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MORE AIRPORTS: NAIDU



GOVT WORKING ON 'TEMPLATE MODEL' FOR SETTING UP

'Success of KA warrants a

the pioneer BRS chief KCR is coming to the Assembly on March 12 fearing disqualification. Revanth would continue as the CM for 10 years. Rumours about changing the CM is a lie spread by the opposition. The BRS did not field candidates in the MLC election to ensure the victory of BJP candidates. There will be no BRS in the future. Even Brahma is not likely to protect the BRS

QUOTE OF THE DAY

- Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Telangana Minister

2 ultra mega solar plants to be set up

Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar has announced that two Ultra Mega Solar Power Plants will be set up in Prakasam district. Responding to questions in the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday the Minister stated that after Rayalaseema, Prakasam is the most suitable region for renewable energy projects in the state. He revealed that the government plans to establish solar power plants in Donakonda and Chandrasekharapuram, each requiring approximately 5,500 acres of land. "A land allocation report has been requested from the...

Uproar in Odisha **Assembly**

High drama unfolded in the Odisha assembly on Tuesday, when members of the ruling BJP and Congress engaged in a scuffle, as a senior opposition MLA attempted to climb the Speaker's podium, and later accused a saffron party legislator of holding his shirt collar and pushing him. Tension erupted in the House during Question Hour as senior BJP lawmaker Jaynarayan Mishra rushed towards Congress MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati, who was standing in front of Urban



Airtel, SpaceX join hands for satcom

Bharti Airtel on Tuesday said it has signed an agreement with Elon Musk-led SpaceX to offer the USbased company's high-speed internet services under Starlink to its customers in India. The as Sunil Mittal-led Bharti Airtel was at loggerheads with Starlink over issues related to licence fees and spectrum pricing for satellitebased internet service providers Airtel is also the single-largest shareholder with a 21.2 per cent share in Starlink's rival firm Eutelsat OneWeb..

-PAGE: 8

Focus on playing for country: Pant

India wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant feels the lure of the IPL is understandable but budding cricketers should always focus on playing for the country as "everything else" follows thereafter Pant who was part of India's triumphant Champions Trophy squad but did not get a game, made his international debut back in 2017, "Since childhood, I had only one dream to play for India. I never even thought about playing in the IPL. I think today, people are more focused on the IPL..

Rs 37,702.15 cr Amaravati works cleared by CRDA

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) has approved tenders worth Rs 37,702.15 crore for developmental works in Amaravati. The decision was taken during a meeting chaired by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday. The works will commence following the Cabinet's approval, scheduled for March 17.

Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MAUD) Ponguru Narayana stated that over 20,000 workers would be involved in these projects starting next month. He also noted that tenders for 73 projects worth Rs 48,012 crore had been invited, of which 59 tenders amounting to Rs 37,702.15 crore were cleared by the CRDA.

The Minister added that Letters of Intent would be issued immediately. Of the 59 works approved, projects

Rs 22,607.11 crore, while those under the Amaravati Development Corporation (ADC) total Rs 15,095.04 crore. Narayana also revealed that land allocation for 31 organisations, originally allotted between 2014 and 2019, was confirmed during the meeting. Additionally, the deadline for location changes for 11 units was extended, and two proposals for land relocation were approved.

The development of Amaravati is estimated to cost Rs 64,000 crore. The Minister clarified that public tax revenue would not be used for this purpose. Of the land acquired from farmers, CRDA holds a surplus of 6,203 acres, with 1,900 acres earmarked for allocation to various organisations. Funding for the project will be sourced through land monetisation, with Rs 15,000 crore already secured from the World Bank. Further loans of Rs 11,000 crore from HUDCO and Rs 5,000 crore from other banks will bring the total mobilisation to Rs 31,000 crore.

DISTURBANCE TO LAW & ORDER

CM warns of stern action

SHAKTI APP LAUNCHED TO ENHANCE WOMEN'S SECURIT

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has reaffirmed his commitment to maintaining law and order in the state, making it clear that no one will be spared if they attempt to disrupt peace. Addressing the State Assembly, he stressed that strict action would be taken against those who threaten public safety, particularly in cases involving crimes against women. He also highlight-ed the launch of the Shakti app, designed to enhance women's security, and vowed to hold the police accountable for any negligence in this regard.

Naidu pointed out that the Shakti app was introduced solely for the protection of women, emphasizing that the previous government had failed miserably in maintaining law and order. He said this failure left people feeling unsafe and government properties unprotected. He asserted that ensuring law and order is crucial for citizens to live without fear.

Expressing grave concern over the rampant drug and ganja abuse during the previous administration, Naidu stated that the TDP, as a responsible Opposition party, had

protests. However, the party office was attacked in response. "Any political party treats its office as a temple. In my 45-year-long political career, I have never seen an attack on a party office," he remarked.

Clarifying that he does not engage in political vendetta, Naidu criticized the previous government for failing to even conduct a review meeting on the drug and ganja problem. He noted that the matter was never discussed in the Assembly, exposing the administration's negligence.

The Chief Minister acknowl-

edged that rehabilitating drug addicts is a difficult task and intro-duced the Eagle system to curb organized ganja cultivation and drug abuse. "No one should cultivate ganja for personal gain at the cost of people's lives. It will not be allowed at any cost in the state," he declared.

To combat drug smuggling, Naidu announced that state borders are being closely monitored using advanced technology.

He also assured that alternative

employment opportunities would be provided to those involved in ganja cultivation.

Continued on Page 2

Previous government blamed for failure in maintaining law and order

TDP's protests against drug abuse led to an attack on its party office

 Naidu criticizes the past administration for ignoring the drug and ganja crisis

 Eagle system introduced to curb organized ganja cultivation and drug trafficking

 State borders being monitored, and alternative jobs offered to ganja cultivators

 Strict measures to curb offensive remarks and vulgarity in politics and social media

 New legislation proposed to prevent land grabbing and misuse of Section 22A

 Drone patrolling, CCTV surveillance, and cyber security stations to monitor crime Naidu recalls Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy's

murder, highlighting criminal conspiracies Police instructed to remain vigilant and raise

awareness on women's

Amaravati poised for a 'Quantum' leap C PRADEEP KUMAR

VIJAYAWADA Andhra Pradesh is charting a bold

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new course in quantum computing with the launch of its visionary 'Quantum Valley' initiative. Spearheaded by Chief Minister N handrababu N aidu this ambitious project seeks to establish the State as a leader in cutting-edge quantum research, much like its trailblazing role in the IT revolution of the 1990s. The Quantum Valley, to be devel-

oped in Amaravati, is poised to become a world-class Quantum Computing Hub, aligning seamlessly with the National Quantum Mission. The initiative aims to revolutionize key industries such as finance, healthcare, logistics, and security by leveraging quantum technology's transformative potential.



To bring this vision to life, the Andhra Pradesh government has forged strategic partnerships with top institutions and technology giants, including IIT Madras, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), and

IBM. These collaborations will drive research, innovation, and talent development, ensuring the Quantum Valley emerges as a globally recognised centre for quantum

RBI to issue Rs 100 and Rs 200 notes with Guv Malhotra's signature

PNS MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India on Tuesday said it will shortly issue banknotes of Rs 100 and Rs 200 denominations bearing the signa-

'The design of these notes is similar in all respects to Rs 100 and Rs 200 banknotes in Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series," it said in a statement.

All banknotes in the denomination of Rs 100 and Rs 200 issued by the Reserve Bank in the past will continue to be legal tender.

Malhotra took over as RBI Governor in December 2024 replacing Shaktikanta Das who demitted office after completion of his extended term

Accept TG lawmakers' letters for TTD Darshan: Min Surekha

PNS HYDERABAD

Endowments, Telangana Environmental and Forests Minister Konda Surekha has requested Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu to ensure hat the Tirumala Tirupati approved guidelines regarding recommendation letters for dar-

In a statement on Tuesday, Surekha thanked the AP Chief Minister for reinstating the recommendation letter system for Tirumala darshan. expressed gratitude on behalf of all public representatives from

Telangana for taking this decision under his leadership. She pointed out that the number of devotees from Telangana visiting Tirumala has increased in recent times. "Even after the formation of two

separate states, the devotion of ugu people has not decrease Devasthanams (TTD) follows the it has only grown stronger," she said, adding that Lord Venkateswara remains equally revered in both states. As per the official guidelines, Telangana MLAs, MLCs

and MPs are allowed to issue: Two recommendation letters per week for VIP Break Darshan (₹500 ticket) and two recommendation letters per week for Special Entry Darshan

(₹300 ticket).

5 dead as bus rams 2 bikes

PNS KURNOOL

As many as five persons were killed in an accident t involving a Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) bus and two motorcycles in Kurnool district on Tuesday. The accident occurred at

Jalimanchi Cross near Pandavagallu village in Adoni mandal at around 11 a.m. Four people died on the spot, while another seriously injured died while undergoing treatment at a local hospital, said the official.

Two people were riding a motor-



cycle while three were on another two-wheeler when the bus collided with them head-on, he added.

Police believe that all the vehicles. the bus and the two motorcycles, were at a high speed. Police registered a case under BNS Section 106. PNS KARACHI/ISLAMABAD

Suspected Baloch gunmen opened fire at a passenger train in Pakistan's restive Balochistan on Tuesday, injuring several passengers, and claimed to have taken over 180 people hostages. Jaffar Express, with around 500

passengers on board in nine coaches, was on its way from Quetta to Peshawar in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa when it was fired upon between Gudalaar and Piru Koneri, according to officials. The Balochistan ing it. The group said it had killed six typersonnel. However, the Pakistani in the gunfire.



Train hijacked by Baloch ultras; hundreds taken hostage

FLASH "The security forces have managed to rescue 80 passengers -- 43 men, 26 women and

11 children -- from a bogie," Balochistan vernment snokesperson Shahid Rind said lowever, around 400 passengers remained on the train, still trapped inside the tunnel as security forces engaged in a gun battle with the militants, he said.

Liberation Army (BLA) claimed it security personnel and taken over 100 seized control of the train by derail- people in custody, including securi-

authorities did not comment on the group's claim. The fate of passengers, including women and children, was not immediately known.

In a statement, the BLA warned that if the Pakistan military launches an operation, "all hostages will be executed".

The group is banned in Pakistan, the UK and the US. Official data on casualties was not available, but security sources said that the train driver and several passengers were injured

Efforts underway to retrieve and digitise historical records: Lokesh

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Education, IT, and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, has revealed that half of Andhra Pradesh's ancient documents have been retrieved following the State's bifurcation, while discussions are ongoing with the Telangana government to secure the remaining records. Speaking in the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday, Lokesh highlighted the government's commit-ment to reclaiming official documents, legislative records, and historical archives.

Avanigadda MLA Mandali Buddhaprasad emphasized the significance of Archives, the Oriental Manuscript Library, and District Gazettes in preserving Telugu heritage. He noted that these collections include invaluable letters from leg-



endary figures such as Alluri Sitarama Raju and Gurajada Apparao. Post-bifurcation, the issue was incorporated into Schedule 10, underscoring the collective responsibility of safeguarding this national treasure.

Minister Lokesh stated that government teams have conducted three reviews of the libraries and made substantial progress in retrieving archival records. However, much work remains

Continued on Page 2

AP gears up to be top biz destination: Chief Secy PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government is implementing key measures to establish the State as a leader in Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) and Compliance Reduction, Chief Secretary K Vijayandand said on Tuesday. He chaired a review meeting at the State Secretariat, attended by Vandana Gurnani, Secretary of Coordination from the Central Cabinet Secretariat, and state nodal officers, along with secretaries from various departments.

Speaking at the meeting, the Chief Secretary highlighted reforms undertaken to streamline business operations. He stated that initiatives such as the single-window desk system are being implemented to ensure swift issuance of necessary permits for industrial investments, alongside providing comprehensive support. Additionally, the governdated laws that hinder business growth, he added.

Reduction, explaining the efforts of outlined necessary future actions,

ment is working on amending out- a special task force committee led by the Cabinet Secretary, comprising 18 central government secretaries. She Vandana Gurnani delivered a noted that Andhra Pradesh had PowerPoint presentation on Ease of already implemented reforms in 23 Doing Business and Compliance sectors during the first phase and



The Chief Secretary highlighted reforms undertaken to streamline business operations. He stated that initiatives such as the singlewindow desk system are being implemented to ensure swift issuance of necessary permits for industrial investments, alongside providing comprehensive support.

including amendments to various laws, subordinate legislations, master plans, and executive orders.

Dr N Yuvaraj, Secretary Industries, stated that as part of the "Vikasit Andhra Pradesh 2047" vision, the government aims to achieve a 15% annual growth rate and generate 20 lakh employment opportunities over the next five years. He emphasized plans to significantly enhance the MSME sector by 2030, with a focus on fostering entrepreneurship in every fam-

Municipal Administration Secretary S Suresh Kumar noted that Andhra Pradesh is leading the country in reform implementation. He pointed out that among the state's 123 urban local bodies, building permits are being issued by 21 Urban Development Authorities.

Department Vani Prasad stated that Yashasvi Mud, among others.

issued online, enhancing efficiency. Similarly, Panchayati Raj and Rural Development Shashibhushan Kumar reported that land revenue collection has been digitized, with 80 lakh demands processed online.

trade licenses and permits are now

Chief Secretary of the Excise Department Mukesh Kumar Meena mentioned that liquor licenses are being allocated through a lottery system, while bar licenses are issued online.

The meeting was attended by Special Chief Secretaries RP Sisodia, MT Krishnababu, and G Sai Prasad; Chief Secretaries Kumar Vishwajit and Kantilal Dande; Chief Commissioner of State Taxes Babu A; APIIC Managing Director Abhishek Kishore; Director Central Cabinet Secretariat Swathi Mahanti; Special Chief Secretary Labour and DPIIT Deputy Secretary

Ground realities decide Council candidates in both Telugu states

→he process for selecting nominees for the State Legislative Council might have been carried out as per the PIN national leadership's decision regardless of **POINT** the likes and dislikes of the state leadership. There can be an element of compulsion while picking candidates for Council seats although local leaders may have strong opinions. Generally, the stamp of the party's high command can be seen in the selection process of nominees for the Upper House both at the state and at the national level.

In Telangana, the nominees for the four seats in the Legislative Council were decided by the top leadership of the respective parties. The ruling Congress selected three candidates. The Congress allotted one seat to its ally CPI. The selection of former Lok Sabha Member film star Vijayashanti is interesting. She

🖊 is known as a firebrand leader of the In the Congress,

even a person who

enjoys the over-

whelming support of the public has to obey the leadership's orders. The Congress high command runs the organisation through in-charges. The TPCC got a new in-charge, Meenakshi Natarajan, who also functions Meenakshi as a bridge between the Congress Government in the state and the high command in New Delhi. After Meenakshi took over as the in-charge, the list of nominees for Council seats saw the light of the day. The new in-charge divided TPCC members into two categories, that is, loyalists who have been with the party since the beginning of their career and those who joined during

Vijayashanti had floated a party named the Telangana

In Telangana, the nominees for the four seats in the Legislative Council were decided by the top leadership of the respective parties. The ruling Congress selected three candidates. The Congress allotted one seat to its ally CPI. The selection of former Lok Sabha Member film star Vijayashanti is interesting. She is known as a firebrand leader of the Congress.

Talli Party during the pre-bifurcation era and eventually merged it with the BRS. She was elected to the Lok Sabha from Medak in 2009 and had the privilege of being one of the two BRS members in the Lok Sabha. The second one was none other than K. Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR). Later, Vijayashanti developed differences with KCR as she was sidelined to pave the way for KCR's daughter Kavitha to enter politics. So she joined the

Vijayashanti was in the BJP during Vajpayee's rule and the BJP had thought of pitting her against Congress President Sonia Gandhi when she was trying to contest from South India. The then APCC President YS Rajasekhara Reddy requested Sonia to contest from Kadapa. The BJP readied Vijayashanti for the Kadapa battle. But Sonia decided to contest from Bellary in Karnataka where the BJP fielded Sushma Swaraj



The candidature of Vijayashanti is believed to have been not acceptable to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. But the Chief Minister has to go by the high command's decision. Now Revanth Reddy can console himself as he got one seat for his man Addanki Dayakar. Senior minister Komatireddy Venkata Reddy

and his brother Komatireddy Raja Gopal Reddy have serious differences with Dayakar in Nalgonda district. Another possible inconvenience awaiting Revanth is that Vijayashanti might get a place in his Cabinet. The BRS has at last done

justice to Dr Dasoju Sravan

Kumar who belongs to the Backward Classes. Earlier, he was in the BRS and had left it as he was not given the Secunderabad Lok Sabha seat. He felt humiliated when he was asked by the BRS leadership how many voters of his caste were there in the con-stituency. He joined the Congress and the party made him its spokesman besides giving him the ticket for contesting from the Khairatabad Assembly seat. Rahul Gandhi had assured him a Cabinet berth if the Congress is voted to power. But he was defeated by Danam Nagendar (BRS) who later joined the Congress.

BRS. Now his dream has come true in the form of a Council

In Andhra Pradesh, five seats have fallen vacant. Due to coalition compulsions, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu allotted one seat each to the Jana Sena Party (JSP) and the BJP. He filled the remaining three seats with candidates from weaker sections. BJP candidate Somu Veerraju has been a strong critic of Chandrababu. When he was president of the state BJP unit, he had accused CBN of using Central funds to boost his

image. CBN couldn't do justice to two persons due to the allocation of two seats to his partners. Former Pithapuram MLA Varma couldn't get a seat as promised by CBN. Varma had to sacrifice his seat for JSP President Pawan Kalyan. The case of former Vijayawada MLA, Vangaveeti

So Dasoju went back to the Radha Krishna should be viewed in the context of the fragmentation of the Kapu community. If there was no need to allot seats to his alliance partners, CBN would have picked these two former legislators.

CBN could easily manage his alliance partners to fall in line in deciding their candidates in the seats allotted to them. He pushed his men into the JSP and the BJP and 'inserted' them into those par-ties. That is how only TDP leaders like Mandali Buddha Prasad (Avanigadda) and Nallamilli Ramakrishna Reddy (Anaparthi) got a chance to contest although their seats were allotted to the TDP's partners. But this can turn problematic for CBN later.

The point is that whatever the party, the leaders were compelled to accept ground realities while finalising Council candidates in both the



Posani Krishnamurali secures bail in all 17 cases

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Posani Krishnamurali has been granted bail in all 17 cases filed against him, with multiple courts issuing favourable orders. On Tuesday, courts in Adoni and Vijayawada granted him bail, following similar relief provided by the Narasaraopet court on Monday and an earlier order from the Rajampet court.

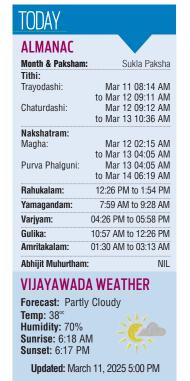
The cases were registered by the state government, leading to Posani's arrest on February 26 in Hyderabad by the Obulavaripalli police of Annamayya district. His arrest was based on statements he had made during a past press conference. Following his arrest, multiple cases were registered against him across the state, reportedly making it difficult for him to seek legal recourse.

fter being taken into custods Posani was transported across several locations, including Rajampet, Narasaraopet, Guntur, Adoni, Vijayawada, and Kurnool jail.

Citing his age-related health concerns, including cardiac issues, the YSRCP legal cell brought the matter to the attention of the High

The court intervened, ordering the issuance of a 35A notice in the registered cases and staying the investigation in a case filed at Visakhapatnam One Town police

Following the High Court's directives, the YSRCP legal team pursued legal remedies in lower courts, successfully securing bail in all cases. Posani is expected to be released on Wednesday. The YSRCP has alleged that the cases against him were politically motivated and intended to suppress dissent.



Handri-Neeva lifeline of R'Seema: Nimmala

Water Resources Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu reaffirmed the government's commitment to completing the Handri-Neeva project on a war footing to ensure irrigation and drinking water supply to the Rayalaseema districts of Kurnool, Anantapur, Kadapa, and Chittoor. Spanning 700 kilometres and featuring over 70 lifts, the project is a crucial initiative aimed at addressing the region's longstanding water scarcity. He made these remarks during a Legislative Assembly session on Monday.

The project's second phase is progressing swiftly, with ten-ders already awarded and significant work underway. The government has set a target to complete it by June this year, ensuring water reaches the region without further delay.

At full capacity, the Handri-Neeva project can transport 3,850 cubic feet per second (cusecs) of water.

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Shaik Abdul Jaleel from

Guntur has been appointed as

the Chief Referee for the

52nd Senior National Carrom

Championship, organized by

the Airports Authority of

India (AAI). The prestigious

event will be held from March

17 to 21 at Talkatora Indoor

His appointment was offi-

cially confirmed by Bharti

Narayan, General Secretary

of the All India Carrom

Federation. A seasoned offi-

cial, Jaleel earned his inter-

Stadium in New Delhi.

