





# Steps taken to protect farmers' interests: Min

PNS ■ NELLORE

Agriculture Minister Kakani Govardhan Reddy has made it clear that all steps have been taken to protect the interests of the cyclone-affected farmers and power supply restoration works are being carried out on war footing.

Talking to the media here on Thursday, he said that the agriculture and horticulture officials are reaching out to the farmers in the cyclone-affected areas. "Calamities can not be stopped but what is important is how far we reduced the damage and to what extent we are supporting the cyclone victims," the minister felt. He claimed that the cyclone damage was reduced as the officials



had taken all precautionary measures in advance.

All precautionary cautions were issued and the officials and the ministers were accessible to the farmers. Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy had issued orders to assess the

crop loss and review the situation from time to time, the Agriculture minister informed. "In 2023, crops in 93 lakh acres were enrolled in e-crop. We sent the details of crops directly to the insurance companies," he said.

Taking a dig at Opposition leader Chandrababu Naidu, he said that instead of infusing courage to the cyclone-affected farmers; Naidu is making statements demoralizing the farmers.

Naidu did not know how to infuse confidence among the affected farmers and give useful advice to come out of the crisis, Kakani slammed.

Kakani Govardhan Reddy recalled that the AP government is the only state that is implementing a free crop insurance scheme in the country.

The minister vented his anger over the misleading and distorting new items being published in the Eenadu Telugu daily.

## Seniors get prominence in Revanth Cabinet 9 Ministers were YSR's close associates

K VENKATESHWARLU  
■ HYDERABAD

The Congress government came into being on Thursday with 12 Ministers including Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. The party gave importance to senior leaders in the Cabinet. Except Revanth Reddy, Ponnamp Prabhakar and Danasiri Anasuya all other Ministers are seniors and are also former Ministers.

Leaders like Thummala Nageshwara Rao, Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Damodara Rajanarsimha and Jupally Krishna Rao have the experience of working with three Chief Ministers. Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has worked with two CMs.

Thummala Nageshwara Rao has worked in the ministries of NTR, N. Chandrababu Naidu and K. Chandrasekhar Rao. Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Damodara Rajanarsimha and Jupally Krishna Rao have worked with Chief Ministers YSR, K. Rosaiah and N. Kiran Kumar Reddy. Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has the experience of working with Chief Ministers YSR and K. Rosaiah.

Konda Surekha has the experience of working in the YSR Ministry. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy was a member of the N. Kiran Kumar Reddy Ministry.



The new Speaker, Gaddam Prasada Kumar, was a Minister in N. Kiran Kumar Reddy's Ministry and was also a close associate of the late YSR.

However, Revanth Reddy, Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Ponnamp Prabhakar, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and Danasiri Anasuya are first-time Ministers.

Interestingly, Ministers Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Damodara Rajanarsimha, N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Jupally Krishna Rao, Konda Surekha, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and Ponnamp Prabhakar were close associates of former Chief Minister, the late YS Rajasekhara Reddy. All these Ministers were active Telangana leaders during the

time of YSR. Another interesting thing is that Revanth Reddy, Thummala Nageshwara Rao and Danasiri Anasuya were in the TDP.

The Congress inducted all senior leaders as Ministers although the party appointed the comparatively young leader Revanth Reddy (54) as the Chief Minister. Danasiri Anasuya (52) is the only Minister younger than Revanth Reddy and D. Sridhar Babu (54) is the same age as CM Revanth Reddy.

Thummala Nageshwara Rao (70) is the senior leader in Revanth Reddy's cabinet. Damodara Raja Narasimha (63), Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka (62), N. Uttam Kumar Reddy (61), and Komatireddy Venkat Reddy (60) have crossed the age 60 mark.

Narendra Modi, Sanjay congratulate Revanth, promise support

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congratulating Revanth Reddy on taking oath as the Chief Minister of Telangana, Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured all possible support for the progress of the state and its people.

Tweeting regarding this, the Prime Minister said, "Congratulations to Revanth Reddy Garu on taking oath as the Chief Minister of Telangana. I assure all possible support for the progress of the state and the welfare of its people. @revanth\_anumula".

The BJP's Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar also congratulated Revanth Reddy on taking oath as the Telangana CM.

Sanjay tweeted, "Congratulations to Shri @revanth\_anumulagaru on taking oath as Telangana's Chief Minister. I extend my warm wishes to his Council of Ministers. Wishing them a successful tenure."



Naidu's 2-day visit to cyclone-hit areas from today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu is scheduled to visit the cyclone-hit areas of Vemuru, Tenali, Bapatla, Parchur, and Prattipadu in the districts of Guntur and Prakasam on Dec 8 and 9 respectively.

Starting on December 8, Friday, Naidu will visit the constituencies of Vemuru, Tenali, and Bapatla. He will stay overnight in Bapatla and continue the visit on Saturday, December 9, when he plans to inspect the crop fields devastated by cyclone Michaung in Parchur and Prathipadu constituencies.

During his visit, Naidu aims to assess the extensive damage caused by the cyclone and extend support to farmers who have incurred significant losses. He intends to meet with farmers, listen to their concerns, and offer encouragement and solidarity during this challenging time.

### Woman's body found

PNS ■ NALGONDA

An unidentified married woman was done to death by some assailants by smashing her head with boulders and lethal weapons in the wee hours of Thursday on the outskirts of Duppalapalli village in Tippiarti police station limits of the district.

Her body was found lying on the side of the road leading to Basireddyapalli village. The victim was apparently in the age of 30-35 years. She was identified as a Hindu woman. She was wearing a yellow Punjabi top, black panties and a black chunni. Silver anklets and toe rings were found on the person of the woman.

Anyone has information leading to revealing the identity of the woman should contact the Tippiarti SI on 8712670181 and Salgaauraram CI on 8712670146.

## Chandrababu has no right to visit cyclone-hit fields: Nagi Reddy

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

AP State Agriculture Vice-Chairman and President of YSR Congress Farmers' Wing MVS Nagi Reddy said that the YSRC government led by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy dedicatedly working for the welfare of farmers and providing relief measures during natural calamities hence the allegations of Telugu Desam on this issue are baseless and politically motivated. He stated that TD Nara Chandrababu Naidu is not eligible to visit in the cyclone-affected villages, as when Naidu was in power for 14 years he did not work for farmers' welfare.

Addressing a press meeting here on Thursday, Nagi Reddy said that CM Jagan had brought revolutionary changes in agriculture, edu-



cation and medicine, keeping in mind the determination. He promised that when the elections were nearing, Naidu had deposited only Rs 2,000 under the name of Annadatta Sukhibhava for one or two months but never worked for farmers' welfare.

He said that CM Jagan implemented and fulfilled all poll promises and suggested to Naidu to ask farmers about YSRCP schemes.

Refuting allegations of Naidu and other TDP lead-

ers regarding no action from the government, Nagi Reddy said that the Jagan government has taken precautions from time to time so that the farmers who reaped harvests do not suffer loss in terms of grain. He claimed that although the cyclone started on the third day of this month, the government has focused on the collection of grain so that it does not fall below 45,000 tons per day despite the rains on the fourth, fifth, and sixth days. He further said that similarly, paddy grain purchases were made offline as well.

Nagi Reddy claimed that as Chandrababu did not help farmers during the Titli cyclone, Jagan Mohan Reddy released input subsidy of Rs 182.63 crores after coming to power to the farmers of horticultural crops who lost in Titli.

## All set for Navy Day celebrations today

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Indian Navy is set to host an impressive showcase, featuring full-dress rehearsals with war drills, stunts, and demonstrations at RK Beach this Friday, from 1 pm to 8 pm. This event provides a rare opportunity for both regular motorists and enthusiasts to witness the extraordinary maritime capabilities of the Indian Navy.

To ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience for everyone, the Visakhapatnam Police have implemented specific traffic regulations. Vehicles without passes are restricted beyond specific points, including Novotel Hotel.

Motorists are advised to use alternative routes like Collectorate Junction to

Naval Coastal Battery, Siripuram Junction to NTR Statue, Pandu Metta Junction to Novotel Hotel, and Naval Canteen Junction to Naval Postal Battery.

General motorists are directed to park at MGM Ground near Park Hotel. Passholders are urged to use designated areas like APIIC ground, AU English medium ground, or the football ground. Beach Road is closed to vehicular traffic from Park Hotel onwards for a secure environment.

Residents living in the vicinity are requested to cooperate with the police. Special considerations may be granted to individuals who present their Aadhaar card in case of urgent needs.



### Aid distributed at relief camps

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Housing Jogi Ramesh has extended financial help to cyclone-hit families in Bantumilli and Kruthivenu mandals in Krishna district. The financial assistance was handed over to the victims at the rescue camp set up at the MPDO offices on Thursday. The minister handed over a sum of Rs 72,000 to 44 families in Kruthivenu mandal and Rs 1,33,500 to 59 families in Bantumilli mandal.

On the occasion, the minister said that the government had made all arrangements to face Cyclone Michaung and those people whose houses were submerged due to heavy rains in Kruthivenu and Bantumilli were brought to the relief camps.

## Expedite cyclone relief...

Continued from Page 1

Once the enumeration process concludes, farmers whose crops have suffered damage will receive input subsidies and a 100% insurance facility will be applied. The Chief Secretary also announced plans to seek relaxation of rules related to the collection of stained and discolored grains from the central government.

G Sai Prasad, Special Chief Secretary of the Revenue Department, reported that 9,321 families affected by the cyclone have been assisted in relief camps, receiving Rs 2,500 per family. Additionally, single individuals in relief camps were given Rs 1,000 each, amounting to a total distribution of Rs 2.5 crore. The distribution of essential items, including rice, dal, palm oil, onions, and potatoes, is ongoing for the affected families. Special Principal Secretary of Agriculture, Gopalakrishna Dwivedi, highlighted that 92,577 hectares of paddy are waterlogged, and 53,218 hectares of standing paddy have fallen due to the cyclone. The enumeration process for crop damage estimation is set to commence on December 11, covering horticultural crops as well. Dwivedi assured that steps would be taken to provide 100% insurance coverage for all damaged crops.

KVijayanand, Special Chief Secretary of the Energy Department, reported on the impact on the power supply, noting the restoration work's swift progress. He stated that power supply has been disrupted in 3,292 villages, with 3,111 villages already having electricity restored, and efforts ongoing for the remaining 181 villages.

B Rajasekhar, Special Chief Secretary of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, informed that 93.8 km of 55 highway roads have been damaged, with urgent steps being taken for their restoration. Pradyumna, R&B Secretary, added that 2,816 km of R&B roads are undergoing repairs on a war footing.

CDMA Koteswara Rao highlighted road damage in 14 different local bodies, amounting to 56.7 kilometers, along with 2,770 damaged street lamps. H Arun Kumar, State Civil Supplies Commissioner, assured that measures were being taken urgently to transport crops to the nearest market yards and godowns. He also reported on the offline system for purchasing grain directly from farmers.

The video conference included participation from MD Dr. BR Ambedkar of the State Disaster Management Organization, Collectors from various districts, and other officials.

## RPF of SCR rescues 107 children

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) is entrusted with the responsibility of security of railway property, passenger areas, and passengers. The force has been working round the clock to provide a safe, secure, and comfortable travel experience to Rail users. RPF is always in the forefront, at times even risking their own lives to safeguard the Railway property and also the lives of passengers. To give focused attention to the safety of Railway property, Passenger security and assisting passengers while taking coordinated action with Government Police and other Law Enforcement Agencies, RPF has launched several operations and recorded noteworthy performance.

A brief of the achievements of RPF/SCR during November 2023

Under "Operation YATRI SURAKSHA" in November 2023, RPF/SCR arrested 44 offenders and recovered stolen property worth Rs 25.92 lakhs with registration of 52 cases against them.

Under "Operation AMANAT", RPF personnel provided help in securing passenger belongings and handed over them to rightful owners. RPF retrieved more than 184 belongings of passengers valued at more than Rs.53 lakhs in the month of November 2023.

RPF has launched "Operation NARCOS" to curb narcotic smuggling through Railways. Under this operation, RPF has confiscated Ganja

valued at more than Rs 1.79 Crores with the arrest of 30 persons during November 2023.

Under "Operation NANHEFARISTE", RPF/SCR undertook the noble cause of identifying and rescuing children in need of care and protection who are lost/separated from their families due to various reasons. 107 children (93 Boys + 14 girls) have been provided safety by RPF/SCR in November 2023.

RPF launched "Operation AHT" under this mission in November 2023, RPF/SCR rescued 46 boys from the clutches of 08 Traffickers.

Under "Operation SATARK" in November 2023, liquor worth Rs 4,56,037 transported illegally through trains was seized with the arrest of 13

persons and subsequently handed over to the Excise Department, which registered 35 cases against the offenders.

RPF has launched "Operation UPALABDH" to curb the activities of touts substantially and make railway tickets available to the common man. During November 2023, 39 cases were registered by RPF/SCR with the arrest of 36 Touts the seizure of 201 live tickets, and total tickets valued Rs 5,13,685.

RPF has launched "Operation RAIL SURAKSHA" to curb the activities of offenses against the railway property. During November 2023, 35 cases were detected by recovering the stolen railway property worth Rs 3, 32,591.

## 'Agniveers will ensure youthful profile of forces: Army Chief



PNS ■ PUNE

Indian Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande on Thursday called the Agnipath scheme a "path-breaking" manpower intake methodology and asserted that it will ensure the youthful profile of the armed forces. Under the Agnipath scheme, which was introduced in 2022, soldiers are enrolled as Agniveers by the armed forces for four years. They can then go back to society and take up jobs in other sectors to pursue a career of their choice.

"In the human resource management domain, the introduction of the Agniveer (Agnipath) scheme has been a path-breaking manpower

intake and management methodology. This will ensure the youthful profile and bring more technologically adapted and oriented soldiers into ranks and file," said the Army chief.

Gen Pande was speaking at the convocation and scroll presentation ceremony at the College of Military Engineering in Pune.

He said the scheme also ensures that the "best of the best" are retained as core manpower of the armed forces.

Gen Pande said the integration of Agniveers into the units and subunits is the key as their assessment and retention in service is based entirely on merit.

"You all are going to be important stakeholders at the grassroots in your units. I want you to provide professional leadership and mentorship both as expected from a good sub-unit commander," he said while addressing the graduate officers.

He said the Indian Army has embarked upon the path of transformation since last one year.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH  
ROADS & BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT  
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE  
'e' NIT No. 31/MOR/ENC(MDR)/2023 Dated: 05-12-2023  
Online tenders are invited under e-procurement platform for 1 work for an amount of Rs. 557.90 Lakhs in Annamayya District and 1 work for an amount of Rs. 632.00 Lakhs in West Godavari District under MDR Plan. Tenderers can download the tender schedules and have further details from e-market place i.e. www.approcurement.gov.in from 08.12.2023, 3.00 PM onwards. Sd/- Engineer-in-Chief (R&B), R.O.No: 11948/CLAD/VT/11/2021-22, Dt: 07.12.2023 Major District Roads.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH  
REVENUE (LA) DEPARTMENT  
FORM NO VI (A)  
(Under section 11 (1) of Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 read with sub rule (1) of rule 19)  
PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION  
Rec.No. 504/2023/LA-Land Matters Date: 30.11.2023  
Whereas it appears to the District Collector, West Godavari District that the lands specified in the schedule below are needed for a public purpose (i.e.,) to provide approach road to house sites under Navarathalu - Peddarandiki Ilu Scheme, notice to that effect is hereby given to all to whom it may concern in accordance with the provisions of Section 11 (1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Central Act No. 30 of 2013).  
Social Impact Assessment study is exempted U/s. 10A of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 as amended by Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Andhra Pradesh Amendment) Act, 2018 (Act No. 22 of 2018).  
There are no displaced families due to this Land Acquisition.  
Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred U/s. 12 of the Act, the District Collector, West Godavari, Bhimavaram hereby designates the Sub Collector, Narasapuram and his staff and workmen to exercise the powers conferred under the above section.  
Under section 11 (4) of the Act, no person shall make any transaction or cause any transaction of land i.e., sale / purchase etc. or create any encumbrances on such land from the date of the notification without the prior approval of the District Collector, West Godavari, Bhimavaram.  
Objections to the acquisition, if any, may be filed by the person(s) interested within 60 (sixty) days from the date of publication of this notification as provided U/s. 15 of the Act before the District Collector, West Godavari, Bhimavaram / the Sub Collector, Narasapuram.  
SCHEDULE  
Mandal: Achanta Village: Valluru  
Sl. Survey No. Total Extent required in Ac., Cts. Extent in Ac., Cts. Name & address of the person interested Boundary Details of Trees, structures etc., if any  
North South East West  
1. 118/1B 0.23 0.04 Smt. Nelapudi 119 118/5 118/11 26  
2. 118/4A 0.075 0.01 Sri Lakshmi W/o 119 118/3A, 3B 118/3B 118/11  
3. 118/11B 0.065 0.01 Damodara Rao 119 118/9 118/4A 118/1  
Total 0.06  
Sd/- P. Prasanthi, I.A.S., District Collector, West Godavari, Bhimavaram



# Governor launches 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra' in city



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Governor S Abdul Nazeer has participated as Chief Guest at the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra launch programme held at Tummalapalli Kalakshetram here on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Abdul Nazeer has said that the goal of the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra is to raise awareness and facilitate the delivery of the welfare scheme benefits to all eligible persons and to do away with the feeling of neglect among crores of citizens. He also said that the Yatra aims to focus on reaching the vulnerable population, to achieve saturation of schemes of the Government of India, across the country covering all Gram Panchayats, Nagar Panchayats, and Urban Local Bodies. He further said that it has been the constant endeavour of the Prime Minister to ensure women-led development and requested all

public representatives and officers of concerned departments to create awareness among all eligible people about the various flagship programmes being implemented by the Government of India and facilitate them to avail the benefits offered under the different outreach programmes.

