



Naidu has taken a U-turn on Volunteer system: Kodali

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP Gudivada candidate and former minister Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao (Nani), has once again made serious allegations against the TDP supremo and former CM N Chandrababu Naidu, claiming that he has taken a U-turn on the issue of Gram/Ward Volunteers. Nani stated that whenever Chandrababu Naidu mentions the Volunteers' name, he appears fearful.

The sitting MLA Nani commenced his election campaign from the first ward in Gudivada town on Wednesday. During his campaign, he highlighted the development activities undertaken in the Gudivada constituency over the past five years, amounting to approximately Rs. 2,000 crore. As part of his electioneering, Kodali Nani criticised former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu for allegedly spreading falsehoods. He accused the TDP leader of reversing his stance regarding the Gram/Ward Volunteers, who have diligently served the people by facilitating access to govern-

Nani remarked that, in light of the elections, Chandrababu Naidu is making promises to the volunteers, assuring them that their jobs will not be terminated and that they will receive higher wages. Nani pointed out that these assurances from the TDP are likely to be false and may not be fulfilled after assuming power.



YSRCP Gudivada candidate and former minister Kodali Nani participating in the election campaigning in the 1st Ward of Gudivada on Wednesday.

ment welfare schemes.

Nani said that his party does not need to depend on the 'Volunteer' system in the upcoming elections, asserting that their members are well-educated and possess a clear understanding of right and wrong. He alleged that over the past five years, both Chandrababu Naidu of the TDP and Pawan Kalyan of the JSP have mistreated these volunteers.

Furthermore, Nani remarked

that, in light of the elections, Chandrababu Naidu is making promises to the volunteers, assuring them that their jobs will not be terminated and that they will receive higher wages. Nani pointed out that these assurances from the TDP are likely to be false and may not be fulfilled after assuming power. He also expressed doubts about the TDP's potential reintroduction of the 'Janmabhoomi Committees' if they were to come into power.

Moreover, Nani stated that after June 4, the day of ballot counting, nobody would be concerned about Chandrababu Naidu. He alleged that if the TDP were to field a candidate independently, they would be defeated, which is why they allied with the BJP. Despite Chandrababu Naidu expressing regret about aligning with the communal BJP, Nani added, he ultimately yielded to the demands of Union Minister Amit Shah.

CP inspects police stations in Gajuwaka ahead of polls

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Commissioner of Police Dr A Ravi Shankar took charge on Wednesday to ensure a seamless electoral process in Gajuwaka. Conducting a thorough inspection, Commissioner Shankar inspected key police stations, polling stations, and booths in the region. The primary objective of his visit was to evaluate readiness levels and issue essential directives to officials, aiming for a hassle-free voting experience.

Commissioner Ravi Shankar meticulously surveyed polling centres in Gajuwaka and neighbouring areas, engaging in discussions with pertinent authorities to devise strategies for maintaining peace during the voting process. Emphasis was placed on bolstering security measures, particularly through the swift installation of CCTV cameras across all polling centres.

Delving into the list of individuals with criminal records associated with critical polling stations, CP Ravi Shankar personally visited certain residences.

Role of presiding officers in poll process stressed

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

District Collector Nagalakshmi has emphasised the crucial role of Presiding Officers (POs) in ensuring the seamless conduct of elections, underlining the need for flawless execution. Nagalakshmi issued orders for adherence to electoral processes, highlighting the importance of training programmes. This emphasis comes as part of efforts to bolster confidence in the electoral process ahead of upcoming elections.

This was followed by a comprehensive training programme held at the Collectorate meeting hall, in which Presiding Officers and Assistant Presiding Officers from various constituencies participated. The session aimed to equip participants with an in-depth understanding of election protocols, including the intricacies of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verified Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs). Through presentations and a specially prepared video by the Election Commission, attendees were briefed on their roles and responsibilities.

During the gathering, Collector Nagalakshmi reiterated the authority vested in POs during



polling, stressing the imperative of their readiness to fulfill duties effectively. Zero tolerance for errors or the necessity for repolling was emphasized, with Nagalakshmi urging swift completion of the voting process. POs were instructed to maintain impartiality, strictly adhere to Election Commission directives, and refrain from exhibiting personal biases.

Further directives from Nagalakshmi included the mandatory conduct of a mock poll 90 minutes prior to polling, with arrangements at polling centers to be finalized the night before. POs were advised to maintain essential handbooks, checklists, and adhere to prescribed protocols diligently. Highlighting the importance of

such training initiatives, Nagalakshmi disclosed plans for similar programs across three phases, ensuring widespread understanding among all stakeholders.

The event witnessed the presence of key officials including Joint Collector K. Karthik, Assistant Collector Sahadith Venkata Trivina, and other notable figures such as DRO SD Anitha, Trainings Nodal Officer Sudhakara Rao, and Municipal Commissioner M. Mallaiah Naidu, alongside their respective staff. As anticipation for upcoming elections mounts, the rigorous training and meticulous planning led by authorities like District Collector Nagalakshmi serve as crucial pillars of confidence in the integrity of the electoral process.