With an allocation of Rs 3,040 crore - the highest budget for any project in the state -the government has demonstrated its dedication to Rayalaseema's development. Multiple reviews have been conducted since the TDP government took office to accelerate progress.

are currently being conveyed from the Malyala pump house to the Jeedipalli pump house. Officials confirmed that once the main canal's lining and expansion works are completed, the water flow will increase to 2,200 cusecs, ensuring adequate supply to the Jeedipalli reservoir.

Minister Ramanaidu dismissed misinformation campaigns aimed at creating confusion about the project's progress and urged farmers in Rayalaseema not to fall prey to such negative propaganda. He also outlined the govern-However, only 1,200 cusecs ment's plan to fill tanks and

Shaik Abdul is Chief Referee

for national carrom tourney

national referee degree in

2013 and has officiated in

several national and interna-

tional tournaments. He also

sub-canals along the Handri-Neeva main canal with Krishna river water, which will help recharge groundwater levels in the region.

With an allocation of Rs 3,040 crore—the highest budget for any project in the state—the government has demonstrated its dedication to Ravalaseema's development. Multiple reviews have been conducted since the TDP government took office to accelerate progress.

Minister Ramanaidu criticized the previous YSRCP government for neglecting the project between 2019 and

Manager during the 2013 SAARC Championship.

Congratulatory messages

poured in from the carrom

fraternity, with Yaganti Durga Rao, Patron Chief of

the Andhra Pradesh Carrom

Association, and Neeraj

Kumar Sampathi, Vice

President of the National

Association, among those extending their best wishes.

Several players and sports organizations also lauded

Ialeel's achievement, recog-

nizing his invaluable contri-

butions to the sport.

2024, alleging that no funds were allocated and even essential payments, such as electricity charges, were ignored. In contrast, the current administration is pushing forward with the second phase, aiming to complete the project before the next irrigation season.

Once completed, the Handri-Neeva project is expected to significantly boost water availability and agricultural prospects in Rayalaseema, ensuring that even the last acre of farmland benefits from the long-awaited irrigation supply.

Accept TG...

Continued from Page 1

These letters are valid Monday and Thursday.

Surekha raised concern that TTD officials are not fully following these instructions, causing inconvenience to both the public representatives and devotees. She urged the AP Chief Minister to instruct the TTD authorities to strictly follow the can continue to have a smooth and respectful Darshan experience at

for any two days between However, Minister

approved policy, so that devotees from Telangana Tirumala.

Modi to be conferred with highest honour of Mauritius

PNS ■ PORT LOUIS

Mauritian Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam on Tuesday announced that his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi will be conferred with the nation's highest honour, The Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean.

Prime Minister Modi is on a two-day state visit to the island nation.

Ramgoolam made the announcement at a community event addressed by Modi. The prime minister extended gratitude to the people of Mauritius for the honour.

"The people and the government of Mauritius have decided to confer upon me their highest civilian honour. I humbly accept this decision with great respect. This is not just an honour for me, it is an honour for the historic bond



between India and Mauritius," he said while delivering his speech at the event attended by over 3,500 people.

Prime Minister Modi is the first Indian to receive this prestigious award, which recognises his contributions to

strengthening ties between India and Mauritius.

Ramgoolam said Modi is the fifth foreign national to receive this distinguished recognition. This marks the 21st international award conferred upon PM Modi by a foreign nation.

CM warns of stern...

Continued from Page 1

drug abuse. Slamming the previous ruling party for stooping to low levels for political gains, Naidu condemned the use of objectionable comments on social media to insult women. He also criticized the use of vulgar language inside and outside the Assembly, asserting that such behavior would be strictly checked. "There is no place for indecent language in the House. Only meaningful debates should

be allowed," he said. Emphasizing the need to promote religious harmony while curbing extremism, Naidu stated that derogatory terms like 'rowdy' and 'gang leader' should no longer be heard. He also announced the introduction of

new legislation under the Prohibition of Land Grabbing Act He urged parents to closely to tackle illegal land acquisimonitor their children's activities to prevent them from falling into ous government had misused Section 22A of the Registration Act, leading to rampant land grabbing. Naidu warned that stringent action would be taken against anyone involved in land grabbing. He revealed plans for drone patrolling at night, the installation of CCTV cameras, and the establishment of 26 cyber security stations to track criminal activities in real-time and take immediate action.

Recalling the 2019 murder of former MLA Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy, Naidu expressed deep concern over the case, particularly the deaths of six accused individuals. He described it as a classic example of how criminals operate and emphasized the need for a thorough investigation.

Efforts underway... Continued from Page 1

So far, Andhra Pradesh has received records dating from 1769 to 1953, with seven out of fifteen record

categories already trans-

ferred. Efforts are under-

way to digitize and preserve these documents to ensure their longevity. Lokesh urged the state government to allocate funds for this initiative in the upcoming budget and mentioned that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds may also be utilized to restore the

He stressed the urgent need for digitization, noting that the Archives Department currently operates out of a rented 24,347 square-foot facility.

archives to their former

Amaravati poised for...

Continued from Page 1

A significant milestone was reached on March 10, 2025, when a high-level meeting in Amaravati convened eminent industry and academic leaders to chart the strategic roadmap for the Quantum Computing Hub. Attendees included Tata Sons Chairman Natarajan Chairman & MD SN Subrahmanyan, Department of Science and Technology Secretary Prof Abhay Karandikar, Quantum Technology Centre Head Dr. JBV Reddy, IIT Tirupati Director Prof Satyanarayana Kalidindi, IIT Madras Director Prof Kamakoti, IBM Research India Director Dr. Amith Singhee, and IBM Quantum India Leader Venkat Subramaniam.

Beyond quantum computing, the initiative is a cornerstone of a broader plan to establish a state-of-the-art DeepTech Research Park in Amaravati.

The Andhra Pradesh government has signed an MoU with IIT Madras to develop this park, which will focus on emerging fields such as artificial intelligence, space technology, defence, and energy. International collaborations are also in the pipeline, with Purdue University (USA) and the University of Tokyo (Japan) expressing interest, alongside ongoing discussions with Australian universities through the Education Centre of Australia (ECA).

The DeepTech Research Park will house premier academic institutions while attracting global technology companies and research organisations specialising in quantum computing, AI, defence, and energy. Efforts are also underway to bring central government research organizations into the fold, with proposals to establish space, defence, and power sector research and testing facilities within the 150-acre campus.

Adding to the momentum, discussions are ongoing to establish an ISRO Testing Lab in Amaravati. Additionally, the Andhra Pradesh government has formally requested the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) Headquarters to be set up in the state, further reinforcing its commitment to advancing space and defence research. With the Quantum Valley

and DeepTech Research Park taking shape, Andhra Pradesh is poised to become a global epicentre of quantum technology and deep-tech innovation. Under CM Chandrababu Naidu's leadership, the state is making rapid strides in emerging technologies, ensuring it remains at the forefront of global scientific and technological advancements for years to

'New school uniforms in AP from next academic year'

PNS VIJAYAWADA

In a major reform aimed at depoliticizing school attire, Minister for Education, IT, and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, announced that new school uniforms will be introduced in Andhra Pradesh from the next academic year. The uniforms will be devoid of any political party colours or symbols and will be distributed along with school bags and belts under the Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Student Kit initiative.

Announcing a debate on Education Budget Demands in the Legislative Assembly, Lokesh outlined his vision to establish the Andhra Pradesh Model of Education as a global benchmark within the next five years. He emphasized the collective role of officials, teachers, public representatives, and parents in achieving this goal.

Addressing challenges in the education sector, the Minister blamed the previous government for mismanagement, point-



ing out a rise in underpopulated schools. He revealed that the number of schools with fewer than 10 students had grown to 5,507, while those with fewer than 20 students had increased to 13,720. Additionally, single-teacher schools had surged by 30 percent, reaching 12,512. Lokesh also raised concerns over the high dropout rate in the state, which had climbed to 12.5 percent. He stated that around 47,000 girls from grades 7 to 8 had been deprived of education. Highlighting discrepancies in government school enrollment, he said officials reported 33.4 lakh students, but the figures were inflated due to the previous administration's "drop box" system.

Criticizing the hasty implementation of the CBSE and board examination systems by the previous government, Lokesh disclosed that mock tests conducted under the new coalition government showed that 90 percent of students failed at least one subject. Consequently, the CBSE system has been postponed for three years. He also pointed to Rs. 59 crores spent on TOEFL assessments and noted that the IB curriculum could only be successfully implemented in wellequipped schools with trained teachers.

Looking ahead, Lokesh announced plans to establish a world-class teacher training institute in Amaravati by next

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Auto Nagar residents hail suspension of GOs 5 and 6

Members of the Andhra Pradesh MSME Industries Association in Vijayawada have expressed their appreciation for the suspension of GOs No 5 & 6, which had caused significant distress to the residents of Auto Nagar.

Addressing the media on Tuesday, the members thanked Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu for bringing in GO No 41. Further, they extended their gratitude to MP Kesineni Sivanath and MLA Gadde RamMohan Rao for their sup-

port. MSME Industries Association honorary president Boyina Venkatrao said that 50 years ago, the people of Auto Nagar purchased land from APIIC, spending more than the market value at the time, and developed the area into one of the most prominent auto manufacturing hubs in Asia. The Auto Nagar resi-

GO required residents to pay up to 50 pc of market value to convert their industrial plots into commercial ones



dents' efforts were crucial in transforming the area into a major industrial hub. However, the previous government's policy under the name 'Coordinate Group Policy' implemented GO Nos 5 & 6, which required Auto Nagar residents to pay up to 50 per cent of the market value of the plots as an impact

fee and other charges to convert their industrial plots into commercial ones. This policy also introduced land conversion charges, which many found to be an unbearable financial burden, especially for small-scale auto mechanics and industries.

When the government did He further noted that the Auto Nagar industries, built not respond to their requests,

High Court. The court ordered that the status quo be maintained until further orders, and directed that the impact fees and Coordinate Group Policy not be implemented until a further ruling. The new government led by CM Chandrababu responded positively, acknowledging the concerns of the industries and taking steps to revoke GO Nos 5 & 6, which were hindering industrial development. The Chief Minister also announced discussions with the government regarding the increase in taxes on open land, vacant land and set-back taxes, which had seen a 100 per cent to 1600 per cent rise and assured that the government would provide favourable solutions to the issues raised by the industries. MSME Industries Association general secretary MS Ramachandra Rao, TV Nageshwara Rao, Durgaprasad, Vinod Babu, and other notable

Scouts and Guides State-level camp concludes



PNS VIJAYAWADA

The five-day State-level Rajya Puraskar Pareeksha Camp for Scouts and Guides held at Koneru Basavaiah Chowdary (KBC) Zilla Parishad High School in Patamata, Vijayawada, concluded on Tuesday. NTR District School Education Officer (DSEO) UV Subba Rao inspected the camp and expressed satisfaction over its successful conduct. As part of the camp, Scouts and Guides participated in various examinations, including Pravesh, Pradhama Sopan, Dwiteeya Sopan, Truteeya Sopan, and the prestigious Rajya Puraskar tests.

During his inspection, DSEO Subba Rao observed their proficiency in First Aid, Pioneering, Mapping, and Estimation skills.

He commended the participants for their dedication final day of the camp, an exhibition was organised at the KBC ZPH School and various school Scouts and Guides visited the exhibition. The camp was organised by Scouts and Guides NTR District Secretary P Murali under the leadership of Daram Prasad, with assistance from KPRB Sharma, D Yogeswara Rao, and L.

ALIET's ECE Dept bags Innovathan 2K25 Project Expo championship

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Department of Electronics Communication Engineering (ECE) at the Andhra Loyola Institute of Engineering and Technology (ALIET) has emerged the winner of the Innovathan 2K25 Project Expo. The grand finale took place on the ALIET campus in Vijayawada on Tuesday. Eighteen departments showcased their projects at the event.

A distinguished panel of judges spent considerable time evaluating these projects and ultimately selected the overall champion as well as the runnersup based on the innovative concepts and practical implementations presented. In the grand finale, the winning team from ALIET received the rolling shield, along with medals and certificates. Additionally, the first-place team was awarded a cash prize of Rs.5,000.

The runner-up position was shared by the Civil Engineering



Department for their project titled "Hydro Renewable Energy Power" and the IT Department for their "Kisan Harith Mithra Project." Both teams received medals, certificates, and a cash prize of Rs.2,500. Other departmental winners were also recognised with cash prizes: Rs.3,000 for first place, Rs.1,000 for second place, and Rs.500 for third place, in addition to medals and

Avera Electrical Bikes cofounder Chandini Chandana and Prof Venu Madhav from PVP Siddhartha Engineering and Technology's ECE Department served as judges.

CM inaugurates new buildings at SRM

He was chief guest of the Conference of Population Dynamics and Development

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Minister Chandrababu Naidu visited SRM University-AP campus on Tuesday evening and inaugurated two newly constructed buildings at SRM University-AP: CV Raman Block and Ganga Hostel Block. In addition, the CM laid the foundation stones for four new buildings: Industrial Research Park, Academic Cluster, Ganga-B Hostel Block and Vedavathi-II Hostel Block.

The CM, who visited the campus as the chief guest of the Conference of Population Dynamics and Development, organised under the auspices of the Planning Department, held an exclusive interaction with the leadership and management of SRM University-AP on infrastructure planning, development and execution of the upcoming

The leadership team of SRM

University-AP, headed by the Chancellor Dr TR Paarivendhar, Pro-Chancellor Sathyanarayanan, Chancellor Prof Manoj K Arora, Executive Director - Research SRM Group of Institutions, Prof D Narayana Rao and Registrar, Dr R Premkumar, showcased the exemplary growth of the university emphasising the establishment of various new-age infra-

structure and facilities catering to

foster a future-ready academic

through self-effort, have been

facing numerous challenges

and are now at risk of being dis-

placed. They expressed their

concern that relocating these

industries to other areas would

be difficult and detrimental to

Prof D Narayana Rao presented the CM with the university infrastructure planning and development plan and execution period for the same in the upcoming years. He gave a comprehensive overview of the future projects, including the proposed Centre for Green Hydrogen & Clean Energy Innovation, Centre for Quantum Computing, Centre for Interplanetary Exploration, SRM Medical College, AI Institute, Skilling Academy, etc. Prof Rao assured that SRM University-AP would strive towards becoming a centre for transformative learning, research innovations and a successful startup incubator and sought the

required support from the government, by allocating the

In his interaction with the CM, Chancellor Dr TR Paarivendhar stated, "We follow our respected Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's vision to transform Amaravati into an innovation hub, and Green Co. SRM University-AP as a new-age holistic university aligned with our strategic goals for develop-

ment in cognisance to CM's pioneering vision of Swarn Andhra

The CM congratulated the apex team of the university on its outstanding progress in the seven years, paving the path of learning and growth in Andhra Pradesh. He stated, "SRM University-AP is a proof of concept of a visionary state, similar to Hitech Hyderabad a proof of united Andhra."

He opined that the future is Internet of Things, Quantum Computing and Ğreen Energy. With SRM University-AP being a leader in tertiary education, he advised that the university develop a strong workforce of designers, coders, and experts with skills in algorithms and hardware who are pivotal in building a progressive State. The CM recommended SRM-AP to lead the startup ecosystem and produce more entrepreneurs by establishing a dedicated Centre for Innovation and Startup ecosystem.

Pro-Chancellor Dr Sathyanarayanan remarked, "The perceptive insights of the Honourable Chief Minister on SRM University-AP's initiatives and prospects have aided in aligning our development plans with the objectives of national

AP govt tables Bill to regulate lifts, escalators

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar has emphasized that the Andhra Pradesh Lifts and Escalators Bill - 2025 will enhance public safety, particularly for the elderly, women, and individuals with disabilities. Introducing the bill in the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday, he stated that the legislation is a response to rapid urbanization and the growing construction of high-rise buildings, hospitals, business complex-

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A series of tragic deaths in

Visakhapatnam has sparked

widespread public outcry, with grieving families accusing pri-

vate hospitals of prioritising financial gain over patient care.

Allegations suggest that patients

are subjected to exorbitant med-

ical bills before being trans-

ferred to the already over-

whelmed King George Hospital (KGH) once their treatment

becomes financially unviable. The controversy has shed

light on disturbing practices

allegedly employed by private

healthcare providers, includ-

ing unnecessary prolongation of

treatments to inflate medical

expenses. In one distressing

case, an elderly woman admit-

ted to a private hospital near

KGH for fatigue was kept under

treatment for 10 days, accumu-

lating a bill of nearly Rs. 12 lakh.

Eventually, doctors declared

her condition critical and transferred her to KGH, where she

passed away within two hours.

man from Gajuwaka was

charged Rs. 3 lakh over two

weeks before being shifted to

KGH, where he succumbed within four hours. His family

asserts that he had shown signs

transfer only took place after the hospital secured full payment.

These are not isolated incidents. Multiple families have

experiences, alleging that hos-

In another case, a 55-year-old

es, hotels, and malls. Raising concerns over rising lift and escalator accidents, the Minister stressed the need for stricter safety measures, especially during fire incidents. He asserted that once enacted, the bill would significantly reduce such risks.

He also pointed out that the Central Government had introduced the Lifts and Escalators Bill in 2024 as part of its Ease of Doing Business initiative. Minister Ravi Kumar noted that ment's commitment to public similar laws are already in effect safety.

in 15 states. The Andhra Pradesh bill was drafted after studying regulations in Tamil Nadu. Karnataka, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar. The proposed law mandates strict safety measures, proper maintenance, mandatory CCTV monitoring, and data security provisions. He assured that all valuable suggestions from Assembly members would be considered before finalizing the law, underscoring the govern-

15 students of PB Siddhartha College placed by Infosys

PNS VIJAYAWADA

As many as 15 final-year degree students of PB Siddhartha Arts and Science College, Vijayawada, have secured placement as System Associates at IT giant Infosys, said college principal Dr Meka Ramesh. According to him, the students exhibited exceptional talent and succeeded in both the online test and interview conducted last month at KITS



Engineering College in Guntur. College Director Vemuri Baburao, Dean Rajesh Jampala and Training and Placement Officer Kavuri Sridhar congratulated the students.

Siddhartha Academy president Malineni Rajaiah, secretary Paladugu Lakshmana Rao, college convener Sureddy Venkateswara Rao, faculty members, and fellow students also congratulated the stu-

Public outrage over alleged exploitation by private hospitals

Families accuse hospitals of financial exploitation before transferring critically ill patients to KGH



of improvement and that the at which point they are suddenly deemed critical and transferred to KGH. "They see us as mere sources of revenue," lamented one grieving relative. come forward with similar "Once they've extracted enough money, they discard our loved ones like they no longer matter."

in private hospitals are allegedly assigned financial targets, incentivising prolonged treatments to maximise revenue. Families believe that once these targets are achieved, the hospitals escalate patient conditions to justify transfers, thereby They also claim that doctors absolving themselves of responsibility for fatalities after costly

interventions. The lack of transparency in private hospital procedures is also criticised. Families are often kept in the dark about the specifics of treatments or medications administered. Their role is largely reduced to pursettling hefty bills, leaving them feeling powerless and betrayed. Regulatory authorities are now facing mounting criticism for their perceived inaction. While Health Department officials insist that inspections are conducted, they acknowledge the limitations of their enforcement powers. Meanwhile, doctors at KGH reveal that nearly 80 per cent of patient deaths at the hospital involve individuals transferred from private facili-

ties, often in irreversible condi-

tions, significantly contribut-

chasing prescribed drugs and

ing to KĞH's high mortality rate. The allegations of exploitation have intensified calls for urgent government intervention. Families, activists, and concerned citizens are demanding stringent regulations and greater transparency in private health-care practices. "Accountability is non-negotiable," asserted a local activist. "These hospitals cannot operate with impunity. The government must step in to ensure patient welfare takes precedence over profits."

Format C-7

(for political parties to publish in the newspapers, social media platforms & website of the party) Information regarding individuals with pending criminal cases, who have been selected as candidates, along with the reasons for such selection, as also as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates

(As per the Commission's directions issued in pursuance of the Order dated 13.02.2020 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in contempt petition(C) no. 2192 of 2018 in WP(C) no. 536 of 2011) Name of Political Party: TELUGU DESAM PARTY

* Name of the Election: BIENNIAL ELECTION TO LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BY MLAS Name of State/UT: ANDHRA PRADESH

(1) Name of the Constituency A.P. Legislative Council by the Members of Legislative Assembly

andidate -Bendula Thirumala Naidu

Name of the candidate -Bendula Thirumala Naidu			
Sl.no.			
1.		Criminal antecedents	
	a.	Nature of the offences	U/s 171(b)(a), 186, 188, 134 IPC,
			127, 134 RP Act under 8-B of APP Act.
	b.	Case no.	C.C.No.281/2012 in Crime
			No.124/2009, Kosigi PS
	C.	Name of the Court	Special Offences MPs, MLAs Court,
			Vijayawada subsequently transferred
			to Judicial Magistrate of First Class, Adoni
	d.	Whether charges have been	Yes
		framed or not (Yes/No)	
	e.	Date of conviction, if any	Not Applicable
	f.	Details of punishment undergone, if any	Not Applicable
	g.	Any other information required to be given	
2	The	reasons for the selection of the candidate	
	Selection shall be with reference to the		social service activities and has been great
	qualifications, achievements and merit of the		supporter of the marginalized sections of the
	candidate, and not mere "winnability" at		society. He was also actively involved in party
	the polls (not more than 100 words)		activities

candidates (not more than 100 words) (2) Name of the Constituency- A.P. Legislative Council by the Members of Legislative Assembly Constituency

Reasons as to why other individuals without No other suitable candidate was

criminal antecedents could not be selected as available

Name of the candidate- Bendula Thirumala Naidu and so on * In the case of election to Council of States or States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of Constituency.