Earlier, the Governor went around the stalls set up at the venue, flagged off the 'Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra' mobile vehicle, and released the IEC material on the programme. S Dilli Rao, Collector, NTR District administered the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra pledge. Rayana Bhagya Lakshmi, Mayor, Vijayawada Municipal Corporation, Malladi Vishnu, MLA, Vijayawada Central, U Harika, Chairperson, Zilla Parishad, Krishna district, Ajay Jain, Special Chief Secretary, Housing & GSWS Dept, and other officers and public representatives have attended the programme.

## Armed Forces Flag Day programme held at Raj Bhavan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Governor S Abdul Nazeer participated as chief guest at the Armed Forces Flag Day programme held at Durbar Hall in Raj Bhavan here on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Abdul Nazeer said that the Armed Forces Flag Day is a special occasion to salute their valour, devotion to duty, and professionalism of the highest order, not only against the external but also the internal threats and made supreme sacrifice at the altar of duty. The Governor saluted the Armed Force personnel of Andhra Pradesh who sacrificed their lives at the altar of duty, and said that the nation owes a debt of gratitude

to them. Earlier, Director of Sainik Welfare Brig. V Venkata Reddy, VSM (Retd.) pinned the Armed Forces Flag to the Governor and collected contributions for the Flag Day Fund. Governor Abdul Nazeer felicitated and presented mementoes to Gallantry Award Winners Air Vice Marshal J Rajendra (Athi Visisht Seva Medal), Brigadier CSS Prakash, (Visisht Seva Medal), Sepoy Gorla Surendra (Sena Medal).

Taneti Vanitha, Minister of Home, Disaster Management & Sainik Welfare, Harish Kumar Gupta, Principal Secretary, Home, Officers and staff members of Sainik Welfare department, and Raj Bhavan has also attended the programme.



# Traffic cops trained in life-saving methods

Administering CPR and first aid

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a joint initiative, the city police, Young Indians NGO and King George Hospital organised a crucial first aid training programme for city traffic police officials at the Armored Reserve Function Hall on Thursday.

Highlighting the importance of the training, doctors from King George Hospital emphasised the critical need for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and first aid skills among traffic police. They stressed that a staggering 40 per cent of lives could be saved in emergency situations through the proper application of CPR. This training equips police officers to actively contribute to life-saving efforts instead of feeling helpless in critical emergencies requiring CPR.

Police Commissioner A Ravi Shankar underscored the significance of this initiative, stating, "Every year, 350 lives are lost due to road accidents. CPR can significantly reduce this number." He added that the training



would not be limited to traffic police alone but all city policemen, acknowledging their role in critical situations where swift

action is vital.

Commissioner Shankar added, "The CPR training provided will be a great help and the best service. The assistance you give to a victim is equal to God's help if you act tactfully in difficult situations and administer CPR at the right time, in the right manner, and in the right way." He urged everyone to acquire and share knowledge about CPR and first aid, announcing plans for a larger training programme to ensure

widespread community participation.

Expressing appreciation and gratitude, Commissioner Shankar commended Young Indians for taking the initiative and successfully completing the programme. He recognised the organisation's role in strengthening the skills of police personnel, acknowledging the collaborative effort between law enforcement and civic organisations.

Dignitaries and professionals actively participated in the training session. Those present were Dr. G. Buchi Raju, Principal of Andhra Medical College, Dr. Allu Padmaja, HOD of Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine at KGH, Roy Kodali (Chair) and Harsha Nandan (Co-Chair) of Young Indians NGO, Tripti Eramilli (Assistant Professor, KGH), Assistant Commissioner of Vigilance Revathi Paila, and medical professionals Dr. Shrivani Bellam, Dr. Kiran, and Dr. Srikrishna, along with members of Young Indians and dedicated police personnel.

## DISTRICT OBSERVES ARMED FORCES FLAG DAY

Collector makes first donation to the Flag Fund

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Dr. A. Mallikharjuna, District Collector of Visakhapatnam, officially launched the Armed Forces Flag Day celebrations in the district on Thursday. The event commenced with Dr. Mallikharjuna presenting the first donation to the Armed Forces Flag Fund in his office, marking the beginning of the fundraising campaign.

Extending heartfelt greetings on Armed Forces Day, Dr. Mallikharjuna expressed his gratitude to the soldiers, veterans, and their families residing in the district.

He urged the citizens, business owners, and industrialists to generously contribute to the Pataka Nidhi (Flag Fund), emphasising its crucial role in supporting the welfare of the Armed Forces.

Leading by example, Joint Collector K. S. Viswanathan



and District Revenue Officer K. Mohan Kumar also made significant contributions to the fund. The participation of District Military Welfare Office staff and ex-servicemen added a sense of community and solidarity to the programme.

Reaffirming his unwavering support, G. Satyanandam, District Military Welfare Officer, Visakhapatnam, highlighted the importance of Armed Forces Flag Day and

the collective responsibility we share in contributing to the well-being of our brave soldiers and their families.

This initiative exemplifies the commendable collaboration between the district administration, citizens, and military personnel. It serves as a powerful testament to our collective commitment to honouring and supporting the Armed Forces on this special day.

# YSRCP is unshakable in Gudivada: Kodali

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former Minister Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao (Nani) made it clear that none can defeat the ruling YSRCP in the Gudivada Constituency. Speaking to the media persons on Thursday, Nani said that the opposition TDP will field a candidate as usual and will lose the seat which has become a practice to them for long. Kodali said that YSRCP can't be defeated in Gudivada by the TDP even if they field a candidate coming from America or space.

Commenting on the celebrations by the TDP after the



Congress won in the neighboring Telangana state, Kodali said that Dr NTR floated the Telugu Desam Party against the Congress and shamelessly the

TDP leaders are celebrating Congress victory after the election results at Gandhi Bhavan in Hyderabad. He further pointed out that one disciple of TDP, former CM of Telangana K Chandrasekhara Rao lost the elections and another disciple of TDP won the elections from Congress and Revanth Reddy became the CM now.

Kodali Nani criticized Chandrababu did not caring about the welfare of the people and was always interested in the welfare of one social group, his Kamma community.

He said that CM Jagan Mohan Reddy will remain as the

chief minister of Andhra Pradesh for decades to come for implementing the welfare regime like Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, and Bengal. He said that Chandrababu becoming the CM will be a daydream and will never become the CM for deceiving the people of AP.

Nani pointed out that the people have witnessed what has happened to Jana Sena who contested in Telangana with the support of BJP. If Jana Sena contests with TDP the result will be the same in the upcoming general elections in Andhra Pradesh. Chandrababu will remain in the opposition.

## Comprehensive plans for Margashira Masotsavam preparations

Stress on need for improved facilities and seamless coordination

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In preparation for the Margashira Masotsavam, Joint Collector K.Y. Viswanathan directed officials to ensure meticulous arrangements at Shri Kanakamahalakshmi Ammavari Devasthanam, aiming to enhance devotees' experience and minimise inconvenience. During the Coordination Committee meeting, Viswanathan stressed the need for improved facilities and seamless coordination compared to previous festivals.

Anticipating a large crowd, Viswanathan instructed the establishment of queue lines, including special queues for the disabled. He provided suggestions after reviewing provisions for drinking water, sanitation, medical camps, and electricity. Security measures were prioritised, with Viswanathan directing police to establish tight security, including a temporary police station and women police presence around the temple.

Sanitation efforts were highlighted, emphasising regular garbage removal and additional directives such as drinking water provision through tanks, installation of temporary toilets, and strict measures

against meat sale. Coordination efforts involved various departments, including GVMC officials tasked with preventing meat sales. Fire safety precautions were mandated, with fire extinguishers placed strategically.

Focal points of the directive included continuous water and electricity supply, special RTC buses for devotees, and special medical camps outlined by the District Health Officer and Abkari officials. To enhance the devotee experience, a complete ban on plastic near the temple and additional staff appointments on important Thursdays were proposed. Plans for special darshans, shamanas, and electric decorations were also discussed.

The Coordination Committee, comprising officials from various departments, unveiled a wall magazine related to Margashira Masotsavam. The meeting was attended by Shri Kanakamahalakshmi Devasthanam officials, GVMC Additional Commissioner Y. Srinivas, Trust Board Chairman, members, and officers of Police, Revenue, Devadaya, and other departments.



## Collector urges swift action for VUDA Park revitalisation

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector Dr. A. Mallikharjuna has directed officials from various departments to take robust measures for development and immediate repairs in VUDA Park. The directive was issued following a surprise visit to the local Vuda Park on Thursday, during which Dr. Mallikharjuna assessed the current state of the park.

During the inspection, the District Collector observed substantial damage to play equipment in the children's play park and underscored the imperative for swift action, advocating for the installation of new equipment. Dr. Mallikharjuna emphasised the critical importance of prioritising greenery and recommended initiatives such as the replacement of electric lamps, proper construction of drains to facilitate efficient rainwater flow, and measures to avert sewage accumulation.

Highlighting the necessity for seamless coordination devoid of administrative errors, Dr. Mallikharjuna urged decisive actions to cul-



tivate a pleasant environment for park visitors. Particular emphasis was placed on reinforcing the beach-side wall adjacent to the park, with explicit instructions to increase its height if deemed necessary. Addressing concerns related to the management of basketball and shuttle courts, the

Collector urged officials to ensure prompt implementation of the directive.

## Vizag student's science project selected for national exhibition

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A science project by Sri Prakash Vidyaniketan student A. Haricharan has secured him a coveted spot at the upcoming national-level science exhibition organised by the Central Board of School Education (CBSE) in Delhi in 2024.

Haricharan's project, named Photo Voltaic Agribot, impressed judges at the regional science exhibition held at Nalanda Vidyaniketan in Vijayawada earlier this year. It stood out among 52 submissions from 30 schools across the State, earning it its place as Andhra Pradesh's representative at the national level.

The Photo Voltaic Agribot is a device designed to convert light into electricity, offering valuable assistance to farmers in ploughing, sowing, and irrigation. This innovative solution has the potential to significantly impact agriculture by improving efficiency and reducing

reliance on traditional methods. Haricharan's talent and dedication have been recognised not only at the regional level but also nationally. His participation in the CBSE exhibition provides him with a valuable platform to showcase his invention to a wider audience and potentially inspire other young minds to pursue their own scientific endeavors.

In response to Haricharan's achievement, Sri Chitturi Vasu Prakash, Director of Sri Prakash Vidyaniketan, expressed heartfelt congratulations and best wishes for the talented student. He remarked, "Haricharan's success is a testament to the spirit of innovation and excellence that we strive to cultivate at Sri Prakash Vidyaniketan. We are immensely proud of his accomplishment and are confident that his invention will leave a lasting impact at the national level in Delhi."



Haricharan's project, Photo Voltaic Agribot, is designed to convert light into electricity.

# GITAM allocates Rs.100 cr for interdisciplinary research

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

GITAM Deemed-to-be University is poised to become a leading hub for scientific research, with a substantial investment of Rs.100 crore planned over the coming years. This ambitious initiative was announced by Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dayananda Siddavattam during an international conference on chemistry research, hosted by the university's Chemistry Department.

Prof. Siddavattam highlighted the critical role of interdisciplinary research in tackling contemporary societal challenges, emphasising its potential to foster scientific breakthroughs. He stated, "High-impact discoveries often occur at the intersection of disciplines. Combining expertise from various fields will allow us to minimise the environmental and health risks associated with chemical products."

Prof. K.S. Krishna, Dean of



the School of Science, encouraged chemistry researchers to

focus on addressing pressing environmental issues. He

stressed the urgent need for innovations in clean energy generation, emission capture, and water and air purification technologies. Additionally, he emphasised the importance of developing biodegradable materials for sustainable environmental protection.

The conference's inaugural session witnessed the participation of leading figures from the academic community. This esteemed group included Prof. J.N. Murthy, Director of the

Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER), Prof. K. Vedavathi, Principal of the School of Science, Prof. B. Srinivasa Rao, Head of the Chemistry Department, Prof. G.V.R. Sharma, Director of the Faculty Development Cell, Dr. A. Jana, Conference Convener, and various other dignitaries. Their presence underscored the significance of this event in promoting interdisciplinary research at GITAM.

District Health Officer issues directives to mitigate health hazards

Expressing concern over the potential rise of dengue and malaria in mosquito-prone environments, Dr. Rao urges vigilance. He encourages residents to seek medical attention at the nearest health centre for free government-provided services if affected by diseases. Health personnel are directed to prioritise this issue and take measures to prevent infectious diseases resulting from poor sanitation.

Residents are advised to refrain from consuming outside food, ensure the consumption of boiled and cooled water, maintain cleanliness in surroundings, eliminate water deposits, cover water containers, opt for hot food, and pay special attention to children's well-being. Dr. Rao reassures the public that medical and health personnel at all health centers are available to address concerns and provide necessary assistance during this challenging period.



# Caste census aims at justice to BCs: Bharat

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Defending the government's decision to conduct a caste census, YSRCP MP Margani Bharat Ram said that the caste census is only for doing justice to the people of backward and underprivileged communities. Addressing a round table conference, organised by the municipal corporation in the Anam Kalyan Kendram here on Thursday, Bharat Ram said

that the caste census had not been carried out since Independence.

"To provide social justice to all underprivileged sections and to eradicate social disparity, the caste census must be held. Unfortunately, the caste survey has not been taken up since Independence," the MP observed.

Admitting that there are poor in the upper caste as well, he lamented that justice has not



been meted out to them either. He emphasized the need for

political, and socio-economic awareness among the BCs, SCs, STs, and minorities, stating that the Chief Minister wanted to give due share to them as per their populating radio. He described the decision of the Chief Minister to conduct a caste census as bold.

MP Bharat Ram opined that if the caste enumeration is carried out scientifically, there would be an understanding of which social groups are in

which condition and what kind of support should be given to them by the government.

The MP made it clear that they would demand the Central government to conduct a caste census across the country along with a population census. Municipal Commissioner K Dinesh Kumar also spoke. Urban coordinator Dr.Guduri Srinivas and city president Adapa Srihari were among those who attended the conference.



## 1,000 liquor sachets seized, 1 arrested

PNS ■ PARVATHIPURAM

The Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) officials seized 1,000 liquor sachets while being transported illegally at Mulga village junction in Parvathipuram mandal.

Police here on Thursday said that on the tip of a SEB team led by Inspector L Upendra conducted a checking of vehicles. They found 1000 liquor sachets being transported on a bike.

# Rains trigger heavy inflows to Yerrakaluva

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

The Yerrakaluva is receiving heavy inflows due to heavy rains in the catchment areas.

District Collector P Prashanthi visited some of the submerged villages by the Yerrakaluva flood water in Attili mandal on Thursday and directed the officials to shift the villagers to the relief camps.

Some villages including Tirupatipuram, Varigedu in Attili mandal, and Yandagandi in Undi mandal were inundated by the Yerra Kaluva flood water.

Collector Prashanthi visited the areas and spoke to the people and the farmers. She knew the details from the officials about the present flood situation.

