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**CAN BUTTRESS GLOBAL** SUPPLY CHAIN: PRESIDENT



'Happy Ending is a movie similar to Dum Masala *BIRYANI'* 



the pioneer Some are saying that KCR will be CM in three to six months again. Stop daydreaming. Try doing it. When Nadendla Bhaskar Rao tried something like this people didn't allow him even in villages. If you try to do so our villagers will dig your grave. This is a government elected by the people. It is our responsibility to provide stable governance for five years.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

- Revanth Reddy, CM, Telangana

## Students advised to pursue Textile...

Stating that the Textile Technology will play a significant role in the future, Principal Secretary for Commerce and Handlooms, K Sunita exhorted students to pursue Textile Technology course as they have a bright future. A workshop on Embracing a Future in the Textile sector was organized here on Wednesday to create awareness on textile courses to the students. Speaking on the occasion, Principal Secretary Sunita asked the students to choose the textile technology courses as they have a bright future in the coming..

## 70-metre-long tunnel made by...

Security personnel have discovered a 70-metre-long tunnel dug by Naxalites in a dense forest along the border of Dantewada and Bijapur districts in Bastar division which is prima facie used as a bunker cum dumping place, a police officer said on Wednesday. According to police, they had received information about the existence of such an underground passage in the Bastar division in the past, but they have spotted it for the first time. The tunnel, around 70 meters long and 6 feet deep, was spotted...



### Gross sugar output may fall 10 %...

India's gross sugar production, without any diversion for ethanol, is estimated to decline 10 per cent to 330.5 lakh tonnes in the current marketing year ending September on likely lower output in according to industry body ISMA. Indian Sugar Mills' Association (ISMA) on Wednesday released its second advance estimates of sugar production for the 2023-24 marketing year (October-September). The industry body has projected gross estimated sugar production..

-PAGE: 8

## 'It will be a tough choice between...

India's batting coach Vikram Rathour on Wednesday said it "will be tough" to pick one among Sarfaraz Khan and Rajat Patidar in the second Test against England. The match begins here from Friday, with hosts India seeking to draw parity after losing the series opener in Hyderabad. After the first game. India faced injury concerns with all-rounder Ravindra Jadeia and KL Rahul being ruled out of the second Test, in addition to the absence of star batter Virat Kohli This forced the selectors to add uncapped Sarfaraz...

#### Lokesh flays Jagan for announcing DSC after 60 months in power

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet, convened at Amaravathi under the leadership of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, on Wednesday announced the initiation of a mega District Selection Committee (DSC) exam to recruit 6,100 teachers in the State.

In response to the YSRC government's decision to conduct the DSC exam in the final phase of their tenure, Lokesh expressed skepticism on X (formerly Twitter). He remarked that the people will not trust Jagan Reddy as he hurried to hold the DSC exam with 6,000 positions in the last 60 days after ruling for 60 months. The young TDP leader criticised the YSRC government for deceiving the people, and said it will be dethroned soon. He affirmed that the TDP and Jana Sena Party, capable of providing employment opportunities to the youth, will assume power in



Governor exhorts students to improve technological skills

# Ram temple, reforms key achievements of Modi govt

#### • Prez Murmu addresses both Houses of Parliament

PNS NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday said the centuries-old desire to build a Ram temple in Ayodhya has now become reality as she listed the achievements of the Modi government over the past 10

In her 75-minute address to the members of both Houses of Parliament assembled in the Lok

hailed the armed forces for giving a befitting reply to terrorism and expansionism, an apparent reference to Pakistan and China.

In her maiden address in the new Parliament building, the President listed out the economic reforms undertaken by the government that has transformed India from the group of "fragile five" to the "top five" economies in the world.

Sabha chamber of the new successful hosting of the G-20 Parliament building, Murmu also summit had strengthened India's

global standing and noted that Jammu and Kashmir, and the northeastern states hosted some international meetings of the grouping for the first time.

This is the time for India to script the future for the coming centuries. Our ancestors have bequeathed us a legacy spanning thousands of years. Even today, we remember with pride the excep-Murmu said the government's tional achievements of our ances-

Continued on Page 2



# **Cabinet nod to DSC**

- To recruit 6,100 teachers 689 posts in Forest Department to be filled
- Approves investment proposals worth Rs. 22,302 cr in green energy projects

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The State Cabinet has given the nod to issue DSC notification to recruit 6,100 teachers in government schools and fill 689 vacancies in the Forest Department. The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet, presided over by Chief Minister ŶS Jagan Mohan Reddy, approved several important proposals at the meeting held at the Secretariat here on Wednesday.

The Cabinet has ratified fresh investment proposals worth Rs. 22,302 crore in green energy projects approved by the State Investment Promotion Board

It has also decided to take Geneva-based educational organisation IB as partner for training the teachers of government schools and staff of the Education Department in handling IB syllabus that would be introduced from the academic year 2025-26.

The Cabinet has also decided to the retirement age non-teaching staff of universities and higher educational institutions to 62 and fill 27 vacancies in the Legislature secretariat.



# Deputy Speaker urges support for Jagan's vision

Fourth phase of YSR Aasara celebrations commences



Deputy Speaker Kolagatla Veerabhadraswamy has rallied cit-izens to stand firmly behind Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, hailing him as a leader of integrity and commitment. Addressing a lic to discern the disparity in govgathering at the local Rajiv Stadium during the commencement of the

PNS VIJAYAWADA

dysfunctional regime.

ly weapons, exemplifies the break-

fourth phase of YSR Aasara celebrations, Veerabhadraswamy underscored the Chief Minister's unwavering dedication to fulfilling promises made to the people.

As the chief guest of the event, Veerabhadraswamy criticised former Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for failing to deliver on pre-2014 election promises. In contrast, he lauded Iagan for diligently ful filling commitments made during the 2019 elections, urging the pubernance between the two regimes. Continued on Page 2

Thug-like administration prevailing in AP

# Govt signs MoU with Baccalaureate

#### IB curriculum to be introduced in govt schools

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Switzerland-based International Baccalaureate (IB) on introducing IB curriculum in government schools.

School Education Principal Secretary Praveen Prakash and Chief Education Officer (Director of Education Innovation) of IB Anton Beguin exchanged MoU copies in the presence of the Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy at the Camp Office here on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that it is a great programme as it paves way for integrating IB syllabus and practices with the syllabus of students of Classes I to XII.

"In countries like India, quality education is necessary for students to make them competitive at the global level," he said, adding that the MoU with the IB offers a good future and helps them get high-paid jobs in the ever-competitive job

Compared to the western countries, it is necessary to upgrade the present educational system and syllabus in India for enhancing problem solving abilities of students, the Chief Minister said, adding that IB curriculum integration with the school syllabus would help achieve this objective.

Continued on Page 2



## Hemant Soren resigns, Champai Soren named Jharkhand CM

PNS RANCHI

Hemant Soren on Wednesday resigned as Jharkhand Chief Minister after more than seven hours of questioning by the ED in a money laundering case, and sen-ior JMM leader Champai Soren was named as his succes-

Meanwhile, JMM's Rajya Sabha MP Mahua Maji claimed that the 48-year-old Hemant Soren was in the "custody" of the Enforcement Directorate. Hemant Soren tendered his res-

ignation to Governor CP Radhakrishnan at the Raj Bhavan,

where he went along with alliance

"Hemant Soren has resigned as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand. The ruling JMM-Congress-RJD alliance has proposed the name of senior leader Champai Soren as the new CM," state Congress president Rajesh Thakur said. 'We have staked a

claim to form the new gov-ernment with the support of 47 MLAs," JMM legislative party leader Champai Soren told reporters.



as armed mining inspections in Martur and police collaboration in the destruction caused by rowdy mobs in conducted an inspection alongside rowdies, and called it a clear demon-Krosuru as evidence of a completely stration of the thug-like administra-He added that the chaos instigattion prevailing in Andhra Pradesh. ed during granite industry inspections

He said that the police and officials should be ashamed for filing cases in Martur, involving thugs and deadand arresting those who questioned down of the system. Chandrababu this. He condemned the lack of highlighted the incident where a action by the police in response to the senior mining department officer attack led by an MLA's son on pub-

lic property in Krosuru. Questioning the silence of the State's Director General of Police (DGP) regarding such incidents, Chandrababu suggested that the DGP resign immediately, asserting that the current state of the Police Department tarnishes its once esteemed reputation.

criticised Superintendents of Police (SPs) for failing to hold lower-level officials accountable for lawlessness. SPs unwilling or unable to enforce the law should swap their khaki uniforms for the YSRCP flag. Such incompetent officers are unworthy even of saluting alongside home guards. Officials should fulfil their duties in accordance with the law, the TDP chief

#### YSRC releases fifth list of 4 MPs, 3 MLAs Anil Kumar Yadav chosen

in-charge for Narasaraopet

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The fifth list of party in-charges was released by YSRCP president and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Wednesday. The CM has been conducting numerous deliberations and finalised the fifth list of incharges with seven names.

Former minister and Nellore city MLA P Anil Kumar Yadav was chosen as in-charge for Narasaraopet parliament constituency, putting aside present MP Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu.

VINDSCREEN DAMAGE

Congress alleges

stone-pelting

# Lifetime of biodegradable straws could be 8-20 months

New research has found that the lifetime of 'biodegradable' straws could be between eight and 20 months. Plastic drinking straws are known

to get into marine ecosystems making beaches unsightly and posing problems for ocean life. Researchers said that measures like restricting traditional polymers

such as polypropylene in drinking straws have led to a growing market for single-use items made from paper or bioplastics, with people increasingly favouring such alterna-

However, the researchers at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Massachusetts, US, said that little is known about how long products made of bioplastics, such as cellulose diacetate (CDA) and polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHA), last



Researchers said that measures like restricting traditional polymers such as polypropylene in drinking straws have led to a growing market for single-use items made from paper or bioplastics, with people increasingly favouring such alternatives.

compared to other materials. Their tics. findings are published in the jour-nal ACS Sustainable Chemistry &

Engineering. Therefore, the researchers conducted experiments using seawater to investigate the environmental lifetimes of different straws and to find a way to accelerate the breakin the ocean before fully degrading down of next-generation bioplas- or CDA, PHA or polylactic acid

In the initial experiments, the team cut inch-long pieces from commercially available straws and suspended them on wires in large tanks with room temperature seawater flowing through them. The straws were made from either coated or uncoated paper, PP polymer,

(PLA) bioplastics.

After 16 weeks (4 months), the researchers found that paper, CDA and PHA straws lost 25-50 per cent of their initial weights. They projected that these degradable straws should fully disintegrate in coastal oceans within 10 months for paper, 15 and 20 months for the bioplastics PHA and CDA, respectively.

bioplastic straws of PLA did not lose weight measurably, which they said suggested that such straws could persist in ocean water for years.

The researchers next examined how changing the bioplastic CDA material's structure - from solid to a foam - impacted its environmental lifetime.

They observed that the CDA foam broke down at least twice as fast as the solid version.

They estimated that a straw made from the foam would disintegrate in seawater in eight months - the shortest lifetime of any material tested.

Having demonstrated that some bioplastic straws are unlikely to remain intact over a long period, the researchers recommended that simple changes, such as switching to foam materials, could further reduce that time frame.

# Will conduct caste census after coming to power



PNS MALDA

Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday asserted that a countrywide caste census would be conducted if the party comes to power at the Centre in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

damaged during the ongoing 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra', with West Bengal unit president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury alleging that the vehicle was "pelted with stones" in Malda district, while

Chief Minister Mamata Baneriee

claimed the incident took place in

The rear windscreen of a car

carrying Rahul Gandhi was

Continued on Page 2



# **Sharmila flayed for comments** against State Govt, Jagan

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Kodali Srivenkateswara Rao (Nani) has criticised APCC chief Sharmila over her comments on the State government and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Speaking to the media at Gudivada on Wednesday, Nani said that if there are family disputes, they should be discussed personally, and it is not appropriate to fight for the access of the Congress, which destroyed the State. Sharmila, who lost her reputation in Telangana by calling herself YS Rajasekhara Reddy's daughter, is now doing the same after coming to AP.



Nani further pointed out at Sharmila, saying that for whatever development that should happen in Andhra Pradesh, Congress should come to power at the Centre. People of AP are against Congress that bifurcated the State, doing injustice to them, and they will not forgive Congress. On the other hand, Congress in AP has less than 0.50 per cent vote bank and in the coming elections it will be zero

He further said that Sharmila is day-dreaming of Rahul Gandhi becoming the Prime Minister of the country and solving the issues in AP, while the survey reports say that BJP will win 350 seats in the 2024 elections. Sharmila is making allegations against CM Jagan only for polit-

Kodali recalled that YSRCP did not come to power in the 2014 elections, when Sharmila took part in padayatra. Did Sharmila appear anywhere after the defeat in 2014 or campaign anywhere in the 2019 elections,

He further asked why Congress kept silent for the last 10 years on various issues in Andhra Pradesh. "Sharmila, who has no understanding of what is happening in the State, is coming now and talking nonsense," said Nani and added that it is a shame to criticise Jagan Mohan Reddy government, which is following in the footsteps of Rajasekhara Reddy, by naming every scheme after him.

# SHG members receive Aasara cheques

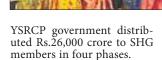
#### Cheques distributed in Vijayawada Central and West constituencies

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada MP Kesineni Srinivas alias Nani, Vijayawada West MLA Velampalli Srinivasa Rao, Central MLA Malladi Vishnu, Mayor Rayana Bhagyalakshmi presented specimen cheques worth Rs.29.52 crore to Self-Help Group (SHG) members here

on Wednesday.

The cheque distribution for SHG members of Vijayawada Central constituency, under the YSR Aasara scheme, was held at the Tummalapalli Kalakshetram. Speaking on the occasion, MP Kesineni Srinivas said that under the YSR Aasara scheme, the



Further, he said Jagan Mohan Reddy is the only Chief Minister who is encouraging women for their empowerment. The CM is taking inspiration from Dr BR Ambedkar, he added

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has lauded the officials

for bagging six awards from the

Centre in One District One

The State won gold medals for Uppada sarees (Kakinda dis-

trict) and Araku coffee (Alluri

Seetaramaraju district), bronze

medals for Pondur cotton and

Kodumur Gadwal sarees and

special jury awards for Madanapally silk and

Mangalagiri handloom sarees.

awards aiming at social and eco-

The Centre has instituted the

Product category (ODOP).

MLA and Central concoordinator stituency Velampalli Srinivasa Rao said that as per his given assur-ance, the Chief Minister waived loans of SHG members. Later, MP Kesineni Srinivas and Mayor Rayana Bhagyalakshmi participated

in the YSR Aasara cheque dis-

**ODOP AWARDS** 

CM lauds officials

with a view to encourage them

and provide branding through

wide publicity. The awards were

presented to the officials of

respective departments from

Andhra Pradesh at a function in

Chief Minister at the Secretariat

The officials called on the

New Delhi recently.

nomic development by selecting one product from each district here on Wednesday. IT and the Chief Minister.

tribution along with YSRCP West constituency coordinator and AP Minority Finance Corporation Chairman Saik Asif, at Musafir Shadikhana in

Wynchipet.
VMC Deputy Mayors
Bellam Durga, Avuthu Sri Sailaja, and others were also

Industries Minister G Amarnath,

Principal Secretary (Commerce

Handlooms) Sunita, Industries

and Commerce Director MM

Nayak and senior officials

Peddiraju, Suresh Kumar,

Dharma Rao, Hari Krishna, Srinivasa Reddy and Vanaja

were among those who visited

#### **Deputy** Speaker...

Continued from Pag 1

Highlighting the impact of the current administration's Veerabhadraswamy invited attendees to witness the tangible improvements in government schools and the enhanced quality of mid-day meals. He enumerated various initiatives such as YSR Kanti Velam, Jagananna Arogya Suraksha, Amma Odi, and others aimed at uplifting communities and improving children's welfare. Praising Jagan Mohan Reddy's monumental achievement of providing homes to 31 lakh people Statewide, Veerabhadraswamy implored citizens to reaffirm their support for the Chief Minister's endeavors.

Veerabhadraswamy further pledged his ongoing accessibility to constituents, promising to address their concerns and champion their causes. He vowed to prioritise the transformation of Vijayanagar into a model town, generating employment opportunities and enhancing its aesthetic appeal. Echoing Veerabhadraswamy's sentiments, MP Bellana Chandrasekhar commended Jagan Mohan Reddy's empathetic governance, grounded in firsthand knowledge gained during his paday-atra. Chandrasekhar emphasised the administration's commitment to inclusive growth, particularly through the Navratna scheme, which has provided critical support to the underprivileged.

#### Hemant...

Continued from Pag 1

Earlier, the legislators gathered at Hemant Soren's residence elected the transport minister Champai Soren as the leader of the JMM legislative party with the party spokesperson Vinod Pandey saying that a consensus was reached on his name.

A legislator from the Serikela assembly constituency for more than three decades since 1991, Champai Soren is known to be a lovalist of JMM supremo Shibu Soren.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Tithi: Shashthi:

Nakshatram:

Saptami

Swati:

Rahukalam

Varjyam:

Yamagandam:

# 'APERC will fully support Mission LiFE'

## Mission LiFE aims to mobilise one billion people towards adopting a lifestyle in harmony with nature

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (APERC) has declared its support for the transformative Mission LiFE (Life Style for Environment), launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at COP26.

On Wednesday, APERC Chairman Justice CV Nagarjuna Reddy along with members Thakur Ramasingh PVR Reddy, MD, AP Genco & Joint MD, AP Transco. K Chakradhar Babu, CMDs of Discoms Prudhvitej, K Santosha Rao and Kumar Reddy CEO of SECM unveiled the poster of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) Ministry of Power, GOI, on Mission LiFE.

Mission LiFE, a key component of India's Nationally Determined Contributions, aims to mobilise one billion individuals worldwide towards adopting a lifestyle in harmony with nature.



The APERC chairman reminded the Commission's approval of initiatives such as LED distribution, solar pump sets, and pump efficiency upgrades within power utilities. He also highlighted the approval of a pilot programme provide energy-efficient appliances to consumers via installment plans, collected through electricity bills. This proposed pilot programme is to actively engage the consumers in EC&EE activity. While appreciating AP Transco and Discoms on implementaciency programmes, Justice CV Nagarjuna Reddy emphasised the need for power utilities for further promoting energy conservation to take the

Mission LiFE forward.
The CMD of APEPDCL, Prudhvitej stated that the Discom's relentless pursuit of energy efficiency and conservation epitomises its unwavering dedication to shaping a sustainable future and addressing climate change. He highlighted APEPDCL's groundbreaking Demand Side Management (DSM) programmes, which have delivered impressive

results, including substantial energy savings and demand reduction. For instance, the Deployment of Efficient Lighting Programme(DELP), Unnat Jyoti Affordable LEDs for all (UJALA) distributed 86 lakh LED bulbs, saving 639 MU annually. The Domestic Efficient Fans Programme (DEFP) sold 66,215 energyefficient fans, saving 12.7 MU per year. The Energy Efficient Tube Lights Programme (EETL) sold 91,246 LED tube lights, saving 22.86 MU annually. Additionally, the Agricultural DSM scheme replaced old pump sets, saving

72 MU yearly.

CMDs of Discoms have thanked the Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, Energy Minister P Rama Chandra Reddy and Spl. CS Energy Department K Vijayanand for their support to motivate the Discoms for providing quality and 24x7 hour

#### Cabinet nod to DSC... Continued from Pag 1 posal to issue bank guarantee to

It has given green-signal to implement the welfare calendar for the month of February and release Rs.5060.04 crore towards the fourth tranche of YSR Cheyutha benefitting 26, 98, 931 SC, ST, BC and minority women of 45 to 60 years age. The Cabinet has also decided to appoint secretaries for all 13, 171 village panchayats having population of more than 500, besides creating the post of Registrar in RGUKT by

amending the law.