Signature of office bearer of the Political Party Name and designation

Varia Ramaiah, Politburo Member & National General Secretary, TDP

pitals retain patients until medical bills reach exorbitant levels,









he pioneer



Gora Techno Hub to be inaugurated by ex-DRDO Chairman Satish Reddy

Gora Techno Hub, an initiative aimed at fostering scientific and technological curiosity among the youth, will be inaugurated on March 13 at the Atheist Center in Vijayawada. Dr G Satish Reddy, former Chairman of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and President of the Aeronautical Society of India, will officiate the event.

Avanigadda MLA and former Deputy Speaker Mandali Buddha Prasad, along with other distinguished guests, will also be present at the inaugu-

Addressing a press conference at the Gora Techno Hub on Tuesday, Chairman Dr G Samaram highlighted the hub's mission to inspire young minds towards advancements in science and technology. He the scientists of the future.



emphasized the importance of nurturing curiosity and enthusiasm among students to shape

"With rapid advancements in artificial intelligence, the integration of technology into daily

found. Gora Techno Hub is committed to providing education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

generation for these changes, Dr Samaram said. He added that the initiative operates under the motto "Ignite, Inspire, Innovate," aimed at stimulating research and innovation.

As part of its commitment, the hub will conduct regular workshops and seminars featuring expert scientists and student participation. A key attraction will be a robotic guide, along with innovative solutions that simplify complex tasks through robotics tasks through robotics. Additionally, a dedicated space hall has been set up, featuring interactive exhibits on Chandrayaan-3, satellites, lunar missions, spacecraft, and signals from outer space.

The press conference was attended by Gora Science Center Director Niantha, along with Rashmi, Sakala, and other prominent members of the ini-

2 ultra mega solar power plants to be set up in Prakasam: Gottipati

Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar has announced that two Ultra Mega Solar Power Plants will be set up in Prakasam district.

Responding to questions in the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday, the Minister stated that after Rayalaseema, Prakasam is the most suitable region for renewable energy projects in the state. He revealed that the govern-

ment plans to establish solar power plants in Donakonda and Chandrasekharapuram, each requiring approximately 5,500 acres of land. "A land allocation report has been requested from the Prakasam District Collector, and construction will begin once it is received. Each plant is expected to generate 1,000 Megawatts (MW) of electricity, significantly boosting the state's ener-

Minister Gottipati expressed



Minister Gottipati expressed confidence that Andhra Pradesh will emerge as a national leader in the renewable energy sector under the Integrated Clean Energy (ICE) Policy-2024

national leader in the renewable energy sector under the Integrated Clean Energy (ICE) Policy-2024.

He highlighted that this policy would generate employment for 7.5 lakh people and help the state achieve its ambi-

Pradesh will emerge as a tious target of producing 100 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy. The Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to making Andhra Pradesh a hub for clean and sustainable energy, positioning it at the forefront of India's green energy revolution.

Arrangements for CM's programme inspected



PNS BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari district Collector Chadalavada Nagarani and Superintendent of police Adnan Nayeem Ashmi inspected arrangements being made for the Chief Minister's programme in Tanuku on Tuesday.

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu will participate in the 'Swarndhra-Swacchandhra Pradesh' pro-Tanuku. The will be organized with the slogan of 'Banning

Single-Use Plastic'. District Collector Nagarani and SP Adnan Naeem Ashmi inspected the helipad and auditorium at Sri Mullapudi Venkataraya Memorial Polytechnic College, the parking lot at Jasti Seetha Mahalakshmi Balikonnata School and the public platform at Zilla Parishad Boys High School as well as the stalls for the exhibition.

The exact venue for the Chief Minister's programme would be finalized after the Chief Minister's Office Security Wing inspects them on Wednesday, the SP stated. The Chief Minister will par-

ticipate in an interaction session to be held with about 300 party representatives at the auditorium of the Polytechnic College. The Chief Minister will meet and address a public meeting to be organized assembly premises of the ZP School on March 15. The Chief Minister will also visit the stalls where alternatives to plastic articles and products are displayed in the same

premises. Later, Collector Nagarani met with officials of various departments at the Tanuku Municipal Office conference hall and reviewed the arrangements for the Chief Minister's visit. She ordered that the arrangements for the Chief Minister's visit be completed on a war footing.

She instructed the Municipal Commissioner to pay special attention to maintaining sanitation in Tanuku town and advised the R&B officials to identify the areas required for barricading and complete them as soon as possible and to prepare a heli-

The Collector instructed the electricity department offipower lines and keep generators ready to ensure that there is no disruption to electricity and ordered the DSOs and DMs to supervise the food arrangements.

She told the officials to set up drinking water and medical camps at the venue as the heat wave conditions prevailed. Joint Collector T Rahul Kumar Reddy, Additional SP V Bhima Rao and other officials were among those accompanying



Eluru MP meets Amit Shah

PNS ELURU

Eluru MP Putta Mahesh Kumar met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in a courtesy call. The meeting took place on Tuesday outside of the Lok Sabha during the ongoing parliamen-

After the NDA government came to power, MP Mahesh Kumar briefed the Union Home Minister about the development of works undertaken in his

constituency.
In response, Union Home Minister Amit Shah assured MP Mahesh Kumar that he would fully support the development of the Parliamentary Constituency.



kids with educational and mobility aids

In a move to enhance the lives of children with disabilities, NTPC Simhadri has distributed vital educational tools and mobility devices to pupils from all 30 Bhavita Centres across the district. The initiative, a key part of the company's corporate social responsi-bility (CSR) programme, took place at Samyuktha Hall, where District Collector Vijaya Krishnan joined approximate-ly 50 children and their fami-

The distribution of these essential resources aimed to improve the children's mobility, educational opportunities, and overall quality of life. Sameer Sharma, the Executive Director and Head of Project at NTPC Simhadri emphasised the company's commit-ment to fostering a more equitable society through inclusive education and empowerment schemes. "Our goal is to create a community where every child has the chance to reach their full potential," stated



dedication to its social respon-

District Collector Vijaya Krishnan commended NTPC Simhadri for its dedication to the specially-abled community, stressing the importance of collaborative efforts from all sectors to achieve significant change. She observed the positive impact of the distributed aids on the children, reinforcing NTPC's commitment to its social mission.

Following the distribution, Collector Krishnan toured

ations, gaining first-hand insights into the facility's commitment to sustainable energy generation. She engaged with women employees in the Control Room, explored the

Plant Model Room, and visit-

ed the innovative Floating

Solar Plant. During her tour, Krishnan displayed a keen interest in the plant's operational efficiency, discussing coal transportation, procurement linkages, and scheduling processes. Her visit highlighted NTPC

Simhadri's dedication to efficient and sustainable energy practices, alongside its community-focused initiatives. NTPC Simhadri's continued

engagement with the community, particularly its support for specially-abled children, reinforces its position as a responsible corporate entity. The company's multifaceted approach, combining sustainable energy generation with impactful social initiatives, sets a benchmark for corporate responsibility in the

Collector appeals for public cooperation in P4 survey

PNS RAJAHMUNDRY

East Godavari District Collector P. Prasanthi has urged the public to cooperate in the ongoing P4 survey aimed at identifying the poorest among the poor and improving their financial sta-

In a video message on Tuesday, the Collector emphasized that the survey's primary goal is to assess the economic conditions of households,



enabling targeted measures to enhance their per capita

income. She also highlighted the need to identify financially well-off individuals in villages and seek their cooperation in community develop-

To ensure the survey's effectiveness, 3,408 secretariat staff from 502 village and ward secretariats are actively gathering data from 1,33,548 households across the district. The Collector urged residents to provide accurate information and support the survey teams in their efforts.

"If you care about the development of your fellow citizens, please extend your support to the survey staff and cooperate with the initiative. This programme aims to uplift the poorest families and enhance their health and education standards," she stated.

The survey will continue until March 18, and the Collector reiterated her appeal for public participation to aid



32 red sanders logs seized, two smugglers

Gadkari promised to clear RRR within 2 months: Venkat R&B Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and

Congress MPs meet Union Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu on Tuesday at Delhi

 Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and Congress MPs meet Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday at Delhi

PNS HYDERABAD

The Union Minister of Road the MPs from Telangana on Transport and Highways, Tuesday regarding the RRR Nitin Gadkari, has assured and highways, Venkat said that all permissions for the that the process of inviting ten-Regional Ring Road (RRR) ders has been completed for will be given within two months and the matter will be Choutuppal stretch. Around brought to the attention of 95 per cent of the land acqui-Prime Minister Modi after sition has also been completgetting all clearances, Roads ed. Rs 1,000 crore has been and Buildings (R&B) Minister sanctioned for 12 ROBs, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy Venkat said.

Aviation Minister K. Rammohan Naidu along with the Sangareddy-Bhongir-

He said that compensation Speaking to the media after would be given to land losers meeting Gadkari and Civil after the Centre's approval. Vijayawada as soon as possi- Machilipatnam is getting



Project," Venkat said. the six-lane National Highway one as the widening of the from Hyderabad to road from Hyderabad to

"Gadkari responded positive- ble. He asked officials to under the Parvathamala Gudimalkapur to Vijayawada said. must be package one and the 'Gadkari said that steps road from Vijayawada to should be taken to complete Machilipatnam the second

delayed. Gadkari said that a ly regarding the construction divide the Hyderabad- meeting would be arranged to of the Somasila Cable Bridge. Machilipatnam highway into discuss the 62-km Srisailam I asked for five ropeways two packages. The road from elevated corridor," Venkat

> Venkat said that he had discussed Mamnoor Airport. Farmers are ready to give land. The Centre has to give some permissions for the Mamnoor Airport.

However, Rammohan Naidu said the Centre will complete the Mamnoor Airport in two and a half years. Rammohan directed the Airport Authority to test the feasibility of Kothagudem, Ramagundam-Peddapalli, Adilabad, Nizamabad Jakran Palli airports, Venkat said.He ties. Designs have already been said that land acquisition for sent to the CM, he added.

the Mamnoor Airport will be completed in 15 days.

Tenders will be invited for constructing the Telangana Bhavan in New Delhi within 10 days. The Congress Government will construct the Telangana Bhavan in Pataudi House with all facili-



Rs 40 lakh and arrested two smugglers at Devarakonda vil-

lage in the Bhakarapet forest division. DSP G. Balireddy informed the media on Tuesday that an RSASTF team, led by RI Sai Giridhar and RSI K. Lingadhar, was conducting a combing operation in the Devarakonda forest area when they spotted a man riding a motorcycle sus-

piciously on a gravel road near Tummachenupalli village. Upon following the suspect, the team discovered a transport vehicle hidden in the forest. Upon inspection, they found 32 red sander logs inside. The task force immediately seized the contraband, along with the transport vehicle and the motorcycle, before taking the

The seized red sander logs and vehicles were shifted to the task force police station. CI Suresh Kumar has registered a case, and further investigations are underway.

two smugglers into custody.

50 kg ganja seized, 5 peddlers arrested



The police seized 150 kg of cannabis and arrested five drug peddlers at Konthamuru village in Rajahmundry rural mandal on Tuesday. Police said that on a tip-off, Rajanagaram

police conducted checking

of vehicles. They found 150 kg of ganja being transported in a vehicle. The ganja was being taken to Vijayawada from Paderu vio Rampachodavaram. The seized ganj is worth over Rs 7.50 lakh. School bus overturns, nine students injured



a curve. The injured students were rushed to the CHC in Jaggampeta, where they are

Doctors confirmed that all the students are out of danger. Students alleged that the

bus, carrying 19 students, overturned while negotiating ving recklessly, which led to ving recklessly, which led to the accident. Kakinada district TDP president Jyotula Naveen visited the hospital and met undergoing treatment. the injured students. Officials expressed relief that all students escaped with injuries and there were no fatalities.



ACROSS THE STATES



4 killed as vehicle falls into gorge in J-K

our persons were killed and eight others injured on Tuesday when a vehicle they were travelling in skidded off the road and rolled down into a deep gorge in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district, officials said. The accident took place near Gangode area in the district when the driver reportedly lost control over the tempo traveller, causing it to roll into the deep gorge. Immediately after the mishap, local police and SDRF personnel rushed to the spot to carry out rescue operations, they said. Three persons died on the spot, and one died on the way to the hospital, officials added. Eight injured persons were shifted to the hospital. "The vehicle was on its way from Jammu to Mahore. It rolled into deep gorge. In the mishap, three persons died on the spot, and one died on the way to the hospital. Six injured our of eight injured persons have been shifted to Jammu," said SSP



Arunachal to bring electronic media advt policy

runachal Pradesh minister Nyato Dukam on Tuesday Assured the assembly that the electronic media advertisement policy will be fully implemented within six months after necessary modifications. The Information and Public Relations (IPR) minister, while responding to a question raised during Question Hour by NCP MLA Toko Tatung, said while the policy has been implemented in principle, the funding pattern remains an issue. "As per the existing policy, a separate fund should be allocated to the IPR Directorate on a quarterly basis, which has not been done. The review process is ongoing, and amendments will be made as funds become available," Dukam said. In response to a supplementary question, he revealed that Rs 48 lakh was spent on electronic and digital media advertisements, including national satellite channels, from 2020 to 2024



Karnataka HC stays FIR against YouTuber

he Karnataka High Court on Tuesday stayed the First

Information Report against YouTuber Sameer M D, who was booked for his investigative video on the Soujanya rape and murder case Soujanya (17), a second-year Pre-University student of the Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College was allegedly raped and murder on October 9, 2012. Justice Hemant Chandangoudar granted interim relief to the petitioner by staying the FIR, which was registered at Cowl Bazaar Police Station in Ballari under Section 299 (hurting religious sentiments) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. Sameer had posted a video titled "Dharmasthala Soujanya Case" on his YouTube channel 'Dhootha: Sameer MD', which has garnered over 18 million views. The video peeps into several criminal cases spanning decades in the Dharmasthala region, with particular focus on the 2012 rape and murder of Soujanya, the wrongful conviction and subsequent acquittal of Santosh Rao, and patterns of alleged influence in multiple criminal

Conviction rate in drugs cases up by 86 per cent: Punjab minister

PNS CHANDIGARH

Chandigarh, Mar 11 (PTI) Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema on Tuesday said the conviction rate in drug cases rose to 86 per cent in the past three years even as he said the state government was committed to wipe out the drug menace from the state.

Referring to the ongoing anti-drugs drive, 'Yudh Nashian Virudh' (war against drugs), Cheema said the police were conducting round-theclock operations against drug smugglers and warned that such individuals would have to police, Cheema told reporters.

either quit drug trafficking or leave Punjab; otherwise, they would end up behind bars.

In the past 11 days, 1,072 FIRs have been registered under the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, and 1,485 drug peddlers have been arrested, he said at a press conference.

Under this campaign so far, 76 kg of heroin, 50 kg of opium and Rs 50 lakh in cash have been recovered, he added. Around 7 lakh drug tablets, 4.5 kg drug powder and 950 kg of poppy husk, along with other synthetic drugs, have been seized by the

Modi, Mauritius Prez discuss ways to boost bilateral ties

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Mauritius President Dharam Gokhool on Tuesday and the two leaders exchanged views on deepening the special and close bilateral ties.

Modi, who arrived here Tuesday morning on a two-day State Visit, called on Gokhool at the State House.

"Had a great meeting with His Excellency Mr. Dharambeer Gokhool, President of Mauritius. He is well acquainted with India and Indian culture. Expressed gratitude for inviting me to be a part of the National Day celebrations of Mauritius. We discussed how to further boost bilateral ties across diverse sectors," Modi said in a post on X.

During the meeting, the two leaders exchanged views on deepening the special and close bilateral ties between India and Mauritius, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a state-

They recalled the shared history between the two countries and the existence of strong



people-to-people linkages, it added. Prime Minister Modi noted that it was an honour for him to attend the National Day celebrations of Mauritius as chief guest for the second time.

In a special gesture, Prime Minister Modi handed over OCI cards to President Gokhool and First Lady Vrinda Gokhool. He also gifted holy Sangam water from Mahakumbh in a brass and copper pot to President Gokhool. Modi also gifted Makhana - a superfood from

The Prime Minister presented a Banarasi silk saree in a Sadeli box to the wife of President Gokhool.

The Banarasi saree, originating from Varanasi, is a cultural heritage known for its fine silk, intricate brocades, and opulent zari work, while the Sadeli box from Gujarat features intricate inlay craftsmanship. After the talks, President Gokhool hosted a State lunch in honour of Prime Minister

Prime Minister Modi also visited the Ayurveda Garden in collaboration with the Government of India. The Prime Minister noted that Mauritius is an important partner for India in advancing the benefits of traditional medicine, including Ayurveda.

"It is commendable that an Avurvedic Garden has been built in the State House in Mauritius. I am also happy that Ayurveda is gaining pop-ularity in Mauritius. President Dharambeer Gokhool and I went to the Ayurvedic Garden, giving me the opportunity to see it firsthand," Modi posted on X. Before meeting President Gokhool, Prime Minister Modi and Mauritius counterpart Navinchandra Ramgoolam planted a sapling at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Garden.

Earlier, Prime Minister Modi received a warm welcome at the airport upon his arrival in the country after nearly a decade. Modi last visited Mauritius in

His Mauritius counterpart Ramgoolam and other leaders gave a ceremonial welcome.

Bureaucrats can't be allowed to frustrate grassroot democracy: SC

PNS NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has said bureaucrats couldn't be allowed to "frustrate grassroot democracy" and upheld a Bombay High Court order reinstating a woman as the sarpanch of a Maharashtra village. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh said it noticed several recent instances from the state where bureaucrats misbehaved with the elected representatives of Panchayats.

"We have given judgements in two-three cases where babus were found to be misbehaving with the elected representatives. This is happening typically in Maharashtra. These babus should be under the elected representatives. These bureaucrats cannot be allowed to frustrate the grass root democracy," it said.

The court also came across bureaucrats trying to open old cases to disqualify elected representatives especially at grassroot level.

"They (bureaucrats) try to open old cases like your grandfather has encroached upon government land and hence you are disqualified," Justice Surya Kant told the counsel for Archana Sachin Bhosale, whose election as the sarpanch was set aside by the high court on January 29. Reinstating Kalavati Rajendra Kokale as the sarpanch, the top court upheld the high court quashing the June 7, 2024 order of the collector of Raigad district declaring a vacancy for the post of sarpanch in village Ainghar, Taluka-Roha and appointing a returning officer to conduct the election.

Is there AI software to track missing persons? Delhi HC asks police

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court recently enquired with police if there was an artificial intelligence (AI) software to track persons who went missing owing to various reasons, including mental illness. A bench of Justices Prathiba M Singh and Dharmesh Sharma in an order passed in February asked Delhi Police to file an affidavit on the matter. The court order came on a petition filed by a man who said his father had been missing since February 17, 2023. "Let a short affidavit be

placed on record by the state, stating whether there is any artificial intelligence software which can be or has been used by Delhi Police for confirming and checking the whereabouts of such missing persons, who may have gone missing due to various reasons including unstable medical conditions, the bench said. The court observed the status report of the police which said there were no traces of the petitioner's father despite requisite procedures, including his photographs being shared on the zonal inte-

People playing politics on language:Goyal

Says lotus will bloom in Tamil Nadu

PNS NEW DELHI

Amid ongoing tussle between the Tamil Nadu government and the Centre over the alleged "Hindi imposition", Union imposition", Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday took a swipe at the state's ruling DMK, alleging some people are doing politics even on language and trying to divide the nation.

IUML MP from Kerala Abdussamad Samadani quoted Hindi couplets in his speech. Appreciating Samadani and a few other members who speek good members who speak good Hindi, Goyal said nobody will become big or small by speaking in Hindi.

"But it is unfortunate that some people are trying to divide the nation...politics is being done on languages His remarks in the Lok also, the commerce and Sabha came soon after industry minister said, elic-

iting protests from some oppositon members.

Congress leader Kumari Selja, who was in the Chair, in a lighter vein mentioned that the minister could also speak in Tamil.

"Vanakkam... (in some-time) Lotus will bloom in Tamil Nadu, we will also talk in Tamil...," Goyal said. Lotus is the symbol of BJP.