Speaking on the occasion, she said that due to heavy rains in Yerrakaluva and Yanamadurru catchment areas, the two rivulets



are receiving heavy inflows and the water is overflowing in Tadepalligudem, Tanuku, Atthili, Pentapadu, Ganapavaram, Palakoderu mandals and some villages and wards of Bhimavaram town.

All required precautions were taken to face any situation, she stated. The flood water gushed into Tirupatipuram and Varigedu villages and steps were taken to shift the villagers to relief camps.

"The Tahsildars of the respec-

tive mandals have been ordered to depute a village revenue officer and police personnel to monitor every kilometer in the Yanamadurru drain area in coordination with the police department," the Collector said.

The instructions given by the district administration should be strictly followed the situation should be assessed every hour and information should be provided, she instructed the officials. All necessary activities like public safe-

ty, evacuation, food supply, setting up of medical camps, and other emergency operations were ordered to be taken up, she informed.

Collector Prashanthi also saw the paddy produce left in the fields due to heavy rains at Varigedu and Tirupatipuram villages. She told the farmers that exemptions were given in paddy purchasing and the farmers could avail of their vehicles even if they did not have GPS to transport the paddy.

On the way, the Collector, flanked by Civil Supplies Minister Karumuri Nageswar Rao, saw the flooding to the Vayeeru at Duvva in the Tanuku constituency. She instructed the officials to take all precautions to avoid loss of life and property due to floods. She directed the irrigation officials to prepare a proposal to carry out repairs to the regulators of the Yenamadurri canal.

# ‘SOs, PSOs must ensure peaceful polls’

PNS ■ ONGOLE

District Collector AS Dinesh Kumar asked the Sector Officers (SOs) and Police Sector Officers (PSOs) to play a vital role in holding the elections peacefully.

An Orientation programme was organised in the GGH auditorium here on Thursday for the SOs and PSOs. Collector Dinesh Kumar and SP Malika Garg addressed the programme creating awareness.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Dinesh Kumar said the SOs and the PSOs should identify the problems in their areas and vulnerable polling



centers and take necessary measures.

He said that they were appointed six months before the elections, indicating their importance in conducting elections.

The Collector said magisterial powers would be given to the SOs as soon as the election notification was issued. The SOs and the PSOs should have

a complete grasp on the polling centers in the sectors allocated to them, the route map, local conditions, the routes available to the voters to go to the polling centers, the possibility of encountering obstacles in various forms, and the history of the elections.

He also advised them to examine facilities in the polling stations and understand the sit-

uation by speaking with the people of various communities. He also suggested to them that they should work in a coordinated manner to ensure that the elections are held in a peaceful atmosphere.

SP Malika Garg said that the SOs and PSOs should work under the directions of the Election Commission. She said that if they face any problem they should not share it with the media or with the local leaders. They should not defy the handbook guidelines and the MCC rules, the SP instructed them. Joint Collector K Srinivasulu, DRO R Srilatha, and a host of police and revenue officials were present.

# Officials directed to shift paddy to rice mills

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh has directed the officials to take steps to shift the kharif paddy produce to the rice mills on a war footing and assess the crop loss expeditiously.

The Collector held a video conference with the officials on Thursday and reviewed the measures to be taken after the cyclone was affected.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Prasanna Venkatesh said that officials should go to the farmers and find out their problems and take steps to resolve them immediately. The paddy produce of the farmers

# Collector hands over autos to 11 SHG SC/ST women

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector V Prasanna Venkatesh here on Thursday handed over auto rickshaws to 11 Self Help Group SC/ST women.

The Collector, flanked by Joint Collector B Lavanya Veni, handed over the keys of the auto rickshaw to 11 SHG women.

Speaking on the occasion the Collector said that to strengthen the SC and ST women economically, the state government is providing auto rickshaws at '0' interest for their livelihood through a special scheme called 'Unnanti-Mahilashakti'.

The Collector said that Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy introduced the 'Unnati-Mahilashakti' scheme for the livelihood of SC and ST women, adding that this would extensively contribute to the livelihood of women.

He said that if the beneficiaries deposit 10 percent of the share money in the SHG bank account at the time of auto purchase, the remaining 90 percent would be provided as an interest-free loan.

As many as 12 SC and ST women in Eluru district were sanctioned 37.97 lakh worth of autos under the scheme and 11 of them were handed over to the auto-rickshaw today, Collector Prasanna Venkatesh said, stating that for the scheme, Rs 36 lakh interest-



free loan facility had been provided.

This programme undertaken for the livelihood of women would also give self-confidence to the rest of the women, he said, adding that women and children can travel without in the auto-rickshaw run by women.

The Collector said that driving licenses would be given to women who take auto rickshaws and they would be given necessary support by the DRDA and the Transport Department officials.

He asked SHG women to come forward to take auto rickshaws under the scheme. Keeping pollution control in mind, operating the CNG auto-rickshaws is encouraged instead of petrol and diesel autos.

Joint Collector B

Lavanyaveni said that the government is implementing the Mahila Shakti Auto Scheme to provide livelihood to women through the Serf Unnati Division. All the SC/ST women between the ages of 20 to 45 are eligible to utilize the scheme and apply for auto rickshaws, she said adding that the women must have a driving license.

The CNG auto rickshaw cost is Rs 3,32,718 for which Rs 3 lakh interest-free loan was sanctioned to the women. Later, the Collector and Joint Collector Lavanya Veni traveled in the respective auto driven by a woman beneficiary.

DRO M Venkateswarlu, DRDA PD R Vijayaraju, ICDS PD Padmavati and RDO Srihari were among those who attended the programme.

## Prajala Sarkar has begun its work: Rahul



**HYDERABAD:** Congratulating the new CM of Telangana, Revanth Reddy, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said that the work of 'Prajala Sarkar' has begun. Rahul tweeted regarding this on Thursday after the swearing-in of CM Revanth Reddy saying, "Congratulations to the newly sworn-in Chief Minister of Telangana, Revanth Reddy garu, and his team. Prajala Sarkar's work has begun. We will deliver the dream of 'Bangaru Telangana,' and fulfil all our guarantees." Meanwhile, the new CM, Revanth Reddy, tweeted, "A people's government has been floated in Telangana. The shackles of slavery have been broken. Now Telangana can breathe freely. Telangana will shine bright with social justice and equal development. The faces of the poor shine brightly. The wings of rights will spread. My Telangana dreams will be fulfilled. This is your brother's word."

# YSRCP highlights welfare measures

PNS ■ MADAKASIRA

Demonstrating support for Chief Minister Jagan's vision of comprehensive development, YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) supporters flooded the streets of the Madakasira constituency during the grand Samajika Sadhikara bus yatra in the Sri Sathya Sai district. Prominent party leaders representing BC, SC, ST, and Minority communities united to orchestrate a significant public gathering, highlighting the State government's accomplishments and its dedicated focus on human capital investment.

Speaking to a vast assembly in the town, Minister for Labour Gummanur Jayaram emphasized the transformative impact of the 'Amma Vodi' scheme under CM Jagan's leadership. "Our underprivileged children now attend school with pride, benefiting from provisions such as uniforms, shoes, ties, and bags, all made possible by CM Jagan's commitment to alleviating educational burdens," Jayaram stated.



He further expounded on CM Jagan's dedication to empowering women, citing enhanced support in welfare schemes that foster financial self-reliance. "Jagananna's rule has demonstrated unprecedented dedication to uplifting the downtrodden and the poor,

earning admiration as an advocate for inclusivity," Jayaram added. "Regardless of caste, religion, region, or party affiliation, the inclusive schemes implemented by the government have benefited all deserving citizens."

MLA Tippe Swamy, representing Madakasira, recalled

the legacy of former Chief Minister late YS Rajasekhara Reddy and his commitment to the development of the backward constituency. "YSR's determination to address water scarcity, regardless of associated costs, exemplifies an unwavering dedication," Swamy said. He praised CM Jagan for continuing this legacy, particularly in the last 4.5 years, by focusing on the development of Madakasira constituency through various schemes.

Bapatla MP Nandigama Suresh acknowledged CM Jagan's groundbreaking educational reforms, stating that they have paved the way for a brighter future for underprivileged children. "His visionary changes have created golden opportunities for the advancement of underprivileged sections, ensuring a promising tomorrow for the marginalised sections in our society," Suresh remarked. The resounding endorsement from YSRCP leaders underscores the party's commitment to inclusive development in Madakasira.

# Advanced Epilepsy Care Centre opened at Aster Ramesh Hospitals

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Around 60 million people suffer from epilepsy and other seizure disorders globally. India has 10 million such cases, of which around one million estimated cases are prevalent in the two Telugu States. Unfortunately, there is a serious dearth of awareness among the population regarding epilepsy. It is commonly believed by many as a behavioral disorder bordering on lunacy. Some people believe that an epileptic is a victim of sorcery, exorcism or black magic.

Dr P Ramesh Babu, Managing Director Aster Ramesh Hospitals, shared news about the opening of the first-ever Aster Ramesh Hospitals Advanced Epilepsy Care Centre and Video EEG facility in the State. The centre will be led by prominent neurosurgeon Dr Ravi Gopal Varma, who is also the director of Aster Global Neuro



Sciences, Dr Keni Raveesh Rajeev, a senior epilepsy specialist from Aster Group and Dr Harini Pavuluri, specialist in epilepsy from Aster Ramesh Group of Hospitals. The three specialists will provide advanced medical and surgical treatments in this region.

Dr Pavuluri Harini said proper diagnosis played a key role in the treatment of epilepsy. With the help of a device known as Video EEG, the aberrant electrical activity in the brain can be graphically recorded to reach precise diag-

nosis. She also explained that two out of three patients can be managed with anti-epilepsy medicines whereas the third would require advanced interventional and surgical procedures for complete relief.

Senior neurologists Major General retired Dr. Kumaravelu, D Balakrishna, Dr Lakshmi Anusha, Dr Nischal Reddy, Dr Prashant Babu, and Neuro Surgeons Dr Arun, Dr Dheeraj, and Business Development Head Dr.Kartek Choudary were present.

# Vizag filmmaker bags international award

Praveen Kumar's short film *Standoff* wins International Avant-Garde Film Award

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Praveen Kumar, an emerging filmmaker from Visakhapatnam, has achieved international recognition for his short film Standoff, winning the prestigious International Avant-Garde Film Award. The award will be presented to Kumar in New York on December 14.

This accolade follows the critical acclaim received by Kumar's previous work, Whispers in the Wind. Kumar's journey into filmmaking began in Visakhapatnam, where he completed a Bachelor's degree in engineering from Gayatri Vidya Parishad (GVP)

Engineering College. His pursuit of further education led him to the United States for an MS in computer engineering. It was during this time that his passion for filmmaking took root.

Reflecting on his educational background and innate storytelling flair, Praveen shared, "My formal education, coupled with a natural flair for storytelling, laid the foundation for my cinematic pursuits." He further honed his skills at the Esper Studio in New York and UCLA University in California, shaping his artistic approach to filmmaking.

"I am currently working on the production of a feature film



titled Missing, in addition to shooting blog videos," Praveen mentioned during his visit to Visakhapatnam, where he has roots.

Over a span of nine years, Praveen Kumar has crafted 10 short films, primarily in

English. His web series, Journey, released on YouTube, received positive responses and earned him accolades at renowned festivals such as the California Film Festival, Detroit Windsor International Film Festival, and Reel to Reel International Film Festival in North Carolina.

Known for his distinctive filmmaking style, characterised by a fusion of traditional storytelling and modern aesthetics, Praveen's films delve into the intricacies of human relationships and societal issues. He provides a fresh perspective on familiar themes, contributing to the diverse landscape of cinema.

Beyond filmmaking, Praveen engages in stand-up comedy in New York and embraces video blogging, a storytelling form that has gained popularity. Sharing his inspirations, he said, "I am inspired by popular directors from Alfred Hitchcock to Shyam Benegal."

Expressing optimism about Visakhapatnam as a potential shooting destination, Praveen concluded, "Visakhapatnam can be a nice destination to shoot movies, web series, etc., and I also have plans to shoot in the city." This highlights his commitment to contribute to the cinematic richness of his hometown.

## CGST seizes cigarettes worth Rs 3.4 crore

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Anti-Evasion Officers of the Guntur CGST Commissionerate have foiled an attempt to smuggle cigarettes and seized 69,30,000 cigarette sticks, valued at Rs 3.4 crore.

Joint Commissioner B. Lakshminarayana, on Thursday, said that in a significant operation conducted on December 5 and 6, the officials intercepted two vehicles, one at NH-16 of Nellore Town and the other at Santhamaguluru, Bapatla district, suspected to be involved in the illegal transportation of Indian origin cigarettes.

## 100 robot-assisted surgeries performed at Manipal Hospital

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Manipal Hospital, Vijayawada, has successfully completed 100 robotic-assisted surgeries since its launch. With the achievement, the hospital has taken a significant leap in medical technology with the launch of the state-of-the-art fourth generation Da Vinci X Robotic-assisted Surgery unit. Additionally, the healthcare group has also expanded and introduced robotic-assistive procedures to over seven specialties. Robotic surgeries have seen maximum application across Gastrointestinal, oncology, Urology, Gynecology, and Bariatric surgery procedures.

Dr Sudhakar Kantipudi,

Hospital Director said, "At Manipal Hospitals, we are filled with an overwhelming sense of pride and purpose as we persistently drive the integration of technology into healthcare services across our hospitals in India. Manipal has ensured access to the best-in-class robotic services to the people of Vijayawada and the neighbourhood region. We have constantly surpassed many benchmarks, from conducting the most number of robotic surgeries in a short span of time. They also believe that the capability, accessibility, and affordability of robotics will elevate the city and the State further as a medical value travel destination."



INDIA CORNER


Indian ambassador met ex Navy men on death row in Qatar

The Indian ambassador to Qatar met on December 3 eight former Indian Navy personnel who were handed death sentence by a Qatari court in October, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday. MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said two hearings on the appeal against the death sentence have already taken place. "We are closely following the matter and extending all legal and consular assistance...Our ambassador got consular access to meet all eight of them in prison on December 3," Bagchi said at a media briefing. The Indian nationals were given consular access earlier as well. The Navy veterans were on October 26 given death sentence by Qatar's Court of First Instance. India described the ruling as "deeply" shocking and vowed to explore all legal options in the case. The Indian nationals, who worked with private company Al Dahra, were arrested in August last year reportedly in an alleged case of espionage.



324 posts of HC judges vacant: Govt

There are more than 320 vacancies in various high courts where 790 judges are working as against the sanctioned strength of 1,114, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Thursday. In a written reply to a question, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal also said that according to the existing Memorandum of Procedure (MoP), the transfer of chief justices and judges of the high courts are to be made in public interest -- for promoting better administration of justice throughout the country. "No timeline has been prescribed in the MoP for transfer of judges from one high court to another," he said. Prepared in 1998, the MoP is a set of documents which guide the appointment, elevation and transfer of high court judges. Since Supreme Court judges cannot be transferred, it guides their appointment and elevation. As on December 4, the top court is functioning with its sanctioned strength of 34 judges, including the Chief Justice of India. As regards the high courts, against the sanctioned strength of 1,114 judges, 790 judges are working and 324 posts are vacant, he said. Meghwal said as on January of this year, 171 proposals received from High Court Collegiums were at different stages of processing.



Seat sharing to be top agenda in upcoming INDIA bloc meet

Working on seat sharing agreements will be on the top of the agenda at the upcoming meeting of the INDIA bloc, likely to be held between December 17 and 20, sources have said. According to sources, while a date for the meeting has not been finalised yet, the meeting will be held in the third week of December. Several constituents of the INDIA bloc have been increasingly pressing for a fast decision on seat sharing in different states so that candidates have sufficient time for campaigning and gauge the situation on ground. A meeting of the floor leaders of INDIA parties was held on Wednesday at Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge's residence with a focus on discussing the parliamentary strategy for both Houses. The seat sharing matter was also raised by leaders of the Trinamool Congress during a meeting of opposition leaders held on Monday morning to decide the strategy for the Winter Session of Parliament.