It has also approved a pro-

While addressing a rally as

part of 'Bharat Jodo Nyay

Yatra' in West Bengal's

Malda district, Gandhi

accused the RSS and the

BJP of propagating hatred

After we come to power at

the Centre, we will conduct

a countrywide caste census

to find out the number of

Dalits and people from other

backward communities," he

of propagating hatred and

violence, Gandhi under-

scored the essence of the

yatra, stating, "The word

'nyay' (justice) has been attached to the vatra because injustice prevails across the

Accusing the BJP and RSS

"We want social justice.

and violence.

APDISCOMS to raise a loan of Rs 1,500 crore for extending distribution network, allot 1272.7acres of land to Greenko Pvt Ltd in Nandyal district for establishing solar power units and 42 acres for establishing IIT City in Tirupati district.

The Cabinet has also decided to reduce VAT on natural gas from 24.5 per cent to 5 per cent and amend rules of Advocates Welfare Fund 1987, besides accepting the fourth State Finance Commission Report and the Government Life Insurance Fund 2024 proposals. It has decided to exempt 5,376 families displaced due to Pulichintala Project from paying registration and user charges of Rs. 60 crore on allotment of house sites under the Navaratnalu-Pedalandariki Illu.

The Cabinet has also decided to establish AP Legislature Institute of Legislative Study and Training to train newly elected members, and also to allot house sites of 500 square yards and 1,000 square yards to chess player Alana Meenakshi Kolagatla and tennis player Saketh Myneni, respectively.

#### Will conduct... Former minister Ravela joins YSRCP Continued from Pag 1

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Ravela Kishore Babu and his wife Santi Jyothi joined YSRCP in the presence of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan

Reddy at the Camp Office here on Wednesday. Party MP Nandigam Suresh, MLC L. Appi Reddy and Prathipadu YSRCP coordinator Balasani Kirnan Kumar were

Former IRS officer Ch. Wilson Babu of Guntur and his family members also joined YSRCP in the presence of Jagan Mohan



# tion of various energy-effi-YSRC releases...

Continued from Pag 1

Addressing a press meeting here on Wednesday night, Minister for Education Botsa Satyanaryana and Advisor (Public Affairs) Ramakrishna Reddy released the list with four MP segments and three MLA segments.

Minister Satyanarayana said that MLA Anil Kumar Yadav will be in-charge from Narasaraopet parliament constituency. Present Tirupati (SC) MP Dr M Guru Moorthy got another chance as Tirupati MP segin-charge, Chalamalasetti Sunil was appointed as Kakinada MP segment coordinator and YŠRC Avanigadda MLA Simhadri Ramesh Babu has appointed as Machilipatnam MP seg-

Vallabhaneni Balashowry recently resigned from YSRC and joined Jana Sena.

Rega Matsyalingam was appointed as coordinator of Araku (ST) Assembly segment, Dr Simhadri Chandrasekhar Rao, of Avanigadda Assembly constituency and Nukathoti Rajesh was appointed as coordinator of Satyavedu (SC) Assembly segment.

MP (Rajya Sabha) and YSRC regional coordinator V Vijayasai Reddy has been entrusted with the responsibilities of the Guntur parliament constituency. MLA Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy has been given the responsibility of regional coordinator of Ongole parliament constituency.

Further, YSRC has appointed Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy as regional coordinator for Kandukuru, Santnutalapadu and Kavali Assembly constituencies.

# Govt signs MoU...

Continued from Pag 1

As per the MoU, IB experts will impart training to teachers in Government schools, education department officials at mandal and district SSC and Intermediate Boards and APSCERT in handling IB syllabus. This will make them part of the IB global teaching

The IB syllabus will be first introduced to students of Class I from the academic year 2025-26 and as they are promoted to higher classes every year, they would be learning the upgraded lessons making IB part of all classes in government schools by 2035 and IB syllabus would be taught to students of Class XII in 2037.

A new journey has begun and it helps set a new standard in the educational system, he said.

IB Director General Olli Pekka Heinonen, who participated in the programme vir-

tually from Geneva, said this is their biggest MoU of its kind and it would be an inspiration for other countries and regions.

He said that the MoU helps improve his country's relas with India in the educa tional sector and IB would first concentrate on Play Best Learning among the students while helping them learn foreign languages also along with other important subjects like mathematics, science and

Education Minister B Satyanarayana, Chief Secretary Dr KS Jawahar Reddy, School Education Principal Secretary Praveen Prakash, School Education Commissioners S Suresh Kumar and K Bhaskar (Infrastructure), Intermediate Education Commissioner Sourav Gour, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan Project Director B Srinivasa Rao, Midday Meals Director SS Shobhika, senior officials and representatives of IB were among those present.

# Ram temple, reforms key...

Continued from Pag 1

ment coordinator. Present

Machilipatnam

Krishna Paksha

Jan 31 11:36 AM

Feb 01 02:03 PM

Feb 01 01:08 AM

Feb 02 03:49 AM

to Feb 01 02:03 PM

to Feb 02 04:03 PM

to Feb 02 03:49 AM

to Feb 03 05:57 AM

1:54 PM to 3:18 PM

6:51 AM to 8:16 AM

09:55 AM to 11:39 AM

9:40 AM to 11:05 AM

08:42 PM to 10:29 PM

Abhiiit Muhurtham: 12:07 PM to 12:52 PM

**Updated:** January 31, 2024 5:00 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy

Temp: 33°° Humidity: 65%

Sunset: 6:04 PM

Today's generation should also build a lasting legacy that will be remembered for centuries," she said.

MP

The Lok Sabha chamber reverberated with applause and thumping of desks when the President spoke about the building of Ram temple in Ayodhya, which is witnessing pilgrims in large

"Over the past 10 years, India has witnessed several such tasks being accomplished in the national interest, for which the people of the country were waiting for decades. For centuries, there was an aspiration to construct the Ram Mandir. Today it is a reality," Murmu said.

The President said within five days of the opening of the temple, 13 lakh devotees had visited Ayodhya Dham. She termed the consecration ceremony at the Ram temple on January 22 as an "epochal moment".

There were doubts regarding the removal of Article 370 from Jammu and

Kashmir. Those are now history. This Parliament also enacted a strict law against 'Triple Talaq'," the President said.

Murmu touched on issues ranging from insurgency to inflation and said a country can progress at a fast pace only when it defeats the challenges of the past and puts maximum energy into build-

She asserted that the armed forces were giving a befitting reply to terrorism and expansionism and India has emerged as a prominent voice against terrorism in the world.

Today my government is building modern infrastructure along the entire border. This work should have been done long ago on a priority basis. Be it terrorism or expansionism, our forces today are giving a befitting response," Murmu said.

The President said the tangible results of the government's efforts to strengthen internal security were visible. "There is a sense of security in

Jammu and Kashmir today. The earli-

er deserted look of marketplaces due to strike has been replaced by the hustle and bustle of crowded markets," Murmu said. The President said there has been significant reduction in the incidents of separatism in the northeast and many organisations have taken steps towards permanent peace.

"Naxal affected areas have shrunk and there has been a steep decline in Naxal violence," Murmu said.

The government, she said, believed the grand edifice of a developed India will stand on the four strong pillars of youth power, women power, farmers and the poor.

After Murmu's speech, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a post on X said, "The Budget Session began with place Rashtrapati Ji's extensive and insightful address highlighting the collective strength of 140 crore Indians, seen in a series of feats our nation has achieved. The Address also highlighted the vision of further developing India in the coming years.

# Congress alleges stone-pelting...

Continued from Pag 1

country.

The Congress, on its official X handle, however, said the window pane was damaged when sudden brakes had to be applied due to a woman coming in front of the vehicle in Malda. However, Gandhi remained unharmed in the incident. Television footage showed him inspecting the damaged window pane after arriving at a designated halt.

The state Congress claimed the "attack" took in Malda's Harishchandrapur area as the yatra re-entered West Bengal from Bihar. "The rear window pane of the vehicle in which Rahul Gandhi was travelling was smashed after being pelted with stones... this is unacceptable. As the yatra and found that the incident entered Malda and was moving occurred in Katihar, not in through Harishchandrapur, a stone was thrown at the car," Chowdhury remarked.

Speaking at a programme in neighbouring Murshidabad district, Banerjee said the incident took place in "Katihar area in Bihar, bordering West Bengal".

"I learnt that Rahul Gandhi's car was pelted with stones. I checked what exactly happened ing in front of the vehicle.

West Bengal. The car entered West Bengal with the glass already broken I condemn the attack. This is nothing but a drama," Banerjee said. The Congress, in a post on its

official X handle, stated that the incident did happen in Malda but because brakes had to be applied due to a woman com-

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH PANCHAYAT RAJ ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

NIT No. 65 to 69/ATO/2023-24 Date: 25-01-2024 Online tenders are being invited for execution of five works in Eluru district with PMGSY-III and PRR (Plain) grant of Rs. 1837.05 lakh. Submission of tenders: From 01-02-2024 to 15-02-2024 up to 3.30 pm. For details contact www.apeprocurement.gov.in Sd/- Superintendent Enginee R.O.No: 12671/CLIADVT/1/1/2021-22, DL 31.01.2024

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# **MLA hails Cabinet** decision on pattas

State Planning Board Vice-Chairman and MLA Malladi Vishnu hailed the Andhra Pradesh Cabinet for approving the proposal to resolve issues regarding house patta registra-tion being faced by residents of Nandamuri Nagar. The issue has been pending for decades, affecting 70 families in the

Vishnu said that he took up the issue to the notice of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan



Reddy, and that the Chief Minister responded positively. Vishnu said that the Cabinet approved the proposal after a detailed discussion. He said that the pattas will be issued to the affected families soon.

Vishnu also said that the government is committed to resolving the issue of house registration in Vijayawada permanently. He said that the government will continue to support the poor, downtrodden, and marginalised sections of society.



# District Health Officer spearheads maternal and child health initiatives

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

District Medical Health Officer Dr. B. Jagannath Rao convened a high-level meeting with Asha Nodal Officers at the District Medical and Health Office on Wednesday, emphasising the paramount importance of prioritising maternal and child health ini-

During the meeting, Dr Rao conducted a comprehensive review of government health programs, stressing the need for dedicated management structures and robust service delivery models specifically tailored to enhance healthcare for pregnant women. Immediate action for high-risk pregnancies was underscored, with a directive for swift registration and expedited med-

During the meeting, Dr Rao conducted a comprehensive review of government health programs, stressing the need for dedicated management structures and robust service delivery models specifically tailored to enhance healthcare for pregnant women.

ical examinations. A major announcement from the meeting was the initiation of monthly comprehensive health check-ups for pregnant women in government hospitals, implemented under the Pregnancy, Motherhood, and Child Health (PMSMA) pro-

Dr Rao passionately championed the implementation of

Prism-10, a targeted initiative aimed at reducing infant mor-tality rates in the district. He made it clear that there would be zero tolerance for negligence in maternal and child health services, announcing stringent consequences for any lapses. As a demonstration of this commitment, official memos were issued to four supervisors deemed negligent in their duties.

The meeting witnessed active participation from key stakeholders, including DIÓ Narayana Rao, District Public Health Nursing Officer (DPHNO) Usharani, Sanyasi Rao, Vijayalakshmi, Jagadish, and others, showcasing a collaborative spirit and underscoring the district's dedication to advancing maternal and child health initiatives.

# **Joint Collector calls for** enrolment of all above 18 in voters' list

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

Joint Collector R Govinda Rao emphasised the importance of voter registration for all individuals above 18 years, during a weekend meeting with political party representatives held at the Collector's office conference hall on Wednesday.

The Joint Collector said that the final voters' list was published on January 22. However, until the last date of nominations, there remains an opportunity for individuals to register as new voters through Form-6. Their names will then be incorporated into the supplementary list. He urged everyone above the age of 18 to ensure they are registered as

Addressing concerns about potential inaccuracies in the voter list, Rao assured that changes in names, addresses, and corrections can be made. If political party representatives bring such issues to their attention, investigations will be conducted, and necessary actions will be taken. Rao underscored the commitment to ensuring a clean and accurate voter list, with continuous collaboration with political party representa-tives. The Joint Collector

also mentioned that articles appearing in newspapers related to voter registration will be thoroughly investigated, and appropriate actions will be taken.

District Revenue Officer J Venkata Rao shared statistics on the proposed voter list as of January 1, 2024. The district encompasses four constituencies, with a total of 7,75,598 voters. Among them, 3,78,764 are men, 3,96,766 are women, and 68 are identified as transgender persons. From January 13 to 30, the district received a total of 1,575 forms. Of these, 118 forms were processed and included in the voter list, three were approved, 12 were rejected, and 1,442 were pending processing. Rao detailed 69 additions, eight deletions, and 41 amendments in the

Political party representa-tives, including YSRCP's V Srinivasa Rao, TDP's G Venkatanaidu, CPM's Reddy Venu, CPI's E Venkata Naidu, BSP's Venkataramana, AAP's P Ravikumar, and Lok Satta's Allam Prabhakar Ram participated in the meeting. The collective effort aims to facilitate a transparent and inclusive electoral process in



# New Joint Collector Mayur Ashok assumes office

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

K Mayur Ashok took charge as the new Joint Collector of the district. Formerly serving as the Joint Collector of Vijayanagar, Ashok's relocation Vijayanagar, Ashok's relocation to Visakhapatnam signifies a fresh phase in his career jour-ney. Prior to officially taking charge, he engaged in a brief meeting with District Collector Dr A Mallikarjuna, where they deliherated on a range of crudeliberated on a range of crucial issues concerning the district's welfare and advancement. This discussion underscored the depth of their commitment to effective gover-

In outlining his vision for the comprehensive development of the district, K Mayur Ashok reiterated his steadfast dedication to advancing various aspects of public welfare. He emphasised key priorities, including expediting land reg-



ularisation processes, leading initiatives such as Navaratna aimed at providing housing for the underprivileged, enhancing infrastructure development endeavors, and addressing pertinent revenuerelated concerns. In a clear

demonstration of his commit ment to service, Ashok reaffirmed his pledge to prioritise welfare-driven policies and initiatives. This underscores his determination to contribute meaningfully to the progress of the district.

#### **VEHICLE FITNESS CENTRES**

# CPM alleges plans for 'massive robbery of funds'

PNS VIJAYAWADA

CPM State secretary V Srinivasa Rao has alleged that bigshots and their family members in the Central and State government are prepared for a massive robbery of funds in the name of Vehicle Fitness Centres in the State. Though the Central government invited bids from interested organisations to set up Vehicle Fitness Centres, some of the people's representatives got the tenders, he alleged.

Srinivasa Rao alleged that certain people's representatives influenced the government officials, which was



against the rules and regulations. The Central government directed to finalise the biddings by October. However, the State government put a step forward and started the land allotment process beside the national highways.

Before the elections, the Fitness Centres are planning to start collections from vehicles, he said. Both the State and

the Central governments set aside road repairs and training for the drivers to prevent road accidents. Also, dividers are not set up as per the rules. Meanwhile, governments are preparing a plan to loot vehicular owners in the name of testing clutches, breaks and engines, he alleged.

Fundraising campaign from today Srinivasa Rao said that the party would start a fundraising campaign on February 1. The CPM is conducting agitations to resolve the people's problems, for which the party

is raising funds from the peo

#### Demand to frame system to resolve problems of unemployed youth

PNS VIJAYAWADA

All India Youth Federation (AIYF) Andhra Pradesh State general secretary Lenin Babu has demanded that the ruling and the opposition parties frame a the problems of the unemployed youth in the State. The government should pay unemployment benefits to jobless youths, he urged.

Lenin Babu addressed the media at the Neelam Rajasekhar Reddy Bhavan in Anantapur on Wednesday. He demanded that the parties allocate majority Assembly and parliament seats for youths to encourage them to enter politics. As per a survey,

the unemployment rate has risen to 16 per cent in the State due to the shutting down of the Public Sector Units and absence of industries in the State, he commented

Further, he criticised Prime failure to provide two crore jobs every year. Before coming to the rule, Modi had given assurance to provide 2 crore jobs every year and bring back the black money from foreign countries. None of these assurances has been fulfilled so far, he

AIYF Anantapur district president Anand Kumar, secretary Santosh Kumar and others were



# Nine-day prayers begin at Gunadala shrine

Statues of preachers unveiled on occasion of centenary celebrations

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The nine-day prayers of Gunadala Mary Matha and the centenary celebrations of the shrine, which is the second largest Catholic shrine in South India, began on a grand note here on Wednesday. On the auspicious occasion, a centenary flag was unveiled by Vijayawada Catholic diocese Most Rev Bishop T Joseph Rajarao, Monsignor Rev Fr M Prasad in the presence of Vicar General Rev Fr Meshapam Gabrielu, Shrine Rector Rev Yeleti William Jayaraju Swami and other along with large number of devotees.

Bishop Rajarao, in his message to the devotees, said that Mother Mary was given a special place, respect and recognition among women. It is said that the wishes of devotees will be fulfilled if they turn to Mary, the mother of God. It was



explained to the devotees that Mary's role in God's plan of salvation was great.

The new statues of the former preachers who had contributed to the development of the shrine, Dominic Grassi, Abross Di Batista, Fr Arlati, Fr Biance, Br Bertholi, Br Krippa, and Br Gioni David, were unveiled by

Bishop Rajarao in a grand man-

Monsignor Father Muvvala Prasad said that the chief guest for this hundred year's celebration is the Apostolic (Pope) Ambassador of India and Nepal Leopoldo Girelli and all Bishops of AM and Telangana will



## **Strive to get more CSS funds: Chief Secretary to officials**

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Dr KS Jawahar Reddy, the Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh, has instructed the officials to strive to spend the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) funds to obtain more funds in this financial year.

To discuss the matter, CS Jawahar Reddy conducted a review meeting with several government department officials from his camp office in Vijayawada on Wednesday. Lav Agarwal, the Resident Commissioner, AP Bhavan in New Delhi, explained the sanctioned funds under the CSS and expenditure details.

He said that officials should concentrate on getting more funds from the Central government in this fiscal year. So, all officials should speed up the CSS works, he added.

AP Dairy Development MD A Babu, Health, Medical and Family Commissioner J Nivas, Tribal Welfare Department Director J Murali, AP TIDCO MD Sridhar and others attended



# **Nayeem Asmi** takes charge

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The newly appointed Superintendent of Police of Krishna district, Adnan Nayeem Asmi, took charge in Machilipatnam Wednesday. He was working in ACB. Former SP P Joshua was transferred to Chittoor.

After assuming charge, SP Asmi met Krishna District Collector P Raja Babu and District Judge Áruna Sarika as a courtesy call. He said that the Police Department would provide justice to the people. Further, he said that the

ensuing election will be conducted peacefully.

# 'Aadudam Andhra' district-level competitions kick off in Srikakulam

PNS SRIKAKULAM

Joint Collector M Naveen announced on Wednesday that the vision of 'Aadudam Andhra' health and unearth sporting talent -- has come to life. In a grand ceremony held at the Kodi Rammurthy Stadium, he inaugurated the district-level competitions alongside local legislators and sports officials.

Naveen urged participating teams to bring their best and strive to represent the district at the State level. He revealed that top teams from across the eight constituencies, competing in cricket, volleyball, kabaddi, and badminton, will face off in a four-day district-level competition. Winners will then advance to the state finals in Visakhapatnam. Emphasising the programme's impact, Naveen highlighted how Aadudam Andhra has established itself as a key initiative



emphasizing the role of sports in a healthy lifestyle.