Participating in a discussion on the Manipur budget supplementary

demands for grants, CPI(M) member from Tamil Nadu S Ventakesan asserted that "India is not Hindia..." and added that people who do not understand about giving funds for education would not understand mother tongue. DMK-led Tamil Nadu government and the Centre are at loggerheads over the former's stand on the three-language policy under the National Education Policy (NEP)

Uproar in Odisha Assembly as BJP, Cong members scuffle

House adjourned multiple times

PNS BHUBANESWAR

High drama unfolded in the when members of the ruling BJP and Congress engaged in a scuffle, as a senior opposition MLA attempted to climb the Speaker's podium, and later accused a saffron party legislator of holding his shirt collar and pushing him.

Tension erupted in the House during Question Hour as senior BJP lawmaker Jaynarayan Mishra rushed towards Congress MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati, who was standing in front of Urban Development Minister K C Mohapatra when the minister was replying to a question.

Mohapatra was giving the reply amid a ruckus by opposition BJD and the Congress members.

Earlier, Bahinipati attempted to climb the Speaker's podi-um in order to stall the proceedings but failed, with Speaker Surama Padhy allowing the Question Hour amid



Thereafter, he approached the minister asking him to stop giving the reply as the opposition members were protesting in the well.

"Mishra caught hold of my shirt collar and pushed me. I was requesting minister Mohapatra to stop giving a reply when the House was not in order. I requested him with folding hands. But, Mishra suddenly came up to me and caught hold of my collar," Bahinipati told reporters outside the House.

Soon, other members of the treasury bench rushed to the well of the House and scuffled with the Congress members who were present there, and raised anti-government slo-

As the chaos prevailed, Speaker Padhy first adjourned

later three more times.

While the BJP and Congress members were seen pushing one another, the BJD members, though present in the well, did not engage in the scuffle.

The BJD and Congress members were protesting on

While the BJD members demanded a statement from Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi over Mishra's remark referring to the merger of erstwhile Koshala with Odisha in 1936 as a "historical mistake", Congress MLAs agitated over the alleged increase in crimes against women in the state.

The opposition members were also seen standing on the reporters' table and raising

The Speaker later extended the adjournment for 10 minutes from noon, and then again till 2 pm.

Govt bans J-K's AAC, JKIM for 5 years

PNS NEW DELHI

Awami Action Committee (AAC), headed by Kashmir's influential cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, and Jammu and Kashmir Ittihadul Muslimeen (JKIM), led by Shia leader Masroor Abbas Ansari, were on Tuesday by the Centre for their alleged anti-national activities, supporting terrorism and fuelling secessionist activities.

Farooq is the chairman of the separatist amalgam All Parties Hurriyat Conference and head cleric of Srinagar's Jamia Masjid, Kashmir's grandest and most influential mosque, where he delivers

Ansari is also a senior leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference and a Shia leader of Kashmir.

In a notification, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said the AAC is also indulging in unlawful activities that are prejudicial to the integrity, sovereignty and security of the country.

In a separate notification, the MHA said the JKIM is indulging in unlawful activities, which are prejudicial to the integrity, sovereignty and



security of the country. Its members have remained involved in supporting terrorist activities and anti-India propaganda for fuelling secessionism in J-K, it said.

Considering all the facts available, the MHA declared both groups outlawed for five years under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, according to the notifications.

The home ministry said the leaders and members of AAC have been involved in mobilising funds for perpetrating unlawful activities, including supporting secessionist, separatist and terrorist activities in J-K.

It said the AAC and its members by their activities show sheer disrespect towards the constitutional authority and constitutional set up of the country and the outfit is involved in promoting and aiding the secession of J-K from India by involving in anti-national and subversive activities, and sowing seeds of disaffection amongst people.

The AAC is exhorting people to destabilise law and order, encouraging the use of arms to separate J-K from the Union of India and promoting hatred against the established government, it said.

Devotees, Naga Sadhus play Holi with funeral pyre ashes

PNS VARANASI

Devotees and Naga Sadhus celebrated the unique tradition of playing Holi with funeral ashes amid burning pyres at the Manikarnika Ghat here on Tuesday

Gulshan Kapoor, the organiser of the 'Chita Bhasma Holi' or 'Masan Holi' ritual at the Mahashamshan (cremation ground), said Naga Sadhus danced with tridents and swords. One of them, wearing a garland of human skulls, performed a fierce 'Tandava' dance. Devotees and foreign tourists participated in the event, getting covered in ash and colours, he added.

Kapoor said the ritual was observed for about an hour from noon, following a grand 'aarti' of Baba Mahashamshan



Preparations for the festival begin six months in advance, with two to three sacks of ash collected daily from the cremation ground. However, this year, the ritual faced opposition

from religious scholars. Kashi Vidvat Parishad, along with other organisations, termed it against the scriptures.

Parishad's general secretary Ramnarayan Dwivedi said there is no scriptural evidence supporting householders play-

ing Holi at a cremation ground. People are being misled into following this practice, which is against our traditions," he said.

Kapoor said keeping in

mind safety concerns, the Mahashamshan Nath Temple Committee had requested women not to attend due to the large crowd and potential

The celebration is rooted in he belief that on 'Rangbhari Ekadashi', Lord Shiva brings Goddess Parvati to Kashi after heir celestial wedding.

While deities, celestial beings and humans celebrate Holi, Lord Shiva's divine companions — ghosts, spirits and other mystical beings — are left out, he said. To include them, Lord Shiva plays Holi with pyre ashes at the Mahashamshan

the following day.

Thousands of people from across the world visit Kashi to witness and participate in this rare and spiritual Holi, which offers an intense encounter with life's ultimate truth, he said.

WB govt plans Bill to combat fee hike in pvt schools

PNS KOLKATA

The West Bengal government is planning to introduce a Bill in the assembly soon to keep a tab on the unbridled fee hike in private schools, Education Minister Bratya Basu said on

Replying to a query from a BJP legislator regarding the state government's plan to control the steep fee hike by the authorities of private schools, Basu said the issue was discussed with Chief Minister

Mamata Banerjee. 'Middle-class parents feel the pinch in the pocket due to the steep fee hike in private schools. It affects their budget. We have discussed the matter with the CM, and as per her guidance and instruction, we have decided to introduce a Bill

in this connection," Basu said. He did not disclose when the Bill would be tabled. Speaking to reporters later, the minister said the enactment of the Bill would depend on the

governor. "The implementation depends on when our Governor gives his signature on

it," Basu said. The minister, however, praised the standard of education at private schools.

"We get meritorious students from the CBSE and ICSE boards who eventually are wellestablished in society," he said.

Basu also said that the state government seeks to regularise the fee structure for treating patients at private hospitals, which used to charge patients 'exorbitantly".

There were differences in the expenses of treating patients at private hospitals. Rich patients got a different treatment. They were charging people exorbitantly. Now, after the intervention of the CM, this has become a thing of the past," he claimed.





Beyond the rhetoric

It is time to go past symbolic gestures and confront the harsh reality of Women's dignity

ven as we celebrated International Women's Day, just two days ■ later, we reported three deeply disturbing incidents: the rape of ■an Israeli tourist in Hampi, a man creating a public nuisance in Pune by urinating at a crossroads, and the blaring of obscene songs in Bihar. These incidents may seem unrelated, but they share a troubling common thread-our society has become morally degraded, indifferent to the dignity of women, and increasingly insensitive to gender equality.

This decline in values is occurring in a country that once revered womanhood, placing women on a high pedestal. The famous sloka from the Manusmriti, 'Yatra naryastu pujyante ramante tatra devta' translates to, "Where women are honored, divinity blossoms there." It serves as a reminder that women should be respected and valued in society. Historically, women like Apala, Ghosha, Lopamudra, and Gargi were esteemed figures in ancient India. In modern times, countless women have made significant contributions across various fields. Yet, given the current state of affairs, one might wonder if the gods have already aban-

What has gone wrong? Why do we see such pervasive misogyny and moral decline in a country that once celebrated womanhood? When did we lose our way? Blaming Western influence for our own degeneration is a weak excuse. The truth is, while women have been at the forefront of progress, they have also endured some of the harshest forms of patriarchy. From domestic violence to workplace discrimination, Indian women continue to struggle against entrenched biases, even from socalled educated and cultured men who conveniently abandon their ideals when it comes to gender equality.

The three incidents reported may not be the norm, but they are symptomatic of a larger, deeply rooted issue. Over the years, we have only reinforced the objectification of women. Just glance at advertisements where women are reduced to eye candy, Bollywood films where they play second fiddle to male protagonists, or popular fiction where they are confined to stereotypical roles of homemakers and child-rearers. Even the comments from the politicians in the recent past have been rather uncharitable about women. The problem runs deeper than we acknowledge. Society as a whole must awaken to the true power of women and respect them for their inherent worth, not just as decorative figures.

What can be done? First, we must recognise and admit that the state of women in India is deplorable. Ignoring the issue or brushing it under the carpet will not help. When stand-up comedian Vir Das made a pointed remark about how India worships women by day and violates them by night, all hell broke loose. Yet, outrage cannot erase the painful truth. Hypocrisy and pretense cannot change the truth. Token gestures and symbolic celebrations are past their expiry date—it is time for real action. Stronger laws may be part of the solution, but they must be backed by proper implementation. (It is worth noting that the conviction rate for crimes against women remains abysmally low) More importantly, we need to instil respect and gender sensitivity in men from an early age. Boys must be taught that their sisters have the same rights as they do, and society must reinforce this equality at every level.

The time for complacency is over. A cultural shift is needed-one that does not just pay lip service to gender equality but actively fosters a safer, more just environment for women. Only then can we truly claim to honour and respect them. Let us make a beginning. We at The Pioneer have taken an initiative and would like our readers to join us in our campaign to awaken the society from its deep slumber.

Leaderspeak

I am on a multi-nation trip to the

Indo-Pacific, a region I know very

well having grown up as a child of the

First stop: Honolulu where I'll visit IC

troops engaging in training.

Pacific. I will be going to Japan, Thailand, and India, with

a brief stop in France enroute back to DC. Building strong

communication are vital to achieving President Trump's

TULSI GABBARD, US INTEL CHIEF

relationships, understanding, and open lines of

objectives of peace, freedom and prosperity.

partners and INDOPACOM leaders, and our

The Unfinished Fight for Gender Equality

The latest data from global institutions paint a troubling picture—economic and political inequality persist, genderbased violence remains rampant. "Accelerated Action" must become a force for real, urgent change

he calendar page has turned and March 8, International Women's Day (IWD), fades into the rear-view mirror. Yet, the echoes of pronouncements — of "Accelerated Action" the very theme of IWD 2025 - still reverberate. Newspapers, policymakers, and government and international organisations have once again performed their ritual - churning out reports and issuing platitudes, all while the chasm of the gender gap yawns wider. They speak of strengthening the "fairer sex" — a term that dares to confine the boundless potential of women. Let us be clear: this is not about "disparities." This is about the brutal, systemic discrimination that chokes life from women's ambitions, both in the intimate spaces of their lives and the cold, unforgiving arenas of their professions. "Accelerated Action" is not a theme; it is a desperate, overdue demand for momentum - a seismic shift towards an unrelenting dismantling of the barriers and biases that have held women hostage for far

too long.
The World Economic Forum's (WEF) 2024 'Global Gender Gap Report', highlights the slow progress in achieving gender equality, with the global gender gap now 68.5 per cent closed, an increase of just 0.1 per centage points from the previous year. Health and Survival (96 per cent) and Educational Attainment (94.9 per cent) are near parity, but Economic Participation (60.5 per cent) and Political Empowerment (22.5 per cent) remain significantly unequal. The report also points to regional disparities that persist, with Europe (75 per cent) leading the charge, North America (74.8 per cent), and Latin America and the Caribbean (74.2 per cent), while Southern Asia (63.7 per cent) and the Middle East and North Africa (61.7 per cent) lag behind. Iceland, Finland, and Norway are top performers, while Bangladesh, Iran, and Sudan struggle with gender inequality. At the current pace, full gender parity will take until 2158, far beyond the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) target.

In economic participation, women form 42per cent of the workforce but hold only 31.7 per cent of senior leadership roles. The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) gender gap is stark, with women representing only 28.2 per cent of the STEM workforce versus 47.3 per cent in non-STEM sectors. Political empowerment has improved, with women occupying 33 per cent of parliamentary seats, nearly double the 18.8 per cent in 2006. The report further emphasises the role of caregiving policies, noting an increase in maternity leave from 63 to 107 days since 1970, while paternity



leave remains low at nine to 15 days

The report issues a compelling call to action, urging governments, businesses, and civil society to accelerate efforts toward gender equality. As the report emphasises, Achieving gender parity is not just a moral imperative, but an economic necessity. Closing gender gaps will drive productivity, sustainability, and societal progress worldwide".

Further, the UN Women's Report on Women's Rights in Review 30 Years After Beijing" (2025) is worth a reflection, which assesses global progress on gender equality since the 1995 'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action'. While 1,531 legal reforms have been enacted, disparities persist - women earn 20 per cent less than men, perform three times more unpaid care work, and only 63 per cent of working-age women are in the labour force compared to 92 per cent of men. Gender-based violence remains widespread, affecting 736 Million women globally, with 53 per cent of women in Europe and Central Asia facing online abuse. Maternal mortality rates have stagnated, and 236 Million additional women and girls are projected to face food insecurity by 2050 due to climate change. Further, Women remain underrepresented in politics (27 per cent of parliamentar-

ians) and peace processes (10 per cent of negotiators in 2023). Despite 112 countries adopting national action plans on women, peace, and security, only 28 per cent have allocated sufficient funding.

change, the "Beijing+30 Action Agenda" outlines six urgent priorities, such as 'bridging the digital gender divide, 'eradicating violence against women, 'ensuring equal political representation' and 'securing climate justice for women'. Governments must significantly increase funding, implement stronger accountability measures, and prioritise gender-sensitive policies.

Achieving gender equality requires bold, immediate action, ensuring all women and girls have equal rights, opportunities, and safety in every sphere of life. Amidst all the celebrations - and resolutions - that marked IWD 2025, it is equally critical to reflect on the 'Human Rights Watch World Report 2025' that reveals a global regression in women's rights, marked by intensified

oppression in numerous regions. Afghanistan witnessed the Taliban's extreme gender-based restrictions, effectively eliminating women from public life through bans on education and employment, alongside reports of severe abuses. In Sudan, conflictdriven sexual violence became a weapon of war, with widespread rape and forced mar-

Moreover, the enduring issue of Crime Against Women (CAW) significantly hinders the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by undermining progress across a broad spectrum of objectives, specifically impeding SDG-3 concerning good health and well-being and SDG-5 dedicated to gender equality, as the repercussions of CAW permeate and disrupt these interconnected areas of social, economic, and gender equality. The road to true gender equality remains long and arduous. While progress has been made, systemic barriers, deep-rooted discrimination, and rising global challenges continue to hinder women's empowerment and safety. The need for sustained, bold, and transformative

(The writer is programme executive Gandhi Smriti Sansthan. Views expressed are personal)

Navigating coercion and gaslighting

SECOND\ **Opinion**

ram writing this column on a Friday. Exactly a week ago, around this time, a slanging match took place in the Oval Office in full view of the media. As people all over watched the drama unfold, I shook with vicarious consternation when a war-time leader was psychologically conquered by two men who are the powers that be of the Western world. It was a scene that felt unsettlingly familiar, not just as

a geopolitical showdown, but as a stark example of the pressures we all face in the presence of unchecked authority. President Trump set an uneasy tone to the meeting right from the word go when he made a stinging remark about President Zelensky's attire as soon they met. Although it was made to sound casual, the dig was front and centre, and the former's discomfort was more than obvious. What I saw that day was a slice of life we've all been part of, in some form or another at work, at home, and in relationships where authority looms large, demanding submission in the face of power imbalances. I cringed at the memories it evoked - of gaslighting and manipulative episodes from my own life - and found myself wondering: What should we do when we're subjected to such mortifying treatment, especially when it is unexpect-

What mental attitude can we adopt in these moments? How do we respond to coercion that seeks to dismantle our courage,



The first step is awareness. Recognising the power play for what it is allows us to protect ourselves emotionally. Often, bullies thrive by distorting reality — by twisting words, fabricating narratives, and making us feel inadequate, indebted, or small. The psychological manipulation is insidious. But when we step back and see the game being played, we can detach ourselves from the emotional quagmire they attempt to drag us into. It's not about denying the truth

of our emotions, but about observing them, questioning their source, and not letting them define us.

Self-validation is the cornerstone of this mental fortitude. In a world where we are conditioned to seek external approval, it is easy to fall prey to manipulation. But when we ground our self-worth in our understanding of who we are, we become less susceptible to intimidation. No longer will we bend or contort ourselves to meet others' expectations. We are enough as we are. And then comes emotional detachment. Bullies feed on emotional reactions. They want us to react, to flinch, to show weakness. The key is not to suppress our feelings but to cultivate a calm, observational stance. When we resist the urge to react impulsively, we throw them off balance. A composed response, or better still, a poised silence, often speaks louder than any words we could muster in the heat of the moment. In the face of a verbal barrage, sometimes doing nothing is the most powerful response. A dignified silence unset-

and what kind of armour can protect us from the tles them because it signals that we are not easily provoked. gle word. In situations where we are pushed into a corner, we can reframe the narrative by presenting the facts. For instance, if we are pressured to express forced gratitude, we might say, "We have both benefited from this collaboration." By putting the truth back at the centre, we dilute their leverage and reinforce our agency. Ultimately, the key is knowing our boundaries and refusing to make concessions that compromise our dignity. The moment we yield to unfair demands, we allow the cycle of manipulation to continue. So, we must know when to say "No" and stand firm in that decision. But all of this requires confidence, and confidence, like any armour, is built over time.

The inner dialogue we carry with ourselves matters immensely. Bullies may make us doubt our worth, but we must reprogram that narrative, affirming daily that we are deserving, and that we need not bend in the face of coercion. Preparing ourselves for difficult conversations through rehearsal and mental preparation can transform panic into poise. In the end, the most profound defence against power plays, gaslighting, and coercion is an unwavering nonchalance. Confidence isn't loud or brash. It is quiet and unshaken. It is the knowing that no matter the forces that may try to knock us down, we are unyielding. We stand tall, not because we are immune to the pain, but because we refuse to let it define us.

(The author is a Dubai-based columnist and children's writing coach.) She has published six books. Views expressed are personal)

Letters to the Editor

India's Golden Shift

Madam— India has always had a deep-rooted connection with gold, a metal that symbolises wealth, financial security, and cultural heritage. From weddings and festivals to religious ceremonies, gold plays an essential role in the lives of Indians.

However, this strong demand for physical gold has led to an over-reliance on imports, contributing significantly to the country's current account deficit and putting pressure on foreign exchange reserves.

Recognising this economic challenge, the Government introduced the Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB) scheme in 2015 under the broader Gold Monetisation Scheme to provide an alternative means of investing in gold while reducing dependency on imports. Over time, SGBs have emerged as an effective financial instrument, gradually shifting India's gold investment landscape towards a more structured and sustainable model.

The SGB scheme was designed to offer the benefits of gold investment without the challenges associated with owning physical gold. These bonds are issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on behalf of the government, making them a secure and reliable investment. Each bond is denominated in grams of gold, allowing investors to own gold in a digital or paper form rather than in physical form.

ANUSHKA BOHRA, UJJAIN

America First, World Last

Madam— It appears that United States (US) President Donald Trump is determined to disrupt global amity with unilateral declarations, whether on tariffs or wars. He thinks of America as the overlord and the countries on the earth as vassals. Before the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-President Trump meeting in Washington DC, he made a scathing attack on the BRICS nations over de-dollarisation attempts and declared that "BRICS

He accused the grouping of being made for a 'bad purpose.' He asserted that he had conveyed to the BRICS countries - Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa - that they would be "hit by a 100 per cent tariff" if "they want to play games with the Dollar," adding a warning that "The day they mention that they want to do it, they will come back and say, we beg you, we beg you."

The response to Donald Trump's threats came from Brazil's President Lula da Silva, who said bluntly that "BRICS+ is committed to ending US Dollar dominance no matter what."

President Trump announced unilaterally that India had agreed to slash its tariffs. He said "India charges us massive tariffs. Massive, they have agreed, by the way, they want to cut their tariffs way down now because somebody

is finally exposing them." HARIDASAN RAJAN, KOZHIKODE

Mark Carney replaces Trudeau

Madam—The 23rd and a decade old ruling President of Canada, Justin Trudeau is all set to leave Canadian President office. The coalition government which Trudeau has been balancing since last few years has finally come to an end with the election of Mark Carney as Canada's next President.

Mark election to the apex post is been done at a critical juncture, as there has been so many fragilities for Canada to be handled around. He is supposed to settle down, a long list of issues both domestically and internationally for

Today, Canada is juggling to manage many of its internal problems like increasing food and housing prices, its trade and tariff war with the US, at the same time, it has been trying to find out a solution about the US idea of land

Not only this of coping some of the regional issues, Canada currently hold worst relations specially with India because of her Khalistani supporting commitments. The new appointment of Mark Carney is welcoming. We hope that Canada will be able to find out the appropriate solution of its domestic and international problems and will stand fairly without any bias on account of her internal turbulences. The change in leadership is the must requirement of Canada at this critical time period.

