlier when the incoming president arrived for service at St. Ĵohn's Episcopal Church.

Here's the latest: Not-so-record inflation

Trump vowed to "defeat what was record inflation." Inflation peaked at 9.1 per cent in June 2022 after rising steadily in the first 17 months of Biden's presidency from a low of 0.1 per cent in May 2020.

The most recent data shows that as of December it had fallen to 2.9 per

But other historical periods have seen higher inflation, such as a more than 14 per cent rate in 1980, according to the Federal Reserve. Trump's promised Day 1 execu-

MAJOR IAS, IPS SHAKE-UP IN AP RK Meena is SLPRB chief

Prasad, IAS (1991), who has been

re-designated as Special Chief

Secretary to the Government, Water

Resources Department and also

Sai Prasad made Spl CS to CM

PNS VIJAYAWADA

In a significant administrative reshuffle, Chief Secretary K Vijayanand issued a Government Order (Rt No 126) on Monday, transferring and redesignating 25 Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers. These changes are aimed at improving governance in key departments across the state. Key appointments include G Sai

appointed Ex-Officio Special Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister. Ajay Jain, IAS (1991), takes on full additional charge as Special Chief Secretary to Government, Tourism & Culture, replacing V Vinay Chand, IAS (2008).

ntinued on Page 2

PNS VIJAYAWADA

In a major reshuffle of IPS officers across Andhra Pradesh, the government has transferred 27 officers and issued new postings for several others. The orders were issued by Chief Secretary K Vijayanand in GO Rt No 123 on Monday. Among the key transfers, Rajiv Kumar Meena, Additional Director General of Police (Operations), Greyhounds & Octopus,

has been appointed as Chairman of the State Level Police Recruitment Board (SLPRB), filling the existing vacancy.

N Madhusudhana Reddy, Additional DGP, who was awaiting posting, has been appointed as Additional DGP, Law & Order, in the existing vacancy. Ch Srikanth, has been transferred to the position of IGP (Operations), with additional charge of IGP (Technical Services) until further orders.

New structure for panchayat cluster system: Dy CM

Income, population to define clusters; staff allocation to be streamlined

PNS VIJAYAWADA

In a bid to enhance rural governance and ensure efficient service delivery, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalvan has directed the Panchayat Raj department to address staff shortages and revise the village panchayat cluster system. He issued these directives during a comprehensive review meeting on Monday.



The Deputy Chief Minister emphasised the importance of uninterrupted services in rural areas and proposed a new classification system to inefficient staff allocation.

for panchayat clusters based on both income and population, replacing the earlier method that considered only income.

The meeting highlighted disparities in the previous system, where some high-income panchayats had smaller populations, while others with lower income had larger populations. These imbalances often led **Nara Lokesh** seeks Swiss Indian envoy's cooperation

KOLKATA DOCTOR RAPE-MURDER VERDICT

Sanjay Roy gets life term till death

PNS KOLKATA

A Kolkata court on Monday sentenced Sanjay Roy to life imprisonment until death after he was convicted of raping and murdering an on-duty doctor at the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, rejecting demands for the death penalty saying it was not a "rarest of the rare" crime.

Additional District and Sessions Judge in Sealdah, Anirban Das, had on Saturday found Roy guilty of committing the crime against the postgraduate trainee doctor on August 9 last year. The heinous crime triggered nationwide outrage and prolonged protests in West

pay a Rs 50,000 fine and directed judge said.



the state government to pay compensation of Rs 17 lakh to the family of the deceased doctor.

Judge Das stated that the crime did not fall under the "rarest of the rare" category, which justified the decision to not give the death penalty to the convict.

"The CBI prayed for the death penalty. The defence lawyer prayed that a jail term be given instead of the death penalty...This crime does not fall under the The court also ordered Roy to rarest of the rare category," the

PNS VIJAYAWADA The State government will soon introduce WhatsApp Governance services to the public, allowing cit-

izens to obtain birth and death certificates through WhatsApp. This initiative is in tune with Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's vision of making government services more accessible. A pilot project will be launched in Tenali later this month to test this process.

Chief Secretary K Vijayanand on Monday chaired a review meeting at the Real-Time Governance Society office in the Secretariat with officials from various departments to discuss the issuance of birth and death certificates via WhatsApp. He emphasised that the Chief Minister's goal is to improve the convenience of

government services for citizens. He urged RTGS officials and relevant departments to expedite the process. Vijayanand highlighted the

importance of delivering birth and death certificates through WhatsApp and called for swift action to begin the necessary work. He recommended using Tenali as a test site to identify any challenges or technical issues that may arise during implementation. He also instructed the departments of

Panchayati Raj, Health and Medical, and Municipal Administration to fully cooperate with RTGS officials for the success of the initiative.

S Suresh Kumar, Principal Secretary of the Department of RTG, assured that all preparations for WhatsApp Governance have been completed. He confirmed that measures are in place to ensure smooth service delivery at the field

Continued on Page 2

Draft agenda items for SZC meet reviewed

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Secretary K Vijayanand held a review meeting at the State Secretariat on Monday with officials from various departments to discuss the draft agenda for the upcoming Southern Zonal Council meeting. The focus was primarily on pending issues stemming from the state bifurcation, which are to be addressed during the meeting. Key issues from Schedule 13 of Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act were reviewed, including the Visakhapatnam-

tional standards. The meeting also assessed the progress of Amaravati's development, with

connectivity to the capital. Further discussions centred on

particular emphasis on rapid rail

the development of the seven Chennai Industrial Corridor, the backward districts in North expansion of Visakhapatnam, Andhra and Rayalaseema, and Vijayawada, and Tirupati airports, the central assistance received and their upgradation to internathus far.



The unrelenting taskmasters of Telugu states

mined and unrelenting. It is true of individuals and more so for those wielding power. These qualities determine a person's or for that matter, a leader's strong will and the willingness to go to any length for the good of the people and society in general. The Telugu states have such determined personalities as heads of governments with enormous tasks.

Any government's success lies in correctly assessing and showcasing its potential development prospects and the availability of resources, apart from positive policy initiatives that propel progress. Ever since the

↑he enormity of any task congress assumed power in Telangana and the NDA took over in Andhra Pradesh, the Chief Ministers of the Telugu states, N. Chandrababu Naidu and Revanth Reddy, have been trying to develop their respective states in every conceivable manner and are leaving no stone unturned to achieve their goals. During his one-year rule,

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy did everything he could to take the financially struggling Telangana for-ward and set things right. The Chief Minister has the right opportunities to get investments in the state, to establish a pro-business and industryfriendly atmosphere and commensurate policy plans. All of Any government's success lies in correctly assessing and showcasing its potential development prospects and the availability of resources, apart from positive policy initiatives that propel progress.

them took Telangana forward on the path of development. Development doesn't mean getting huge investments alone.

Its proper utilisation matters a lot. During his first trip abroad, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy was successful and now he is on a tour of foreign countries to bag the maximum possible investments with renewed policy strengths and expertise.

Last year, Telangana saw welfare-oriented development and the government ensured that in the clamour for social welfare development should not suffer. The HYDRAA and MUSI rejuvenation plans have



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become part of welfare-oriented development initiatives. This time the Chief Minister's

foreign tour, it is hoped, would fetch the state the needed multinational investment. As expected Team Telangana has been successful in bagging huge investments.

The first year of Revanth Reddy's Congress Government in Telangana has achieved more than what was expected from it, given the financial problems and the burden of social welfare schemes announced during the elections. The speed of government programmes may pick up in the second year of Revanth's rule as more promises are expected to be fulfilled. Mobilising resources is a key factor now for the government and the Chief

Minister is on the job.

And now coming to Andhra Pradesh, we have a Chief Minister who is known for his administrative excellence and political acumen. Known as an able leader and a taskmaster, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Nara Chandrababu Naidu, proved his administrative mettle in many ways during the first six months of NDA rule by bringing to light huge projects like the capital city of Amaravathi and the multi-purpose Polavaram Project. The latest feather on the Chief Minister's cap is the revival package for the Vizag Steel Plant. Dispelling rumours that VSP would be privatised, the Centre

announced a revival package valued at around Rs 11,000

If Mr Chandrababu had not been at the helm, it would not have been possible to streamline the three vital projects crucial for Andhra Pradesh's development. While the experience of Chandrababu is an asset for Andhra Pradesh, the drive of Revanth Reddy is an important factor in the growth of Telangana. Both are unrelenting taskmasters who never give up until they get what they want. A good sign of political leadership for any state if it has to progress.

> (The writer is a senior journalist)

Nara Lokesh seeks Swiss Indian envoy's cooperation

PNS ZURICH/DAVOS

Minister for Education, IT, and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, on Monday, sought the cooperation of the Indian Ambassador to Switzerland, Mrudul Kumar, in attracting investments from Swiss pharmaceutical giants to Andhra Pradesh.

During a meeting with the Swiss ambassador at the Hilton Hotel in Zurich, Lokesh highlighted Switzerland's \$100 billion pharmaceutical industry and urged support in facilitating the entry of companies such as Novartis, Roche, Lonza, and Alcon into Andhra Pradesh. He informed the ambassador that the State offers a favourable investment climate and pointed out that over 27,300 Indians are currently employed in Switzerland across engineering, IT, pharmaceutical, and paramedical sectors.

Lokesh also outlined the new

industrial policy announced by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, which includes investorfriendly schemes and attractive incentives for sectors like manufacturing, textiles, machinery, hardware, rail components, and medical equipment.

"We are taking steps to establish a Skill University and an nessed to reduce technical skill gaps and enhance cost efficiency, seeking Switzerland's support in this initiative.

Indian Ambassador Mrudul Kumar noted that over 350 Swiss companies, including Nestlé, Novartis, and STMicroelectronics, have set up operations in India, creating 1.3 lakh jobs. Similarly, Indian firms like TCS, Infosys, HCL, and Mahindra, alongside banking and insurance companies, have established their presence in Switzerland.

The ambassador assured Lokesh of his cooperation in inviting Swiss companies to set up units in Andhra Pradesh.

Union Minister Kinjerapu Mohan Industries Minister TG Bharat, Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board CEO Saikanth Sarma, and other dignitaries attend-

85th Presiding Officers' Meet

Ayyanapatrudu highlights Telugu pride

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Speaker of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly, Chintakayala Ayyanapatrudu, delivered an inspiring address at the 85th All India Presiding Officers' Conference held in Patna on Monday. Speaking in Telugu, he emphasised the cultural richness, historical significance, and pride of the Telugu language, receiving widespread appreciation for showcasing the heritage and intellectual stature of the Telugu-speaking community on a national platform.
In his address, the Speaker

reflected on India's 75 years of democracy, highlighting the resilience and adaptability of the country's democratic framework. "Our journey of



amending the Constitution over 100 times reflects the strength and resilience of our democratic system," he remarked, stressing the vital

"Our journey of amending the Constitution over 100 times reflects the strength and resilience of our democratic system.'

role these amendments have played in addressing challenges and fortifying the Constitution.

Raising concerns about the decreasing number of working days in legislative assemblies, Ayyanapatrudu pointed out that fewer sessions undermine the essence of democracy. He proposed that legislative bodies with over 100 members should conduct a minimum of 75 sessions annually. "Every legislature must ensure at least 75 working days each year over a

five-year term," he said, underlining the importance of robust legislative engagement.

Turning his attention to the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly, the Speaker noted that 50% of its recently elected members were first-time legislators. He stressed the need for orientation and awareness programmes to equip these young and educated leaders with a thorough understanding of legislative procedures and practices.

The Speaker's speech was hailed as one of the key highlights of the conference, bringing pride and recognition to Telugu culture and language while emphasising the need for democratic accountability and legislative preparedness.

CM for Al...

Continued from Page 1

"At one point, wherever I

went, people would always talk about Jews. They'd say, 'There are just one or two

Jews in the village, but they

control everything because

of their political donations and charity work. That's why they're respected," he added. Advising Telugu

NRIs to prosper and excel

wherever they are, Naidu

urged them to create wealth

and expressed his faith that

Birth, death...

Continued from Page 1

K Dinesh Kumar, CEO of RTGS, stated that by the end of this month, they will evaluate the technical process of issuing birth and death certificates through WhatsApp in Tenali's Panchayats and Municipalities. RTGS has developed a portal under the Andhra Pradesh Civil Registration System (AP CRS), which integrates all birth and death registration

The system will enable immediate WhatsApp notifications to citizens once their certificates are generated, allowing them to download the certificates directly.

MT Krishna Babu, Śpecial Chief Secretary of the Health Department, K Kannababu, Secretary of Municipal Administration, A Suryakumari, Director of Women and Child Welfare, Krishna Teja, Director of Panchayat Raj, and Shiva Prasad, Director of Village Secretariat, were also present at the meeting.

ALMANAC	
Month & Paksham:	Krishna Paksha
Tithi:	
Saptami:	Jan 20 09:58 AM
	to Jan 21 12:40 PM
Ashtami:	Jan 21 12:40 PM
	to Jan 22 03:18 PM
Nakshatram:	
Chitra:	Jan 20 08:30 PM
	to Jan 21 11:36 PM
Swati:	Jan 21 11:36 PM
	to Jan 23 02:34 AM
Rahukalam:	3:14 PM to 4:38 PM
Yamagandam:	9:40 AM to 11:04 AM
Varjyam:	05:54 AM to 07:41 AM
Gulika:	12:27 PM to 1:51 PM
Amritakalam:	04:22 PM to 06:11 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	12:05 PM to 12:49 PM
VIJAYAWADA	WEATHER
Forecast: Sunny	1
Temp: 32 [∞]	× 1.4
Humidity: 59%	
Sunrise: 6:40 AN	
Sunset: 5:58 PM	
Sullset. 3.36 PIVI	
Updated: Januar	y 20, 2025 5:00 PM

DEMAND FOR DY CM POST FOR LOKESH

University in Andhra Pradesh.

and we seek closer collaboration

between Switzerland and our

State in these areas," Lokesh stat-

ed. He emphasised the potential

for leveraging Swiss expertise in

renowned institutions like the

University of Zurich and the

skills of women could be har-

Lokesh also suggested that the

University of Basel.

Avoid public discussion, TDP leaders told

Andhra Pradesh Minister be made through discusfor Education, HRD, and IT sions among alliance leadcommand has issued important directives to party leaders. The party has instructadvised against making his support for Nara Lokesh appointment as Deputy statements to the media. to be appointed Deputy CM.

Continued from Page 1

Sai Prasad made...

The high command clari- CM. Following this, sever-

fied that any decision al other leaders made public statements on the matter. Although these individuals were not directly involved in Nara Lokesh to be appointed as the Deputy Chief that personal opinions they voiced their personal Minister, the Telugu Desam should not be imposed on opinions. Former Minister Recently, during Chief Reddy, former Pithapuram Minister Chandrababu MLA SVSN Varma, and Naidu's visit to Midhukur, Rajahmundry Urban MLA ed its leaders not to discuss Kadapa District President Adireddy Vasu also publicly the matter publicly and Srinivas Reddy expressed supported Nara Lokesh's

RK Meena is...

Continued from Page 1

Budithi Rajsekhar, IAS (Retd), has been given full additional charge of the post of Special Chief Secretary to Government, AHDD&F Department, following the transfer of Mudavathu M. Nayak, IAS (2005). K Sunitha, IAS (1996), is transferred from Industries and Commerce to the Public Enterprises Department, while Dr N Yuvaraj, IAS (2005), will hold additional charge as Principal Secretary to Government, Industries and Commerce. Other significant transfers include Mukesh Kumar Meena, IAS (1998), now Principal Secretary to Government, General Administration Department (Political), and S Suresh Kumar, IAS (2000), who

as Principal Finance Secretary. Several officers have also been reallocated to crucial posts like Health and Family Welfare, Revenue, and Social Welfare. Bhaskar Katamneni, IAS (2004), will take on the role of Secretary for the ITC&E Department, while Dr N Yuvaraj, IAS (2005), will assume full additional charge for the Infrastructure & Investment Department.

moved to the MA&UD Department.

Peeyush Kumar, IAS (1997), will now serve

Ôther notable changes include the transfer of G Veerapandian, IAS (2009), to Commissioner Health & Family Welfare, and Hari Narayanan, IAS (2011), to IG Registration and Stamps. A series of additional charges were also handed out to various officers, ensuring smooth administration across departments.

The Special Chief Secretary, Principal Secretaries, and Secretaries of the concerned departments have been asked to make internal arrangements for vacant positions, ensuring continued functionality in the respective departments.

Other major transfers include G Pala Raju, IIGP, who is now the Director of the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), and R Jayalakshmi, IGP, who has been posted as IG/Director of the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB). B Raja Kumari, IGP, has been appointed as IGP of the APSP Battalions, while B Satya Yesu Babu, DIG, has been posted as DIG, the Police Transport Organisation

Several other officers have also been given new responsibilities, including KKN Anburajan, DIG, who will now serve as DIG, Welfare & Sports; Babujee Attada, DIG, who will head the Greyhounds; and Dr Fakkeerappa Kaginelli, DIG, Intelligence, who is now posted as DIG, APSP Battalions. Vikrant Patil, SP, Kakinada, has been trans-

ferred to Kurnool as SP, while V Harshavardhan Raju, SP, will take charge as SP, Tirupati. M Deepika, Commandant, 3rd Bn APSP, Kakinada, has been shifted to Commandant, 2nd Bn APSP, Kurnool.

Additionally, KSSV Subba Reddy, SP, PTO, has been appointed as SP, Co-ordination, Human Rights & Legal, and P Parameswara Reddy, SP, will now serve as SP,

Further, S Sreedhar, SP, who is waiting for posting, is likely to be posted as SP, ČID. Krishna Kanth Patel, SP, who is waiting for posting, is transferred as DCP, Administration, Visakhapatnam, while Dheeraj Kunubilli, ASP, Rampachodavaram, has been posted as Additional SP, Administration, in Alluri Sitarama Raju dis-

Several other officers have been retained in their existing positions, including J Rama Mohan Rao, SP, Intelligence, and N Sridevi Rao, SP, CID.

Preparations in full swing for 76th R-Day fete

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Ahead of the 76th Republic Day celebrations scheduled for January 26 at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation (IGMC) Stadium in Vijayawada, NTR District Collector Dr G. and Commissioner S V Rajasekhar Babu conducted a review meeting on Monday. The meeting focused on coordinating efforts among departmental officials to ensure smooth execution, with attention to logistics and security arrangements.