Applauding the State government's commitment to sports development, District Olympic president Association Dharmana Krishna Das com-mended Aadudam Andhra for its success in nurturing potential athletes. He acknowledged

the challenges faced by athletes

in the past due to limited

resources, and emphasised the

government's current support

by providing kits, food, and lodging to assist their athletic

The ceremony witnessed a vibrant display of unity and enthusiasm. The release of balloons and pigeons, the unveil-ing of the sports flag, and the commencement of competi-tions showcased the collaborative efforts of Naveen and Krishna Das. Their participation in friendly batting and volleyball matches further ignit-

ed the spirit of the games. Recognising the dedication and talent of district-level teams, Krishna Das promised special incentives for those advancing to the State level. The event was graced by numerous dignitaries, including DSDO Sridhar, District Education Officer K Venkateshwarlu, and representatives from various government departments and sports associations

# 'Sports culture will lead to healthy lifestyle'

'Adudam Andhra' district-level competitions begin



PNS VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao has said that sports culture leads people to a healthy lifestyle, and with that aim the State government is conducting the prestigious 'Adudam' Andhra' event. The goal is to incorporate sports in daily life,

Dilli Rao, along with Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Mayor Rayana Bhagyalakshmi, Joint Collector Dr P Sampath Kumar, and District Sports Development Officer (DSDO) SA Azeez, inaugurated the NTR districtlevel 'Adudam Andhra' sports festival at the Indira Gandhi Corporation Stadium on Municipal (IGMC) Wednesday.

Addressing the gathering, the Collector said 'Adudam Andhra' is being successfully conducted at the Sachivalayam, mandal, and constituency levels. Cricket, kabaddi, volleyball, kho-kho, and badminton are

part of the sports event. The district-level winners will participate in the State-level tournament, which will take place in Visakhapatnam from February 6, he added.

He further said that the State champions in cricket, volleyball, kabaddi, and kho-kho will get Rs.5 lakh, while the runners-up and third place winners will get Rs.3 lakh and Rs.2 lakh, respectively. For badminton, the prize money is Rs.2 lakh, Rs.1 lakh and Rs.50,000 for the first three places. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy introduced the 'Adudam Andhra, Idi Manandari Aata' sports festival and such an event is not conducted in any other States, he

Mayor Bhagyalakshmi said that the State government aims to identify talented youths in sports and encourage them. The government is presenting Rs.12 crore as cash prizes to the winning teams. They will also get jobs under the sports quota, she added.



# Minister urges CM to sanction proposals worth Rs 82.90 crore

PNS ONGOLE

Minister for Municipal Administration Audimulapu Suresh appealed to Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy to sanction proposals to carry out development works at a cost of Rs 82.90 crore in Kondapi constituency.

Minister Audimulapu Suresh met the Chief Minister during the Cabinet meeting in the secretariat on Wednesday. The Minister urged him to sanction development works worth Rs 82.90 crore to be carried out in Kondapi constituency. He submitted the proposals of development works to the Chief Minister.

The Minister said that he had urged the Chief Minister to sanction five major develop-



ment works to be taken up in Kondapi at a cost of Rs 82.90

The development works including the highway bridge to be constructed on the Ananthavaram-Tetupuram road at a cost of Rs 2.4 crore, expansion of NH 5 at Singarayakonda at a cost of Rs 4 crore, Kondapi-Ongole-Nandyal road development works at a cost of Rs 50 crore, Kondapi-K Upplapadu-M Nidamanu connecting road at a cost of Rs 1.50 crore and construction of a road cum check dam at Chilakuru in Marripudi mandal at a cost of Rs 25 crore.

The Chief Minister responded favorably to the appeal, Minister Audimulapu

# 98 kgs of ganja seized, 2 arrested

PNS NARASARAOPET

The police seized 98 KGs of ganja while being taken on a bike illegally and arrested two persons at Thimmapuram village in Edlapadu mandal on Wednesday. Nadendla CI Balarami

Reddy told the media that two persons were going on a motorcycle and they fell down from the bike as it collided with another bike. The passersby rushed there to help them. They found ganja packets on the bike and informed the police. The police immediately rushed there and seized the ganja packets which contained 98 KGs of ganja. The accused were bringing the ganja from Sileru in Visakhapatnam district.



# Aadudam Andhra being organised successfully in WG district: DC

West Godavari district Collector P Prashanthi has said that the 'Aadudam Andhra' sports event is being organized successfully in the district and she exhorted the budding players to avail such opportunities to perform their

As part of 'Aadudam Andhra' sports event, a district level tournament was organized on the premises of SRKR engineering college here on Wednesday. MLA and Whip Grandhi Srinivas attended the programme as chief guest.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Prashanthi said that the 'Aadudam Andhra' sports event is being organized suc-cessfully in WG district for which there was overwhelming response from the people. She asked the players to bring laurels to the district by winning medals in the sports event.

She said that the 'Aadudam Andhra' sports event is being organized in order to encourage youths to take part in sports and also to promote sports across the state. She emphasized the need to take part in sports to keep good ĥealth.

The Collector said that Cricket, Badminton, Volleyball, Coco and Kabaddi tournaments were organized as part of 'Aadudam andhra'. She said that the 'Aadudam Andhra' sports event would conclude on February 2. She informed that 70 teams from seven constituencies are play-

ing in the tournament. Whip Grandhi Srinivas said the government is organizing 'Aadudam Andhra' sports events across the state in order to encourage sports. Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's aim is to keep AP top in sports. The Whip said that the Aadudam Andhra sports event began in the state on December 26 and various sports events were organized at the village, ward and mandal level. As many as 5,350 teams participated in the event across the state.

The Whip said that the government is making efforts to bring the past glory to sports by providing all needed infrastructure. Joint Collector Ram Sundar Reddy, RDO K Srinivasulu Raju, municipal commissioner M Shayamal and other officials were pre-

# 'SC/ST/BC Minorities can not be lured with money'

**PNS** ■ GUNTUR

Minister for Social Welfare Merugu Nagarjuna made it clear that the Opposition parties can not lure the SC/ST/BC and minority community voters with money.

The YSRCP organized 'Samajika Sadhikara Yatra' and a public meeting at Mangalagiri on Wednesday. Addressing the activists, the minister said that Jagan Mohan Reddy is the only leader who thinks about the welfare of SC/ST/BC and minorities in the country. Jagan

Mohan Reddy is the leader who raised the issue of social revolution, he added

"Whichever village we go to, the people there say that we have been benefited with the welfare schemes being implemented by the Jagan Reddy headed government. All the poor are happy with the Jagan Reddy regime as they receive benefits directly from the government without mediators," the minister claimed.

He slammed that former Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu humiliated the underprivileged sections with his comments and considered them as vote banks. The YSRCP would win in the second successive time in Mangalagiri constituency, he exuded confidence. He said that YSRCP candidate Ganji Chiranjeevi is the local resident and Nara Lokesh lives in Hyderabad.

Minister for Housing Jogi Ramesh and Jupidi Prabhakar vowed for the victory of Ganji Chiranjeevi in Mangalagiri constituency. They called upon the YSRCP activists to strive hard to win the next elections.

# **1252 NDPL liquor bottles** seized, 5 arrested

PNS KADAPA

The police seized 1,252 Non Duty Paid Liquor (NDPL) bottles worth Rs 12.52 lakh while being transported illegally and arrested five persons at Proddatur on the Jammalamadugu-Mudukur highway in Andhra Pradesh.

SP Siddhartha Koushal told the media here on Wednesday that on a tip off, SEB police team conducted checking of vehicles on Jammalamadugu-Mydukur highway. They found 1,252 NDPL liquor bottles being transported on a mini-truck.

The NDPL liquor bottles were

They were transporting the NDPL liquor bottles concealing them under vegetables.

The seized NDPL bottles included 240 bottles of Mansion House brandy (750 ML), 672 bottles of Royal Stag whisky (750ML), 168 bottles of Blenders Pride whisky (750 ML), 172 bottles of Royal Challenge whisky (750 ML). The police arrested five per-

sons in this connection. The seized liquor bottles are worth Rs 12.52 lakh and the minitruck. The SP announced a cash reward to the police team headed by II town inspector G Ibrahim, Proddatur SEB Inspector Mahesh Kumar, SI



# Officials asked to send information to file nominations for PMAEPA

PNS BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari district Collector P Prashanthi directed the officials to send information to file nominations for the 'Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration (PMAEPA).

District Collector Prashanthi reviewed the nominations of the Prime Minister's Awards with the officials of the concerned departments here on

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that nominations have been called for the 'Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration"). Union ministries, states and all districts would participate in the Prime Minister's Awards; she said adding that the Prime Minister's Award would be presented by the Prime Minister to the dis-



tricts which show the best in administration.

The Collector said that under the Prime Minister's Awards for the year 2023, the following awards would be given in recognition of the contribution of civil servants in the implementation of schemes including the Har Ghar Ial Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Gramin, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban, Mission Indradhanush,

Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Ujwala Yojana, PM Swanidhi, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojana, PM Mudra Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Poshan Yojana, Kisan Credit Card Scheme for Farmers, Animal Husbandry and Fishery Industry.

She said that the departments implementing these schemes should immediately submit the information including video clips and other documents related to the respective schemes for nominations.

CPO K Srinivasa Rao, DEO R Venkataramana, Additional DMHO Bhanu Naik, district forest officer Asha Kiran, industrial department Mangapati Rao and district skill development officer Krishna Reddy were among those who were present.



# Pravin Aditya assumes charge as Joint Collector

PNS KAKINADA

C Pravin Aditya here on Wednesday took charge as Joint Collector of Kakinada

Talking to the media on the occasion, he said that he would strive to resolve the revenue disputes with the cooperation of officials. Earlier, he

worked as Polavaram Proiect officer. After assuming charge as Joint Collector, he called on district Collector Krithika Shukla. Incharge RDO and DRDA PD K Sriramani, Civil Supplies DM D Pushmani, Animal husbandry JD S Surya Prakash Rao and other officials congratulated Pravin

# Govt committed to fill 2lakh jobs: Revanth

## • 6,956 staff nurses get appointment letters

PNS HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said that two lakh vacancies in government service would be filled by December 2024.

'We are committed to our promise given to the unemployed," he said addressing a function organised to present appointment letters to staff nurses at the LB stadium here.

"Soon after assuming office, Cabinet members met the UPSC Chairman seeking suggestions as the government had vowed to "cleanse" the TSPSC after the leaking of question papers of TSPSC recruitment tests during BRS rule. A new chairman and members have now been appointed to the TSPSC. The government is trying to fill 15,000 posts in the police the Chief Minister

Appointment letters were given to 6,956 women who the jobs of 'some' others are were recruited as staff nurses by destroyed is coming true," he the government



The CM criticised the BRS government for "failing" to deliver on the promise to give

"This is only the first step in keeping the promise to create two lakh jobs a year. My statement that the youth of Telangana will get jobs only if

Minister T. Harish Rao for calling the appointments of staff nurses "a political distraction amid the unmet promises of the Congress government," Revanth said that the BRS leader is opposing recruitments and "KCR should instil some sense in his nephew."

He attacked the BRS supre-

18,507 small and 147 large

informed

Polytechnic Colleges in Guntur

and Madakasira are offering

textile technology courses while Textile Engineering is offered by Vignan Engineering

textile industries in AP.

College in Guntur.

Slamming former Health his daughter K. Kavitha who lost in Nizamabad in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Health Minister Damodara Rajanarsimha, R&B Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Forest Minister Konda Surekha and Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao also mo for giving an MLC seat to attended the function.

Collector M Venugopal

Reddy highlighted that Guntur

district stands top in cotton

production and there is a large

number of textile industries in

the district. There are a large

number of job opportunities in the textile industries for the

students if the textile technol-



#### PNS KAKINADA

Governor and JNTUK chancellor S Abdul Nazeer has advised the students to equip themselves with four vital skills including communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity to fully participate in the glob-al community and remain

competitive. The Governor delivered his address at the 10 th convocation of JNTUK at the alumni auditorium here on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, he asked the students to improve technical skills with life skills and adapt themselves to the changing

He opined that one who is responsive and adaptive to changing times is sure to be successful. The Governor complimented the JNTUK for its efficient functioning and securing NAAC Plus. Besides all the UG and PG programmes of the constituent colleges, the University College of Engineering has been accredited by the NBA for three years, he said

The Governor also appreciated JNTUK for its work towards meaningful collaboration with prominent international institutes of repute in Germany, the USA, and Sweden, duly encouraging faculty and student exchange programmes. Rear Admiral (retired) SV Sesha Chary, an alumnus of JNTU College who is the chief guest while delivering

the keynote address, said that the country was making giant strides in many fields including space and defence, and the students should take the best advantage of the situation and prove their talent. He said that Artificial intel-

ligence and augmented reality are taking technology to many levels. The infrastructure is growing at a very high pace. With the IT boom, manufacturing had taken a back seat, but now it is back in preference, he added. Earlier, Vice Chancellor Prof. GVR Prasadaraju also spoke.

Later, the Governor conferred an honorary Causa degree of doctor of science on V. Rajanna, president of technology, software, and services at Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). The director of R&D, Prof. Vipparty Ravindra, read out the citation on Rajanna. Registrar Prof. L. Sumalatha has read out the list of the Ph.D. awardees and gold medalists.

Later, the Governor who is also the President of Indian Red Cross Society AP Branch, inaugurated the Red Cross Eye Bank established by IRCS Kakinada District Branch, during his visit to Kakinada.

# Students advised to pursue Textile Technology courses

**PNS** ■ GUNTUR

Stating that the Textile Technology will play a significant role in the future, Principal Secretary for Commerce and Handlooms, K Sunita exhorted students to pursue Textile Technology course as they have a bright future. A workshop on Embracing a Future in the Textile sector was organized here on Wednesday to create awareness on textile courses to

the students. Speaking on the occasion, Principal Secretary Sunita asked the students to choose the textile technology courses

as they have a bright future in the coming years. She asked the students to apply for Andhra Pradesh Polytechnic Common Entrance Test which is the gateway to the future in

Textiles technology.

She stated that by studying textile courses rather than engineering and medicine courses, one can get jobs immediately, adding that most of the jobs are remaining vacant in the textile sector due to lack of candidates to meet the demand.

Sunita said that many students due to lack of awareness are not coming forward to pursue textile technology courses. In order to create



awareness among the 10 th ture sector, the textile industry class students, workshops are being held. After the agricul-

is the largest in the country; she informed, adding there are

"After passing 10th standard there will be a possibility to pursue diploma in textile technology, for which notifica-tion will be issued by AP PolyCET in February and March and the examination will be conducted in the month of May after the completion of

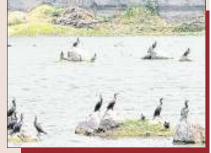
ogy courses are completed.
Government Textile
Technology Institute Principal K Mohammad, Textile association representatives Raghurami Reddy, Jyothirmai, ation 10th standard examination," she made it clear

handloom department additional director AV Patel and JD K Kannababu were among those who attended the pro-

### **Two more Tamil Nadu wetlands** designated as Ramsar sites

wo more wetlands in Tamil Nadu have received Ramsar recognition, taking the total number of Ramsar sites in the state to 16, the highest in the country. Chief Minister M K Stalin said in a post on 'X': "Extremely delighted to announce the recognition of two new #Ramsar sites in Tamil Nadu - Longwood shola in Nilgiris & Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary in Ariyalur. This brings the total Ramsar sites in Tamil Nadu to

16, the highest in the country, with 13 sites recognised in 2022 alone after our #DravidianModel Govt came to power. A great testament to our government's relentless efforts in environmental conservation." India is one of the contracting parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, which was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971. An intergovernmental treaty, it came into force in 1975. India became a signatory to the convention on February 1, 1982.



### **SC fines 6 Maharashtra cops** for illegal detention

he Supreme Court has imposed a cumulative cost of Rs 12 lakh on six Maharashtra policemen after taking a serious note of their role in abetting illegal detention of three persons and demolition of their rented premises without any judicial order. According to the peculiar facts of the case, the six policemen of Jalgaon called three tenants including Vijaykumar Vishwanath Dhawale and Vinod

Dodhu Chaudhary to a police station on March 9, 2022 and kept them under detention for 24 hours. And, in the meantime, the rented premises of the detenue were demolished by relatives of former owner and the tenants were also forced to sign some documents, apparently giving their consent of vacating the premises, a bench of justices Vikram Nath and Satish Chandra Sharma said in its judgement delivered on January 30.



## Want to help Delhi govt fix hospitals, not get into blame game: HC

he Delhi High Court on Wednesday said it wanted to "help" the city government fix the state of its hospitals and not get into "blame game" but correct facts with respect to the ground reality must be placed before it. A bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Manmohan expressed its displeasure over the "misleading" information provided to it on the functioning of medical equipment in GTB hospital and said it wanted to ensure that there was

a "structural reform". The court issued notice to UPSC, DSSB and the Services department after it was informed about the issue of vacancies and lack of manpower in the hospitals and also suggested setting up a committee of doctors to come up with a solution. "We want to help Delhi government in fixing things. If you don't give us the correct position, it is very difficult to help you. We are not entering into blame game. Here (on paper) everything looks hunkydory but on ground people are denied admission," said the bench



# Modi govt rebuilt J-K, ended era of terrorism, says Shah

PNS NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said the Narendra Modi government has rebuilt Jammu and Kashmir, ending an era of terrorism and violence and giving wings to development by rolling out massive infrastructure and welfare schemes

In a series of posts on X in both English and Hindi, accompanied by the #PragatisheelJammuKashmir hashtag, Shah also said Prime Minister Modi transformed Jammu and Kashmir by awakening a new hope among youngsters.

He said the Modi government secured the dreams of the youngsters and gave new flight to their aspirations by strengthening education and skilling facilities.

"The Modi government rebuilt Jammu and Kashmir, ending an era of terrorism and violence. The Modi gov-

ernment gave wings to the development of Jammu and Kashmir by rolling out massive infrastructure and welfare schemes and today it stands as a proud testimony to Bharat's powerful democracy," he said.

The home minister said the culture of Jammu and Kashmir is one of the country's most ancient and richest and, under the Modi government, the Union Territory's cultural heritage is being revived and its cultural pride is once again increasing.

He also alleged that the people of Jammu and Kashmir were untouched by development due to dynastic politics.

Shah said the Modi government has strengthened the Panchayati Raj system in the Union Territory with the aim of providing development at the grassroots level, freeing governance from dynasty and bringing it to the common people.
"Under the leadership of

PM Narendra Modi ji, Jammu and Kashmir is now heaving a sigh of relief. After abolishing Article 370, the Modi government has secured the dignity of life in the Valley by crushing terrorism with a zero-tolerance policy," the home minister said.

In a post on X along similar lines, Shah's office said Jammu and Kashmir struggled with terrorism and extremism for a long time.

The Modi government established peace and stability in Jammu and Kashmir by abolishing Article 370, as a result of which the Union Territory is moving forward on the path of development and prosperity, the post said.

Due to the policies of the

Modi government, the picture of the youngsters of Jammu and Kashmir has changed and they are no longer joining separatism but development, it added.

"Not a single incident of stone pelting took place in Jammu and Kashmir in 2023," the post said.

 $S\bar{h}ah's$  office said the Modi government restored the Panchayati Raj system to strengthen the roots of democracy in Jammu and Kashmir, due to which governance has come into the hands of the common people and a new era of development has dawned in the entire

#### **GYANVAPI**

### 'Temples should be built at original places'

PNS BHOPAL

BJP veteran Uma Bharti on Wednesday demanded that temples be built at the "original places" in Kashi and Mathura like Ayodhya and Hindus get the right to worship, as she hailed the Varanasi district court's order on Gyanvapi matter.

The Varanasi district court has granted the family of a priest the right to worship Hindu deities in the Gyanvapi mosque cellar. Hailing the court order as "sukhad" (pleasant), Bharti stated she had worshipped the idols inscribed on the walls of Gyanvapi in 1993.

"After the decision of the Varanasi District Court, I would again request that like Ayodhya, the temples should be built at the original places in Mathura and Kashi and the right to worship should be given to

Hand over these places to Hindus, this is the complete solution," she said.