KIRTI WADHAWAN, KANPUR

WOMEN'S AWARDS UNDER FIRE

 ↑he recent controversy over the Chief Minister's award to a woman on Women's Day in Haryana has raised serious questions. For many years, the Mahila Awards have stood as shining symbols of recognition, highlighting women's achievements in fields where they have often been marginalised.

These awards are more than just an inspiration for inclusion, they aim to honour outstanding achievements in a society that has often overlooked women's contributions. However, the integrity of these awards is now at risk, challenged by political influences and changing cultural attitudes. The future of the Mahila Awards depends on society's ability to find a balance between fairness, recognition and inclusiveness. It is important how we honour women's achievements going forward. The Women's Awards have historically played a vital role in acknowledging and honoring female achievements in a variety of fields. Whether in literature, science, sports, or film, these awards have provided much-needed recognition in areas where women often face challenges. However, in our rapidly changing social and political climate, the significance and necessity of these awards are coming

under scrutiny. In the past, the Women's Awards represented a hard-earned acknowledgment of excellence in fields where female talent was often overlooked.

They were symbols not just of inclusion, but of resilience, determination, and pioneering success. Today, however, these awards are at risk of losing their integritynot because of a decline in women's achievements, but because their original meaning of recognition is being blurred, politicised, or discarded altogether.

At a time when inclusivity is claimed to be embraced, the unique purpose of the Women's Awards risks backfiring. Some argue that gender-specific awards should no longer exist in a society that aims for equality. But does true equality come from eliminating platforms that once amplified women's voices? Rather than creating a level playing field, we are seeing a worrying trend: the mixing, repurposing, or outright removal of awards designed to honor women's contributions.

In today's cultural climate, where representation is often prioritised, some awards have shifted the focus from true achievements to a focus on

PRIYANKA SAURABH, HISAR

Europe: The Unraveling of a Continent in Denial

As the continent clings to outdated illusions of dominance, the war in Ukraine has exposed decades of strategic miscalculations and betrayals. Now, with Washington shifting priorities and internal fractures deepening, Europe faces a stark choice: reclaim sovereignty or fade into irrelevance



he spectacle that unfolded in the Oval Office of the White House last week was nothing short of a geopolitical farce-Volodymyr Zelensky, once the West's prized emissary of democracy, now reduced to a beleaguered supplicant before Donald Trump and his inner circle. The desperation in his voice was palpable as he attempted to navigate the most humiliating moment of his political career with forced composure. But Trump appeared to be sizing up the Ukrainian president for obsolescence, searching for a more pliable figure to serve American interests in Ukraine. The bitter irony of history plays out in cycles, and it seems Zelensky is now on the cusp of becoming the sacrificial lamb for the West's mounting failuresmuch like past puppets discarded when their usefulness waned

Yet this moment is more than just an embarrassing episode for Ukraine's leader; it is emblematic of a much deeper malaise-a reckoning that Europe itself can no longer evade. The European continent, which for centuries positioned itself as the epicentre of enlightenment, democracy, and civilisation, is now teetering on the precipice of its catastrophic undoing. The Ukraine war, a conflict exacerbated by the very hands that claim to seek peace, is but a symptom of an existential crisis decades-if not centuries-in the making.

Europe's ruling elite, basking in the illusions of their hegemonic past, have orchestrated betrayal after betrayal, not only against external powers but also against their long-term survival. The great deception played on the USSR, for instance, was a masterstroke in Western duplicity. The fall of the Soviet Union was not an organic collapse but a carefully engineered dismantling, with Europe-hand in hand with the United States and Britain-undermining Moscow's geopolitical reach under the guise of partnership. Vladimir Putin himself, in his now-infamous 2007 Munich speech, laid bare the West's treachery: "What happened to the assurances given by Western partners after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact? Where are these declarations today? No one even remembers them. But I will allow myself to remind this audience what was said. I would like to quote the speech of NATO General Secretary Mr Woerner in Brussels on 17 May 1990. He said: 'The fact that we are ready not to place a NATO army outside of German territory gives the Soviet Union a firm security guarantee. Where are these guarantees?"

These assurances were nothing more than words on paper-meaningless in the grand chessboard of Western hegemony. NATO expanded, encircling Russia, reneging on every commitment, demonstrating that Europe had no intention of honouring its promises. The deliberate humiliation of Russia post-1991-the eastward march of NATO, the exploitation of Russian economic vul- the 19th century, ultimately disintegrated as



nerabilities under Western-advised 'shock therapy'-was an act of strategic subjugation. And yet, in an extraordinary twist of fate, the very forces that dismantled the USSR are now engineering their disintegration.

History is rife with European fragmentation, political betrayal, and self-inflicted wounds. The Treaty of Versailles, a document intended to secure peace after the First World War, instead laid the foundation for the Second, as European powersdrunk on their perceived victory-imposed punitive measures that sowed the seeds of future destruction. The division of Germany, the appeasement of Hitler at Munich, and the Cold War partitions across the continent all serve as testaments to the European elite's tendency to manufacture crises rather than resolve them.

The Napoleonic Wars saw Europe in constant flux, with alliances forged and broken in pursuit of hegemonic domination. The Concert of Europe, an attempt to stabilise the continent in



undermined its very premise. European unity has historically been an illusion-punctuated by moments of cooperation swiftly followed by bitter enmities. And yet, despite this bloodstained history, modern European leaders refuse to acknowledge the destructive cycle they are perpetuating in

Europe, shackled by its servitude to American interests, blindly followed Washington into every geopolitical quagmire-be it in Iraq, Libya, Syria, or now Ukraine-without considering the long-

term consequences. The current conflict in

Ukraine is not an aberration; it is the logical cul-

mination of decades of strategic miscalculations.

The EU, by choosing to weaponise Ukraine as a

this alignment would ensure perpetual dominance. But as the tides shift-with Washington's attention pivoting towards Asia and Trump poised to prioritise 'America First' over NATO's European commitments-the continent is waking up to a grim reality: it has no viable future without a fundamental realignment.

The past century has been a cycle of European duplicity-not only against Russia but also against the Global South. Latin America, Africa, and Asia suffered under colonial plunder and economic subjugation, all dressed in the language of progress. The European elite, now feigning moral righteousness in Ukraine, were the very architects of untold misery across the world. France still holds African nations in a monetary stranglehold through the CFA franc, Britain continues to exert

battering ram against Russia rather than seeking

diplomatic equilibrium, has sealed its fate. Instead

of charting an independent course towards true

strategic autonomy, Europe doubled down on its

vassal status to the United States, believing that

undue influence in its former colonies, and European financial institutions dictate the economic policies of entire regions. The same Europe that lectures Russia on sovereignty had no qualms about redrawing borders, toppling governments, and instigating wars to maintain its

But this project is now crumbling under its contradictions. The rise of multipolarity-with China, Russia, and the Global South forging alternative economic and political alliances-signals the twilight of Western supremacy. Europe, so accustomed to imposing its will on others, now finds itself adrift: incapable of self-reliance, bereft of true leadership, and, most damningly, out of time.

Macron's recent overtures regarding European nuclear deterrence-an implicit admission that American security guarantees are no longer sacrosanct-reveal a bloc scrambling for existential answers. Yet even now, the European elite refuse to acknowledge their culpability in this crisis. Instead of introspection, they escalate their reckless adventurism, funnelling billions into Ukraine in a deluded attempt to 'bleed Russia dry'a strategy eerily reminiscent of Cold War-era hubris, but one that now imperils Europe itself.

As a result, inflation, energy crises, deindustrialisation, and mounting social unrest are becoming the new normal. The EU, having sanctioned itself into economic paralysis, is watching its industrial base erode while American corporations feast on the carcass of what was once the world's most formidable economic bloc. Germany, the economic engine of Europe, is faltering under the weight of its self-imposed dependence on American diktats. The Franco-German axislong heralded as the linchpin of European unityis fracturing under competing interests. Southern Europe resents Northern Europe's austerity, Eastern Europe is increasingly questioning Brussels' authority, and Britain has already jumped ship.

This is Europe's moment of reckoning. It must either embrace true emancipation-breaking free from the yoke of outdated political dominion, reconciling with Russia, and forging a future dictated by its sovereign interests-or continue its descent into irrelevance. The choice is stark. The EU can either learn from history or become its latest tragic casualty.

The lesson of the USSR should not be lost on Europe. Superpowers do not fall in a day-they rot from within, weakened by arrogance, strategic miscalculations, and a failure to adapt to shifting geopolitical realities. Europe stands at that precipice now. The only question that remains is whether it dares to step back before the abyss swallows it whole.

(The (The writer is a journalist and a policy analyst.

How Three New Societies Are Shielding Agriculture from Global Trade Shocks

¬he world is witnessing a major realignment in global trade as the US tariff war disrupts supply chains and reshapes agricultural exports. Countries that once relied on established trade routes are now facing uncertainty, forcing them to look for alternative suppliers. In this evolving landscape, many fear that India's agriculture exports might be affected, but the reality is different. India is not just insulated from these shocks: it is positioned to thrive. The reason behind this resilience lies in a historic transformation—the creation of three new multistate cooperative societies.

These cooperatives are more than just policy initiatives, they are a strategic shield, ensuring that Indian farmers, agribusinesses, and exporters do not become victims of global trade volatility. Instead of fearing disruptions, India is using this moment to expand its global agricultural footprint, leveraging the power of cooperatives to make its exports stronger, more competitive, and more farmer-centric. The US has been engaged in a prolonged trade war, particularly with China and the European Union.

American tariffs on Chinese goods led to retaliatory measures, including high tariffs on US agricultural products such as soybeans, corn, and pork. These policies disrupted global supply chains, forcing importing countries to search for new suppliers. Historically, such trade wars create volatility, where smaller agricultural exporters struggle to compete with larger economies.

Many feared that India, which is still building its export infrastructure, might lose out in the global realignment. However, this time, India has turned the challenge into an opportunity—by strategically strengthening its cooperative economic framework to ensure that Indian agriculture emerges stronger, not weaker.

The government's bold decision to establish three new multistate cooperative societies has changed the game for Indian agriculture exports. These cooperatives are not just support structures; they are economic engines, ensuring that Indian farmers and agri-businesses are directly connected to global markets without dependency on middlemen or volatile international policies. The National Multi-State Cooperative Export Society is the backbone of Indias new export strategy, enabling farmers to directly participate in exports, giving them better prices, and eliminating exploitative middlemen.

By standardising quality, improving logistics, and ensuring compliance with global trade requirements, this cooperative will make India a reliable alternative to disrupted supply chains elsewhere. The National Multi-State Cooperative Organic Society will capitalise on the growing demand for organic and chemical-free produce, helping Indian farmers secure premium prices

in global trade. This structured, cooperativedriven supply chain will allow India to emerge as a leading supplier of organic food. The National Multi-State Cooperative Seed Society will strengthen both domestic productivity and India's growing seed export market by ensuring that farmers have access to high-quality, export-

By reducing dependency on foreign seed corporations, India will minimise trade risks and position itself as a global leader in agricultural

inputs.Unlike previous trade disruptions where Indian farmers suffered from price fluctuations, this time, India is protected by a cooperative-led economic framework that ensures direct market access, diversified global partnerships, and better price stability. **ANAND**

With cooperatives facilitating direct exports,

India's agricultural trade is less dependent on traditional intermediaries, making it immune to tariff shocks. While many countries struggle due to over-dependence on the US or China, India has expanded trade agreements with the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia, ensuring multiple market opportunities. By focusing on processed and high-value agricultural goods, India is building a resilient trade model that

withstands market fluctuations. Moreover, removing middlemen and securing better trade deals through cooperatives guarantees that farmers are not at the mercy of international price crashes. The rising global demand for organic and speciality agricultural imports further strengthens India's position as a key supplier, allowing the country to fill the supply gaps created by disrupted trade routes. While many countries are struggling with the effects of the US tariff war, India is building a future-proof agricultural

The creation of these three multistate cooperatives is not just a response to global trade challenges—it is a proactive step towards making India the world's next agricultural export powerhouse. By embracing cooperative-led trade, direct farmer participation, and a strong focus on value addion, India is proving that no tariff war can derail its agricultural success story.

Instead of being vulnerable to shifting trade policies, Indian farmers are now in control, charting a new course for global leadership in agriculture. This transformation is not just about increasing exports; it is about reshaping the very foundation of India's rural economy through cooperation. As the world looks for stable, reliable,

and high-quality agricultural suppliers, Indiapowered by its new cooperative revolution—stands ready to meet this demand. However, the success of this model will depend on the cooperation among cooperatives, ensuring that they work in harmony to create a seamless economic framework that benefits farmers at every level. The cooperative economic framework is not just about collective trade—it is about collective

It is a movement that redefines how India participates in global trade, ensuring that its farmers are not just contributors but decision-makers in the global agricultural economy. By fostering deeper collaboration between cooperatives, ensuring knowledge-sharing, and building an ecosystem of trust, India is setting an example for the world on how cooperation can drive economic strength.

Conclusion

India's response to global trade disruptions is not just defensive—it is transformative. By establishing three powerful multistate cooperative societies, the country has ensured that its agricultural exports are resilient, competitive, and farmer-dri-

These cooperatives are more than economic instruments; they are a strategic shield that insulates Indian agriculture from tariff shocks and volatile global policies. Instead of relying on traditional supply chains, India is proactively building new trade alliances, particularly in the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia. By focusing on high-value and organic products, streamlining logistics, and removing exploitative middlemen, the country is positioning itself as a reliable glob-

al supplier. The National Multi-State Cooperative Export, Organic, and Seed Societies collectively empower farmers, giving them direct market access and better price stability.

As the world searches for stable agricultural partners, India is emerging as a global leader, proving that cooperative-led trade is the key to sustainable growth. This is not just about increasing exports; it is about reshaping India's rural economy and ensuring that farmers are at the center of global trade. The cooperative movement is India's answer to economic resilience, making its agriculture future-proof.

This is not just a policy shift; it is a transformation that will define the future of Indian agriculture for decades to come. Cooperation is not just a principle—it is the foundation of India's new economic resilience.

Jai Kisan! Jai Cooperative Movement!

(The writer was a member of the high level MSP committee. Ministry of Agriculture. Views expressed are personal)

The Qualities That **Shape Our Destiny**

RAJYOGI

BRAHMKUMAR

NIKUNJ JI

not have any one of these divine qualities, then it means he/she has the opposite-the demoniacal qualities-which, as everyone knows, result in peacelessness, disease, sorrow, and suffering. Most people do not yet know that the absence of one or the other divine quality is the cause of one or the other kind of

They, therefore, try to find out its cause in the political, economic, cultural, or social system. The truth, however, is that positive or negative qualities manifest themselves through human behaviour or human activity, whether it be a political, economic, cultural, or social activity. One should, therefore, try to trace the negativity and work for positivity in human behaviour rather than search for the cause elsewhere.

human misery.

The present society has made marvellous progress in various fields, but emotionally, it is much weaker.

Man has not been able to control his impulsiveness, ambitions, anger, and anxiety. There is thus a lot of imbalance created by rapid and great advancement in science and technology on the one hand and a lack or absence of parallel progress in emotional maturity, self-control, and ethical abilities on the other hand.

This has resulted in many problems that we are facing today. It can thus be said that the qualities in man determine the quality of his life and his peaceful and happy, or peaceless and sorrowful state. But it is a pity that man has been trying to find happiness in ruling over big territories, possessing a lot of property or wealth, and having a great many comforts.

He has, therefore, been making efforts to have economic prosperity even by adopting demoniac qualities. He has been trying to achieve success, name and fame, or political and economic power even if his soul had to give up the divine qualities and resort to negative or demoniacal qualities. This has led to the corruption of the soul, degeneration of society, and peacelessness and suffering of various kinds.

If we accept this analysis of our present predicament, then we have to admit that we have had a fall in moral values and divine qualities, and what we require today is to extricate and uplift ourselves from this situation with the help of education that can restore the divine qualities in us. Our other efforts to make the world a better place to live in would be of no avail unless and until there is a qualitative change in our nature and

Complete peace, it should be remembered,

ccording to scriptures, there are about 36 comes from complete purity or full-fledged divine qualities (36 Gunas), and if one does divine nature. Even a fraction of one demoniacal quality leads to a lessening of peace in that proportion, if not more.

It should also be noted that demoniacal qualities have linkages among themselves, even as divine qualities are connected among themselves

and strengthen and sustain each other. So, liberation from one negative quality leads to at least some liberation from other negative qualities. Thus, even our little effort to inculcate, in ourselves, some divine qualities ultimately leads to a great overall change in our nature and results in enhancement in the quality of our

inner happiness. In the current state of the world, where materialism is often prioritized over spiritual growth, the loss of divine qualities has become more evident. People are increasingly finding themselves trapped in cycles of stress, competition, and dissatisfaction, despite

their material success. This is because material achievements, while significant, cannot replace the profound peace and contentment that come from living a life grounded in divine principles. The more we focus on accumulating wealth and power at the expense of our inner values, the more we drift away from true happiness. Moreover, demoniacal qualities such as greed, envy, and pride not only harm the individual but also have a ripple effect on society as a whole. They lead to corruption, injustice, and conflicts that disrupt social harmony and undermine collective well-being. In contrast, divine qualities like compassion, humility, and selflessness create an environment where mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation can flourish. This, in turn, lays the foundation for a society that is not only prosperous but also peaceful and just.

One must, therefore, in one's interest and in the interest of building a better world, pay attention to the task of restoration of divine qualities and elimination of devilish qualities or negative traits. In this lies not only the hope for our liberation but also the key to improving the overall conditions of the world.

To conclude, the true happiness and peace stem from divine qualities, not material success. The pursuit of wealth and power at the expense of inner values leads to suffering and societal decay. By cultivating compassion, humility, and selflessness, we can restore harmony, uplift humanity, and create a just, peaceful world for future generations.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and a popular columnist. Views expressed are personal)

VIJAYAWADA | WEDNESDAY | MARCH 12, 2025

IN BRIEF



Rupee settles 10 paise higher at 87.21 against US dollar

he rupee recovered from steep losses and settled with a gain of 10 paise at 87.21 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday as the American currency index fell to its fourmonth low level and crude oil prices also stayed subdued. A volatile trend in domestic equity markets and outflow of foreign capital amid fear of recession in the US and trade-related uncertainties restricted the recovery in the local currency, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 87.37 and touched the day's low of 87.39 against the greenback. The unit also strengthened up to 87.17 before ending the session at 87.21 (provisional) against the dollar, 10 paise higher compared to its previous closing level. On Monday, the rupee crashed 36 paise to close at 87.31 against the US dollar Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan, attributed the rupee's recovery to weak tone in the US dollar index and a decline in the US 10-year treasury yields.



PhonePe crosses 60 cr registered users

intech major PhonePe has crossed 60 crore registered users on its platform, the company said on Tuesday. The milestone for the country's largest fintech firm coincides with its preparation for initial public and in the 10th year of its operations. "Reaching 60 crore registered users is a proud moment for all of us at PhonePe. Every milestone we achieve brings us a step closer to realising our vision of building a truly inclusive financial ecosystem. We will continue building homegrown solutions to meet the evolving needs of our users and help drive India's digital transformation," PhonePe Co-Founder and CEO Sameer Nigam. In the 10 years, the company has diversified its operations to wealth management, e-commerce with Pincode etc. The company was valued at USD 12 billion during its last funding round held in 2023. The PhonePe digital payments app, was launched in August 2016. As of March 2025, payments acceptance network spread across over 4 Crore



CG gets Rs 450 cr order to make **products for Vande Bharat**

G Power and Industrial Solutions on Tuesday said it has secured an order of Rs 450 crore for supply of railway products for Vande Bharat trainsets. Apart from this purchase order, a separate 35-year service order is also a part of the long-term agreement, a company statement said. " CG Power and Industrial Solutions Ltd (CG) has entered into a long-term supply agreement with Kinet Railway Solutions Limited for supply and servicing of railway products including propulsion kits with motors, transformers and various other items," the company said in a BSE filing. The first purchase order, ranging between Rs 400-450 crore, has been secured by the company for supply of railway products for 10 Vande Bharat trainsets. Since its inception 86 years ago, CG has established a strong foothold in the railway industry, offering a comprehensive portfolio that includes traction machines & systems, rail transportation traction electronics, among others

Govt working on 'template model' for setting up more airports: Naidu

PNS NEW DELHI

With increasing air traffic and expanding aircraft fleet, the government is planning to put in place a "template model" for setting up more airports, including those dedicated for cargo and flying training

organisations.
India, one of the world's fastest-growing civil aviation

markets, currently has 159 operational airports while domestic airlines have placed orders for over 1,700 planes. Against this

backdrop, Civil Aviation Minister Rammohan Naidu on Tuesday said the ministry is "actively working on creating a tem-plate model where we can have

different kinds of airports". The idea is to have different categories of airports, including those for cargo and Flying Training Organisations

On the sidelines of an event in the national capital, Naidu said the government is looking to create a multi-model system and that there are a lot of technical aspects involved.

