

Pepper Motion CEO Andreas Hager calls on CM Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andreas Hager, CEO of the German-based Pepper Motion Company, called on Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy at the Camp Office here on Wednesday.

Pepper Motion, engaged in manufacturing of electric buses and trucks, is poised to lay the foundation stone for its EV bus and truck manufacturing unit on 800 acres at Punganur in Chittoor district with an investment of Rs 4,640 crore.

The Chief Minister explained about the transparent industrial policy being implemented by the Government for giving single window clearances to entrepreneurs and producing green energy in the State.

Andreas Hager told him that their unit will manufacture 30,000 electric buses and trucks annually and it will



also have a facility of retro fitting for converting diesel buses and trucks into electric vehicles. Its integrated vertical production facility of international standards will also have a 20 GWH capacity battery manufacturing unit, he told the Chief Minister.

Pepper Motion has tie up with leading international corporate companies and has facilities

in USA, Europe, Mexico and China. He thanked the Chief Minister for giving fast clearances for its unit at Punganur and said that its forthcoming global centre of excellence in the State will also extend services to its partners in Middle East, Africa and Asia.

He said the unit would provide employment to 8,100 engineers and technicians.

Rajampet MP P Mithun Reddy, Pepper Motion CTO Dr Matthias Kerler, Finance Director Uve Stelter, Wurth Electronics India MD Harsh Aadya, Pepper Motion CIO Rajasekhara Reddy Nallapureddy, CSO Satya Bulusu, CCO Ravi Sankar, Associate Sridhar Kilaru and senior officials of the CMO were also present.

CM Jagan to inaugurate ‘Owk Tunnel 2’ today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will dedicate the ‘Owk Tunnel 2’ to the people near Mettupalli, Nandyal district on Thursday, by releasing 20,000 cusecs of water from the Gorakallu reservoir to the Owk reservoir. The Jagan Government has embarked on a transformative initiative, YSR Jalayagnam, to provide drinking water and irrigation facilities benefiting lakhs of farmers.

Fulfilling the long-cherished aspiration of the Rayalaseema people, the first and second tunnels of the Owk project, an integral component of the Galeru Nagari Sujala Sravanthi project, have been completed at a cost of Rs 567.94 crore. Construction and other ancillary works worth Rs 934 crore have also been completed for Owk Tunnel-3. Thereby, total works worth Rs 1,501.94 crore have been completed.

According to the Irrigation officials, Owk Tunnel 2 will ensure extension of irrigation facilities to 1.5 lakh acres under Srisailem Right Bank Canal, additional water supply of 1 TMC per day to Gandikota, Vamikonda, Sarvaraya Sagar, Mylavaram, and Paidipalem reservoirs under the Galeru Nagari Sujala Sravanthi scheme, irrigation facility to 2.60 lakh acres in united Kadapa, Chittoor, and Nellore districts, stabilisation of 1.3 lakh acres of ayacut, and drinking water to 20 lakh people in 640 villages.

On the other hand, works on Owk Tunnel 3 are progressing at a brisk pace. In the backdrop of dwindling flood days in Krishna river, facility is being created to swiftly transfer an additional 10,000 cusecs of water beside the present 20,000 cusecs, thereby increasing the total capacity to 30,000 cusecs by constructing Owk Tunnel 3 at a cost of Rs 1,297. 78 crore.

Works worth Rs 934 crore have already been completed for Owk Tunnel 3, distributaries and other ancillary works. Of the total 5,801-km length of the tunnel, 4,526 km is ready.

The key features of Owk Tunnel 1 and 2 are completion of a flood canal with a capacity of 20,000 cusecs from Gorakallu to an extent of 60 km, followed by tunnel excavation works. Overcoming all obstacles, lining works along with the construction of 180 meters of tunnel in the fault zone are complete. Cement concrete lining works in right and left tunnels are also done. This will allow an additional 10,000 cusecs of water to be supplied to Rayalaseema. Gandikota reservoir can be filled in just 15 days through Galeru-Nagari flood canal. Rayalaseema will receive 2 TMC of water per day at the rate of 20,000 cusecs during the flood season in Srisailem reservoir

AP govt investor...

Continued from Page 1

The Chief Minister also laid the stone for the Rs 280 crore pharma unit of the Sigachi Industries at Orvakal mega industrial hub in Kurnool district. It will provide employment to 850 persons.

He also launched the works of the nutraceuticals unit of the RPS industries which will invest Rs 90 crore and provide employment to 285 persons.

He said that out of the 386 MoUs signed at the GIS (Global Investors Summit) at Visakhapatnam in March 2023 to bring in Rs 13 lakh crore investments with a potential to give employment to 6 lakh persons, 33 units have started functioning and works relating to 94 units are in full swing while the works of other industries are in preliminary stage.

In the last four-and-a-half years, 130 large and mega industries have come up across the State with an investment of Rs. 69,000 crore providing employment to 86,000 persons, he said.

With periodical reviews under the aegis of Chief Secretary and with the proactive role of the officials, we have been able to achieve this collectively, he said, asking them to continue the same tempo henceforth.

Jagan’s aim is political...

Continued from Page 1

Every YSRCP leader and cadre is proudly going to the people to vote for YSRCP led by CM Jagan Mohan Reddy. People are attending the Samajika Sadikara bus yatra in large numbers which clearly shows the popularity of CM Jagan among the people across the State.

Sajjala said, "During the election, Chandrababu will stoop down by giving false promises to cheat the people. CM Jagan is the only leader who will ask the voters to vote only if they believe that the government has done good to them. Have you ever seen people like this in politics? It is not necessary to say what Jagan has done for the development of BCs.

HC questions at TTD over non-payment of compensation to Lakshmi’s kin

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The AP High Court has expressed its ire against Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) for not paying the compensation of Rs 5 lakh to the family members of Lakshmi, who was attacked and killed by a leopard on the walking path.

The court expressed anger at TTD for not paying compensation to the family of the deceased even after the court issued orders to pay the amount. The HC asked why the amount was not paid though the TTD was the richest temple in the country.

The Wildlife Department, in an affidavit, has expressed its



willingness to put up fencing on the walkway. The department said that there was no objection to setting up underpasses in a few areas.

Advocate Y Balaji, representing the petitioner, asked the Wildlife, TTD and Forest

departments to jointly monitor the safety of the devotees. Balaji said High Court supervision was necessary.

The High Court has issued orders to TTD and others to file a counter within two weeks.

‘AP jumps to 4th rank in GSDP growth rate’

During Naidu’s regime, State’s industrial growth was 3.2%, but under CM Jagan it reached 10.59%

PNS ■ MANYAM & KRISHNA

On the last day of Phase II of YSRCP’s ‘Samajika Sadhikara’ yatra, senior leaders from the party reiterated how Andhra Pradesh had done very well across all parameters on the development front. Today, party leaders representing the BC, SC, ST, and Minority communities organised massive public meetings in Kurupam Constituency, Manyam district (North zone) and Machilipatnam Constituency in Krishna district (Central zone). These gatherings underscored CM Jagan’s commitment not just to the marginalised communities, to the welfare of the public but majorly to the overall progress and development of the state made in the sectors of economy, agriculture, industry, investments, education, healthcare and infrastructure. Given that the ‘Why AP Needs Jagan’ campaign is running parallelly

where the party cadre is going to every household to highlight the promises fulfilled by CM Jagan and at the same time expose how TDP failed on every promise, the bus yatra is seeing an overwhelming response.

NORTH ZONE

Vizianagaram MP Bellana Chandrashekar highlighted CM Jagan’s dedicated focus on uplifting the state. He said, “CM Jagan has adeptly balanced welfare and development in Andhra Pradesh. He is a visionary leader committed to the state’s prosperity, prioritizing the people over electoral considerations.”

Araku MP Goddetta Madhavi emphasized, “CM Jagan bestowed respect to Tribals by establishing Parvatipuram as a district. Otherwise, who would have thought about us?” Further, Kurupam MLA Pushpa Sri Vaani added, “CM Jagan not only fulfilled every commitment but also delivered justice by giving us social and political representation. It is this justice that we term Samajika Sadhikarata”

CENTRAL ZONE

Revenue Minister Dharmana Prasad Rao highlighted crucial developmental statistics of the state. He said, “Andhra Pradesh has made rapid strides as far as GSDP growth is concerned. The State was ranked 16th in March 2019, but jumped to the fourth rank in 2022-23. Subsequently, the per capita income of AP advanced from 17th rank in March 2019 to ninth rank in 2022-23. This is development! And mind you, I am quoting data from Central agencies like RBI so no one can dare to question it!”

In a full throttle attack against the TDP, Dharmana Prasad Rao said, “While Chandrababu Naidu was in power, the State’s industrial growth stood at a mere 3.2 per cent. However, under

CM Jagan, it has tripled, reaching 10.59 per cent. Previously, agriculture, the backbone of the State’s economy, was ranked 27th with a negative growth rate of -6.5 per cent. But under CM Jagan, agriculture is now flourishing at +5.56 per cent. We have now moved from the second last to the seventh position!”

MLA Anil Kumar Yadav added, “CM Jagan has nominated a fisherman to the Rajya Sabha! Which other CM has the guts to do this? It is under CM Jagan’s leadership that at the moment, nine fishing harbors are currently being constructed. And it’s not just about infrastructure, his benevolence is what makes him stand apart. It was CM Jagan who swiftly assisted the owners whose boats were damaged in a recent fire mishap in Visakhapatnam harbour. Government reacted with absolute alacrity and provided aid within a remarkable four-day timeframe.”

Vizag Police seize 200 kg of ganja

Culprits managed to escape

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The II Town Police in Visakhapatnam carried out extensive search operations in the Atchamma Peta area, and seized illicit stash of ganja destined for other regions. On Wednesday the searches continued at a residence near Manorama Theater, where 99 packets of ganja, weighing approximately 200 kg and packed in seven bags, were found.

A case has been registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. However, the culprits managed to escape. Upon questioning the house owners, it was revealed that they had no information about the accused individuals and had neglected to collect any photo ID cards from them. Consequently, the house has been seized under the NDPS Act for being rented out without proper documentation, contributing to the smuggling of ganja.

DCP-1(L&O) K Srinivasa Rao, accompanied by DCP-2(L&O) K Ananda Reddy, and Commissioner of Police A Ravi Shankar personally inspected the seized ganja. They directed officials to intensify efforts to apprehend the accused and conduct a thorough investigation into related matters, including the origin and destination of the illicit substance.

Commissioner A Ravi Shankar, addressing the media at the scene, stressed the importance of due diligence when renting properties in the city.

He recommended landlords collect a photo ID card along with comprehensive information from tenants, undergo necessary police verification, and exercise caution when hiring unfamiliar individuals as workers or watchmen.

Commissioner Shankar underscored the responsibility of courier and parcel services to thoroughly check packages before dispatching them. Any discovery of cannabis should be immediately reported to the police. Failure to comply may result in legal action under the NDPS Act.



Commissioner A Ravi Shankar, addressing the media at the scene, stressed the importance of due diligence when renting properties in the city.

He recommended landlords collect a photo ID card along with comprehensive information from tenants, undergo necessary police verification, and exercise caution when hiring unfamiliar individuals as workers or watchmen.

Commissioner Shankar underscored the responsibility of courier and parcel services to thoroughly check packages before dispatching them. Any discovery of cannabis should be immediately reported to the police. Failure to comply may result in legal action under the NDPS Act.

Continued from Page 1

PMGKAY was introduced in 2020 as a pandemic relief measure, under which 5 kg of free foodgrains per beneficiary per month was provided in addition to the 5 kg of subsidised foodgrain under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

In December 2022, as PMGKAY came to an end after multiple extensions, it was subsumed under the NFSA providing ration free for one year.

Under the NFSA, up to 75 per cent of the rural population and 50 per cent of the urban population are being covered under two categories -- Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and priority households.

While AAY households, which constitute the poorest of the poor, are entitled to 35 kg of foodgrains per family per month, priority households get 5 kg per person per month.

Terming it as a historic decision, the government said the extension of free grain distribution under the PMGKAY for next five years reflects the long-term commitment and vision of the government for addressing national food and nutrition security.

Gold worth Rs 63L seized at Hyd airport

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Customs officials at the RGI Airport in Hyderabad seized gold worth Rs 62.94 lakh in separate incidents over the last two days.

On November 28, the officials intercepted an Indigo flight (6E-48) in the early morning hours and seized two gold rods worth Rs 24.50 lakh. The rods weighing 394 grams were concealed under two different seat cushions on the flight.

On November 27, Customs officials intercepted a flight coming from Dubai based on passenger profiling. Upon checking, gold in powdered form was found inside two cartons. The gold weighed 602 gms and was valued at Rs 38.44 lakh.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Krishna Paksha

Tithi: Tritiya: Nov 29 01:57 PM to Nov 30 02:25 PM

Chaturthi: Nov 30 02:25 PM to Dec 01 03:31 PM

Nakshatram: Ardra: Nov 29 01:59 PM to Nov 30 03:01 PM

Punarvasu: Nov 30 03:01 PM to Dec 01 04:40 PM

Rahukalam: 1:27 PM to 2:50 PM

Yamagandam: 6:32 AM to 7:55 AM

Varjyam: 03:51 AM to 05:33 AM

Gulika: 9:18 AM to 10:41 AM

Amritakalam: None

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:42 AM to 12:26 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy

Temp: 33°

Humidity: 64%

Sunrise: 6:19 AM

Sunset: 5:33 PM

Updated: November 29, 2023 5:00 PM

Complete works on priority buildings in 3 months: CS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Chief Secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy has directed the officials to complete the construction of priority buildings in the state, such as village secretariat buildings, Rythu Bharosa Kendra buildings and YSR health centres in the next three months. He held a review meeting with the officials regarding the progress of the constructions.

On this occasion, the CS instructed to speed up the construction work of all the priority buildings and complete them as per the specified deadline. He instructed that in any case, within three months, the sanctioned Rythu Bharosa Kendras, Village Secretariat Buildings and YSR Health



Centers should be completed. He ordered the officials of the respective departments to speed up the works of the buildings under construction at various stages and complete them on time. Later, the CS reviewed the Jal Jeevan Mission and other issues.

At the meeting, State Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Department Special Chief Secretary B Rajasekhara explained the progress of various priority buildings through a power-

point presentation.

Panchayati Raj and Rural Development Commissioner Surya Kumari, PR&RD ENC B Balu Naik, RWS ENC RV Krishna Reddy, CE B Raju and others also participated in this meeting. State Medical Health Department Special Principal Secretary MT Krishna Babu, Finance Secretary Dr KVV Satyanarayana, Medical Health Department Commissioner J Niwas and others participated virtually.

Road widening project...

Continued from Page 1

Moreover, roots are treated with fungicop and copper oxychloride after uprooting to safeguard their health. Despite these efforts, concerns have arisen regarding the survival of the translocated trees, particularly those near the government chest hospital in Pedda Waltair.

an elaborate and meticulous campaign.

The grand old party’s campaign was led by its leaders Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Revanth Reddy.

It focused mainly on the alleged corruption of the BRS government while highlighting its six poll guarantees.

Besides BRS, Congress and BJP, BSP supremo Mayawati also took part in electioneering in the state.

Much to the embarrassment of the BRS government, the National Dam Safety Authority had given an adverse report on the sinking of a barrage which is part of Kaleshwaram irrigation project, which had provided

ammunition to the opposition.

More than 2.5 lakh staff will be engaged in poll duties for the assembly elections, Chief Electoral officer Vikas Raj has said.

The counting of votes will be taken up on December 3. For the first time in Telangana, home voting facility was provided to the persons with disabilities and voters above 80 years.

As on November 28, law enforcement agencies have seized cash, gold, liquor, freebies among others all the state ever since the model code of conduct came into force in the state on October 9, an official release said.

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

ENERCON-2023

A step towards promoting energy efficiency in Indian industry

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a remarkable initiative to drive sustainable growth and global competitiveness, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in Andhra Pradesh successfully organised the second edition of ENERCON here on Wednesday, bringing together industry stalwarts and experts to explore and promote energy efficiency in the Indian industrial landscape. The overarching theme of ENERCON 2023, 'Making Indian Industry Energy Efficient and World Class', resonated throughout the event, emphasising the need for sustainable practices to propel the Indian industry to international standards.

Dr V Murali Krishna, Vice-Chairman of CII Andhra Pradesh, said: "ENERCON is a significant step towards making Indian industries energy-efficient and globally competitive. We have collaborated with energy-intensive sectors to create sectoral benchmarks for energy efficiency. CII's Net Zero Movement is crucial to strengthen sustainability



efforts in the country."

S Ramana Reddy, Vice Chairman and Managing Director of NREDCAP, stressed the global move towards Net Zero targets in combating climate change. He highlighted Andhra Pradesh's strategic position to leverage opportunities and establish a green hydrogen economy in the state. Reddy outlined the potential of green hydrogen production through renewable energy sources like solar and wind power to reduce carbon emissions in the power sector and transportation, aligning with the Mission LiFE objectives.

The Government of Andhra

Techno-Commercial feasibility reports for 29 locations were prepared, estimating a potential of 33,240 MW. DPRs are being formulated for 20,900 MW in a phased manner.

Pradesh's promotion of Pumped Storage Hydro Power Projects (PSP) to balance Variable Renewable Energy and meet peak power demand was highlighted.

Techno-Commercial feasibility reports for 29 locations were prepared, estimating a potential of 33,240 MW. DPRs are being formulated for

20,900 MW in a phased manner.

Prudhvi Tej Immadi, Chairman and Managing Director of APEPDCL, emphasised the increasing need for storage grids with the rise of renewable energy. He commended Prime Minister Narendra Modi's One Sun One World One Grid

(OSOWOG) initiative, aimed at linking the world to clean solar energy. Immadi mentioned the installation of smart meters across industrial units, commercial ventures, and government offices to enhance energy audit capabilities and curb power theft.