Governor S A Nazeer will hoist the national flag during

Continued from Page 1

Later, Mrudul Kumar facil-

itated a meeting between

Naidu and the Chief Executive

Officers (CEOs) of four lead-

ing Swiss companies, along

with several other key business

figures. During this meeting,

Naidu outlined the invest-

ment opportunities in Andhra

Pradesh, particularly focusing

on the state's skilled workforce

and business-friendly poli-

cies. He invited the Swiss busi-

nessmen to invest in Andhra

Pradesh, leveraging both state

and central government incen-

tives, as well as the state's

initiatives to attract invest-

ments, including the avail-

ability of advanced research

and development centres,

opportunities for collaboration

on innovation hubs and incu-

bators, and potential joint

ventures in advanced manu-

facturing sectors such as aero-

space, automotive, and ener-

gy. Upon arrival at Zurich air-

port, the Chief Minister,

accompanied by Ministers

Nara Lokesh and TG Bharat

and a team of officials, was

given a warm reception by

members of the Europe Telugu

Desam Party Forum and the

Indian diaspora.

Naidu also outlined various

infrastructural advantages.

the event. Other prominent attendees include Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Andhra Pradesh High Court Chief Justice Dhiraj Singh Thakur, ministers, High Court judges, MPs, MLCs, MLAs, corporation chairpersons, and senior IAS and IPS

officers. Collector Dr Lakshmisha stressed the importance of providing adequate amenities for visitors, including drinking water and maintaining cleanliness at the stadium.

CM woos Swiss.....

Continued from Page 1

Hyderabad's world-class

infrastructure, large land bank,

skilled human resources, and

extensive air connectivity all

position Telangana as an

attractive destination for

investment. The state's already

developed facilities in sectors

like technology, pharmaceuti-

cals, and aerospace further

enhance its appeal, giving it a

competitive edge in drawing

Pradesh, under the experi-

enced leadership of Naidu, has

its own set of advantages.

Having attended Davos mul-

tiple times, Naidu is well-

versed in the art of promoting

his state's interests on the

global stage. His expertise in

marketing and policy-making

gives Andhra Pradesh a dis-

tinct advantage. Moreover, the

state's coastline and seaports

offer significant industrial

potential, especially for sectors

However, both states face a

similar challenge—securing

investments is not just about

presenting a compelling image

but offering attractive indus-

trial policies and incentives.

reliant on maritime trade.

On the other hand, Andhra

global investors.

He also directed officials to finalise preparations for the display of tableaux during the

DAVOS 2025: Will Naidu or...

Police Commissioner S V Rajasekhar Babu emphasised the need for robust security measures in and around the IGMC Stadium, calling for heightened vigilance. He informed that contingents Battalions, Scouts and Guides, and the Police Band would participate in the parade.

The review meeting was attended by DCP Gowthamishali, Vijayawada RDO K Chaitanya, and other officials, who deliberated on various aspects of planning to ensure a successful event.

While Naidu's established

track record in creating invest-

ment-friendly environments gives Andhra Pradesh a clear

edge in this area, the impor-

tance of policy remains para-

mount. It is policies that often

drive real investment, rather

than the agreements or MoUs

The reality is that many of

investments.

the memorandums signed at

forums like Davos don't always

translate into immediate, tan-

Nevertheless, politicians often

use the event to boost their

state's image, claiming large-

scale investments to further

As the WEF summit continues, the key question remains: Will Naidu's experi-

ence and established policies

secure more investment for

Andhra Pradesh, or will

Telangana's infrastructure and

strategic advantages help

Revanth Reddy win the day?

Adding another layer to this

competition is the fact that

Andhra Pradesh's delegation

in Davos is significantly larg-

er than Telangana's, which

may give Naidu's team an

edge in networking and nego-

their political narratives.

signed at such events.

gible

they would achieve it. Naidu further highlighted the population and agewealthy countries and emphasised the importance of population management. According to the CM,

India will emerge as the world's number one or two country by 2047 and remind Telugu NRIs not to forget their motherland while remaining loyal to the countries they live in.

Moreover, he observed that the state is poised to become a green hydrogen hub and called on the Telugu diaspora to share ideas based on the best practices and knowledge they have gained in various countries.

Naidu and Lokesh interacted with Telugu NRIs and Europe TDP Forum members at the airport.

"In some time, the chief minister and ministers will meet investors in Zurich,' the release added.

Draft agenda...

Continued from Page 1

The issue of outstanding funds under the Resource Gap Funding scheme was also raised.

The Chief Secretary directed officials to provide updates on the assistance received for the construction of Andhra Pradesh Bhavan in Delhi, central educational institutions, and other aspects of Amaravati's development. He instructed relevant departments to prepare detailed reports for the upcoming meeting. Senior officials, including S. Balasubrahmanyam, S. Suresh

Kumar, and others, participated in the meeting, with some attending virtually.

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Siddhanta Pandita Sabha on Jan 25, 26

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Siddhanta Pandita Sabha will be organised by the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, will be held on January 25 and 26 at Kolanukonda, under the guidance of Jagadguru Vijayendra Saraswati Swamigal of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, said Subrahmanya Siddhanti, Chief Priest of Kanchikamkoti

Sarvajnapeetham. In a release on Monday, he made this announcement and further said that the primary topic of discussion at the Sabha will be Uttarayana Arambha Nirupanam. Scholars from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and other States are expected to attend in person and some are likely to participate vir-

tually, he added. Vijaya Subrahmanya Siddhanti encouraged scholars, researchers and people with an interest in astrology and astronomy to actively participate and contribute to making the event a success. For further details, participants are advised to contact 9963732303.

Early detection key in combating leprosy: DC

Leprosy eradication campaign launched in NTR district

PNS VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr G Lakshmisha has urged the public to actively participate in making the district 'leprosy-free'. As part of the leprosy-eradication initiative, medical tests will be conducted across the district from January 20 to February 2. Collector Dr Lakshmisha unveiled wall posters, pamphlets, and other awareness materials related to the campaign at the Pingali Venkaiah Meeting Hall on the Collectorate premises here on Monday.

During the event, the Collector emphasised that early detection and timely medical intervention are critical in combating leprosy. He said medical camps will be held throughout the campaign to identify individuals showing symptoms such as skin patches, painless lumps, and loss of sensation in extremities, among other related signs. He stated that if patients with leprosy symptoms are identified early and provided with timely medical assistance, the disease can be managed effectively.



He also highlighted that anti-leprosy medications will be distributed free of charge through health centres. He said that ASHA workers and Health personnel will play a key role in identifying potential cases by visiting households and encouraging those with symptoms to undergo testing at nearby health centres. He urged those exhibiting symptoms of the disease to take advantage of this oppor-tunity and collaborate in making the district leprosy-free.

NTR District Leprosy Prevention Officer Dr Usharani reported that data collection and case identification will be streamlined through a special app, ensuring efficient follow-up by medical officers.

She mentioned that free medication and treatment will

be provided to diagnosed patients for 6 to 12 months, depending on the severity of their condition. Later, she said to date, 54 leprosy cases have been identified in the district, all of whom are receiving treatment through primary health centres.

District Revenue Officer Narasimham, Lakshmi DM&HO M Suhasini, and DRDA PD K Srinivasa Rao.



Andhra Pradesh Saaguneeti Viniyogadaarula Sanghaala Samakhya representatives submitting a representation to KRMB Chairman Athul Jain at the KRMB office in Hyderabad on Monday

Relocate KRMB headquarters to Vijayawada: APSVSS

Delegation meets KRMB Chairman to request release of water to Nagarjuna Sagar Left Canal Zones 2 and 3

PNS VIJAYAWADA

A delegation of the Andhra Saaguneeti Viniyogadaarula Sanghaala Samakhya (APSVSS), the welfare association of water users and ayacutdars in the State, has Krishna Management Board (KRMB) Chairman Athul Jain, and requested him to shift the headquarters of KRMB to Vijayawada. Also, the delegation urged the Chairman to supply Nagarjuna Sagar Project (NSP) water to Nagarjuna Sagar Left Canal Zone-2 and 3 to protect the standing crops of mango, tobacco, jowar, cotton, chillies, blackgram, greengram,

oil palm and others.
The APSVSS representatives, including Nagarjuna Sagar Right Main Canal Project Committee Chairman Pulukuri Kantha Rao, Vice-Chairman Upplapati Chakrapani, Left Canal Project Committee Vice-Chairman Alla Venkata Gopala Krishna Rao, Madicherla Distributory Committees Chairman Devineni Satyanarayana, Nunna DC Chairman Pamarthi Srinivasa Rao, Krishna Eastern Delta Distributory Committees Chairman 'Kommareddy Rajesh, and Yarlagadda Ravi Babu, met Chairman Athul Jain at the KRMB office in Hyderabad on Monday. They submitted a representation requesting to shift the KRMB headquarters and release water to NSP Zone-2 and 3.

Speaking on the occasion, APSVSS president Alla Venkata Gopala Krishna Rao said that around 1.56 lakh acres of ayacut in Zone-2, and 2.11 lakh acres in Zone-3 are being cultivated in the erstwhile Krishna district. For the purpose, the KRMB accorded 12 TMCs of water release orders under the Nagarjuna Sagar Left Canal in the State for the 2024-25 Rabi season. These water releases are scheduled from December 2024 to January 2025 to protect the standing crops. The NSP authorities have released 2.90

TMCs of water so far, he said. He added the Telangana drew more than 120 TMCs for their power generation out of 299 TMCs in the Krishna Basin below Srisailam and Nagarjuna Sagar Project. Due to these actions of Telangana, the yield of existing ayacut in the State is badly affected. So, the authorities should examine the requests of the State and do justice to save ayacut under Zone 2 and 3 under NSLC. However, so far no positive action has been observed in the field, he

He requested the release of 3,059 cusecs of water, with a flow of 1,750 cusecs at the 101.36-km mark of the 21st Branch Canal. This is necessary to ensure that water reaches the tail-end regions of the NSLC, which is critical for saving the standing crops in Zones 2 and 3. To evaluate the actual transmission losses, Telangana is accounting for significant losses compared to Andhra Pradesh's share in water releas-

es at the AP border, he said. Additionally, he emphasised the need to hand over the NSRC head regulator located in the AP region, along with the withdrawal of CRPF forces and adjustments to Telangana's cropping schedules. Later, Gopala Krishna requested the Board Chairman to allocate AP's rightful share of 512 TMCs of water out of 811 TMCs as per KWDT-1 to protect the existing ayacut under

Tribal community protests for road, forest clearances

PNS ANAKAPALLI

Members of the PVTG (Konda) tribal community staged a unique protest at the Anakapalli Collector's office, seeking road access and forest clearances to aid in the development of their villages. In a symbolic gesture, the protesters placed Bauhinia leaves on their heads and carried dollies (makeshift stretchers), highlighting the severity of their struggle for basic infrastructure that is crucial to their well-being and economic

A key issue highlighted during the protest was the delay in obtaining forest permissions for road construction in Donkada and Neredubandha icant grants, bureaucratic obstacles have stalled the projects for over two years. Neredubandha, located in Chimalapadu panchayat of Ravikamatham mandal, was allocated Rs. 2.5 crore for road development, but work has not started due to pending forest clearances, even after the foundation stone was laid by local legislator KSN Raju.

In Donkada, a village in Golugonda mandal, around 80 residents are similarly waiting for a road construction project that has been delayed despite the sanctioning of Rs. 1.35 crore from the PRED-I Impact funds. The absence of forest clearances

PVTG (Konda) members demand urgent infrastructure development



has left the community cut off from essential services.

tion to other affected villages such as Pasuvulabanda, Sompuram, and Jeelugula, which face similar challenges. The residents of V. Madugula mandal's Pasuvulabanda village, situated on Samalamma Hill, are isolated, despite being provided electricity under the PM-JANMAN Scheme. PM-JANMAN Sompuram in Cheemalapadu panchayat also remains disconnected from basic services.

The lack of roads has led to tragic outcomes, with individuals like Sendriya Venkat Rao and Korra Babu Rao losing their lives due to the inability to access medical help. Further compounding the difficulties faced by these communities is nated spring water, which has resulted in serious health problems. Local medical officials have advised against using the water, but the Rural Water Supply (RWS) department's failure to provide safe drinking water has worsened the situation. Despite repeated protests and appeals, authorities have yet to take effective action.

The protest, led by CPM district executive member K Govinda Rao and supported by PVTG Sangam mandal president Kilo Potti Dhara, has urged authorities to take immediate action to address these pressing



Rly employees transforming daily roles into creative masterpieces

Waltair Division staff combine their passion for art and literature, creating renowned works that transcend their daily duties

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

In the hustle of daily duties and tight schedules, a remarkable group of individuals from the Waltair Division of East Coast Railway is proving that creativity can thrive in the most unexpected places. Engineers, mechanics, and office staff, often seen as routine of their jobs, have found an artistic outlet, creating masterpieces with passion and a deep love for art and literature.

The artistic journey of these railway employees began with Malla Shiva, a Loco Pilot whose artworks are set to be featured in the 2025 edition of Kona Seema Chitra Kala Parishad art magazine. His inspiration stems from the stunning landscapes he encounters during his train journeys. After his shifts, Shiva spends his evenings sketching and translating these views into vibrant paintings that showcase the vastness of open

fields and towering mountains, celebrating the natural beauty around him.

Shiva's achievements extend far beyond painting. He holds a Guinness World Record for creating a miniature chess-board and has been honoured by the Limca Book of World Records for an intricate portrait of Mother Teresa made using five lakh nen dots

Parallel to Shiva's artistic journey is that of KR Jagannath, a stenographer whose passion for poetry has earned him admiration across the literary world. His poems, delving into themes of travel, nature, and social issues, reflect the depth of his experiences. For his significant contributions to Telugu literature, Jagannath will receive the prestigious Telugu Keerthi National Talent Award in Vijayawada in April.

Another railway employee, M Vijay Kumar, has achieved global recognition for his unique artistic vision.

Riding without helmet unforgivable offense: DTC Mohan

PNS VIJAYAWADA

TransportCommissioner (DTC) A Mohan has stated that riding a two-wheeler without a helmet urged the public not to lose their lives due to minor negli-

As part of the Road Safety Month observance, a bike rally was organised by the Transport Department which was inaugurated by DTC A Mohan.

Speaking at the event, Mohan said that the aim of the 36th Road Safety Month is to raise public awareness about road safety and to prevent accidents. He stressed that it is the responsibility of every individual to be aware of the importance of wearing helmets. He mentioned that many lives are lost due to negligence to wear

helmets during road accidents. He urged two-wheeler riders to wear helmets without fail, stating that violations would lead to fines and possible licence suspension.

various initiatives are being conducted in collaboration with voluntary organisations to create awareness about wearing seat belts in cars and helmets for two-wheeler riders. The ultimate goal of these efforts is to prevent the loss of lives in road accidents. The bike helmet rally was attended by RTO K Venkateswar

MotorVvehicle Inspection Officers K Sivarama Goud, Uday Shiva Prasad, employees of the Transport Department, zonal president of the Transport Workers Union M Rajubabu, office staff, vehicle dealers and

Rs 176-cr cricket betting scandal shocks port city

Police and political links exposed in investigation

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

A city-wide uproar has erupted following shocking revelations in the ongoing investigation into a massive cricket betting racket. The scandal, which has sent shockwaves through the community, began unravelling on January 12 when Task Force Police raided a flat in Gayatri Towers, Doctors Colony, Peda Waltair, apprehending a key bookie involved in large-scale betting

The investigation, now spearheaded by the Cybercrime Police under the direction of Police Commissioner Shankhabrata bagchi, has unearthed staggering evidence of Rs 176 crore worth of transactions across 80 bank accounts linked to the betting network. In a decisive move, ?45 lakh from these accounts has been frozen. with three additional bookies already apprehended.

The network's reach appears vast, with investigators identifying several accomplices. Over the weekend, five individuals—three on Saturday and two on Sunday—were taken into custody. Among the detainees are a rowdy sheeter from Kobbathota and an accomplice from Sandathota, underscoring the gang's deep roots

Energy Minister lays stone for development Works

PNS BAPATLA

Minister for Energy Gottipati Ravi Kumar laid the foundation stone for various development works, including road construction, on Monday. The Minister unveiled a plaque marking the occasion at Sajjapuram village in Santhamaguluru mandal.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister claimed that in the last six months, 3,750 km of CC roads had been constructed, comparing it to only 1,800 km of CC roads built during the five years of the YSRCP regime.

"Andhra Pradesh has become a hub of development. The coalition

Government is committed to the overall progress of the state," Minister Ravi Kumar asserted

He reaffirmed the State's commitment to creating 20 lakh jobs over the next five years. The Minister also highlighted key achievements of the coalition Government, including the increase in social security pensions from Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,000 for over 64 lakh pensioners across the

Taking a jibe at the previous Jagan Mohan Reddy-led regime, he lamented that all sectors were neglected during the five years of YSRCP rule, with job creation completely overlooked.



Uttam slams BRS on Krishna water allocation and ration cards

Telangana Civil Supplies Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy launched a scathing attack on the former BRS government over its handling of Krishna water allocations and the distribution of ration cards. The Minister accused the opposition of spreading false propaganda while asserting the Congress government's commitment to ensuring justice for

On the contentious Krishna water issue, Uttam criticised former chief minister KCR and BRS

leader Harish Rao for their alleged negligence. "During their tenure, KCR and Harish Rao signed documents approving 298 TMC feet water allocation under Krishna Tribunal, which led to severe injustice to Telangana. They turned a blind eye to critical issues such as the Pothireddypadu and Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation projects," he said. Uttam termed Harish Rao's

the former leaders'

remarks as 'petty politics' and alleged that

mised Telangana's rightful share of Krishna waters. The Minister addressed concerns about ration card distribution, stating that the Congress government is working tirelessly to ensure that every eligible household receives benefits. "We are issuing ration cards to all eligible families. The process is continuous and new applicants can apply through Prajavani and Gram Sabhas," Uttam said. He highlighted the Congress party's legacy, stating

Congress that introduced the Food Security Act and ensured food for millions.

Taking a dig at the BRS, Uttam said, "During their tenyear rule, BRS issued only 60,000 ration cards. In contrast, we aim to ensure ration benefits for an additional 40 lakh people once the new and old processes are completed. Every individual will receive 6 kilos of fine rice, adding a financial burden of Rs 11,000 crore on the government, which we are willing to bear for the people's welfare.

Responding to allegations

from Harish Rao, Uttam said, "Harish Rao is resorting to baseless and malicious remarks. While the BRS deceived people during its rule, they now oppose every welfare initiative we undertake. Telangana's people know the truth, and we remain committed to their welfare."

The Minister also assured that all pending ration card applications received through public grievance platforms and local meetings would be processed transparently. He urged the public to apply through official channels if their names are not listed

YSRCP faces unprecedented crisis after 2024 defeat

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) is facing a severe crisis following its crushing defeat in the 2024 Assembly and Lok Sabha elections. The party, which once held a strong grip over Andhra Pradesh politics, is now struggling to manage a wave of defections by senior leaders, including former ministers, MPs, and MLAs. These exits have weakened the party's organisational structure and influence in key districts.