# India, Oman ink pact for collaboration in defence

PNS NEW DELHI

India and Oman on Wednesday signed an agreement that would provide a framework for collaboration in new areas of defence engagement including procurement of military equipment.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was firmed up at a meeting of India-Oman joint military cooperation committee (JMCC) in Muscat.

In the talks, the two sides also carried out a comprehensive review of their defence cooperation and explored ways to boost it in line with their shared strategic interests.

The two sides specifically focused on possible collaboration in the defence industrial sector at the meeting. The Indian delegation at the talks was led by Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane.

It is learnt that the overall situation in West Asia including security concerns arising out of targeting of cargo vessels in the Red Sea by Houthi militants figured in the talks.



"Both sides reviewed and appreciated the robust defence cooperation between India and Oman," the defence ministry said.

It said the meeting delved into many new areas of cooperation such as training, joint exercise, information sharing, oceanography, ship building and MRO (maintenance, repair, and operations) facilities that would build mutual trust and interoperability between militaries of both

"They also exchanged views on regional and global issues of shared interest. Both sides

cal initiatives to further boost bilateral defence engagements with focus on defence industries collaboration," the ministry said in a statement.

The two sides also inked an MoU pertaining to procurement of defence material and equipment which would provide a framework for defence collaboration in new areas.

The MoU was signed over a month after India and Oman unveiled a joint vision document titled 'A Partnership for the Future'.

The vision document was adopted during the visit of Oman's Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik to India in December.

In Muscat, Aramane also held bilateral talks with Omanese Defence Ministry's Secretary General Mohammed Bin Naseer Bin Ali Al Zaabi.

"During the talks, Giridhar Aramane highlighted the potential of the domestic defence industry with capacity, capability and looked forward to a fruitful partnership with the armed forces of Oman," the defence ministry

#### PARLIAMENT SECURITY BREACH CASE **ACCUSED TELL COURT**

# **Being tortured to accept** association with opposition

PNS NEW DELHI

Five of the six people arrested in the Parliament security told a court here that they were allegedly being tortured by Delhi Police to accept their association with opposition

The submission was made before Additional Sessions Judge Hardeep Kaur, who extended the judicial custody of all the six accused till March

Five of the accused --Manoranjan D, Sagar Sharma, Lalit Jha, Amol Shinde and Mahesh Kumawat -- told the court that they were forced to sign about 70-odd blank papers. "Accused persons were tortured/given electric shocks to sign and confess (to) the commission of crime under the UAPA and their association with national political parties... two accused persons were forced to write on the paper about their association with the political party/leader of opposition political party," the accused told the court in a joint petition.

The court sought a reply from police in the matter and fixed February 17 for hearing the application.

The sixth accused in the case is Neelam Azad, who had earlier alleged before the court that police had forced her to sign several blank papers.

Azad's application is currently pending before the conduction polygraph/narco/brain mapping), the associated persons conducting the tests pressed two accused persons to name a political party/leader about their involvement.

"Each were asked about their current/old mobile phone numbers and made them visit the Airtel/BSNL/Vodafone offices for issuance of SIM cards of old mobile numbers and current SIM card numbers for reasons best known to the prosecution. During this illegal drill, accused persons gave their biometrics/signed for issuance of SIM cards," the joint petition stated.

The accused persons claimed they were forced to provide all their social media account, email and phone passwords.

In a major security breach on the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament terror attack, Sagar Sharma and Manoranjan D jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the public gallery during Zero Hour on December 13 last year, released yellow gas from canisters and shouted slogans before they were overpowered by some

#### BJP alleges 'mother of all scams' by Bengal govt

PNS NEW DELHI

a CAG report to allege that "mother of all scams" to the tune of about Rs 2 lakh Trinamool Congress-ruled West Bengal.

"Her government has tried to loot public money everywhere. The CAG report is a slap on her government's face and exposes it," Majumdar alleged.

manush".

the "kingpin of the corrupt". ridding society of graft.

The BJP on Wednesday cited the two major events.

In a press conference, BJP West Bengal president Sukanta Majumdar accused the state government headed by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of treating the public money like her

In strong-worded remarks, BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia alleged that the "mother of all scams" has been found out in West Bengal even though Banerjee speaks about "Maa, mati and

He alleged that the Trinamool Congress president was a "chor" (thief) and

"It is a battle of two ideologies," Bhatia said and claimed that all constituents of the INDIA bloc are part of an ideology that centred on corruption and family rule while the Modi government is dedicated to promoting honesty and

## Preparations in full swing ahead of Modi's mid-Feb UAE visit PNS DUBAI

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi set to visit to the UAE mid-February for a massive Indian community gathering and a dedication ceremony of a large Hindu temple, officials from the Indian missions in the

Modi is scheduled to address the Indian community event, Ahlan Modi (Hello Modi), at Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Zayed stadium on February 13 and is scheduled to attend on February 14 a dedication ceremony at the BAPS Hindu temple getting the finishing touches at the UAE capital.

"As construction of the religious campus nears completion, His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi are scheduled to inaugurate the Mandir on 14 February 2024," Swaminarayan Sanstha said.

Prime Minister Modi's visit to the UAE is not yet been officially announced. Regarding the Ahlan Modi event, India's ambassador to the UAE, Sunjay Sudhir, said they are expecting tens of thousands of people to throng the site of the reception.



Prime Minister Modi along with then US President Donald Trump addressed a massive community event called 'Howdy, Modi!' in Houston, Texas on September 22, 2019.

A registration portal has

been set up to smoothen the process and transport is being arranged from all emirates for participants to reach the venue. The event is being organized collaboratively by 150 Indian community organisations in the UAE. A cultural programme involving 400 local together to add colour to the show. During the last 3 years, over 2,000 artisans from Rajasthan and Gujarat have carved the 402 white marble pillars for the temple. Earlier, addressing a gathering of diplomats invited to celebrate the Republic Day, Ambassador Sudhir said over

3.5 million Indians call UAE their home, thanks to the affection shown by the country's leaders. "One of the most significant developments in bilateral relations in recent years is the construction of the BAPS Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi," Ambassador Sudhir said.

'The temple expected to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi on the 14th of February, will be a spiritual oasis. Standing on top of a hillock on the outskirts of Abu Dhabi, the temple will be a testimony to the enduring tradition of peace and tolerance," he said.

# Z-plus security cover withdrawn for Tejashwi, given to new deputy CMs

PNS PATNA

Days after the fall of the Mahagathbandhan government in Bihar, Z-plus security cover accorded to former deputy chief minister and RID leader Tejashwi Yaday was withdrawn by the new dispensation on Wednesday.

Yadav will now be provided security cover given to Bihar ministers, a notification issued by the state home department said.

The Nitish Kumar-led government accorded Z-plus security cover to newly appointed Deputy Chief



Ministers Samrat Chaudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha, the notification said. Along with the deputy CMs, the Z-plus security cover was also accorded to BJP's Lok Sabha MP Rajiv Pratap Rudy. The decision was taken

after the department reviewed the threat levels of various VIP protectees in the state, the notification added. According to sources, Z-

plus security cover is the highest level of security provided by the government.
Under the Z-plus security

covers, a dedicated team of trained personnel armed with sophisticated firearms guard the VIP concerned.

Dantewada and Bijapur dis-

He said a brief exchange of

fire took place between secu-

rity personnel and Naxalites,

who lobbied shells of BGL

(barrel grenade launchers). Naxalites soon fled the scene,

tricts.

# Normal to above-normal rainfall likely in north India in Feb: IMD

tures.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After experiencing a drierthan-usual December and January, north India is expected to see normal to above-normal rainfall in February, the Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Wednesday.

Addressing a press confer-IMD

Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said India cumulatively may experience above normal rainfall

in February. Northwest India recorded just 3.1 mm of rainfall January, the sec-

ond lowest since 1901, the IMD said. North India consisting of seven meteorological sub-divisions is most likely to receive

above-normal rainfall (more than 122 per cent of the long period average) in February.
"Monthly rainfall over the

country as a whole during February is most likely to be above normal (more than 119 per cent of the long period average)," Mohapatra said.

Normal to above-normal rainfall is predicted over northeast and central India.

Below-normal rainfall is likely over south peninsular India. Most parts of the country are likely to witness abovenormal minimum tempera-

Northwest, west central, northeast and parts of eastcentral India are likely to see above-normal maximum temperatures in February, according to the

IMD. Normal to below-normal maximum temperatures are likely in most parts of peninsu-

lar India and parts of eastcentral India, the IMD said. "Below-normal cold wave

days are expected over some parts of central India during February," it

The strong El Nino conditions -- abnormal warming of surface waters in the central Pacific Ocean -- are likely to weaken steadily and turn to ENSO neutral conditions by the end of the spring season. Most models indicate a transition to La Nina conditions, considered favourable for Indian southwest monsoon, around July-September,

Mohapatra said.

# 70-metre-long tunnel made by Naxals uncovered in Bastar

PNS RAIPUR

Security personnel have discovered a 70-metre-long tunnel dug by Naxalites in a dense forest along the border of Dantewada and Bijapur districts in Bastar division which is prima facie used as a bunker cum dumping place, a police officer said on

Wednesday. According to police, they had received information about the existence of such an underground passage in the Bastar division in the past, but they have spotted it for the

first time. The tunnel, around 70 meters long and 6 feet deep,

Bijapur district forest when a joint team of security personnel from Dantewada was conducting an anti-Naxal operation, Dantewada Additional Superintendent of Police, RK Barman, said.

Personnel belonging to the District Reserve Guard, Bastar Fighters, both units of the state police, and CRPF's 230th battalion were involved in the operation, he said.

"During patrolling near Todopat-Uspari village, security personnel spotted the tunnel opening from a roof. Its openings were covered with long woods, bushes, and soil,"



According to Barman, this is the first such instance in the Bastar region wherein an underground tunnel has been

"Prima facie, Naxalites have

dug this tunnel manually to use it as a bunker to hide from security personnel during operations in the area. They might have also been using it to dump Naxal-related mate-

Dantewada and Bijapur are among seven districts under the Bastar division. Meanwhile, Barman said

However, details will be

Police had received inputs

known after the investigation,

about such a tunnel being

dug by Naxals in forests under

the Bastar region in the past,

he added.

the anti-Naxal operation was launched based on inputs about the presence of cadres of the Bhairamgarh and Indravati area committees of Maoists in villages along the border of

but it was spotted for the first he said. time," another police official On their way back, securiy personnel dismantled three Maoist memorials and recovered a cooker bomb planted in forests, Barman added.

Notably, three CRPF personnel, including two commandos of CoBRA unit, were killed and 15 others injured in an encounter with Naxalites along the border of Sukma and Bijapur districts on Tuesday.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

# On the brink

The Maldives is running into one crisis after another; now an impeachment motion looms over Muizzu

lacksquare enerally known for its turquoise waters, pristine beaches and coral reefs, the name of the Maldives as a destination for Indian tourists is currently mud. The archipelago's complex political scenario has raised concerns not only within the country but also in the larger geopolitical landscape. The looming impeachment motion against Md Muizzu, the Maldives President, coupled with a shocking fall in Indian tourist numbers, underscores a shifting dynamic in the Indian Ocean region. The developments have triggered apprehensions about the country's stability. Given its strategic location, the internal political dynamics are crucial not only for the Maldives but also for the Indian Ocean region. As China seeks to expand its influence, India finds itself at a strategic crossroads, requiring thoughtful and proactive measures to counterbalance these developments. The core of the problem is Muizzu's desire to distance himself from India and align with China. The Maldives is the newest country to fall prey to Chinese designs:



The dragon has been steadily increasing its economic and infrastructural footprint in the region by way of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with significant investments in key projects. This has raised concerns in India about China's expanding influence in a region traditionally considered India's sphere of influence. The Maldives has asked India to remove its military base, which is a big loss for India and will make China stronger in the region.

Though India has flexed its soft power and dissuaded its tourists from going to Maldives, that approach may not work with China's support to the Maldives. But the position of the Maldives has become a little

untenable as it earns the major share of revenue from tourism; the recent decline in Indian tourist numbers has hit it hard. Holding the top spot just three weeks ago, Indian tourist arrivals have now slipped to the fifth position. India and the Maldives share ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious and commercial links steeped in antiquity. The relations have been close, cordial and multi-dimensional: India was among the first nations to recognise the Maldives after its independence in 1965 and to establish diplomatic relations with it. Now, India must adopt a nuanced and strategic approach to maintain influence in the Maldives and counterbalance China's expanding footprint. Strengthening diplomatic ties with our neighbour is paramount. Besides, India should bolster economic cooperation by offering viable alternatives to Chinese investments. Initiatives that promote sustainable development and address the Maldives' economic concerns can help strengthen economic ties. It goes without saying that India would have to back the pro-India Maldivian leaders; for example, the pro-India Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) has recently claimed a landslide in Male's mayoral election. This is indeed a good sign for India and, if Muizzu is impeached, India could have the chance to reestablish its cordial relations with the Maldives that it has always had.



An artiste hoists 'Thirumudi' (Royal crown) of Muchilot Bhagavathi on 'Perumkaliyattam' festival, in Kannur

# Myanmar: India's strategic dilemma



India needs to evolve a realistic strategic blueprint in line with the 'Neighbourhood First' policy to save Myanmar from China's Belt and Road Inititiative

orried over the refugees and insurgents from across porous border owing to the unabated crisis, the Indian government has decided to fence the Myanmar border to discontinue the free movement regime (FMR), as with the Bangladesh frontier which may act as a deterrent and preventive measure to control the existing menace. India must act cautiously: Given Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu's honeymoon with China, India needs to evolve a realistic strategic blueprint in line with the 'Neighbourhood First' policy to save Myanmar from China's overtures to the junta through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), besides supporting border areas rebels by brokering peace between warring groups and army generals in this violence-plagued country. India took a cautious stand when the army, known as Tatmadaw, engineered a coup on February 1, 2021. India had diplomatically and indirectly supported the junta, refraining from openly supporting the democratic forces led by Aung San Suu Kyi, which has now put it in a dilemma.

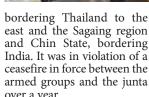
nic groups. In this complex scenario, "OPER-ATION 1027" was undertaken in December 2023 by 'The Three Brotherhood Alliance' comprising the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, AA and the Myanmar National Democratic Álliance Army, which had shaken the junta. An offensive against the junta had dealt it a devastating blow, prompting China to sup-

India faces the challenge of check-

mating China, which is danger-

ous because it supports some eth-

port it. The Three Brotherhood Alliance' had captured key roads and military posts, hitting the cashstrapped junta's revenues and obstructing troop movements. conflict zone suggested that the surprise attacks on the Shan state were followed by the AA opening a front against the army in its base in Rakhine state on the west coast. It was a coordinated attempt by insurgents to spill over to Kayah State



The bold move threatens the military's control over crucial trade routes to China thereby hitting its interests. It was a welcome step for China when the army led by Min Aung Hlaing dethroned the elected government, but now the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction, thereby challenging the junta. The Brotherhood is Junta's

biggest challenge: The alliance has been successful in cutting off the junta from a stretch of land that handles about 40% of bilateral border trade with China; around \$1 billion of the trade comes from natural gas piped into China. The fighting erupted recently in Shan, Kachin and Chin states, which are situated in the country's north as well as in Rakhine state in the west. Three Brotherhood fighters have claimed they have overrun dozens of military posts across the region and seized major roads leading in and out besides forcing the surrender of over 100 soldiers of the Myanmar army, demoralizing the junta. The armed groups have taken the fight to the Tatmadaw in Kayah State in the country's east which is important to the Myanmar



CHINA HAS URGED MYANMAR TO RESTORE BORDER STABILITY EVEN AS THE JUNTA'S **CONFLICT WITH** ARMED GROUPS INTENSIFIES

India must rethink its strategy: India will need to rethink its old-fashioned position towards Myanmar before the fallout threatens its interests. India feels the US should seize the moment to enhance engagement with India in Myanmar and work to alleviate the humanitarian situation thereby supporting the antijunta forces and establishing a federal democracy. India has tried to maintain equidistance between the military generals and pro-democracy political parties to ensure that the junta does not fall into China's lap. Junta to hit back: The army generals were not ready for the alliance's huge offensive, which set off a chain reaction, cornering the junta. Armed groups are reported to have taken control of fifty towns and villages and 100 posts. Army chief Hlaing has promised to undertake a counterattack on terrorists in the north, which might expose the junta's weak-

Armed rebellion by ethnic armed organizations has dealt a diplomatic blow to the army generals who have been exposed; China will be directly impacted. The Ukraine war had come as a blessing in disguise for the junta as the US and EU were preoccupied with it. The Hamas attack on Israel has further alienated Western powers from Myanmar but the attack by armed groups may change the entire scenario. The

National Unity Government (NUG) formed by opposition lawmakers in Burma is considered close to the West, which is feeling encouraged after the successful offensive by the

armed groups. China's double speak: China has urged Myanmar to restore border stability even as the junta's conflict with armed groups intensifies. Myanmar has been asked by China to 'cooperate' with it to maintain stability on the common borders. China's official stand is intriguing; "As a friendly neighbour, China sincerely hopes that Myanmar will restore stability and development as soon as possible, and supports all parties in Myanmar to properly resolve differences within the constitutional and legal framework and achieve reconciliation through dialogue."

A recent visit by Assistant Foreign Minister Nong Rong holds significance after armed groups stepped up an offensive, which put Chinese residents and infrastructure at risk. Some former diplomats are surprised over the 'Dual Policy adopted by China, which has been actively supporting the militant groups. The United Wa Stat (UWSA) in Myanmar's northeastern Shan state receives weapons and political sustenance from China.