In a special address, Vishal S Budhia, Vice-Chairman of CII Southern Gujarat Zone and Chairman&MD of Steamhouse, said that allocating resources to research and development (R&D) for efficient fossil fuel utilisation was crucial. Discouraging investments in fossil fuel-based technologies hinders progress in R&D efforts, he added.



Complete 19,489 houses by January 30: Collector

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao has directed officials to finish 19,489 houses and make them ready for the housewarming ceremony by January 30 next year. To achieve the target, Housing and other relevant department officials should set weekly targets and monitor progress, he said.

The District Collector convened a video conference on Housing, Adudam Andhra, the final voters' list, priority building construction and other issues with all Revenue Divisional Officers (RDO), Municipal Commissioners, Special Officers, Tahsildars, MPDOs and other engineering officers from the collectorate in Vijayawada on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Dilli Rao said that following the

directions from the state government, the housewarming ceremony would be conducted soon. For that, the officials concerned should complete 19,489 house constructions at the Jagannanna Layouts in the district by January 30, he said.

Further, he emphasized that officials should concentrate on the construction from the roof level and roof-casting houses. For that, they should make a plan to complete the target houses within the stipulated period, he directed. As many as 3,955 houses are targeted in the Mylavaram constituency, followed by Tiruvuru - 481, Jaggaiahpet - 1,169, Nandigama - 1,756, Vijayawada East - 2,663, Vijayawada Central - 5,453, and in the Vijayawada West constituency 4,012 houses must be completed, he said.

Later, the Collector instruct-

ed the officials that they should resolve the applications on the voters' list of objections and claims. He put December 26 as the deadline for that and asked for a comprehensive voters' list by January 1 2024.

Also, Dilli Rao reviewed Adudam Andhra, the sports festival which will be conducted from December 15 to February 3. The players' registration began on November 27 and as of now, 10,000 registrations were completed, he said. Mylavaram, Ibrahimpatnam, Penuganchiprolu, Jaggaiahpet, Chandralapadu, and Kanchikacherla Mandals are lagging in the registrations, he said.

Joint Collector Dr P Sampath Kumar, DRO SV Nageswara Rao, Housing PD Rajini Kumari, DEO CV Renuka, DSDO SA Azeem and others were present.

Spl Secy for timely completion of houses in Srikakulam dist

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

In a significant meeting at the Srikakulam Zilla Parishad Hall, Mohammad Diwan Maidin, the Special Secretary of the State Housing Department, stressed the critical need for completing the Houses for All Poor scheme on time. The meeting, attended by District Collector Srikesh Lathkar and housing authorities, aimed to assess progress

and address challenges in district-level housing initiatives.

Concerned about the district's drop from the third to the fourth position in the state's housing construction progress, Maidin warned of strict action against staff and engineering officers falling behind targets. He urged transparent services and seamless coordination among stakeholders to meet housing construction targets



effectively. Engineering assistants in the district have specific targets in the mega housing drive. Maidin emphasized the role of Mandal Special Officers and officials in ensuring timely completion, stating they should work in coordination. Maidin stressed the necessity for advance arrangements of materials to prevent delays, emphasizing the provision of essential facilities upon house

completion. Highlighting urgency, Maidin underscored immediate bill uploads for completed construction, ensuring swift payments. District Collector Srikesh Lathkar urged authorities to meet government targets and work in coordination. Officials were encouraged to hold mandal-level meetings to address beneficiary concerns and boost construction pace.



Regional sports meets from December 5 to 9

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Commissioner of the Technical Education Department and Chairperson of the State Technical Education and Training Council Chadalavada Nagarani has said that sports is the only field that teaches the most valuable lessons in life about perseverance and patience. She said that sports help in mental and physical fitness. She unveiled the poster of the 26th Inter Polytechnic Sports and Games Meet 2023-2024, at the State Technical Education Commissionerate on Wednesday. Nagarani said that this sports festival will be held at Anantapur

Government Polytechnic from January 4 to 6 next year.

Nagarani explained that on the other hand, this year from December 5 to 9, regional sports and games meets will be held in different parts of the State. She further explained that the programme has been designed to encourage young athletes in polytechnics of the state and develop true leadership and sportsmanship among the students. The commissioner said that sports help students to be physically fit and socially alert. Technical Education Department Joint Director V Padma Rao and other officers participated in the programme.

Devineni Uma held while protesting 'sand mafia'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The NTR District Police arrested former minister Devineni Uma Maheswara Rao while he was staging an agitation at the Ferry of Ibrahimpatnam on Wednesday, against irregular excavating of sand and illegal transporting by the ruling YSRCP. The TDP leaders condemned the arrest of Devineni Uma and made serious allegations against the police and the ruling YSRCP leaders.



YSRCP's Ibrahimpatnam MPP P Jyotsna staged a protest on the National Highway against the illegal transporting of sand from Guntupalli on

Tuesday night. Also, she lodged a complaint at the Ibrahimpatnam Police Station demanding the immediate arrest of sand mafia leaders.

Following the agitation of P Jyotsna, on Wednesday, former

minister Devineni Uma Maheswara staged a protest against the illegal sand excavation without having any permits and transporting it to the sand dumps. Also, he showed the videos regarding the excavation of sand at Guntupalli on the river Krishna through video call.

Later, the police tried to call off Uma's agitation, however, they were in vain. After that, the police arrested Uma and many TDP leaders forcibly and shifted them to the police station.

In this connection, Devineni Uma said that thousands of crore rupees which were col-

lected from the sand mafia, have been sent to the Tadepalli Palace. There is no sand available for the common man and they are spending thousands of rupees to buy sand from the middleman, he alleged.

Further, he said that sand leases expired in May, and as much as Rs.350 crore worth of sand was stored at the sand dumping yards. However, the YSRCP leaders looted the sand dumps and sold them, he said.

For the past six months, illegal sand selling has been happening in the state and the Mining Department has taken no action against the sand mafia, he criticized.

Officials asked to make arrangements for Bhavani Deeksha relinquishment

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A meeting chaired by the Executive Officer (EO) of Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam, KS Rama Rao, on Wednesday discussed the relinquishment of Bhavani Deekshalu and the facilities that should be provided to Bhavanis and devotees during the Deeksha relinquishment.

During the review meeting, EO Rama Rao emphasized that top priority should be

given to the facilities. He said that temple authorities should provide hassle-free darshan of the goddess to the Bhavanis and devotees. For that, all departmental officers should coordinate with one another, he added.

The meeting was attended by Sthanacharya Vishunubhotla Siva Prasad Sarma, Durga temple Executive Engineers KVS Koteswara Rao and L Rama Devi, Vedic Committee members and others.

Waltair Division's mock drill checks alertness and preparedness

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a proactive measure to enhance emergency preparedness and coordination, Waltair Division organized an extensive mock drill for real-time relief and rescue operations at Simhachalam Railway Station Yard here on Wednesday. The drill, which simulated a scenario involving the derailment of three coaches of the 08854 special, aimed to evaluate the alertness and preparedness of various departments in handling emergency situations.

Waltair Division's Divisional Railway Manager, Saurabh Prasad, personally monitored the operations, underscoring the significance of preparedness in ensuring passenger safety. ADRM (Operations) Manoj Kumar Sahoo, ADRM (Infra)

Sudhir Kumar Gupta, and Siddharth Pradhan, Senior Divisional Safety Officer, supervised the relief operations, ensuring a comprehensive and realistic approach to the drill.

The mock drill involved the deployment of men and materials for rescue operations, showcasing the coordinated efforts of departments such as Mechanical, Carriage & Wagon, Operations, Commercial, Medical, Security, Signal & Telecom, Civil Engineering, Traction Distribution, Electrical, Personnel, and Finance. External agencies including the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and Fire Brigade teams, alongside Civil Administration, actively participated. The primary objectives of the mock drill included assessing the responsiveness of

railway personnel and different departments, testing and improving communication skills, and enhancing coordination among the participating entities. The exercise aimed to replicate an actual emergency situation, providing a valuable opportunity to evaluate and enhance emergency response capabilities. During the event, DRM Saurabh Prasad highlighted the critical role of the mock drill in evaluating the readiness of railway personnel to handle emergencies effectively. He emphasized the importance of swift rescue operations and the restoration of normalcy in the aftermath of such incidents. DRM Prasad extended appreciation to the local administration and media for their extensive support in ensuring the success of the drill.



Online consumers too come under Consumer Protection Act-2019

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

IMd Imtiaz, Chief Commissioner of Land Administration (CCLA), Additional Commissioner and Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has said that online consumers would come under the Consumer Protection Act - 2019. He released a brochure 'Viniyogadarula Rakshana Chhattam 2019 - Hakku, Prayojanalu', designed by the Consumer Organisation Federation at his office in Vijayawada on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion,

Imtiaz said that as per the 'Consumer Protection Act - 2019', consumers may resolve their problems through mediation. Also, he suggested that consumers may approach the National Consumer Helpline Number 1915 if they were cheated when they purchased products. Also, there is an Integrated Call Centre number 1667, and consumers may use this number for their problem resolution, he added.

Consumer Organisations Federation State president K Venkata Raman, Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty IT Directo G Srinivasa Rao and others were present.

TDP will revive Abhaya Hastham Scheme: Lokesh

PNS ■ AMALAPURAM

Telugu Desam party National General Secretary Nara Lokesh resumed his padayatra on the third day in Mummdivaram Assembly constituency on Wednesday.

During his padayatra, Lokesh met people of various walks of life to understand their concerns and assured them of resolving their problems if voted to power.

On the third day of Yuvagalam 2.0 padayatra in Mummdivaram Assembly Constituency, he interacted with different groups, including DWCR (Development of Women in Rural Areas), representatives of the Madiga and Gowda communities, along with villagers of Komanapalli.

Following the interaction with women from DWCR, Nara Lokesh assured full support for DWCR groups, including the revival of the Abhaya Hastham Scheme. Criticizing Jagan Mohan Reddy for deceiving and exploiting the people, Lokesh stated that the YSRC government had looted Rs. 2500 crores from DWCR women. He also promised to repair damaged roads and take measures to curb the drug and ganja mafia, negatively impacting the youth of the state.

Responding to the issues raised by representatives of the



Madiga Community, Nara Lokesh said that Dalits suffered the most in the state after Jagan Mohan Reddy came to power. He mentioned that in the last TDP government, they provided employment to the youth with skill training and gave unconditional pensions to eligible individuals. However, Jagan Reddy canceled all these schemes. He assured to restore all Dalit schemes canceled by Jagan after TDP comes to power.

Speaking to the people of the Gowda community, Nara Lokesh reminded them that former CM NT Rama Rao provided 24 percent reservation to BCs in local bodies, which was later increased to 34 percent by N Chandrababu Naidu. Noting that Jagan

Mohan Reddy canceled 10 percent reservation in local bodies for BCs and diverted Rs. 75,760 crore of BC sub-plan funds, Nara Lokesh promised to give political priority to BCs when TDP comes to power. He pledged support for the Gowda community in various ways and assured assistance for overseas education for BC students.

Meanwhile, the residents of Komanapalli village met the TDP National General Secretary and submitted petitions regarding the sand scam. In response, he assured that sand would be made available to the people with a better sand policy, and false cases would be waived against those who fought against YSRC irregularities.

Tanuku industrial park being developed

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari district Collector P Prashanthi said that the Industrial park in Tanuku is being developed at a cost of Rs 9.87 crore and all needed infrastructure is being provided.

Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy laid the foundation stones for the establishment of industries, food processing units and inaugurated some industries virtually on Wednesday. A programme was organized here on the occasion. Collector P Prashanthi and other officials participated in the programme.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Prashanthi said that all needed basic amenities including roads, greenery, social forestry, water harvesting are being provided and CC roads and drains are being constructed in the industrial park in Tanuku and the



Collector unveiled the plaque in this regard in the video conference hall on Wednesday flanked by Industrial Estate president Vanka Rajkumari.

The Collector said that the incentives provided by the

state government for the establishment of food processing and industries should be taken advantage of by young men and women by establishing units. Collector Prashanthi said that the state

government is giving good encouragement to the establishment of industries and permits are being granted in one day through a single window.

APIIC Zonal Manager K

The Collector said that the incentives provided by the state government for the establishment of food processing and industries should be taken advantage of by young men and women by establishing units.

Babji, Deputy Zonal Manager YVK Subba Rao, Industrial promotion officer J Sripathi and other officials were present.



Man, his daughter fatally knocked down by RTC bus

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

In a tragic road accident, a man and his daughter were killed as an APSRTC bus knocked down their bike at Reddycheruvu village in Roddam mandal on Wednesday.

Police said that the deceased Phanindra Reddy (30) along with his three-year-old daughter Gauthami, was going on a motorcycle. A speeding RTC bus knocked down their motorcycle killing the man and his daughter instantaneously.

Heart wrenching scenes were witnessed at the accident site with the wailing wife and parents of the deceased inconsolably.

The police registered a case and shifted the bodies to the GGH for post-mortem.



Adireddy Srinivas calls on Nara Lokesh

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Telugu Desam party state executive secretary Adireddy Srinivas (Vasu) and Jana Sena party city in-charge Atti Satyanarayana called on TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh at Mummidivaram on Wednesday.

Lokesh was on his Yuva

Galam padayatra in Konaseema district on Wednesday. The two young leaders met Nara Lokesh and conveyed their support to him. Lokesh told them that the TDP and JSP aligned and decided to work together in the next election. All the TDP and JSP leaders and cadres should work hard to defeat the YSRCP, he told them.

Confident of sweeping polls

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

Industries Minister KT Rama Rao said that silent voters will vote for the BRS and added that the BRS will win Mulugu, Huzurabad and Goshmahal. He said that Revanth would lose in Kamareddy as well as Kodangal.

"Modi's campaign was aimed at Parliament elections and not Assembly polls. Modi has the IB report with him. It is meant for next April's LS polls, whether it is Amit Shah or Modi," he said.

KTR asked what was wrong with what Harish Rao said about Rythu Bandhu. "If Harish is wrong they should take action against him. Why are you stopping Rythu Bandhu payments to farmers? You should issue a notice and not stop payments. If the PM's Kisan Scheme can be allowed why not allow Rythu Bandhu too? I am showing the ECI mirror. Selective justice is not justice," he said.

He said that Pawan Kalyan's



"Modi's campaign was aimed at Parliament elections and not Assembly polls. Modi has the IB report with him. It is meant for next April's LS polls, whether it is Amit Shah or Modi," KTR said.

campaign will have an impact on Telangana elections.

"They have all left. Only KCR is here. Ditto on December 3. We will win even seats which are considered tough. Congress is a known virus without a vaccine," KTR said.

"The Congress hype is just gossip and they are trying to spread rumours via word of

Officials directed to prepare voters list transparently

PNS ■ ELURU

District Electoral Roll Observer B Sridhar directed the officials concerned to prepare the voters lists maintaining transparency and include the names of all who crossed 18 years of age in the voters list.

Electoral Roll Officer B Sridhar held a meeting with district in-charge Collector B Lavanya Veni, EROs, AEROs of seven constituencies and representatives of recognized political parties here on Wednesday on photo voters list brief amendment 2024 and reviewed the brief amendment of voters list. In-charge Collector B Lavanya Veni gave a PowerPoint presentation in this regard.

Speaking on the occasion, Roll Observer B Sridhar said that in order to prepare a list of authentic voters, meetings are often held with representatives of recognized political parties and problems are resolved immediately, if any. By January 1, 2024, everyone who attained 18 years of age should be registered as a voter.

The responsibility lies on the officials to organize programmes and register students who have completed 18 years of age as voters in all educational institutions. As there is still time for voter registration, AEROs and special AEROs should focus on this



matter, Sridhar told them. The final lists of voters should be announced by January 5, 2024, he said and asked to organize a special campaign on December 2 and 3 to receive claims and objections.

He said that the BLOs have been appointed for each polling station and the TDP and YSRCP parties have appointed booth level agents. On October 27th, the draft list of voters was released and soft and hard copies were given to the recognized political parties, Sridhar made it clear. Complaints received from various political parties should be investigated at the field level and resolved in accordance with the provisions of the EC, he told the election officials.

Any minor complaint received should be scrutinized very carefully and resolved properly as per the guidelines of the Election Commission. The deadline for receipt of claims

and objections on voter lists is December 9 and they should be resolved by December 26, the Roll Observer said.

District in-charge collector B. Lavanya Veni said that there are 3 revenue divisions, 28 mandals, 7 assembly constituencies and one parliamentary constituency in Eluru district and the population of the district is 21,35,149. As per the schedule of revision of voters lists, the draft lists were announced by 27th of last month.

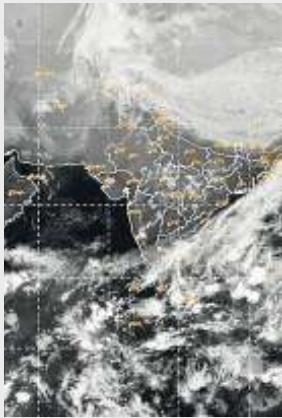
As per this, the total voters in Eluru district are 15,88,622 of which 7,78,884 men voters, 8,09,615 women voters and 123 third gender voters. So far 1,95,122 claims have been received of which 1,85,052 claims have been resolved. YSRCP leader K Sambha, TDP leader Pali Prasada, NERASU Nelaraju (BJP), M Ravi (CPM) and R Rammohan Rao (Cong.) were among those who attended the meeting.