# 'BJP people's most preferred party'

## ■ PM Modi cites poll win data

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday cited poll data for assembly elections over the decades to assert that the BJP has become people's most preferred choice for governance as its record of retaining power is better than the Congress and other parties. Speaking at the BJP Parliamentary Party meeting, he said not any leader but "team spirit" should be credited for the party's big win in the recent assembly polls, noting that besides winning in three states, the party's strength has also grown in Telangana and Mizoram, sources said. The prime minister also asked party leaders to use the language preferred by the masses in their interaction with them. While giving an example, he said they should use "Modi ki guarantee" instead of "Modi ji ki guarantee". Quoting Modi, Parliamentary Affairs Minister



Pralhad Joshi told reporters that the Congress faced assembly polls 40 times while in power in those states and could win only seven of them, having a dismal success rate of 18 per cent. The corresponding figures for the BJP are 22 out of 39 times, a success rate of 56 per cent, Modi noted. Regional parties have fared better than the Congress but not the BJP as they won 18 of 36 times when in power, notching up a success rate of 50 per cent. It shows that the BJP is the

most preferred party for running the government, he said. In the case of a party in power in a state for two terms facing assembly elections, the Congress' success rate is only 14 per cent compared to the BJP's 59 per cent, he added. The prime minister reiterated that the four biggest "castes" for him are the poor, youth, women and farmers, and party leaders should work for their development. He asked MPs to participate in "Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra", a government exercise aimed at saturation coverage of various welfare schemes.

## Modi's 'arithmetic of success' shattered 'mathematics of oppn'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Taking a swipe at the INDIA bloc, senior BJP leader Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Thursday claimed there was an ongoing tussle among the alliance partners and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "arithmetic of success" has shattered the "mathematics of the opposition". Addressing people during the Viksit B h a r a t Sankalp Yatra in Rampur's Koyla village, Naqvi said the opposition should realise that a "swarm of stopgap" will not be able to conquer the "mountain of mass mandate". There is an "ongoing tussle" among the partners of the Indian National Inclusive

Developmental Alliance (INDIA) bloc and Prime Minister Modi's "arithmetic of success" has shattered the "mathematics of the opposition". A non-Congress central government is successfully completing two consecutive terms ensuring good governance and inclusive empowerment and is moving towards the third term under the "dynamic and decisive" leadership of Prime Minister Modi, Naqvi was quoted as saying by a statement from his office. Taking a swipe at the Congress, he said the success of the Modi government has sent the "democratically defeated dynasty" into depression.



# Grant of citizenship: SC questions singling out Assam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Centre why did it single out Assam and exclude West Bengal from grant of citizenship under section 6A of the Citizenship Act when the latter shares a much larger border with Bangladesh. Section 6A of the Citizenship Act relates to illegal immigrants in Assam. Observing that illegal immigration is a serious problem, a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, what is the Union government doing to safeguard the border. "Why did you single out Assam when West Bengal shares a much larger border with Bangladesh? We want to know why was West Bengal excluded from the grant of citizenship...the argument cannot be that there was agitation in Assam...why was West Bengal left alone...what is the position in West Bengal now? the bench also comprising Justices Surya Kant, M M Sundresh, J B

**"Why did you single out Assam when West Bengal shares a much larger border with Bangladesh? We want to know why was West Bengal excluded from the grant of citizenship...the argument cannot be that there was agitation in Assam... why was West Bengal left alone...what is the position in West Bengal now? the bench also comprising Justices Surya Kant, M M Sundresh, J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said."**

Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said. As the hearing commenced the Centre clarified that examination of the constitutional validity of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, has nothing to do with any other amendments in the Citizenship Act. Mehta told the five-judge constitution bench that the application of section 6A is limited to only a specific period of time. "I would like to begin with some factual clarifications. Your lordships are examining a limited question of constitutional validity of Section 6A. This is confined to a very few individuals during a particular period of time. This examination has nothing to do with any other

amendment to Citizenship Act," he told the bench. Mehta told the top court that so far as the contentions as pointed out by the petitioners are concerned like influx of immigrants from foreign countries, paucity of resources that were otherwise available to them, etc, all their concerns are true. "Person is deemed citizen if his parents or any grandparents were born in undivided india. The category is very limited- it applies in Assam, a limited geographical area. The category from which persons are permitted is only Bangladesh, a very limited area," Mehta said.

# President highlights need to bring some changes in education

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday said there is a need to make some changes to the education system in management institutions for inclusive development of the country. The President, who presented the LakshmiPat Singhania-IIM Lucknow National Leadership Awards' here, also called for linking artificial intelligence (AI) to management education and said one who knows and uses it properly should not have any fear of losing his or her job. "We have to bring some changes in the education system of our management institutions for more effective and inclusive development of the country," Murmu said. She urged managers, educationists and organisational heads to connect Indian management studies with Indian companies, consumers and society. Instead of case studies and articles about businesses based abroad, the President said,



case studies about Indian and multinational companies based in the country should be written and taught. "Our management institutes should also focus their research on research journals based in India. Special attention should be paid to those Indian journals that are in the open access domain and are accessible to students and researchers of every category," she said. Referring to the recent rescue of 41 workers from the Silkyara tunnel in Uttarakhand, Murmu said the rescue operation is not only being appreciated but there is also talk of conducting leadership studies on it. "This is a very good and lively topic, especially for leadership and teamwork in a crisis," she said. Speaking about AI, Murmu said many people are worried about job loss due to this technological innovation. "One who knows AI and uses it properly should not have any fear of losing his job due to AI," she said.

# PM has directed release of Rs 450 cr second instalment to TN, Rajnath Singh

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has directed the Union Home Ministry to release Rs 450 crore, the second instalment to Tamil Nadu for cyclone relief, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said here on Thursday. Following an aerial survey and a hi-level meeting with Chief Minister M K Stalin at the Secretariat, Singh said the first instalment of Rs 450 crore had been released earlier to the state. The release of two instal-



ments to Tamil Nadu is the Centre's share in the State Disaster Response Fund. "PM Modi is distressed by the loss of lives in TN due to rains, flood," he said. After the meeting with Singh, Stalin said a team from

the Centre would soon visit the state to assess damage due to the cyclone. He termed as 'unseen before,' the rains here and nearby areas and outlined the state's relief initiatives on war-footing. In view of the government's preventive measures, loss of lives and damage has been avoided to a large extent. The CM said relief work would continue to go on in full swing to bring normalcy in all the affected areas. Chennai city has started returning to normalcy.

# Ethics panel report on Moitra likely to be tabled in LS on today: Sources

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The report of the Ethics Committee which recommended the expulsion of TMC MP Mahua Moitra in a "cash-for-query" case is likely to be tabled in Lok Sabha on Friday, parliamentary sources said. The report was earlier listed in the agenda of the lower house for December 4 but was not tabled. Various opposition members have insisted that there should be a discussion on the



recommendations before a decision is taken on Moitra. "If the report is tabled, we would insist on a full-fledged discussion as the draft was adopted in two-and-a-half minutes," BSP MP Danish Ali

told reporters on Thursday. The committee headed by Vinod Kumar Sonkar, at a meeting on November 9, adopted its report recommending Moitra's expulsion from Lok Sabha over the "cash-for-query" allegation. Six members of the panel, including Congress MP Preeti Kaur who had earlier been suspended from the party, voted in favour of the report. Four members of the panel belonging to opposition parties submitted dissent notes.

# Mamata plucks tea leaves in north Bengal; shakes a leg

PNS ■ KURSEONG (WB)

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday visited a tea estate in Darjeeling district, plucked leaves along with workers besides talking to them. Wearing the tea pluckers' apron, Banerjee also sang a few lines with the workers and shook a leg with them. The chief minister is on a six-day visit to the northern districts of the state. "Today, after wearing their clothes, I plucked tea leaves. I learned tea plucking from them. Now, I can go to any tea garden and pick tea leaves. This is my biggest lesson today. I remember I wrote a poem about them (tea leaves pluckers) long ago," she later

said. The Trinamool Congress supremo has over 100 books to her credit and several of them are of poems. "We have blood relations with the people of the Hills. The Hills became my own home," she added. Banerjee also spoke to the tea garden workers and distributed winter garments to them. During a trip to Darjeeling last year, Banerjee took to making momos at a roadside shop in Darjeeling besides serving pani puris to the people of the Hills. Later, Banerjee went to a community hall here to bless her nephew Abesh Banerjee who tied the knot with his longtime girlfriend at a ceremony here.



# More women coming out to report crimes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

National Commission for Women Chief Rekha Sharma on Thursday said that the increase in number of FIRs in crime against women, as revealed by NCRB, indicates that more women are coming forward and reporting such cases, which is a positive development. Speaking on the survey recently released by the National Crime Records Bureau, Sharma said, "NCRB data is showing that more women are coming forward and reporting crimes against them. NCRB data is saying that more FIRs are being registered, in Delhi, UP..." "Data doesn't show crime is rising. This data means women are coming forward and complaining. It does not say how many FIRs have been registered, and how many charge sheets have been filed. It is only on the basis of FIRs. We always tell the Police, always register the FIR when a woman complains," she said.

# Arthritis drug may suppress progression of type 1 diabetes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A commonly prescribed rheumatoid arthritis drug may suppress the progression of type 1 diabetes, according to a study published in the New England Journal of Medicine. The researchers at St Vincent's Institute of Medical Research (SVI) in Melbourne found that the drug called baricitinib can safely and effectively preserve the body's own insulin production and suppress the progression of type 1 diabetes in people who initiated treatment within 100 days of diagnosis. Type 1 diabetes is a chronic condition in which the pancreas produces little or no insulin. It typically appears in adolescence.

The disease can also occur in children and adolescents depending on how many B-cells of the pancreas are non-functioning. "When type 1 diabetes is first diagnosed there is a substantial number of insulin-producing cells still present. We wanted to see whether we could protect further destruction of these cells by the immune system," said SVI's Professor Thomas Kay. "We showed that baricitinib is safe and effective at slowing the progression of type 1 diabetes in people who have been recently diagnosed," Kay said. The findings show promise as the first disease-modifying treatment of its kind for type 1 diabetes that can be delivered as a



tablet, the researchers said. "It is tremendously exciting for us to be the first group anywhere in the world to test the efficacy of baricitinib as a potential type 1 diabetes treatment," said Kay. "Up until now, people with type 1 diabetes have been reliant on insulin delivered via injection or infusion pump. Our trial

**"We showed that baricitinib is safe and effective at slowing the progression of type 1 diabetes in people who have been recently diagnosed," Kay said.**

showed that, if started early enough after diagnosis, and while the participants remained on the medication, their production of insulin was maintained," the researcher said. The randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled human trial of the drug baricitinib monitored the blood glucose and insulin production of

91 participants over the course of one year. Of these, 60 were given baricitinib and 31 were given a placebo. All trial participants were aged between 10 years and 30 years and started on the trial within 100 days of having been diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. The study shows that people with type 1 diabetes in the trial

who were given the drug required significantly less insulin for treatment. Management of the lifelong autoimmune disease is incredibly burdensome on those diagnosed and their families, requiring meticulous glucose monitoring and insulin administration day and night to stay alive, the researchers said. "We are very optimistic that this treatment will become clinically available. This would be a huge step-change in how type 1 diabetes is managed and we believe it shows promise as a fundamental improvement in the ability to control type 1 diabetes," said Professor Helen Thomas, preclinical lead on the trial.

# Separate poverty assessment for minorities not done: Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Thursday informed the Lok Sabha that a separate poverty assessment for minorities has not been done and it implements various schemes for the welfare and upliftment of every section of society, including minorities. Minority Affairs Minister Smriti Irani said this in a written reply to a question by BSP MP Danish Ali on whether the government proposes to carry out any survey for identifying the minorities, including Muslims, living below the poverty line in each state.

The ministry has adopted a multi-pronged strategy by way of implementation of various schemes aimed at educational empowerment, employment-oriented skill development and infrastructure support, etc. for the upliftment of the living standards of economically weaker and underprivileged sections of all minorities, Irani said. "A separate poverty assessment for minorities has not been done by the government. The government implements various schemes for the welfare and upliftment of every section of the society including minorities," she said.








FIRST COLUMN

SHAPING UP INDIA'S 'TECHADE'

Technology is at the heart of future geo-political arrangements



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Much of the discourse in Delhi this week was focused on the use of technology and its impact on society. This happened at a time when most of India was discussing the impact of the crucial state election results on the upcoming national elections next year. The conspiracy narrative that finally emerged after the last votes had been counted was that somehow, the winning team managed to technologically hack the electronic voting machines, at a mass level, which resulted in an outcome that wasn't expected! The techno-political challenges apart, there were many parallel conversations that pointed to the centrality of technology in modern geopolitical equations.

External affairs minister was addressing a global technology summit that discussed in detail the role technology, is likely to play in the wake of expected higher decibels on the political front (with the two largest democracies India and the US getting in the election mode next year and the overall impact on future of the planet. External affairs minister S Jaishankar said "We all intuitively know that the march of technology is really the history of human progress and actually pretty much every era has its particular sets of technological advancements which have defined it. We also know that the history of the world, the balances of power, the making and unmaking of nations, of civilizations are all in one way or another a reflection of how technology has grown. Now, in terms of the policy challenges that it presents, one of course is the need to regulate technology because many technologies also come with downsides and we have seen that expressed in world affairs through regimes and treaties and rules."



In one of the most candid admissions, the minister highlighted the pitfalls of India following an ideological (to be read as non-aligned) blinder-induced foreign policy approach for nearly three decades. The obvious reference was to the opt-out from the US block on nuclear technology cooperation back in the 1960s when the then US president had offered India to build a nuclear weapon of its own. India had refused on ideological high grounds and the prevailing foreign policy mindset. Some of these drained onto the national psyche, where India beyond a point, was content with importing most finished goods while sticking to being a monsoon-dependent agrarian economy. Keeping to the context Mr Jaishankar said "Where India is concerned, I think today we are, in many areas, very clearly playing catch-up. We're playing catch-up because while our era of reform started three decades ago, the era of reform was not necessarily the era of technology, and we conceptualised reform in much narrower terms. if I were today to sum up the last decade because I think we are now very clearly at the tail end of what is the second term of the Modi government, perhaps one major difference has been the centrality of technology in approaching public policy and to approach governance and towards national security. So, if one looks today at the domestic direction, the push on manufacturing, and this itself is a debate in this country, there are people who believe that it is not our competence, I would say even our karma, to do manufacturing, and that we would be wasting our time, energy and resources embarking on that path. But here's a common-sense proposition. You're not going to be able to do R&D if you don't have competitive manufacturing. You can't encourage people to be at the cutting edge if you are not at the middle level of the same business." This focus on technology at the heart of future geo-political arrangements is one dominant theme getting into 2024.

*(The writer is a policy analyst, views are personal)*

Has SAARC lived up to its expectation?



SANTOSH MATHEWS

SAARC Charter Day is observed on December 8 by eight member countries. It is time to analyse its journey; what has been achieved and where it is headed



The South Asian Regional Cooperation also known as SAARC, is a regional cooperation comprising eight countries i.e. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. When SAARC was initially constituted in 1985, there were only seven member states however in 2007, Afghanistan was added to this regional grouping.

The SAARC was set up in order to ensure that economic, social and cultural development occurred in the region. However, over the last few years, we have seen a decline in any kind of engagement on these fronts. Further the major objective of ensuring that the living standards of the people has gone downhill and there have been blatant human rights violations in the region which has caused individuals to lose their dignity in a myriad of ways. Regional integrity which was the founding idea behind SAARC has faced a serious blow with the skirmishes and standoff between India and Pakistan. These conflicts have spilt over into other avenues as well, which has effectively brought the SAARC functionalities to a grinding halt. Thus, also putting the peace and harmony of the region in jeopardy. The conflicts have prevented states from being able to build sustainable cooperation to promote economic, social or cultural development as a regional block. However, one must note that despite the fact that the regional block is not functioning as it was envisioned, states continue to have individual interactions with each other on various fronts of cooperation. The major driving factor behind the creation of SAARC was the acceleration of the process of economic growth. Further in order to realize this the SAARC states created an institutionalised regional economic cooperation through the Committee on Economic Cooperation.

The agenda for this committee was to promote various methods and ways through which economic and trade relations could be intensified. The biggest step undertaken by the committee towards helping realize this goal was the creation of the SAARC Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA) in 1993. The SAPTA came into force in 1995 with the sole goal of promoting free trade among the member states in the region. To a large extent, this Agreement can be credited for reducing the trade barriers in the region to a large extent and for kindling the fire of free trade in the region. The SAPTA was replaced by the South Asian Free Trade Area at the twelfth SAARC meeting which was held in Islamabad. The South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) though signed in 2004 was operationalized in 2006 and for a while, it was able to promote trade in the region but has fallen flat at the present due to political conflicts that exist between the two nuclear power states of the South Asian region. Over the years both the SAPTA and the SAFTA have failed to achieve their goals of accelerated economic growth in the region. Further, the incapacitation of Afghanistan to act as a state the Taliban has ruined the economy of the state. However, there is a need to strengthen the SAFTA and create a more durable structure like that of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Drawing a parallel with recreating the same possibilities through SAFTA that the AfCFTA is set to bring to the region. According to a recent World Bank report the AfCFTA is set to boost the regional income by 7% which when converted to dollars amounts to \$450bn. Thus, impacting the quality of life of women, daily wage labourers and unskilled. This in turn enables the region to lift around 30 million people out of extreme poverty by 2035. The AfCFTA will be able to achieve this goal by diversifying exports, accelerating growth, competitively integrating into the global economy and increasing foreign direct investment. If the SAARC could implement the SAFTA in a much more aggressive manner it would aid in the upliftment of around 736 million people living in extreme poverty in the South Asian Region.