To a query on whether more airports are set to be privatised, the minister said privatisation is a separate issue,

and the efforts are to create more airports,

"Land is a challenge in many places... we are trying to ensure air connectivity to all regions and wherever possible, we can taper down the land requirement... (for instance like having) a small airport where we can operate an ATR," he noted.

Domestic air passenger traf-fic stood at little over 16.13



crore in 2024 while the current fleet of domestic airlines is over 800 planes.

In response to queries related to certain recent incidents involving Air India, Naidu said whenever there are issues, those are discussed and feedback is also sought from the airline concerned.

"If there is any breaking of law, then we take action, penalise them and ensure that things happen in the right way. Whatever issues come up, we take necessary action," he

India, US to hike mkt access, cut tariff, non-tariff barriers: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and the US are planning to negotiate a trade agreement and both countries will focus on increasing market access, reducing import duty and non-tariff barriers, and

and non-tariff barriers, and enhancing supply chain integration, Parliament was informed on Tuesday.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada said that as on date, reciprocal tariffs have not been imposed by the US on India.

"Both countries plan to negotiate a mutually beneficial, multi-sector Bilateral Trade Agreement. Both countries

Agreement. Both countries would focus on increasing market access, reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers, and enhancing supply chain integration," he said. The US issued a memoran-

dum on reciprocal trade and tariffs on February 13, wherein the US Commerce Secretary and United States Trade Representative (USTR) are to take necessary actions to investigate harm to America from any non-reciprocal trade arrangements adopted by trading partners and provide a report with detailed proposed remedies for each trading partner. Tariffs are import duties imposed and collected by the government and paid by companies to bring foreign goods



into the country.

During the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Washington last month, India and the US announced their commitment to more than double the two-way commerce to USD 500 billion by 2030 and negotiate the first tranche of a mutually beneficial, multisector Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) by fall of

In 2023, the US-India bilateral trade in goods and services stood at USD 190.08 billion (USD 123.89 billion in goods and USD 66.19 billion in services trade). That year, India's merchandise exports to the US stood at USD 83.77 billion, while imports were USD 40.12 billion, leaving a trade gap of USD 43.65 billion in favour of India.

During 2021-24, America was India's largest trading partner. The US is one of the few countries with which India has a trade surplus.

Prasada also said that India continues to engage with the US to achieve enhancement and broadening of bilateral trade ties in a mutually beneficial and fair manner.

"This is an ongoing exercise and Indian exporters are working towards diversifying trade baskets and export destinations," he said.

Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal on Monday told a Parliamentary panel that nego-

tries are still on and no agreement on trade tariffs has been reached so far.

Barthwal briefed the Parliamentary Committee on External Affairs, on US President Donald Trump's recent claims that India has agreed to reduce its tariffs 'way down", while Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri briefed the committee on China and

Europe. In 2023-24, India exported engineering goods worth USD 17.62 billion to the US. The other major goods included electronics (USD 10 billion), gems and jewellery (USD 9.9 billion), petroleum products (USD 5.83 billion), textiles (USD 4.7 billion), marine products (USD 2.5 billion).

In a separate reply, the minister said India's tariff policy aims to regulate trade, protect domestic industries, and generate revenue through taxes on imported and exported goods.

Recent reforms have focused on streamlining the tariff structure and facilitating trade," Prasada said.

India is a member of the WTO (World Trade Organization) and bound to its maximum tariff that can be applied on a product category. The applied tariffs are generally below the bound tariff for a given commodity

Sensex, Nifty recoup losses to settle almost flat

IndusInd Bank tanks 27pc on derivatives scare

PNS MUMBAI

Benchmark BSE Sensex recovered most of its losses to close marginally down in a volatile session on Tuesday even as private lender IndusInd Bank slumped 27 per cent and global markets declined on US

recession worries.
The 30-share BSE Sensex settled down by 12.85 points or 0.02 per cent at 74,102.32 with half of its constituents closing lower. The index opened sharply down and slumped further 451.57 points or 0.61 er cent to 73,663.60 in early deals following weak global trends. The barometer later recovered losses to close almost flat.

Analysts said late-buying in select blue-chips such as ICICI Bank, Reliance and Airtel helped recover losses.

The broader Nifty of NSE advanced 37.60 points or 0.17 per cent to close at 22,497.90, rebounding from the day's lows. The index rose by 61.8 points or 0.27 per cent to hit a



high of 22,522.10.

Shares of IndusInd Bank plummeted by more than 27 per cent to close at Rs 655.95 apiece on BSE after the private discrepancies in its derivatives portfolio.

During the day, the stock of Mumbai-based lender tanked 28 per cent to hit a 52-week low of Rs 649 per share. Additionally, the shares emerged as the major laggard on the 30-share BSE barome-

Infosys, Bajaj Finserv, Mahindra & Mahindra, Zomato, Hindustan Unilever, Power Grid, Axis Bank,

UltraTech Cement, Adani Ports, and Tata Consultancy Services were among the laggards in the Sensex pack.

On the other hand, Sun Bharti Airtel, HCL Technologies, Maruti Suzuki India, Larsen & Toubro, Reliance Industries, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Titan were the gainers.

"Despite significant sell-offs in the US and other Asian markets driven by concerns over an economic slowdown caused by the ongoing trade war, the domestic market is showing signs of a gradual

Gold edges up to Rs 88,790 per 10 g

Silver drops by Rs 350

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Snapping its three-day losing run, gold rebounded to Rs 88,790 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid firm global trends, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity rose by Rs 40 to Rs 88,790 per 10 grams from the last close of Rs 88,750

per 10 grams.
Gold of 99.5 per cent also went up by Rs 40 to Rs 88,390 per 10 grams.

However, silver prices eclined by Rs 350 to Re 98,900 per kg. The white metal had settled at Rs 99,250 per kg on Monday.

Comex gold futures for April delivery rose by USD 19.30 or 0.67 per cent to USD 2,918.70 per ounce in the global markets. Meanwhile, spot gold advanced 0.82 per cent to USD 2,912.43 per

"Gold traded higher as dollar index weakness and escalating tariff concerns in the US

signalled economic uncertainty. Safe-haven buying remained strong, with ETF inflows supporting the bullish sentiment," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said.



Comex silver futures in the Asian market hours traded 1.44 per cent higher at USD 33

According to HDFC Securities' Senior Analyst of Commodities Saumil Gandhi, market participants continue to monitor President Donald Trump's comments and assess how the tariff battle will play out in the near future.

solarised under PM Surya Ghar' PNS NEW DELHI

'1 million homes

Over 1 million households have been solarised under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana so far, Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy Pralhad Joshi said on Tuesday. The PM Surya Ghar: Muft

Bijli Yojana is the world's largest domestic rooftop solar initiative transforming India's energy landscape with a bold vision to supply solar power to one crore households by March 2027.

"India achieves a historic milestone in solar energy! Under the visionary leadership of PM @narendramodi ji, the @PMSuryaGhar Muft iili Yojana has empowered 10 lakh homes with solar energy, driving a new era of sustainability, affordability, and self-reliance," Joshi said in an X post.

Launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 15, 2024 with a budget outlay of Rs 75,021 crore, the initiative aims to provide free electricity to households by facilitating the installation of rooftop solar

Airtel, SpaceX join hands for satcom service

PNS NEW DELHI

Bharti Airtel on Tuesday said it has signed an agreement with Elon Musk-led SpaceX to offer the US-based company's high-speed internet services under Starlink to its customers in India.

The development assumes significance as Sunil Mittal-led Bharti Airtel was at loggerheads with Starlink over issues related to licence fees and spectrum pricing for satellitebased internet service providers. Airtel is also the single-largest shareholder with a 21.2 per cent share in Starlink's rival firm Eutelsat OneWeb.

OneWeb has received permission to start operations in India and is waiting for spectrum allocation to roll out ser-

Bharti Airtel Managing Director and Vice Chairman Gopal Vittal said that working with SpaceX to offer Starlink services to Airtel customers in India is a significant milestone and further demonstrates the company's commitment to next-generation satellite con-

collaboration enhances our ability to bring



world-class high-speed broadband to even the most remote parts of India, ensuring that every individual, business, and community has reliable internet. Starlink will complement and enhance Airtel's suite of products to ensure reliable and affordable broadband for our Indian customers wherever they live and work," Vittal said.

Airtel said that its agreement with SpaceX is subject to receiving authorisations to sell Starlink's satellite communications-based services in India, Airtel said in a state-

The agreement will enable Airtel and SpaceX to further explore how Starlink could complement and expand Airtel's offerings, and how Airtel's expertise in the Indian market could complement SpaceX's direct offerings to consumers and businesses.

India, Qatar sign MoU for economic, financial cooperation

PNS NEW DELHI

India and Qatar have signed an agreement to promote and develop mutual collaboration in public-private partnership framework and investment, use of financing tools, as well as economic policies, the finance ministry said on Tuesday.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on financial and economic cooperation was signed between the two countries on February 18 during the visit of Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani to India.

The MoU aims to promote and develop mutual collaboration in the areas of economic policies, use of financing tools, public-private partnership

framework and investment. The MoU is expected to explore new and emerging sectors and avenues for investments in both countries," the ministry said in a statement. The ministries of finance of

both countries shall promote models and areas of joint collaboration between them, such as organising expert workshops, seminars and conferences; exchanging documentary and technical information in areas of joint work and keeping pace with the dialogue between the business communities of the two countries.

The MoU signifies the commitment of both sides to work together and unlock new opportunities for investment, growth and development.



Housing sales in 9 cities rise to Rs 6.73 lakh cr in 2024

PNS NEW DELHI

Housing sales across 9 major cities rose 12 per cent annually to Rs 6.73 lakh crore during the last year on high demand especially for luxury homes, according to PropEquity.

Real estate data analytic firm PropEquity on Tuesday released data on housing sales of top 9 cities in terms of value for the 2024 calendar As per the data, total housing sales

across top 9 cities grew 12 per cent to Rs 6,73,000 crore last year from Rs 6,00,143 crore in 2023. Among cities, housing sales in

Gurugram rose to Rs 1,06,739 crore in 2024 from Rs 64,314 crore in the

preceding year. PropEquity did not mention the name of real estate companies that achieved strong sales in Gurugram last year.

However, property brokers in the Gurugram area said DLF, Signature Global, Godrej Properties, M3M India along with its group firm Smartworld Developers, Elan Group, ATS Group and Krisumi Corporation

were among the top sellers.
In Delhi-NCR overall, PropEquity said the sales of residential properties $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) \left(1\right$ rose 63 per cent to Rs 1,53,000 crore in 2024 from Rs 94,143 crore in the preceding year.

Samir Jasuja, Founder & CEO of PropEquity, said, "In Delhi-NCR,



the weighted average sales price has gone up to Rs 12,469 per sq ft." "Rising prices and demand buoy-

ance in Delhi-NCR is due to the robust infrastructure development,

growing corporate presence and ample employment opportunities as is evident from Delhi-NCR's rising dominance in office leasing," he said. With the new government in place in Delhi, and MPD 2041 likely to see

the light of the day, Jasuja said the real

estate market will further see a surge with entry of new supply. Gurugram-based property consultant InfraMantra co-founder Garvit Tiwari said, "The Gurugram market performed extremely well in 2024. The city within a short span, has

estate destination for residential and commercial development." Gurugram boasts of good returns leading to greater interest from

emerged as the most preferred real

investors, he added. Vijay Harsh Jha, Founder and

CEO of property brokerage firm VS Realtors, said the NCR market has become a hot destination with demand for luxury homes at an alltime high. "The infrastructure development

around the National Capital and the adherence to compliance due to RERA have helped the real estate sector become a trusted investment tool for income generation and wealth creation," he said.

As per the PropEquity data, housing sales in Mumbai rose 13 per cent to Rs 1.38 lakh crore last year from Rs 1.22 lakh crore in the 2023 calen-

what's brewing?

Crime, conspiracy, and chaos:

SUNNY DEOL BRINGS HIS JAAT SUPREMACY IN THE LATEST TEASER

The makers of *Jaat* have turned up the excitement with a gripping new teaser, offering a thrilling glimpse into the high-stakes battle between Sunny Deol and Randeep Hooda. The film, set to release worldwide on April 10, promises a perfect blend of action, emotion, and raw intensity.

Sunny Deol, in collaboration with Mythri Movie Makers, shared the teaser on Instagram, instantly setting social media ablaze. The short clip introduces audiences to an electrifying face-off between Deol's character, Jaat and Hooda's menacing Ranatunga.

The teaser showcases Deol in his signature larger-than-life avatarmaking a powerful entrance with a cigarette in hand before unleashing his fury on a wave of enemies. Every punch, every blow is packed with bone-crushing intensity, building up to the defining moment where he fiercely declares, "Main Jaat hoon," before engaging in a noholds-barred battle with Hooda's ruthless antagonist. With just 30 days to go, anticipation is at an all-time high. The film is set to release on



Baisakhi, making it a festive cinematic treat for audiences. The caption of the teaser post read:

"30 DAYS TO GO for #JAAT's supremacy at the box office. This Baisakhi, a blockbuster treat will entertain you in cinemas. GRAND RELEASÉ WORLDWIDE ON APRIL 10th. #BaisakhiWithJaat" With an action-packed narrative

and a face-off between two powerhouse performers, Jaat is shaping up to be a thrilling spectacle that stays with audiences long after the credits roll. Fans are eagerly counting down the days until they can witness this grand showdown on the big screen.

Loot Kaand a thrilling heist mazon MX Player is all set to take audiences on a high-octane journey with its upcoming heist thriller, Loot Kaand. The streaming platform has unveiled a gripping teaser, offering a sneak peek into a world

that spirals into unforeseen chaos. Set against the backdrop of a seemingly quiet town in West Bengal, Loot Kaand unravels a web of dark secrets and hidden dangers. The story revolves around Latika and Palash, two siblings struggling with financial tur-moil. In a desperate bid to change their fate, they plan an audacious bank robbery with an unexpected accomplice. However, their plan quickly unravels,

of crime, desperation, and deception. Packed with action and suspense, this

six-episode series follows two siblings

as they embark on a daring bank heist

dictable twists at every turn. Bringing this thrilling narrative to life is an impressive leading them into a deadly game involvensemble cast featuring Tanya Maniktala, Sahil Mehta, Gyanendra Tripathi and Saad ing gangsters, corrupt Bilgrami in pivotal roles. The series is officials, and unpre-



directed by Ruchir Arun and created by Saurav Dey, with production handled by Drishyam Films and N2O Films—names known for delivering gripping and highquality content.

Aamir Khan vs Ranbir Kapoor?

Alia Bhatt teases an epic collaboration

ollywood fans were sent into a frenzy when Alia Bhatt teased an upcoming collaboration between two powerhouse actors—her husband, Ranbir Kapoor and Aamir Khan. Sharing an intriguing poster on Instagram, she hinted at an epic face-off between the two stars, branding it as AK vs RK. However, the big reveal comes with a twist—the much-anticipated project is

On Tuesday, Alia took to Instagram to share her excitement, posting a teaser video where she playfully built anticipation. The poster she unveiled features Aamir and Ranbir with the tagline. "The Ultimate Blockbuster", along with another bold statement: "The Greatest Rivalry of the Year."

Expressing her enthusiasm, Alia wrote, "A battle of the best! Two of my favourite actors with against each other... Stay tuned for something very very exciting... more deets coming tomorrow...



P.S. I know you're going to love it as much as I did." In the video, she further teased fans, saying, "I have been waiting to show this to you guys. Two of my favourite actors will be seen together. va ek doosre ke against (or against each other). Dikhana hi bhool gayi (I forgot to show it to you)... Yakeen nahi ho raha na, mujhe bhi nahi hua (Don't believe it na, it was tough for me too). But it is real, and it is great. Stay

The project, helmed by acclaimed filmmaker Nitesh Tiwari, marks a rare collaboration between Aamir and Ranbir. While the two briefly shared screen space in Aamir's 2014 blockbuster PK, this new venture promises to showcase their chemistry in an exciting new way. While fans initially speculated about a potential film, the hashtag #ad in Alia's post confirmed that the

> collaboration is for an advertisement. However, given the star power and the cryptic "greatest rivalry of the year" tagline, the project is still expected to be nothing short of cinematic. With the full reveal expected soon, fans are eagerly waiting to see what this high-profile collaboration has in store. Will it be a humorous battle? A dramatic showdown? One thing is certain—when two acting legends come together, entertainment is guaranteed!



and Kabir Bedi are set to share the screen in Aachari Baa, an upcoming streaming film that promises to be an emotional rollercoaster. Directed by Hardik Gajiar, the film explores themes of loneliness, resilience and unexpected companionship, delivering a powerful message about family bonds and love

that often goes unspoken.
The film follows Iaishnaviben Anopchand

Vagadia, fondly known as Baa, played by Neena Gupta. A woman of strength, warmth, and unwavering independence, Baa finds solace in making homemade pickles—her simple joy in life. After nearly a decade of waiting to reunite with her son, she finally gets an invita-tion to Mumbai. However, her excitement quickly turns to disappointment when she realises she has been called not for quality family time but to dog-sit while her son and his family head off on vacation.

In the midst of the chaotic city and an unfamiliar home, Baa finds herself reluctantly bonding with Jenny, the mischievous dog she never wanted. What follows is a touching journey of self-discovery, unexpected friendships, and a silent yet powerful plea for love and recognition.

Speaking about her role, Neena Gupta shared, "Baa is not just a

character; she is a reflection of countless mothers and grandmothers who have dedicated their lives to their families, only to find themselves alone in the end. She is strong yet fragile, fierce yet deeply vulnerable. She doesn't ask for much—just a little love, a little time, a lit-

tle presence."

She further added, "When I read the script, it made me laugh and cry at the same time. I instantly knew wanted to be a part of it. This film is my way of reminding people that love should never be an afterthought. If you still have your parents or grandparents around, don't wait for 'tomorrow' to show them you care. I'm grateful that JioHotstar is bringing this story to audiences everywhere, because it's a message that needs to be heard.

Kabir Bedi, who also plays a key role in Aachari Baa, described the film as more than just a story—it's a wake-up call.

'This film forces us to ask ourselves: When was the last time we truly listened to our parents? When was the last time we made them feel seen? I hope, for many watching on JioHotstar, it becomes a reminder to cherish the loved ones who once put us before themselves."

Produced by Jyoti Deshpande, Poonam Shroff and Parth Gajjar, Aachari Baa is presented by Jio Studios, Hardik Gajjar Films, and Backbencher Pictures. The film is set to stream soon exclusively on JioHotstar, bringing its heartfelt story to audiences everywhere.

With its mix of humor, drama, and poignant moments, Aachari Baa is set to be a deeply moving experience that lingers long after the credits roll.

ARCHIE









CALVIN AND HOBBES

LIGHTNING FLASHES! HUNDER RUMBLES ACROSS





HORRIBLY, CALVIN HAS BEEN





GARFIELD







"C" ... IT'S GOT TO BE UNDER "C" LET'S SEE

COOTIES BE HERE SOMEWHERE

REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



1 2 7 9 8 5 4 3 6 9 5 4 6 3 2 8 1 7 3 8 6 4 7 1 2 5 9 4 9 5 8 2 6 1 7 3 2 3 1 7 9 4 6 8 5 6 7 8 1 5 3 9 2 4 5 1 2 3 6 9 7 4 8 8 4 9 5 1 7 3 6 2 763248591



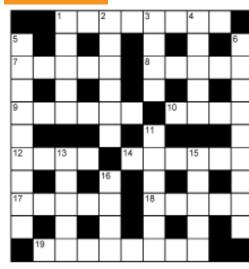
DIFFICULTY RATING: **********

SUDOKU



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

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Calm and quiet
- 7 Sit on this 8 Steam bath
- 9 Oboe player
- 10 Applaud
- 12 An area of cut grass

before doing it for

 A keyboard instrument 2 From one side to the other

an audience

3 Simple to do

- 14 A box for a body
- 17 Once more
- 18 Heartbeat 19 Practise something

4 Normal

15 Untrue

16 Leg joint

this (6,3)

5 A student might carry

6 Someone who makes

things out of wood

11 A reddish-brown metal

13 The largest mammal



CAPTAIN SPEAKING. THE WEATHER AT OUR DESTINATION IS FINE AND

GINGER MEGGS

CAN WE USE THE MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA?