Former ministers, MPs, and MLAs have left the party, weakening its influence across AP The crisis began soon after senior Rajya Sabha members Similarly, Rayalaseema leaders

the election results were declared. Former MLA Pendem Dorababu was the first to resign, setting off a chain reaction of high-profile departures. Among those who left were former Deputy Chief Minister Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas, popularly known as Alla Nani, and several MLCs. The situation escalated when

Beeda Masthan Rao, Mopidevi Venkataramana Rao, and Ryaga Krishnaiah also announced their resignations.

More recent defections have added to the party's woes. Former Minister Avanti Srinivas and ex-Bhimavaram legislator Grandhi Srinivas are reportedly set to join the Telugu Desam Party (TDP).

such as Adari Anand Kumar and retired IAS officer AMD Imtiaz have stepped down, reflecting growing dissatisfaction within the party.

In another major blow, Ravi Chandra Reddy, a prominent YSRCP spokesperson known for his effective media presence, left the party to join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

His induction ceremony was attended by BJP State president Daggubati Purandeswari and Health Minister Satya Kumar Yadav, marking a significant loss for the YSRCP.

These defections have left the YSRCP in a precarious position, raising doubts about its ability to rebuild and regain its political footing. The party's once-strong cadre is now thinning, and internal dissent is on the rise. Meanwhile, a resurgent Opposition is capitalising on the party's vulnerabilities.

The YSRCP's rise and fall have been dramatic. After a landslide victory in the 2019 Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections, the party enjoyed years of dominance. However, the poor performance in the 2024 elections, combined with a string of defections, points to deeper problems within its leadership and organisational structure.



APSSDC launches German language training for nurses

The Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC) has introduced a German Language Training and Placement Linked Programme for nursing professionals under its Skill International Initiative. In collaboration with 2COMS Consulting Pvt. Ltd., the programme aims to train eligible candidates in the German language and facilitate their placement in the German healthcare sector as nurses.

The inaugural session of the programme's first batch was held at the Government College of Nursing, Kurnool. The event was graced by prominent dignitaries, including Manjula Rani, Principal of the College, P Deepti, District Employment Officer, L Anand Rajkumar, District Skill Development Officer (DSDO), Kurnool, V Sreekanth Reddy, DSDO, opportunities. "German lan-Nandyal, and Ákanksha,



D Manohar, Executive Director of APSSDC, emphasised the programme's role in empowering nursing professionals with language skills essential for global healthcare guage proficiency is in high demand in European coun-

tries. This training will not only enhance nurses' employability but also pave the way for exciting careers in the global healthcare sector. Certified language instructors will ensure the quality of training," he said.

The training, spanning 8–10 months, aims to equip aspiring

nurses from Andhra Pradesh with the German language proficiency required to secure jobs in Germany's healthcare sector. Successful candidates will be placed in nursing roles in Germany upon completion of the programme.

Students and faculty at the

Government College of Nursing expressed their enthusiasm for the initiative, which promises valuable international career opportunities. This programme is a significant step towards enhancing the skills of young professionals and broadening their global career horizons.

Officials directed to adopt villages for development

PNS ELURU

District Collector K Vetri Selvi has instructed district and mandal-level officials to adopt villages to foster development. Accompanied by Joint Collector P Dhatri Reddy, she chaired a meeting on Monday to review efforts to improve living standards in

The Collector urged officials to adopt villages and focus on providing essential facilities, including education, healthcare, employment opportunities, sanitation, drinking water, and infrastructure. She assured full support for developing the adopted villages, including constructing roads and improving sanitation, and called for transforming them into model villages.

She advised officials to hold villages to raise awareness villagers' needs and available emphasised.

West Godavari District

Nagarani has directed horticul-

ture officials to promote the

cultivation of orchid flowers

among farmers in the district.

orchid farm in Kapavaram vil-

lage of Peravali mandal, where

decorative flowers are being

cultivated and interacted with

the growers to understand the

She inquired about the dura-

tion of orchid cultivation, the

source of the plants, the num-

ber of plants grown per acre, and the costs involved. She also

discussed the workforce engaged in the cultivation of

Orchid farm manager K

Srinivasa Mangaraju explained the process, noting that the

plants were imported from

Thailand in 2016. After a 45-

day quarantine and inspec-

tion by the Central Research

cultivation process.

the flowers.

The Collector visited an

Chadalavada

PNS BHIMAVARAM

Collector



amenities. The officials were tasked with resolving issues related to education, healthcare, sanitation, sustainable livelihoods, and community infrastructure in the adopted

villages.
"The focus should be on increasing literacy rates, grama sabhas in the adopted empowering women, and conducting door-to-door surabout welfare schemes and veys to collect details about

She also directed officials to devise action plans for village development, aiming to lift rural families out of poverty. Identifying unemployed youth and organising skill development programmes to enhance their employability were high-

lighted as key priorities. DRO V Visweswar Rao, DRDA PD R Vijay Raju, and ZP CEO K Subba Rao were

Promote orchid flower cultivation: Collector

"For optimal flower cultiva-

tion, water puddles must be

dug at the base of the plants,

and sprinklers should be

installed to maintain a cool

environment," Srinivas told the

Collector. "An acre can accom-



DGP inaugurates police petrol bunk

PNS RAJAHMUNDRY

Director General of Police (DGP) Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao visited Rajahmundry on Monday to inaugurate a Police Petrol Bunk and a newly constructed Police Parade

The DGP was accorded a warm welcome by GVG Ashok Kumar, Inspector General (IG) of Eluru Range, D Narasimha Kishore, Superintendent of Police (SP) of East Godavari, and other police officials.

The Police Petrol Bunk, located near Lalacheruvu in Rajamahendravaram, was constructed by Indian Oil Corporation Ltd under the supervision of the district police. DGP Dwaraka Rao formally inau. gurated the facility, which district.

modate approximately 45,000

plants. The initial investment

for purchasing plants, setting

up canopies, and other

arrangements in the first year

The orchids are ready for

is about Rs 60 lakh."

aims to support the operational needs of the police

The DGP also unveiled the newly established Police Parade Ground at the district police office and inspected its

Senior police officials, including Additional SP (Admin) NBM Murali Krishna, Additional SP (Law & Order) Alluri Venkata Subbarao, Additional SP (Crimes) L Arjun, Additional SP (AR) L Chenchi Reddy, DSP (SB) B Ramakrishna, and Inspector (SB) A Srinivasa Rao, along with other police personnel, attended the event.

The inaugurations are expected to bolster police infrastructure and improve the working conditions of law

months after planting. The

price of each stem ranges

between Rs 20 and Rs 25, with

expected monthly income from

once a plant is established,

there is no need for re-pur-

chase, as the same plants con-

tinue to be cultivated. The flowers are sold to various

cities, including Chennai, Visakhapatnam, Hyderabad,

Pune, Bangalore, Pondicherry, and beyond, with decorators

regularly placing orders.

The Collector highlighted

that the government would offer a subsidy of around Rs 32

lakh for orchid cultivation and instructed officials to inform

farmers about the subsidy

details. District Horticulture

Officer R Devanand, Drip

Veerabhadra Rao, and

Municipal Commissioner T

Ravi Kumar accompanied the

Irrigation Officer

Collector on the visit.

Srinivas also revealed that

an acre exceeding Rs 5 lakh.

Couple among 7 killed in three road accidents

A couple and two children were among 7 people killed in three road accidents which took place during the last 24 hours in the State.

Police said that a couple was killed and two others were injured when the car in which they were travelling collided with a private bus at Kukkaladoddi village in Renigunta mandal.
Police said that the accident

took place on the night of Sunday. The deceased and the victims belonged to Hyderabad. After visiting the hill shrine Tirumala, they were going to Hyderabad in the car which collided with a private travel bus killing the couple Anjali Devi (40) and Sandip (45). The police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH in Renigunta for postmortem.

Three people including two children were killed and four others, including their parents, were critically injured when the car in which they were travelling collided with at Jakkalavaripalali village in Chandragiri mandal on Puthalapattu-Naidupet highway on the night of Sunday.

The deceased were identified as Jeevan (10), Viswa (6) and Kalaivani. The injured were admitted to the Ruia hospital. CI Sbbarami Reddy registered a case and shifted the bodies to the SVIMS hospital for postmortem. The deceased and the injured belong to Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu and went to the Tirumala hill shrine on pil-

In another road accident, two youths were killed when the motorcycle they were rid-







ing hit the road divider at the KČP flyover bridge on the Vijayawada-Machilipatnam highway on Monday. The deceased were going to Hyderabad on a bike from Kakinada and their motorcycle hit the divider in which they suffered fatal head injuries

and died instantaneously. The deceased were Dasari Chandrasekhar (23) and Mukta Durga Babu (24). Poor visibility was said to be the reason for the accident. The police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH in Vuyyuru for postmortem.



120 youths get placements at 'Job Mela': Minister

A total of 120 job aspirants were selected for various positions at a job mela organised at Agiripalli on Monday, announced Minister for Housing and I&PR, K Parthasarathi.

The Minister inaugurated the job mela at the NRI College campus in Gopalapuram, near Agiripalli, where Amara Raja Batteries selected eligible can-

didates for various job roles.
Speaking on the occasion,
Minister Parthasarathi reiterated the Government's commitment to creating 20 lakh jobs over the next five years. He highlighted that Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu is working towards bringing world-class technology to the state, ensuring a bright future for the youth.

The Minister further emphasised that Chief

education, employment, and job creation in the state. He expressed hope that the job mela would provide a significant opportunity for unemployed youth and urged them to take full advantage of the

"Since the coalition government came to power, under the leadership of Chandrababu Naidu, steps have been taken to generate job opportunities in both the Government and private sectors. As a result, major companies are now eager to invest in the state," he

Parthasarathi also stated that a special industrial policy is being formulated to encourage entrepreneurship in every household. He shared that a 'skill census' is being conducted, similar to the population census, to assess the skills of youth in every household.

in 175 constituencies across the state, offering skill development training in all sectors and creating job opportunities," he added.

The Minister also mentioned that NTPC will establish a non-conventional energy development unit with an investment of Rs 1.87 lakh crore, which will generate employment for 1.06 lakh vouth. He further claimed that . Education Minister Nara Lokesh, during a recent foreign trip, successfully convinced Google to set up its unit in the

Reliance Industries has also initiated the establishment of 500 compressed biogas units with an investment of Rs 65,000 crore, Parthasarathi revealed.

Later, the Minister handed over appointment letters to the 120 selected youths.

Mermaid performance wows audience at VISAKHA Expo 2025

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The VISAKHA Expo-2025 is making a splash in the city, with a mesmerizing mermaid performance that is setting the event apart from others. A first for Vizag and only the second of its kind in India, this captivating spectacle promises to be a showstopper, drawing thousands of tourists and providing an unforgettable experience for all.

The performance features a talented team of four mermaid performers, hailing from both the Philippines and Australia. After two years of rigorous training at a spe-

Philippines, supported by the local government, the performers are ready to showcase their incredible skills. Two performers from the Philippines and two from Melbourne, Australia, have honed their underwater expertise for months to ensure a flawless and breathtaking show.

Institute, they were issued an

NOC. The plants were then

placed in plastic pots in special

sheds on the farm, surround-

ed by coconut fibre, with rele-

vant solutions sprayed on

The show takes place in a custom-designed tank, where the water temperature is carefully maintained at 28°C to ensure the performers' comfort. In a bid to uphold high standards of hygiene and safety, the water is changed daily, creating a clean and safe envicialized centre in the ronment for both the perThe first-ever mermaid show in Vizag, featuring performers from the Philippines and Australia, adds a magical touch to the expo, attracting thousands of tourists and boosting the local economy.



Speaking to The Pioneer, Anil Azia, 28 year old performer from the Philippines, described the performance as one of the most physically demanding she has ever undertaken. Despite spending hours underwater, Azil expressed her joy in performing, especially in front of young children, who are often mesmerized by the magical

display.
Fellow performer Ruth, 33, also from the Philippines, echoed Azil's thoughts, emphasizing the challenging nature of the performance. After completing her own two years of training, Ruth

feels when delivering a captivating show and shared her excitement about being a part of VISAKHA Expo-2025.

The Expo's impact has been felt far beyond the performance itself. The event has employed around 400 local workers, significantly boosting Vizag's economy. The influx of tourists has helped elevate local businesses, making the Expo a key driver of the region's tourism sector. With a range of attractions—including the highly anticipated mermaid performance— VISAKHA Expo-2025 is expected to continue drawing large crowds until April 2025.



ACROSS THE STATES



EC to conduct meeting of global poll bodies

he Election Commission is organising a conference of international poll management bodies here ahead of its 76th year of establishment. The two-day conference on "Global Election Year 2024: Reiteration of Democratic Spaces; Takeaway for EMBs" comes after more than 70 countries with nearly half the world's population went to the polls last year. The conference aims to reflect on key areas of contemporary poll management and a prospective view of elections while drawing key learnings, the Election Commission (EC) said on Monday. Nearly 30 representatives from the election management bodies (EMBs) of 13 countries -- Bhutan, Georgia, Namibia, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Ireland, Mauritius, Philippines, Russian Federation, Tunisia and Nepal - will participate in the conference on January 23-24. The conference will commence with a keynote address from Chief Election Commissioner Raiiv Kumar and include sessions on various aspects of election management. The EC came into being on January 25, 1950, a day before India became a republic.



J-K LG Sinha registers himself for organ donation

mmu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha pledged for organ donation by registering himself with the Ayushman Bharat Organ Donation Registry (ABODR) on Monday. Representatives from the State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (SOTTO), led by its nodal officer Dr Elias Sharma, visited Raj Bhawan and presented the organ donation pledge certificate to the Lieutenant Governor. "The Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, registered himself with the Ayushman Bharat Organ Donation Registry (ABODR) of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India," said a spokesperson from Raj Bhawan. The Lieutenant Governor expressed his willingness for organ donation during a programme organised by the Bharatiya Jain Sansthan on Sunday. Sandeep Jain, president of Bharatiya Jain Sangathan, was also present.



5,000 artistes to perform during R-Day parade

howcasing India's vibrant colors and cultural diversity, an ensemble of more than 5,000 artists representing over 45 dance forms will perform during the Republic Day celebrations here on January 26. Titled 'Jayati Jai Mamah Bharatam', the program has been conceived by the Ministry of Culture and the Sangeet Natak Akademi and will be presented during the Republic Day parade at Kartavya Path, officials said. "This remarkable performance will feature over 5,000 artists representing more than 45 traditional and folk dance forms from across India," the official said. The dance forms that are planned to be showcased include Jhijhiya (Bihar), Mayur Ras (Uttar Pradesh), Dangi (Gujarat), Lambadi (Telangana), and Purulia Chau (West Bengal), among others. Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, who attended its rehearsals a few days ago, had earlier said, "This is a glimpse of India's fame through its cultural wealth.

NCC cadets should contribute to 'Viksit Bharat' dream: Rajnath

Noting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is an ex-cadet of the NCC, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday exhorted cadets to contribute to PM Modi's dream of making India a 'Viksit Bharat' by

Addressing a gathering of cadets and officers during his visit to the ongoing Republic Day National Cadet Corps (NCC) camp at Delhi cantonment, Singh also said that he sees an image of India in NCC cadets. A total of 2,361 NCC cadets from across the country are taking part in the month-long camp, which began on December 30, and will culminate with the PM rally on January 27.

The annual event is also witnessing the participation of 917 girl cadets, the largest contingent so far. Appreciating the unity and dis-

cipline shown by cadets at the NCC camp, the defence minister said, "India has many bodies but one soul, many branches but one root, many rays but one light".

In his address, Singh also recalled

Birla's remarks at the inaugural

function of the 85th All India

Presiding Officers Conference

(AIPOC) here came amid reports

that the Delhi Assembly held a

mere 74 sittings in its entire five-

According to a study by PRS

PNS PATNA

year tenure.

Legislative, the

outgoing Delhi Assembly held 74

sittings during its

five-year term, an

average of 15 days

a year. On the

days it met, the

assembly sat for

an average of

three hours. The

House passed only 14 bills dur-

ing its term, the

lowest number for

any previous full-

The Lok Śabha

concerns over dis-

ruption of House

proceedings in a

planned manner

and urged presid-

ing officers to talk

to leaders of polit-

ical parties to

ensure smooth

functioning of the

state legislative

assemblies and

the political parties

to formulate a code

of conduct for its

lawmakers to

uphold the dignity

of the legislative

'We have to make efforts by

reaching out to political parties to

minimise disruptions during

House proceedings. All political

parties should co-operate to

uphold the dignity of the House,'

Birla said. He said agreement and

disagreement were the strength of

any democracy and encouraged

presiding officers to nurture such

traditions to empower their respec-

assemblies.

Birla also urged

councils.

term assembly.

Decline in sittings

matter of concern'

We have to make

efforts by

reaching out to

political parties

to minimise

disruptions

during House

proceedings. All

political parties

should co-operate

to uphold the

dignity of the

House

of legislatures a



that before foraying into politics, he himself was "a student, a cadet of NCC, and a physics teacher".

The energy and enthusiasm of the cadets reflect that India has and will have a bright future. NCC ingrains in youth leadership quality and discipline, he added.

Singh also spoke of the 'Viksit Bharat' vision of the government and the role the cadets can play in realising the ambitious vision that seeks to make India a developed nation by the time it completes 100 years since its Independence in 1947.

The 85th AIPOC was attended

by Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman

Harivansh, Bihar Assembly Speaker Nand Kishore Yadav, Bihar

Deputy Chief Minister Samrat

Choudhary and presiding officers

of state legislative bodies from

Kumar met Birla at the Raj Bhavan

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish

Monday

morning but was

conspicuous by

his absence at the

two-day confer-

ence -- '75th

Anniversary of

Constitution:

Contribution of

Parliament and

State Legislative

Strengthening Constitutional

Leader of the

Bihar

Opposition in

Tejashwi Yadav,

who was sched-

uled to speak at

the conference,

also skipped the

any House is

directly linked to

its member. The

more the members are responsi-

ble in their con-

duct, the more it

will enhance the

dignity of the

House. This will

also strengthen

democracy as we

will be able to hold

elected governments accountable

in an effective manner," Birla said.

role of parliamentary standing

committees to ensure account-

ability of elected governments.

He also favoured increasing the

"Standing committees are mini-

Parliaments and there is a need to

strengthen their functioning. More

effective standing committees will

lead to greater accountability in

governance and transparency in

administration," he said

"The dignity of

Bodies`

Values'.

across the country.

"Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi, himself an ex-cadet of the NCC, has given the vision of 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047. So, its current cadets have a responsibility to contribute to his 'Viksit Bharat' dream,' Singh said.

However, he emphasised that 'Viksit Bharat' does not mean merely physical development on land, but a holistic growth of entire soci-

Praising the NCC's role in inculcating discipline and leadership qualities among cadets when they there is a "spark within" the cadets that forges a way of life for them in such a way that irrespective of the profession they will choose later, they will all contribute to nation-

building.
Singh also recalled his visit to Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in Mumbai, a place, he said, also reminds one of the deadly 26/11 terror attacks in that city in 2008.

He also mentioned the last words spoken by Major Sandeep Unnikrishnan before he laid down his life while battling the terrorists in the attack.

"That was his (Maj Unnikrishnan's) leadership quality (shown during the combat)," the defence minister told the cadets, exhorting them to become leaders

Singh also exhorted them to "think big" and never get disheartened in life, nor have a narrowminded thinking.

"A person becomes significant in life not by virtue of the big posts one holds, but by the human qualities they have," he said.



Resolve humanitarian crisis outside AIIMS'

Rahul writes to Nadda, Delhi CM over plight of patients

PNS NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has written to Union Health Minister J P Nadda and Delhi Chief Minister Atishi, flagging the plight of hundreds of patients and their family members huddled on the footpath and subway outside AIIMS here and sought concrete steps to resolve this "humanitari-

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha also urged the central strengthen the public healthcare system in the upcoming budget and increase the necessary resources for it.

In a post in Hindi on X, Gandhi

said, "I have written letters to the Chief Minister of Delhi and the Union Health Minister to provide better facilities to the patients and their families coming to Delhi AIIMS from all over the country."

"Recently I saw that in freezing cold these people are forced to sleep in the subway under the metro station, where there is no provision of drinking water or a toilet. There are heaps of garbage lying around. The arrival of such a large number of patients to government to take concrete steps Delhi AIIMS also shows that people are not getting affordal good quality health facilities where they live," Gandhi said.

"I hope that taking cognizance of my letter, the Chief Minister of



Saif attacker panicked, planned to flee to Bangla: Police

PNS MUMBAI

The Bangladeshi national

arrested for allegedly stabbing actor Saif Ali Khan had panicked upon seeing his image on TV channels and was planning to flee to his native country when he was nabbed, police officials said on Monday. Police also said the 30-year-old attacker asked his brother in Bangladesh to send documents which helped cops to ascertain his identity as a resident of the neighbouring country. The accused, identified as Shariful Islam Shehzad Mohammad Rohilla Amin Fakir who changed his name to Vijay Das. was arrested on Sunday after an extensive examination of CCTV footage, which showed him riding a motorcycle on January 9, a week before the violent attack. Khan was repeatedly stabbed by the intruder inside his upscale Bandra apartment on Thursday.

necessitating surgery.
The shocking nature of the attack raised serious concerns regarding security at the 'Satguru Sharan' building where Khan lives with his family and about the motive for targeting the Bollywood star. As the investigations progressed, teams of Mumbai Police combed different areas of the city to

through hours of footage from gather evidence. Initially, police faced challenges in tracing the lone assailant. Fakir, a native of Jhalokathi district in Bangladesh, had been residing in Mumbai for over five months, working odd jobs and associated with a housekeeping agency, police said. Mumbai police identified the intruder from CCTV grab and ascertained that he was riding a motorcycle at a crossing in suburban Andheri on January 9, officials said.

The motorcycle owner informed police that he was Fakir's former employer. This lead helped police obtain the suspect's phone number, which was placed under surveillance. the officials said. In a breakthrough on Saturday night, police tracked a digital payment made by the suspect at a food stall near Century Mills in Worli, where he ordered Bhurii Pav (popular scrambled egg dish made with eggs, onions,

tomatoes, and spices) and a

bottle of water.

STALIN TO CENTRE

Withdraw draft UGC regulations

Several provisions in the draft UGC regulations were 'in conflict with the state's educational system and policies,' Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin claimed on Monday and urged Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to withdraw the said regulations. The state believed that many provisions in the draft regulations might pose serious challenges to the academic integrity, autonomy, and inclusive development of state universities, he said.

'We therefore request that the Ministry of Education may withdraw the draft Bills under discussion and review the concerns to better align with the needs of the



diverse higher education landscape in India," Stalin said in a letter addressed to Pradhan.

Also, in separate letters addressed to the chief ministers of the non-BIP ruled states, Stalin asked his counterparts to consider passing a resolution in their respective Assemblies on lines similar to the Tamil Nadu

Assembly resolution seeking the withdrawal of the draft UGC regulations 2025. "The recently issued UGC guidelines restrict the role of state governments in the appointment of Vice-Chancellors and certain administrative admission procedures, including the introduction of entrance exams for UG and PG courses in Universities," he said.

These guidelines were "a clear infringement" on the rights of state governments and will have farreaching consequences on the autonomy of state universities, he said in the letter addressed to the chief ministers of New Delhi. Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Telangana and West Bengal

Public trust in science second highest in India: Survey

tive assemblies and councils.

PNS NEW DELHI

Public trust in science is the second highest in India, following Egypt, with a moderately high level overall worldwide, according to a survey spanning 68 countries, including under-researched ones in the Global South.

Australia ranked fifth and Bangladesh sixth, while New Zealand ranked ninth and the US twelfth for public trust in scientists.

The analysis, published in the journal Nature Human Behaviour, found no evidence for the oftrepeated claim of a crisis of trust in science, researchers said.

"Our results show that most people in most countries have a relatively high level of trust in scientists and want them to play an active role in society and politics, lead researcher Viktoria Cologna, from ETH Zurich, Switzerland, said. The survey, the first in a post-pandemic world, included nearly 72,000 people.

The majority of the participants also perceived scientists as qualified (78 per cent), honest (57 per cent) and concerned about people's well-being (56 per cent), the authors found.

However, significant differences between countries were noticed -in particular, people with right-wing political views in Western countries tend to have less trust in scientists than those with left-wing views.

Further, 83 per cent of the survey respondents believed that scientists should communicate with the public about science, and 52 per cent that scientists should be more involved in the policy-making process, the researchers found.

The participants also gave high priority to research related to improving public health, solving



energy problems, and reducing poverty

While research related to developing defence and military technology was given a lower priority overall, people in African and Asian countries often demand high priority for developing defence and military technology, the authors said. "Our results also show that many

people in many countries feel that the priorities of science are not always well aligned with their own priorities. We recommend that scientists take these results seriously and find ways to be more receptive to feedback and open to dialogue with the public," co-author Niels G. Mede, from the University of Zurich, said.

"Our 68-country survey challenges the idea that there is a widespread lack of public trust in scientists. In most countries, scientists and scientific methods are trusted,' the authors wrote.

The study provides global, representative survey data on the populations and regions in which researchers are perceived to be most trustworthy, the extent to which they should engage with the public, and whether science is prioritising important research issues, the team said.

Bangla national held for illegal stay in India

PNS KOCHI

Kerala police arrested a Bangladeshi national, Hossain Belor (29), on Monday for illegally staying in India. A resident of Jessore, Bangladesh, Hossain, was taken into custody by the Angamaly police.
A team led by District Police

Chief Vaibhav Saxena apprehended him from his residence in Kochi and recovered an expired Bangladeshi passport, police said.

Hossain had arrived in Kerala three months ago, according to police. His arrest follows the apprehension of a 28-year-old Bangladeshi woman, Thaslima Begum, last week. She was detained in Bengal Colony, Perumbayoor, along with her

boyfriend, a native of Bihar. The duo reportedly crossed the Bangladesh-India border, traveled to several locations, and eventually reached Bengaluru before coming to Kerala. Fake Aadhaar and PAN cards were recovered from the woman, police said.

Further investigation into the case led to Hossain's arrest. He briefly stayed in Shalimar, took a train to Aluva, and eventually reached Angamaly, where he worked in construction, police added. He had visited India twice before and paid Rs 5,000 to an agent for two Aadhaar cards in his name, which he used to pose as an Indian citizen, police said. District Police Chief Vaibhav Saxena interrogated Hossain, and those who assisted him locally are under surveillance.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-----

A giant leap in space

ISRO'S space docking underscores the nation's technical prowess and sets the stage for future space explorations

ndia's space programme, spearheaded by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), has achieved yet another landmark with its first successful space docking experiment. This milestone represents a pivotal moment in the nation's space exploration journey, further cementing ISRO's reputation as a key player in global space technology. Space docking is the process of two spacecraft connecting in orbit, enabling the transfer of crew, equipment, or fuel. It is a critical technology for advanced space missions, including the construction of space stations, in-orbit servicing and interplanetary travel. The ability to dock spacecraft is a benchmark for spacefaring nations, signifying their capability to perform complex operations in space. ISRO's docking experiment involved two small, indigenously developed spacecraft launched into orbit. The mission demonstrated autonomous manoeuvering, where the spacecraft approached each other, aligned precisely, and successfully docked while orbiting Earth at high speeds.



The operation required intricate planning and the development of cutting-edge technologies such as precision navigation, control systems, and robotic mech-

This docking experiment lays the groundwork for India's ambition to develop its own modular space station, a project slated for the next decade. Space docking technology is critical for future missions to the Moon and Mars. It facilitates the assembly of larger spacecraft in orbit and supports refueling and crew transfer, essential for long-duration missions. Mastery of docking technology positions India as a potential partner for international projects, such as the Lunar

Gateway or other collaborative space station endeavours. The success underscores ISRO's ability to innovate and develop sophisticated technologies domestically, reducing reliance on external support. Executing a docking manoeuver is no small feat. ISRO had to address multiple challenges, including developing highly accurate navigation and control systems capable of autonomous decision-making. Ensuring synchronisation of two spacecraft traveling at speeds exceeding 28,000 km/h. ISRO's successful space docking marks a critical step forward in India's space aspirations. It aligns with the organisation's vision to expand its presence in low Earth orbit and beyond. The achievement also inspires confidence in India's space capabilities as the nation eyes ambitious goals such as the Gaganyaan human spaceflight mission, lunar exploration, and interplanetary ventures. The international space community has lauded ISRO's accomplishment, recognising it as a significant technical breakthrough. It reaffirms India's position as a rising space power, capable of undertaking challenging and high-stakes missions. As the nation continues to push the boundaries of what's possible, this milestone serves as a foundation for even greater achievements in the years to come. With every new stride, India moves closer to its dream of being a leader in the final frontier.



School students perform during Kokborok Day celebrations, in Agartala

Mahakumbh: Spiritual fervour

meets economic revival



NAND GOPAL GUPTA

This edition of Mahakumbh is not only the world's largest religious congregation but also a showcase of Uttar Pradesh's evolving economic prowess and cultural magnificence

ver 3 crore devotees, both national and international, taking a holy dip on the debut day of Mahakumbh in Prayagraj, has just validated what we have been saying for the past several months. In terms of scale and grandeur, this edition of Mahakumbh would not only be the largest religious congregation on the planet. But it would also remain unmatched for a very long time. We estimate that it will eventually have around 400 million visiors (more than double the previous edition). But won't be surprised if the actual number exceeds our expectations, by a modest margin. Elaborate arrangements would be an under-

A more apt term would be epicscale preparations. Yes, this is what went into this grand event which we would like to be remembered forever. The UP government had sanctioned more than 540 projects to create worldclass amenities at an estimated expenditure in the vicinity of Rs 7,000 crore. You go to the site and you will notice a sprawling new city (covering 4,000 hectares) has been set up which has over 1.5 lakh tents and all basic amenities including advanced medical centres and distinct pockets for busi-

There is hardly any name (big or small) in the consumer-facing business that you will find missing in action at the holy site serving the devotees with their offerings. On a cumulative basis, we are expecting a generation of economic activities worth Rs 2 lakh crore or over \$24 billion which is simply staggering. The security architecture created

for this mega event is powered by artificial intelligence (AI), which is an added feature. Our objective has been simple. We wanted to create a site that would be the best possible amalgamation of religious fervour of the highest order and modern amenities of the best lass. And from the initial response of the visitors, we seem to have succeeded to a large extent. It would be no exaggeration to say that we have spared no effort in ensuring that this grand religious event assumes an unmatchable character. This was



SIMPLE. WE

WANTED TO

CREATE A SITE

THAT WOULD

BE THE BEST experience the magnificence of Bharat's religious strength, the POSSIBLE show has to also offer them a AMALGAMATION glimpse of the world's ancient society being in a serious OF RELIGIOUS resurgent mode. The event has to intrinsically **FERVOUR** validate our subtle claim of OF THE HIGHEST global leadership in several spheres. There is one more ORDER AND critical message that we wish to emanate from Mahakumbh MODERN this time. And that pertains to AMENITIES OF THE the growing economic prowess of Uttar Pradesh. From being BEST CLASS in the disparaging 'Bimaru' state club till the recent decade,

which we have left no stone unturned. That millions of visitors should carry the impression of a modern and thriving economy is indeed an

We have been working quite hard in reviving the state's economy since 2017 trying to put it in the leader's club (among states) in the country. There has been a slew of policy and regulatory interventions which have delivered positive results. We are the third largest economy (statewise) which has an impressive share of over 8 per cent in the national GDP. The annual growth of the state's economy in the last seven-eight years has been to the tune of 11 per cent, among the highest in the country. Despite being a landlocked state, we have a share of around 5 per cent in the national exports which has facilitated our defining Marketing Development Assistance scheme.

eration the new business opportunities (for the next five years) emerging from a far superior infrastructural base. We today have the largest rail network in the country, 38 per cent expressways' share of the national

quite evident at the site for kitty, four international and nine domestic airports. Further, seven new airports are under construction including the world-class Jewar Airport which will be unveiled soon. To energise grassroots economies, one of our major initiatives has been: the onedistrict-one-product scheme. Launched in 2018, this scheme seeks to identify the specific USP product of 75 districts and help the local stakeholders take that business to the next level with all-round support (training to marketing) from government agencies. Since the inception of the scheme, we have supported over 1,33,472 artisans across the state. The efforts to give a decisive rejig to the state economy have considerably paid off, propelling us to commit to further pushing our growth momentum and becoming a \$1 trillion economy in the notso-distant future. This is the core objective of our economic salvation route, which we This year, we will be announc- have been pursuing for quite ing a new export policy that some time. And I am quite confident, that the visitors to Mahakumbh this time, will also have a sufficient glimpse

> (The writer is Minister for Îndustrial Development & Export Promotion, Uttar Pradesh; views are personal)

children's elocution competition

Sparking smile: Lessons from a

From innovative tech-based ideas to timeless acts of kindness, the young participants presented thoughtful solutions that left me inspired about what truly makes us happy

ast week, I had the privilege of being on the panel of judges for an elocution competition for students, with the topic 'The Perfect Solution to Make People Smile More.' It was an intriguing subject-one very close to my heart-because I am the kind of person who smiles a lot. A lot more than people sometimes care to respond to or reciprocate. On the street, in the metro, in the building gallery, during my walk-almost anyone I can get eye contact with, whether stranger or friend, gets a smile. It is the most inexpensive gift I can offer, regardless of whether it is valued or not. It's a heart-felt gesture that could be the very thing someone needs to make their day. The children who participated came up with some remarkable ideas-everything from making a smile a commodity that fetches monetary rewards or other tangible benefits to evoking emotion-al points that deeply resonated with the empathy in me. Given that the contest was called "Pitch Perfect," the students brought forth many innovative concepts to make people smile, many of which



revolved around technology. It was fascinating to imagine how new-age devices could inspire smiles, but I couldn't help wondering-do we really need tools and gadgets to smile? Can't we simply find natural reasons for it? Can't we create genuine moments that make people's eyes crinkle at the corners authentical-

Às I waited for those ideas to unfold, I felt a gentle discomfort with the implicit belief that nothing happens these days without gadgets. But then came a few gems that emphasised the importance of compassion, empathy, and kindness as part of our daily lives-powerful ingredients for sparking smiles. This is what I want the younger generation to embody-an attitude that encourages them to be better solely on innovations.

I was deeply moved by what some of the children shared. When I asked one young participant what act of kindness he had done that day to make someone smile or brighten their day, his answer was simple yet profound: "I told my mother how yummy the breakfast was, and it made her very happy."

My takeaway from the experience was this: the new generation is competitive, full of energy to beat the odds and rise to the top in life. But it is also brimming with humaneness and rationality, qualities nurtured by the guidance of teachers, parents, and mentors. As they navigate the pressures of becoming super achievers, they still understand that the roots of happiness and peace lie in kindness and compassion. As is my habit, I often ask my students if they enjoy going to school and, if so, why. The answer I invariably hear is they like school not because of what they learn in class, but

because of their friends. This

smiles through simple acts of kindness, rather than relying temples of learning-platforms for young minds to ignite and

> Their answer also makes me wonder if there's more to be desired in how we mould our students. Have we focused too much on academic excellence at the cost of soul-nurturing education? Perhaps we need to spend less time teaching children skills to thrive in a competitive world and more time preparing them to be compassionate, kind-hearted individuals who bring joy to those around them.

> This competition, with all its innovation and spirited energy, reminded me that the most profound solutions to making people smile often lie in the simplest of acts: a word of appreciation, a compliment, a smile shared.

As we look toward a future increasingly driven by technology, let's not lose sight of what makes us truly human. It's the little things that have the power to make the world a little brighter.

(The author is a Dubai-based columnist and children's writsometimes makes me ques- ing coach. She has published people each day, spreading tion my belief that schools six books. Views are personal)

GOVERNOR VS STATE GOVERNMENT

the turnaround in the state's

economic fortune would be

philosophy of co-existence

and welfare of the humanity.

With thousands of foreign

devotees (not only NRIs but

devotees from other national-

ities and religions too) expect-

ed to arrive at the holy site and

Madam — The dispute between the Tamil Nadu government and Governor Dr RN Ravi over vice-chancellor appointments has reached the Supreme Court. On January 17, 2025, a bench led by Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan intervened, stating that the matter would be resolved by the next hearing unless the parties reached an agreement. The Tamil Nadu Government has filed writ petitions accusing the Governor of delays and non-compliance with constitutional duties. The court has scheduled the next hearing for next Wednesday, signalling its readiness to resolve the deadlock. This conflict echoes previous legal cases on gubernatorial powers in university appointments.

In The Chancellor, University of Kerala vs Governor of Kerala (2017), the Supreme Court affirmed that while the Governor holds discretionary powers in such appointments, consultation with the state government is crucial. Similarly, the 2019 West Bengal VC appointment case emphasised state autonomy in these matters, reinforcing the need for cooperation between the state and the governor. External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar, in his Nani Palkhivala Memorial Lecture, highlighted the importance of constitutional morality and the role of advisors in governance. His remarks, though not directly related to the Tamil Nadu case, underscore the significance of upholding constitutional norms. The Supreme Court's involvement could clarify the limits of gubernatorial power, setting a precedent for future state-governor conflicts. This case tests the balance between state autonomy and the governor's constitutional duties, with far-reaching implications for governance.