(The writer is a political analyst and an expert on South Asia, views are personal)

# Road conditions hinder village development



#### Deteriorating roads in Bhopalaram village of Bikaner hinder development, affecting health, education and mobility

evelopment Bhopalaram village, situated in the Lunkaransar block of Bikaner, Rajasthan, has come to a halt due to the lack of proper roads. The absence of a paved road is a significant challenge for the nearly two thousand residents in the village. According to 47-yearold resident Baluram Jat, the main road connecting the village to the block headquarters was constructed around eight years ago and has not been maintained since, rendering it impass-

The road's deteriorated condition has made it challenging even for families to transport patients to the hospital. During Vimla's childbirth, the ambulance broke down due to the damaged road, forcing the family to arrange a private vehicle to reach the hospital. Vimla, a 28-yearold young woman from the village, noted that her condition worsened due to the road's large potholes. She highlighted that many pregnant women in the village prefer going to their parental homes for childbirth due to road conditions are subpar bricks, persistent difficulthese challenges. However, in a given area, the progress ties will persist until the



journey to the hospital becomes exceedingly diffi-

The challenging road conditions in the village have significantly impacted the lives of individuals with disabilities as well. Rajaram, a 26year-old affected by polio in both legs, shared that although the government provided him with a handoperated bicycle, the deteriorating state of the roads poses a considerable obstacle to his mobility. The uneven and damaged surfaces make it challenging for Rajaram to use his bicycle effectively for travel, exacer-bating the difficulties he faces due to his disability. The advancement of development is hindered by deteriorating roads. When the

hampered. In Bhopalaram In this regard, the Chairman village, Vinod, another resident, points out that the deteriorating road has led to a severe water problem. allocated for this road, but it water tankers from the block was constructed only withhave to navigate the broken road, causing more than half the water to spill before reaching the village. This not only leads to water wastage but also compels villagers to incur additional expenses to procure water once more. The deteriorated road has had a detrimental impact on the education of village girls as well. Seventeen-year-old Malati reveals that she had to halt her education after completing 10th grade because she faced challenges travelling eight kilometres to reach the Higher Secondary School in Lunkaransar Block for her 12th-grade studies. The poor condition of the road resulted in limited transportation options from the village, and her parents couldn't afford to purchase a scooter for her. Malati also highlights that although some portions of the road have been patched with

in other sectors is inevitably entire road is improved. of the Gram Seva Sahakarita Samiti, Asuram, explains that a space of 50 feet was in 20 feet. Due to its small and deteriorated condition, villagers face daily challenges. If there is any hindrance in tendering for the construction of this road, it can also be done under the Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Rural Guarantee Act (MGNRE-GA). This would not only improve the condition of the road but also provide employment to people under MGNREGA. Asuram asserts that the village's most crucial need should be promptly fulfilled through the Panchayati Raj Institutions because the road is not just a means of transportation but plays a significant role in opening new avenues for development. It is not only a means of access but is also intricately connected to education, health, and the economy. (Tamanna is a student of

Class 12 from Lunkaransar, Rajasthan. Views are personal. Charkha Features)

**GANDHIAN PRINCIPLES** 

Sir — Considering the war foreboding and sense of anarchy around the geo-political world order, it's a good time to practice and remember the ideological principles of Gandhi Ji. Mahatma Gandhi was popularly called as 'Father of Nation' and "Bapu". He was killed following a prayer vigil in New Delhi on January 30, 1948. He teaches us the canon of non-violence, civil disobedience, the welfare of all, interfaith harmony, equality social justice and constructive work but world order is dysfunctional. Rather the current situation of countries is filled with atrocities and savagery, and

destroying one or the other. There is a spread of anti-humane dispensation among the nations vis-a-vis the Russia-Ukraine war, entire West Asia giving a sense of anarchy and retaliation between Iraq, Gaza, Yemen, Pakistan and the Indo-Pacific extent where Philippines and Taiwan are acting against the power but India too has dealt with the external as well as internal crisis of Naxalism, security threats in Parliament, suspension of 141 Members of Parliament for the first time in the history. Gandhi ji believed that change could be achieved through peaceful means, advocating for dialogue and understanding even in the face of adversity and ensuring that the benefits of progress reached every stratum of society. Let's hope that everyone should practice of exams and how it is conducted. Parents and follow the Gandhian axions that are and teachers have to inculcate in children carved out to build the better society that

Dimple Wadhawan | Kanpur

#### **SUICIDE IS NOT A SOLUTION**

Sir — In a shocking incident a JEE aspirant from Kota, Rajasthan committed suicide just days ahead of the exam. The year 2023 has already witnessed many student aspirants committing suicide in Kota due to exam pressure and the latest tragedy yet again pinpoints how entrance exams are causing severe mental agony, panic and pressure among young students. The sui-

## Rhino killing is a cause of concern



March 2023, the carcass of a rhinoceros was found, with its horn missing, in Assam's Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, which houses nearly seventy per cent of India's rhino population. Later, in December, another Rhino was spotted dead due to suspected spear penetration; surprisingly its horn was intact. These incidents took place after an uneventful 2022 when no rhino was harmed. Now, poachers have struck again by killing an adult female rhino and decamping with its horn. The carcass of the animal was

found on January 22. Poaching is the biggest threat to the one-horned rhinos. Local poachers, hand-in-glove with international smugglers, pose a big threat to the rhinos.

The Assam government had set up a special task force to achieve zero poaching of rhinos in 2022. The task force, set up by the Assam government, and consisting of dedicated commandos, did a commendable job by ensuring nil poaching of the endangered animals in 2022. So, it can safely be assumed that there was a massive breach in security or that a few unscrupulous elements in the park were hand-in-gloves with the poachers that resulted in the latest rhino killing. The entire security apparatus including the CCTV cameras require an extensive examination and overhaul. At the same time, a methodical review of logistics, personnel and training would not be out of

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

tal tension students experience and also expose certain flaws in the exam system and the societal beliefs prevalent which focus only on marks, passes, ranks and success. It is high time that the Ministry of Education in the States and the Centre take the matter seriously and take suitable measures so that our young students do not make such harsh decisions just in the name the mentality to face problems with courage and willpower and to face challenges boldly.

M Pradyu | Kannur

#### **CRUX OF BUDGET FOR 2024-25**

Sir — An economy on relatively placid waters and the sanguine prognosis of an assured continuity of the govt in office should help focus on a largely marginalised key element of any budget: the fiscal deficit. Whereas In Defense two-thirds go towards salary, pensions and establishment expenses, the Operating Ratio for Railways was cide cases occurring in Kota and elsewhere 98.14% in 2023, ie, to earn Rs100, the in the country pinpoint how much men- expenses are Rs 98.14.!There is little left for

capital outlays. With allocations to infrastructure on Defense and Railways being the highest in these two, deficit financing is inevitable. And then, even the most selfassured govt has to make space for an election year largesse. Issues in the agricultural sector and the income of farmers have been the bugbear of this govt. Ever since the agitation over the Farm Bills, the government has been wary of this huge vote bank. The yearly assistance of Rs 6000 may go up to Rs 9000. This will be a big outgo on top of various subsidies already in place. Tax-paying public is another sector that needs to be kept happy in an election year. However, the scope for concessions in personal taxation may stay cosmetic. The budget is expected to set the fiscal deficit at a vulnerable 5.3% against street estimates of 5.5%. The actuals may take it even beyond. The crux of budgeting for 2024-25 must hence lie in managing the wily Deficit -

R Narayanan | Mumbai

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# **FIRST COLUMN**

# THE DIVINE WISDOM OF **BHAGAVAD GITA**

The Gita implores us to recognise the significance of fulfilling our duties



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

et me start with verse # 3.8 of the Bhagavad-Gita, which is, "You should always do your duty. Because action is superior to inaction. Maintenance of the body will also not be possible through inaction." We all know what our duties are according to time, place and circumstances. We also know that neglecting our duties impacts our maintenance. For example, a student does not pay attention to his studies. What happens subsequently? He finds it hard to maintain himself. For whose benefit was this verse spoken?

Let me take another verse, which is very famous. I am referring to verse #2.47, which goes like this, "You have a right only in action, not ever in predetermining fruits. You should not speculate about the fruit of action; your attachment to inaction also should not be there." For whose benefit was this verse spoken? Do we really have any other right except to do our duties? And we must not neglect to do them. As regards the results of our actions, the right to decide them has been kept by God with Himself. Can you imagine what will happen if all of us are free to decide the results? Complete chaos. And who will lose in such chaos? We will.

The third verse chosen by me is very telling, in which Lord Krishna promises, "People who worship Me with undivided attention, meditating on Me, for these regular practitioners of yoga, I help in getting what one does not have and provide security of what one has." This is wonderful. What more could we ask for? Therefore, do what the Lord instructs. How else to decide about who deserves such enormous mercy? Verse after verse the Lord is cajoling us to do what will fulfil all our desires, which are according to dharma. God couldn't be a party to anything against dharma. Could He?



The fourth verse in this connection is: "Where there is yogeshwara Shri Krishna and where there is Arjuna (meaning us), there will be opulence, victory, wealth and morality." (18.78) What are our desires generally? That we should succeed in our endeavours. We would if we were aiming for what is according to morality, i.e. dharma. The same is about wealth. Don't we need enough resources for our maintenance? Not only wealth, there will be 'saubhagya' (good fortune). Who benefits from all these? We do; God doesn't because He is complete in all respects. (3.22) The next verse is about gaining peace and a perfect destination. Lord Krishna instructs, "In all respects, take My shelter only. By My mercy, you will achieve supreme peace and the eternal abode." What is it that we lack after gaining material needs, comforts, etc.? It is peace, which is what God is promising. Not only that, God is also assuring eternal abode, which is free from the defects of this material world. How nice it will be to not be subjected to repeated birth and death? God is prepared to grant this also. As a matter of fact, God is always wanting to give. He has so much to give if we become deserving. Isn't that fair? How do we become deserving? Lord Krishna describes, "Develop My consciousness; become My devotee; make sacrifices for Me; and offer obeisance to Me." (18.65) One may feel that all these activities relate to God. No, far from it; they only purify our existence.

I will take up one more verse, which is, "Having My consciousness, you will cross all impediments by My grace." (18.58) This is quite an amazing offer from God. Aren't we all struggling with one problem or another throughout our lives? We do, but our ego comes in the way. We are not prepared to accept that somebody can be superior to us and to such an extent that we have to take His shelter and His alone. (18.66) We would rather suffer but won't do as instructed by God. Do we realise that our acts will benefit the world if we obey God's instructions? We will become better persons by following dharma.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher, views are personal)

# Tread the WTO quagmire with caution



The battle for a permanent solution to Public Stock-Holding programme is a difficult one; India must fight it deftly

n a meeting of the Committee on Agriculture (CoA) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) – held on October 2, 2023, in Geneva, the European Union (EU) agreed to consider India's demand for a permanent solution to public stock-holding (PSH) program for food security. This is a significant for food security. nificant change of stance since March 2023, when the EU along with the USA and Canada had challenged it.
The issue will be taken up for delibera-

tion in the 13th ministerial conference (MC) of the WTO (World Trade Organization), scheduled from February 26-29, 2024 in Abu Dhabi. The MC is the highest decision-making body of the global trade watchdog (read: WTO) that includes 164 member countries.

While, the USA and EU countries want a comprehensive discussion on agriculture encompassing the value-chain, market access, and export restrictions besides the PSH program, India has categorically stated "it won't negotiate any other issue in the agriculture sector till a permanent solution on PSH is found".

It has also conveyed that support measures given to its poor farmers like input subsidies such as on electricity, irrigation, fertilizer and even direct transfers are non-negotiable.

Under the PSH program, government agencies like the Food Corporation of India (FCI) buy agri-produce such as wheat, rice/paddy, and coarse cereals from farmers at the minimum support price (MSP) and distribute it at a subsidized price of Rs 2/3/1 per kg respectively to meet the needs of India's poor and vulnerable population under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) that was enacted in 2013. From January 1, 2023, these staple foods are given to the beneficiaries 'free'; initially in force till December 31, 2023, this arrangement has been continued for five years till December 31, 2028

The excess of MSP plus handling, storage and distribution cost over the realization from the sale (that is, Rs 2/3/1 per kg prior to January 1, 2023, and 'zero' thereafter) is paid as a subsidy from the Union Budget. This can be bifurcated into two components (a) subsidy to the farmer, which is the excess of MSP of, say rice over its international price also known as External Reference Price (ERP) in WTO parlance and (b) subsidy to the food consumer, being the excess of ERP over the price paid which currently is 'nil'. The WTO is concerned with (a) branded as "product-specific" subsidies. It requires some explanation.

The international price/ERP of any commodity is based on global demand-supply forces and is determined in a competitive manner. All farmers irrespective of their country of location are expected to receive this price. In case, because of the intervention by the government of a member country say India, the farmers therein receive a price/MSP higher than this, they are presumed to have been subsidized to the extent of excess of MSP over

The WTO is also concerned with subsidies on agricultural inputs like fertilisers, seeds, irrigation, power, etc., referred to as "non-product specific" subsidies.

The developed countries argue that such subsidies distort international trade; hence these need to be curbed. Their argument found acceptance at the WTO.





ONE WONDERS WHETHER A MERE DECLARATION BY PRIVATE TRADERS

STOCKS WOULD SATISFY THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. WE HAVE ALSO SEEN INSTANCES OF HEAVILY SUBSIDISED FOOD (NOW FREE)

COUNTRIES

BEING SMUGGLED

Accordingly, under the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), the total of product and non-product-specific subsidies or aggregate measure-ment support (AMS) is capped at 10 per cent of the value of agricultural production for a developing country (for developed countries, this threshold is 5 per cent). If a member country gives AMS over 10 per cent, it is a violation.

The AoA came into force in 1995. For India, until 2005, MSP was less than ERP. Thereafter, MSP has been higher than ERP and, in the last decade, this gap widened. During 2018-19, in the case of rice, for instance, AMS was at 11 per cent, exceeding the 10 per cent cap. During 2019-20, it was even ACQUIRING SUCH higher at 13.7 per cent.

For over a decade or so along with other developing countries has been making efforts at WTO to wriggle out of the situation. In the 9th Ministerial Conference (MC) held in Bali (2013), it secured sanction for a "peace clause". It said, "If a developing country gives AMS in excess of 10 percent, no member will challenge this until 2017 when the WTO would look for a permanent solution."

In the General Council (GC) held in December 2014, this sanction was modified to say "The peace clause will stay till a permanent solution was found." However, the peace clause comes with sev-NEIGHBOURING eral riders, such as the submission of data on food procurement, stockholding, distribution and subsidies. These also include establishing that subsidies are not "trade distorting." Besides, programs implemented after 2013 are not covered under the ambit of the India has invoked the 'peace

latest being for the marketing year 2020-21. However, developed countries have objected to such invocation. They want India to be more transparent about its PSH program and put in place safeguards to prevent 'illegitimate' exports But, this can't go on ad infinitum.

The WTO should go for a permanent solution within a time-bound manner. In fact, the MC held in Bali (2013) had implicitly given a deadline of 2017 ".....no member will challenge this until 2017 when the WTO would look for a solution."

December 2014 deferred it indefinitely. India has done right by insisting on a deadline now. However, its stance for the 13th MC isn't the right way to go. India is trying to delink PSH from a comprehensive look at agriculture. It is attempting to delink things that are intertwined with each

for breaching the 10 per cent ceil-

ing in case of subsidy on rice - the

The PSH program involves buying food from the farmers and distributing it to the beneficiaries. Here, we are talking about the entire supply chain involving procurement, handling, storage, distribution and so on. So, the issues of market access, and sale in the domestic and international markets can't be brushed aside.

India's PSH program is openended under which the government's agencies buy the highest possible quantities of wheat and rice from the farmers at everincreasing MSP. Since these purchases are unrelated to the requirement under the NFSA (courtesy vote bank politics), sur-

plus stocks with agencies are inevitable which they dispose of by auctioning to private traders etc under the Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS). Under OMSS 'all the bidders are compulsorily asked to give an undertaking that they won't export it'.

One wonders whether a mere declaration by private traders acquiring such stocks would satisfy the developed countries. We have also seen instances of heavily subsidized food (now free) being smuggled to neighbouring countries. It won't come on record but it disturbs the global demandsupply equation.

India should put everything on the table and talk. It is widely recog-Unfortunately, the GC held in nized that the formula for the computation of AMS under the AoA suffers from several flaws. The ERP used for comparing with MSP (albeit current) dates back to 1986-88. This is bound to "artificially" inflate the subsidy. By using the current ERP, India's subsidy will automatically go below the 10 per cent threshold. Besides, AoA calculation doesn't exclude subsidies given to resource-poor farmers. These farmers mostly produce food for self-consumption meaning they don't have a surplus to sell. So, the question of subsidies to them distorting trade doesn't arise. Their exclusion will also reduce the AMS.

Meanwhile, the government should end the open-ended procurement and restrict purchase only to what is required for giving to the NFSA beneficiaries. It should also consider switching to 'giving subsidy in cash' using DBT mode.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

# Nitish's ninth move on Bihar's political chessboard

With Nitish Kumar's latest move, Bihar has witnessed a seismic shift, with ramifications extending far beyond the State's borders

he political chessboard of Bihar has recently L witnessed a profound transformation, sending ripples across the entire nation. As the Lok Sabha elections loom on the horizon, every twist and turn in Bihar's political saga holds the potential to significantly impact the grand political finale. Nitish Kumar's latest move, switching sides for the fifth time in just over a decade and assuming the Chief Minister's role for the ninth time, has added an intriguing layer to the unfolding drama. While
Nitish's political acrobatics
have grabbed the spotlight, the BJP's strategic gamble in political narrow-mindedness this intricate game has not gone unnoticed.



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

Kumar's commitment to social justice, considering his shifting allegiances and recent embrace of temple politics. The perplexity deepens as Bihar grapples with the impliand the weakening influence of caste arithmetic. The focus Amidst the evolving scenario, now shifts to the RJD, foundquestions arise about Nitish ed on the accomplishments of shifted beyond the tradition-

the charismatic Lalu Yadav, whose legacy seems at odds with its preparedness for the future.

While Nitish manages to retain power through an alliance with the expanding BJP, questions persist about his credibility, especially in comparison to the broader social coalition led by the RJD. The isolation of the RJD in Bihar and the BJP's steady progress as a formidable alternative force set the stage for a crucial message ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. The recalibration of the "social justice" agenda, impacted by Nitish's move, necessitates a reassessment of the BJP's influence in this domain.

The political dynamics have



al Mandal vs. Mandir narrative, evolving into a complex interplay of Mandal vs. Mandal and Mandir plus Mandal, with "good governance" emerging as a pivotal factor. Nitish Kumar's decision to realign with the BJP becomes a litmus test for the leadership of Tejashwi Yadav,

and maintaining the party's political standing. As Tejashwi positions himself

as a "development man," distancing from his father's rule characterized as "jungle raj," the RJD embarks on a campaign to showcase its achievements, especially in job creation. The political chess match intensifies, with Tejashwi asserting that the game has just begun, and the RJD will strategically reveal its cards in due course. The RJD's shift toward economic justice signals a new direction, expanding its support base beyond traditional vot-

The repercussions of Bihar's political upheaval reverberate the young successor of the RJD, who faces the challenge from prominent leaders and strategic shifts have rede-

of navigating a family feud across party lines. As Bihar's political maestro, Nitish Kumar, navigates through another historic yet controversial chapter in his twodecade-long career, the political landscape awaits the set-tling of dust from Sunday

evening's events. In the intricate tapestry of Bihar's political narrative, Nitish Kumar's recent manoeuvre stands as a pivotal chapter, influencing not only the state's dynamics but resonating across the national political spectrum. As the dust settles on the dramatic events of Sunday evening, Bihar finds itself at a crossroads, with implications stretching far beyond its borders.

fined the contours of politi- ground of ideologies, the cal discourse, challenging conventional narratives of Mandal, Mandir, and governance. Nitish Kumar's alliance with the BJP, marked by its expanding influence in the state, prompts a reevaluation of political equations and the potential impact on the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Tejashwi Yadav, stepping into the limelight as the face of the RJD, navigates the party through the challenges of a family feud, asserting a commitment to economic justice and development. The RJD's attempt to redefine its image, distancing from the perceived shortcomings of the past, sets the stage for a renewed political strategy.

As Bihar becomes a battle-

reactions from national leaders underscore the significance of these developments. The shift from social justice to economic justice, coupled with the evolving political landscape, necessitates a recalibration of strategies for all stakeholders.

In the end, Bihar's political arena remains unpredictable, with each move sparking debates and reflections on the past, present, and future of the state's political trajectory. As the nation watches the unfolding drama, the implications of Bihar's political metamorphosis will continue to resonate, shaping the contours of Indian politics in the days to come.

(The writer is a senior journalist; views are personal)

# **Dabur to set up greenfield** facility in South India

abur on Wednesday said it will open a new manufacturing unit in south India and invest Rs 135 crore for this purpose. The unit will manufacture a range of Dabur's Ayurvedic Healthcare, personal care and home care products like Dabur Honey, Dabur Red Paste, and Odonil air fresheners, Dabur India said in a statement. The board of the homegrown FMCG and Ayurvedic products maker in a meeting on Wednesday "approved

an investment of Rs 135 crore" for setting up greenfield facility in south India, it said. "Our business has scaled up in south India and today accounts for 18-20 per cent of Dabur's domestic business. With south India's contribution increasing, we have decided to establish a new manufacturing facility there to better cater to the local demand," Dabur India CEO Mohit Malhotra said. This will be the 14th domestic manufacturing location of the company which owns brands such as Dabur Amla. Dabur Vatika, and juice brand Real



# **Sun Pharma net profit rises** 16.5% to Rs 2,523.8 crore

9 un Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd on Wednesday reported a 16.52 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 2,523.8 crore in the third quarter ended December 31, 2023. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 2,166 crore in the year-ago period, Sun Pharmaceutical Industries said in a statement. Consolidated total revenue from operations during the quarter under review stood at Rs 12,380.7 crore as

compared to Rs 11,240.97 crore in the corresponding period a year ago, it added. Total expenses were higher at Rs 9,560.74 crore as against Rs 8,943.38 crore in the same guarter of FY23. The company's board has declared an interim dividend of Rs 8.50 per share for the year FY24 against Rs 7.50 per share interim dividend for the previous year, the statement said. "We are pleased by our continued broad-based growth, including in global specialty. We are keenly looking forward to the EMA.