Well marked low pressure area to intensify into 'Depression'

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Tuesday's low pressure area over south Andaman Sea & adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal moved west-northwestwards and lay as a well marked low pressure area over Southeast Bay of Bengal & adjoining South Andaman Sea at 0830 hours on Wednesday, Meteorological Centre said. In a daily weather report here, it

said that the well marked low pressure area is likely to move west-northwestwards and intensify into a "Depression" over Southwest Bay of Bengal on Thursday. Thereafter, it is likely to move northwestwards and intensify gradually into a "Cyclonic Storm" over Southwest & adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal around December 2.



'AP NEEDS JAGAN TO PROVIDE SOCIAL JUSTICE, ENSURE DEVELOPMENT'

PNS ■ PARVATIPURAM

The YSRCP leaders here on Wednesday reiterated that the AP needs Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy to provide social justice, implement welfare schemes and to develop the state.

The YSRCP organized Samajika Sadhikara Bus yatra in which a host of YSRCP leaders and a large number of people participated. The YSRCP leaders explained to the people the implementation of various welfare schemes as per the assurance given. They called upon people to extend their support to the YSRCP in the 2024 elections.

AP TIDCO chairman

Jammana Prasanna Kumar, YSRCP north Andhra district coordinator YV Subba Reddy, deputy Chief Minister Rajanna Dora, Boodi Mutyalanaidu, MLA Pushpa Srivani and district YSRCP president Parishat Raju and MLC Suresh Babu participated in the programme.

The Sadhikara Bus Yatra began at 3 pm in a grand manner. A huge rally was taken out on the occasion. B Chandrasekhar, Gotteti Madhavi, Kalavati, ZP president Chinna Srinu Jogulu, Navaratnalu vice chairman Narayana Murthy and a host of other leaders were among those who took part in the meeting.

Officials directed to expedite JJM works to provide drinking water

PNS ■ PARVATIPURAM

District Collector Nishanth Kumar directed the officials concerned to expedite the works of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) to provide protected drinking water to every household.

The Collector inspected the works of Jal Jeevan Mission at Maripivalasa and Appayyapet villages in Sitanagaram mandal on Wednesday.

The Collector said that safe water should be provided to every household to protect the health of the people through the Jal Jeevan Mission scheme. The drinking water will be provided to every household under the Jal Jeevan Mission in the district, the Collector said. The Collector directed the officials to provide a tap connection to every household.



Making it clear that there is no dearth of funds, the Collector instructed the officials concerned to expedite the works and complete the pending works by one week. He also directed them to maintain quality in the works. District RWS officials O Prabhakar Rao explained to the Collector

about the progress of the Jal Jeevan Mission works at the village. He told the Collector 300 tap connections are being provided at Maripivalasa village and 430 connections in Appayyapet village to households, adding that 1500 more tap connections to be given in the mandal.



TDP leader B.Tech Ravi granted bail

PNS ■ KADAPA

Telugu Desam party senior leader and former MLC M Ravindranath Reddy, known as B.Tech Ravi, was granted bail by the district court on Wednesday.

B.Tech Ravi was arrested by the police in connection with a crime incident on November 14 and he was sent to judicial remand. The district court granted him bail today and he would be released from the district prison this evening or on Thursday, a TDP leader said. B.Tech Ravi tried to enter the airport on January 25, 2023 to welcome TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh. But the police prevented B.Tech Ravi from entering the airport which led to a clash between him and the police. The police registered a case against him for the incident.

'Kakinada being developed industrially'

PNS ■ KAKINADA

District Collector Krithika Shukla said that the government is aimed at developing Kakinada district industrially to churn out employment.

Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy unveiled a plaque for Sri Satyadev Printing cluster virtually under Enterprises cluster development programmes (MSE CDP) from Tadepalli camp office. The Sri Satyadev Printing Cluster was established at a cost of Rs 14.76 crore.

Collector Krithika Shukla, MLC Karri Padmasri, state housing corporation chairman Davuluri Dorababu, industries department GM T Murali and AP IIC Z m Muralimohan were present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Krithika Shukla said that under the Micro & Small Enterprises Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP), a new printing cluster has been set up at Kakinada in the district at a cost of Rs 14.76 crore.

The Collector said that for the development of this new industrial estate, established with the investment partnership of the



Collector Krithika Shukla, MLC Karri Padmasri, state housing corporation chairman Davuluri Dorababu, industries department GM T Murali and AP IIC Z m Muralimohan were present on the occasion.

strengthen the district financially, along with job opportunities for thousands of people in the district," the Collector said, adding that through this cluster, state-of-the-art foreign printing machines have been installed directly in the printing clusters, thus enabling printing in a short time at a low cost.

The foundation stone was laid today for setting up complexes required for small industries in Peddapuram in the Industrial Area, she added. The APIIC has taken up the project with the cooperation of the State and Central government at a cost of Rs 13.30 crore, she said.



260 bags of black jaggery, rock sugar seized

PNS ■ NARASARAOPET

The police conducted a raid on a godown and seized 150 bags of black jaggery and 110 bags of rock sugar worth Rs 5 lakh in Dacheppalli on Wednesday.

Gurajala DSP Pallapu Raju told the media on Wednesday that on a tip off

a police team led by CI Surendra Babu and SI Sandrarani conducted a search on the godown. They found 150 bags of black jaggery and 110 bags of rock sugar and seized them. The police also seized two liters of country-made liquor.

The black jaggery and rock sugar are used to brew

illicit liquor. The police found the godown belonging to Penugonda Mallikharjun Rao and two cases have already been registered against him. He took the godown on rent a few days ago and hoarded huge quantities of black jaggery and rock sugar to supply illicit liquor brewers.

INDIA CORNER

CBI arrests censor board official in bribery case

The CBI has arrested a regional officer of Central Board of Film Certification, Bengaluru and two private persons in an alleged bribery of Rs 12,000 from a film producer to rectify minor issues related to subtitles of his movie, officials said Wednesday. The agency arrested regional officer Prashant Kumar and two individuals -- Prithvi Raj and Ravi -- in connection with the case. The accused allegedly demanded Rs 15,000 which was brought down to Rs 12,000, the officials said. "It was alleged that the accused later reduced the bribe amount to Rs 12,000 for issuing of censor certificate by regional officer to rectify the minor issues related to cinema subtitle of a movie which was directed and produced by the complainant," a CBI spokesperson said. He said the agency arrested them while accepting the bribe, they said. "Search was conducted at the premises of the regional officer which led to recovery of Rs 3 lakh," the spokesperson said.



Woman who lost her son to drugs catches peddler

A woman, who lost her son to drugs, trapped a peddler who was repeatedly calling her second son for supplying drugs in the Baddi area of the state, police said on Wednesday. It began when Santosh one day picked up the call of a 'chitta' (adulterated heroin) smuggler, who was repeatedly calling her other son to buy drugs, and spoke in a male voice. She asked the peddler to come to Vardhman Birla Marg in Barotiwala area of Baddi on Tuesday to handover the contraband. When he came, Santosh, who had been waiting for him along with several of her relatives and other people, caught hold of him, tied him to a tree, and beat him up. The peddler, identified as Madan Mohan from Nadaun area of Hamirpur district, was later arrested with 0.99 gram of 'chitta' in his possession. Madan Mohan, who runs a shop near Santosh's house, was booked under several sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, police said.



Couple's argument leads to diversion of Lufthansa flight to Delhi

An argument between a couple led to the diversion of a Munich-Bangkok Lufthansa flight to Delhi on Wednesday following which they were deboarded, official sources said. The Lufthansa flight number LH772 landed at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport at 10.26 am after the pilots contacted the Air Traffic Control (ATC) informing them about a "situation and possible unruly passenger". The flight left for Bangkok after a delay of more than an hour even as the male passenger was deboarded by CISF personnel at the airport. An argument between a couple -- a German man and his Thai wife -- led to some problems on-board the Lufthansa flight following which it sought permission to land at the IGI, which was allowed, the sources said. An official said the wife had first complained about her husband's behaviour to the pilot, saying she was being "threatened" by him and sought intervention.



Cabinet nod for scheme to provide drones to 15,000 women SHGs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet has approved a central scheme to provide drones to 15,000 progressive women Self Help Groups (SHGs) with an outlay of Rs 1,261 crore for two years beginning 2024-25.

A decision in this regard was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur told reporters on Wednesday.

"The scheme aims to provide drones to 15,000 select women SHGs during the period 2024-25 to 2025-2026 for providing rental services to farmers for agriculture purpose," Thakur said.

The women SHGs will be identified from the total 89 lakh SHGs formed under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana, he said.

In various states, appropriate clusters where usage of drones is economically feasible will be identified and progressive 15,000 women SHGs will be selected for providing drones, the government said in a release.



Green light for Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet has approved the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan, which focuses on 11 critical interventions for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, Minister Anurag Thakur said on Wednesday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the scheme on Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas in Jharkhand's Khunti. The scheme -- which aims to, among others, provide pucca houses, piped water supply and roads -- got the Cabinet nod late on Tuesday. The total outlay for the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN) has been pegged at Rs 24,104 crore, of which the central share will be Rs 15,336 crore and the states will contribute Rs 8,768 crore. "Over 28,16,000 (28.16 lakh) tribal people from 220 districts in 18 states and one Union Territory will benefit from this scheme. Those tribals who have not yet benefited from Government of India schemes so far will be the beneficiaries under this scheme," Thakur said.

A central financial assistance at 80 per cent of the cost of drone and accessories/ancillary charges of up to Rs 8,00,000 will be provided to women SHGs for purchase of drones.

The Cluster Level Federation (CLFs) of SHGs may raise the balance amount (total cost of procurement minus subsidy) as loan under the National Agriculture Infra Financing Facility (AIF). Interest subven-

tion of 3 per cent on the AIF loan will be provided.

"Around 500 drones will be provided by fertiliser companies. The rest 14,500 drones will be made available through the central assistance in the next two years," Thakur said.

The total expense of a drone and its accessories is about Rs 10 lakh. About 80 per cent of the cost or up to Rs 8 lakh, will be provided by the Centre, he said.

The minister said the drone pilot will get an honorarium of Rs 15,000 and a co-pilot about Rs 10,000, he said.

For use of drones, a cluster of 10-15 villages will be formed and about 1,000 hectare land will be available for drone operation. The importance will be given for commercial crops, he added.

According to the statement, one of the members of women SHGs who is well qualified, 18 and above years of age will be elected for a 15-day training, comprising five-day mandatory drone pilot training and additional 10-day training for agriculture purpose of nutrient and pesticide application.

Create culture of quality: Rajnath

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday called on the Indian defence manufacturers to create a "culture of quality" while producing military hardware, describing it as a prerequisite to compete in the global market.

Singh said global demands for Indian products can be created only by ensuring quality, noting that such an approach would help the country become a global hub of defence manufacturing.

The defence minister was addressing the plenary session of Defence Research and Development Organisation's 'Quality Conclave'.

Singh pointed out that the countries, which manufacture quality products, export their equipment across the globe and that India has full potential to become a leading manufacturer of defence equipment.

He also underscored the importance of cost control while manufacturing quality defence products.

"Cost control should be given utmost importance; however it should not be at the expense of quality. We have to be globally cost-competitive, but it has to be done by remaining in the top-quality segment," Singh said.



Singh said global demands for Indian products can be created only by ensuring quality, noting that such an approach would help the country become a global hub of defence manufacturing.

"We must move forward with this idea," he said.

The defence minister also underscored the need to manufacture high-quality military systems which are effective, reliable and safe and can enable the armed forces to accomplish their missions successfully.

Singh also presented 'System for Advanced Manufacturing

Assessment and Ranking' (SAMAR) certificates to the representatives of qualified industries.

In his remarks, DRDO chairman Samir V Kamat reaffirmed DRDO's commitment towards delivering quality systems.

He requested all stakeholders to have firm resolve and synergise towards self-reliance in high-quality indigenous military systems. The conclave provided an opportunity for stakeholders to network with experts to create an ecosystem in the country for producing high-quality indigenous systems, the defence ministry said.

The participants brainstormed on various aspects of quality for the defence manufacturing revolution in India for an 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', he said.

NO ONE CAN STOP CAA IMPLEMENTATION: SHAH

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Home Minister Amit Shah asserted on Wednesday that the Central government will implement the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and no one can stop it.

Addressing a big rally here to launch the BJP's Lok Sabha campaign, Shah launched a blistering attack on Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on the issues of appeasement, infiltration, corruption and political violence, alleging she has "destroyed" the state.

Banerjee has been opposing the CAA due to her support to infiltration, he asserted, adding that a state with so much infiltration cannot develop.

He urged people to throw out her government by electing the BJP in the next assembly polls in 2026 and asked them to lay its foundation by supporting the party in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

He said, "Give so many seats to the BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls that Modiji says I have become PM due to Bengal."

India targeting enrolment of half a million foreign students, says Niti Aayog CEO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is targeting enrolling half a million foreign students by 2047, Niti Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam said on Wednesday.

Subrahmanyam made the comments while addressing the 18th FICCI Higher Education Summit. He also said technology is going to "blow up" the higher education sector and the universities have to embrace Artificial Intelligence in a big way



to stay relevant and competitive.

"NITI Aayog is preparing a vision document for 2047 and education has a separate role in it. One of the important points

in this include that, by 2047, we aim to target half a million foreign students in India. We should become the global provider of education by improving our quality, brand value and improve our rankings which are globally recognised," he said.

The Niti Aayog CEO asserted that there is a need to create more education cities in India.

He urged the private sector to further expand the higher education ecosystem and ensure more international students are

attracted to India, along with encouraging domestic students to study in the country.

"We need to be more innovative in the higher education sector. We need to focus on revamping the educational system so that the students are industry ready," he said. Highlighting the importance of newer technology, Subrahmanyam said, "Technology is going to blow up the higher education sector (in India).

'PRACTISED YOGA, TOOK WALKS TO KEEP SPIRITS UP'

Rescued workers interact with PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The 41 workers, who were rescued from Uttarakhand's Silkyara tunnel in a multi-agency rescue operation, kept their spirits up while trapped inside by taking morning walks and practising yoga, a rescued worker told Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The workers hailed Prime Minister Modi, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami and rescue teams for their efforts, with one of them saying they had nothing to worry as when the government could save Indians abroad, they were within the country.

In his telephonic conversation with the rescued workers late Tuesday night, Modi told them, "I congratulate you on coming out safely after being in danger for so many days. It is a matter of happiness for me and I cannot express it in words. If something bad had happened, can't say how we would have taken

that. It is God's grace that all of you are safe." "Seventeen days is not a short time. You all showed a lot of courage and encouraged each other," Modi told the workers, according to a video of the conversation released by the Prime Minister's Office.

Modi said he used to keep seeking information about the operation and was in constant touch with the chief minister.

"My PMO officials also were sitting there. But worry is not lessened by just getting information," the PM said. A worker from Bihar, Saba Ahmed told the prime minister that though they were stuck in the tunnel for days, they did not feel any fear or nervousness. "We were like brothers, we were together. We used to take a stroll in the tunnel after dinner. I used to tell them to do morning walks and yoga. We would like to thank the Uttarakhand government, especially the CM, VK (Singh) sahib," Ahmed said.

Court asks ASI to explain reason for seeking more time

PNS ■ VARANASI

The Varanasi district court on Wednesday asked the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to explain the reason for seeking more time for submitting a scientific survey report of the Gyanvapi complex and posted the matter for hearing on

Thursday. Taking up the plea of the ASI seeking three additional weeks to submit the report, District Judge A K Vishvesh asked a senior ASI official from Delhi to explain the need for more time, to which the ASI counsel said that officials in Varanasi have been handling the task and will apprise the court

about it. The Muslim side represented by lawyer Mohammad Ikhlaiq objected to the ASI repeatedly seeking more time.

The ASI had on Tuesday sought three more weeks from the district court for submitting the scientific survey report of the Gyanvapi mosque complex saying it needed more time for

the assimilation of information generated by different experts. The district court of Varanasi had asked the ASI to submit the report on the Gyanvapi Masjid complex by November 28.

In its application, the ASI had stated that its experts are working on various types of data col-

lected by archaeologists, surveyors and other experts, etc and assimilation of information generated by different experts and different tools is a difficult and slow process and it will take some more time to complete the report for final submission.

The ASI started the survey in the barricaded area of the

Gyanvapi mosque premises, excluding its sealed section, on August 4, following court orders. On November 2, the ASI told the court it had "completed" the survey but may take some more time to compile the report, along with the details of the equipment used in the survey work.

Landlords have rights to beneficial enjoyment of property: HC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Landlords cannot be deprived of beneficial enjoyment of their property and are vested with the right to decide how to utilise their possessions, the Delhi High Court said on Wednesday while upholding an order for vacation of tenanted premises.

The high court said it is trite law that a tenant cannot dictate to the landlord as to how the property has to be utilised.

"Landlords cannot be deprived of the beneficial enjoyment of their property. Further, the court is not to sit on the armchair of landlords to dictate as to how the property should be utilised. It is the sole discretion of the landlords to



get all the tenanted premises vacated and use as per their need," Justice Jasmeet Singh said.

The high court passed the judgement while dismissing a revision petition filed by a tenant challenging a trial court's order of eviction of a shop at Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Marg here. The landlord said he and his son are joint owners of the property, where several shops have been given on rent, and he has been running

a hotel on the first floor and those above that. He said his son, who has completed his education abroad, wishes to run an independent business, and has decided to start a plush restaurant for which they require the tenanted portions back. The tenant, in his plea, said the landlords in their eviction petition did not disclose the exact area under their possession and the space occupied by 14 tenants.

He claimed the eviction petition was nothing but an afterthought as property prices and rent in the area have risen astronomically. He said the petition was filed in order to seek higher rent from him or to sell the tenanted premises at a premium.