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Wednesday March 12, 2025

'MARATHI MUSIC IS READY FOR A GLOBAL **BREAKTHROUGH' MUSICIAN AND COMPOSER** HYPERPOP. HE SHARES **DHIRU, IN AN EXCLUSIVE INSIGHTS FROM HIS TIME** CHAT WITH THE PIONEER **LEARNING UNDER CHARLIE OPENS UP ABOUT HIS PUTH, THE EVOLVING LATEST INDEPENDENT LANDSCAPE OF MARATHI TRACK,** MARATHI MUSIC, JEVLIS KA?. A AND WHY HE **PLAYFUL YET BELIEVES REGIONAL SOUNDS CAN HEARTFELT FUSION OF** RETRO FUNK. **TRANSCEND DANCE-POP** LANGUAGE AND **BARRIERS**

TEJAL SINHA teial.sinha30@gmail.com

arathi music has seen a fresh wave of innovation in recent years, with artists blending traditional roots with global sounds. One such artist leading this evolution is Dhiru (formerly known as Dhirendra Mulkalwar), a seasoned music composer and sound designer who has worked on films like *Uri-The Surgical Strike* and *Article 15*. Now, stepping into the

sound designer who has worked on films like *Uri-The Surgical Strike* and *Article 15*. Now, stepping into the indie music scene, he presents *Jevlis Ka?*, a track that transforms a simple everyday Marathi phrase into a dynamic, danceable pop anthem.

In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, Dhiru takes us through his journey with *Jevlis Ka?*, the inspiration behind the track, and his vision for Marathi music on a global stage.

For Dhiru, Jevlis Ka? is more than just a song—it's a feeling, a playful yet heartfelt expression of love and care. The phrase itself, meaning "Have you eaten?" is something we hear daily, often from the people who matter most to us. "With this track, I wanted to take something so deeply ingrained in our culture and reimagine it in a way that feels modern, fresh and universally relatable," he explains. Sonically, the song blends retro funk, dance-pop and hyperpop influences while remaining distinctly Marathi at its core. "The track carries a vibrant, youthful energy—something instantly infectious yet comforting, much like the phrase Jevlis Ka? itself."

Dhiru has long been composing contemporary Marathi music, always striving to blend global influences with the richness of the language. A particularly transformative experience came when he attend-

ed a course with international pop artist Charlie Puth.

"I had the opportunity to collaborate with 30 talented music producers from across the world. As part of the program, we were each required to create two songs and I made a conscious decision to write and compose in Marathi while ensuring that the production carried a truly international appeal," he recalls.

However, due to his commitments to film and web series scores, it took him until 2025 to finally release his own independent music. Fortunately, the timing coincided with the success of recent indie Marathi hits like Gulabi Sadi and Taamdi Chaamdi, proving that audiences were eager to embrace new sounds in Marathi music. "The success of these songs reaffirmed that there is a vibrant audience open to fresh sonic directions in Marathi pop," Dhiru says. "It is truly exciting to contribute to this evolving landscape and to share my own artistic perspective with listeners." With songs like Gulabi Sadi and Taamdi Chaamdi gaining traction beyond Marathi-speaking audiences, there's a clear indication that regional music can transcend language barriers. "Music is an emotion before it is a language," Dhiru asserts. "A great melody, an engaging rhythm, and a strong sense of identity can make a song resonate with listeners far beyond its linguistic boundaries." Citing examples from Punjabi music's global rise, Tamil and Telugu tracks making waves internationally, and even K-pop's universal appeal, Dhiru believes Marathi music has the same potential. "If we continue to innovate while preserving our authenticity, our sounds will travel far beyond Maharashtra, connecting with people purely through musical energy and

The idea for *Jevlis Ka?* had been lingering in Dhiru's mind for a long time. "I kept hearing the phrase in a rhythmic, almost melodic way. That's when I knew it had the potential to be the heart of a song."

He built the song around this hook, infusing it with a retro funk groove and dance-pop energy to give it a fresh and modern feel. "The biggest challenge was making the lyrics feel effortless and natural and Akshay Shinde did a brilliant job of capturing that conversational charm," he adds. From composition to production, the process was about striking the right balance—keeping it youthful and dynamic while staying true to its Marathi essence. "In the end, Jevlis Ka? became exactly what I envisioned: a fun, catchy and heartfelt song that feels both new and familiar."

Dhiru's love for funk played a major role in shaping the sound of *Jevlis Ka?*. "The sheer groove of funk is irresistible—it makes anyone want to move or tap their feet," he explains.

For this song, he wanted to capture that energy while blending nostalgia with a futuristic, contemporary twist. "That's why I combined disco's retro vibe with the playfulness of hyperpop, creating a sound that feels both familiar and exciting." The song naturally took on a bubblegum pop vibe, which also extended to its visual aesthetics, including the album artwork. "Music can act as a time capsule, carrying elements of nostalgia while embracing contemporary sounds. That's what *Jevlis Ka?* represents—a blend of familiar warmth and refreshing newness."

Having worked extensively on film scores, Dhiru acknowledges the stark difference between composing for films and creating independent music. "Film music exists to serve a narrative—it's a collaborative process where every note is shaped by the story, the characters, and the director's vision," he says.

characters, and the director's vision," he says.

Independent music, however, is boundless. "It's entirely personal, which is both liberating and daunting. With *Jevlis Ka?*, I had no external framework guiding me; I had to create my own world from scratch. This freedom allows for immense creativity, but it also demands a level of self-discipline—to know when to refine, when to experiment, and most importantly, when to stop and say. "This is it.""

Dhiru draws inspiration from Marathi music's deep history, from 'Abhangs' and 'Natyasangeet' to 'Tamasha' and 'Povadas'. 'If we look closely, all these folk forms have one thing in common—they reflect the language and spirit of the common people in their respective eras." he notes.

With Jevlis Ka?, he wanted to bring that essence into today's world. "My approach is not to replace tradition but to build upon it—creating a sound that feels fresh while still carrying a sense of familiarity."

Dhiru is optimistic about Marathi music's future.

Dhiru is optimistic about Marathi music's future. "Artists like Ajay-Atul, AV Prafullachandra, Kratex, Sambata, Rocksun, Nihar Shembekar and Sanju Rathod are pushing boundaries and redefining the Marathi soundscape," he says.

"With audiences becoming more open to diverse sounds and the accessibility of global influences, the space for creative experimentation is growing. This evolution is paving the way for a bold, contemporary Marathi music scene that stays true to its roots while embracing new sonic landscapes." At its core, Jevlis Ka? is about simplicity. "Even though it's just a small phrase, it carries warmth and care, forming the foundation of deeper relationships with our loved ones," Dhiru reflects. By blending familiar emotions with a fresh, modern sound, Jevlis Ka? creates a sense of nostalgia while still feeling exciting and new. "I believe it's this simplicity and authenticity that strike an emotional chord with people," he says.

As Dhiru embarks on this new chapter in independent music, he remains committed to his artistic vision—staying true to Marathi identity while embracing the limitless possibilities of sound. *Jevlis Ka?* is just the beginning, and if this track is any indication, his journey in indie pop is one to watch.

Sandeep Kewlani on 'Edge-of-the-seat thrills' & 'heartfelt thrills of *Sky Force*'

PNS|HYDERABAD

andeep Kewlani's directorial debut, *Sky Force*, is more than just a film—it's an immersive experience that brings the bravery and sacrifices of the Indian Air Force to life. With Akshay Kumar leading the cast, this high-stakes action drama has taken audiences by storm, making its mark as a standout entry in the 100-crore club.

Kewlani was captivated by the idea of *Sky Force* because there have been very few films about the Air Force in Indian cinema. The film offered a unique opportunity to explore the depth and intensity of an Air Force officer's life—showcasing not just their high-octane missions but also their deep-rooted sense of duty, camaraderie and the emotional sacrifices they make. "At its core, the film reflects the powerful mantra, "We never leave one of us behind.' We wanted to bring that emotional depth to the screen," he explains in a chat with *The Pioneer*. To enhance realism, the team incorporated real aircraft sounds, making sure the audience could feel the sheer power of high-speed jets and the intensity of the situations the officers navigate.

But more than just an action-packed spectacle, *Sky Force* is an emotional journey—one that pays homage to the unsung heroes who serve the nation.

For Kewlani, finding the right balance between action and emotion was crucial. "The film is emotionally driven, focusing on sacrifice and the grief of families, while the action sequences—especially the air combat—highlight the risks and courage of the Air Force."

One of the most poignant aspects of the film is its exploration of the families left behind when an officer goes missing in action. Inspired by the real-life story of A.B. Devayya, Sky Force captures the harrowing uncertainty that families endure—waiting endlessly for answers that may never come. "The goal was to create a thrilling yet deeply moving experience, where the emotion stays with the audience long after the action ends," Kewlani says.

Developing the characters was a challenge, especially with limited information available on real-life pilots like O.P. Taneja, A.V. Devayya and Pakistani pilot Amjad Hussain. To ensure authenticity, the filmmakers collaborated with Air Force officers, including Wing Commander Abhijit Gokhale, who provided valuable insights into the officers' behavior, protocols, and body language. "We wanted to ensure that the emotional arcs felt natural and relatable," Kewlani says. Akshay Kumar's character, for instance, carries a certain vulnerability—mirroring real-life details like O.P. Taneja's chain-smoking habit, which Kumar accurately portrayed using herbal cigarettes.

The families of Taneja and Devayya were deeply moved by the authenticity, expressing gratitude that their loved ones were represented with such care and accuracy.

A film of this scale demanded top-tier visual effects and action choreography. The team conducted extensive research on aircraft capabilities—understanding the strengths and weaknesses of different fighter jets.

Collaborating with action director Craig (a pilot himself) and Wing Commander Gokhale, the filmmakers choreographed the aerial combat scenes with precision. The visual effects were handled by industry giants DNEG and Prime Focus, bringing Hollywood-level expertise to

In a candid conversation with *The Pioneer*, Sandeep Kewlani, the director of the blockbuster film Sky Force, shares the inspiration behind the movie, the meticulous research that shaped its authenticity and the challenges of bringing largescale aerial combat sequences to the big screen. Kewlani's passion for storytelling and his dedication to honoring the heroes of the Indian Air **Force shine through in this** exclusive chat

the project. With shoot locations spanning London, Hyderabad and Mumbai, the team worked tirelessly to create action sequences that felt dynamic and real. "A dedicated team of 1,000-1,500 people worked behind the scenes to bring these intense moments to life," Kewlani reveals. In today's fast-paced entertainment industry, holding the audience's attention is a challenge. Kewlani ensured *Sky Force* was a tight, gripping experience. "We kept the film at a crisp two hours, knowing that attention spans are shorter. Every scene—whether action-packed or emotional—was strategically positioned to maintain momentum."

From the screenplay to the sound design, every element was fine-tuned to keep viewers immersed in the story. "The goal was to make the audience feel the reality of the film, keeping them captivated from start to finish."

Filming *Sky Force* came with its fair share of challenges. One of the most difficult sequences was the high-intensity train scene shot in Jaisalmer. With a moving train, bullets flying and an aircraft circling above, coordinating the action was a logistical nightmare. The extreme heat added to the struggle, with half the crew hospitalised on the first day. "The climax was also a massive challenge. We had only one day to shoot it, so we used 5-6 cameras to capture every angle. There was immense pressure, but Akshay Kumar's performance,

especially in the emotional moments with Tabby's story, made it all worthwhile." When the audience gave a standing ovation, it was clear that all the hard work had Akshay Kumar's involvement was instrumental in bringing *Sky Force* to life. "He's naturally jovial and keeps the atmosphere light, but his performance in *Sky Force* was intense and deeply emotional," Kewlani shares. Kumar's ability to balance action and subtle nuance made his portrayal one of his most powerful to date.

His return to action films post-COVID was highly anticipated, and his star power played a crucial role in drawing audiences back to theatres. "His loyal fanbase ensured strong engagement, reaffirming his reputation for delivering box-office hits." Making *Sky Force* was a relentless journey. "We worked tirelessly for 3-4 years, dedicating every day—including Sundays—to perfecting this film," Kewlani says.

He credits the film's producers—Dinesh Vijan, Jyoti Deshpande, Poonam Vijan and Amar Kaushik—for their unwavering support. Special mention goes to his co-director Abhishek, first AD Sunil Shetty, assistant director Jeet Desai, cinematographers Santha, action director Parvez Sheikh, costume designer Shivank Kapoor, and the VFX team at Prime Focus.

"It was surreal to have our producers trust us with such a big-budget project," he adds. The cast, which includes Nimrat Kaur, Sara Ali Khan, Veer Pahariya, Sharad Kelkar and Manish Choudhury, also contributed significantly to making the film a reality.

Kewlani was especially impressed with Veer Pahariya, who made his industry debut with *Sky Force*. "He brought a unique depth to his character, and I have no doubt he will go on to achieve great things in the industry."



Optimising resource allocation in large-scale construction projects



he construction industry is the backbone of infrastructural and economic growth across countries. As a leading engineering, procurement, and construction company, B L Kashyap & Sons has witnessed firsthand how the effective allocation of resources can determine the success or failure of large-scale construction projects. In an era where timelines are stringent, labour is scarce, costs are scrutinised and sustainability is non-negotiable, optimising resource allocation is no longer a choice but a necessity.

Large-scale construction projects are intricate ecosystems involving a multitude of variable resources—human capital, materials, machinery and finances. Each of these resources is interdependent, and their mismanagement can create bottlenecks, leading to delays, budget overruns, and compromised quality. A major challenge is the dynamic nature of construction projects. Weather conditions, unforeseen ground realities, labour shortage or fluctuating material costs can disrupt even the most meticulously planned schedules. To navigate these challenges, resource allocation must be adaptive and data driven.

Technology is slowly emerging as a game-changer in

optimising resource allocation. Tools like Building Information Modelling (BIM), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software, and predictive analytics are slowly transforming how construction companies plan and execute projects. By creating detailed 3D models, tracking resources in real time and leveraging historical data for forecasting, companies can enhance coordination among stakeholders, minimise wastage and anticipate resource requirements at every stage. These advancements ensure that decisions are informed and timely, reducing inefficiencies and ensuring better outcomes. The effective implementation of any technology is fundamentally reliant upon the quality of its input data.

Input data.

While technology plays a pivotal role, the human element remains irreplaceable. Skilled workers are the backbone of any project. Investing in training and upskilling ensures that the workforce is not only efficient but also adaptable to new technologies and methodologies. Fostering a culture of collaboration and transparency among teams improves communication, reducing the chances of errors and misallocation. Empowering teams to take ownership of their tasks often leads to better resource utilisation and successful project execution.

In today's context, optimising resources goes beyond efficiency; it's about sustainability. The construction industry significantly impacts the environment, and responsible resource allocation can mitigate this. Adopting green building practices, sourcing materials locally and utilising renewable energy sources ensure that projects align with environmental goals. Recycling construction waste and reusing materials not only reduce costs but also

reusing materials not only reduce costs but also minimise the ecological footprint. Sustainability is not just a responsibility but also an opportunity to create long-term value for customers and communities.

Optimising resource allocation also has a profound impact on business performance. Effective resource management ensures projects are delivered on time and within budget, which directly contributes to profitability. Furthermore, it enhances client satisfaction by meeting expectations reliably, fostering trust and repeat business. By reducing wastage and improving operational efficiency,

companies can allocate savings

towards innovation and growth. In a competitive market, these advantages enable businesses to maintain an edge while also attracting investments by demonstrating a

commitment to responsible and efficient practices.

Neglecting resource optimisation can have significant downfalls. Poorly managed resources can lead to frequent delays, inflated costs, reduced quality, ultimately harming the project's reputation and profitability. Over time, this can erode client trust, affect team morale and tarnish a company's brand. Moreover, the inability to adapt to unforeseen challenges can result in resource wastage, missed opportunities and non-compliance with sustainability goals, putting long-term growth at risk.

Reflecting on our experience at B L Kashyap, it is evident that the early planning and assessment of risks has played a crucial role in resource optimisation and successful commissioning of our projects. Real-time monitoring and flexibility in resource allocation help address unexpected challenges without disrupting project timelines. Continuous improvement through post-project analysis ensures that lessons learned contribute to better planning and execution in the future. Collaborating with all project stakeholders to define sustainability goals and assess their environmental, costs and effectiveness, fosters transparency, ultimately benefiting the project. These practices underline the importance of adaptability and foresight in managing resources effectively.

As India's construction industry grows, the scale and complexity of projects will continue to increase. Companies

must embrace innovation and adaptability to stay competitive. At B L Kashyap & Sons, we have consistently strived to set benchmarks in resource optimisation, ensuring that our projects are delivered on time and within budget while positively impacting the communities we serve. Optimising resource allocation is not just about managing assets; it is about creating value. By leveraging technology,

nurturing skilled teams, and prioritising sustainability, the construction industry can build a culture leading to a future that is efficient, resilient and responsible.

(The author, Saurabh Kashyap, is the Director Operations, at B L Kashyap

Sports ministry revokes suspension imposed on WFI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

the Sports Ministry has revoked the suspension imposed on the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), ending the months of uncertainty surrounding the sport and paving the way for resumption of activities, including selection trials for the upcoming Asian Championship in

The ministry had suspended the WFI on December 24, 2023 for lapses in governance and procedural integrity by the new body, which was elected on December 21. It had asked IOA to form an ad-hoc panel to run the affairs of the

The Sanjay Singh-led body had announced the conduct of Under-15 and Under-20 National Championships in Nandini Nagar, Gonda — the stronghold of former WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh — and the choice of venue irked the government since the former BJP MP was facing charges of sexual harassment.

The ministry, in its order issued on Monday, said that the WFI has taken compliant measures, so in larger interest of the sport and athletes, the ministry has decided to lift the suspension.

There were complaints that the WFI was still operating from the residence of Brij Bhushan, prompting the ministry to form a verification committee, which performed a spot inspection and found that the Federation had shifted its office to East Vinod Nagar in New Delhi.

The ministry was satisfied with the corrective measures taken and considering that not having a competent body in place will affect Indian wrestlers' medal chances at 2026 Asian Games and 2028 Olympic Games, it ended the suspension.

"I thank the government for taking this step. It will allow us to function smoothly. It was needed for the sake of the sport. The athletes were suffering for lack of ompetitions," Sanjay Singh said.

The ministry, though, has asked the WFI to follow certain directions, such as the Federation has to ensure that there is a balance of power among the elected office bearers, and it keeps itself disassociated from the suspended/terminated

It may be noted that Prem Chand Lochab, the new general secretary, was elected from the rival camp and the ministry's directive could be understood in that context.

I thank the government for taking this step. It will allow taking this step. It will allow us to function smoothly. It was needed for the sake of the sport

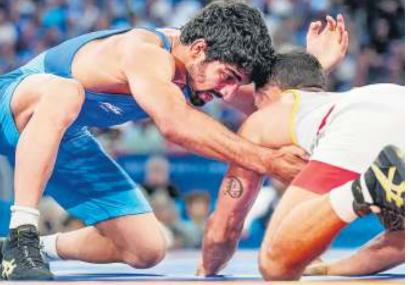
undertaking in this regard within 4 weeks. Any violation of the undertaking will invite appropriate legal action, including the action under the Sports Code," the ministry said in its order.

It also said that the WFI must ensure that the selection for all international events should be done in a free, fair and transparent manner as per the extant provisions of the Sports Code and the other latest instructions issued in this regard along with regulations issued from timeto-time by the UWW (United World Wrestling).

The WFI president said there is nothing that can't be followed.

We have already shifted to a new office and soon we will call for an EC meeting and also issue a circular for the selection trials. We have no issues in following these instructions," he said.

The Asian Championship is scheduled to be held in Amman, Jordan from March 25. The Indian wrestlers missed out on "The EC of the WFI must give an competing in Ranking Series tourna-



ments in Zagreb and Albania due to the ministry's suspension and the court cases filed by prominent wrestlers Vinesh Phogat, Bajrang Punia and Satyawart

The Indian wrestlers could have missed participation in the World Championship

also last year but after they protested outside the residence of Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, they were allowed to participate.

The wrestlers, who had led the protest against Brij Bhushan, had contended that the WFI did not have the authority to pick

national teams since it was suspended.

The court had directed the Indian Olympic Association to restore the ad-hoc panel for managing the WFI but the sports body had refused, saying UWW, the world governing body, recognises only the WFI and won't accept entries from the ad-

The UWW, which lifted its suspension on WFI on January 13, 2024, had threatened IOA to suspend WFI again if there was interference in its governance.

We are so relieved that this suspension has been lifted. There was a compete lull, the young wrestlers were suffering for no fault of theirs. They were missing tournaments, there was no national camp. The suspension should have been lifted long back," said a coach associated with a leading training centre in Haryana.

Vinesh, Bajrang and Sakshi Malik had accused Brij Bhushan of sexual abuse of junior wrestlers and held a long protest at Jantar Mantar. An FIR was lodged and the former BJP MP is facing a trial in the case.

Brij Bhushan has denied the charge. Vinesh later joined the Congress and won the Julana seat during the Haryana state elections last year. Bajrang was appointed chief of All India Kisan

New Zealand rest T20 regulars for series against **Pakistan**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Wellington

ew Zealand have rested a majority of their T20 regulars for the home series against Pakistan with the IPL around the corner.

The series, comprising five T20Is, begins March 16 while the IPL begins March 22.