Bhuvaneshwari unveils CD of special campaign song

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Nara Bhuvaneshwari, the wife of Telugu Desam Party (TDP) supremo and former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu, unveiled a CD of a special video song titled 'Egire Pasupu Jenda - Eduruleni Agenda' at Jangareddygudem in Eluru district on Wednesday. The video song was created by the party's women's wing state general secretary, Mulpuru Sai Kalyani.

During her visit to Jangareddygudem, Bhuvaneshwari released the video song CD at the K Convention Centre. She expressed her happiness with the song and encouraged party leaders and members to promote it to enhance the party's standing in the upcoming elections.

After the event in Jangareddygudem, she visited the Abhanjaneya Swamy temple in Hanuman Junction, Krishna district, where she performed special poojas. TDP MLC Panchumarthi Anuradha, Telugu Rythu state general secretary K Nani, and other party leaders attended.

It's official: Sujana to contest from Vja-West, Kamineni from Kaikaluru

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leadership has formally announced the candidatures of Yalamanchili Satyanarayana Chowdary, popularly known as Sujana Chowdary, for the Vijayawada-West Assembly segment and Kamineni Srinivasa Rao for Kaikaluru Assembly segment. These nominations come as part of the BJP's seat allocation agreement with the TDP and JSP, securing two crucial Assembly segments in the former Krishna district.

In a statement released on Wednesday, the BJP unveiled a list of six candidates for Andhra Pradesh's upcoming elections. Among the 16 Assembly constituencies in the combined Krishna district, the BJP has secured Vijayawada-West and Kaikaluru, while Avanigadda has been allotted to the JSP.

Former Central minister Sujana Chowdary, making his electoral debut under the BJP banner after parting ways with the TDP, is poised to contest from Vijayawada-West. Chowdary had played a pivotal role for the TDP in New Delhi post the state's bifurcation.

Meanwhile, the TDP has finalised 13 candidates for this district, but the announce-



Meanwhile, the JSP is contemplating nominating former legislator Vangaveeti Radhakrishna from Vijayawada-East for the Avanigadda constituency, a move not sanctioned by the TDP. With a significant Kapu voter base in Avanigadda, the JSP sees Radhakrishna's candidacy as a strategic manoeuvre to sway voters in their favour.

ment of the Avanigadda candidate by the JSP is still awaited. Dissatisfaction among TDP cadres persists over the seat allocation to the JSP. Former Deputy Speaker Mandali Buddha Prasad, aspiring for this segment, has seen protests by his followers against the decision to allocate the seat to the JSP.

Similarly, within the JSP, Pothina Venkata Mahesh, the party's Vijayawada President, regarding the candidature selection process. Mahesh had hoped to contest from Vijayawada West, but the BJP's endorsement of Sujana Chowdary's candidacy has altered the dynamics.

Political analysts predict widespread discontent within both the TDP and JSP ranks due to the allocation of segments to the BJP, potentially leading to electoral setbacks for the latter. Additionally, there are concerns about cooperation between the TDP and JSP in the Avanigadda segment.

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LS, ASSEMBLY POLLS Women get raw deal in combined Krishna

TDP's Tangirala Sowmya is the only lucky woman to get Assembly seat

DASARI SRINIVASA RAO
■ VIJAYAWADA

Women in the combined Krishna district are feeling let down by the main political parties in the state, like the YSRCP and the TDP, which didn't keep their promises about helping women gain more power. Sadly, neither party gave even 25% of the MP and MLA seats to women in the combined Krishna district.

Out of 16 Assembly and two Lok Sabha parts, the TDP gave one Assembly part to a woman, but the ruling YSRCP didn't give any. Compared to the YSRCP, the TDP did slightly better by giving a part to a woman in Nandigama.

The YSRCP and the TDP recently announced their candidacies for MP and MLA seats in the combined Krishna district. The TDP gave a seat to a woman named Tangirala Sowmya in Nandigama for the second time in a row.

Last time, the TDP gave two Assembly seats to women, Pamarru (Uppuleti Kalpana) and Tangirala Sowmya (Nandigama). But

In the 2019 elections, the YSRCP didn't give any seats to women, and it looks like they're doing the same for the 2024 elections. Even though Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and opposition leader N Chandrababu Naidu talked about helping women, they didn't do anything to give women more seats.



TDP's Tangirala Sowmya

this time, they only gave one seat to a woman.

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In Krishna district, there are two Lok Sabha seats: Vijayawada and Machilipatnam. The YSRCP gave these seats to men. TDP gave Vijayawada to a man, and Machilipatnam is likely to go to a man too. The

TDP's ally, Jana Sena Party (JSP), got the Machilipatnam seat, but they haven't found a candidate yet.

There are also 16 Assembly seats in the combined Krishna district.

The YSRCP didn't give any seats to women. But the TDP gave the Nandigama seat to Tangirala Sowmya, a former woman legislator. This made some people in the opposition party happy about women getting more seats.

It's worth noting that the BJP state unit is led by a woman, Daggubati Purandeswari, a former Central minister. Her party will be contesting in two

seats: Vijayawada West and Kaikaluru. But they are very unlikely to pick any women candidates for these seats.