# **Clinisys to recruit around** 200 professionals in India

Gsaid it will hire around 200 professionals this calendar year for its Bangalore and Kolkata offices. Clinisys has around 350 professionals working in India across its offices in Bengaluru and Kolkata, the US-based company said in a statement. The

company said these professionals will support Clinisys' pioneering lab informatics products and cloud transition initiative. The new hiring will be a balanced mix of freshers and experienced professionals, which means the company will be recruiting 40 per cent freshers and the remaining 60 per cent for experienced and senior positions with a proven technology background. "As the global leader in lab informatics, with over 40 years' domain experience, we have a clear strategy to create and deliver the next evolution



# India only can buttress global supply chain: President

PNS NFW DFI HI

A strong network of micro, small and medium enterprises is being developed in the country based on the world's belief that only India can strengthen the global supply chain, President Droupadi Murmu said on Wednesday.

In her first address to a joint sitting of the two Houses in the new Parliament building, she observed that the MSME sector is "benefiting enormously from reforms".

"Today, the world believes that only India can strengthen the global supply chain. That is why India is also today taking major steps in this direction. A strong network of MSMEs is being developed in the country," Murmu stressed.

The President emphasised that the government is working with "full commitment" to empower the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and small entrepreneurs.

"Presently, approximately 3.5 crore MSMEs are registered on the Udyam and Udyam Assist Portal. Under the Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs,



guarantees of nearly Rs 5 lakh crore have been sanctioned in the last few years. This is over six times higher than the amount provided in the preceding decade before 2014,"

The Credit Guarantee Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) aims at motivating first generation entrepreneurs towards selfemployment by providing credit guarantee funding for third-party guarantee-free/collateral free loans.

Some of the key benefits of the CGTMSE scheme include guarantee on credits for loans up to Rs 2 crore, without thirdparty guarantee and collateral. The guarantee on coverages

ranges from 75 per cent (others) to 85 per cent (micro enterprise up to Rs 5 lakh). The scheme is applicable for current and aspirant entrepreneurs.

The President also highlighted that more than 84 lakh people have connected so far with the PM Vishwakarma Yojana launched by the Prime Minister on September 17.

"It is difficult to imagine daily life without Vishwakarma families. These families pass on their skills from generation to generation. However, due to lack of government support.

#### India sees 46% of world's total real-time digital ransactions

PNS NFW DFI HI

India has emerged as the world's second-largest producer of mobile phones and logged a five-fold increase in mobile phone manufacturing in the last decade, President Droupadi Murmu said on Wednesday, outlining the global acknowledgement of India's prowess in digital transactions and systems. Her first address to a joint

sitting of the two Houses in the new Parliament building resonated with references to the rapid expansion of the startup ecosystem, nation's AI push, speedy 5G roll-out, as well as the semiconductor sector investments.

Today, 46 per cent of the world's total real-time digital transactions take place in India, she said, adding India is among the leading digital economies globally.

"Digital India has made life and business much easier in India. Today, the whole world acknowledges this as a great achievement of India. Even developed countries do not have a digital system like India has," she said.

Murmu noted that a record 1,200 crore transactions were done through UPI last month.

"This amounts to a record transaction of Rs 18 lakh crore," she said.



#### Pfizer, Glenmark join to launch skin disease drug in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drug firms Pfizer and Glenmark Pharmaceuticals have joined hands to launch a medication to treat skin disease atopic dermatitis in India.

Developed by Pfizer, abrocitinib has received marketing authorisation from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), the companies said in a statement on Wednesday.

The product will be comarketed under the brand names Jabryus and Cibinqo by Glenmark and Pfizer, respectively, it added.

The product is already approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), European Medicines Agency (EMA), and other regulatory agencies.

# **UNREGISTERED PMS ACTIVITIES**

# Sebi bans individual from securities markets for 2 years

PNS NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi has restrained an individual from the securities markets for a period of two years for providing unregistered portfolio management services.

The regulator also directed Sanbun Investments, its proprietor Nishaan Singh (Noticee) to cease and desist from acting as or holding himself out to be a portfolio man-

Sebi directed the noticee to refund Rs 16.19 crore received from clients and/or investors as fees or consideration or, in respect of their unregistered portfolio management activities within a period of three months, Sebi said in its order on Tuesday.

The order came after Sebi received a complaint in October 2022 against Sanbun Investments, which is the sole proprietorship concern of Nishaan Singh.

Pursuant to the receipt of the complaint, the regulator conducted an investigation to ascertain the veracity of the complaint and whether there had been any violation of PMS



(Portfolio Managers) regula-

"I note that under the garb of providing courses related to the securities market, the noticee has been offering portfolio management services and providing recommenda-tions to the clients in private groups and luring investors/ clients to invest in the securities market by assuring positive returns," said Anitha Anoop, Chief General Manager of Sebi's Quasi-

Judicial Cell 1. The regulator also noted that the noticee has been offering portfolio management services without obtaining the relevant registration

from Sebi in violation of PMS (Portfolio Manager) rules.

"I note that the noticee has received a total credit for a sum of Rs 16.19 crore in his two bank accounts towards the portfolio management services offered by him, and are liable to be refunded to the

respective clients," Anoop said. By indulging in such activities, the noticee contravened the regulatory norms.

Accordingly, Nishaan Singh is debarred from accessing as well as dealing in the securities market for two years or till the expiry of two years from the date of completion of refunds to complainants/ investors, whichever is later.

# SECL to open Amrit Pharmacy stores at its in-house hospitals

PNS NEW DELHI

Government-owned Coal India arm South Eastern Coalfields Ltd (SECL) will become the first Pharmacy stores in hospitals at its premises to sell medicines at subsidised rates, the government said on Wednesday.

SECL, which runs in-house hospitals at its campuses for its employees, has entered into a pact with HLL Lifecare Ltd, a public sector enterprise under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, to set up Amrit Pharmacy stores.

"The Amrit pharmacies in SECL hospitals will ensure availability of generic and lifesaving branded drugs under one roof. These pharmacies will provide medicines, implants, surgical consumables

etc. for common diseases as well as critical conditions, at highly subsidised rates, which will greatly benefit in and out patients consisting of SECL employees as well as the gener al public visiting these hospitals," the coal ministry said in a statement.

In the initial phase, the stores would be set up at hospitals at SECL headquarters Bilaspur and central hospitals in the operational areas of Gevra, Sohagpur and Chirimiri.

AMRIT-- Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment -- is a flagship scheme of the health ministry aimed at providing medicines for various diseases including critical illness like cancer and cardiovascular diseases at highly subsidised rates to the public.



# Equity markets settle nearly 1% higher ahead of Budget

PNS MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices losses and closed nearly 1 per cent higher on Wednesday amid robust buying in HDFĆ Bank and Reliance Industries.

Investors are eyeing the two important events lined up ahead -- the interim budget and the US Fed interest rate decision -- to derive further

Reclaiming all the early lost ground, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 612.21 points or 0.86 per cent to settle at 71,752.11. During the day, it zoomed 711.49 points or 1 per cent to 71,851.39. The Nifty climbed 203.60 points or 0.95 per cent to 21,725.70.

"Nifty bounced back from a weak start and closed with gains of 204 points at 21,726 levels. Global markets will keenly await the US Fed's commentary on the rate cut timeline. On the domestic front, investor's focus will be on the Budget," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head -Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd.



Among the Sensex firms, Sun Pharma, Tata Motors, State Bank of India, Mahindra & Mahindra, Maruti, Bajaj Finserv, Power Grid and UltraTech Cement were the major gainers.

Larsen & Toubro declined over 4 per cent after its December quarter earnings. Titan also ended lower from the 30-share pack.

"A positive build-up was reflected in Indian markets prior to the interim budget, although expectations are low, the market anticipates a lower fiscal deficit supported by buoyant tax revenues. The overall trend in the market is

akin to a see-saw, and the buyon-dips strategy is effective as of now. Global market cues are mixed ahead of the FOMC meeting, and US 10-year yields were marginally down," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge rallied 1.83 per cent and the midcap index jumped 1.57 per cent.

Among the indices, healthcare advanced 2.67 per cent, realty climbed 2.29 per cent, auto (1.77 per cent), services (1.60 per cent), commodities (1.48 per cent), power (1.15 per cent) and telecommunication (0.97 per cent).

### Fiscal deficit touches 55% of annual target

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union government's fiscal deficit touched Rs 9.82 the annual Budget target at December-end 2023, according to data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) on Wednesday.In the corresponding period last year, the deficit was at 59.8 per cent of the budget estimates of 2022-23. For 2023-24, the fiscal deficit of the government is estimated to be at Rs 17.86 lakh crore or 5.9 per cent of

The CGA said the net tax revenue receipts stood at 17.29 lakh crore or 74.2 per cent of the full-year target at December-end 2023. During the year-ago period, the net tax collection was 80.4 per cent of that year's target.

The central government's total expenditure during the April-December period worked out at Rs 30.54 lakh crore or 67.8 per cent of the current year's budget estimates (BE). In the nine months through December

# RBI stops PPB from accepting deposits after Feb 29



PNS MUMBAI

The RBI on Wednesday barred Paytm Payments Bank Ltd from accepting deposits or top-ups in any customer account, prepaid instruments, wallets, and FASTags, among others after February 29, 2024.

The Reserve Bank's action against Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) follows a comprehensive system audit report and subsequent compliance validation report of the external auditors.

These reports revealed persistent non-compliances and continued material supervisory concerns in the bank, warranting further supervisory action, the RBI said in a statement. "No further deposits or

credit transactions or top ups shall be allowed in any customer accounts, prepaid instruments, wallets, FASTags, NCMC cards, etc. after February 29, 2024, other than any interest, cashbacks, or refunds which may be credited anytime," it said.

The central bank further said withdrawal or utilisation of balances by its customers from their accounts including savings bank accounts, current accounts, prepaid instruments, FASTags, National Common Mobility Cards are to be permitted without any restrictions, up to their available balance.

The RBI in March 2022 had directed PPBL to stop onboarding new customers with immediate effect.

# Gross sugar output may fall 10%: ISMA

PNS NEW DELHI

India's gross sugar production, without any diversion for ethanol, is estimated to decline 10 per cent to 330.5 lakh tonnes in the current marketing year ending September on likely lower output in Maharashtra and Karnataka, according to industry body ISMA.

Indian Sugar Mills' Association (ISMA) on Wednesday released its second advance estimates of sugar production for the 2023-24 marketing year (October-September)

The industry body has projected gross estimated sugar production around 330.5 lakh tonnes in 2023-24 as against 366.2 lakh tonnes in the previ-

The gross production in Maharashtra is estimated to fall



to 99.9 lakh tonnes from 118.5 lakh tonnes, while the production in Karnataka may dip to 49.7 lakh tonnes from 65.8 lakh

In Uttar Pradesh, the gross output is seen increasing marginally to 119.9 lakh tonnes from 118.9 lakh tonnes during

the period under review. The government has so far allowed sugar diversion of only

17 lakh tonnes for production of ethanol via sugarcane juice/B-heavy molasses for 2023-24. This would mean net sugar production could be around 313.5 lakh tonnes,"

ISMA said in a statement. The net sugar production stood at 328.2 lakh tonnes during 2022-23 marketing year with a diversion of 38 lakh tonnes of sweetener for

ethanol-making from sugarcane juice and B-heavy molasses.

Due to less diversion allowed so far by the government, the net sugar production is likely to fall by 4.5 per cent. Considering an opening stock of about 56 lakh tonnes

on October 1, 2023, domestic consumption of 285 lakh tonnes and the estimated net production of 313.5 lakh tonnes, ISMA said the closing stocks would be comfortable around 84.5 lakh tonnes as on September 30, 2024.

We believe that the government may now easily allow around 18 lakh tonnes of additional sugar diversion for production of ethanol in the cur-rent ESY (Ethanol Supply Year). Even then, closing stock will be sufficient enough to cater around three months into the next season,

#### Ind a credible and unstoppable force, says Microsoft country head

PNS MUMBAI

Technology giant Microsoft's country head Puneet Chandok on Wednesday said India is a "credible" and "unstoppable" force now.

Speaking at an event on artificial intelligence organised by the company, Chandok, who is the president at Microsoft India and South Asia, said 100 new startups are getting incorporated in the country everyday.

The comments come at a time when the country has become the fastest growing major economy in the world, and a day after the IMF upped India's FY25 GDP growth estimate to 6.5 per

# India's gold demand dips 3% to 747.5 tons; outlook bullish: WGC

PNS MUMBAI

India's gold demand witnessed on-year decline of 3 per cent at 747.5 tonnes in 2023, and going ahead the spurt in demand could be anywhere between 800-900 tonnes, if prices hold out and are not significantly volatile, the World Gold Council said in a report.

The country's total gold demand stood at 774.1 tonnes in 2022, according to the World Gold Council (WGC) Gold Demand Trends report 2023. "India's gold demand in 2023 declined by 3 per cent to 747.5 tonnes, strongly influenced by rising gold prices. Although consumer interest remained high, it lagged trade sentiment. October's price correction during Navratri stim-



ulated a robust consumer response, boosting Diwali sales in November.

"However, demand declined in December as gold prices resumed an upward trend, resulting in a 9 per cent drop in fourth quarter jewellery demand compared to the same period of 2022," WGC Regional CEO, India, Somasundaram PR told.

Price of gold was volatile throughout 2023, with the yellow metal reaching a new high of Rs 61,845 per 10 gm on May 4 in the domestic market and USD 2,083 an ounce in global markets, and this trend continued with the precious metal reaching another high of Rs 61,914 per 10 grams in November 16

# what's brewing?

# **Shilpa Shetty honuored** with Champions of Change **Prestigious Award**

tributions to both cinema and culture. In a heartfelt Instagram post, Shilpa Shetty expressed her gratitude, stating,

Shilpa Shetty took center stage at the esteemed Champions of Change Maharashtra, receiving the highly coveted 'Champions of Change 2023' award. This prestigious accolade stands as a testament to her extraordinary conmy work and feel humbled that I can play catalyst in a small, positive way through entertainment or awareness for



one's health & wellness. Thank you for the acknowledgment, Nandan Jha (@nan-dan5664) ji. It's all this love and appreciation that motivates me to do better. This one's for my audiences."

Draped in a regal saree, Shilpa Shetty accepted the award with elegance, underscoring the significance of this honor. The award recognizes her exceptional talent and unwavering commitment to shaping the landscape of Indian cinema and culture.

Renowned for her recent portrayal of an a daring lady cop in web series , *Indian Police Force* and her captivating performance in the silver screen film *Sukhee*, Shilpa Shetty continues to entertain audiences with her diverse and impactful roles. Beyond her onscreen presence, she is a dedicated advocate of health and wellness, embodying a holis-

# **Aamir Khan to** visit Japan for son Junaid's upcoming film's progress

amir Khan's elder son, Junaid Khan is all set to make his film debut with Aditya Chopra's period epic

Maharaj directed by Siddharth P Malhotra
after doing theatre for over 7 years.

He is also currently shooting for his second film, which is a film produced by

Aamir Khan Productions in Japan. Asource close to the project shares, "After wrapping a shoot schedule in Mumbai, the production unit has moved to Japan to shoot the next schedule. While Aamir sir is in Mumbai, he in constant touch with the team to take updates on how everything is progressing on the film. He is extremely gung ho about this film and is also planning a make quick trip to Japan to see how it's all shaping up."

It is said that the film currently in the works is set to capture the picturesque landscapes of Sapporo, a location that has never been showcased on the silver screen before. The anticipation surrounding this project continues to mount, promising audiences a unique visual experience with the unexplored charm of Sapporo as well as viewing Junaid in a romantic role in this upcoming cinematic masterpiece.

# Kevin Bacon, Kyra Sedgwick to co-star in new movie after two decades

A ctors Kevin Bacon and Kyra Sedgwick are heading back to the big screen together. The couple, who celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary together back in September, will co-star in the

upcoming movie Connescence. The movie will mark their first film together since 2004, when the couple appeared together in two films: Cavedweller and The Woodsman, reports People maga-

Connescence is written and directed by Michael J. Weithorn, a longtime writer, director and producer who is best known for creating the CBS Kevin James sitcom The King of Queen. Deadline was the first to

report the news. Outside his work in television, Weithorn last directed a feature film with 2010's A Little

Ås per People, his latest movie stars Bacon, 65, as a security guard named Stan, who meets Sedgwick's character Cynthia after he stops an attempted robbery at her home.

"From this chance encounter grows a charged and dynamic friendship – first as late-night text sessions filled with humour and intimate revelations, growing into something that shakes the foundation of both their lives," reads

together on screen again for

the synopsis, as per Deadline. "We are so excited to work

the first time in 20 years in such a funny, moving and original script," the couple shared in a statement with the outlet. "It's great working with your family, and it's complicated working with your family," Sedgwick told People of working with her family on *Space Oddity* in March 2023.

"But you know no one's going anywhere, so that's kind of nice. You





has signed on to carry
Paramount Pictures Kill Them has signed on to direct All," according to an insider with knowledge of the project.

Kill Them All is Paramount's adapta-

tion of a graphic novel by Kyle Starks. Josh Appelbaum and Andre Nemec are producing the project on behalf of The Saw Mill from a script by James Coyne. It first started out as a project launched on Kickstarter before being acquired by Oni Press. Oni Press is serving as an executive producer, with Starks

stepping in as an associate pro-Kill Them All centers on a hard drinking, former cop who wants his job back and the world's greatest assassin who wants revenge. They can get both if they fight their way to the top floor of a skyscraper of crime - and if they can "kill

them all. It's like a

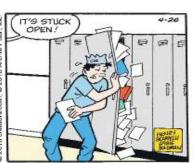
ing up into the building rather than trying to fight their way out. The heroes fight through 20 floors of Crime Lords, Luchadore gang bosses, ex-boyfriends, office workers, political intrigue, awesome henchmen, burgeoning friendships and the inescapable grips of their pasts. Hargrave made waves with his 2020

feature debut, the adrenaline-pumping Extraction starring Chris Hemsworth. The action thriller was produced by AGBO Films and written by Joe Russo, quickly becoming one of Netflix's mostwatched original movies. Hargrave returned to direct and produce the sequel Extraction 2 in 2023. The sequel broke Netflix records by

immediately hitting #1 in 90 countries with its predecessor right behind at #2, holding the top two spots for two consecutive weeks. Hargrave will next executive produce and direct the pilot episode of the Apple TV+ drama The Last Frontier, created by Jon Bokenkamp and starring Jason Clarke.









## **CALVIN AND HOBBES**



REALITY CHECK







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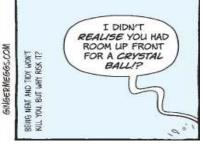




## **GINGER MEGGS**







# Vijayawada

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Thursday
February 1, 2024



# Exploring the changing dynamics of social space in the digital age

UNLOCKING

**COMMUNITY** 

THE SOCIAL

**KNOWLEDGE OF** 

SPACE IN A NEW

**CHAT WITH SHIV** 

COLLABORATIVE,

SHARING HIS

**INSIGHTS** 

CHANGING

ON THE

**SOCIAL** 

SPACE.

KUMAR, CHIEF

WAY, **THE PIONEER** 

**BRINGS TO YOU OUR** 

INTEGRATOR OF THE

**COMMUNITY ACTION** 

rganizations and NGOs of all sizes are embracing experimentation with new economic models, technologies, and impact evaluation techniques in the rapidly changing field of social innovation. The establishment of alliances and partnerships both within and between sectors is a major focus, highlighting the value of crossorganisational collaboration in the sharing of skills, resources, and knowledge. Shiv Kumar, Chief Integrator of the Community Action Collaborative, offers his insights on the changing against against the state of the community.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

ing social space. He notes that in recent years, a more impact-driven, diverse, and collaborative approach has gained traction.