COVID-19 caused an alarming surge in premature births, but vaccines were key to returning the early birth rate to pre-pandemic levels, researchers have found analysing birth records in California, US.

Maternal COVID-19 infection increased the probability of preterm delivery, which is birth occurring before 37 weeks of gestation, by 1.2 percentage points, from 7.1 to 8.3 per cent, the researchers said.

"To move the needle on preterm birth that much is akin to a disastrous environmental exposure, like weeks of breathing intense wildfire smoke," said researcher Jenna Nobles, a University of Wisconsin-Madison sociology professor.



As the virus spread from July to November of 2020, the likelihood that a mother with COVID-19 would give birth more than three weeks before the due date was 5.4 percentage points higher than anticipated - 12.3 per cent instead of 6.9 per cent, the research team from

Stanford University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison found.

However, the researchers found from about 40 million birth records that the excess risk of preterm birth fell slightly in early 2021 before dropping steeply in 2022, at which point

maternal COVID-19 infection in pregnancy caused no excess risk of preterm birth for infants.

Vaccines contributed to that decrease, an effect that jumps out when the birth records are divided up geographically, the researchers said in their study published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

"In ZIP codes with the highest vaccination rates, the excess risk of preterm birth declines much faster.

"By summer 2021, having COVID-19 in pregnancy had no effect on preterm birth risk in these communities. It takes almost a year longer for that to happen in the ZIP codes with the lowest vaccine uptake," said Nobles. The researchers said that the finding highlighted the pro-

tectiveness of COVID vaccines.

By increasing immunity faster, early vaccination uptake likely prevented thousands of preterm births in the US, said Nobles. The researchers said that the positive effects of vaccination in preventing premature births could help allay some of the most prominent concerns voiced as COVID-19 vaccines became available to pregnant patients.

"We already know there is very little evidence of adverse effects of vaccination on fetal development.

"The results here are compelling evidence that what will actually harm the fetus is not getting vaccinated. That's a message practitioners can share with concerned patients," said Nobles.

Out, with lessons

The evacuation of 41 workers tells us a few things about what went right and what we must set right

Life be frail and ephemeral but it is the human grit, determination, resilience and collaborative spirit that makes it explore space, navigate seas, move earth, climb mountains and challenge the mighty Nature. On the same theme, the Silkyara tunnel rescue operation in Uttarkashi stands out as a shining example of effective crisis management. After 400 hours of intense effort, the trapped workers can see the sun again. It was arguably the nation's biggest rescue operation – international experts, local authorities, Army and big machines all worked in tandem to pull off this feat. And the rat miners, part of the Army operations, deserve a special mention as finally they managed to reach the miners after digging continuously for 24 hours. Rat mining is now banned in India, yet their skills did the trick. Celebrations apart, this is also the time to ponder over the lessons learned from the oversights and mistakes made during the mission. For 17 days, the Silkyara-Barkot tunnel became a site of frenzy after 41 workers were trapped



in the tunnel. The rugged terrain and inclement weather compounded the challenges; the remote location added a degree of difficulty to the mission, necessitating a swift and coordinated response.

While the rescue operation ultimately succeeded, it is important to examine our shortcomings to improve future crisis responses. One notable oversight was the initial delay in deploying specialised equipment to the site. This lapse, attributed to logistical challenges and communication gaps, underscored the importance of a rapid and efficient response in emergencies. Another lesson learned was the need for enhanced coordination among the agencies involved in the rescue. Effective communication channels and seamless collaboration are essential for streamlining efforts and ensuring a cohesive response. It would have been better had the Army been called in earlier, given its expertise in such operations. Initially, delays and confusion arose due to inadequate coordination, highlighting the need for improved inter-agency cooperation which was, however, made good after it became a national top story. While the operation showcased the prowess of specialised units in handling complex crises, it also emphasised the importance of addressing logistical challenges and improving coordination among agencies. It also highlighted how protocols and standard working procedures are flouted by the companies involved. There must be a Government agency to ensure that safety procedures are followed. The life of every individual matters but the companies often cut corners when it comes to worker safety. Even the multinational companies operating in India do not follow the same safety protocols they follow in Europe and America, as was amply proved by the Bhopal gas disaster. They know safety at the workplace is not a priority. In Silkyara, there was no plan in place to evacuate workers in case of an emergency. By continuously refining our emergency response strategies, we can better prepare for challenges.

PICTALK



Girls wearing traditional Punjabi dress perform 'giddha', in 11th Amritsar International Folk Festival

PTI

Democracy: Restoring the dignity in public life

Poll campaigns are becoming toxic with unrestrained campaigns; no one is sacrosanct, and all political parties must shoulder the blame for it

The campaign for the last phase of the election to the Telangana assembly has come to an end with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Mega Road Show" at Hyderabad on Monday evening. It is once again silence in the state. But this is a temporary silence and a prelude to the much bigger cacophony that is all set to unfold in days to come. Poll pundits describe the election to the five State assemblies as the semi-final. While elegance and aristocracy were the catchwords of speeches made inside and outside the parliament, of late the quality of the language used by our lawmakers has degenerated to a level lower than the Bharani Pattu sung by a section of pilgrims at the Devi Temple in Kerala's Kodungallur. For those who are not familiar with the Bharani Pattu ritual, Bharani is one of the 27 stars used by astrologers for scientific calculations while Pattu means song/hymn. The self-styled Brahmins pay their obeisance to Bhagawathy (Devi/Goddess, the presiding deity of Kodungallur)



by singing obscene hymns on Bharani day in the Malayalam month of Chingam. It is a tradition whereby the farmers of yore days complain to the Goddess about their hardships in the typical Dravidian style. The elections that were held after India became an independent country stand out for its methodical and systematic campaign. The enthusiasm and fervour seen in the people from metropolises to villages elevated the democratic process into a festival-a festival of democracy. The campaign speeches delivered by the leaders were a learning process as they were packed with information, wisdom and knowledge. There are no records of leaders like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,

Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Balraj Madhok, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and Morarji Desai crossing the Lakshman Rekha and verbally assaulting their rivals. The political discourse took a nasty turn with Indira Gandhi attacking the Opposition parties alleging them of trying to finish her off in their bid to capture power. All her speeches were centred around this one-point agenda and were seen by political pundits as an attempt to divert the attention of the electorate from real issues. She belittled the corruption charges against her party colleagues and ministers by stating that "corruption was a global phenomenon". The stand-off between the then Congress Chief Sonia Gandhi and the then Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi made it to the global news headlines. Sonia Gandhi began addressing Modi as 'Maut Ka Saudagar' (the wholesale merchant of death), Fascist, Dictator and whatnot! Modi retorted by calling her Antonio Maino (her Italian

name) and 'Congress widow' to which the Congress and the Communists cried foul. The name-calling continued unabated as Rahul Gandhi opened a new battle front in the run-up to the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. 'Chaukidar Chor Hai' was the new war cry of the Congress scion. Though Modi kept silent for a while, he was forced to retaliate which was not music to the ears of Congress leaders. This is one of the main reasons for having a One Nation, One Poll system. With the One Nation, One Poll system, we need to bear with this abnormal situation only once every five years and not every alternate month. The silent campaign has its virtues and elegance. Election Campaigns should not upset the rhythm of one's daily life. The dignity and harmony of democracy could be sustained by a silent campaign and not by discordant notes. (The writer is a special correspondent with the Pioneer, views are personal)



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

Tunnel between science and spirituality

The successful rescue mission in the Silkyara, shows how coordinated efforts and a compassionate approach can achieve the impossible

The march of science, the heart of man must beat in unison with the heart of God. The future belongs to spirituality over science, to metaphysics over physics. These profound words of Swami Vivekananda gripped my attention after a friend of mine shared it on my WhatsApp with a photograph of tunnelling expert Arnold Dix bowing down before God (read Almighty) outside the Silkyara tunnel.

The successful completion of the rescue mission to extricate 41 workers trapped inside the Silkyara tunnel on Uttarakhand's Char Dham route was achieved on Tuesday evening of November 28, 2023. Rat-hole mining experts employed manual drilling techniques to navigate through the final 10-12-meter stretch of debris from the collapsed section of the under-construction tunnel. It was on the morning of Diwali, November 12, that a landslide occurred at approximately 5:30 AM, causing a section of the Silkyara-Dandagaon tunnel under construction on the Brahmakal-Yamunotri highway at Uttarkashi to collapse. The tunnel, a critical part of the Char Dham all-weather road project led to the trapping of 41 workers inside the tunnel, specifically at the Silkyara Bend – Barkot tunnel, situated about 200 meters from its entrance, which triggered a challenging rescue operation, as the entire nation joined in unison praying for the safe exit of the trapped workers. Action by officials and district administration began immediately and meticulously to bring out the trapped workers unhurt. Twelve skilled rat-hole mining experts played a crucial role in this intricate operation. The successful rescue operation in the Silkyara tunnel – after the 17-day ordeal of life and death – involved a collaborative effort from various entities, including the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) at the national level, state rescue agencies, international drilling experts, and even local rat-mining labourers – whose crucial contribution had often been overlooked by many. The district administration swift-



ly initiated rescue operations with approximately 200 disaster relief personnel employing drilling equipment and excavators. Simultaneously, oxygen, electricity, and food were provided to the trapped labourers through air-compressed pipes. Other than NDRF, the other agencies included SDRF, BRO, NHIDCL, and ITBP, who collaborated in the rescue efforts. In the Odisha train disaster, the NDRF played a crucial role in rescue operations. During the Sudan crisis, India launched 'Operation Kaveri' facilitating the safe evacuation of 3,000 stranded Indians. Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar engaged with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, while the Indian Air Force and Navy conducted flights and sorties, evacuating nearly 3,900 Indians. After the release of the 41 trapped workers, in a message, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that their "courage and patience" was inspiring. In a post on 'X', he wrote, "I want to say to the friends who were trapped in the tunnel that your courage and patience is inspiring for everyone. I wish you all well and good health. It is a matter of great satisfaction that, after a long wait, our friends will now meet their loved ones." Coming back to the profound words of Swami Vivekananda, as mentioned at the beginning, it emphasises the harmony between the march of science

and the spiritual essence of humanity. The idea that "the future belongs to spirituality over science, to metaphysics over physics" suggests a balance between the material and the spiritual dimensions of human existence. In the context of the successful rescue mission in the Silkyara tunnel and other instances mentioned, this balance is evident in the coordinated efforts and compassionate approach adopted by various entities involved. The challenging rescue operation in the Silkyara tunnel serves as a practical manifestation of this balance. One could say that the use of manual drilling techniques, led by skilled rat-hole mining experts, symbolises the human touch, perseverance, and skill beyond mechanised technology. The collaboration of different entities, from local rat-mining labourers to international drilling experts, reflects a holistic approach. Arnold Dix, bowing down, serves as a poignant reminder of the humility required in the face of the unknown. Tunnelling through the Earth, Dix, a master of physical engineering, found himself compelled to bow before a force greater than himself – a force that perhaps transcended the limits of his scientific understanding. This gesture encapsulates the essence of surrendering to the supreme,

acknowledging that there are realms beyond the grasp of human intellect. Amidst the grandeur of our discoveries, there exists a yearning for meaning and purpose that science alone cannot satiate. This is where spirituality steps in, offering solace to the searching soul and providing a framework for understanding the metaphysical aspects of our existence. However, the act of surrendering to the supreme does not imply abandoning reason or forsaking scientific inquiry. Instead, it encourages a harmonious coexistence where the intellect bows to the infinite wisdom that transcends empirical understanding. Moreover, surrendering to the supreme allows us to navigate the uncertainties of life with grace and resilience. In moments of adversity, the recognition of a higher power provides a source of strength and comfort, where one understands a sense of purpose. The integration of spirituality and science may find a deeper understanding of our existence and our place in this grand arena of the cosmos, where our greed and wants need to be self-checked and demand self-restraint. (The writer is a programme executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, views are personal)



RAJDEEP PATHAK


LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HC REJECTS PIL ON LOUDSPEAKERS
Sir—Dubbing it a "wholly misconceived PIL," a Division Bench of the Gujarat High Court on Tuesday rejected a public interest litigation (PIL) that had sought a ban on the use of loudspeakers in mosques during azaan. It's a good decision that came from HC. India is a democratic country where people follow different religions; that's called "unity in diversity." Different kinds of flowers beautify a bouquet of flowers; in the same way, having various religions prettifies India. All citizens should live together, loving and supporting each other. With everyone's support, our country will develop; otherwise, our country will be scattered, society will be destroyed, and evils and devils will flourish. United we stand, divided we fall.

Tauqueer Rahmani | Mumbai

BRUTAL MURDERS CREAE PANIC IN UP
Sir—As per the report, the murders of eight women in the past few months, in a similar pattern, have created panic among people and anxiety for police in the BJP-ruled state of Uttar Pradesh. All the victims were aged between 35 and 60 years and were strangled to death with a saree or chunari, said officials. Seven of these murders were reported from different villages within Shahi police station limits. The most recent one was reported from Sheeshgarh police station on November 26. Bareilly ADG PC Meena, along with IG (Range) Rakesh Singh, visited the crime spot and directed officials to work out the cases at the earliest. He asked them to do the crime mapping of incidents and analyse the crime pattern to nab the assailants. "It is still not clear whether these murders are interconnected or not. I am also not sure whether it is the work of one person or different people. But residents suspect the involvement of a psychopath in the region," said ASP (crime) Mukesh Pratap Singh. ASP Mukesh Pratap Singh issued an advisory to villagers to not allow women to go out of their homes alone and

Mission impossible!



to insert the pipe in the final stages through which all the trapped workers were pulled out. India has now developed a 'Desi Technology' to rescue workers trapped in tunnels. Providing food and oxygen to keep them alive for more than two weeks was unbelievable. The patience, courage, and confidence of trapped workers and their family members, as well as the efforts put in by all the rescuers from different organisations, are beyond appreciation. The personal interest taken by the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister was exceptional. The government needs to investigate thoroughly the reasons for the mishap, and the lessons learned can be useful for safety in the number of tunnels under construction and proposed in the Himalayas. It is not advisable to stop construction activities in the Himalayan region because of this mishap.

O Prasada Rao | Hyderabad

step out in groups of three-four, if necessary. This advisory also stands for daytime, as all these murders happened between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. with women working in the field or at deserted places. The murder of a woman in the same pattern was reported from a village under adjoining Sheeshgarh police station limits on Sunday. Urnila, 55, wife of one Ved Prakash of Jagdishpur village in Sheeshgarh, had gone out to collect fodder for cattle around noon and did not return home. The woman's body was later found lying near the field of one Dori Lal, around 500 metres from the village. Earlier last year, three women aged between 60 and 64 years were killed in December in Barabanki district. With this, women are living under the fear of getting targeted and are not going out.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

MEMORABLE TALES OF 'THE GABBA'
Sir—The iconic Australian cricket stadium, 'The Gabba' in Brisbane, is said to be demolished and rebuilt for the 2032 Olympics. Renowned for hosting one of

the fastest tracks in world cricket, the Gabba became a household name in India and across the world after India breached what was Australia's fortress until 2021. For good measure, Gabba, the bastion of the Australian cricket team, is bordered by 'Vulture Street', which cricket aficionados will famously know as one of the two ends of the ground. Gabba may not stir emotions and enthrall romantics like the storied Australian cricket grounds of Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide, but its very mention would strike fear in the minds of visiting teams. For the Indian fans, starting the day by listening to former Australian great Bill Lawry's cheerful voice early in the morning was music to the ears when he would start with, "very good morning to all our viewers wherever you are." Again, when action gets tense on the field, one will find Lawry saying, "It is all happening here at the Gabba."

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

THE ANCIENT ART OF MUDRAS

Yogic hand gestures channel energy and help connect to higher spiritual realms



SWAMI CHARANASHRIT

Mudras, a Sanskrit word that translates to "gesture," are ancient hand positions that have been practised for thousands of years in various cultures, particularly in the realms of yoga, meditation, and traditional dance. These symbolic gestures are believed to channel energy within the body and connect the practitioner to higher spiritual realms. The philosophy behind mudras lies in the idea that different parts of the hands represent different elements and energies, and by bringing them together in specific ways, one can harmonise and channel these energies for various purposes.

Major Mudras and Their Significance:

Anjali Mudra (Prayer Gesture):
How to perform: Bring the palms of your hands together in front of your chest, fingers pointing upward.
Anjali Mudra is a gesture of reverence and gratitude. It is commonly used as a greeting and is often performed at the beginning and end of yoga classes. This mudra symbolises the connection between the individual self and the universal consciousness.

Gyan Mudra (Knowledge Gesture):
How to perform: Touch the tip of the thumb and the index finger, forming a circle, while keeping the other fingers extended.
Gyan Mudra is associated with knowledge, wisdom, and concentration. It is believed to enhance memory and improve concentration during meditation. This mudra is commonly used in various meditation practices to quiet the mind and promote inner peace.

Chin Mudra (Consciousness Gesture):
How to perform: Touch the tip of the thumb and the index finger, forming a circle, and let the other three fingers remain extended.
Chin Mudra is a gesture of consciousness and is often used during meditation.


Prana Mudra (Life Force Gesture):
How to perform: Join the tips of the ring finger and the little finger to the tip of the thumb, while keeping the other fingers extended.
Prana Mudra is believed to increase the vital life force energy within the body. It is associated with improving vitality, reducing fatigue, and boosting the immune system.

Apana Mudra (Digestive Gesture):
How to perform: Touch the tips of the thumb, middle finger, and ring finger together, while keeping the index finger and little finger extended.
Apana Mudra is said to balance the Apana Vayu, one of the five vital forces in the body related to elimination and downward movement. This mudra is believed to support digestive health, assist in detoxification, and promote a sense of groundedness.