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

STRICTER RULES FOR MIGRANTS

Madam —Many Indians move to Gulf countries to earn money within a short period. They live there for a few years, earn a substantial income and manage to survive under tough conditions. Even if the ritories. work is as labourers, the monetary com-

Indian women win Kho kho World Cup



↑he Indian women's team claimed the title of the first Kho Kho World Cup 2025 with their exceptional skills, invincible strategy, and incredible agility. On Sunday nation but also inspired women athevening at the Indira Gandhi Indoor letes across the country. It symbolis-Stadium, India secured their victory by defeating Nepal with a massive margin of 78-40 in a historic match.

pensation in these countries is far higher than what they would earn in India. For instance, Saudi Arabia alone is home to approximately 2.5 million Indians as of 2024, most of whom belong to the lower economic strata. The situation is similar in other Gulf countries. However, this scenario may soon change. To regulate the influx of people from India, Saudi Arabia has now imposed restrictions on its work visa policies. These stricter regulations will come into effect from Makar Sankranti, January 14, 2025.

Applicants for work visas in Saudi Arabia will now have to undergo a pre-verification process for their educational and professional qualifications. Those with insufficient qualifications may face rejection from obtaining a work visa. Other Gulf countries, such as the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait, also employ millions of Indians. Like Saudi Arabia, these nations are also likely to implement measures to control the number of Indian workers entering their ter-

Dattaprasad Shirodkar | Mumbai

Dressed in blue jerseys, the Indian players dominated the game right from the start. Captain Priyanka Ingale delivered an extraordinary performance, scoring several crucial touch points, which helped the team maintain a consistent lead. Under her leadership, the team built a 34-point advantage and eliminated every possibility of a dream run for Nepal.

This victory stands as a living testament to Indian women's power and their growing influence in the world of sports. This historic achievement has not only brought glory to the nation but also inspired women athes the triumph of teamwork, determi-

nation, and relentless effort. R K Jain | Barwani

FIRE BROKE OUT AT MAHAKUMBH

Madam — A fire broke out in the Maha Kumbh area in Prayagraj, leading to the burning of several tents. Two cylinders exploded in Sector 19 of the Maha Kumbh Mela, causing a massive fire in the camps. Firefighters are trying to douse the blaze. Although the police and administration team reached the spot, and the fire had been doused. But the issue has raised several questions on the safety of the devotees that have come from far areas to visit the spiritual atmosphere of the holy confluence

and take a dip at the Triveni Sangam. The government and administration express sorrow over the incident and pray for the safety of all devotees. It is the government's responsibility to ensure security, control the fire, and prevent such incidents in the future. Instead of paying deep consideration for the advertisement, authorities should develop focus on the safety and security of the lives of devotees.

Dimple Wadhawan | Kanpur Nagar

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Educators serve as mentors and guide, empowering students to become responsible citizens



SAKSHI **SETHI**

ducation is not merely the transfer of knowledge. It is the shaping of minds, the fostering of growth and even more the cultivation of potential. As educators, the role extends far beyond delivering lectures or grading assignments. It encompasses mentoring, inspiring and empowering individuals to become critical thinkers and responsible citizens. Reflecting on our roles allows us to embrace our responsibilities more consciously and adapt to the evolving needs of learners and society. In contemporary education, the role of the educator has shifted from being the sole source of knowledge to a facilitator of learn-

This transition underscores the importance of guiding students to explore, question, and construct their understanding. It is about creating an environment where students feel safe to express their thoughts, make mistakes and grow from them. The role of an educator becomes especially significant when working with board students. When talking about them, the educator's primary responsibility is to ensure a strong understanding of the curriculum, including breaking down complex concepts, identifying and addressing knowledge gaps and providing effective study

Beyond teaching content, educators must help students develop time management and exam techniques to perform confidently under pressure. The role demands subject expertise and a keen awareness of the examination format and trends. Today, the modern educational landscape for board students includes challenges such as increasing competition, societal expectations, and the rapid integration of technology in learning. Educators need to stay adaptable, leveraging digital tools



to make learning engaging and accessible by recognising diverse learning styles employing strategies to meet those needs, and ensuring that every student feels included and valued. Additionally, acknowledging the diverse learning needs of students and personalising instruction whenever possible is also crucial for ensuring their success. There is no denying that students are at a critical juncture in their academic journey, preparing for examinations that often determine their future educational and career paths. Reflecting on our roles as educators in this context reveals the need for a balanced approach that combines academic rigour, emotional support, and life-skill development.

One of the most vital roles of an educator is to be a lifelong learner. Education is a dynamic field, and staying updated with pedagogical advancements, cultural shifts, and technological innovations is essential. This commitment to personal growth will not only enhance teaching effectiveness but will also model the value of continuous learning for students. Teaching values such as critical thinking, collaboration, and adaptability prepare students for challenges beyond the examination hall. It is essential to emphasise that education is about equipping them with skills for life, not just marks on a report card. Reflecting on our roles as educators highlights the immense responsibility and opportunity, we have in shaping young lives. It requires academic expertise, emotional intelligence, and unwavering dedication. By nurturing not just the intellect but also the spirit of our students, we as educators can guide them toward success in their exams and, more importantly, in life. By embracing our multifaceted roles with passion and purpose, we can create transformative experiences for our students and leave an enduring legacy of knowledge and wisdom.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

How skill-based degrees are redefining India's future

By aligning with industry needs and empowering individuals with practical expertise, the nation is paving the way for a more inclusive and dynamic workforce



ndia's education system is undergoing a quiet revolution. As the global job market evolves, the emphasis on traditional degrees gives way to skill-focused education tailored to the demands of a dynamic economy. A prime example is the introduction of degree courses in salons, spas, beauty parlours, and other vocational domains. These courses sig-nify a paradigm shift in how we perceive education, employment, and entrepreneurship in 'Viksit Bharat.' This development addresses critical challenges. It aligns with the growing aspirations of India's youth, caters to burgeoning private sector industries, and equips individuals with skills for self-employment, entrepreneurship and opportunities abroad.

Growing Demand for Vocational

The global wellness industry, valued at over \$4 trillion, continues to expand, with India emerging as a key player. The beauty and wellness sector alone is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 18 per cent over the next five years. The personal grooming industry demands nearly 1.3 million professionals annually, significantly surpassing the 3-4 lakh jobs the software industry adds yearly. This boom has created immense demand for skilled professionals, from hairstylists and spa therapists to salon managers and beauty wellness consultants. Recognising this, regulatory bodies like the UGC and AICTE have integrated skills courses into the education system. Indian universities now collaborate with training institutes to offer structured programmes like the Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Beauty and Wellness. These programmes cover skincare, makeup artistry and salon

Other universities offer diplomas and degree programmes in wellness and hospitality sectors, designed with industry leaders. Globally, institutions such as the London College of Beauty Therapy (UK) and the Australian Academy of Beauty Dermal and Laser offer worldclass programmes. These courses adhere to international standards, providing globally recognised certifications that enhance employability abroad.

Parity Between B Voc and BSc

An essential aspect of this transformation is recognising the equivalence of Bachelor of Vocation (B Voc) and Bachelor of Science (BSc) degrees. While BSc focuses on academic learning, B Voc emphasises hands-on, industry-relevant training. Recent policy reforms place these degrees on par, ensuring vocational education is no longer seen as secondary but as an equally credible academic pathway. This parity allows B Voc graduates to access the same opportunities as BSc graduates in employment, higher education, or competitive exams. It underscores the value of skills and practical expertise in driving economic growth. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and National Credit

BEAUTY

SECTOR

ALONE IS

PROJECTED

COMPOUND

CENT OVER

FIVE YEARS

THE NEXT

GROWTH RATE

(CAGR) OF 18 PER

ANNUAL

WELLNESS

Framework Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) further strengthens this integration. RPL allows individu-TO GROW als to earn formal recognition for previous informal training or work experiences.

When aligned with the National Credit Framework, credits earned in schools, vocational training institutions, or universities become seamlessly transferable across sectors. This fosters flexibility in education, empowering individuals to personalise their learning journeys and reduce redundancy. By integrating RPL with skillbased programmes, India's education system becomes more inclusive and adaptable. Employment Entrepreneurship Opportunities Skill-based degree programs unlock diverse career

1. Private Sector Jobs: Luxury wellness brands, fitness chains, and beauty franchises seek trained professionals. Graduates can secure jobs in high-end spas, salons, and wellness centres with lucrative salaries and career

2. Self-Employment and Freelancing: These courses empower entrepreneurial individuals to establish businesses. Graduates can run boutique salons or offer personalised wellness services, catering to niche markets. 3. Government Jobs: Recognising vocational degrees has expanded opportunities in government roles. Graduates are eligible for positions in wellness centres and initiatives under schemes like Skill India and PMKVY (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal

Vikas Yojana). 4. Global Opportunities: Programmes often include internationally recognised certifications, enhancing employability abroad. For instance, graduates from LCBT in the UK find opportunities in European markets, while Australian academy-trained professionals thrive in Asia-Pacific

regions. Breaking Stigmas Around Vocational Careers

Vocational careers have long been viewed as secondary options. Introducing structured degree programs challenges these stereotypes. Formal education in salons, spas, and beauty parlours combines technical skills, business acumen, and industry exposure, positioning these professions as aspirational.

This shift is especially empowering for women, who form a significant portion of the workforce in these fields and now gain access to recognised qualifications that enhance professional credibility. **Challenges in Implementation** India's higher education system, often criticised for being theoryheavy, struggles to improve prac-

tical skill sets. Initiatives like the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and platforms like SWAYAM aim to modernise education, but challenges remain:

1. Quality Assurance: Maintaining high standards and industry relevance requires collaboration with established industry

2. Áwareness: Many students and parents remain unaware of these

opportunities, favouring traditional careers. Awareness campaigns are crucial.

3. Infrastructure and Faculty: Vocational education requires specialised infrastructure and trained faculty. Institutions must invest in state-of-the-art facilities and continuous professional development for educators.

Recognition **Accreditation:** Further integration into academia and government recruitment processes will enhance vocational degrees' credibility. Vision for the Future

Skill-based degree programmes signify societal reform, recognising youth aspirations and aligning education with market realities. By formalising careers through structured courses, India creates a skilled and confident workforce. These reforms reflect a commitment to inclusivity, providing pathways for diverse socio-economic backgrounds to pursue rewarding careers.

India is on the brink of an educational revolution. Skill-based degrees in fields like salons, spas, and beauty parlours redefine education. These programmes bridge the gap between aspiration and opportunity, equipping students with skills to thrive globally. As these initiatives gain momentum, scaling them, ensuring quality, and destigmatising vocational careers are imperative. With parity between B Voc and BSc degrees and the integration of RPL into the National Credit Framework, India's education system is transforming into a flexible and robust framework. These changes will meet today's demands and shape a prosperous future for the nation.

(The writer is co-founder and MD of Orane International, a training partner of the National Skill Development Corporation(NSDC) and a network Member of India International Skills Centres, an initiative of GoI. The views expressed are personal)

Globally, technologies like

drones and AI are governed by

protocols that protect privacy

and civil liberties. Similarly, the

principle of proportionality-

using the minimum force nec-

essary—guides actions to

ensure demonstrators' rights

are respected. In India, police

increasingly emphasise ethical

practices. Engaging communi-

Balancing rights and order: Innovations in protest management

Protests are the lifeblood of democracy. For law enforcement, it must carefully balance between public safety and democratic freedoms

housands of people gather, holding banners and chanting slogans, their voices echoing through the streets. For law enforcement, these aren't merely demonstrations but skill, strategy, and restraint tests. Managing protests today demands more than enforcing law and order; it requires innovation, preparation, and

Reflecting on this evolving role, a senior officer once remarked, "Our goal isn't to silence dissent but to ensure it unfolds safely for everyone involved. Effective protest management is about enabling expression while maintaining peace." This philosophy increasingly shapes how law enforcement approaches public demonstrations globally



O P SINGH

and in India.

Dialogue Policing: Dialogue policing, extensively practised in Sweden and Norway, prioritises proactive communication between police and protest organisers. Liaison officers meet organisers before demonstrations to discuss routes, safety measures, and mutual expectations. This approach fosters

before they arise. Indian police have applied similar strategies during political rallies and cultural events, engaging community leaders to ensure peaceful outcomes. Leveraging Technology:

Technology is transforming protest management globally. In countries like Singapore and

South Korea, drones with high-resolution cameras monitor crowd density and movement, while artificial intelligence (AI) tools analyse data to predict potential flashpoints. This enables law enforcement to allocate resources proactively and prevent crises. Indian police are increasingly adopting these tools. Drones were deployed during the farmers' protests and other large-scale events, offering real-time montrust and de-escalates tensions itoring of crowd dynamics.

Social media monitoring cells track misinformation and narratives, enabling swift corrective measures. Law enforcement enhances its situational awareness and credibility by integrating technology with traditional methods. Non-Lethal Methods:

Germany sets a global benchmark for using non-lethal tools like water cannons, sound devices, and barricades

to manage large gatherings. Officers trained in crowd psychology focus on isolating disruptive elements while respecting the rights of peaceful protestors. In India, nonlethal methods have been employed during sensitive protests, such as barricading roads to control crowds or using water cannons to dis-



focus remains on proportionality—ensuring responses are measured, harm is minimised, and democratic freedoms are respected.

Transparency Accountability

Transparency is crucial for public trust. In New Zealand, body-worn cameras document police actions during protests, ensuring accountability and protecting officers from false accusations. perse tense gatherings. The Oversight bodies review

footage to ensure compliance military forces often supplewith established protocols. In India, body-worn cameras have been introduced in several states, particularly during sensitive operations.

Multi-agency coordination for Large Protests Managing large-scale demon-

strations often requires multiagency collaboration. In the United States, unified command centres integrate local police, state law enforcement, and federal agencies for cohesive responses. These centres streamline resource sharing and operational alignment, which is critical for complex India's law enforcement regularly employs similar coordination during significant events, such as farmers' protests, political rallies, and national festivals. Central parament state police, ensuring adequate workforce and resources. Clear protocols and seamless coordination are the backbone of these efforts.

Comprehensive Training: Training is a cornerstone of effective protest management. Canadian police emphasise de-escalation, cultural sensitivity, and conflict resolution, with officers undergoing practical simulations to prepare for high-pressure scenarios. In India, the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) has introduced

advanced modules covering non-lethal tools, technology integration, and crowd psychology.
Ethical Policing:

Ethical considerations are cen-

tral to managing protests.

ty leaders, addressing grievances, and prioritising dialogue reflect a commitment to balancing public safety with democratic freedoms. The shift towards a restrained, people-centric approach underscores the evolving role of law enforcement in a modern democracy. (The writer is Director

General of Police and Head of *the Haryana State Narcotics* Bureau; views are personal)

VIJAYAWADA | TUESDAY | JANUARY 21, 2025

IN BRIEF



Zomato Q3 profit declines 57.2 pc to Rs 59 cr

ood tech unicorn Zomato on Monday reported a 57.2 per cent drop in consolidated net profit for the December quarter to Rs 59 crore, with its margins facing pressure due to aggressive store expansion to meet orders from its quick-commerce platform Blinkit. The company had earned a net profit of Rs 138 crore in the year-ago period. Notably, Zomato witnessed a 2 per cent quarter-on-quarter and 17 per cent year-on-year growth in food delivery, driven by a broad-based "demand slowdown", it said in a letter to shareholders. The company's consolidated revenue from operations stood at Rs 5,405 crore, as against Rs 3,288 crore in the December quarter of the previous financial year. However, during the quarter under review, Zomato's total expenses also shot up to Rs 5,533 crore, from Rs 3,383 crore in the corresponding period of 2023-24. The revenue-reporting segments for the group include India food ordering and delivery; hyperpure supplies (B2B business); quick commerce; Going out; and All other segments (residual). The combined gross order value for the company's consumer-facing (B2C) businesses, including the food delivery, quick commerce and going out segments, registered a 57 per cent year-on-year growth and stood at Rs 20,206 crore during the reporting quarter.



EKI to cut 42 pc greenhouse gas emissions

KI Energy Services (EKI) on Monday announced its commitment to reduce 42 per cent greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. The company has also joined hands with the UK-based Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) to meet its targets. Under SBTi's standards EKI has committed to a 42 per cent reduction in its Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030, using 2023 as its base year, the company said. Its Co2 reduction plan has also got approval from the global climate action body, EKI said. "Our alignment with SBTi's rigorous standards signifies a defining moment in our journey towards a low-carbon future. We are...helping both our organisation and our clients drive positive environmental impact and build resilience against climate change," EKI CMD Manish Dabkara said. UK-based SBTi is a collaboration between the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), the United Nations Global Compact, the World Resources Institute (WRI) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)



Fitch upgrades Vedanta Resources' ratings

itch has upgraded Vedanta Resources Ltd's (VRL) longterm foreign-currency issuer default rating following a "significant reduction" in the company's refinancing risks. The rating agency upgraded VRL's senior unsecured rating to 'B+' from 'B-' and also changed the outlook to stable, according to a statement. Besides, it has upgraded "the ratings on the USD 300 million June 2028 bonds and USD 500 million December 2031 bonds, issued by VRL's subsidiary Vedanta Resources Finance II Plc (VRF2), and unconditionally and irrevocably guaranteed by VRL, to 'B+' from 'B-' with Recovery Rating of 'RR4'," the statement said. The upgrade follows a significant reduction in VRL's refinancing risks, after it raised USD 1.1 billion in new bonds and received bank commitments for loans worth USD 350 million at the holding company, formed by VRL and other offshore investment holding companies owned by VRL, in January 2025, the statement

Budget should focus on mix of fiscal consolidation roadmap: Ind-Ra

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) on Monday said the FY26 Budget should focus on a mix of fiscal consolidation roadmap, while boosting consumption demand, and capex

spending.
The Centre in the FY22
Union Budget had provided a
fiscal consolidation glide path

till FY26 according to which the fiscal deficit will be brought down to 4.5 per cent of the GDP.

"By adhering to the outlined targets, it builds up fiscal credibility which is important for various stakeholders especially investors in gauging the fiscal health of the economy. It also helps in curtailing inflation which has

been sticky during FY24-FY25. This is one of the reasons for weak consumption demand in the economy which has kept private investments in wait-and-watch mode. Thus, measures to stimulate consumption demand in the economy through income tax relief may be announced in the

Against the backdrop of the past three quarters of growth slowdown, Ind-Ra expects the FY26 Union Budget to focus on a mix of the following short-

forthcoming budget," Ind-Ra

and long-term agendas -- a fiscal consolidation roadmap, a revised fiscal roadmap, boost to consumption demand, and boost to infrastructure and manufacturing capex, it said in a statement.