Terrorism is not something that is new to the region and is however something that is overlooked to a large extent. States in the region tend to engage and counter-terrorism as individual actors rather than work together collectively as a block to prevent this from escalating in the region. Terrorism and politically instigated violence is not something that is new to the region and has persisted from before the inception of the SAARC. There is a need for SAARC to contribute to the strengthening of practical and implementable counter-terrorism cooperation. The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) is a permanent organ of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and it aims at the promotion of cooperation between member states against three identified tents of counter-terrorism i.e. terrorism, separatism and extremism. If the SAARC could create something similar to the RATS it would greatly benefit their current individualistic fight against terrorism. From the perspective of India, why does SAARC play an important role in the foreign policy of India? If the SAFTA is properly operationalized it would be able to achieve its goal which is to reduce the customs duties to zero in the region. Thus, enabling India to boost its economic growth not just in the region but internationally as well. Further, the framework agreement on energy cooperation in the South Asian Region would enable India to mitigate the shortage faced in electricity production. Further, it would allow all member states to achieve their Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Accord as the electricity created under this Agreement leans towards green energy sourced from renewable sources. SAARC as an organisation had come up with a Visa exemption scheme wherein certain categories of dignitaries were exempted from Visas. If this idea is to see fruition there is a need for states to set aside their differences and work together. India has always been the forerunner of Space development initiatives and it would be an added feather to the cap of India if we could launch the SAARC regional satellite. It would also help boost the amity between the respective member states. Further, the revitalization of SAARC would play an important role in enabling India to curb the rampant spread of Chinese influence in the region. With the Chinese influence becoming stronger in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Nepal, it is imperative for India to show these states that India can do for them what China offers as with the political tilt of various governments of the member states of SAARC the influence of China waxes and wanes. India needs to capitalise on this before it is too late and the damage is done. SAARC as a regional grouping is still of incredible importance. It is true that SAARC as a regional grouping is dormant now. However, we must not lose hope as the revitalisation of SAARC is in our best interest and could change the way we are perceived on international platforms.

*(The writer is a professor at Puducherry University, views are personal)*

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WE MUST NOT LOSE HOPE AS THE REVITALISATION OF SAARC IS IN OUR BEST INTEREST AND COULD CHANGE THE WAY WE ARE PERCEIVED ON INTERNATIONAL PLATFORMS

Road safety: Rising accidents is a cause of concern

In the last few years, the nation has witnessed an alarming surge in road mishaps, surpassing even China in harrowing game of road safety roulette



SIDDHARTH MISHRA



SIMRAN DAS

According to the annual report on road accidents in India, 2022 released by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, the grim reality reveals a huge toll on lives and resources. A staggering 461,312 incidents were reported in 2022 alone, resulting in a catastrophic loss of 168,491 lives and causing injuries to 443,312 individuals. Shockingly, these figures depict an alarming escalation of 11.9% in accidents, 9.4% in fatalities, and 15.3% in injuries compared to the previous year, underscoring the gravity of the situation. These figures carry far more significance than just numbers; they stand for broken lives, devastated families, and a massive socio-economic burden on society. Every victim of road accidents serves as a stark reminder of how vital it is to deal with this growing emergency. The question now becomes apparent: Why is our nation, known for its inventiveness and resourcefulness, unable to address this issue and provide an appropriate and effective solution to the growing menace of road accidents? This situation seems to be the result of several circumstances, including a mix of careless driving, speeding, intoxication, and a disregard for following traffic regulations. This, together with insufficient enforcement of traffic laws and lack of awareness among people, keeps the situation dangerous on India's highways.



It is obvious that for ensuring road safety, improving the condition of the road networks is crucial. Dangers for commuters are further compounded by poorly maintained roads, inadequate signage, insufficient illumination, and a dearth of separate pedestrian sidewalks and cyclist pathways. Furthermore, a plausible factor contributing to this menace is the ease of getting a license by people as well as the faulty administrative procedure for issuing driving licenses in India. There are apparent loopholes and variations in the driving examinations for issuing licenses in different Indian states. The procedure for obtaining driver's licenses may further vary from district to district. In certain places, it is fairly flexible, while in others, it is quite rigid. Here, the role of corruption, assumingly prevalent in local offices, cannot be denied which, probably, becomes a cause of issuing licenses to undeserving persons, who, through their negligent driving, put the lives of others in danger. This is not a secret that driving licenses can be obtained relatively easily in our country. On the contrary, getting a driver's license in countries such as Germany is almost akin to a quest for a holy grail. In Germany, getting a driver's license is considered one of the toughest jobs as it requires passing highly difficult tests and procedures. Moreover, a corruption-free system makes sure that people with full driving competence, capacity and skill as well as an understanding of road conditions only get a driver's license. Moreover, in Germany, detailed road safety regulations are in place which require the parties involved in an accident as well as those witnessing an accident on the road mandatorily to stop, notify the police, assist the victims and ensure that help arrives. Any contravention of such rules makes the violator liable for heavy penalties and punishments. Moreover, Indian laws for ensuring road safety need reforms, especially Indian penal laws. The lax colonial age law in this respect is usually misused and also lacks in creating an effective deterrence. For example, Section 304 A of the IPC allows for a maximum sentence of two years for causing death by negligence—a very short sentence, when compared to the current needs. The Motor Vehicle Act of 1988 also requires significant reforms. While the Act was amended and Section 134A was added to protect people who save the lives of others from criminal or civil liability as a result of the Save Life Foundation's PIL, no significant changes have been observed till now. Road safety must become a top priority as India moves forward on its path to development and global leadership. To ensure safer roads for all, it is essential to adopt a culture of responsible driving, support infrastructural improvements, push for strict policy reforms and enforce laws strictly.

*(Siddharth Mishra is an Assistant Professor Faculty of Law University of Delhi, and Simran Das is a Student Faculty of Law; views are personal)*



MONEY MATTERS

## Tata Motors partners with HDFC Bank for vehicle financing

Tata Motors on Thursday said it has partnered with HDFC Bank to provide digital financing solutions for its commercial vehicle customers. The two companies have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to this effect, Tata Motors said in a statement. Under this partnership, Tata Motors customers can now seamlessly access HDFC Bank's vehicle financing solutions through Tata Motors' online sales platform and the Tata e-Guru mobile application, it added. "The integration of financial services into the digital ecosystem will ensure a streamlined process, allowing customers to select their preferred financier that suits the requirements," the company said. Tata Motors Vice President & Business Head Trucks, Rajesh Kaul said, "This partnership aligns with our commitment to enhancing customer experience through innovative digital solutions. By integrating HDFC Bank's expertise and reach, we aim to empower our customers with a range of financial choices that suit their unique needs."



## Giordano aims to double revenues from India

Retailer Giordano is targeting to double its revenues from the apparel business in India in 2024, top officials said on Thursday. The Hong Kong-headquartered company, which re-entered the Indian market almost after a decade, is set to close 2023 with a revenue of Rs 20 crore from the apparel business. Ujjval Saraf, the director of Brandzstorm India Marketing, the company's partner in India, said in 2024, the revenue from Giordano's apparel sales are to go up to Rs 40 crore and the points of sale to double to 100. Giordano International's member of management committee, Ishwar Chugani, said the company has 108 points of sale in Myanmar and it sees India as a promising market. Saraf said the target is to book a revenue of Rs 100 crore from apparel sales in 2026 with a corresponding increase in distribution which includes exclusive stores, shop-in-shop and selling at online marketplaces.



## Hyundai to increase vehicle prices from January 1

Automaker Hyundai Motor India Ltd on Thursday said it will hike the prices of its vehicles from next month citing rising input cost, adverse exchange rate and increase in commodity prices. The company, which sells a range of vehicles starting from Grand i10 Nios to electric SUV IONIQ5, priced between Rs 5.84 lakh to Rs 45.95 lakh, however, did not specify the quantum of the proposed price increase to be effective from January 1, 2024. The price increase is owing to rising input cost, adverse exchange rate and increase in commodity prices, amongst other reasons, Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL), said in a statement. HMIL COO Tarun Garg, COO said the company always tries to absorb the cost escalations to the extent possible and ensure customers are not burdened. "However, it has now become imperative to pass on some portion of the rising input cost to the market through a minor price increase," he added.



# No 'spectacular announcement' in February budget, says FM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday ruled out any "spectacular announcement" for her sixth budget on February 1 next year, saying it would just be a vote on account before the general elections.

A full Budget for the 2024-25 fiscal would be presented in July next year by the new government elected after the April-May general elections, she said at the CII Global Economic Policy Forum.

"I am not going to play a spoilsport, but it is a matter of truth that the February 1, 2024, budget that will be announced will just be a vote on account because we will be in an election mode. So the budget that the government presents will just be to meet the expenditure of the government till a new government comes to play," she said.

"No spectacular announcements come in that time (in a vote on account). So you will have to wait till after the new government comes in and presents the next full Budget in July 2024," Sitharaman said in reply to a question on whether she would announce a "super-



charged budget" in February.

Piyush Goyal, who was holding additional charge of the Ministry of Finance after Arun Jaitley fell ill, had presented the last interim budget in 2019. After the Narendra Modi-led government swept to power for the second straight time, Sitharaman was appointed as the finance minister and she presented the full budget on July 5, 2019.

Traditionally, a vote on account is an authorisation for incurring certain expenditures required till a new government takes office.

Governments in the past have refrained from making any major policy announce-

ment during the vote on account, but there is no constitutional bar from making big announcements. Goyal had announced a Rs 6,000 per year cash dole to 12 crore farmers in the interim Budget 2019.

Goyal had also announced tax sops for the middle class, including hiking the standard deduction available to the salaried class to Rs 50,000, from Rs 40,000.

Also, a full tax rebate was announced for individual taxpayers having taxable annual income of up to Rs 5 lakh. The 2019 interim budget had proposed that such taxpayers would not be required to pay any income tax.

### 'All sectors contribute significantly to high GDP growth'

**NEW DELHI:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said India continues to maintain the momentum of the fastest-growing major economy, with all sectors contributing significantly in economic activities. Replying to a short-duration discussion on the state of the economy in the Rajya Sabha, the minister also highlighted the various achievements of the Modi government since May 2014. "The second quarter growth was very high, it is the highest in the world. We continuously maintain that momentum of being the fastest-growing economy," Sitharaman said. She further said that in just the last eight years, India has become the fifth largest economy from the 10th in 2014. "The activities are all across the economy. It's not as if one sector is doing well...All sectors are growing and growing significantly for us to notice it," she said.

## National highways totalling 43,856 km under construction stage: Gadkari

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

National highway projects totalling 43,856 kilometres are under construction stage in the country, Parliament was informed on Thursday.

These national highways are being constructed at a cost of over Rs 9,60,103 crore, Minister for Road, Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari said in the Lok Sabha.

According to the data shared by the minister, as of October 31, the total length of national highways in the country is about 1,46,145 km against 91,287 km as of March 31, 2014.

The total number of under-construction national highway projects is 1,609. These projects are coming up across various states and UTs, Gadkari said.

The government has taken a number of steps to ensure the timely completion of projects like awarding projects after adequate preparation in terms of land acquisition and pre-construction activities, streamlining the land acquisition notification process, simplifying the procedure for approval of GAD (General Arrangement Drawing) by Railways, among others.

## MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

# ED files first chargesheet against Chinese smartphone maker Vivo

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has filed its first charge sheet in connection with its money laundering probe against Chinese smartphone maker vivo-India and some others, official sources said on Thursday.

The prosecution complaint was filed before a special court here on Wednesday under the criminal sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and vivo-India has been named an accused apart from those arrested in this case, the sources told PTI.

The federal probe agency arrested four people, including mobile company Lava International's MD Hari Om Rai, in October as part of this investigation. The others who were taken into custody were Chinese national Guangwen alias Andrew Kuang and chartered accountants Nitin Garg and Rajan Malik.

The ED had claimed in its remand papers before a local court here that the alleged activities of the four arrested accused enabled vivo-India to make wrongful gains that were detrimental to the eco-



nomic sovereignty of India.

It had raided vivo-India and its linked persons in July last year, claiming to have busted a major money laundering racket involving Chinese nationals and multiple Indian companies.

The ED had then alleged that a whopping Rs 62,476 crore was "illegally" transferred by vivo-India to China to avoid payment of taxes in India. The company had said that it "firmly adheres to its ethical principles and remains dedicated to legal compliance".

Rai had recently told a court here that though his company and vivo-India were in talks to launch a joint venture in India a decade ago, he had nothing

to do with the Chinese firm or its representatives since 2014.

"He has not derived any monetary benefit, nor has he engaged in any transaction with vivo-India or any entity allegedly related to vivo, let alone having been associated with any alleged 'proceeds of crime'," Rai's lawyer had told the court.

The agency filed an enforcement case information report (ECIR), the ED's equivalent of a police FIR, on February 3 after studying a December 2022 Delhi Police FIR against an associated company of vivo-India, Grand Prospect International Communication Pvt. Ltd. (GPICPL), its directors, shareholders and some other professionals.



## Govt bans use of sugarcane juice/sugar syrup for ethanol making

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Thursday banned the use of 'sugarcane juice and sugar syrup' for ethanol production in the 2023-24 supply year that started this month, in order to maintain adequate sugar availability for domestic consumption and to keep prices under check.

However, the government has allowed use of 'B-molasses' for ethanol production in 2023-24, a move which sugar industry bodies welcomed.

In a letter issued to all sugar mills and distillers, the Food Ministry directed them "not to use sugarcane juice /sugar syrup" for ethanol production during the 2023-24 ethanol supply year (December-November).

The directive was issued as per clause 4 and 5 of the Sugar (Control) Order 1966.

"Supply of ethanol from existing offers received by Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) from B-Heavy molasses will continue," Food ministry said in the letter.

The decision by the ministry comes in the backdrop of estimated fall in sugar production in 2023-24 marketing year (October-September).

Welcoming the move, the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories (NFCSF) Managing Director Pakash P Naiknaware said, "There is huge stock of ethanol made from B-molasses lying in the country apart from contracted quantities. The letter resolves the industry's concern."

However, there are some ambiguity in the letter that states supply of ethanol from "existing offers" received by OMCs from B-Heavy molasses will continue.

## EV retail sales grow 25.5% to 1,52,606 units

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Electric vehicle total retail sales, including passenger and commercial vehicles, grew 25.5 per cent to 1,52,606 units in November, according to data released by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Association (FADA) on Thursday.

The total EV retail sales in November 2022 were recorded at 1,21,596 units, according to FADA.

The e-two-wheeler sales were 18.82 per cent higher at 91,243 units during the previous month from 76,791 units in November 2022.

The e-three-wheeler volume rose 32.37 per cent to 53,766 vehicles in the reporting month as compared to 40,619 units retailed in the year-ago period, the data showed. Electric passenger vehicles retail sales in November this year stood at 7,064 units, a growth of 77.35 per cent over 3,983 units in the same month of last year.

The electric commercial vehicle (e-buses) retail sales were reported at 533 units in the previous month as against 203 units retailed in November 2022, registering a year-on-year growth of 162 per cent, it said.

# Stock markets snap seven-day winning run; Sensex falls 132 points

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty snapped their seven-day winning streak on Thursday due to profit taking by investors after recent sharp gains triggered by negative cues from Asian markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell 132.04 points, or 0.19 per cent, to close at 69,521.69. The gauge hit the lowest intra-day level of 69,320.53.

Broader index Nifty also declined 36.55 points, or 0.17 per cent, to settle at 20,901.15.



Analysts said crude oil prices in international markets failed to boost sentiment amid selling pressure from foreign institu-

tional investors even as traders stayed on the sidelines ahead of RBI's monetary policy decision. The Reserve Bank of India is

## Odisha approves projects worth Rs 4,804 crore

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government on Thursday approved 19 industrial projects worth Rs 4,804 crore which are likely to generate 17,553 jobs, officials said.