Huni Mudra (Seal of Patience):
How to perform: Join the tip of the middle finger with the tip of the thumb, while keeping the other fingers extended.
Shuni Mudra is associated with patience, discernment, and discipline. It is believed to help cultivate a sense of patience and focus. Practising this mudra is thought to bring balance to the air element within the body and mind, promoting a calm and reflective state. Shuni Mudra is often used to enhance one's ability to make wise decisions. Incorporating mudras into your meditation or yoga routine can provide a deeper dimension to your spiritual journey, promoting physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Mudras are powerful tools that bridge the physical and spiritual aspects of our being. Incorporating these symbolic hand gestures into your daily life or meditation practise can deepen your connection with yourself and the universe. As with any ancient practice, it's essential to approach mudras with respect and an open mind, allowing yourself to explore their potential benefits on a personal level.
(The writer is a spiritual guide, views are personal)



In India's diverse landscapes, every village contributes a distinctive thread to the larger narrative of our country. Nestled approximately 6 km from the Poonch district in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Mangnad stands out as a border village that is slowly etching its identity in the realms of agriculture and animal husbandry. Over the years, Mangnad has earned a reputation for its unique approach to animal husbandry. It's a village where livestock is not just a part of the scenery; it's a way of life. Yet, it's not a place where dependence solely rests on animal husbandry. Even government employees here take a keen interest in



BHARATI DEVI

both animal husbandry and agriculture. Consequently, Mangnad not only meets the local demand but also supplies milk and vegetables to the broader Poonch region. Every morning, vehicles laden with litres of milk make their way to the city, with city-dwellers acknowledging the village as a vital source for their daily dairy needs. This tradition has been sustained for years, but in the last 8-10 years, Mangnad has also emerged as a significant player in vegetable production, adding another layer to its unique identity. Today, the village engages in diverse occupations, from private businesses to government employment, but one common thread binds them



all—cultivating vegetables. Observing the burgeoning interest in agriculture, the local agriculture department has stepped in to support the villagers. This collective effort has equipped the village with essential resources, including

small tractors, quality seeds, agricultural camps, and water tanks, transforming Mangnad into a beacon of self-sufficiency. Considering the hilly terrain of Jammu and Kashmir, this transformation is a testament to the resilience and determination

of its people. Mangnad is not merely a supplier of milk and vegetables; it's a testament to how a community can carve its niche, even in challenging landscapes. The villagers have not only embraced agriculture but have also diversified into vegetable production, a feat worth celebrating. 54-year-old Murti Devi, a resident of the village, shares that their approach to vegetable cultivation has evolved. Initially, they planted a single type of vegetable for six months and then another for the next six months. However, with experience, they have streamlined their efforts, categorising vegetables into four distinct seasons. They now synchronise their

planting with the weather, ensuring a continuous supply of diverse vegetables throughout the year. Sushil Kumar, 40, asserts that apart from vegetable production, they have no other business. With some patches of land, they ventured into vegetable farming, selling produce worth lakhs every season. This entrepreneurial spirit extends to several farmers in the village, illustrating how Mangnad has become an agricultural powerhouse. Harish Kumar, 29, emphasises the enduring interest in animal husbandry among the villagers. While some are dedicated to daily milk supplies to the city, others have expanded their focus to vegetable cultivation. The

villagers are not just cultivating vegetables; they are champions of organic farming, ensuring not only flavorful produce but also contributing to the nutritional well-being of consumers. This border village's success story is not just about agriculture; it's about community resilience, innovation, and a collaborative effort with the agriculture department. The department's support, including providing specialised sheets for transforming cow dung into fertilizer, has not only improved lives but has also bestowed a distinctive identity upon Mangnad.
(The writer is Charkha's volunteer trainer from Poonch, J&K. Views are personal. Charkha Features)

India's G20 Presidency: Towards a better future



NARENDRA MODI

Today marks 365 days since India assumed the G20 Presidency. Let us reflect, recommit, and rejuvenate the spirit of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'



As we undertook the responsibility of G20 Presidency last year, the global landscape grappled with multifaceted challenges: recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, looming climate threats, financial instability, and debt distress in developing nations, all amid declining multilateralism. In the midst of conflicts and competition, development cooperation suffered, impeding progress. Assuming the G20 Chair, India sought to offer the world an alternative to status quo, a shift from a GDP-centric to human-centric progress. India aimed to remind the world of what unites us, rather than what divides us. Finally, the global conversation had to evolve—the interests of the few had to give way to the aspirations of the many. This required a fundamental reform of multilateralism as we knew it. Inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented, and decisive—these four words defined our approach as G20 president, and the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration (NDLD), unanimously adopted by all G20 members, is testimony to our commitment to deliver on these principles. Inclusivity has been at the heart of our presidency. The inclusion of the African Union (AU) as a permanent member of the G20 integrated 55 African nations into the forum, expanding it to encompass 80% of the global population. This proactive stance has fostered a more comprehensive dialogue on global challenges and opportunities. The first-of-its-kind 'Voice of the Global South Summit,' convened by India in two editions, heralded a new dawn of multilateralism. India mainstreamed the Global South's concerns in international discourse and has ushered in an era where developing countries take their rightful place in shaping the global narrative. Inclusivity also infused India's domestic



INDIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY USHERED IN A DAWN OF NEW MULTILATERALISM; A BEGINNING OF A NEW WORLD ORDER

approach to G20, making it a People's Presidency that befits that world's largest democracy. Through "Jan Bhagidari" (people's participation) events, G20 reached 1.4 billion citizens, involving all states and Union Territories (UTs) as partners. And on substantive elements, India ensured that international attention was directed to broader developmental aims, aligning with G20's mandate. At the critical midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, India delivered the G20 2023 Action Plan to Accelerate Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), taking a cross-cutting, action-oriented approach to interconnected issues, including health, education, gender equality and environmental sustainability. A key area driving this progress is robust Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). Here, India was decisive in its recommendations, having witnessed the revolutionary impact of digital innovations like Aadhaar, UPI, and Digilocker first-hand. Through G20, we successfully completed the Digital Public Infrastructure Repository, a significant stride in global technological collaboration. This repository, featuring over 50 DPIs from 16 countries, will help the Global South build, adopt, and scale DPI to unlock the power of inclusive growth. For our One Earth, we introduced ambitious and inclusive aims to create urgent, lasting, and equitable change. The Declaration's 'Green Development Pact' addresses the challenges of choosing between combating hunger and


protecting the planet, by outlining a comprehensive roadmap where employment and ecosystems are complimentary, consumption is climate conscious, and production is planet-friendly. In tandem, the G20 Declaration calls for an ambitious tripling of global renewable energy capacity by 2030. Coupled with the establishment of the Global Biofuels Alliance and a concerted push for Green Hydrogen, the G20's ambitions to build a cleaner, greener world is undeniable. This has always been India's ethos, and through Lifestyles for Sustainable Development (LiFE), the world can benefit from our age-old sustainable traditions. Further, the Declaration underscores our commitment to climate justice and equity, urging substantial financial and technological support from the Global North. For the first time, there was a recognition of the quantum jump needed in the magnitude of development financing, moving from billions to trillions of dollars. G20 acknowledged that developing countries require \$5.9 trillion to fulfil their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by 2030. Given the monumental resources required, G20 emphasised the importance of better, larger, and more effective Multilateral Development Banks. Concurrently, India is taking a leading role in UN reforms, especially in the restructuring of principal organs like the UN Security Council, that will ensure a more equitable global order. Gender equality took centre stage in the Declaration, culminating in

the formation of a dedicated Working Group on the Empowerment of Women next year. India's Women's Reservation Bill 2023, reserving one-third of India's Parliament and state legislative assembly seats for women epitomizes our commitment to women-led development. The New Delhi Declaration embodies a renewed spirit of collaboration across these key priorities, focusing on policy coherence, reliable trade, and ambitious climate action. It is a matter of pride that during our Presidency, G20 achieved 87 outcomes and 118 adopted documents, a marked rise from the past. During our G20 Presidency, India led deliberations on geopolitical issues and their impact on economic growth and development. Terrorism and the senseless killing of civilians is unacceptable, and we must address it with a policy of zero-tolerance. We must embody humanitarianism over hostility and reiterate that this is not an era of war. I am delighted that during our Presidency India achieved the extraordinary: it revitalised multilateralism, amplified the voice of the Global South, championed development, and fought for the empowerment of women, everywhere. As we hand over the G20 Presidency to Brazil, we do so with the conviction that our collective steps for people, planet, peace, and prosperity, will resonate for years to come.
(This is an exclusive writeup by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi)

Cultivating a unique economic identity in the border areas

Mangnad is not merely a supplier of milk and vegetables; it's a testament to how a community can carve its niche, even in challenging landscapes

In India's diverse landscapes, every village contributes a distinctive thread to the larger narrative of our country. Nestled approximately 6 km from the Poonch district in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Mangnad stands out as a border village that is slowly etching its identity in the realms of agriculture and animal husbandry. Over the years, Mangnad has earned a reputation for its unique approach to animal husbandry. It's a village where livestock is not just a part of the scenery; it's a way of life. Yet, it's not a place where dependence solely rests on animal husbandry. Even government employees here take a keen interest in



BHARATI DEVI

both animal husbandry and agriculture. Consequently, Mangnad not only meets the local demand but also supplies milk and vegetables to the broader Poonch region. Every morning, vehicles laden with litres of milk make their way to the city, with city-dwellers acknowledging the village as a vital source for their daily dairy needs. This tradition has been sustained for years, but in the last 8-10 years, Mangnad has also emerged as a significant player in vegetable production, adding another layer to its unique identity. Today, the village engages in diverse occupations, from private businesses to government employment, but one common thread binds them



all—cultivating vegetables. Observing the burgeoning interest in agriculture, the local agriculture department has stepped in to support the villagers. This collective effort has equipped the village with essential resources, including

of its people. Mangnad is not merely a supplier of milk and vegetables; it's a testament to how a community can carve its niche, even in challenging landscapes. The villagers have not only embraced agriculture but have also diversified into vegetable production, a feat worth celebrating. 54-year-old Murti Devi, a resident of the village, shares that their approach to vegetable cultivation has evolved. Initially, they planted a single type of vegetable for six months and then another for the next six months. However, with experience, they have streamlined their efforts, categorising vegetables into four distinct seasons. They now synchronise their

planting with the weather, ensuring a continuous supply of diverse vegetables throughout the year. Sushil Kumar, 40, asserts that apart from vegetable production, they have no other business. With some patches of land, they ventured into vegetable farming, selling produce worth lakhs every season. This entrepreneurial spirit extends to several farmers in the village, illustrating how Mangnad has become an agricultural powerhouse. Harish Kumar, 29, emphasises the enduring interest in animal husbandry among the villagers. While some are dedicated to daily milk supplies to the city, others have expanded their focus to vegetable cultivation. The

villagers are not just cultivating vegetables; they are champions of organic farming, ensuring not only flavorful produce but also contributing to the nutritional well-being of consumers. This border village's success story is not just about agriculture; it's about community resilience, innovation, and a collaborative effort with the agriculture department. The department's support, including providing specialised sheets for transforming cow dung into fertilizer, has not only improved lives but has also bestowed a distinctive identity upon Mangnad.
(The writer is Charkha's volunteer trainer from Poonch, J&K. Views are personal. Charkha Features)

MONEY MATTERS

I-T dept conducts 'survey' at Hinduja Group entity

The Income Tax department on Wednesday conducted a survey operation at Hinduja Global Solutions, an entity of the Hinduja Group, in Mumbai and some other cities, official sources said. The survey operation is being undertaken as part of a tax evasion investigation and offices in Mumbai and some other cities are being covered, they said. According to the I-T law for survey operations, only office premises are being covered. An email sent by PTI to the company did not elicit response. Sources said the tax department action is also linked to provisions of the General Anti-Avoidance Rules (GAAR). Hinduja Global Solutions (HGS) offers strategic consultation, digital transformation, IT systems integration among other services. The Hinduja Group, which owns IndusInd Bank, Hinduja Leyland Finance and Hinduja Bank (Switzerland), is diversifying and has plans to get into the new tech, digital and fintech as part of its new phase of growth and fill gaps through acquisitions to have complete offerings in the BFSI sector.



UltraTech acquires cement grinding assets of Burnpur Cement Ltd

Aditya Birla group firm UltraTech Cement Ltd on Wednesday said it has acquired the cement grinding assets of Burnpur Cement Ltd in Jharkhand for Rs 169.79 crore. The company has acquired 0.54 mtpa cement grinding assets of Burnpur Cement Ltd, located at Patratu in Jharkhand, UltraTech Cement said in a regulatory filing. The acquisition has been carried out at a consideration of Rs 169.79 crore in terms of the provisions of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002," it added. This investment marks the company's entry in Jharkhand, the filing said, adding the company's capacity in India now stands at 133 mtpa. Last year state-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) had put up for sale the account of loss-making Burnpur Cement and invited bids from Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs) to recover loans outstanding of over Rs 50 crore.



Guj CM leads Vibrant Gujarat Roadshow in Tokyo

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Wednesday led the 'Vibrant Gujarat Roadshow' in Tokyo, that saw participation of more than 200 business professionals, on the fourth day of his Japan visit, according to an official release. A high-level delegation led by Patel is in Japan to promote the upcoming Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit, to be held in January next year in Gandhinagar. At the roadshow, executive vice president Japan External Trade Organisation or JETRO, Kazuya Nakajo, and Director General of JETRO, Takehiko Furukawa, praised Gujarat's remarkable growth, as per the release. Recognizing the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, they highlighted Gujarat's integral role in the global business ecosystem. Furukawa mentioned that the reason for this growth in Gujarat is its "double-engine government", the release said. Executive Vice President of Suzuki, Kenichi Ayukawa, shared his experience of working in Gujarat. He praised the proactive approach of PM Modi and CM Patel.



COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE BY 2030

Country can mop up US\$ 543 bn from retail investors: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The country can mobilize as much as US\$ 543 billion from retail investors for climate investments by 2030, while the global potential for the same is a whopping US\$ 3.4 trillion, says a report.

A Standard Chartered Bank report on sustainable banking, is based on investor interest from a survey of 1,800 respondents in 10 growth markets across Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

According to the survey, of the US\$ 543 billion investible retail capital that can be mobilized in the country, US\$ 324 billion could flow into mitigation themes such as energy efficiency, renewables and energy storage, while US\$ 219 billion could be pumped in for adaptation including resilient infrastructure, biodiversity and food systems.

The survey shows 96 per cent of investors in the country are interested in climate investing -- the highest among all markets surveyed, and 84 per cent of



them want to increase capital flows towards climate investments. Though these investors are motivated by making a positive impact and personal values when making such investments, they also say that multiple barriers are holding their interest into investment.

The respondents cited accessibility (76 per cent), comparability (75 per cent), comprehensibility (73 per cent) and com-

parability (74 per cent), as major barriers. According to Marc Van de Walle, global head of wealth management at the bank, overall climate mitigation and adaptation face an annual funding gap of trillions of dollars. To overcome the current disconnect between investor interest and the scale of climate investments, the industry needs to improve access to solutions, harmonise reporting standards and measurement of impact.

Though these investors are motivated by making a positive impact and personal values when making such investments, they also say that multiple barriers are holding them back from translating their interest into investment.

According to Saurabh Jain, head of wealth management at Standard Chartered India, climate change is a key challenge for the country given its frequent extreme weather events, growing population and increasing urbanization, highlighting the need to bring rapid focus into building climate-resilient infrastructure and staying on course to achieve the country's net-zero targets.

'Second quarter GDP numbers likely to be good'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian economy is showing momentum and the growth rate in the second quarter (July-September) is likely to be good, Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth said on Wednesday. The GDP numbers for the second quarter are scheduled to be released on Thursday. The economy grew at 7.8 per cent in the first quarter (April-June) of the current financial year.

"India economy showed good momentum in the second quarter. The second quarter numbers should be good", Seth told reporters on the sidelines of a national workshop on 'Leveraging private finance for urban infrastructure developments -- Learnings from G20 Infrastructure Working Group'. He further said that the fiscal deficit target of 5.9 per cent for the current financial year was feasible despite additional outgo towards food subsidy.

"We are confident of meeting fiscal deficit target this year despite the government raising food subsidy for the next five years," Seth said.

Govt clears Terms of Reference of 16th Finance Commission

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has cleared the Terms of Reference of the 16th Finance Commission to suggest the ratio for devolution of taxes between the Centre and states and also review financing disaster management initiatives, for five years beginning April 1, 2026.

The commission would submit its report for the five-year period (2026-27 to 2030-31) to the President by October 31, 2025, an official statement said.

Besides tax devolution and states' revenue augmentation measures, the commission would review the present arrangements for financing disaster management initiatives with reference to the funds constituted under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

"The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the Terms of Reference for the Sixteenth Finance Commission. The 16th Finance Commission's recommendations, upon acceptance by the government,



"The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the Terms of Reference for the Sixteenth Finance Commission. The 16th Finance Commission's recommendations, upon acceptance by the government, would cover a period of five years commencing April 1, 2026."

Names of the chairperson

and members of 16th Finance Commission would be finalised soon, an official said.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for 16th Finance Commission will be notified in due course.

The commission shall make recommendations in matters including the distribution between the Union and states of net proceeds of taxes which are to be, or may be, divided between them and the allocation between states of the respective shares of such proceeds.

The commission would advise on the principles which should govern the grants-in-aid of revenues of states out of Consolidated Fund of India and the sums to be paid to states by way of grants-in-aid of their revenues.