Michael Bracewell, who was one of the main performers for New Zealand in the Champions Trophy (CT), will lead the side

in the absence of Mitchell Santner. Besides Bracewell, six more players in the T20 squad featured in the 50-over Champions Trophy. New Zealand lost the final to India on Sunday.

Devon Conway, Lockie Ferguson, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra and white-ball captain Santner were unavailable for selection due to IPL commitments. Kyle Jamieson and Will O'Rourke have been included only for the first three games of the series, as the selectors seek to manage the workload of the pace bowlers returning from the Champions

Matt Henry, who finished as the leading wicket-taker in the tournament despite missing the final through injury, has been selected for games four and five, subject to further assessment once the ODI rrives home on Wednesd

Bevon Jacobs, who was part of the squad for the recent T20 series against Sri Lanka, was unavailable due to IPL commitments, while Kane Williamson wasn't considered for selection after making himself unavailable.

Selector Sam Wells said the Pakistan series was important for several reasons. "We're certainly starting to narrow our sights on the ICC T20 World Cup in India

next February and March," he said. "We made it clear in our planning and communication with players that availability for that tournament and the build-up to it was required to be considered for this

series against Pakistan. "Half of this squad is only returning from the Champions Trophy on Wednesday and so we're going to need to manage those players really carefully," he

Focus on playing for country: Pant to budding cricketers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA New Delhi

ndia wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant feels the lure of the IPL is understandable but budding cricketers should always focus on playing for the country as "everything else" follows

Pant, who was part of India's triumphant Champions Trophy squad but did not get a game, made his internation-

"Since childhood, I had only one dream-to play for India. I never even thought about playing in the IPL. I think today, people are more focused on the IPL. Of course, it's a great platform, but I believe that if your goal is to play for your country, everything else-including the IPL-will eventually fall into place," Pant told JioHotstar.

"If you have that bigger mindset, success will follow. I always believed that I would play for India one day, and God has been kind. At 18, I got the opportunity to make my debut, and I am grateful for that," said the 27-year-old.



play and some of his trademark shots include a one-handed six with the bat often slipping out of his hands. He explained why that happens frequently.

nl for that," said the 27-year-old. "I think it mostly happens because I Pant is known for flamboyant style of hold my bottom hand very lightly. I

mainly try to use my bottom hand for support because, at times, it starts dominating. So, I focus on gripping my top hand tightly," said Pant.

"But when I overreach—especially when the ball is too wide or too short—

it's not always in the ideal hitting zone. Sometimes, the shot I attempt may only have a 30-40 per cent success rate, but depending on the match situation, I'm willing to take that risk. That's my

"When I take that chance and overreach, I need to do something to maintain balance. At times, it may look like I'm throwing the bat, but in reality, I'm just trying to make the most of that delivery. If my bat slips, if it's not in my hand, or even if it hits my head-my only focus at that moment is finding the boundary."

Pant said being a gymnast in his younger days has also helped him as a

"I used to do gymnastics as a kid. My gymnastics coach always told me that it would come in handy in life.

"Basu Sir, our Indian team trainer, once told me in 2018-19, 'Thank you to your gymnastics coach because what he taught you in childhood is still benefiting you today.

I kept practicing hand springs, and it has played a huge role in my fitness for

PCB files formal complaint with ICC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA | Karachi

Congress (AIKC).

◄he Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is still waiting for a "formal clarification" from the ICC on the issue of not have their representative on stage for the closing ceremony of the Champions Trophy in Dubai.

India beat New Zealand by four wickets in the title clash on Sunday to win the tournament for the third time.

We have filed a formal complaint with the ICC as what happened is unacceptable to us," a PCB official said on Tuesday. The controversy erupted when Sumair Ahmed, who is the chief operating officer of the PCB and was also the tournament director of the Champions Trophy, was not invited on stage for the final presentation.

BCCI president Roger Binny presented the white jackets to India players and the medals to match officials, while ICC chairman Jay Shah handed the trophy to skipper Rohit Sharma and gave the medals to the winners.

The reasons being given for not having our COO and tournament director on stage for the final presentation make no sense to us

- PAKISTAN CRICKET BOARD

BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia and New Zealand Cricket's CEO Roger Twose were also present on stage.

ing our COO and tournament director on stage for the final presentation make no sense to us. We are waiting for a formal clarification/apology," the PCB official

'We are appalled by this blatant disregard for Pakistan's role as the host nation," the official said. He said the PCB had informed the ICC about Sumair Ahmed's presence in Dubai for the presentation ceremony in advance and he also met and congratulated Jay Shah and some BCCI officials after India's win.

"Giving explanations that ICC only invites CEO's, chairmen, vice-chairmen or secretaries for the ceremony is illogical.

'We want a full public clarification and an assurance that such biased and unjust treatment will not happen again or we will push this matter to the board of governors," he added.

Victorious Indian cricketers return home ahead of IPL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

¬he Indian cricketers, led by Rohit Sharma, have made a quiet return home following their triumph in the Champions Trophy (CT) in Dubai. After leading India to their second ICC title in nine months, skipper Rohit landed back in Mumbai on Monday night.

The squad members have got a week off before they join their respective IPL teams ahead of the tournament beginning March 22.

All the players with families left from Dubai on Monday. There are some players who have stayed back for a couple of days," a BCCI source told

With players preferring to rest ahead of the two-month-long IPL, the BCCI did not plan a felicitation for the team like it did when the squad returned

from Barbados following the win in the met Prime Minister Narendra Modi following their return from Barbados via a special flight back in July.

Head coach Gautam Gambhir and pacer Harshit Rana landed in Delhi on Monday night. Superstar Virat Kohli had left the team hotel with wife Anushka Sharma right after the team returned from the Dubai International Stadium late on Sunday night.

Shreyas Iyer, who played a big role in the middle order, will captain Punjab Kings and will join the team on March 16. India beat New Zealand by four wickets to win their third Champions Trophy. They were the only unbeaten side in the eight-team tournament.

Though Pakistan were the tournament hosts, India played all their games in Dubai as per the agreed hybrid model.

MCG to host a night match between Australia, England

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Melbourne

Australia and England will be held under lights at the Melbourne Cricket Ground from March 11-15, 2027. Cricket Australia announced Tuesday that the historic match will be the first day-night men's test at the MCG.

The famous stadium on the edge of downtown Melbourne hosted the first cricket test in 1877 and the centenary test between Australia and England in 1977. Australia won by a 45-run margin in both of those matches.

"The 150th anniversary test at the MCG will be one of the great cricket events, and playing under lights will be a fantastic way to celebrate both our game's rich heritage and test cricket's modern evolution," Cricket Australia chief executive Todd Greenberg said. "It will also help ensure more people are able to attend and watch what will be a fan-

Challenging two-year cycle to start for coach Gautam Gambhir with England tour

tastic occasion.

"The Centenary Test created many Hookes' five consecutive boundaries off Tony Greig, Rick McCosker batting with a broken jaw and Derek Randall's defiant century, and I'm sure the 150th test will create its own lifelong memories." Australia is hosting the 2025-26 Ashes series against England starting in November.

The Australian men's team, coming off a semifinal run at the Champions Trophy, is set to defend its World Test Championship title in a final against South Africa in England in June.

Australia has won 12 of the 13 daynight test matches — which are played with a pink ball and have day and night sessions daily - it has contested at home since introducing the concept in 2015. Eight of those tests have been in Adelaide, and none has started later than

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA | New Delhi

eople who know Gautam Gambhir, describe him as someone "boringly consistent", someone who has not even changed his eating pattern in the last 20 years

An experiment is out of question. He loves wearing his denims for casual gatherings and it has not changed for

But when it comes to cricket, his brain is always ticking and seeking solutions to various strategic problems. It has been eight months since Gambhir

took charge of the national team after Rahul Dravid ended his stint with the T20 World Cup triumph in July.

The man from Delhi's Old Rajinder Nagar has witnessed some heartbreaking and baffling defeats as well as success. He has seen both ends of the spectrum with high of Champions Trophy (CT) and low of six Test losses.

The CT win has come like a breath of fresh air and 'Guru Gambhir' will get a chance to analyse the big picture as Indian cricket is expected to undergo a sea-change in the next two crucial years.

It won't be wrong to say that Gambhir has completed his probation period and will get into a phase where he would have three distinct challenges, starting with the

Test tour of England. That will be, as usual, right after the T20 spectacle known as IPL with no time for preparation.

His second big challenge will be the 2026 T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka where Suryakumar Yadav's men will be defending their title.

And last but certainly not the least is

2027 ODI World Cup in South Africa, which will be a helluva challenge. If one segregates Gambhir's coaching

across formats, he has already built a fabulous core for the T20 team with Surya at Even as Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and

Ravindra Jadeja walked into the sunset in shortest format, their absence was hardly felt as the new brand of cricket that India has been playing in T20 is earning them

He has unearthed a gem in Abhishek

When Varun Chakravarthy and Jasprit Bumrah would bowl during a global meet (World T20) those eight overs would be a nightmare for batters. Sanju Samson has found his mojo although Rishabh Pant will be around and so would be Yashasvi

There is a prolific powerplay wickettaker in Arshdeep Singh and at least three seam all-rounders in Hardik Pandya, Nitish Kumar Reddy and Shivam Dube.

Surya and Axar along with Hardik are old guards in this team. It is a team which has all its bases covered and is running on



auto-pilot with a tweak here and there. But it is the other two formats where Gambhir, the strategist, the disciplinarian and the man-manager would have to merge for results.

Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli have made it clear that they are not retiring from ODIs anytime soon. Retirement is an indi-

vidual call and both have performed in Champions Trophy.

But during the 2027 World Cup Gambhir won't have the option of using four specialist spinners and create magic with totals in range of 240-250.

Scores will be on higher side and the question is if Rohit with his short and

aggressive bursts can do enough along with Kohli, who is now more of an anchor now.

Rohit has said that he won't retire but was also unsure of his participation in the 2027 World Cup. Here, Gambhir will have to step in. Gambhir's, 'team first' philosophy won't change.

He loaths the superstar culture. He has

immense respect for performers which is seniority neutral.

It will not be a surprise if he demands a bit of clarity both from the board as well as national selection committee as to how they plan to see Rohit in ODI scheme of things with only 27 ODI games ahead of World Cup.

Another issue to ponder over would be the next captain? Shubman Gill is a terrific ODI player and has been Rohit's deputy but Hardik Pandya is also a good leader, who believes in implementing the coach's

strategy to the 'T'. He did that well in Gujarat Titans with another football team-like head coach Ashish Nehra at the helm.

In immediate future, Gambhir will also have to deal with Test cricket squad where he would face the maximum challenge. In case Rohit plays and has Jaiswal and

Shubman Gill, the Test cricketer. Will he get all three Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and Mohammad Siraj in best shape for the series where swing and

seam will be the order of the day.

KL Rahul in top-three, where will it place

And what happens to that one middleorder slot that has been India's Achilles heel for some time. Shall Karun Nair fit in there or Shreyas Iyer should regain his Test place?

'Guru Gambhir' has some really tough choices to make but he has never been afraid of making bold decisions.

Vijayawada | Wednesday March 12, 2025

Hrithik's leg injury delays dance number with Jr NTR in *War 2*

r NTR is all set to make his Hindi film debut with *War 2*, starring alongside Hrithik Roshan. Directed by Ayan Mukerji and produced by Aditya Chopra, the film has been generating a lot of

NTR and Hrithik started rehearsing for a high-energy dance number that appears in the film's climax.

They spent nearly 15 days preparing for the sequence. However, during the shoot, Hrithik sustained a leg injury, forcing him to take a break on doctors' advice. Due to this, the song's

NTR, who had been stationed in Mumbai for the filming, is now returning to Hyderabad because of the delay, a source revealed. Most of the film, including its action sequences and dialogue portions, has already been completed. Only this dance number and a few remaining scenes are yet to be Despite this minor setback, the

makers remain committed to releasing War 2 on August 15, coinciding with Independence Day. In the film, NTR takes on a negative role, marking his grand entry into Bollywood.

where he opened up about his personal life, childhood struggles, and emotional experiences, Kiran dismissed the idea that it was a strategy to gain sympathy. "I don't like the word 'sympathy." We took a lot of risks to reach this point. When I spoke about my mother and her struggles, people called it a sympathy move, but I disagree. It wasn't sympathy that worked for the film-it was the content," he explained. "If sympathy could make a film collect Rs 50 crores, I'd sit and cry for hours, but that's not how it works," he added.

When asked why he appeared more relaxed about *Dilruba* compared to *KA*, Kiran admitted, "To be honest, my mindset was different a month ago. But after watching Dilruba, I became confident that it will entertain the audience." He acknowledged that recent films like Sankranthiki Vasthunnam and Dragon had similar narratives involving an ex-girlfriend taking care of the protagonist, but he is confident in Dilruba's unique storytelling. "I accepted this project before those films were even announced. While shooting, we learned about their stories and watched them, but our film is narrated in a completely fresh way, so there's no comparison," he said.

Addressing whether he has increased his remuneration after KA's success, Kiran responded frankly, "Yes, I have to hike my salary. Earlier, a few thousand rupees were enough, but now expenses have risen into lakhs, so it's necessary." He also shared his concerns about the current state of cin-

'SUCCESS OF KA WARRANTS A PAY HIKE'

SURESH KAVIRAYANI sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

ctor Kiran Abbavaram is known for speaking from the heart without overthinking his words. In a candid conversation, he shared insights about his upcoming film *Dilruba*, the current state of cinema, his remuneration,

upcoming projects, and more.
Following the success of KA, Kiran is now gearing up for Dilruba, co-starring Rukshar Dhillon and directed by Vishwa Kanu. Set to release on March 14, the film is a fresh attempt at a new-age commercial entertainer. "We have already revealed a lot about the story in different interactions," Kiran shared, adding that the film respects women and will resonate strongly with female audiences. "I am confident that the female audience will enjoy this film a lot," he asserted.

Reflecting on KA,

> **Actor Kiran Abbavaram speaks** straight forward from his heart without any thoughts. He speaks about his upcoming film *Dilruba*, present scenario of the films, about his remuneration, his upcoming projects and many other topics...

exam season, Kiran acknowledged the risks involved. "Yes, I am a bit nervous about the openings, but I couldn't delay the release any further it should have been released earlier," he said. Speaking about the success of re-released films, he remarked, "Those films have massive fan bases. Their re-releases feel like a reunion, where audiences relive memories from the past."
When asked about actors calling the shots in the industry, Kiran clarified, don't know about others, but for me, I like to be involved wherever necessary. Since my name is associated with the film, I feel responsible. However, the producer oversees everything and I respect that it's because thanks to producers that I've come this far." His experience in the industry has sharpened his judgment. "Now, I can assess a director's narration. Some narrate well,

ema, saying, "The industry is going through a tough phase. I hope things improve, but right now, cinema depends heavily on the theatrical business. If a film does well in

theaters, only then does it succeed. I

believe everyone needs to focus on

creating quality cinema—otherwise, only ten to fifteen films will perform

With *Dilruba* releasing during

well in theatres."

but execution is key. My upcoming films will reflect this understanding, ensuring a minimum guarantee

of quality," he stated.

Discussing Telugu cinema's reception in other industries, Kiran pointed out a disparity. "When a hit film from another language gets dubbed in Telugu, our audience eagerly watches it. But when Telugu films are dubbed in Malayalam or Tamil, they don't receive the same enthusiasm," he observed. Despite this, he admitted to casting Tamil and Malayalam actors in some of his films. "I'm not a big star, so I included actors from other industries to gain visibility there. However, if you look at my films, I have introduced nearly 40 people, including technicians and artists," he added.

Director Vishwa Karun, a fan of Puri

Jagannadh, has incorporated elements of Puri's style into *Dilruba*. "Some dialogues and scenes reflect his influence," Kiran revealed. He also teased the depth of his character, Sidhu, saying, "Sidhu's beliefs and dialogues will make the audience think. Why

doesn't he say sorry or thank you? What happened in his family's past? These intriguing aspects drive the

Looking ahead, Kiran plans to release two films this year and increase his output to three films annually from next year. "After Dilruba, I have a K-ramp movie coming up immediately," he confirmed, revealing that he has already signed four more projects. He admitted to taking on some films in the past out of obligation.

"I don't regret those mistakes, but moving forward, I will be more selective. After KA, the audience sees me differently—they recognize my genuine effort to make quality films," he said.

On a personal note, Kiran shared exciting news about his family. He and his wife are expecting their first child in May. When asked if he was hoping for a boy or a girl, he smiled and said, "I want it to be a

Aadi Sai Kumar returns in a khaki avatar with *Shanmukha*

hiatus with his upcoming film a-half-year gap, my film Shanmukha is finally releasing on March 21." he shared. Aadi expressed his excitement about the project, particularly highlighting the contribution of renowned music composer Ravi Basrur, known for his work in KGF and Salaar. "He has taken this film to the next level,"

Aadi remarked

that the film's

digital, satellite

and theatrical

rights have

been sold

He also revealed

Giving credit to the film's director and acknowledged his relentless hard work. "He is the one who convinced Ravi Basrur to compose the music, thanks to his rapport with the music director," Aadi said. The film stars Avika Gor as the female lead. "She has been a child artiste for years and it was a pleasure working with her. I would love to

collaborate with her on more projects in the future." he added. Aadi's father, Sai Kumar, is widely recognised for his iconic police roles. narticularly character graphics."

never try to imitate my father, but I was fortunate to play a police officer in this film also revealed that Shanmukha has a mythological touch toward the end, along with some horror elements Avika Gor, speaking about the project, described it as a special film in her career. "I am eagerly waiting for the release. Doing a devotional film has been an exciting experience. I got to play a dream role that every artist wishes for. Aadi is a fantastic coactor, and working with Ravi Basrur was a dream come true," she said. Director-producer Shanmugam added, "The Hindi digital and theatrical rights for other states have already been sold. Aadi plays a powerful police officer and we have crafted the film with stunning visuals and exceptional





nce a top director in the industry, Puri Jagannadh is now facing difficulties in finding an actor for his next film. According to sources, the director has approached several actors, including Nani, but has yet to secure a lead. Following the failures of *Liger* and *Double iSmart*, Puri Jagannadh is no longer in the limelight, making it challenging for him to attract big stars.

Adding to the issue, Puri has been spending most of his time in Mumbai, which has distanced him from many in the Telugu film industry. Reports suggest that he recently approached Nagarjuna with an interest in narrating a script to Akhil Akkineni, but Nagarjuna, currently busy with Kuberaa and Coolie, does not seem keen. Akhil, too, has already committed to two upcoming projects and is focused on completing them first. Other actors like Ram Pothineni, Nithiin and Sai Dharam Tei are also tied up with their respective commitments, leaving Puri still searching for a lead. With no major stars available, the industry is now curious to see who will take on the lead role in Puri Jagannadh's next film.

Kayadu Lohar stars alongside Ravi Teja in upcoming film

ayadu Lohar, who made her Telugu debut in Alluri alongside Sree Vishnu, is now set to star opposite Ravi Teja in an upcoming project. Though Alluri was released in 2022, Kayadu's presence in the film was limited mostly to songs and she didn't gain much recognition. However, after appearing alongside Pradeep Ranganathan in the recently released Return of the Dragon, which turned out to be a success, she has caught the attention of filmmakers.

According to sources, Kayadu has been roped in to play the female lead opposite Ravi Teja in a film directed by Kishore Tirumala. Ravi Teja is currently working on Mass Jathara, an action drama helmed by Bhanu Bhogavarapu. His next project with Kishore Tirumala is expected to be a family entertainer with a strong emotional core. Along with Kayadu Lohar, the film will feature another female lead. Reports suggest that Malayalam actress Mamitha Baiju, who gained popularity with *Premalu*, has been cast in the second lead role.

Nani's court drama to skip theatrical release and head to OTT? crowd-pullers for a theatrical instead. During a promotional release. Recognising this, Nani event, Nani made a bold statector Nani is keeping busy both in front of and behind

The camera. While he is acting in *Hit 3* directed by Sailesh Kolanu, he is also producing multiple projects. One such film

is *Court*, directed by Ram Jagadish. The film's tagline, State Vs A Nobody, hints at a gripping courtroom drama

Nani's sister, Deepti Ghanta, is co-producing the film alongside Prashanthi Tipirneni. The story is inspired by a real incident in Tamil Nadu, with some cinematic liberties taken to enhance the narrative. Priyadarshi plays a lawyer, while newcomers Harsh Roshan and Sridevi play the lead roles. This marks Sridevi's debut. The film also features Sivaji, Sai Kumar, Rohini and Subhalekha Sudhakar

Despite Nani's aggressive promotions, sources suggest that Court is primarily aimed at an OTT release. Historically, courtroom dramas haven't performed well in Telugu cinema and the film's lead pair—being relatively new-may not be strong

in key roles.

appears to have strategically planned for the film to be released on streaming platforms

ment: "If you don't like this film, don't watch Hit 3." While such remarks have created a

buzz, it remains to be seen whether audiences will be drawn to this courtroom drama in theaters or prefer to watch it