After FY22, the Union government has been focusing on the infrastructure sector to help correct supply-side con-



Ind-Ra expects this to remain so in the 2025-26 Budget, which will be unveiled on February 1

A revised fiscal consolidation roadmap starting FY27 is crucial as high deficit and debt levels would remain a highlight of Indian public finances. "Notwithstanding the growth slowdown in FY25 and the likely minor growth improvement in FY26, Ind-Ra expects the government to adhere to its fiscal consolidation roadmap provided in the medium-term fiscal policy-cum-fiscal strategy statement," it said in a state-



INDIA AT DAVOS

States join hands with Centre to present united colours

PNS DAVOS

Putting aside their party affiliations, the Centre and states have come together in this skiing resort town, at least in terms of the space for their respective pavilions.

Two India pavilions, just a few blocks apart on the same side of the famous Promenade street, together house all lounges and meeting rooms for the union ministers, central government departments and state governments.

One has got pavilions of Kerala, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh. Apart from the delegation from these states, the second one has pavilions of Andhra Pradesh,

Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. Both pavilions will also host five union ministers at

Indian companies present here include Tata group's TCS, describing itself as a 'perpetually adaptive enterprise', as well as Wipro, Infosys and **Tech Mahindra**

different times, while the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and Invest India are also present -- the two agencies handling most of the country's presence here.
Industry body CII is also

present with a large delegation of CEOs and other business leaders.

Among states, Kerala is

ruled by the Left Front, Telangana by Congress, Uttar Pradesh by BJP, Andhra Pradesh by NDA with TDP leader N Chandrababu Naidu as the chief minister, Maharashtra by BJP-led Mahayuti and Tamil Nadu by

Union ministers attending the WEF Annual Meeting also come from different parties. Ashwini Vaishnaw and CR Patil come from BJP, Chirag Paswan from LJP (Ram Vilas), Jayant Chaudhary from RLD and K Ram Mohan Naidu from

DMK-led UPA alliance.

Indian companies present here include Tata group's TCS, describing itself as a perpetually adaptive enterprise', as well as Wipro, Infosys and Tech Mahindra.

Gold trades flat at Rs 82,000 per 10gm; silver slides Rs 500

PNS NEW DELHI

Gold prices remained flat at Rs 82,000 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Traders waited for US President-elect Donald Trump's inaugural address later on Monday before placing any directional bets, marketmen said.

On Friday, the precious metal surged Rs 700 to settle near a record high at Rs 82,000 per 10 grams. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity traded flat at Rs 81,600 per 10 grams on Monday. On October 31 last year, gold of 99.9 per cent purity and 99.5 per cent purity hit a record high of Rs 82,400 and Rs 82,000 per 10 grams, respectively, in the local markets.

However, silver prices decreased by Rs 500 to Rs 93,000 per kg from the previous close of Rs 93,500 per kg on Friday.

In futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for February delivery slipped Rs 62 or 0.08 per cent to Rs 78,961 per 10 grams.

Silver contracts for March delivery depreciated Rs 202 or 0.22 per cent to Rs 91,400 per kg in futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) on Monday.

'Glass industry's role key in India's economic growth'

PNS KOLKATA

Union minister Jitendra Singh on Monday praised the significance of the glass industry in driving India's future eco-nomic growth, while highlighting the need for enhanced collaboration and awareness among academics, R&D centres, and the private sector.

Addressing the International Congress on Glass organised by CSIR-Central Glass and Ceramic Research Institute, the union minister of state for science and Technology and earth sciences stressed the growing importance of the recycling industry along-side manufacturing for sustainability.

Glass is one sector which has a very high recyclability. vocated f

a "one institute one theme" approach to achieve better coordination and results.

Singh also pushed for a campaign to raise public awareness about the glass industry's contributions to

He further emphasised the

need for greater collaboration between academic institutions, startups, and industry stakeholders to foster growth and innovation.

Referring to the newly established CSIR Innovation Complex in Mumbai, Singh said it comes at a pivotal moment in India's start-up



"India is the third-largest start-up ecosystem in the world, with over 100 Unicorns India's entrepreneurial spirit," he added.

The Innovation Complex will provide high-end scientific infrastructure, expertise, and regulatory support to stakeholders, including CSIR labs, start-ups, MSMEs, and industry.

India-Oman free trade pact likely during Goyal's Muscat visit

PNS NEW DELHI

Issues pertaining to the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) between India and Oman are expected to figure during the visit of Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal to Muscat next week, an official said. Though the negotiations

for the proposed agreement were concluded, Oman has sought revision of its market access offers on some prod-

On January 14, India and Oman held the fifth round of talks for the agreement, which is aimed at boosting bilateral economic ties.

agreement, officially dubbed as Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), formally began in November 2023. In such agreements, two trading partners either significantly reduce or eliminate customs duties on a maximum number



of goods traded between

They also ease norms to promote trade in services and attract investments.

The official said the Union minister is visiting the West Asian nation for the eleventh session of the India-Oman Joint Commission Meeting (JCM). The two-day meetings

will start on January 27. The tenth meeting was held

here in May 2022. Ways to promote bilateral trade and the proposed FTA may figure in the meetings,

the official said.

export destination among the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries for India. India already has a similar agreement with another GCC into effect in May 2022.

Oman is the third largest

The bilateral trade has declined to USD 8.94 billion (exports USD 4.42 billion and imports USD 4.5 billion) in 2023-24 from USD 12.39 billion (exports USD 4.47 billion and imports USD 7.91 billion) in 2022-23.

petroleum products and urea. These account for over 70 per cent of imports. Other key products are propylene and ethylene polymers, pet coke, gypsum, chemicals, and iron

According to the think tank GTRI (Global Trade Research Institute), Indian goods worth USD 3.7 billion like gasoline, iron and steel, electronics, and machinery may get a significant boost in Oman, once both sides reach a comprehensive free trade agreement. These goods at present face a 5 per cent import duty in

Oman's import duty ranges with the existence of specific duties. A duty of 100 per cent is applicable on specific meats, wines and tobacco products.

Reduction in import duties under the CEPA will allow Indian products to enter the Omani market at competitive

TVS Motor drives in electric 3 wheeler Aims to be prominent player in segment

PNS NEW DELHI

Monday forayed into the electric three-wheeler segment with plans to enhance the product range during the year. The company, which introduced the King EV MAX model to cater to the passen-ger electric three-wheeler segment, is priced at Rs 2.95 lakh (ex-showroom) with a certified driving range of 179 km

TVS, which has a sizeable presence in two and threewheeler segments across domestic and international markets, expects the segment to transition to full electric by

on a single charge.



"This is going to be the starting point of our EV jour-

ney in three-wheelers...we want to be a prominent player in the EV segment," TVS Motor Company Director and CEO KN Radhakrishnan said. On product range expansion, he noted: "We have started with the passenger version. Now, we will definitely look at a cargo version, and then we will look at what else can be

done using this platform". Radhakrishnan said the company would also look at exporting the King EV MAX model to international mar-

He noted that the company invested close to Rs 125 crore in the development of King EV MAX. TVS Motor Company Head Commercial Mobility Business Rajat Gupta said the electric three-wheeler passenger segment witnessed a CAGR of 80 per cent

IRFC profit rises to Rs 1,631 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Railway Finance Corporation Ltd (IRFC) on Monday reported a 2 per cent increase in net profit to Rs 1,631 crore for the third quarter ended December 2024. The NBFC, under the administrative control of the Ministry of Railways, had earned a net profit of Rs 1,599 crore in the year-ago period. The total income of the company rose to Rs 6,766 crore in the October-December period from Rs 6,740 crore in the year-ago period, IRFC said in a regulatory filing.

The total expenses of the Mini-Ratna company during the period under review fell marginally to Rs 5,136 crore from Rs 5,141 crore.

plex developmental challenges.

plishments include AI-driven

agricultural programs that

boost farmers' incomes,

healthcare solutions that pro-

vide access to life-saving ser-

vices, and sustainable urban

C4IR India said its accom-

Govt allows 1 mn ton sugar exports for 2024-25 season

The Centre on Monday permitted the export of 1 million tonnes of sugar for the 2024-25 season ending September, a move aimed at stabilising domestic prices and supporting

the industry. Food Minister Pralhad Joshi announced the decision on

social media, stating the measure would benefit 50 million farmer families and 500,000 workers while strengthening the sugar sector.

Joshi said it

would boost the liquidity of sugar mills, ensuring timely payment of cane dues, besides balancing avail-

ability and prices for consumers.

The Food Ministry order permits the export of all grades of sugar within allocated quantities. New mills starting production in 2024-25 and those restarting operations after closure have also received export

Mills can export either directly or through merchant exporters until September 30. They have the option to surrender quotas by March 31 or exchange them with domestic

quotas to reduce transportation

The policy allows mills to swap export quotas with domestic monthly release quantities through mutual agreements, subject to the Food Ministry's approval.

Sugar exports under the Advance Authorisation scheme will continue under existing provisions.

The decision comes as local sugar prices hit an 18-month low, pressuring mills' margins. India's sugar output is projected to decline to 27 million tonnes in

2024-25 from 32 million tonnes last year, falling below the domestic consumption requirement of over 29 mil

lion tonnes. According to the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories, the country's sugar output reached 13.06 million tonnes by January 15, down 13.66 per cent year-onvear, due to lower vields in kev producing states Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Uttar Pradesh.

The country had restricted exports entirely in the previous 2023-24 season due to domestic supply concerns.

India at forefront of age defined by tech evolution: WEF

PNS DAVOS

In an era defined by technological evolution, India stands at the forefront as one of the world's fastest-growing economies and a global hub for startups and digital innovation, the World Economic Forum

said on Monday. The Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) India, liaison office of World Economic Forum (WEF) in India, launches its 6-year impact journey report on the inaugural day of the WEF

Annual meeting 2025 here. The WEF said its partnership with India dates back more than 40 years. Over the past four decades,

this relationship has developed into a strong, multifaceted and meaningful collaboration with the national government, several state governments, business leaders across key industries and other important stakeholders, including civil society and leading experts, resulting in several impactful initiatives that have advanced shared

priorities. India's advocacy for and pursuit of developmental templates where technology serves



as a bridge rather than a barrier are highly relevant and the Forum is proud to act as its partner in shaping a more human-centric, planet-friendly and resilient future, the

foreword of the report said. The Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) India was launched in 2018 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a statement of the

a hub for innovation; it is a flagship centre of the World Economic Forum, exemplifying a vision for technology-driven development with impactful, on-the-ground results, the Forum said.

country's commitment to har-

nessing emerging technolo-

gies responsibly and inclu-

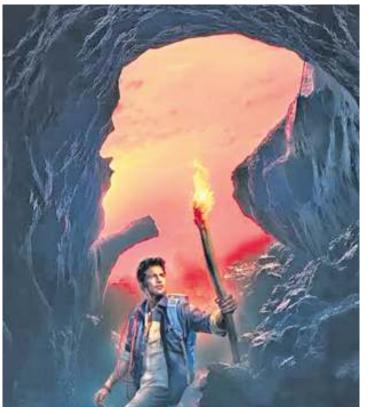
Today, C4IR India is not just

sively for societal good.

As C4IR India enters the next phase of its journey, the new report highlighted key milestones and emphasized the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in scaling technologies to address comdevelopment frameworks that improve the quality of life in These initiatives have been

made possible through strong partnerships across the public and private sectors, academia, and civil society, with a focus on creating practical solutions grounded in responsible governance, it added.

Rajiv Khandelwal: I had no idea what I was stepping into with *The Secret of the Shiledars*



ctor Rajiv Khandelwal, who will be seen in the upcoming series *The* Secret of the Shiledars, said that he actually had no idea what he was

Rajeev said, "Playing a character like Ravi has been an incredible journey for me. It's a contradiction of sorts that despite knowing what I was stepping into I actually had no idea what I was stepping into. From the moment we started shooting, I knew we may end up creating something magical under the skilled direction of Aditya." "And we actually did. With The Secret of the Shiledars, he has ventured into an entirely new and intriguing genre, showcasing his brilliant creative vision." Raieev's character Ravi embarks on a quest to uncover hidden secrets and untangle his true identity, the path is far from

Produced by Nitin Vaidva under the banner of Dashami Creations LLP, with Aditya Sarpotdar as the showrunner and director. the series is based on the acclaimed Marathi novel Pratipashchandra.. He added: "The show's unique premise inspired me to push my limits as an actor, and working with Sai, Ashish sir and all other cast and crew members made the experience even more rewarding. I can't

did while creating it" Actress Sai Tamhankar said that to be part

of such an enriching show that challenges you at every step and shapes you as an artist is truly what an actor craves. "With The Secret of the Shiledars, I'm glad to have put my best foot forward. Being from the heartland of Maharashtra, seeing it represented on-screen so authentically is immensely fulfilling. I believe this story will keep viewers hooked till the very end." "Sharing screen time with stalwarts like Rajeev, with his incredible body of work, was truly inspiring. I am looking forward to what the audience has to say." Showrunner & Director of the show Aditya Sarpotdar said, "Being a Maharashtrian, The Secret of the Shiledars is especially close to my heart. It's my way of representing the courage and sacrifices of the Maratha Shiledars. The novel Pratipashchandra written by Dr. Prakash Koyade has been a favourite of mine for long." Producer of the show, Nitin Vaidya said that with The Secret of the Shiledars, they've brought together history, selfdiscovery and unexpected twists in an intriguing narrative that is set in the modern world. The Secret of the Shiledars will be streaming on Disney-Hotstar on January 31.



HINA KHAN: DRAWN TO CHARACTERS WHO HAVE FLAWS, BUT ARE REAL

ctress Hina Khan, who takes on the role of a woman torn between A ctress Hina Khan, who takes on the role of a worman consecution said that she societal expectations and her own desires in *Grihalaxmi*, said that she is drawn to characters who have flaws, make mistakes but are real. Speaking about it, Hina says, "I am drawn to characters who aren't just black or white. They have flaws, make mistakes, but at their core, they are real. The imperfections make them more relatable. I want to portray characters whose struggles reflect the complexities of human nature." The actress, who is currently fighting breast cancer, is making a return to the screen with "Grihalaxmi," which centers around power and survival. It also stars Chunky Pandey, Rahul Dev, and Dibyendu Bhattacharya. Grihalaxmi tells a compelling story of resilience, survival, and personal

A few days ago, Hina and the team of Griha Laxmi seeked divine blessings in #Siddhivinayak Temple in Mumbai for the new series. In other news, Hina in July, had announced her return to work for her first assignment since her breast cancer diagnosis.

In a heartfelt post, the Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai actress wrote, "My first work assignment after my diagnosis. Walking the talk is challenging, especially when facing life's biggest challenges. So, give yourself a break on bad days; it's okay... you deserve it. However, don't forget to live your life on the good days, no matter how few they are. These days still hold importance. Accept the change, embrace the difference, and normalize it." On June 28, Hina Khan confirmed that she had been diagnosed with stage three breast cancer.

Taking to her Instagram, the actress shared a note that read, "Hello everyone. To address the recent rumor. I want to share some important news with all the Hinaholics and everyone who loves and cares for me. I have been diagnosed with stage three breast cancer. Despite this challenging diagnosis, I wish to reassure everyone that I am doing well.' "I am strong, determined, and fully committed to overcoming this disease. My treatment has already begun, and I am ready to do everything necessary to emerge from this even stronger.

Yami and Pratik -starrer Dhoom Dhaam to release on Valentine's Day

Yami Gautam Dhar and Pratik Gandhi star in new comedy, *Dhoom Dhaam*, which will be released on Netflix this Valentine's Day. Directed by Rishab Seth, the comedy revolves around Yami plays Koyal, a wild child with zero chill, and Pratik stars as Veer, a timid momma's boy and animal-loving veterinarian. Their stars have (somehow) aligned, but on their wedding day, the newlyweds find themselves in far-from-perfect situations.

The film is produced by Aditya and Lokesh Dhar of B62 Studios , and Jyoti Deshpande of Jio Studios.

"With Dhoom Dhaam, we wanted to create something unique and entertaining, where humour, chaos, action and romance come together in a fresh, high-energy story. Collaborating with Netflix has been an amazing journey, allowing us to bring this thrilling narrative to a global audience. Yami and Pratik have done an incredible job capturing the essence of Koyal and Veer, with their amazing chemistry and depth. We're excited for viewers to experience this rollercoaster of emotions on Netflix, February 14," Dhar brothers said in a

Despande, President - Jio Studios, RIL, said, "Yami and Pratik's performances bring incredible energy to the story, and we can't wait for audiences worldwide to enjoy this rollercoaster ride when it premieres on Netflix on February 14!"

Ruchikaa Kapoor Sheikh, Director of Original Films, Netflix India, said the film is set against the backdrop of a wedding night where an unexpected adventure unfolds.

"The film is a true entertainer with its heart in the right place. The fresh pairing of Yami Gautam Dhar and Pratik Gandhi makes it a perfect Valentine's Day watch. We are excited to collaborate with Aditya Dhar, Lokesh Dhar and Jio Studios for Rishab Seth's directorial. With Dhoom Dhaam, we reaffirm our commitment to



bringing unique and engaging films to audiences around the world." Yami has multiple successful films including "Chor Nikal Ke Bhaga", "Article 370" and "Dasvi" while Pratik, best known for his role as Harshad Mehta in "Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story", was most recently seen in "Do Aur Do Pyar" and "Madgaon Express".

Rasha Thadani: Shooting for Azaad had been special, completely irreplaceable

who has stepped into the world of cinema with Azaad, said that shooting for the film had been so special and completely irreplaceable for her. She described it as the 'best years' of her

Rasha, daughter of actress Raveena Tandon, took to Instagram, where she shared a string of pictures from the behindthe-scenes moments from the film. which is directed by Abhishek Kapoor.

She wrote a thank you note expressing her gratitude to the audiences.

'What a wild ride it's been. The best years of my life. I couldn't be more thankful for all the love I've been receiving for Janaki. Thankyou for those who watched and loved *Azaad*. Shooting for this film had been so special and completely irreplaceable," she wrote.

The actress added: "Thankyou for all the feedback as well, taking it into account, working on my

ebutante Rasha Thadani, craft and will work harder for the next endeavour. Lots of love, Rasha.'

Azaad, which also stars Ajay Devgn and Aaman Devgn, is set in 1920s India, where a young stable boy bonds with a spirited horse. Amid rebellion and tyranny, his quest to ride the majestic animal becomes a journey of courage, awakening him to the country's fight for freedom.