Gold rallies Rs 750 to record high of Rs 63,500; silver zooms Rs 800

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price rallied Rs 750 to Rs 63,500 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday amid strong global trends, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 62,750 per 10 grams.

Silver also zoomed Rs 800 to Rs 79,000 per kilogram.

"Gold prices surged on Wednesday, trading at an all-time high of Rs 63,500 per 10 gram, up Rs 750 following a bullish trend in overseas markets," Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of

commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

In the overseas markets, gold and silver were trading higher at USD 2,041 per ounce and USD 24.95 per ounce, respectively.

Spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,041 per ounce, up USD 27 from the previous close.

Weaker dollar and statements from a Federal Reserve official reinforced bets that the central bank will begin lowering interest rates next year, which boosted traders' sentiment and pushed Comex gold to its highest level since May, Gandhi said.

IREDA makes dream stock market debut Shares settle with premium of 87.5%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) made a remarkable stock market debut on Wednesday, ending with a premium of 87.5 per cent, against the issue price of Rs 32.

The stock listed at Rs 50, up 56.25 per cent from the issue price on both the BSE and NSE. During the day, it rallied 87.46 per cent to Rs 59.99 on the BSE.

On the NSE, the stock ended at Rs 60 apiece, soaring 87.5 per cent.

The company commanded a market valuation of Rs



16,123.90 crore.

In volume terms, 381.55 lakh shares of the firm were traded on the BSE and over 57.98 crore shares on the NSE during the day.

In the equity market, the

30-share BSE Sensex jumped 727.71 points or 1.10 per cent to settle at 66,901.91 and the Nifty climbed 206.90 points or 1.04 per cent to 20,096.60.

The Initial Public Offering (IPO) of IREDA was sub-

scribed 38.80 times on the last day of bidding on Thursday.

The IPO had a fresh issue of up to 40,31,64,706 equity shares and an offer for sale component of up to 26,87,76,471 equity shares.

The price range for the offer was Rs 30-32 a share. This was the first public issue by a public sector enterprise after Life Insurance Corporation's IPO in May last year. Proceeds from the fresh issue will be used for augmenting IREDA's capital base to meet its future capital requirements and onward lending.

IREDA is a mini Ratna firm under the administrative controls of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

LIC launches guaranteed return plan Jeevan Utsav

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Insurance behemoth LIC on Wednesday launched its guaranteed return plan, Jeevan Utsav. It is a non-linked, non-participating, individual savings, whole life insurance plan, LIC said in a regulatory filing.

LIC Chairman Siddhartha Mohanty, in an interview to PTI had recently said policyholders can expect a lifelong benefit of 10 per cent of the sum assured after the policy matures. Mohanty had said the new product is poised to disrupt the market and that there is a widespread interest among insurance buyers in understanding the transparent cost structure and returns over a period of 20-



25 years.

Furthermore, he had mentioned that the new product would include features such as a loan facility and the option for premature withdrawal.

This plan is available for ages starting from 90 days to 65 years, LIC said in a statement. It gives guaranteed life-long income and life-long risk cover and the minimum premium paying term is five years and the maximum premium paying term is 16 years, it said.

FLOUTING INVESTMENT ADVISORY RULES

Sebi bans 9 entities from securities mkt for 2 yrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi has barred nine entities from the securities market for at least two years and directed them to refund Rs 8 crore collected from investors, through unregistered investment advisory services, within three months.

Additionally, the regulator has imposed a penalty totalling Rs 18 lakh on them and asked them to pay the amount within 45 days.

The nine entities that have been prohibited are -- Yogesh Kukadia, Rajesh R Kallidumbil, Nithin Raj, Signal2Noise Capital Partners, Investo Investment Advisers, SS Info Sales, SI Digi Sales, CT Web Sales and ML Tele Sales.

Further, three individuals -- Yogesh Kukadia, Rajesh Kallidumbil and Nithin Raj -- have been restrained from associating as directors or key managerial personnel with any listed public company for two years. In its probe, the regu-



latory found that Yogesh and Rajesh, who were registered as investment advisers, had not conducted the IA (investment advisory) activities in their individual capacities but rather carried out IA work through the six partnership firms that were not registered with Sebi.

The regulator conducted an inspection of the advisory activities of Yogesh and Rajesh for the period April 2018 to September 2019 after receiving certain complaints. Going by the order, the entities received Rs 810.24 lakh from the clients as fees in respect of their unregistered investment

advisory activities. The amount of fees was collected from 4,536 clients for providing investment advice through the six partnership firms, which were not registered with Sebi.

The three individuals, who are common partners in all the six partnership firms, have collected the fees from the clients through the six partnership firms, which were not registered and hence not eligible to collect such fees.

The amount of fees was collected from 4,536 clients for providing investment advice through the six partnership firms, which were not registered with Sebi.

The three individuals, who are common partners in all the six partnership firms, have collected the fees from the clients through the six partnership firms, which were not registered and hence not eligible to collect such fees.

Web3 sector can create 2 mn high-paying jobs in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Web3 sector, the new generation of internet based on decentralised blockchain technology, has the potential to create an employment base of about 2 million high-paying direct jobs in India within the next decade, a report said.

India is home to more than 900 enterprises in the Web3 sector, making significant strides by accounting for 11 per cent of the global Web3 developer community in 2022, securing its position as the third-largest talent pool of developers on a global scale, said a report by

management consulting services provider Primus Partners.

The transformative potential of Web3 extends across various sectors, with collaborative pilot projects showcasing its usefulness.

Promising use cases include supply chain management, privacy in healthcare, education, and experience certificates, voting systems, identity management, and more. Web3, therefore, when integrated responsibly, can transform industries, said the report titled 'Unlocking the Web3 Potential: India's Journey from a Talent Exporter to a



Product Powerhouse'.

Web3 can be looked at as set of technologies and platforms helping implement decentralised solutions delivering value to all stakehold-

ers. "As we witness the evolution of Web3, its potential for transformative growth becomes increasingly evident. Our study thoroughly explores this expanding land-

scape, offering valuable insights that illuminate the path forward for India with strategic attention to coordinated global efforts, robust domestic legislation, heightened awareness, and a nurturing business environment," Shrawan Shetty, Managing Director, Primus Partners.

India, through its G20 presidency, has shown dedication to addressing VDAs, evidenced by the publication of the IMF and FSB's synthesis paper on crypto in September 2023, the report said.

As a global consensus takes shape, the report stress-

es the urgency for India to advance its domestic policies, creating a conducive environment for Web3 businesses by implementing forward-thinking legislation, it added.

The report outlines a strategic framework for India's ascent to Web3 leadership, emphasising legislative prioritisation, heightened awareness, and business environment enhancement.

Proposing a coordinated global approach, the report underlined the need for a collaborative blueprint, emphasising global taxonomy, minimum standards, flexibility, and coordinated monitoring.

IAG Cargo open to partnerships with Indian carriers, logistics players



PNS ■ NEW DELHI


Bullish on the growth prospects in India, IAG Cargo is open for partnerships with Indian carriers and logistics players as and when an opportunity comes up, a top official said on Wednesday.

The European entity, which represents the cargo business of five airlines, garners around

10 per cent of its global export revenues from India. IAG Cargo handles the air cargo business of British Airways, Iberia Cargo, Spanish carriers -- Vueling and LEVEL -- and Ireland's Aer Lingus Cargo.

In an interview with PTI here, IAG Cargo's Chief Executive Officer David Shepherd said it gets some of the highest load factors from the Indian market, which is seeing a massive growth in diverse industries, including pharmaceuticals and e-commerce.

To a query on whether IAG Group will be looking at partnerships with Indian carriers and logistics players, he said.



'Having a fan-following in Marathi industry doesn't exactly give an edge for working in Bollywood'

Addinath Kothare is a notable name in both the Hindi and Marathi entertainment industries. He has worked on hit television shows, and films, and was recently seen in successful series such as *City of Dreams* and *Bajao*. In a recent interview, the actor spoke about the differences between Hindi and Marathi cinema, and his journey of working in Bollywood.


Talking about the noticeable differences between Hindi and Marathi cinema, Addinath mentioned that Hindi cinema (Bollywood) has a larger audience which is why the films have a bigger budget, unlike Marathi films which have smaller budgets due to a lesser audience. He went on to say that Marathi films are mainly content driven which is generally not the case for Bollywood.

The actor also spoke about his enthusiasm to play different types of roles and be part of different genres such as comedy, action, and thriller. He says he enjoys doing different types of roles and is glad he is receiving diverse roles.

Addinath further told Hindustan Times that while he may have a good fan following with his Marathi background, it does not exactly give him any advantage when trying to make a place in Bollywood.

He said that even if he and his father are well established in the Marathi industry, he has had to start from scratch in Bollywood. He went on to say that he has given auditions and then got selected for every role he has done so far. For the unversed, Addinath is also a director and producer, and his directorial *Paani*, produced by Priyanka Chopra, will be releasing next year. Addinath said that he is looking forward to *Paani* releasing in cinemas next year, and also gave some insight into the film. He mentioned that the film is based on a true story of a simple man who lives in a village in Nanded that has been going through a drought.

Addinath Kothare ended off by sharing how grateful he is for getting to work with prominent Bollywood actresses, as his work in Madhuri Dixit Nene's Marathi production also releases next year.



Akshay Kumar: Martial arts is not just about physical strength; it's about discipline & focus

Surat witnessed four days of intense competition and martial arts excellence as the Akshay Kumar 15th International Kudo Tournament unfolded from November 26 to 29, 2023. Headlined and meticulously orchestrated by the actor with a heart, Akshay Kumar, this event not only showcased the prowess of Kudo athletes but also emphasized the actor's commitment to empowering those who aspire to excel in martial arts, especially those less privileged.

India has now become the third-largest Kudo practicing country globally, following Russia and Japan. At the event, participants from all 38 states and union territories of India showcased their skills, reflecting the widespread enthusiasm for the sport across the nation. On the 28th of November, Akshay Kumar attended the event and met with the participants, sharing his passion for Kudo and Mixed Martial Arts (MMA). The event garnered further significance with the presence of Shri Harsh Sanghvi, Home Minister of Gujarat and Minister of State for Sports, who commended Akshay Kumar's dedication to promoting martial arts in the region.

The Akshay Kumar 15th International Kudo Tournament stands out as a unique sporting spectacle, hosting athletes free of cost for the past 15 years. This includes providing complimentary lodging, boarding, training, and participation, reflecting Akshay Kumar's vision to make Kudo accessible to all. Over the years, Kudo has gained recognition from the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, with Kudo Tournament participants earning eligibility for 3% sports quota reservations in scale 3 government jobs.

The tournament has not only been a platform for competition but a gateway for deserving students from less fortunate backgrounds to secure job postings in major government departments. The tournament structure, from district to international levels, provides a comprehensive pathway for athletes to progress. Winners of district tournaments move on to state competitions, leading to Nationals, Federation Cup, and ultimately, the prestigious Akshay Kumar International Kudo Tournament. The victors of this event then advance to higher stages such as the South Asian Cup, Asian Cup, and World Cups.

Akshay Kumar's commitment to nurturing talent extends beyond the tournament. Every year, he sponsors several athletes for month-long training camps in Thailand, enhancing their skills and preparing them for future challenges.

Akshay Kumar says, "Martial arts is not just about physical strength; it's about discipline, focus, and the relentless pursuit of excellence. I am where I am today because of martial arts and I am honoured to contribute to the growth of Kudo in India and empower athletes to realize their full potential."

Taylor Swift 'moves in' with Travis Kelce to spend 'QUALITY TIME TOGETHER'



Singer-songwriter Taylor Swift is said to be moving in with Travis Kelce for a couple of weeks before continuing her world tour.

The singer, 33, and the NFL player, 34, have attracted much attention over their relationship in recent months, reports Mirror.co.uk.

They have been spotted spending time together on occasions, whilst having both been busy with work commitments. It has now been reported that Taylor is moving into Travis' mansion in Kansas City, Missouri, for a few weeks whilst on a break from the Eras Tour.

As per Mirror.co.uk, the latest leg concluded last week and

she isn't set to go back on tour until February next year. It has been reported this week that Taylor and Travis are preparing to spend their first extended period of time together. A source told the Daily Mail that she's "smitten" and said they are now set to spend "weeks at a time" together.

The source commented: "She realises that the hard work in their relationship is about to start as they will be spending weeks at a time together. Up until now it has been time snatched as they both have had such busy schedules."

The source said that the activities the pair have done in recent weeks – including her watching

him play for the Kansas City Chiefs and appearing on Saturday Night Live – aren't typical for the first few months of a relationship.

It was further stated that for now Taylor and Travis can "try to be as normal" as their lives allow them to be. The source went on to add to the outlet: "They finally have the time and opportunity to spend some real quality time together."

It's previously been reported that Travis recently bought a new home in the area. It's been suggested that the mansion, which is rumoured to be worth \$6 million, offers more privacy than his previous residence.



HELEN FLANAGAN RECALLS ONE NIGHT STAND, MAN WHO 'RUINED' HER MENTAL HEALTH

Actress Helen Flanagan has been opening up about life as a single woman and dishing details about her love life.

The former *Coronation Street* actress, 33, revealed all to her fans on social media about her dating woes throughout 2023, reports Mirror.co.uk. She admitted to being ghosted by one potential love interest, having a one night stand and experiencing one possible suitor ruining her mental health.

Helen, who recently announced details of an upcoming acting role, split from footballer Scott Sinclair in July last year. Scott and Helen share three


children together Matilda, 7, Delilah, 4, and son Charlie, 1. As per Mirror.co.uk, they first started dating in 2009, with the footballer proposing in 2018. However, after 13 years together the couple called it quits on their relationship with Helen adapting to being a single woman for the first time in her adult life over recent months.

Taking to social media earlier this week, *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here* star Helen looked back on her quest to find a new partner this year. The mum-of-three shared a light-hearted video on TikTok introducing "the men of 2023" to her followers, including screenshots of how she


saved her dates' phone numbers in her contacts list. Some of the cheeky nicknames Helen gave the past love interests included: "Too obsessed with their dog, ruined my mental health. My ghoster. Dead chat. Complicated X. Dead chat 2 and My One Night Stand".

An optimistic Helen captioned the candid update: "After 13 years of being married, I've spent this year trying to find myself and start dating again. Let's just say it's been an experience... In conclusion we're hoping for a better 2024."


ARCHIE




CALVIN AND HOBBS




GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK




SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

| | | | | | |
|----|----|--|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | 6 | | |
| 7 | | | 8 | | |
| | | | 9 | | |
| | 10 | | | | |
| 11 | | | | 12 | |
| | | | 13 | | |
| | 14 | | | | 15 |
| 16 | | | | 17 | |
| | | | | | |
| 18 | | | 19 | | |


NANCY



SUDOKU

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| | | 7 | 8 | 5 | | | | |
| 8 | 4 | | 2 | | | | | |
| | | | 6 | | | 4 | 9 | |
| | 2 | | | | 3 | 1 | 7 | |
| 5 | | | | | | | 2 | |
| 4 | 3 | 8 | | | | 9 | | |
| 9 | 8 | | | 7 | | | | |
| | | | | 9 | | 3 | 8 | |
| | | 3 | 5 | 9 | | | | |

GINGER MEGGS



ACROSS

- Noon
- Costing nothing
- Contact by telephone
- Purchasing
- Rich
- Very sore
- A floor covering
- Large boat
- A red gemstone
- Selected
- Going very quickly
- Less dirty
- Cup and
- Small trees
- A nipping sea creature
- Twirl around

DOWN

- One of the planets
- A meal
- Water from the sky
- Ninety less ten

SOLUTION 751

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| R | E | P | E | A | T | I | N | G |
| D | A | T | E | R | S | A | N | D |
| F | R | I | G | H | T | E | N | |
| G | O | A | L | D | E | F | E | A |
| T | R | A | N | S | I | N | G | |
| S | O | L | V | E | R | E | D | |
| A | N | S | W | E | R | I | N | G |

'I don't have a knack for comedy; it's difficult'



ACTRESS LUBNA SALIM, WHO HAS MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY, GETS CANDID WITH **THE PIONEER** ABOUT BEING A CONSISTENT ACTRESS, HER CAMARADERIE WITH KAMLESH GILL, AND MORE.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Actress Lubna Salim, who is well-known for her creative ability in both theatre and film, has made a significant contribution to the entertainment industry for more than three decades. The recent fame of *The Aam Aadmi Family* comedy series takes some time out and gets candid with **The Pioneer**.

"I am a consistent actress; to be able to walk this thorny part in the industry, you certainly got to be congruous. I had never expected my wide popularity to go to this extent, and there can never be comparisons between the mediums we are juggling with. Yes, the reach of a feature film, for example, when I did *Parbat Ke Uss Paar*, was beyond expectations. *Oh My God*, gave me immediate adulation. Now, when I did *Baa Bahoo Aur Baby*, citizens immediately recognized me on the streets by the name of my character. So this hero-worship was different from a feature film. I have watched myself coming in the commercials in between an important match that's going on; it is a different high in my life. Overall, it is the most difficult time to be in the theater. Who doesn't want to be in films? That's the final nail in the coffin for any actor," shares the *Oh My God* actress.

She does what she does in films, which the theater actress can relate to. She definitely wants that kind of audience adulation that mainstream heroines enjoy! Because audience adulation is important,

The daughter of the popular scriptwriter Javed Siddiqui continues, "I never had any expectations from my series; I knew it would be a sure-shot success. Right from day one, when Kamlesh Gill entered the sets and gave her first shot, I swear, we were rolling on the floor with so much laughter. She's an actor mom with so many stories to tell. I loved taking care of her on the hotel premises, feeding her, and escorting her to the room. Now she has become old and frail, but she has returned to work. She wasn't able to stand, but the whole unit was in total support of her. Her daughter had revealed to

us how eager she was to return to the sets because she wanted to continue working until her last breath. We have recorded every moment of hers."