The projects were approved at the State-Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSWCA) meeting chaired by chief secretary PK Jena here.

The approved projects are in apparel and textiles, steel downstream, paint (chemical), plastics, packaging/metal downstream, chemicals, food, beverage and allied sectors, steel (ferroalloys), IT infra-

structure, agro processing, renewable energy/circular economy and infrastructure.

These diverse investments not only enhance Odisha's manufacturing capabilities but also showcase the region's rich mineral resources, metallurgical expertise and commitment to technological advancements in the IT sector, Jena said, adding that the agro industry has seen notable advancements, tapping into the state's cultivation potential.

The new projects will come up in 10 districts, which will reflect a comprehensive and widespread industrial development strategy for the state.

# 'Make-in-India prog drives growth in manufacturing-based exports'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Exports of manufacturing-based products have increased significantly due to the Make-in-India programme, leading to a huge growth in employment opportunities in the country, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Thursday.

The Railways, Communications and Electronics & IT Minister told reporters here that earlier the services sector used to dominate the export figures, but pharmaceuticals, mobile phones and merchandise have replaced it



now. He attributed the increase in the export of manufactured goods to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Make-In-India programme.

According to 2022-23 export data, of total exports of USD 762

billion, USD 453 billion came from manufactured goods and USD 309 billion from services, the minister said.

"This is a big turning point. It is a reflection of change in the country's economy. Manufacturing-based exports impact a common man's life. If we study the economy of countries like Japan and South Korea, we will see that they all, during their economic journey, focused on manufacturing while moving from low-income to middle-income and then high-income," Vaishnaw said.

## CAN REGISTER 8% GROWTH: NITI VC

# 'India labour-rich with enough institutional maturity'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has the potential to grow at 8 per cent as the country is labour-rich with enough institutional maturity of a functioning democracy, Niti Aayog vice chairman Suman Bery said on Thursday.

Bery also cautioned that North India has not been doing well traditionally compared to South India, and this can create tensions in a federal polity. "So, 8 per cent growth or something approximating that means continuous change that needs to be politically man-

aged," he said while addressing the Global Economic Policy Forum 2023, organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the finance ministry. According to Bery, the modernisation journey of India is unusual and unique.

"And if I wanted to bet on India for the next 25 years, I would point to first, the fact that we are not labour constrained in a world which is increasingly labour constrained. But much more importantly...we have the institutional maturity of a functioning democracy with estab-



lished rules of the game for the transfer of power we have just seen magnificently in the state

elections," he added. Bery noted that economic growth in a country like India is a prereq-

uisite for equity.

"So, growth is not an end in itself, but it is a means to an end to raise living standards and secure India's strategic and institutional economy," he said. Bery pointed out that India is the fastest-growing major economy but still the lowest per capita income country in the G20. "Growth needs to be both inclusive as well as pro-people, and women-led growth will be critical for attaining positive outcomes.

"The challenge is to use the mature institutional democratic structure of India to

realise its potential in the Amrit Kaal," the Niti Aayog vice chairman said. He emphasised that growth must be prioritised to achieve domestic and international objectives of higher living standards and securing India's strategic and institutional economy.

Bery also said it is important to strike the right balance between facilitation and regulation at the Union and state levels to realise India's potential. "It is important to link both the personal as well as spatial dimensions of inequality," he said.

## Pencil-maker Doms sets Rs 750-790 price band for Rs 1,200 crore IPO

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The second largest pencil-maker Doms Industries on Thursday set a Rs 750-790 price band for its Rs 1,200 crore initial share sale that's opening on December 13.

The Umbergaon, Valsad-based company said the issue comprises Rs 850 crore of offer for sale and Rs 350 crore of fresh issue, and will close on December 15. Its chief financial officer Rahul Shah told reporters here that the floor price is 75 times and the cap price is 79 times the face value of the equity shares.

The OFS will have its single largest shareholder Fila of Italy

selling shares worth Rs 800 crore from its 51 per cent holding and promoter families diluting shares worth Rs 50 crore Rs 25 crore each by Sanjay Mansukhlal Rajani who is a director of the company and Rs 25 crore by Ketan Mansukhlal Rajani who is whole-time director.

This offer also includes a reservation of shares aggregating up to Rs 5 crore for subscription by eligible employees which will be issued at a discount of Rs 75 per share.

The company will use proceeds to part finance the Rs 453.57 crore capex for setting up a new manufacturing facility to expand production



### Arijit Singh melts hearts once again with soul-filling ditty *Dil Haareya*



lovers from the small screen adaptation of Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy*. In *Dil Haareya*, the two are seen once again navigating a complicated love story but the powerful bond they share promises to transcend the geographical and cultural barriers dividing them. Tanya who was recently seen in the OTT series *PI Meena* says, "It was just beautiful to be a part of a soul-stirring Arijit song and love and breathe such a rich emotional journey within the span of a few minutes. It was also lovely to work with Danesh again in a story powered by the magic of love that knows no barriers and will find its way." Danesh adds, "The video is shot in a very slick manner, and yet it has an old-world charm. The music and lyrics as well as Arijit's voice just elevates it to a different level. It was also an absolute joy to reunite with Tanya and be a part of *Dil Haareya*. The small twist at the end of the video is so heartwarming and indicates that true love, as Tanya said, will always find a way to flow unabated." The lyrics of *Dil Haareya* are penned by Juno and the music is by Vivian Richard. Produced by Saregama on all audio streaming and social platforms from December 7 onwards.

### Taylor Swift has handwritten Paul McCartney note on her bathroom wall



Singer Taylor Swift showed off one of her most prized possessions – a special handwritten note that Paul McCartney wrote just for her.

Swift, who has become one of the most influential pop icons this year has been likened to having the same rare talent as great songwriters ahead of her time including Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, and The Beatle's very own Paul McCartney.

Being compared to one of the greatest songwriters ever is an incredible honour that Swift does not seem to take lightly as she is a huge Beatles fan herself, reports mirror.co.uk.

Swift interviewed from TIME, she showed off one of her most prized possessions, a framed handwritten note from McCartney himself hung up on display in her bathroom.

The note featured an inspirational lyric from their chart-topping song Blackbird released in 1968 that read: "Take these broken wings and learn to fly."

During her interview, the Grammy award-winning singer gave a full tour of her glamorous New York City apartment and highlighted some of her other most prized possessions, reports mirror.co.uk.

In addition to her framed note from McCartney, Swift also revealed that she is a die-hard Fleetwood Mac fan too. Set up on display for everyone who enters, Swift had a beautiful Stevie Nicks Barbie sitting still boxed in her kitchen that was personally sent to her from the legendary rock singer herself.

She described being awarded the title a "breakthrough moment" in her career.

### Richa Chadha & Ali Fazal's debut production *Girls Will Be Girls* becomes only Indian feature selected at SFF 2024



The power couple actor-producer duo, Richa Chadha and Ali Fazal have achieved a historic milestone with their maiden production venture, *Girls Will Be Girls*. The film is set to be premiere at the prestigious Sundance Film Festival in the highly competitive World Dramatic Feature category, a remarkable feat for their debut as producers.

The feature has been selected from among the thousands that are submitted every year, as Sundance is among the biggest film festivals in the world. *Girls Will Be Girls* is one of the exclusive 16 films chosen to participate in the competition section of the festival. This accomplishment positions the film among a select few Indian narrative feature films to have achieved such recognition at Sundance.

Directed by Shuchi Talati, the film is a compelling story set in a boarding school in a small

Himalayan hill town in northern India. It follows the journey of Mira, a 16-year-old girl whose rebellious awakening is intertwined with her mother's unfulfilled coming-of-age experiences. Produced under the banner Pushing Buttons Studios, launched by Richa Chadha and Ali Fazal in March 2021, *Girls Will Be Girls* marks their venture into film production. The cast includes multi-award-winning Malayalam film actress Kani Kusruti, and Jitin Gulati alongside debutants Preeti Panigrahi and Kesav Binoy Kiron in lead roles.

This Indo-French official co-production, a collaboration between Pushing Buttons Studios, Blink Digital, Crawling Angel Films and Dolce Vita Films, represents a significant milestone in Indian cinema's global outreach. *Girls Will Be Girls* has already garnered international acclaim, receiving international grants including the Cinema Du Monde, the Arte Kino Prize and the

VFF Talent Highlight Award. It was the Berline Talents Project Market in 2022.


Speaking of this, the director Shuchi expressed, "I am delighted that my first feature has been selected at the Mecca of cinema, Sundance. It is heartening to see a film shot and conceptualized in India make it to this mammoth international festival. At the heart of this coming of age drama is a love story between a mother and a daughter, and even though it is very rooted in Indian ethos, I am glad it resonates with people across many continents."

Adding to her thoughts, producer Richa Chadha said, "Ali and I embarked on this production with a vision to tell unique stories. *Girls Will Be Girls* making it to Sundance validates our commitment to compelling storytelling. We

couldn't be more thrilled. This journey has been about pushing boundaries and redefining narratives, and we are hopeful audiences worldwide will relate with the film. I am also elated the world will see Shuchi's fresh voice and cinematic perspective and some excellent performances from our debutant actors."

Concluding their thoughts, Ali said, "Being part of Sundance with our debut production is a dream realized. *Girls Will Be Girls* is not just a film; it's a celebration of storytelling, and we hope it leaves an indelible mark on the hearts of the audience. This project is a labor of love, and the recognition at Sundance is a testament to the dedication and passion of our entire team."

### Eva Longoria's confidence comes from her identifying as 'ugly duckling'



Actress Eva Longoria feels like the "ugly duckling" because she didn't "identify as a beauty growing up."

The 48-year-old actress has admitted she didn't mind being cast as Gabrielle Solis on *Desperate Housewives* in a role that focused a lot on her looks, and joked she's "riding that wave to the beach."

Asked where her confidence has come from, she told Entertainment Tonight: "For me? The ugly duckling. I did not identify as a beauty growing up and so I don't have a very healthy relationship with it because it didn't define me... When people are like 'You know you're sexy and beautiful and you're on this list', I'm like 'bring it yes, yes.'"

Longoria joked that being recognised for her looks is "better than the alternative," and revealed her family keeps her in check.

She added: "You know my sisters are still like 'Why are you a spokesperson for L'Oreal?' It's nothing like family to ground you."

She recently noted how it's unfortunate that young women often compare themselves to others because of "unattainable images" on sites like Instagram and TikTok.


She told PEOPLE magazine: "For me, I was lucky not to grow up in a time of social media. I never had that relationship with beauty that I think a lot of young girls grow up with, especially today, with the pressures of it and comparison and trying to keep up with these oftentimes unattainable images."

She has never needed to look up to anyone else as a role model because the women in her life are so inspiring.

Longoria said: "I come from a family of independent, strong women. I didn't have to look far for those role models."

"My mom raised four girls, one child with special needs, had a full-time job, had dinner on the table every day at six, was at every band practice, cheerleading practice, everything. And so for me, it's like, 'Wow.' I always think, 'I'm not doing enough in my life!'"


#### ARCHIE




#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### GARFIELD



#### REALITY CHECK



#### SPEED BUMP



#### CROSSWORD

1	2		3	4	5
6		7			8
9		10		11	
12			13	14	
16	17			18	


#### NANCY



#### SUDOKU

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

#### GINGER MEGGS



#### ACROSS

1 A large extinct animal  
6 Do this in water  
7 Me  
9 A friendly word for a cat  
11 Feathered creatures  
12 The same in value  
13 This animal has no legs  
16 Turned over and over on the ground  
18 A group of players on one side in a game  
19 All the bones in your body

#### DOWN

1 Vanish  
2 Hit these in with a hammer  
3 A large number of soldiers

#### SOLUTION

N	Y	N	O	W					
L	O	C	O	M	O	T	I	V	E
I	N	T	O	B	E	A	T	O	N
I	R	A	S	H	E				
G	R	E	N	H	O	U	S	E	S
H	E	R	E	S	E	D			
E	O	N	I	E	N				
S	U	R	R	O	U	N	D	E	D



# ‘Muthanga has greatly influenced me, and I have pleasant memories of visiting this lovely place’

PNS| HYDERABAD

Acting and travel are two things that actress Anu Sithara is equally passionate about and considers to be vital. The actress, who has played a number of roles with exquisite grace, enjoys travelling to locations that are surrounded by breathtaking scenery and the unspoiled allure of the countryside.

Just like many, travel is life for the actress. Whenever Anu has a break from her demanding job schedule, she always takes her husband Vishnu out on the road. The actress finds Wayanad to be an incredibly beautiful place, and she never gets tired of this lush, green area at a high height. “Exploring new places yields a wealth of priceless memories. Going on a tour is a wonderful way to decompress and take a break from work.”

The actor may have a natural affinity for the outdoors due to her Wayanad roots. She is enthralled by the rural landscape’s verdant paddy fields, shimmering rivers, chirping birds, and peaceful pathways more than she is with the city life. For her, life is richer because of the breathtaking views of the countryside. “There are no words to describe the joy and serenity that come with returning home from a journey abroad. I’m quite attached to my native country. I always take guests who come to visit to Muthanga. The scenery is breathtaking as you drive from Muthanga to



Actress Anu Sithara, who is known for playing diverse characters, and someone who really enjoys travelling, shares her travel voyage experience, especially the serenity of Wayanad and Muthunga.

Gundlupet,” says the actress. Anu has a special place in her heart for the charming and unspoiled Muthanga in the Wayanad district. The drive into the woods on the rubberized roadway is an experience of a lifetime, and Muthanga is the pride of the Wayanad people. Visitors can only be transported to a dreamlike world by the towering tall

trees, lush bamboo forest, clean air, calming breeze, lumbering elephants, chirping cuckoos, brilliant peacocks, elegant deer, and mischievous monkeys. “Whenever I have time, I visit Muthanga since it’s a peaceful forest village. Muthanga has greatly influenced me, and I have pleasant memories of visiting this lovely place.”

## B-town inspired hairstyles for you to ace this wedding season

The leading ladies of Bollywood inspire not only our day-to-day styling but also for our wedding functions. We want to look like them, at least partially, so we choose the same color lehenga, apply the same makeup, and style our hair in their manner. Amy Johnson, Global Lead Stylist at Dyson, shares how we can achieve hairstyles inspired by Bollywood celebrities’ wedding looks.

### Athiya’s mesmerizing mermaid waves



Aithya Shetty stole multiple hearts on social media when she posted dreamy pictures of her Haldi ceremony. Dressed in a stunning ivory colored Anarkali, she complemented her look with an effortless half-open hairdo featuring mermaid waves. She completed the hairstyle by adding in few jasmine flowers to elevate the look.

- Start with towel dried hair and apply your favourite styling product
- Comb mid-lengths and ends with a detangling comb to completely detangle your tresses
- Attach the Coanda smoothing dryer which is a multi-functional attachment that quickly prepares hair for styling. Select drying mode and choose high speed and high heat. Pre-dry your tresses.
- Divide your hair into 3 sections for effortless styling.
- Attach the 30mm long barrel to create voluminous curls and waves in both directions. Set airflow direction to curl away from the left side of your face. Start from the bottom section of your hair.
- Wrap a piece of hair around

the barrel, leaving out the ends and hold in place until dry. Set the hair with cold shot for 5-10 seconds and slowly release out. Repeat the same on top left section.

- Change airflow direction and repeat on the bottom right section. Move to the top right section. Separate the curls with a detangling comb.
- Take a small section and braid it top-to-bottom. Repeat on the other side. Take both the braided sections and secure at the back of your head with a bobby pin. Hide the bobby pin with fresh flowers to complete the hairstyle

### Katrina’s Stunning Straight & Sleek Look

Katrina Kaif opted for a sleek and straight look for her wedding celebrations. She covered the top of her head with a drape and flaunted those long tresses. It does not need too much styling, which makes it perfect for those wanting something easy and chic.

#### TO ACHIEVE THIS LOOK:

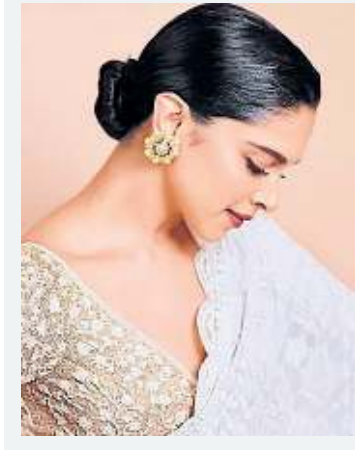
- After washing your hair, apply a styling cream and begin to blow dry your hair smooth with a hair dryer. Doing this step first will maximize the smoothness and help prolong the style.
- Once dry, brush the hair through to remove any tangles.
- Next, section the hair into

manageable pieces, tying or clipping away the top sections first.