Bankrolled by Ronnie Screwvala and Pragya Kapoor, the film also features Diana Penty, and Mohit

During the promotions of the film, Aaman and Rasha said that they are glad that they are fluent in Hindi.

Rasha said, "My mother talks at home in Hindi only.

Meanwhile, Aaman added by saying, "I think the industry that we are trying to work in, its main language is Hindi. So if we don't know the language, it is not a good thing. I am glad. We were unaware that we know Hindi so well."



ARCHIE







HERE WE ARE, OVERLOOKING SUICIDE GULCH, ABOUT TO UNDI OURSELVES DOWN AT RREAKNECK SPEED IN A THAT HARDLY STEERS!

CALVIN AND HOBBES







GARFIELD











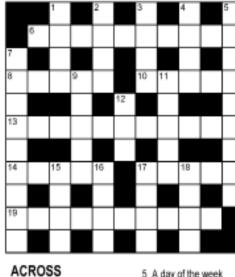
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GINGER MEGGS







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Tuesday January 21, 2025

'I'm very particular about leaving my character behind once the camera stops rolling'

Known for her fearless approach to storytelling, Nyrraa M Banerji, delves into her latest gripping project, *Checkmate*, her creative process and the lessons she's learned along the way in an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*. With an exciting array of roles under her belt and more in the pipeline, she continues to redefine what it means to be a multifaceted artist in today's dynamic world of entertainment

TEJAL SINHA tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

yrraa M Banerji is a force to reckon with in the world of entertainment, blending beauty, talent and an undeniable spark that sets her apart. From her beginnings in South Indian cinema to her impactful roles on television and gripping performances in web series, she has fearlessly explored every facet of storytelling. Her career is a testament to her versatility and bold choices, effortlessly stepping into roles that challenge conventions and captivate audiences. She has once again mesmerised viewers with her thrilling new series Checkmate.

In an engaging conversation with The Pioneer, she opens up about her journey, her approach to acting and the intriguing projects on the horizon.

Reflecting on her evolution as an artist, Nyrraa credits her diverse experiences for shaping her both personally and professionally. "Transitioning from films to television and reality shows has opened up my creative horizons. It has helped me explore new facets of my personality," she shares.

Interestingly, reality shows, particularly Bigg Boss, marked an important yet challenging chapter in her career. "I've never been part of a reality show before, and honestly, it tested me in ways I didn't expect. As the daughter of a naval officer, I have an analytical mindset. I study patterns, look for facts and present my arguments with precision. This analytical nature made it hard for me to adapt to the unpredictable and chaotic environment of a show like Bigg Boss."

Although her journey on Bigg Boss was short-lived, it left a lasting impact. "It gave me the strength to be constantly alert and self-aware. Now, apart from analyzing others, I focus on self-analysis-how I'm feeling, thinking, and reacting. That level of internalization has become part of my daily routine." From starting her career in South Indian films to Bollywood, web series, and television, the Khatron Ke Khiladi fame has created a strong and diverse fan base. "Each medium has its own unique style of working and preparation. Exploring them has not only given me immense confidence but also taught me to adapt and evolve as an actor," she notes.

After taking a two-year sabbatical following personal losses, she ventured into television, which further solidified her presence. "It allowed me to reach a wider audience, from South Indian cinema enthusiasts to web series fans and television viewers," she says.

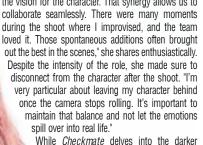
Nyrraa is currently gearing up for her new web series, Checkmate, produced by Shavuntan Telefilms. "I share a special bond with the production house, and I trust their creative vision completely. Whenever they approach me with a project, I know it's going to be

Speaking about the show, she reveals, "Checkmate follows the journey of a simple girl who grows up in a toxic, unloving family environment. After enduring years of abuse, she snaps and transforms into a serial killer. Despite her dark path, the story beautifully explores her emotional struggles, her desire for love, and how life keeps bringing her back to square one." The character's complexity intrigued Nyrraa. "She's not

entirely a hero or a villain. She has a nurturing, feminine side, especially in her love for children, which is her safe space. But life's circumstances push her into actions she doesn't wish to Nyrraa's preparation for *Checkmate*

involved immersing herself completely in the character's emotional world. "I didn't do specific homework for the role. Instead I read the script repeatedly until I started feeling the character's emotions as my own. Only when you genuinely feel the character can you bring it to life on screen. she explains.

As an actor with significant experience, Nyrraa also contributed her ideas to enhance her role. "The creative team and I share a great rapport. We're same page when



While Checkmate delves into the darker aspects of human emotions, Nyrraa found it relatable in some ways. "We all have moments when life feels unfair, and we face betraval from people or circumstances. I tapped into those personal feelings to portray my character's emotional journey," she says.

> that she didn't need to draw directly from her life. "It wasn't mimicking my experiences but channeling the emotional essence of those moments. That's the beauty of acting - you use your feelings as a medium to tell someone else's story.

However, she also emphasizes

body of work, Nyrraa

admits to being selective about her projects. "I'm very particular about the roles I choose. I strive to avoid repetition and ensure that each character I portray brings something unique to the table. Most of my roles have been vibrant, bubbly, and chirpy, but Checkmate is a significant departure from that," she explains.

The actress also shared her excitement about an upcoming Netflix series. "It's entirely different from anything I've done before. I'm in a completely deglamorized look, with no makeup and a very natural appearance. I can't reveal much right now, but I can promise it's something to look forward to."

Looking ahead, Nyrraa is eager to strike a balance between different types of roles. "I want to alternate between playing simple, grounded characters - like a doctor or a lawyer - and more glamorous, positive lead roles. I think it's important to explore both sides of my personality as an actor. While I'm often approached for glamorous roles, I also want to showcase my genuine, unfiltered self on screen," she reveals.

Beyond her acting career, Nyrraa's journey is a testament to her resilience, adaptability, and creative spirit. As she continues to explore diverse roles and mediums, her dedication to storytelling remains

With *Checkmate* set to premiere and exciting projects in the pipeline, Nyrraa is undoubtedly a name to watch out for. As she puts it, "I'm here to create, to inspire, and to keep evolving - not just as an actor but as a person." Her words and work reflect the true essence of a multifaceted artist, and her fans can eagerly anticipate what's next in her ever-evolving career.

It wasn't about mimicking my experiences but channeling the emotional essence of those moments. That's the beauty of acting - you use your feelings as a medium to tell someone else's story



NUSHRRAT1 FAN-GIRL' MOMENT **WITH KUMAR SANU**



manual intervention. **Transparency through Blockchain** Producers, Importers, and Brand Owners (PIBOs) can comply with EPR requirements by purchasing certificates from Plastic Waste

Processors (PWPs). These EPR certificates are generated by PWPs by uploading procurement and sales invoices. The latest guidelines from Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) state that all the GST invoices are mapped with Government of India's GST portal, thereby improving the audit process and reducing the number of fake EPR certificates generated against underpriced and irrelevant sales

invoices. This GST portal integration with CPCB portal will help push genuine certificates and obviously have an impact on EPR

Blockchain integration for data transparency and traceability is one of the most important contributions technology has made to waste management. The traditional systems lack reliable mechanisms to track waste from its origins all the way

through to its final disposal. This lack of accountability leads to inefficiency, fraud, and non-compliance. Blockchain technology solves this problem by creating tamper-proof records of waste management. The data is immutable, and all parties can access it. QR codes that are linked to blockchainrecords enhance traceability and allow real-time compliance verification.

Blockchain can be used to provide valuable insights into India's e-waste management sector. Between 2010 and 2022, India experienced a 163% surge in electronic waste generation from screens, computers, and small IT and telecommunication equipment (SCSIT), the highest growth globally, according to a United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report.Blockchain-based systems can further enhance compliance with India's EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) framework by tracking materials across their lifecycle.



India's diverse waste production patterns and vast geography require scalable solutions that can handle operations in both urban and rural areas. For instance, metro cities like Delhi and Mumbai generate thousands of tonnes of waste every day. It requires technology that is able to efficiently manage large-scale operations without compromising environmental compliance.

Scalable platforms are already making inroads, with features like geospatial analytics enabling more efficient resource allocation in cities. In rural regions, mobile-enabled platforms bridge the gap by connecting communities with logistics providers and waste management services. The Plastic Waste Management Rules 2022 have also highlighted the need for scalable solutions to address the 24 million tonnes of plastic packaging introduced annually into India. Of this, only 9.8 million tonnes can be mechanically recycled. Scaling up recycling infrastructure and adopting advanced technologies are critical to meeting the demands of this regulation.

Empowering stakeholders through collaboration

Technology has turned waste management into an effort of collaboration by connecting stakeholders via digital platforms. Advanced tools allow for seamless interaction and partnership between producers, recyclers, industries, and regulatory agencies. Digital marketplaces for waste commodities have been one of the most significant advancements. These platforms link buyers and sellers, ensuring waste is reused instead of thrown away. Real-time notifications of matching leads for buy and sell and secure transaction systems enable stakeholders to make quick decisions. India's advocacy for international collaboration at the Global Plastic Treaty negotiations also reflects its stance on waste management as a shared responsibility. The country has called for a global effort to transfer technology and financial support to developing nations, emphasizing that only collective action can address the scale of the plastic waste problem.

Drive compliance and sustainability.

Several industries are required to meet their obligations in waste management following strict environmental regulations such as the EPR. The technology simplifies compliance through the automation of critical processes and transparent records that can be audited and reported. It requires producers to take responsibility for the end-of-life disposal of their product and ensure that it is recycled or reused responsibly. Technology is not only about compliance but also promotes sustainability through the circular economy. Digital solutions are aligned with sustainability goals by encouraging the reuse and recycling of waste materials, as well as reducing dependence on virgin resources.

> (The author, Nimit Aggarwal, is the Founder and Managing Director of EcoEx.)



Mbappé puts on a show again with two goals as Real Madrid beats Las Palmas

With Kylian Mbappé putting on a show again, Real Madrid returned to the top of the Spanish league.

Mbappé continued his scoring streak with a brace as Madrid routed 10-man Las Palmas 4-1 on Sunday, prompting a big ovation at Santiago Bernabeu stadium for the France star who has struggled at times in his first season with the Spanish powerhouse.

"It's always a dream to get a standing ovation at this stadium," Mbappě said.

"I'm really happy, I've adapted to the team and I can play the way I want to. Everyone enjoys the team's game. All the Real Madrid players are leaders because it's the best team in the world. We have to be united because we have to win a lot of things. You always have to win at Real Madrid."

Mbappé now has scored four goals in his last four matches with Madrid.

Brahim Díaz and Rodrygo also scored for Madrid as it overtook Atletico Madrid to begin the second half of the league season. Madrid is two points ahead of city rival Atletico, which on Saturday saw its record 15-game winning streak end in a 1-0 loss to Leganes. Madrid opened a seven-point lead over third-placed Barcelona, which drew 1-1 at Getafe on Saturday.

"It was an important match for us," Mbappé said.
"We knew what happened yesterday with Atletico's defeat and Barcelona's draw and we wanted to get the win. We started badly because we conceded an early goal, but the team's reaction was outstanding. We looked for space and played fast and with

It was the second straight victory for Madrid after an embarrassing 5-2 loss to Barcelona in the Spanish Super Cup final in Saudi Arabia on Jan. 12.

After Rodrygo was fouled,



Mbappé converted an 18th-minute penalty kick on Sunday after the visitors had taken the lead through Fábio Silva one minute into the match at the

minute into the match at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium.
Díaz put Madrid ahead in the 33rd and Mbappé added his second goal in the 36th after an assist by Rodrygo.
Rodrygo scored his third goal in three matches in the 57th.

Mbappé thought he had scored a hat trick near the end of the first half but his goal was disallowed for offside. He also hit the woodwork in first-half stoppage

Jude Bellingham had a goal disallowed after video review in the second half.

"Mbappé's great form is helping us a lot," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said.

"Our work today was very good. We managed to get the right balance to handle the good moments and the difficult ones."

and enduring a three-game losing streak across all competitions, had Benito Ramírez sent off for a high kick in the 64th. He initially was shown a yellow card but video review determined he deserved a red card.

Defender David Alaba made his return to action after a long kneeinjury layoff in the 77th. He hadn't played since December 2023.

Madrid was without forward Vinícius Júnior because of a suspension.

President Pérez

As the only candidate, Florentino Pérez was reelected Madrid president on Sunday, securing his control of the club until 2029. Other results

Earlier Sunday, fourth-place Athletic Bilbao won 2-1 at 13thplace Celta Vigo, while ninth-place Rayo Vallecano drew 1-1 at 10th-place Osasuna. Valencia moved out of last place by beating Real Sociedad 1-0 at home for its Las Palmas, sitting in 14th place first league win since November.



Elina Svitolina rallies to reach the Australian Open quarterfinals for third time

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Elina Svitolina was 4-1 down before she went on a roll and took 11 of the next 12 games in a 6-4 6-1 victory over Veronika Kudermetova on Monday to reach the Australian Open quarterfinals for the third time.

The 30-year-old Ukrainian is into the last eight at a Grand Slam for the 12th time and will next play No. 19 Madison Kevs, who had a 6-3 1-6 6-3 win over Elena Rybakina, the 2022 Wimbledon champion and 2023 Australian Open

runner-up. Keys has twice reached the semifinals in Australia, in 2015 and 2022, and entered the season's first major with a title
It wasn't just power and pace in Adelaide earlier this month. Svitolina is back in the quarterfinals in Australia for

the first time since 2019. "Feels like a lifetime ago," Svitolina said.

Since then, she has married French player Gael Monfils in 2021 and the pair had a daughter, Skai, in 2022.

"Many things happened and I'm really pleased with the performance throughout the tournament. Really enjoying this win today."

After dropping two early service games to Kudermetova, she said her

only goal "was just trying to fight."
"It's the only thing I can do when things are not going your way, put your head down and get back to work," she said.
"Really happy I could come
(back) into the match and then

win in straight sets." In a message written on a TV camera lens after the match, the No. 28-seeded Svitolina wrote "The Spirit of Ukraine" and drew a heart shape.

Svitolina, the No. 28 seed wore a red dress, red shoes and a red cap for the match. People in the crowd waved the yellow and blue Ukraine flag.

Kudermetova took a medical timeout for on-court treatment on her abdomen after falling behind 5-4 the

first set. She left the court for treatment after losing the first set. Kudermetova saved a breakpoint and held for 1-1 in

the second set, following up a

forehand winner down the line with a loud roar. That was the end of her

celebrating. from Svitolina that was difference between the pair. After bringing Kudermetova to the net with a drop shot and then lobbing over her to start the next game, Svitolina punched the air.

There was no handshake at the net with Kudermeotva, a 27year-old from Russia, but no animosity, either.

Svitolina's husband, Monfils, was playing later Monday against No. 21 seed Ben Shelton on Margaret Court Arena. The 38-year-old Frenchman reached the fourth round with an upset over fourth-seeded Taylor Fritz, the US Open runner-up last year. Other quarterfinalists will be decided when defending champion Jannik Sinner and No. 13 seed Holger Rune meet in an afternoon match and five-time major winner Iga Swiatek takes on Eva Lys, the lucky loser from qualifying, in

Rishabh Pant named captain of Lucknow Super Giants for upcoming IPL 2025

PTI KOLKATA

Dynamic keeper-batter Rishabh Pant was on Monday named the captain of Lucknow Super Giants for the upcoming IPL and he vowed to give his "200 percent" to win the team's maiden title.

Pant was picked at the mega auction for an IPL record Rs 27 crore by the franchise owner Sanjiv Goenka.

"I will give my 200 percent.
That's my commitment to you.
I will try whatever is there in my power to repay the faith. I am really excited and looking forward to new beginning and new energy. And have a blast out there with lot of fun," Pant told mediapersons after being unveiled as the new skipper. We start with new hope and

aspirations. And most importantly, new confidence. I wanted to introduce you all to our new captain Rishabh Pant," Goenka said.

This is Pant's second stint as a



At his former franchise Delhi Capitals, the captaincy became a point of contention, leading the 27-year-old Pant to opt out of DC's retention plans after unsuccessful negotiations.

Pant beat Nicholas Pooran to secure the top job after Rahul didn't feature in the list of LSG's retained players. LSG had retained Pooran, Mayank Ravi Bishnoi, and Ayush Badoni before the

Right after the auction, Goenka made a cryptic remark that the franchise wanted to keep players who put the team first ahead of their personal goals and milestones, which was construed as a dig at Rahul

Pant sounded optimistic. "Definitely happy with the team. We have a mix of youth and experienced players. We

who often struggled to score at a brisk pace. Asked about his new team going the distance in the IPL,

have not been where we wanted to be... That's the journey how we can take this franchise to newer heights. Despite DC's interest in keeping him, they were not fully committed to him leading the side, prompting Pant to reenter the auction.

At the auction, they pipped Sunrisers Hyderabad, LSG to get Pant for Rs 20.75 crore, eventually they had to raise their price to Rs 27 crore to outbid Delhi Capitals' right-tomatch card.

"I know it's a new beginning for me, new franchise, new owner. The ideology of captaining the side doesnt change. We will add a lot of things which we will discuss with the management and will see how we would take this forward in a better way."

Speaking about his captaincy mantra, "I've learnt from a lot of captains, seniors. You don't only learn from captains, a lot of senior players are also there.



Rohit Sharma, Yashasvi named in Mumbai squad for next Ranji game

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Tndia captain Rohit Sharma Twill show up in a Ranji Trophy match for the first time in almost a decade after he and rising star Yashasvi Jaiswal were named in Mumbai's squad for their fixture against Jammu and Kashmir, starting January 23 at MCA-BKC Ground here.

The team will continue to be led by the seasoned Ajinkya Rahane, the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) said while announcing the squad on Monday. Rohit had confirmed his

participation for the next round of the Ranji Trophy match on Saturday during a press conference India's squads for limited-overs series against England and the Champions

Trophy next month. When asked if he would play in the next domestic game for his state team, Rohit replied, "I will".

Of late there have been questions over Rohit's form in the longest format after his forgettable outing in his last eight Tests, including against New Zealand at home and against Australia Down

Under. The India skipper had showed up for a training session for Mumbai on January 15 as it became clear after the team's disastrous tour of Australia that the BCCI has made it mandatory for the players to feature in domestic circuit.

Soon after, Jaiswal too joined the Mumbai camp which trained at the BKC ground as he had a few batting sessions

The BCCI recently made it mandatory for all contracted India players to participate in domestic cricket except when there are fitness issues.

with his domestic team.