Lubna described how the veteran actress' energy was sheer madness coming from the Punjabi film industry. Continuing to win our hearts, she adds, "I don't have that



knack for doing comedy because presently you can watch me on your television screens doing a very serious role. It's just that my so-called comedy genres have picked up and received that prominence in the industry. Doing comedy is difficult; it involves some serious technicalities."

She has been associated with the family drama series since the first season. So it was natural for us to ask her about how she perceives family love, to which the *Just Married* fame shares, "They are my lifeline. I am not talking about blood relationships at all! For instance, my housekeeper is my family because she's feeding my son when I am away from work. And all this with no expectations in return? As far as my films are concerned, even though they are a part of my family, I should feel good about returning them. Hence, you see very little of me these days. I had decided very early on in my career that I would never become just one of the faces in the crowd. Now that your serial is on air, your fans won't even allow you to breathe very funny."

Sharing her camaraderie with the new production house, she states, "TVF has its own niche in the OTT genre. They

were the first ones to start creating interesting content for binge-watchers. *Panchayat* and *College Romance* are two of my favorites. Now, because the team consists of only youngsters, there is no pressure on us. The way they want to showcase the point of view of their generation through their series makes them stand out amongst everyone else."

Her father, Javed Siddiqui, was a Hindi and Urdu screenwriter, dialogue writer, and playwright from our country. During his career, he collaborated with some of India's most prominent filmmakers, from independent directors like Satyajit Ray and Shyam Benegal to commercial directors like Yash Chopra and Subhash Ghai. We were very intrigued to know about his influence on her: "Any daughter would be closest to her father, and so am I. My mother calls me his "karchi", not even a "chamchi" (she laughed out loud). My whole family is in the same field; the common outlook toward the industry has kept us bound together for a lifetime. And we are the worst bunch of critics of each other at home. It's so easy to get carried away from the fame we receive, so the reality check at home has always been there."



SHIKHA DUGGAL

With ALT EFF all set to premiere its new edition, **The Pioneer** interacts with its director Kunal Khanna, who shares some interesting insights about the festival.

As we earlier reported to you, the All Living Things Environmental Film Festival is bringing sustainability and storytelling together. We have the festival's director on board who aligns with the commitment to using his influential platform for the greater good. Kunal Khanna wants to celebrate his conscientious approach and advocacy for social and environmental causes.

In an exclusive interaction with us, he opened up, saying, "I have been in a privileged position to be able to dive into ideas that have crossed my mind, where I find my true passion. During my early education at the University of Melbourne, I took a particular interest in economics, as it helped me make sense of the world that we live in, particularly from the perspective of the systems that dominate the current world order. However, as a practicing economist, it became increasingly clear to me that these systems may not be very conducive for our planet, people, and the diverse species on it to thrive; instead, they are skewed towards those who hold capital. I was able to question this and develop a new worldview personally as a result of the experiences I had in the arts through film festivals and other cultural events in Australia."

Then his food truck came about because he wanted to experience

more of this and while doing so, make money and not spend money. He quit his job as an economist and started a Masters of Environment degree with a food truck with his best friend Tyson Savanah, and this served both as his livelihood and his ability to engage with such experiences. It was some of the fun years of his life, as he describes them to us, and also when he met his wife Laura, who came to get lunch, and he wooed with his dosa-making skills. Interesting timeline.

He shared, "During my masters, I was introduced to the concept of permaculture, and very quickly it became a mindset I wanted to adopt for everything I did, and I have done exactly that. The three core ethics and the 12 principles of permaculture govern all the decisions I make in my life today. When I returned to India after thirteen years, Laura and I started The Odd

Gumnut Permaculture Farm in Panchgani and established the first zero-waste kombucha company."

Then in 2019, he wanted to develop a platform where people can have insightful experiences like he did back in Melbourne that helped shape his perspective. The environmental crisis is the most critical issue of our time and my subject matter. He took this idea to his co-founders, who run a design studio and also happen to be qualified filmmakers. Collectively, they launched ALT EFF, an environmental film festival, in 2020 in the midst of the pandemic and have not looked back since.

He continued, "Launching ALT EFF did not have anything to do with the pandemic, as we were having initial discussions for a festival in Panchgani already. The pandemic meant we launched as a 100% virtual festival, which actually enabled us to reach large audiences around the world with very low budgets and overheads. The wider societal interest and re-evaluation of our relationship with the environment meant the time could not have been better to kick-start the initiative. And in hindsight, I am very grateful for the same."

In his opinion, the environmental documentary scene in the country has been the best it has ever been. The limelight received by films such as *All That Breathes*, *The Elephant Whisperers*, and more recently, *Against the Tide* are all pushing filmmakers to cover stories that fall within the theme of

environment, both directly and indirectly. The interest in the same from audiences has also been growing consistently, and it only makes sense that as we continue to experience the wrath of climate change, the stories we tell increasingly cover and touch on this lived experience. One aspect that is still lagging is the finance for environmental documentaries. Production houses such as Civic Studios are starting to fill this gap, and he is very excited to see their slate of films released over the next couple of years.

Besides, "the way we approach the theme of environment is very broad. Films on social issues and the environment have been pivotal in some of the decisions I have made that have put me where I am today. In terms of the audiences that have experienced ALT EFF, our research shows that 83% of the viewers who attended made a change in their behavior or approach to certain issues after watching films at the festival. I can therefore conclude that, yes, environmental films hold immense power to bring about change and create impact, as awareness is the very first step to taking action."

His key lesson is that the power lies in collaborations and partnerships; this is the only way they can achieve the necessary scale for addressing the current environmental crises. Building and nurturing a network across the country is therefore of utmost importance for them as a festival.

PREVENTING VASCULAR COMPLICATIONS IN DIABETES

Diabetes is a chronic condition that affects millions of people worldwide. Apart from its well-known impact on blood sugar levels, diabetes can have a profound effect on the vascular system. The interplay between diabetes and vascular health is crucial, as individuals with diabetes are at a significantly higher risk of developing vascular complications. Vascular diseases include a range of conditions such as atherosclerosis, peripheral artery disease (PAD), coronary artery disease, and stroke, among others. Understanding how to prevent vascular complications in diabetes is essential for improving the overall well-being of those affected. Dr. Krishna Chaitanya, Lead Consultant - Vascular and Endovascular Surgery, Aster RV Hospital explores the steps you can take to protect your vascular health and reduce the risk of complications associated with diabetes.

THE DIABETES-VASCULAR DISEASE CONNECTION:

Before diving into prevention strategies, it's crucial to comprehend the link between diabetes and vascular complications. Diabetes, both type 1 and type 2, can have detrimental effects on the vascular system. The elevated blood sugar levels characteristic of diabetes can lead to a cascade of events that damage blood vessels over time. Here's how it happens:

High Blood Sugar Levels: Uncontrolled diabetes results in consistently high levels of glucose in the bloodstream. This excess sugar can injure the delicate inner lining of blood vessels, leading to inflammation and the formation of fatty deposits.

Atherosclerosis: Atherosclerosis, often referred to as "hardening of the arteries," is a condition where fatty deposits accumulate on the walls of blood vessels. Over time, these deposits, known as plaques, can narrow and block blood flow, increasing the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Microvascular Complications: Diabetes can also affect the small blood vessels throughout the body. This may lead to microvascular complications such as retinopathy (eye damage), neuropathy (kidney damage), and neuropathy (nerve damage).

Preventing Vascular Complications: Preventing vascular complications in diabetes involves a combination of medical management, lifestyle changes, and proactive self-care.

Here are essential strategies for safeguarding your vascular health:

Blood Sugar Control: The cornerstone of diabetes management is controlling blood sugar levels. Regular monitoring, medication adherence, and following your healthcare provider's guidance are crucial in maintaining optimal glucose levels.

Healthy Eating: A balanced diet that's low in saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, and sodium can significantly reduce the risk of atherosclerosis. Focus on incorporating whole grains, fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats into your meals.

Regular Physical Activity: Exercise plays a pivotal role in vascular health. It helps manage blood sugar, lowers blood pressure, and keeps your weight in check. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week.

Medications: Your healthcare provider may prescribe medications to manage risk factors such as high blood pressure, cholesterol, or blood-thinning agents. Complying with your medication regimen is crucial.

Smoking Cessation: Smoking damages blood vessels and accelerates atherosclerosis. If you smoke, seeking support to quit is one of the most significant

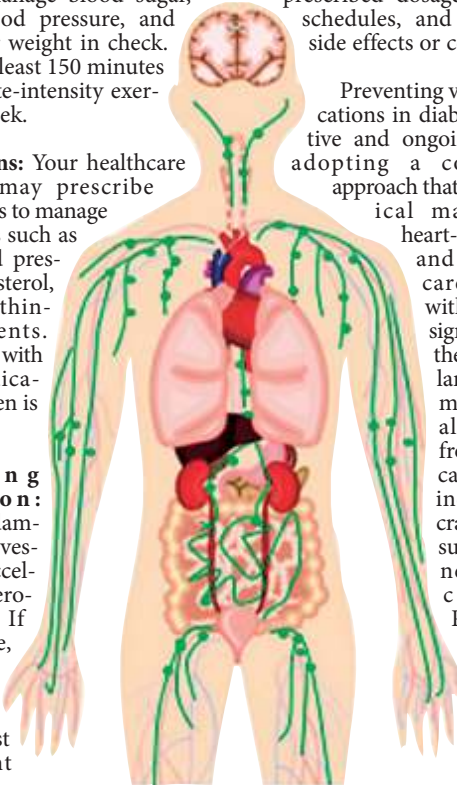
steps you can take to protect your vascular health.

Regular Check-Ups: Frequent check-ups with your healthcare provider are essential for monitoring your vascular health. They can conduct tests to assess your risk factors and identify issues in their early stages.

Foot Care: For individuals with diabetes, foot care is paramount. Nerve damage can lead to reduced sensation in the feet, making them susceptible to injuries and infections. Regularly inspect your feet, keep them clean and moisturized, and choose appropriate footwear.

Medication Management: If you've been prescribed medications, follow your healthcare provider's instructions carefully. This includes taking prescribed dosages, adhering to schedules, and reporting any side effects or concerns.

Preventing vascular complications in diabetes is a proactive and ongoing process. By adopting a comprehensive approach that combines medical management, a heart-healthy lifestyle, and vigilant self-care, individuals with diabetes can significantly reduce their risk of vascular issues. Keep in mind that personalized guidance from your healthcare provider is indispensable in crafting a plan that suits your unique needs and circumstances. Protecting your vascular health is an investment in your overall well-being and longevity.



India Women's A pip England Women's A by 3 runs

PTI ■ MUMBAI

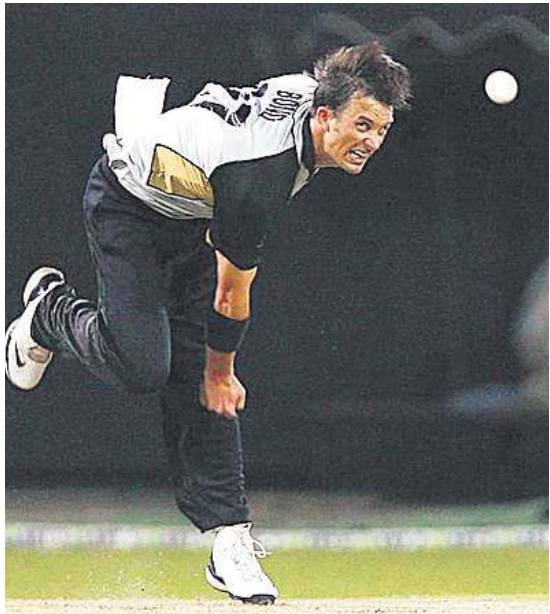
India Women's A staged a late inspirational comeback to pip England Women's A side by a mere three runs in the first T20 game of their three-match series here on Wednesday. Chasing 135 for win, England looked in complete control riding on a brilliant 70-run stand for the fourth wicket between vice-captain Hollie Armitage (52) and wicket-keeper-batter Seren Smale (31), but India fought back with a cluster of wickets to clinch a narrow win. Kashvee Gautam (2/23) struck twice to dismiss Smale and Issy Wong (2) in the 18th over to open the door back for the Indians, who pulled off a thrilling win at the Wankhede Stadium. With 13 needed off the final over, Shreyanka Patil (2/26) gave away five extras (wide) on the first ball but India prevailed eventually by three runs. India Women's A were guilty of not putting up enough runs on the board and making plenty of mistakes in the field.



Armitage, who top-scored in the game with 52 off 41 balls (3x4s, 1x6s), made the most of a lifeline as Disha Kasat spilled a regulation catch at cover off Prakashika Naik (1/28). Another opportunity to break the stand was missed in the 14th over when Indian 'keeper Uma Chetry did not collect the ball to break the stumps, anticipating a direct hit. The two England batters unleashed powerful hits while constantly pressuring the Indian fielders with brisk running between the wickets. Patil got India A their first breakthrough when she cleaned up Grace Scrivens (7) in the second over. Mannat Kashyap (1/21) got rid of Mady Villiers (20; 17 balls, 4x4s) and Naik removed Freya Kemp (1) in the eighth over. Earlier, after electing to bat, India made 134/7 in 20 overs. Kasat batted well to make 25 from 32 balls, hitting three fours. On a slow deck, India Women's A could not really push on with their scoring rate, with England

seamers doing well. Skipper Charlie Dean was the pick among the bowlers with 4-0-19-2 while Kemp finished with figures of 4-0-30-2. Wong (1/13), Lauren Filer (1/34) and Kirstie Gordon (1/26) chipped in with a wicket each. Player of the match Patil admitted India made errors in the field. "It is a big platform for all of us. It happens, (but) how we come back is what matters," Patil told the media after the match. Patil said India were confident that the bowlers would pull it off. "I would say maybe (India were) 10-15 runs short but then we were looking (at a total) around 130-140 because the wicket was slightly slower and we knew our bowlers could get the job done," she said. Brief scores: India Women's A 134/7 in 20 overs (Vrinda Dinesh 22, Disha Kasat 25, Gnanananda Divya 22; Charlie Dean 2/19) beat England Women's A 131/8 in 20 overs (Hollie Armitage 52, Seren Smale 31; Kashvee Gautam 2/23, Shreyanka Patil 2/26) by 3 runs.

Shane is Paarl Royals head coach for SA20



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

SA20 franchise Paarl Royals on Wednesday announced the appointment of former New Zealand pacer Shane Bond as the new head coach for the 2024 season of the South African league. Bond replaces former South African all-rounder JP Duminy in the position, with the latter currently serving the national team. Bond, a former New Zealand fast bowling sensation, brings an impressive array of credentials and passion for the game. His illustrious career, both as a player and a coach across New Zealand's national team and multiple T20 franchises, has earned him the reputation of making the best players even better. His tactical acumen, knowledge of the game and his ability to inspire and nurture emerging talent have been widely recognized in the cricketing community which have also reflected in the Kiwi pacer helping the Mumbai Indians franchise lift four titles in nine seasons in the IPL. He was recently also roped in by Paarl Royals' sister franchise, Rajasthan Royals,

in the dual role of assistant coach and fast bowling coach for the IPL. Royals' Director of Cricket, Kumar Sangakkara, welcomed the 48-year-old for his debut season in the SA20. "Apart from being a fierce competitor during his playing days, Shane (Bond) has also excelled in his various coaching roles across teams and leagues, and we are delighted to have him lead the coaching team at Paarl Royals. "The inaugural season provided us with a lot of learnings after our semi-final finish, and we believe that his experience, commitment and vision align well with our goals for the upcoming season," Sangakkara said. Bond shared his thoughts on the opportunity, saying, "It is a new challenge for me personally to be heading to the SA20, but what gives me the belief is the strong squad we have been able to assemble for the upcoming season. "We have so much experience and immense potential in our ranks, which makes me excited to join the group in January and work towards achieving our target of lifting the trophy."

Playing under great leaders will help me: Gill

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

India opener Shubman Gill feels the experience of playing under "great leaders" in the India setup will help him a lot when he leads Gujarat Titans in the upcoming season of the IPL. Gill has played under the likes of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma and played a vital role in India reaching the World Cup final at home recently. Gill was recently announced skipper of 2022 IPL champions Gujarat Titans after their captain for two seasons, Hardik Pandya, was traded back to five-time winners Mumbai Indians. It will be Gill's maiden outing as captain of an IPL side, having begun his journey in the competition in 2018 with Kolkata Knight Riders before heading to GT in 2022. "We all know captainship comes with a lot of things, and

commitment is one of them. Discipline is one of them. Hard work is one of them. Loyalty is one of them," said Gill in a video posted by the franchise on social media. "And, because, I think I've played under great leaders and I've learned a lot from them, I think those learnings that I have had from their experience playing under them is gonna help me a lot in this IPL." Gill added that there was no dearth of experienced players in Gujarat Titans, and he would get to learn a lot from leaders such as New Zealand's Kane Williamson and Afghanistan's Rashid Khan. "We have great leaders in our team, be it Kane (Williamson) or be it Rashid (Khan) or be it (Mohammed) Shami, or even David (Miller), or even Wriddhi (Saha). So, I think it's gonna be great. "And obviously, there are



gonna be a lot of learnings along the way, which would be my experience as a captain. And I see a lot of people mak-

ing great memories," he added. As far as playing the leadership role is concerned, Gill

was the India U-19 vice-captain during the 2018 World Cup. He was also named skipper of India Blue during the 2019-20 Duleep Trophy, the India C captain in the Deodhar Trophy the same season, and the India-A leader during the New Zealand tour later in 2019. However, Gill feels it will take him some time for the feeling of being made GT skipper to sink in. "I think it's gonna take, like, probably till the time we don't play the first match. It's not gonna quite sink in. It's a great feeling. "I was about seven or eight years old when IPL started happening. Obviously, it's a dream for any kid who wants to be a cricketer and wants to play the IPL to be able to captain a team. Then, to be able to be that kind of binding factor in this team, it feels amazing," he concluded.