"The social environment has changed dramatically in recent years, becoming more impact-driven. Seeing so many humanitarian and environmental organizations spring up with a clear mission is incredibly motivating. These organizations are committed to making a beneficial difference in society, in contrast to typical ones that are only concerned with making money. Among them are non-profit organizations, social enterprises, and impact investment corporations, each of which contributes

differently to the advancement of social change," he said.

According to him what distinguishes these organizations is their steadfast dedication to adopting novel business strategies and utilizing state-of-the-art technologies. Instead of being constrained by traditional methods, they welcome fresh concepts and methods that enable them to tackle environmental and social issues in fresh and long-lasting ways. "One of the most remarkable aspects

"One of the most remarkable a of these entities is their multifaceted approach to tackling social issues," he says as he keeps sharing his ideas. "They understand that social issues are interrelated

and cannot be solved on their own. Rather, they embrace a comprehensive viewpoint and proactively address a range of concerns, including but not limited to poverty, education, healthcare, and climate change. This all-encompassing strategy illustrates how social space is changing, with organizations realizing the connections between many environmental issues also and striving for complete solutions."

In general, there has been a major change in the social sphere in recent years, with a focus on impact-driven projects, diversity, and collaboration. The emergence of these mission-driven organisations, and their adoption of technology and innovation show the amazing strides they have achieved in creating a more sustainable and inclusive future. "Working with various organisations—including NGOs, for-profit businesses, and governmental agencies—in the social sphere offers a dynamic environment full of potential and difficulties. In order to maximise my combined influence, it is critical that I manage these complications. Our propensity to address social issues in discrete silos, frequently without a thorough and coordinated strategy, is one of the main challenges we confront. This disjointed reaction makes it more difficult for us to bring about significant change. Furthermore, a common problem among civil society organisations is needless competition!

Despite the urgent need for cooperation, organisations compete with one another for funds and attention rather than working together to achieve shared objectives due to the scarcity of resources. To overcome this obstacle, we must change our focus from individual success to collective effect, making teamwork the cornerstone of our efforts," indicated the social investor.

The tendency to place logos and egos above the real impact being made is another issue that has to be addressed. It is critical to put more emphasis on the results and constructive changes they may bring about for society and less emphasis on the need for individual attribution and acclaim! Through prioritizing impact-driven activities, they may cultivate a collaborative culture that prioritises the greater good over individual recognition. Last but not least, "It's possible that the current frameworks for collaboration aren't always the best at reaching goals. To make sure that these frameworks are egalitarian, inclusive, and flexible enough to accommodate the various requirements and viewpoints of all parties involved, it is imperative that they be thoroughly examined and improved. We need to be aware of the transaction costs, which include the time, energy, and materials needed for productive teamwork. Furthermore, when organizations with disparate work cultures and ideals join together, conflicts between cultures may occur. To get above these obstacles, it is essential to accept these differences and seek to foster mutual respect, understanding, and shared ideals."

# Presenting innovative & out-of-the-box story lines

PNS| HYDERABAD

oming from a diverse background that combined his passion for entertainment with a deep understanding of business and strategy, Gautam Reddy, before he could begin his own venture, gained valuable experience and honed his business acumen during his journey in the corporate world

Inspired by a vision to create a dynamic and versatile entertainment company that caters to a wide range of audiences, he ventured into the entertainment landscape and established Amusement Park Entertainment, building it into the innovative company it is today.

"Our drive lies in our dynamic and proactive approach, which ensures that this hybridd entertainment company stays at the forefront of market trends and evolving audience preferences. With a keen eye on consumer research, audience feedback, and data analytics, my team constantly endeavours to adapt and evolve. Monitoring these factors up close helps us align the company's content and strategies with the ever-changing market dynamics. Additionally, I believe in leveraging the company's diversified presence across various entertainment verticals to gain insights and synergies that will aid in keeping the company ahead of industry trends," says the founder.

The entertainment industry is known for its rapid evolution. They thrive in such an environment by embracing change. Personally, "I am committed to nurturing talent and fostering collaborations, which has helped the company hone the ability to adapt and remain agile. Likewise, facilitating partnerships and embracing new technologies and platforms ensures we stay on the cutting edge of industry developments. The holistic approach acts as a catalyst for talent management and brand collaborations to position ourselves as trailblazers in the ever-changing entertain-

ment landscape."

As a company, they haven't shied away from voicing their strategic interest in expanding into specific regional markets in South India. The founder further highlights, "We recognise the importance of respecting and celebrating the rich cultural diversity and regional nuances. We have a compelling presence in regions across the south of India too, and our strategy involves customising content and experiences that align with regional tastes and preferences. This approach not only enhances the company's reach but also contributes significantly to the growth of regional entertainment industries. Facilitating crosscultural exchanges and forging collaborations between North and South Indian talent aids us in our goal to bridge regional divides. At the same time, it will help us enrich the Indian film industry's diversity."

sity."

Education and training, irrespective of the field of work, are, of course, essential. Similarly, there's nothing as vital as practical exposure that moulds and hones a person's skill set. And thus, his perspective lies between these two lines. Talking about the emerging talent of the industry, they come with a hunger to learn while banking on the skills they've honed over the years through conventional training.

over the years through conventional training.

The Amusement Park Talent Network is not limited to emerging talent alone. It also provides opportunities and necessary support for established artists looking to diversify their careers. Our network offers guidance on exploring new avenues within the entertainment industry, whether it's transitioning from acting to producing, venturing into music, or entering the world of brand collaborations. This inclusive approach ensures that talent at various stages of their careers can benefit from the network.

The wave of trends and changes has been agile, and only those who adapt accordingly will stand the test of time.

Hence, they value audience feedback and actively integrate it into their content and services. The company collects feedback through various channels, including social media, audience surveys, and direct interactions with viewers. This feedback is then analysed and used to make informed decisions about

content creation and service improvements.

There is no denying the fact that data and analytics play a pivotal role in decision-making, content creation, and marketing. The company leverages data to gain insights into audience behaviour, content performance, and market trends. These insights guide content strategies, allowing the company to formulate content that resonates with the audience and is aligned with the dynamics of the market. It also assists in optimising marketing campaigns and identifying emerging opportunities in the industry.

"The funny thing about technology is that the everyday breakthroughs in the field make one believe it has reached its pinnacle, and the next day, you read about another breakthrough. It's a field that witnesses constant developments. When it comes to technology in cinema, it's the same, and it employs the majority of the innovative production technologies at its disposal. Be it the switch from basic storyboarding to 3D previsualization or the usage of various digital tools for production, we have immersed ourselves in technological advancements that help create a compelling visual experience. Previsualization tools, real-time rendering, virtual production, CGI, and similar ground-breaking technologies get integrated into our productions. Apart from that, utilising such innovative tools aids in scheduling, conceptualization, and budgeting. The never-ending exploration of innovative storytelling techniques and formats in the projects has been integrated into our studio's plan of action. Experimenting with nonlinear narratives, interactive storytelling, and transmedia experiences are a few such examples. Such innovations help engage with audiences in new and exciting ways, making the storytelling experience immersive and unforgettable."

Signing off, he says, "The strategy we have involves striking a balance between creating content that resonates locally in India and appeals to a global audience. We achieve this by incorporating universal themes and values into our storytelling while respecting regional cultural nuances. Additionally, strategic marketing and distribution ensure that our content reaches a wider international audience while ensuring its authenticity is untainted. This approach allows the company to contribute to the global entertainment industry while honouring its Indian roots."



# **ENDING SCREENTIME WHILE FEEDING**

The way a parent feeds their child can have a significant impact on the child's development, both physically and emotionally. Feeding time allows parents to focus on adequate and balanced nutrition, it helps them to encourage healthy eating patterns, portion control, and incorporating a diverse diet contributing to the child's physical well-being. The feeding time not only helps parents to focus on the child's physical growth but it is also a great opportunity to bond emotionally with the child. The feeding process can strengthen the parent-child bond, contributing to a secure attachment.

Watching screens like (TV, mobile, iPads, or laptops) during meals can distract children from paying attention to their hunger and fullness cues, potentially leading to overeating or undereating thereby making them prone to malnourishment in the form of obesity. Encouraging children to focus on their food without distractions helps them develop mindful eating habits, promoting better awareness of taste, texture, and satisfaction. Without the distraction of television, children are more likely to pay attention to the food they are eating. This awareness can contribute to a healthier relationship with food and an understanding of nutritional choices. Watching TV while eating can create an association between screen time and emotional comfort, potentially leading to unhealthy eating habits. Without distractions, children may be more mindful of their food choices, making it easier for parents to guide them toward nutri-

tious options.

TV commercials can also influence food pref-

erences. They are designed to be persuasive and often use appealing visuals, catchy jingles, and emotionally resonant messages to create a positive association with the promoted food product. Some TV ads promote foods that are high in sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats. The constant exposure to such advertisements may contribute to an increased preference for less nutritious options, potentially impacting overall dietary choices and health. Children, in particular, can be highly susceptible to the influence of TV ads. Advertisements that target children often feature colourful and fun visu-

als, appealing characters, and may include toys or

promotional tie-ins, all of which can shape their preferences and influence their food choices.

Avoiding TV during meals reduces exposure to

these influences.

Responsive and nurturing feeding practices can help build trust and emotional security in the child. Creating a positive and enjoyable mealtime experience fosters a healthy relationship with food. A pleasant atmosphere during meals encourages children to view eating as a positive and social activity. Allowing children to explore and develop self-feeding skills promotes independence. Gradually introducing age-appropriate utensils and encouraging self-feeding helps children build confidence and motor skills. Involving children in food-related decisions, such as choosing snacks or helping with meal preparation, supports their autonomy

and decision-making skills.

Meals are often social occasions. Meal time gives opportunity for the family to bond and interact while watching screen during meal time can detract from this important time for conversation and connection.. Family meals provide opportunities for children to learn social skills, manners, and communication.

Forcing a child to eat or using food as a reward or punishment can create negative associations with eating. It's essential to respect a child's appetite and preferences. Creating a relaxed and stress-free meal environment contributes to positive associations with food. Stressful mealtimes can lead to eating difficulties or emotional challenges.

# Some tips to reduce and gradually stop TV time during feeding time that parents can follow are:

- Create a consistent feeding routine that does not involve TV time
- Designate a specific area for meals that is free from
- distractions
  Children often model their behaviour after adults. If they see you prioritizing meals without TV, they are
- more likely to follow.

  4 Use mealtime as an opportunity for family conversation. Engaging in discussions can make the meal more enjoyable, and children may be less inclined
- 5 If TV watching during meals is a well-established habit, consider gradually reducing the time spent
- **6** Establish and communicate clear mealtime rules to your children and be consistent in enforcing them.
- **7** Engage children in meal preparation, allowing them to take an interest in the food being served. This involvement can create a sense of ownership and excitement about meals.
- 8 If you do allow screen time, monitor the content to ensure it is suitable for their age and does not interfere with the development of healthy eating habits.

It is important to note that these guidelines may vary based on individual family preferences and cultural practices. The key is to create a positive and mindful eating environment that supports the development of healthy habits and a positive relationship with food.

(The author, Dr. Himani Narula, is a developmental and behavioral pediatrician director and co-founder of Continua Kids.)

# NEED TO BE PATIENT WITH LIKES OF GILL, IYER: RATHOUR

**PTI** VISAKHAPATNAM

⊣he likes of Shubman Gill and Shreyas Iyer deserve patience amid their current poor run, said India batting coach Vikram Rathour on Wednesday, urging his wards to tackle England's aggression with intelligence in the second Test

The Indians lost the opening Test in Hyderabad by 28 runs despite having a 190-run first innings lead. England managed to shock the home favourites with their 'Bazball' approach with Ollie Pope scoring a match-winning 196. The second Test starts here on

"There are young batters in our team who have not played much Test cricket. So, we need to be a bit patient with them. Batters like (Shubman) Gill, (Yashasvi) Jaiswal and (Shreyas) Iyer will eventually start getting big runs, I'm sure of it," Rathour said at a press conference here.

Although Jaiswal played a knock of 80 in the first innings

of his fifth Test, Gill and Iyer failed to fire, continuing their struggles in the format. While Gill has played 21 Tests, Iyer has appeared in 13 five-day

games. Gill hasn't scored a 50 in his last nine Test innings. Iyer has been similarly off-colour. Rathour said he expects better application from the side's batters in second Test where the home team will once again

miss the services of the redoubtable Virat Kohli.

'There's a difference between playing with intent and playing with intent and playing attacking cricket. I want them to play with intent. If there is the opportunity to score some runs, they should take it," Rathour said.

"They need to decide by looking at the surface and conditions. So, the batters need to possess that intelligence as to which is the best or safest shot on the surface," he explained. Rathour felt India's batting performance in the second innings of the Hyderabad Test probably lacked discipline.



"Could they have batted with more discipline? Maybe they could have. That's what they need to decide and come up with their plans," he observed. "But, they need to score runs by playing their shots, as you need to back your strengths. Batting is always about scoring runs. It's not about not getting out but how many runs you put on the board," he

England used the sweep shot quite well to blunt the effectiveness of Indian spinners but Rathour said it's not a stroke that can be added overnight to a player's repertoire.

"...You need to be prepared for that by practising it. If you add more shots to your game, it's always beneficial. We played traditionally. The strength of strong areas is going straight when it comes to using our

"We can keep doing that, and of course, if we can add more shots and score through the square of the wicket, that's always an addition," he said.

the English batters for playing brave cricket, especially Pope, effectively taking the game away from Rohit Sharma's

However, he maintained that England's strong showing has not put his team under any additional pressure.

"They (England) were brave. They took their chances, which worked for them. The kind of innings Pope played was exceptional. I haven't seen too many playing such a knock against our bowling attack," he said.

"I don't think (there's any pressure). We are expected to win while playing in India, and the boys are used to that by now.

"The message to them from the support staff is to play good cricket and not bother about results too much. The other teams also come wellprepared. Since we have won Test matches in Australia, England and South Africa, we also expect them to win a Test in India."

# with the hardest: Foakes

PTI VISAKHAPATNAM

 $E_{Indian\ wickets\ are\ among}$  the hardest for wicketkeepers as they require frequent improvisation and a tough mind prepared to deal with things occa-

sionally going wrong.
Foakes, who made a Test comeback after 11 months, effected the stumpings of a well-set Ravichandran Ashwin and Mohammed Siraj in India's and Monammed Siraj in Indias second innings that sealed England's epic 28-run win in the opening Test of the five-match series in Hyderabad. He also scored 34 in a crucial

112-run partnership with the star of the match Ollie Pope (196) that gave England the decisive lead.

"In conditions like this, it's about trying to think on your feet and learn because it's not natural conditions (for me)," the 30-year-old was quoted as saying by 'ESPNCricinfo'.

"I've obviously kept away a lot and kept to spinners, but I find that Indian pitches, with the variable bounce, are up there with the hardest.

The more extreme the "All three were probably the conditions you know things worst pitches I've batted on. are occasionally going to wrong so you just have to mentally strong enough to put it out of your mind," he added. The 30-year-old is bracing up for extreme conditions in the rest of the series as well.

"There is a good chance the next one is going to be a tough

"You're in the game, so it's nice as a keeper. It's obviously a very



hard place to keep, and you're aware of that. You're going to have some tough moments or a tough day. But you'd rather be in the game than watching the ball do nothing in front of you," he added.

In their tour of India in 2021, England had won the opening Test only to lose three in a row in the four-match series on rank-turners.

Going into that, I was thinking. These are horrific wickets — I just need to find a way to stay in," Foakes recalled.

Emphasising a shift in the team's mindset, he said: "I think now the group is more, if that's the situation, you've got to be positive; got to put it (pressure) back on the bowler and put them under pressure. "Before, there was more of a

fear of getting out and that put us in our shells. Whereas now it's not worrying that you are getting out and accepting that you probably are on those sort of surfaces. But how can you actually go and dominate at times as well?"

Keeping the tough Indian conditions in mind, Foakes was chosen as the specialist wicketkeeper ahead of Jonny Bairstow.

"The thing I've tried to develop when I go in is if we lose couple of wickets, to expand early," he said about his

partnership with Pope.
"But I think generally, throughout my career, when there's been those kind of situations where you have to grind in is when I've been most successful. That's where I need to keep improving, so it fits quite nicely into my game."

# Indian conditions up there Leach skips practice, unlikely to play in 2nd Test vs India

PTI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

England's most experienced spinner Jack Leach is all set to miss the second Test against India starting here on Friday, owing to a left knee injury sustained during the series-opener in Hyderabad. Leach didn't take part in the team's training session on Wednesday and was seen receiving treat-

ment from the physio on the sidelines. "He's a tough kid, Leachy. So, I am not sure. You never know with Jack. You can never really write him off. We'll see how he pulls up in a couple of days," opener Zak Crawley said at the media conference here. Leach had jarred his left knee while fielding on the first day of the Hyderabad



Test, which England won by 28 runs. He played through pain, bowling 26 overs in the first innings and 10 in the second essay despite bruising and swelling around the joint. He was seen limping during Wednesday's training session.

Leach's injury means that off-spinner Shoaib Bashir, who joined the team late in Hyderabad due to visa related issues, could be set for Test debut.

Crawley is confident that Bashir, if given

crawley is confident that Bashir, if given an opportunity, will do well.
"He is a great kid. He has got a lot about him. He knows what he is trying to do with his bowling and he backs himself. I like that and feel like if he got his chance in this series he would go well."

about our batters (not scoring

enough), but India has been winning a lot of series at home.

We haven't lost a series at home

"It means we are putting up

more runs than the other

teams. These are tough

conditions to score runs, but I'm sure that the batters will

'Don't think players require too

much coaching'
At this level, Rathour said the

players just need to act as per

the situation. "Once you come

for 12-13 years.

find a wav."

## Ashwin retains No 1 spot, Bumrah moves to 4th in

ICC Test rankings **PTI** ■ DUBAI

Senior India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin maintained the top spot, while compatriot Jasprit Bumrah jumped to fourth in the latest ICC Test bowling rankings released on Wednesday.

Ashwin, who had grabbed match haul of six wickets in India's 28-run loss in the opening Test against England, is on 853 rating points, while pacer Bumrah, who also claimed half a dozen wickets,

rose a rung to fourth.
The third Indian in the top 10 in the bowling charts is leftarm spinner Ravindra Jadeja at number six.

Jadeja also enjoys a healthy buffer at the head of the Test all-rounder rankings.

However, Joe Root, who has moved up to fourth place, might challenge him soon if the Englland veteran maintains his good show with the ball. While Root is primarily known for his batting skills, the 33-

year-old showcased his handy spin by taking five wickets in the Hyderabad Test. He even opened the bowling for England in the second innings. This effort has seen Root rise to a new career-high rating on the list for Test all-rounders and seen the evergreen England star jump one place to fourth.

Root is behind Ashwin and Shakib-Al-Hasan while Axar Patel has dropped a spot to

Virat Kohli has moved to sixth and is the lone Indian among the top 10 batters while Ollie Pope, who stunned India with a magnificent 196 in the second innings, jumped a mammoth 20 places to 15th. Pope's England teammate Ben Duckett also improved his

ranking, gaining five places to 22nd after knocks of 35 and 47 against India. Australia opener Usman Khawaja gained two places to eighth following a half-century

in the opening innings of the second Test against the West Indies at the Gabba. impressive

After their performance against Australia, three West Indies quicks also improved their rankings.

Kemar Roach moved up two places to 17th, Alzarri Joseph climbed four spots to 33rd, and Shamar Joseph, who was the Player-of-the-Match at the Gabba, rose a significant 42 places to reach the 50th position in the rankings.