Rohit had cited a busy schedule with the national team among reasons for not playing domestic cricket. (In) the last 6-7 years, I can

at least tell about what has happened with me since I've started playing Test cricket regularly, which is from 2019, you hardly have any time (in hand)," he told media

"And then, when you play so much international cricket through the year, you need some time off as well as a to cricketer just to refresh, get for your mind right, just to be ready for the upcoming season."

"But we have addressed it now and nobody takes it for granted or anything like that. It is just based on looking at how one has gone through the season, how much rest he needs.

"Based on all of that, we decide what is going to happen with certain players. Now it's been made mandatory that if there is time, you have to play domestic cricket," he said. Mumbai squad: Ajinkya Rahane (captain), Rohit Sharma, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Avush Mhatre, Shreyas Iyer, Siddhesh Lad, Shivam Dube, Hardik Tamore (wk), Akash Anand (wk), Tanush Kotian, Shams Mulani, Himanshu Shardul Thakur, Awasthi, Sylvester Dsouza, Royston Dias, Karsh

a bigger and more lucrative

Then February was occupied in 2001 by the Champions League when a new format

with a second group stage started. February stayed on the

calendar when the round of 16

started in 2004, and for the

So when UEFA decided in

2022 on this eight-game

league phase, January was

needed even though some

leagues in Nordic countries do

not start until March, and

others are still on midwinter

next two decades.

Yes, transition phase is coming but I don't need to prove anything to anyone: Axar Patel

contender to take veteran Ravindra A Jadeja's place permanently at some point, spin-bowling all-rounder Axar Patel is aware of the possibilities that may arise during India's big Test transition but he doesn't feel the need to prove "anything to anyone" to make his case. Axar, who turned 31 on Monday, has been Jadeja's under-study for the past decade with same skill-sets but with a bit of less finesse than his fellow senior Guiarati.

In his 11-year-international career, Axar has taken 184 wickets across three formats and 55 of them have come in 14 Tests, two of which were in Bangladesh when Jadeja was unfit. Talk about Indian cricket's transition and

whether he stands to gain, India's T20 vice-captain's offered a matter of fact response.

"Yes, a transition phase is coming, and ultimately, it's the selectors' and captain's call. I don't feel the need to prove anything to anyone," Axar gave an uncomplicated answer.

"My approach is to focus on fulfilling the role assigned to me and continuously improving myself. If I perform well, my



place in the team will take care of itself automatically."

In his mind, he is an all-format player and that belief is unshakeable. "I just keep telling myself that I have played all three formats be it Tests, ODIs,

or T20s. My focus is on doing well whenever I get an opportunity, rather than feeling the need to prove anything to anyone, whether I'm picked or not. "I don't take the pressure of thinking that I deserve a spot. It is always about the team combination and whether there is any room for me."

He wasn't disappointed when he didn't make the cut for Border-Gavaskar

Trophy as it was not meant to be. Instead, he concentrated on a T20I series in Africa where he played all the games. "When it comes to selection or the Australia series, I think more about where I can get opportunities rather than

whether I deserve a place. "It's all part of a cricketer's journey --

only 15 players can be in the squad and you can't take your place for granted. I don't think in those terms." There has been a lot of chatter about

communication between the Gautam Gambhir-led support staff and the players during the series Down Under. When asked about it, Axar carefully sidestepped the issue but did say that in a fast-paced format like T20, it is more about specific strategic inputs and roles. In that regard, he felt that "communication is pretty clear".
"I was not with the team for last two and

half months so I do not have much idea what was going on in Australia. But it's the same support staff, we just have the inputs that is required from bowling coach and the batting coach. "T20 is a fast-paced format, so it's about

making correct decisions, so we discuss that only. What role do I have to play."

European Cup winner, can most influential clubs wanted qualify for the round of 16 a bigger and more lucrative

and Man City.

Wednesday games Real Madrid hosts struggling

Zagreb.
Sixth-place Inter Milan goes to
Sparta Prague, and Bayern
Munich, in a surprising 10th place with 12 points, travels to Feyenoord which is 18th with

10 points. Brest goes to Schalke's stadium win to stay in contention.

breaks. Austrian champion Sturm

domestic game since December 7 and will not

Champions League makes January debut with high-stakes clash of PSG and Manchester City

PTI ■ GENEVA

 $T_{\text{games to be played in January include one with}}^{\text{he first Champions League}}$ possible in an shocking consequences unpredictable debut season for the 36-team format. Paris Saint-Germain vs Manchester City on Wednesday is a clash of super-wealthy state-backed teams currently a barely believable 25th and 22nd in

the standings.
If the 2020 beaten finalist and 2023 champion play to a draw at Parc des Princes, both could start the 18-game final round on January 29 outside the top-24 places that qualify for the knockout stage. The new format that replaced the traditional groups — now with eight games instead of six, facing eight different opponents, and two in January is unknown territory even for UEFA, whose preseason prediction that eight points

should ensure advancing likely

will fall short. However, few imagined what would play out in the first six rounds.

a night match.

Man City and PSG have struggled, Real Madrid has lost half its games in 20th place despite adding Kylian Mbappé to a title-winning team, and lowest-ranked debutant Brest has cruised to four wins and seventh in the standings, just ahead of Lille.

"It would have been impossible to list these eight clubs as being in the top eight positions," Giorgio Marchetti, the UEFA deputy general secretary, told The Associated Press in a recent interview. 'There is a lot of new fresh air."

"I think the format has an impact," Marchetti said, pointing to comments by Inter Milan coach Simone Inzaghi that it is more difficult to prepare for eight different opponents instead of three. "Ît is more of a challenge." Which positions are teams

playing for?
The top eight in the standings

on January 29 advance directly to the round of 16 that starts in March. They will likely include current leader Liverpool and second-place Barcelona which are the only two teams already certain to finish in the top 24. Liverpool is the only team to

win all six games. Teams placed from ninth to 24th go into the new knockout playoffs round. Nos. 9-16 will be seeded in the draw on January 31 and will play the second leg at home. Teams placing 17 to 24 host the first

legs. Nos. 25-36 in the standings are eliminated and do not transfer to the Europa League. Already out are Leipzig, Slovan Bratislava and Young Boys which each lost all six games. Tuesday games

Liverpool hosts Lille and Barcelona is at 15th-place Benfica. Atletico Madrid in 11th place can rise above visiting Bayer Leverkusen, which is in fourth place with just one point more. Villa, the Aston

Champions League and got two extra midweek matches with a win at 16th-place Monaco. Stuttgart, in 26th place, is favored to win at Slovan and for all. The congested calendar for soccer left few options. Historically, European club competitions took a move to 10 points, which would put pressure on PSG midwinter break until March.

Salzburg, and third-place Arsenal can secure its round of 16 entry — and do Man City a favor — by winning at home against 24th-place Dinamo

in neutral Germany to face Shakhtar Donetsk, which has four points and likely must Why is the Champions League playing in January?

Graz, which plays at Atalanta on Tuesday, has not played a For the money, mostly. The resume until February 1.

Vijayawada | Tuesday January 21, 2025

I want to show non-violence thru my film: Padmavathi Malladi

SURESH KAVIRAYANI

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director opular Sukumar's daughter Sukriti Bandreddi is making her debut as an actress with the film Gandhi Thatha Chettu. Padmavathi Malladi is also making her debut as a director with this film which is releasing on January 24. The director talks about this project and how she roped in Sukriti. Now big production house Mythri Movie Makers is releasing this film.
Padmavathi was born and brought

Padmavathi was born and brought up in Hyderabad, completed her BSc in Bio-Technology, MBA and also did her PG Diploma in Quality Control. "I used to write short sto-ries and also some poems. My friend showed one of my stories to Jil director Radhakrishna and he introduced me to Chandrasekhar Yeleti," said Padmavathi. That's how she joined films for the first time by writing for the film Manamantha with Chandrasekhar. "I learnt a lot when I worked with him," she said. She next worked for the film *Radhe* Shyam with director Radhakrishna. "At the same time I got a chance to work with director Nag Ashwin for Mahanati," she said.

Padmavathi's mother is a film lover and used to watch all films on the first day. "That's how I get interested in films," she said. Then she wrote dialogues for 'Choosi Choodangane' (2020) which her friend Sesha Sindhu directed. Then she wrote dialogues for 'Ammu' (2022) and also worked in 'Brinda' web series.

One of her friends thought of a small love story between a tree and a boy and Padmavathi connected to that point. "I like greenery and trees, so I want to tell the present generation about non-violence. So, I developed a story about a girl, her grandfather and a tree. How a girl saved a village tree through non-violence is the basic story. There are a lot of emotions and a message is also there, but it is not an art film, it is a commercial cinema," she said. Her friend and director Sindhu Rao heard the story and she liked it very much. She collected money through some crowd-funding and also from others. "We planned with a limited



budget and we went according to our plan," she said.

After writing the story she is searching for a thirteen year-old girl to play the main role in her film. "I auditioned hundreds of girls, but some of them didn't agree to shave their head. Though some agreed, their acting was poor. At that time, my friend Sindhu had seen

Sukumar's daughter Sukriti at a film premiere and sent her photos to me. After seeing her photo, I fixed her as my girl," said Padmavathi. She then messaged Sukumar and approached Sukriti.

"We did nearly two months' workshop with her in acting, dialogue delivery and body language. Location is a big task for us as we

AS WRITER FOR FILMS LIKE MAHANATI. MANAMANTHA AND *RADHE* SHYAM. **PADMAVATHI MALLADI IS NOW MAKING HER DEBUT AS DIRECTOR WITH** GANDHI TATHA CHETTU. **SUKUMAR'S DAUGHTER SUKRITI PLAYS** THIS ONE AND **PADMAVATHI** TALKS ABOUT THE PROJECT AND HOW

search in many places and finally zeroed in Rangampet near Nizamabad and we found a tree also," she said. When asked why can't go for make-up instead of shaving her head? "Yes, we can use prosthetics, but it takes so much time and is also very costly. In my film, the girl is very strong and she doesn't care about these things, so

HOUSE FOR HER

SMALL FILM.

Sukriti accepted it and did it very well," she added.
Padmavathi says that music is one

of the important ones for her film. "If you close your eyes and listen to the music of my film, you can understand the story. It has come out very well." "Sukumar's wife Tabitha was there on the sets throughout the shoot. On the second day I asked Tabitha, 'can you please present this film?' and she accepted immediate-

film? and sne accepted immediately," said Padmavathi.

They completed the film within their budget with Sindhu Rao as producer. Once the film was over, Sukumar had seen it and did he give any advice or changes to it? "No, he told me 'this is not my genre, so whatever you think you go with that and I believe in you'. So, he com-pletely supported me," she said. It is Sukumar's advice to send this film for Film Festivals. "It won many awards at the International Film Festival and earned so much respect. Now, it should earn audience applause after its release here and I am eagerly waiting for the result." She added that though the film won many awards, it is not an art film; it is a commercial film with a message of non-violence. "I wanted to tell through the film that non-violence is important not only for human beings but also for nature," she said. Padmavathi worked as a writer for

a few films, but she never watched shooting on the sets. "I mostly interacted with actors with my dialogues. So, here I have a bond with senior director Singeetham Srinivasa Rao and when I told him about my directorial debut, he gave me a twoday crash course, which I followed as it is," said Padmavathi. "It really helped me and I implemented what-

rever he told me," she said.

The other interesting thing about this film is she didn't take any junior artistes for this film. "The local vilartistes for this film. "The local villagers acted in the film and they did very natural acting," she said. She also mentioned that Anand Chakrapani as grandfather and Rag Mayur as villain gave a stunning performance in the film. Thanikella Bharani gave voiceover for the tree.

About her future project, she said she has a few stories, but at present is waiting for this film's release. "I will decide what genre I should take after this film's release," she said.



Actor Vijay Rangaraju is no more

Telugu actor Vijay Rangaraju passed away on Monday. The actor joined a private hospital in Chennai last week and on Monday he suffered from car-diac arrest and breathed his last. According to reports, the actor was injured in shooting of a film a few days back in Hyderabad and then he went to Chennai and joined a private hospital.

private hospital.

Vijay Rangaraju is his screen name and his original name is Raj Kumar. He played villain and character roles in many Telugu and Malayalam films. He is popular with the film 'Bhairava Dweepam' that stars Nandamuri Balakrishna and directed by Singeetham and directed by Singeetham Srinivasa Rao. Rangaraju alias Raj Kumar made his debut with a Malayalam film opposite Malayalam superstar Mohan Lal. The film ran nearly 150 days and then he got an offer for the Telugu film 'Bhairava Dweepam'.

When he signed the Telugu film, there was already an actor named Raj Kumar. So the producers Vijaya Production house changed his name to Vijay Rangaraju. They took their production house name Vijaya, the character is like SV Ranga Rao in 'Pathalabhairavi'. So from his name Ranga and then 'Raj' from his original name, was christened as Vijay Rangaraju.

Though the Telugu film was a

big success, Rangaraju didn't get many chances. EVV Satyanarayana gave him a role in his 'Magarayudu'. After acting in a few Telugu films, he left for London for a few years. After his comeback, he did films like 'Uri' and also acted as the main villain in 'Yajnam' film opposite Gopichand. He acted in some popular films like 'State Rowdy', 'Ashok Chakravarthy' and Vijay'.

Apart from films, Vijay Rangaraju is passionate about weightlifting and bodybuilding. Vijay Rangaraju is survived by two daughters Deekshita and Padmini.

am Gopal Varma changed Telugu cinema with his 'Shiva' into new heights. People talk about before and after 'Shiva', as it marks a trendsetter in Telugu and Indian cinema. Later, he made some good films like 'Satya', 'Anaganaka Oka Roju', 'Kshana Kshanam', 'Rangeela' 'Sarkar' and many more. But in recent years, he is known for his controversial remarks and is in the news for wrong reasons. He started making satirical films with a political backdrop, but none of them made any impact. Recently, RGV has seen his old film 'Satya' with the actors who acted in that film in Mumbai. After watching the film, the director made a confession that from now onwards, he is going to make good films. RGV is known for his brilliance, but he lost his touch complet in recent years. The director posted a long note after watching 'Satya' a few days back and what he wanted to do in the coming days. "I obviously can't make any amends now for what I already did, but I promised myself two nights back while wiping away my tears, that every film I make from now onwards will be made with a reverence towards why I wanted to become a director in the first place," said RGV in his post. The director also confessed that his recent films are not made with honesty and integrity which was there in 'Satya'. "Some of my later films might have been successful but I do not believe that any of them had the same honesty and integrity which SATYA had," added the director. The director confessed that he wanted to make sincere films in the coming days. ""Finally now I took a vow that whatever little of my life is left, I want to spend it sincerely and create something as worthy as SATYA and this truth I swear on SATYA," said the director.





Wanted to write more womancentric stories: Sri Vidya Basava

A nother female director Sri Vidya Basava is coming up with a thriller 'Hatya' this time. She made her debut with 'Madha', but she said that she didn't enjoy the success of that film because of the pandemic. "I struggled a lot to release my first film 'Madha'. I have shown the film to many people and requested them to release it, but when it comes to this 'Hatya', I didn't ask anyone." said director Sri Vidya.

She added that after the release of the trailer, many approached the filmmakers to release it. "It happened because of producer

"Though I struggled a bit to complete 'Hatya', I learnt from those mistakes and completed it."

She said that she felt proud after completing the film. "I wanted to make a profitable ven-ture of 'Hatya' and the film has come out very nicely. Our unit people have also seen the film and appreciated it a lot," said Sri Vidya. Dhanya Balakrishnan and Pooja Ramachandran played important roles along with Ravi Varma in this thriller. She added that as a woman director she wanted to do more women-centric films and create

Prashanth," said the director, more characters, "Dhanya prepared her role and then came to the sets and her performance was definitely one of the highlights. Ravi Varma's role definitely connected to everyone," said the director. She also mentioned Pooja Ramachandran's performance in the film.

Dhanya Balachandran said that she wanted to do action films like Vijayashanthi and Malasri and now her wish has come true with this one. "It's an investigative thriller and I should thank director Vidya for giving me this opportunity," said Dhanya.

Bhairavam is a strong story-based film'

Bellamkonda Sai Sreenivas, Manchu Manoj and Nara Rohit are playing lead roles in the film 'Bhairavam'. Vijay Kanakamedala is the director, while Radha Mohan is producing it. The film's teaser was unveiled on Monday at a multiplex in Hyderabad. On this occasion, Sreenivas talks highly about the film. "Bhairavam' is one of the strong story-based films and I am confident that this film is going to be a great success," said Sreenivas. After 'Jaya Janaki Nayaka', he wanted to do a good film and director Vijay worked very hard for it. "I am sure Vijay is going to be in the list of top directors with this one," said Sreenivas. He added that it is a blessing to him to work with Manoj Manchu and Nara Rohit. "Rohit accepting this film is one happy moment. He and Manoj can only do the



characters in this film and it was a blessing for me to work with them," said Sreenivas.

Manoj praises director Vijay and says he is a dedicated person. "I have seen the film and Sai's performance is top notch. Rohit is my childhood friend and he gave voiceover for my film a few years back, again for this film, I was happy that I shared screen space with him, said Manoi.

Rohit said that he became closer with Manoj with this film. "It's a wonderful journey working with Sai and we enjoyed a lot while shooting this film. This is one of the most memorable films for me and I hope it is going to be a great success and director Vijay is going to direct big films," said Rohit.

Akshay Kumar as Lord Shiva from Kannappa

The promotions for the much-awaited film 'Kannappa' is now going aggressively. Vishnu Manchu, playing the protagonist of Kannappa and is also producer of the film, recently started promotions in Bengaluru and Chennai. Now, it's Monday, so the makers unveiled another look from the film, and this time it is none other than the Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar, who is playing the role of Lord Shiva

In 'Kannappa', Lord Shiva emerges as a divine force, embodying strength, serenity and with a deep sense of devotion. He is depicted as the supreme deity who governs the three realms, surrendering himself to the purest form of devotion.

The first look poster features Akshay Kumar

in the iconic Shiva Thandavam pos-ture, holding a Trishul in one hand and a Damarukam in the other. His intense expression and commanding presence exude the divine energy of Lord Shiva, further amplifying the film's mystic and powerful aura.

With such a captivating portrayal of Lord Shiva, Kannappa promises to be an unforgettable cinematic experience. Apart from Manchu Vishnu and Akshay Kumar, some of the icons like Mohan Babu, Prabhas, Mohanlal, Sarath Kumar are also there. Kajal Aggarwal plays the role of Parvathi, while Preity Mukundhan is Kannappa's love interest. Directed by Mukesh Kumar Singh and produced by Mohan Babu Manchu, Kannappa is poised to deliver a high-octane, visually stunning epic, complete with breathtaking action and effects. The film is releasing on April 25, 2025.