India to tour Lanka in July-August

PTI ■ COLOMBO

The crisis-ridden Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) and its host broadcaster will have something to cheer about during the middle of 2024 when the Indian team makes its annual ritual tour of the islands for a short six-match white-ball series, the board announced on Wednesday. SLC has been banned by the ICC for government interference and the global body has also shifted the U-19 World Cup to South Africa. However the national teams (men and women) will be allowed to fulfil their bilateral commitments. According to the 2024 calendar released by SLC, India is supposed to travel for three ODI and T20Is each during July-August, which is effectively country's cricket season. The men's national team is due to play 52 international games in 2024, which includes 10 Tests, 21 ODIs and 21 T20Is. The T20Is, however, doesn't factor in the additional games that they will play during the T20 World Cup. One of the major assignment will be the three-Test away series in England, which is a part of the current World Test Championship. The other tough assignment will be the two-Test series against South Africa in November.

Sreesanth, Binny to play in American Premier League

PTI ■ HOUSTON

Former India pacer S Sreesanth and all-rounder Stuart Binny are set to take part in the second edition of American Premier League (APL) T20 scheduled in Houston from December 19 to 31. Both Sreesanth and Binny

have retired from active cricket in India and hence are allowed to play in overseas franchise leagues. All the matches will be played at the Moosa Cricket Stadium in Houston, Texas and the league had been sanctioned by the ICC, in May this year and the USA Cricket board has roped in 40 international

cricketers across seven teams. The seven teams include Americans, Indians, Paks, Windees, Bengalees, Aussies and English. Sreesanth and Binny will be part of the Premium Indians team. The 40-year-old Sreesanth, who announced his retirement from all forms of



domestic cricket in India last year, said, "I am honoured to be picked by the Premium Indians. I am still very new to franchisee cricket eco-system outside of India so really excited about it. "It would be a great experience to play in front of the American crowd in a new territory for the first time."

BCCI extends Dravid's contract But tenure yet to be decided, Laxman to remain at NCA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BCCI on Wednesday extended the contract of Indian cricket team head coach Rahul Dravid in order to maintain continuity following the senior side's stupendous performance in the ODI World Cup where it won 10 games in a row before losing the final. However, there was no mention of how long his new tenure would be in the press release issued by the BCCI. "The Board of Control for Cricket in India announces the extension of contracts for head coach Rahul Dravid and the support staff of Team India (senior men)," the sport's apex body said in a statement. "The BCCI engaged in produc-

tive discussions with Dravid after the term of his contract ended following the recently-concluded World Cup and unanimously agreed to further the tenure," it added. BCCI secretary Jay Shah said that Dravid will have "full backing" of the board, moving forward in his endeavour to win the ICC Trophy, which is missing from the cabinet for the last decade. "Having won 10 consecutive games before the final, our World Cup campaign was nothing short of extraordinary, and the head coach (Dravid) deserves appreciation for setting up the right platform for the team to flourish. "The head coach has our full backing, and we will provide



him with all the support needed for sustained success at the international level," the BCCI secretary said in a statement. "The last two years with Team India have been thoroughly memorable. Together, we have witnessed the highs and lows, and throughout this journey, the support and camaraderie with-

in the group have been phenomenal," Dravid said. The PTI had on Tuesday reported that Dravid's contract would be renewed with the BCCI looking for continuity in the set-up helmed by the legendary cricketer over the last two years. Dravid had replaced Ravi Shastri after the T20 World Cup in 2021, getting appointed for a two-year term which ended with the ODI World Cup. Under Dravid, India also finished as runners-up in the last World Test Championship, losing to Australia in the final. Along with the 50-year-old Dravid, his support staff comprising batting coach Vikram Rathour, bowling coach Paras Mhambrey and fielding coach T Dilip have also got an extension.

It is expected that his stint would be at least till the T20 World Cup in the West Indies and the USA in June-July next year. The PTI had reported that Dravid had been offered an extension and asked to helm the affairs in South Africa as they work on the modalities. While VVS Laxman, the NCA head, who has often filled in for Dravid when the latter was taking short breaks, is believed to have informed the brass that he is more comfortable working with pathways teams such as India A and India U-19, apart from being actively involved in cricketing matters with regards to the new NCA set-up in Bengaluru. "The Board also appreciates

VVS Laxman for his exemplary roles as Head of NCA and as the stand-in Head Coach. Similar to their legendary on-field partnerships, Dravid and Laxman have worked closely in driving Indian Cricket forward," the BCCI's release makes it clear that both for the time being will continue in their respective roles. BCCI president Roger Binny, who has been a bridge between the board and the head coach, also welcomed the decision. "The performances of the Indian Team are a testament to his strategic guidance. I am delighted that he accepted the offer to remain the head coach, and it speaks of the mutual respect and shared vision between him and the BCCI."

With so much dew even 14 runs per over would have been chased: Gaikwad

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

The dew laden condition was the primary reason for Indian bowling attack's poor show in the third T20 International, where the home team failed to defend an imposing total of 222, vice-captain and opener Ruturaj Gaikwad said after the defeat. Indian bowlers leaked 80 runs in the last 5 overs while defending 222 as Glenn Maxwell's 48-ball-104 not out, included 23 runs off the final over from Prasadh Krishna, who was smashed for four boundaries and a six. For the record, Krishna's 0/68

in 4 overs is the worst T20I figure by any Indian bowler. "I don't think so it's a concern because it's almost like you are bowling with a wet ball. And it's really tough on them," Gaikwad told reporters during the post-match press conference. "In these kinds of conditions, 12 runs per over or even 13 or 14 runs per over is gettable, even while we are chasing. In the first game, how easily we managed to chase 210," he cited an example. "So I think, I don't think so definitely there's not a concern at all. It's just that the conditions are slightly

tougher for them, and we have to accept and move on." Gaikwad said Maxwell's brutal innings and heavy dew proved to be home team's undoing. Making his 100th T20I appearance, Maxwell slammed an unbeaten 104 off just 48 balls as Australia massed 45 runs in the last two overs to seal a last-ball thriller to make it 1-2 in the five-match series. "I think even Maxi batted really well. To win from a situation where they needed 100 from seven and a half hours and then 50 from 3 overs, I think it was critical



innings for him," Gaikwad said. "And I think from our side, our bowlers tried executing whatever they had in their control. Also, there was a lot of dew around so ball was slipping a lot. So I think it was tough for the bowlers as well. "Even though we scored 230, in the last game, it was still in between we felt the game might go till the last over, but this kind of dew it is these totals are bound to happen and bound to chase." On way to a 57-ball 123, the 26-year-old Gaikwad scored his first fifty in 32 balls before

completing the hundred in just 52 balls to set up a more than par-score for India. "Initially, I felt pitch was slightly tacky, ball was stopping a little bit and there was some movement in the air and off the pitch as well. So first, I felt 2-3 overs, the wicket was like that, and we lost two wickets (Yashasvi Jaiswal and Ishan Kishan) in a span of one over. So it was important that we stitched a partnership. And then after 7-8 overs, I think the wicket got slightly better." India will Australia in the fourth T20I on Friday at Raipur.



Prabhas will portray a ‘middle-class police officer’ in Spirit

After the Baahubali series, Pan-India star Prabhas didn't have a proper hit, but that isn't worrying the fans due to the star actor's massive lineup. His next release, *Salaar*, is one of the most awaited films in Indian cinema. Up next, he has *Kalki 2898 AD*, which is expected to revolutionize Indian cinema technically. Prabhas is doing a comedy movie with Maruthi.

Also, the *Mirchi* actor has a movie with Sandeep Reddy Vanga, which is titled *Spirit*. While promoting *Animal*, Sandeep Reddy

Vanga stated that they are planning to release *Spirit* either during the 2025 Christmas season or 2026 Sankranti. After *Animal's* release, Sandeep will wholly concentrate on the pre-production works of *Spirit*.

Sandeep Reddy Vanga already mentioned that Prabhas will play a police officer role in *Spirit*. While promoting *Animal*, the director has dropped one more exciting update about Prabhas' role. He said that the protagonist in *Spirit* comes from a middle-class background.

Both in *Animal* and *Arjun Reddy*, the male leads belong to wealthy families, and now Sandeep Reddy Vanga is changing this aspect for the Prabhas star. The movie will start rolling in September 2024. Sandeep Reddy

Vanga takes more time for writing, and he is doing the same for *Spirit*. The biggie will be produced by Bhusan Kumar of T-Series.

Saloni Batra: Being on the sets of Animal led me into dream land

The much-anticipated trailer for *Animal* has set the stage on fire, creating waves of excitement among fans. The film boasts an ensemble cast featuring Ranbir Kapoor, Anil Kapoor, Rashmika Mandanna, Bobby Deol, and Saloni Batra. Saloni Batra, who steps into the role of Reet, Ranbir Kapoor's on-screen sister, shares her awe-inspiring experience of working on such a grand project as she celebrates her birthday today, considering *Animal* to be amongst her biggest gift from the universe this year.

Saloni Batra stated: "Being on the sets of *Animal* has been like god woke me up from a dream and led me into dream land. I've literally seen my manifestations

come to life from paper to reality and it has been surreal. Acting alongside the likes of Ranbir Kapoor, Anil Kapoor and being directed by the Sandeep Reddy Vanga has been one of my most fulfilling experiences. Masters of their craft, all of them have inspired me and I've learnt so much from them."

She further adds, "Ranbir, always so humble and grounded, is one of the most hardworking actors I've met. His empathy, patience and helpful nature reflects on screen in his endearing performances. I was stuck in a scene once for which he helped and then the scene just took flow. I thank you RK for always being a comforting energy. Anil Kapoor was always like a buddy on set. His energy is

contagious. He played my father and was such a natural but never made any of us feel the stardom he came with. Rashmika is the sweetest soul and the most warm person I've come across. I thank my stars for this set up I got to work in with Sandeep sir anchoring the ship. He is so passionate, full of clarity about his vision, into the process always which makes him the director he is. I honestly feel blessed."

With the film's release just around the corner, anticipation among fans is at its peak. The combination of a star-studded cast and Saloni Batra's heartfelt reflections sets the stage for *Animal* to entertain audiences and leave an indelible mark on the cinematic landscape.



Hanuman's Avakaya is a tangy melody connecting cultures & embracing Indian tradition

The unique homegrown superhero flick *Hanuman* has unveiled its latest gem - a song titled *Avakaya* rendered by Sunidhi Chauhan. This song pays homage to a beloved culinary tradition that is deeply rooted in the hearts of Telugu people—the art of making *Avakaya* - a spicy mango pickle that transcends mere gastronomy to become a cultural celebration. *Avakaya* is a cultural bridge, beckoning audiences from all

corners of the country to explore the metaphor of good and evil. As the notes of *Avakaya* reverberate, it is evident that the attempt is to savor the cultural diversity that unites us.

Talking about it, filmmaker Prasanth Varma says, "Avakaya is a pickle that is deeply entrenched in our culture. The process of making the pickle is like a celebration. Every year, all the grandmothers prepare this pickle and stores it to make our eating habits

easier for the coming year. In India, when you make pickle, you nurture it against all evils. In the song, the hero is protecting the women who are making it against the demons."

Hanuman is presented by RKD Studios, while PrimeShow Entertainment is the producer of the film. Venkat Kumar Jetty is the Line Producer and Kushal Reddy is the associate producer. Catch film in the theatres on January 12, 2024

Mahesh Babu praises Bobby Deol for his menacing avatar in Animal says, 'You blew my mind'

In a recent promotional event for the highly anticipated film *Animal*, Superstar Mahesh Babu couldn't contain his admiration for Bobby Deol's role, which has left the entire nation in shock. The trailer, touted as one of the most awaited glimpses of the year, features Bobby Deol in a role that has captivated audiences and drawn high praise from industry peers.

As the trailer unfolds, Bobby Deol's presence escalates, eventually stealing the spotlight and setting the stage for a head-to-head clash with Ranbir Kapoor in what promises to be a cinematic extravaganza. Mahesh Babu, visibly impressed, shared his thoughts on Bobby Deol's performance, saying,

"Bobby, you come in the end, and you blew my mind - my phone just dropped. The transformation is stunning, and as an audience, it's very inspiring for us. I can't wait to watch you on the big screen".

With Bobby Deol going head to head against Ranbir Kapoor, *Animal* promises a clash of titans that has everyone on the edge of their seats.

As the release date approaches, the expectations and excitement surrounding *Animal* continue to build. Bobby Deol's performance, as endorsed by none other than Mahesh Babu, is poised to be a defining aspect of the film, leaving audiences eagerly counting down the days until the 1st of December.



Ram Charan takes time from filming to cast his vote as he jets off to Hyderabad

Global star Ram Charan is creating a buzz as he travels from Mysore to Hyderabad, not for a film shoot, but to cast his vote. This move proves his commitment to civic duty and being a responsible citizen. Taking time off his busy shooting schedule for the upcoming film, fans are eagerly anticipating his new avatar on the big screen.

Coincidentally, the theme of Ram Charan's highly awaited movie, *Game Changer*, revolves around the electoral system, adding a layer of significance to

his real-life actions. Despite the glamour of the film industry, he prioritizes his civic duty by taking the time to vote. Once done, the renowned actor will return to the film set, balancing his roles as an actor and a responsible citizen. The film, *Game Changer*, slated for release next year, promises an exciting cinematic experience for fans. As the excitement builds for the movie's release, Ram Charan continues to captivate audiences, not just with his on-screen presence but also with his commitment to making a difference in the real world.

JR NTR-HRITHIK ROSHAN'S WAR 2 IN CINEMAS FROM AUG 14, 2024

War 2, the sequel to the 2019 Hrithik Roshan-starrer blockbuster film *War*, has locked its release date. The sequel will take the narrative forward for Hrithik's character of Major Kabir Dhaliwal, a RAW agent, who was shown to have gone rogue in the first part of the film. As per a trade source, *War 2* will debut in theatres on August 14, 2025. The film, which is directed by Ayan Mukerji, is the 6th film from the spy universe after *Ek Tha Tiger*, *Tiger Zinda Hai*, *War*, *Pathaan* and the recently released Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif-starrer *Tiger 3*.

Hrithik also teased his appearance in *Tiger 3* along with SRK, hinting towards the next movies in the spy-universe.

War, which released in 2019, told the story of Hrithik's character, who goes rogue to cleanse the intelligence system of the country of traitors and to identify the infiltrator in the elite forces.

The film broke all opening day and weekend box-office records for a Hindi film before it was surpassed

by the Shah Rukh Khan-starrer *Pathaan*. It eventually emerged as a major success becoming the highest-grossing Indian film of 2019 and the 17th highest-grossing Indian film of all time.

The film is produced by Yash Raj Films, which recently released the streaming series *The Railway Men* based on the 1894 Union Carbide gas leak in Bhopal.



Jayam Ravi and Nithya Menen's Kadhalikka Neramillai romantic thriller first look out

Tamil actor Jayam Ravi has joined hands with Kiruthiga Udhayanidhi for the romantic thriller, *Kadhalikka Neramillai*. The film, which was unofficial so far, was officially launched by the makers on Wednesday. The makers also revealed the title and the first-look poster of the film as well.

The title of Kiruthiga Udhayanidhi directorial starring Jayam Ravi and Nithya Menen is *Kadhalikka Neramillai*. Taking to X (formerly known as Twitter), the actor announced the film and shared the first look poster as well.

Jayam's post loosely translated read, "No Time for Love #KadhalikkaNeramillai(sic)."

The first look poster features Jayam Ravi and Nithya Menen in a romantic pose. The duo can be seen gracefully embracing each other as they blur into the background and the focus is on the

union of their hands. The title of the film appears on the right corner of the image.

Kadhalikka Neramillai also stars Yogi Babu, Vinay Rai, and Lal in pivotal roles. Along with a power



packed starcast, the film also has a starling production team.

Maestro AR Rahman will compose the music of *Kadhalikka Neramillai*, Gavemic Ary will handle the cinematography while the editing is to be done by Lawrence Kishore.

Ram Pothineni unveils his rugged avatar in Double iSmart's new poster

Energetic Star Ram Pothineni's highly anticipated *Double iSmart*, which is the sequel to the blockbuster hit *iSmart Shankar* directed by Puri Jagannadh and co-produced by the director and Charmee Kaur. Sara Ali Khan and Kavya Thapar are the leading female roles, Bollywood star Sanjay Dutt plays as antagonist, and Vishnu Reddy in pivotal role.

The makers unveiled a striking poster of *Double iSmart*. Ram Pothineni took on his hand Twitter and posted the poster that shows him upside down, surrounded by a wheel of weapons. Ram looks as good as ever in his rugged manner, dressed in a black jacket and goggles. "The countdown has begun," Ram tweeted beside the eye-catching banner. As a Maha Shivratri festive gift, *Double iSmart* is set for a



massive pan-Indian release on March 8. And today marks the 100-day countdown for *Double iSmart's* release.

Double iSmart, produced by Puri Jagannadh and Charmee under the Puri Connects label, with background music composed by Mani Sharma.

The CEO is Vishu Reddy. Gianni Giannelli, a Hollywood cinematographer, is working on this high-voltage action thriller. The film will be released on March 8, 2024. The film will be released in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada on March 8, 2024.