# 'It will be a tough choice between Sarfaraz, Patidar'

**PTI** ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

India's batting coach Vikram Rathour on Wednesday said it "will be tough" to pick one among Sarfaraz Khan and Rajat Patidar in the second Test against England.

The match begins here from Friday, with hosts India seeking to draw parity after losing the series opener in Hyderabad.

After the first faced injury concerns with allrounder Ravindra Jadeja and KL Rahul being ruled out of the second Test, in addition to the absence of star batter Virat Kohli. This forced the selectors to add uncapped Sarfaraz Khan, Sourabh Kumar and Washington Sundar to the squad, and Rajat Patidar also made the team.

"It will be a tough choice. What value they bring to the team, of course, is that they are superb players. We have seen how well they have done in domestic cricket in the last few years," Rathour said of the reinforcements during a press conference.

"So on these kind of wickets, I think they can really add a lot of value to the team."

it would be tough. But, that decision will be made by Rahul Dravid and Rohit Sharma." The playing XI will be finalised keeping in mind the conditions. "It (pitch) is difficult to predict. It will turn, maybe not from the first day, but eventually, it will turn. That's how the wicket looks

**'NO QUESTION OF RECOVERY':** India slipped to fifth place on the World Test Championship (WTC) table following the loss in following the loss in Hyderabad and the hosts would be desperate to bounce back here. Rathour said that more than

recovery, the players need to learn and move on. "There's no question of

He added, "If we have to pick just one out of them, of course, every game that you play. Of course, we could have done better in batting, bowling and fielding. A lot of discussions and ideas are being shared, preparing well and hoping to do well in the next game." He expressed confidence in the

players' ability to bounce back and cited Índia's unbeaten record in Test series at home since 2012. "We keep talking

to this level, I don't think you require too much coaching. It's about reading the situations and making smarter decisions. "As long as they are asking the right questions and receiving the right answers, there is no chance of over-coaching," he concluded.

message to all players who is in charge," Afridi told reporters here.

Expressing support for team director Mohammad Hafeez, the 46-year-old said the the captain and team management should get at leat threeyear contracts. "If you think Muhammad Hafeez is

good then don't just judge him on one series give him proper time and the same should apply to the captain as well he should be there for three years." Afridi added that players in The T20

squad should be given a long run ahead of the World Cup later this year.
"The World T20 Cup is going to be a very tough tournament this year with

veteran.

some very strong teams in the hunt for the title. I also don't think this is the time to make any changes in the format



# **BCCI** secretary Shah reappointed ACC chairman for third term in a row

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tndian Cricket Board (BCCI) Secretary Jay Shah was on Wednesday appointed as the president of the Asian Cricket Council for a third consecutive

Shah's extension was proposed by the Sri Lanka Cricket president Shammi Silva for the second time and the nomination was unanimously backed by all the members of the ACC at its annual general

meeting in Bali. Shah initially assumed the role in January 2021, succeeding Bangladesh Cricket Board President Nazmul Hassan.

Under Shah's leadership, the ACC successfully organised the Asia Cup in T20 format in 2022 and in ODI format in 2023.

"I am grateful to the ACC Board for their continued We must remain committed to ensuring the allround development of the sport with a special focus on

regions where it is still in its infancy. The ACC is committed to nurturing cricket across Asia," Shah said in a release.

"Under Shah's guidance, the ACC has been instrumental in unearthing and promoting new talent in cricketing powerhouses like Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka," Silva said.

Pankaj Khimji, chairman of Oman Cricket and vice-president of the ACC, also extended congratulations on Shah's term.

Today, stakeholders see value in investing in tournaments that the ACC conducts, and I credit him for this major transformation, which will further fuel the growth of the game in the region," Khimji stated. Welcoming the reappointment, Hassan said cricket in Asia will continue to under prosper leadership, emphasising collaboration with the ACC in furthering this endeavor.



PTI ■ KARACHI

Former captain Shahid Afridi has Furged the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) to follow the policy of having one skipper across formats to prevent infight-

ing over captaincy. Star batter Babar Azam had stepped down as skipper from all three formats after Pakistan failed to advance from the group stages at the ODI World Cup last year with PCB naming Shaheen Shah Afridi and Shan Masood as the T20 and Test skipper respectively.

"The PCB must have one captain for all formats and there is no need to have a vice-captain. This will give a clear



# 'Bazball' comes naturally to us: Crawley have the option of playing Rajat Patidar, a domestic

**PTI** ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

England opener Zak Crawley On Wednesday said most of his teammates have become better players since embracing the ultra-aggressive 'Bazball' approach, which is way more compatible with their natural game than the traditional "take-

your-time" strategy. England upstaged India by 28 runs in the opening Test in Hyderabad despite conceding a 190-run first innings lead, showcasing a fighting attitude that stunned the pre-series favourites. England are yet to lose a Test since pioneering 'Bazball' under their New Zealand coach Brendon McCullum.

"I suppose it ('Bazball') comes quite naturally as a lot of our teams are playing more aggressively. The mindset

when I first came to England was to backlight or take your time and build a long innings and I didn't think that came naturally to me and a few of the others," Crawley said in a press conference ahead of the second Test starting here on

"A lot of us play a bit better under this regime," he added. In contrast, India were also battling a selection crisis in addition to finding answers to their poor performance in Hyderabad after all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja and top-order batter KL Rahul were ruled out due to injuries.

The hosts are already without mainstay Virat Kohli, who has opted out of the first two Tests citing personal reasons. Asked what it would mean for

its performance and planning. "...We haven't spoken about that. It sounds cliched but we stick to our own lead up ... We don't bother about what they are doing," Crawley said when asked if the absence of the duo is a boost for England.

"Two very good players missing out but I'm sure looking at their depth they the English team, Crawley said his team is more focussed on

have two very good players coming in. So, that won't change anything for us too

much. We're just trying to play the same, read the conditions on day one and see what happens for there," he added. India have drafted in Sarfaraz Khan, Washington Sundar and Sourabh Kumar to replace the injured duo. The hosts also

either. "They're absolutely a top side in their own conditions. There are four games left, we have got to stick to what we do well and hopefully results come from there," he said.England underwent an extended training camp in Abu Dhabi to prepare for the series in India and Crawley feels the camp benefitted them even though some former players had criticised the team for not landing in India early.

After the loss in spin friendly conditions in Hyderabad, there is a lot of chatter

surrounding the possible nature of wickets that the hosts

will prepare for the second

Test starting here on Friday.

Crawley that's not a concern

Vijayawada | Thursday February 1, 2024

# "Happy Ending is a movie similar to Dum Masala Biryani'

Yash Puri, who is coming up with the upcoming film *Happy* Ending, speaks to the Hyderabadi scribes here sharing some interesting insights about the

PNS| HYDERABAD *appy Ending* is Yash Puri's next film. He

gained recognition for his roles in ZEE5's web film Alanti Sitralu, the comedy *Cheppalani Undhi*, and the newly released epic drama Shaakuntalam. With its intriguing promotional material, Kowshik Bheemidi's lighthearted coming-of-age story is creating a lot of attention. The movie is being financed by Yogesh Kumar, Sanjay Reddy, and Anil Pallala under the banners of Silly Monks Studios and Hamstech Films.

Yash Puri engaged with the press here on Wednesday The interview offers insights into the plot, genre, and distinctive aspects of *Happy Ending*, highlighting Yash Puri's excitement and self-assurance in the movie's triumph. Examining the idea of mythological curses, the movie shows how they might affect a young man in the present day. The goal of the movie is to show off the protagonist's interesting attempts to break the curse. The film keeps a fun and humorous tone despite the obstacles the character faces. The entire

movie is focused on enjoyment and amusement; not a single minute is meant to convey a message. A fresh perspective on the characters played by Jhansi and Ajay Ghosh will be provided.

The movie also includes noteworthy contributions from the editing, soundtrack, and cinematography departments. Yash Puri promises an emotional and psychological push in the final fifteen minutes of the film, urging viewers not to miss it! Because it offers a fusion of new and old aspects to appeal to modern viewers while integrating a notion from three millennia ago into a contemporary environment.

Yash Puri highlights, "The movie has kid-friendly

content that is relevant to the curse's theme but

excludes adult stuff, thereby qualifying it for a U/A certificate. With its appeal to both adults and children, I think watching the film with friends will be a fun experience. The purpose of the movie's Valentine's Day week premiere is to honor various kinds of love." Harsha, the protagonist's character, represents the difficulties of a young guy who, because of a curse, suppresses his emotions. "Even though the curse is a major plot device, the human feeling portrayed in the story is what really drives the movie. The narrative gains depth when the protagonist chooses to communicate his love through poetry instead of physical

> Yash Puri is optimistic about the movie's box office performance, citing the audience's emotional response as the narrative's true power. He feels, "The movie combines humor, melodies, and a compelling plot with a deep emotional core. I am confident in the film's success because of the great reaction I have received from viewers." Looking back on the making of the movie, Yash Puri says, 'Making a demo was a big part of persuading the producers. The majority of the cast and crew in the film are new, and I thank the producer Anil for believing in this youthful group and being happy with the outcome." Yash Puri talks about how excited he is about the movie and drops a clue about a new project that will be revealed shortly.

Yash Puri ends by saying that although being a commercial hero is his dream, he understands that building his own brand is more important than pursuing purely commercial methods. He makes references to future endeavors and shows a route for accomplishing his objectives.

Singh and Jackky Bhagnani have chosen to tie the knot in an intipretty much in order. However, following the call from the mate two-day celebration, set to conclude Indian PM in December, urging rich and on February 21 in Goa. The couple, originfluential families to choose India as the

ding festivities within India. The love story between Rakul and Jackky blossomed, leading to this joyous

tollywood On PM Modi's call, Rakul-dackky decide to change their wedding plans to India

the stage for a heartwarming celecontribute to its growing economy."
This decision showcases the couple's sense of responsibility as citizens, alignbration. A source close to the soon-to-be-maring with the national sentiment and conried couple revealed, "Rakul tributing to the collective effort of holdand Jacky had initially planned ing events within the country. As responfor their wedding to take place in the sible citizens, they are not only celebrat-Middle East. After nearly six months of meticulous planning, everything was ing their love but also doing their duty towards the nation.

Hosting the wedding in India aligns with economic goals, providing a boost to the local wedding industry. This choice exemplifies their commitment to supporting the nation's economy and promoting the richness of Indian celebrations.

As we eagerly await more details about this intimate celebration, fans are ready to immerse themselves in the joy of this beautiful union. Stay tuned for more moments that will make Rakul and Jackky's wedding an affair to remember.

inally planned a destination wedding overseas, made a last-minute decision to venue for their big life events, Rakul and align with Prime Minister Narendra Jackky reconsidered their original plans Modi's call for families to host their wedand relocated the wedding to India. Their decision, made in mid-December, neces-

moment of matrimony. From their initial encounters to the love they share, their journey has captivated fans and set their love for the country and desire to

🕇 ensible director Sekhar Kammula became a household name for making wholesome entertainers that will appeal to audiences of all classes is presently making a multi-starrer with Superstar Dhanush and King Nagarjuna. Suniel Narang and Puskur Ram Mohan Rao are producing the film, with the blessings of Shri Narayan Das K Narang, under their banner Sree Venkateswara Cinemas LLP (A Unit Of Asian Group). The production house announced their new film. After the classic Love Story with Naga Chaitanya and Sai Pallavi and the ongoing #DNS, this magnum opus marks Sekhar Kammula's third collabopus marks sekhar Kammulas time condoration with SVCLLP, Sonali Narang pre-

sents it.

This new film is going to be a larger-thanlife one and pre-production works are
presently underway. This hat-trick film of
Sekhar Kammula and SVCLLP will be
mounted on a big scale with high budget and
top-class technical standards.

The production house who developed a
great rapport with the director are very much
pleased with the story of the new movie.

This will go on floors, after the ongoing
film #DNS is wrapped up. More details are film #DNS is wrapped up. More details are

their 30s.

The character faces the challenge of pursuing dreams beyond a job, a conflict many encounter in

Abhijeet reflects on the reali-

that after 40, taking risks

increased responsibilities. While

some may compare him to Rohit in real life, "I take my acting career

seriously and am selective. I have

recently worked on the Pelli Gola

and Modern Love series, with

Miss Perfect being my latest web series. It is a romantic comedy with humorous elements, taking

comes more challenging

# Ranbir Kapoor-starrer The Animal Park completes its basic structure

sitated a complete reset, involving the

destination, resc and accommodations.

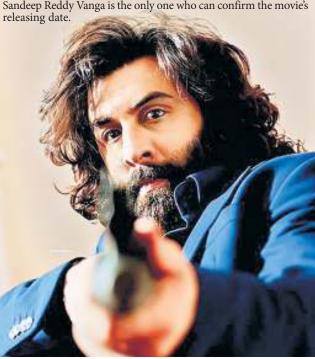
Despite the considerabl changes, the cou-

ple embraced the overhaul, driven by

Pollowing Animal's enormous success, Animal Park is currently under development. The major confrontation between Ranvijay Singh and his impersonator will be shown. Ranbir Kapoor is going to play both parts. Sandeep Reddy Vanga has assured fans that Animal Park will be even bigger and crazier than the original, so there is a lot of expectation surrounding it. Here's an update on the shooting schedule and other details.

According to a report, *Animal Park* will start filming in 2025. In addition to Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Love and War*, Ranbir Kapoor needs to finish Nitesh Tiwari's film Ramayana. After these movies are over, Ranbir Kapoor will start working on Animal Park. However, the essential framework of the Animal Park script is completed. The source has stated that the sequel's main plot was ready during the writing of Animal, since it was always supposed to be a multi-film production. The domestic conflict between Ranvijay and Geetanjali, played by Rashmika Mandanna, will also be a major theme of the sequel, along with the rivalry between him and his

Another theme of Animal Park will be Ranvijay's relationship with his son. There are rumors that Animal Park will have a darker atmosphere than animal. His brother is now the one planning to exact retribution. Fans will have to wait a long time for Animal Park to be out, despite the high level of anticipation. Fans should anticipate a 2026 release if filming just starts in 2025. However, Sandeep Reddy Vanga is the only one who can confirm the movie's



# **Sonu Sood Honoured with** 'Champions of Change' Award for Humanitarian Contributions

onu Sood, a celebrated actor and philanthropist, has received the prestigious 'Champions of Change' award in recognition of his outstanding humanitarian efforts. Renowned for his selfless endeavours, Sood has garnered widespread acclaim for his unwavering commitment to societal welfare that has earned him numerous accolades.

Through his charitable organisation, 'The Sood Foundation', the actor has helped the underprivileged in terms of education, helped the poor promote their enterprises and he has also begun work on his dream project, an old age residence His dedication to uplifting communities in times of crisis has been praised globally and has emphasised the impact of individual self-sac-

The recognition adds up to Sood's power to influence change and represents his contribution towards social responsibility. His initiatives have not only provided immediate relief but have also inspired collective action and solidarity in times of adversity. Through his persistent actions, Sonu Sood continues to inspire hope and ignite positive change, personifying the essence of humanitarianism.

On the work front, Sonu Sood has just completed his maiden film as a director. 'Fateh' is a cybercrime thriller starring Sood and Jacqueline Fernandez in the lead, and produced by Sood's production company, Shakti Sagar Productions and co- produced by Zee Studios.

PNS HYDERABAD

Bigg Boss fame Abhijeeth stars in the upcoming web series Miss Perfect, where Lavanya Tripathi plays the female lead. Abhijna Uthaluru also plays a key role. The web series, proby Supriva Varlagadda under the Annapurna Studios banner and directed by Vishwak Khanderao, is set to stream on Disney Plus Hotstar from



media about the film, sharing ilar characters in real life-indiinsights into the character, storyline, viduals who grapple with career genre of Miss Perfect, and more. decisions and remain conflicted

In Miss Perfect, Abhijeeth shares, "I portray the character of Rohit, who seems laid-back and lacks a clear life goal. He works for money but doesn't take it seriously. Rohit's passion lies in cooking, and I've encountered many sim

> place among characters in an apartment. The series features funny dialogues and aims to be both pleasant and entertaining." Abhijeet notes that they faced challenges during summer shoots due to the heat. Abhijeeth expresses his admiration for Lavanya Tripathi's acting skills, considering her a good co-star. The two, he reveals, developed a good friendship while working together, sharing severworking together, sharing several funny scenes. Lavanya, having acted in more films, brings happiness to Abhijeet's family, and they all appreciate her acting. He also expressed his satisfaction with Supriya being the producer of the series However he ampha of the series, However, he emphasizes the importance of selecting subjects carefully, as a flop movie could affect even a good relationship. The creative producer Adheep's narration of the *Miss* Perfect story left a positive impact, and the team hopes the audience feels the same magic while watch-

ing the series.

# **Dulquer Salmaan unveils** the 'Beginning Look' of Prithviraj Sukumaran from THE GOAT LIFE

ocial media is abuzz with the biggest stars of Indian Cinema revealing the posters for superstar Prithviraj Sukumaran's upcoming film, The Goat Life. With Prabhas first taking to his social media to share the Official 'First Look', and Ranveer Singh later sharing 'The Look Before', now Dulquer Salmaan has unveiled the 'Beginning Look' of Prithviraj from the film. This look has come as a surprise to all, as it is in extreme contrast to the rugged and intense

posters which have been previously released. The third poster of Prithviraj is refreshing and filled with a simple charm that promises to bring a smile to the audience's face.

Directed by National Award winner Blessy and produced by Visual Romance, *The Goat* Life also features Hollywood actor Jimmy Jean-Louis, Indian actors like Amala Paul and K.R. Gokul, along with renowned Arab actors such as Talib al Balushi and Rik Aby in pivotal roles. The upcoming film's music direction and sound design are helmed by Academy Award winners A.R. Rahman and Resul Pookutty, respectively. The stunning visuals of the film have been shot by Sunil KS, and they have been edited by A. Śreekar Prasad. Being shot in multiple countries around the world, the film is the biggest-ever venture in the Malayalam film industry, setting new benchmarks in production standards, storytelling, and acting prowess. With exemplary performances and a soulstirring background score, the film makes for a larger-than-life theatrical experience.

The greatest-ever desert film in Indian cinema, *The Goat Life* will be released in theatres near you on 10th April 2024, in five languages: Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada.

# Adivi Sesh graced Suhas' Ambajipeta Marriage Band grand pre release event says, 'Suhas will go to great heights'



Promising young actor Suhas has been doing some crazy characters and he is now gearing up for the release of *Ambajipeta Marriage Band*. The promotional campaign has been creating a stir on social media. The film is directed by Dushyanth Katikineni. The film is produced jointly by GA2 Pictures and director Venkatesh throughout said, "He came to the event even though his leg Maha's Maha Creations, the film is coming also under the banner of Dheeraj Mogilineni Entertainments. As the film is nearing release, makers arranged a grand pre-release yesterday. Adivi Sesh graced the event as chief guest.

On this occasion, actor Adivi Sesh shares, "I've known Suhas since he was doing videos on Chai Biscuit. I can tell he will go to great heights. Such a talented artist is rare. I can't imagine what level Suhas will reach next. One day, he should come as a guest to my event. I like him very much. I watched this movies trailer ten times. I liked it so much. Sharanya garu,

Actor Suhas thanking Adivi Sesh for supporting him throughout said, "He came to the event even though his leg sprain isn't fully healed. He says we have to support ourselves. My parents didn't believe that I was acting as a hero in Geetha Arts. Bunny Vas gave me such an opportunity, and I thank him for it. I can say that in *Ambajipeta Marriage Band*, I have given the best performance of all the movies I've done so far. I was able to act like that because of every detail given by director Dushyant. I will surely talk about my co-stars at the success meet of this film. I promise that the movie will be on your list of favorite movies. We are planning paid premieres on