- Prepare your straightener by choosing the desired heat setting for the hair type. Allow the tool to reach this temperature.
- Take each section – sections should be a similar size to the plates to allow the strands to spread evenly across them – and place the straightener close to the roots and glide through to the ends at a medium speed
- Reduce the heat setting for hairline sections. To get closer to the roots, take sections at an angle
- Apply a holding styling product to fix the style in place and increase style longevity.



### Deepika’s Lovely Low Bun



Nail your traditional look with a sleek middle parted low bun, just like Deepika Padukone. Add a traditional touch with gajra (jasmine flowers) wrapped around your low bun for the wedding or cover your head with your dupatta and style it with an elaborate mathapatti.

To achieve this look:

- Use a paddle brush to smooth down any frizz and stretch out curls, whilst setting the parting into place

- Using an elastic band, secure the hair into a low ponytail at the back of the head towards the nape of the neck, drawing the hair down evenly at both sides, smoothing neatly over the top of the ears
- Twist the ponytail into a bun and fix into place with hair pins and a spritz of holding spray
- Pro tip. Manage the frizz and flyaways with a little gel or oil or use the flyaway attachment of the Airwrap multi-styler to perfect your look.
- Try weaving baby’s breath or hydrangeas into the bun or a hairband

### Alia’s Casually Elegant Waves

Alia Bhatt opted for super elegant minimalistic waves that accentuated her soft facial features. This look is perfect for those who wish to take the subtle route. Replace the traditional maang-tikka with a sheesh-patti for a classic and elegant look.

#### HOW TO ACHIEVE THIS:

- Start by using the Airwrap multi-styler with its pre-styling dryer attachment on a high heat and high airflow setting, and blow dry the hair until 80% dry. To create root lift, scrunch the hair roots with your fingers during the process.
- Once dried, section your hair into half, creating a center part.
- Starting with one half, create inward facing curls by manually winding a small section of hair around the 40mm Airwrap barrel on a high heat and high airflow setting. Change the direction of airflow and repeat the process to get outward facing curls.
- Once the hair is fully curled, attach the firm smoothing brush on the Airwrap multi-styler and brush through the curls from root to ends to loosen them.
- Seal and add texture to the look by applying a setting spray.



### Priyanka’s Enchanting Soft Updo

Priyanka Chopra Jonas graced her Christian themed wedding with an elegant soft updo. The updo had middle-parted tendrils that framed her glowing face.

#### TO ACHIEVE THIS HAIRDO:

- Start by using a hair dryer and blow dry the hair until 80% dry. Once dried, section your hair into half, creating a center part.
- Starting with one half, create outward-facing curls by manually winding a small section of hair around a round brush, while using the dryer on a high heat and high airflow setting.
- Heat each section of hair for 5 seconds (or until dry) and set the curl with by pinning up. Leave it till it dries and remove the pin. Repeat the process and complete the first half of the hair.
- Complete the second half of the hair by following steps 3 & 4.
- With an elastic band, tie the hair into a low-side ponytail.
- Split the ponytail in half, twist one half to the elastic band and secure it with pins.
- Repeat the same for the other half.
- For a more natural look, loosen strands of hair at the top part and release strands of fringe at the side.
- You may also add some flowers to go with your traditional attire.



## Early language skills enhance employability in India

In today’s globally integrated world, language proficiency has become a valuable asset in the global employment market. India, with its diverse linguistic landscape, is no exception. Early language skills play a pivotal role in enhancing employability, and individuals who can communicate effectively in multiple languages have an evident advantage.

#### THE MULTILINGUAL ADVANTAGE:

India is a linguistically diverse nation with hundreds of languages and dialects spoken across the country. However, when it comes to employability, knowing multiple languages, especially English, can be a game-changer. English is widely recognized as the global lingua franca, making it essential for Indians aiming for international job opportunities. Besides English, proficiency in languages such as Spanish, French, and Mandarin, amongst others, can be an added advantage when pursuing a global career.

#### EARLY LANGUAGE ACQUISITION:

The foundation for strong language skills is laid in early childhood. Children are like sponges when it comes to language acquisition. Learning a language at a young age often leads to better pronunciation, comprehension, and fluency. The minds of young children are highly adaptable and receptive to different sounds and structures, making it easier for them to become multilingual. Hence, parents and the right educational institutions are crucial in promoting language learning from a tender age.

#### IMPROVED COGNITIVE ABILITIES:

Early language skills are not just beneficial for communication but also for cognitive development. Multilingual individuals tend to have enhanced problem-solving abilities, better memory, and improved multitasking skills. These cognitive benefits can make a significant difference in the workplace. Employers often value individuals who can think critically, adapt quickly to new situations, and handle complex tasks, which can be associated with multilingualism.

#### COMPETITIVE EDGE IN THE JOB MARKET:

In India, where the job culture is highly competitive, possessing early language skills can set you apart from other candidates. Multilingual candidates are in high demand, not only in international companies but also in industries that require communication with a diverse customer base. With the advent of technology, remote work, and globalization, companies are seeking employees who can communicate with a global clientele and navigate the complexities of international business.

#### GLOBALIZATION AND INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:

India’s economic liberalization and the rise of the technology sector have made it a hub for international companies and start-ups. With the Indian economy booming, the demand for individuals who can work seamlessly across borders is on the rise. Early language skills give individuals the edge to work with international teams, handle overseas clients, and even pursue opportunities abroad. This globalization of the job market has opened up numerous avenues for those with multilingual capabilities.

#### LANGUAGE SKILLS IN SPECIFIC INDUSTRIES:

Many industries, such as tourism, hospitality, export-import, and customer service, place a premium on language skills. Knowing a language can be a ticket to better opportunities and higher-paying jobs in these sectors. For instance, proficiency in German can open doors in the automobile and engineering industry, while proficiency in Spanish can be a boon for people wanting to work in the USA as it is the second most widely spoken language in the country. Early language skills specific to the industry of interest can be a key to unlocking the global job market.

#### LANGUAGE LEARNING RESOURCES:

In India, there is a growing emphasis on language learning from a young age. Educational institutions have started to offer language programs and integrate them into their curriculum. Additionally, various online platforms and mobile applications provide convenient ways to learn and practice languages. These resources make it easier for individuals to acquire language skills from an early age, even if they do not have native speakers in their immediate environment.

Early language skills have become indispensable for enhancing employability in India. The ability to communicate in multiple international languages opens doors to better career opportunities, improved cognitive abilities, and a competitive edge in the job market. To maximize the benefits of early language skills, it is crucial for parents, educators, and policymakers to emphasize language learning from a young age. By doing so, India can equip its vast workforce with the linguistic tools necessary to excel in the global job market and foster a new generation of international professionals.

(The author, Eshleen Jolly, is the founder, of Learning Lingos.)

## WINTER & HEART: Season’s impact on cardiovascular well-being

As the winter season approaches in India, diverse climates and varying degrees of cold temperatures characterize each region, notably experienced in the northern areas. This climatic shift presents a unique set of challenges for individuals endeavoring to maintain optimal heart health. The cold temperatures inherent in winter have the potential to constrict blood vessels, impacting blood pressure and necessitating heightened precautions for those with pre-existing heart conditions.

Furthermore, urban areas in India contend with a surge in air pollution during the winter months, resulting in a poor Air Quality Index (AQI) that significantly affects respiratory health. The repercussions of compromised respiratory health indirectly influence cardiovascular well-being, underscoring the critical need for vigilance in monitoring air quality during this period to mitigate health risks.

Emphasizing this, health experts highlight the importance of obtaining adequate sunlight or resorting to vitamin D supplements and foods rich in it to maintain heart health, especially for individuals with existing heart issues.

In addition to the direct effects of cold temperatures and air pollution, dietary habits and cultural practices prevalent during this season introduce unique challenges. The consumption of rich winter foods, often associated with festive

celebrations, poses a potential threat by contributing to elevated cholesterol levels and fluctuations in blood pressure. Recognizing these multifaceted risks necessitates a holistic approach to health and a comprehensive understanding of how illnesses during winter can impact the heart.

Indeed, the seasonal drop in temperatures is not solely a concern for respiratory infections; health experts stress the importance of fortifying one’s immunity against winter illnesses for overall heart well-being. Maintaining a robust immune system is likened to a shield protecting the heart from the cold and regulating blood pressure, particularly important for individuals susceptible to falling ill during winter.

Given these considerations, individuals are encouraged to adopt a proactive approach to their well-being. Regular consultations with healthcare professionals, coupled with lifestyle adjustments, form crucial elements of this holistic approach. By staying informed about potential health risks, making educated choices regarding diet and physical activity, and taking measures to ensure adequate vitamin D levels, individuals can navigate the complexities of the winter season while prioritizing their cardiovascular health.

(The author, Dr. Anjan Siotia, is the Director of the Cardiology Department at BM Birla Heart Research Centre in Kolkata.)



# GAMBHIR CALLED ME FIXER: SREESANTH

PTI ■ SURAT

**F**ormer pacer S Sreesanth on Thursday alleged that ex-India teammate Gautam Gambhir called him a "fixer" during a Legends League Cricket match here.

The two World Cup-winning players were involved in a heated exchange during an Eliminator match between Indian Capitals and Gujarat Giants here on Wednesday.

The umpires had to intervene and separate the two players.

"He kept on calling me 'fixer fixer, you are a fixer, \*\*\*\* off you fixer on live television on centre wicket," Sreesanth said while going live from his Instagram handle.

"I just said 'what are you saying, I kept laughing in a sarcastic way. He spoke to the umpires in the same language when they tried to control him," he added.

Sreesanth was handed a life ban by the BCCI's disciplinary committee due to his alleged involvement in the IPL 2013 spot fixing scandal.

However, the ban was reduced to seven years in 2019 by the Supreme court of India.

"From my side, I didn't use any bad word. Please guys support the real truth. He has been doing it with a lot of people. I



have no idea why he started it, it was the end of the over. "Now his people are saying sixer sixer bola hai but unhone bola you fixer, tu fixer hai (his people are claiming he said sixer sixer but he said you are

a fixer). This is not the way to talk. I'm thinking of leaving it (the incident) here but his people are trying to save him. I request you all to not fall for extra paid PR work," Sreesanth added.

An hour after Sreesanth went live. Gambhir, who is a BJP MP from East Delhi, posted on X a picture of himself in the Indian jersey smiling, captioning it "Smile when the world is all about attention!"

On Wednesday, in another Instagram live video after the game Sreesanth had called Gambhir “Mr fighter”, adding that he did not even respect senior players. “Just wanted to clear the air

with what happened with Mr fighter. One who always fights with all his colleagues. For no reason whatsoever. He does not even respect his own senior players, including Viru Bahi (Virender Schwag) "That's exactly what happened today. Without any provocation, he just kept on calling me something which was very rude which shouldn't have been said by Mr Gautam Gambhir," Sreesanth had said. "I am not at all at fault here. I just wanted to clear the air straight away. What Mr Gauti has done, sooner or later all of you will get to know. The words that he used and the things he said on a cricket field, live, is not acceptable. "My family, my state, everybody has gone through so much. I fought that battle with all your support. Now people want to down me for no reason. He said things he shouldn't have said. I will surely let you know what he said," he reiterated. This is not the first time Gambhir has been involved in an on field altercation. He has had fiery exchanges with Virat Kohli a couple of times during the IPL, including earlier this year when Royal Challengers Bangalore took on Lucknow Super Giants.

## Smith's manager debunks former Australian captain's retirement talks

PTI ■ SYDNEY



Steve Smith will not follow his teammate David Warner into Test retirement as the former Australian captain thinks he can still achieve a lot more, clarified Warren Craig, his long-time manager.

Warner had expressed his desire for a Sydney farewell after the third and final Test against Pakistan starting from January 3, 2024.

There have been talks about Smith following the suit after a below par season this year against India and England. While the New South Welshman's overall average remains the best among contemporary batsmen - 9320 runs from 102 Tests at an average of 58.61 with 32 hundreds -- he has struggled for big runs this season. However, Craig did not buy into the floating rumours. "I can debunk that (retirement) at this point in time. He's still talking about things he wants to achieve," Craig was quoted as saying by Sydney Morning Herald. The 34-year-old top-order batter has achieved every trophy during his illustrious career, including the Ashes (thrice), ODI World Cup (2015 and 2023), T20 World Cup (2021) and the World Test Championship (2023). But this year, he has man-

aged only 518 runs across 17 innings at an average of 34.53. But standing very close to becoming the fourth Australian batter to score 10000 Test runs, Smith might not want to miss that chance.

Allan Border, Ricky Ponting and Steve Waugh are the Aussie players to have crossed that landmark.

Smith was also in decent form during the recently concluded ODI World Cup in India, scoring 302 runs from 10 innings at an average of 33.55 with two fifties. However, former Australian captain Mark Taylor offered a word of caution to Smith. "It doesn't mean they're done (in mid 30s), but normally you've seen their best by then. The early-30s would be the purple patch for most players," he told SMH.



# Buttler delighted to regain form

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND  
(ANTIGUA)

England skipper Jos Buttler said he was "fed up" with his woeful run of form and that it was time to get back to being "the player that I know I am" by putting up a solid performance with the bat.

The wicketkeeper batter, who struggled with the bat all throughout the ODI World Cup, scored his first half century since September -- an unbeaten 58 off 45 balls to guide England to a series-levelled six-wicket victory over hosts West Indies in the second ODI here on Wednesday.

"I've been searching for form. I have had moments where it has been frustrating," Buttler was quoted as saying by the 'BBC'.

"I was getting fed up with it so it was time to put in the performance and get back to the play-

er that I know I am,” he added. Ahead of the second ODI Buttler had been dismissed for five single digit scores in eight outings. But the match-winning knock on Wednesday made him the fifth England batter to cross the 5,000-run mark in ODIs. “Really pleasing. I’ve been playing for a while now so it’s great when you get to those milestones after playing for a long period of time. It’s been a frustrating time recently.” Buttler had taken over the reins as white-ball skipper from World Cup-winning captain Eoin Morgan last year. Under his leadership, England won the T20 World Cup last year. However, defending champions England made an embarrassing early exit from the ODI World Cup last month, finishing seventh to just qualify for the 2025 Champions Trophy.

## Bangladesh and New Zealand

### Day 2 washed out in the 2nd cricket Test

AP ■ MIRPUR (BANGLADESH)

A day after 15 wickets tumbled, there wasn't a ball bowled on Thursday because of rain on Day 2 of the second cricket test between Bangladesh and New Zealand.

There was no sign of the rain stopping so match officials called stumps early and ruled that play would start earlier than scheduled on Friday.

Bangladesh has a 117-run lead and control of the match as it bids for a first ever Test cricket series win over New Zealand.

After skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto won the toss and opted to bat, Bangladesh was bowled out for 172 runs with Mushfiqur Rahim top-scoring on 35.

That dismissal made Mushfiqur the first Bangladeshi batter to be given out for handling the ball and obstructing the field.

Bangladesh's spinners then helped the home team hit back strongly, reducing New Zealand to 55-5. Offspinner Mehdi Hasan led the attack with 3-17 and left-arm spinner Taijul Islam, fresh from his 10-184 in the first test, took 2-29.

Bangladesh leads the two-match series after a 150-run victory in the First Test.

## Bangladesh and New Zealand

We should have varied pace more, fielded better: Patil

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Young off-spinner Shreyanka Patil feels India should have varied the pace more while bowling and also fielded better in their 38-run defeat against England in the opening Women's T20I here. Renuka Singh Thakur (3/27) got two wickets in the first over, but India squandered the advantage to help England post a massive 197 for 6 on Wednesday. The home team batters then cut a sorry figure on a placid wicket to be restricted to 159 for 6 in the opening T20I of the three-match series.

"We could have varied the pace little more, the wicket was not that great for bowlers. It was completely in favour of the batters. I could bowled better but bowling in the death overs is not at all easy," Patil (2/44) told reporters at the Wankhede Stadium.

Patil, who made her T20 debut on Wednesday, admitted that fielding was one area in which the Indian team needs immediate attention as it looks to bounce back in the second match to be played at the same venue on Saturday.

"The wicket was amazing to bat on, it was not easy (to bowl), but I think we did a pretty decent job. We will have a discussion as to what can be improved. Fielding could have been better, but we



will bounce back stronger," she said.

The 21-year-old said it was difficult for her to get sleep after knowing that she would make her debut against England.

"I was very happy that I got the cap. I was a bit excited as well as nervous, I did not get any sleep (the previous night) but after one or two balls I was fine. (It felt like) I belong here," she said.

Patil said the inaugural Women's Premier League has

helped her learn the tricks of playing under lights with the white ball.

"It (WPL) did help me personally playing against Harry di (Harmanpreet Kaur), Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah (Rodrigues)," she said.

"I think that was the start for me and to carry the momentum here was a good achievement. It did help me to adjust under lights, bowling under pressure... Now I feel like this is where I belong and I am enjoying it."

Patil said she did scenario-based practice before the series in Bangalore which proved beneficial for her. “Yes, I did a lot of scenario-based practice in Bangalore with my coach (Arjun Dev) because once you start playing high-level cricket you need to be more accurate as to what should be doing so that performance comes out well. “The execution part is still in the learning phase, but I would say planning is very important and execution will

happen with experience," she said.

England batter Danni Wyatt scored a fluent 47-ball 75 with eight fours and two sixes to help the tourists post the total.

Her 138-run third wicket stand with Nat Sciver-Brunt (77) is now England's highest partnership against India in T20is.

"Nat is just so calm, we don't really talk much out there. We have played with each other a lot. I have batted a lot with Nat. She is a quality player, she scores runs for fun, especially out here in Mumbai and (is) familiar with the conditions," Wyatt said.

Not being selected in the WPL last year was disappointing for the right-handed batter but Wyatt said she would be looking forward to being a part of the upcoming edition of the league, the auction for which will be held on December 9.

"Not while I was batting, not when I was walking out to bat but it crossed my mind a few times, people spoke about it," Wyatt replied when asked if WPL auction was on her mind while batting.

"I was pretty disappointed last year but I have completely changed my mindset now. I've done hard work and I think of had a good summer. I would love to be a part of the next WPL," she said.

# England beats West Indies by 6 wickets to level series

**AP**  **NORTH SOUND**  
(ANTIGUA)

Will Jacks scored 73 and Sam Curran took 3-33 as England found form to beat the West Indies by six wickets in the second one-day cricket international, leveling the three-match series at 1-1. Jacks' second ODI half century helped England to a winning total of 206-4 in the 33rd over in a match which was low-scoring compared with the series-opener in which 651 runs were scored. England sent the West Indies in at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium and bowled out the home team for 202 in 40 overs. Shai Hope top-scored with 68 after his match-winning 109 not out in the first match which the West Indies won by four wickets. The West Indies slumped to 23-4 after seven overs before Hope restored the innings in a 129-run partnership with

Sherfane Rutherford, who scored 63.

Hope reached his 25th ODI half century from 44 balls and scored his 68 runs at a run a ball, trying to give impetus to an innings which flagged a little in the middle stages.

Rutherford's maiden half century came from 71 balls.

Jacks gave the England innings a solid foundation. He shared a 50-run partnership with Phil Salt (21) for the fourth wicket and reached his half century from 43 balls.

His was the fourth England wicket to fall with the total 116 in the 20th over.

While Zac Crawley and Ben Duckett both were out for 3, Henry Brook and Jos Buttler took charge and carried England to victory with 17.1 overs to spare.

Buttler finished 58 not out, Brook 43 not out and the unbroken partnership was worth 90.

At 36, Buttler reached 5,000



career runs in one-day internationals, following West Indies captain Shai Hope who reached the 5,000 run milestone in the first ODI. Hope reached 5,000 runs in 114 innings, Buttler in 153. Buttler registered his 26th ODI half century from 43 balls just before the end, reaching the mark with a six off the bowling of Oshane Thomas.

"It was a must-win game today and we put in a brilliant performance," Buttler said. "I've been searching for some form and it was great to spend some time in the middle. There's no substitute for that. "Being not out at the end to get your side over the line is a great feeling."

The West Indies began poorly when Alick Athanaze was out in the fourth over, caught by Buttler off a sharp delivery from Gus Livestone. Curran then made a timely return to form by dismissing Kearny Carty (0) and Brandon King.

(17) to leave the West Indies innings teetering at 23-4. It was Curran's first haul of three wickets or more in nine ODIs since March. His 0-98 in the first match was the most expensive ODI spell ever by an England fast bowler. "It was a tough day the other day but you've got to keep trying to move forward and bounce back," Curran said. "We lost that game the other day but bounced back and we're really pleased." Hope and Rutherford stayed together until the 30th over when Rutherford was caught by Salt from Livingstone's bowling. Hope fell four overs later, bowled by Livingstone and the rest of the West Indies order offered little resistance. "We put pressure on ourselves by the way we batted," Hope said. "We didn't play situations smart enough and that's what caused the downfall in the batting.



## NANDAMURI KALYANRAM'S **DEVIL** IN CINEMAS ON DEC 29

Nandamuri Kalyanram's next on-screen appearance will be in *Devil*. The PAN-Indian film features Samyukta Menon as the female lead. The movie was supposed to come out during the last week of November. The makers postponed the release due to the delay in post-production works.

Now, here is the latest update from the team. The movie will open in cinemas worldwide on 29th December. This is a bold move as *Devil* is coming to theatres a week after the big-ticket film *Salaar*. Till now a couple of songs have been unveiled.

Harshavardhan Rameshwar, who recently impressed with his background score in *Animal*, is the music director of *Devil*. Srikanth Vissa penned the story, screenplay, and dialogues.



## Mrunal Thakur: I am a 'Telugu Ammayi' too; I am here to stay in Tollywood

Having another blockbuster hit in her kitty with *Hi Nanna*, Mrunal Thakur has proved that she's here to stay in the South, with enrapturing hearts. In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, a super excited Mrunal gets candid about being in the most bewildering phase of her life, having a South career, and more.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Tollywood actress Mrunal Thakur is living like the rich and famous now, but most importantly, she's not letting that success get to her head. Straight from New York, with huge expectations, the leading lady speaks to us on the Zoom call and expresses the significant response she's anticipating and how excited she is to promote it in an international country. But before that, it was really important for us to get to know her headspace with all those well-liked compliments surrounding her in the South.

She communicated with a lot of feelings—feelings of joy—“I am in the most bewildering phase of my life. Every Telugu release is just making me feel stupefied about the reception. Earlier, I was going through a phase of FOMO, and I am satisfied now. There is a whole new world waiting for me now. This new phase is allowing me to put a smile on the faces of a whole new set of audiences, and that's so enriching to see. Filmmakers across every language are reaching out to me with their scripts.”

As she learns the Telugu ropes, she further continues, “Having a South career itself is

an enormous discovery of my life. I never thought I'd end up working in a language that I am uncomfortable speaking. Lately, one of my fans has stood up and said you remind me of Smita Patil. I was floored! I was about to break down emotionally. I adore this comparison. It was a pleasant coincidence, even though she was a Maharastrian, and my fans tell me now I am the one taking the Marathi community onto a global scale.”

Of course, *Sita Ramam* was the game changer. A movie that didn't overlook any of her attributes and continued to only make her a memorable Telugu actress down South. The *Jersey* fame conveyed, “I deserve a lot of love, which was lacking when *Sita Ramam* hadn't entered my life. I am a Telugu ammayi, so am I a Marathi mulgi now. I am here to stay in Tollywood! The treatment has changed so much: they are calling me by my character names and not Mrunal anymore.”

She even indicated a few lines in the context of Telugu production houses she's been working with continually, and we hear her saying, “Contracts are very important for an actress these days; how much is your producer allowing you to go for the promotions? My dates were occupied with the Family Star movie, but the production house managed it for me, so that, even I could attend the *Hi Nanna* promotions. There were days spent attending to my doctor, going for dental surgery, shooting for Family Star, and then doing my current release's promotions. I am doing this because these are my babies in the South Fraternity. I want all of them to be a success!”

As we spoke, she was in America, just had a phone call with Nani, and immediately revealed, “With a gigantic heart, he has asked me to helm the *Hi Nanna* promotions over-

Hyderabad for the local promotions. The last I had come for my movie screening was Love Soniya in Hindi. I am representing my own film in a country that is not my home ground.”

In spite of not



being a Telugu-speaking girl, gradually she's picking up on the linguistic identity too, and on the same note, she clarified for the masses, “Speaking Telugu is very difficult for me, although I have begun understanding it so well now. I can deliver my dialogue in Telugu even with all the difficulties around me. This was an accidental career I discovered in Tollywood, and this has become my multiverse now.”

When you see the promos, *Hi Nanna* is bound to take you on an emotional ride. Well, how did the actress play on her emotional strengths? Was our next question imposed on her? She replied with utmost honesty, “Sometimes we have to play certain relationships on-screen, for the audiences and fans of which the dynamics we have never experienced in our real lives. I was evoking all the emotions in the movie. And Kiara Khanna will always be my first child. Her mother knows it too; there

were days on the sets when Kiara used to unknowingly call me “mumma,” and I was never uncomfortable. She provoked and demanded those positive maternal instincts from me; I liked it. All the children in the movie *Fraternity* are well-behaved, but Kiara is different to me; she's extremely expressive. Many times she's made Nani garu and me go what! I had always sat down for her close-up shots because of the eyes chiko.”



## Pindam promises a visual feast for horror enthusiasts

Roja Poolu, *Aadavari Matalaku Ardhalu Verule* fame Sriram, Kushee Ravi are teaming up for a horror drama *Pindam*, directed by a debutant Saikiran Daida. Yeshwanth Daggumati of Kalaahi Media is the producer. After encouraging responses to the first look, teaser and the song - *Jeeva Pindam* - the trailer of the film was launched today. The film is releasing in theatres on December 15.

The trailer commences with a discussion between Srinivas Avasara and Easwari Rao on spirits, if people after their death can harm others lives. The story shifts to a 90s backdrop when Anthony and his family move to a mysterious house. The house has a past they're unaware of and the family is soon affected by a series of eerie events. Two children hear strange conversations from one another.

The parents and the grandma are naturally worried and do their best to protect the children.

dren. After a spirit healer enters the house, she confirms that the house is affected by multiple spirits and asks the family to take care of the younger child. They need to protect their child before the 'mahalaya amavasya'. A dialogue suggests regardless of one's efforts to destroy something, they can't restrict its internal power.

*Pindam* lives up to the 'scariest film' ever caption with its engrossing trailer that pleases horror enthusiasts with intriguing drama, thrills and a chilling backstory. The aesthetics of the film are certain to be a major attraction, with the cinematography, unique lighting techniques, music and sound design contributing to its appeal. One also can't wait to watch the gripping premise, performances on the screen.

*Pindam* will unfold across three timelines - present-day scenario besides dating back to the 1930s and 1990s. Ravi Varma plays another crucial role. Saikiran Daida, Kavi Siddhartha have written the story while Satish Manoharan is the cinematographer. Krishna Saurabh Surampalli has composed the music and Shirish Prasad is the editor. Jashuva and Vishnu Nair are the stunt director and the art director respectively.



**PINDAM**

## 'Gitanjali is a character very dear to me as an actor,' says Rashmika Mandanna

Rashmika Mandanna, also known as the national crush, is one of the most well-known actresses of the film fraternity. Recently she was seen in the blockbuster Sandeep Reddy film, *Animal*, for which she has received immense love. The chemistry between Rashmika Mandanna and Ranbir Kapoor has been hailed by audiences with the newly famous hashtag - #RaRa! It is undoubtedly true that nobody would've been able to portray Gitanjali the way Rashmika did! On receiving so much love, Rashmika shares, “My loves!! The past couple days have been so overwhelming with the amount of love I have been receiving for *Animal*. It's inexplicable. Thankyou. Gitanjali is a character very dear to me as an actor. Her strength is her most admirable trait, and I just loved every bit of playing her character. I'm going to forever cherish the moments spent on the sets with the whole team of *Animal*.” Even amidst the success of her recent film, she's shuttling between locations for her upcoming thriller project, *The Girlfriend* which just goes on to prove her dedication to deliver stellar performances! On the work front, Rashmika has an exciting line up of projects that prove will surely be a treat to her fans, right from *The Girlfriend*, *D-51* and highly anticipated, *Pushpa 2- The Rule*.



## Urvashi Rautela roped in for NBK109

Urvashi Rautela, who is Bollywood's youngest superstar, has achieved global recognition through her perseverance and hard work. She currently has over 70 million followers on Instagram. In addition, Urvashi is the youngest Indian to be listed in the Forbes Top 10. And now, in the ever-evolving landscape of the Indian film industry, Urvashi consistently shines bright. Urvashi has once again left fans in awe by signing yet another massive pan-Indian project.

The actress is all set to grace the silver screen as the leading lady in the much-anticipated film titled *Nbk109*. Currently, the movie is shooting in the picturesque locales of Ooty, *Nbk109* is helmed by the accomplished director K. S. Ravindra Bobby. Produced by Sithara Entertainment.

Director KS Bobby was amazed at Urvashi's performance in Inspector Avinash which had an acclaimed 8.5 rating on IMDB and also her acting performances alongside Megastar Chiranjeevi, Pawan

Kalyan had amazed him and roped the actress for this massive project.

The anticipation surrounding *Nbk109* is palpable, Urvashi has consistently wowed audiences with her versatility, and her inclusion in this star-studded project only amplifies the excitement. And now the actress is on a signing spree as she has almost done 5 massive Pan Indian projects in a Year and has always amazed the audience

with her performance. And now including Bobby Deol, Dulquer Salmaan, and Nandamuri Balakrishna adds an extra layer of excitement, promising a cinematic feast that transcends linguistic boundaries.

As the film is currently under the shooting process this massive news has caused fans to eagerly anticipate the moment when Urvashi Rautela, alongside Bobby Deol, Dulquer Salmaan, and Nandamuri Balakrishna, graces the screen in this visual extravaganza.



## 'Every episode of Vadhuvu will impress the audience'



Disney plus Hotstar is back with another interesting web series titled *Vadhuvu*, which is currently streaming on the platform. The series has Avika Gor, Nandu, and Ali Reza playing key roles. Produced by Srikanth Mohta and Mahendra Soni under the SVF banner, *Vadhuvu* is directed by Poluru Krishna.

Ahead of the release of the series on the platform, the team organised a special event, during which actor Ali Reza said, “One day I got a call for the series *Vadhuvu*. They asked for a 30 days call sheets. However, I was shooting for Varun Tej's *Operation Valentine*, where I am playing the character of an Air Force pilot in it. I told the same thing to the HotStar team. They said they will think. However, with the *Operation Valentine* shoot being postponed for another two months, I told the team that I was ready to work in the project. The mood of the scene was already created

when we went into the set. The atmosphere on the set was kept like that. *Vadhuvu* will be a sure hit.” The series is a remake version of a Bengali web series *Indu*.

Director Poluru Krishna said, “When I watched the original web series, I really liked the soul of the story. But we have designed the characters to suit our nativity. Our series is very different from the original. The name itself is a Bengali remake. In the first episode, Avika gets married and comes to her in-laws. The real story starts from the second episode. We will also take the audience to Avika's in-laws. The series is so gripping. From the second episode to the 7th episode, the story is just as curious. Episode 7 is going to kick ass.”

## 'Not a great film, but I have made Thikamakata a good film to watch,' says director Venkat

*Thikamakata* is gearing up for release on December 15 with a new concept. Twins Hari Krishna and Ramakrishna as heroes, Annie and Rekha Nirosha as heroines is the movie *Thikamakata* directed by Venkat. The pre-release event of this movie was held in the city. Producers C. Kalyan, Damodar Prasad and Prasanna Kumar were the chief guests for this pre-release event and congratulated the

movie team.

Producer C. Kalyan, who graced the event, was elated with Venkat introducing himself as a director and sharing that the entire team has done a great job. “I wish with all my heart that the film will be a success. He said that if a small film is good, the industry will be good, so he wants a small film to be accepted as a good film and succeed instead of being a big film.”

Meanwhile, director Venkat shared that when he first told this story to producer Tirupati Srinivasa Rao, he said, ‘I am getting ready to make this film for my sons.’ “This movie started when the hero Hari Krishna Rama Krishna liked the story. Hari Krishna, Ramakrishna, Annie, and Rekha

all supported each other well. Sivannarayana Garu, Rocket Raghava, Yadama Raju, and Bhaskar are also very highlighted, and each one supports me. I can't say that I have made a great film, but I can definitely say that I have made a good film. He said that he wants this movie to be a success. Also, special thanks were given to the producers, C. Kalyan, Damodar Prasad, and Prasanna Kumar, who came to support this movie.”