As for the Congress party, they haven't announced their candidates yet. They might join forces with the left parties CPI and CPM. After they decide who gets which seats, they'll announce their candidates.

The Congress party is led by YS Sharmila Reddy, the daughter of former Chief Minister Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy and the sister of current CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. They're looking for women candidates to join the contest.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Krishna Paksha

Tithi:

Tritiya:

Mar 27 05:06 PM to Mar 28 06:57 PM

Chaturthi:

Mar 28 06:57 PM to Mar 29 08:21 PM

Nakshatram:

Swati:

Mar 27 04:15 PM to Mar 28 06:38 PM

Vishaka:

Mar 28 06:38 PM to Mar 29 08:36 PM

Rahukalam:

1:52 PM to 3:23 PM

Yamagandam:

6:17 AM to 7:48 AM

Varjyam:

12:41 AM to 02:25 AM

Gulika:

9:19 AM to 10:50 AM

Amritakalam:

08:58 AM to 10:43 AM

Abhijit Muhurtham:

11:56 AM to 12:45 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Sunny

Temp: 39°

Humidity: 53%

Sunrise: 6:05 AM

Sunset: 6:20 PM

Updated: March 27, 2024 5:00 PM

Oppn stands for lies...

Continued from Page 1

Cautioning the people that the slew of welfare schemes will continue only if Jagan remains Chief Minister, he said that the opposition parties have come together and are implementing their conspiracies by creating dissensions in his family.

In the 2014 elections, these three parties came together and distributed signed copies of an election manifesto promising the waiver of farmers' loans, women's self-help groups' loans, jobs for every family and unemployment allowance in the absence of a job. Rs. 25,000 for the birth of a girl in the name of the Mahalakshmi scheme, three

cents of house site for the poor, and a host of other promises but threw the manifesto into the dustbin after coming to power, he said.

The issues on which they came together in 2014 remain unresolved. TDP and Jana Sena have ganged up and fallen at the feet of Delhi leaders for fighting Jagan.

"What happened to the promise of special status to the State?" he said.

"It is a war between YSRCP that stands for credibility and political values and a combination of political parties that stands for deceit and lies," he said and cautioned people that a vote for the opposition will result in the winding up of welfare schemes and the loss of hap-

piness for the poor.

While Naidu threw the election manifesto into the dustbin and cheated people after winning the 2014 polls with the support of Jana Sena and BJP, the YSRCP fulfilled 99 per cent of its election promises and spent a whopping Rs. 2,70,000 crore on welfare schemes by pressing the button 130 times in the last 58 months transparently, with Rs. 1,90,000 lakh crores of it going to women alone.

Asking the people not to be misled by the false promises of Naidu who has a proven track record of backstabbing all sections, he asked them to press two buttons for YSRCP in the May 13 polls, one for the assembly seat and another

'Memanta Siddham'...

Continued from Page 1

At several stops, Chief Minister Jagan climbed atop the bus to greet the enthusiastic crowds, despite the sweltering heat.

In Veerannagattu Palli, the crowds assembled in large numbers and presented him with a Gajamala. On the first day, the bus yatra covered 64 km in the YSR district, passing through Kumarampalli, Vempalli, Sarvarajupeta, VN Palli (Kamalapuram), Gangireddypalli, Urutur, Yerraguntla (Jammalamadugu), Potladurthi, and Proddatur.

Throughout the Bus Yatra, the Chief Minister will engage with various groups of people and intellectuals in the morning hours, receiving representations from them on improving government functioning.

Kavitha spends one...

Continued from Page 1

"She ate dal and rice, which was also served to other inmates on Tuesday night, and Wednesday morning, she had tea with snacks," a jail source said.

Kavitha was taken to Tihar jail on Tuesday evening after a Delhi court sent her to judicial custody till April 9 on the ED's plea that if released, the "highly influential" arrestee was likely to influence witnesses and tamper with evidence.

"Following her medical examinations, she was directly sent to her cell. Her blood pressure was slightly low during the medical checkup but later it went back to normal," the source said.

Kavitha was given a mattress, slippers, clothes, a bedsheet, and a blanket as per the jail rules, the source said, adding she was also provided with her medicines.

An official said she did not demand anything 'specific', and she will be provided with things as per the court order and the jail rules.

According to the court order, she is permitted to have home-cooked food, a mattress, slippers, clothes, a bedsheet, a blanket, books, pen and paper, and medicines.

The BRS leader is also allowed to wear jewellery. However, she was not wearing any jewellery when she came to the jail, the official said.

Uphold alliance...

Continued from Page 1

Warning against any attempts by party members to exploit the alliance for personal political gain, Kalyan affirmed his readiness to take strict action. He clarified that the Party Affairs Central Committee continuously monitors adherence to alliance principles among party leaders.

Subsequently, addressing Jana Sena's women leaders, Kalyan assured them of the party's recognition of their contributions. He applauded their frontline role in various struggles and reiterated the party's commitment to supporting women leaders irrespective of caste, religion, or regional affiliations.

In an interesting turn of events, Telugu Desam Party leader and Ongole MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy visited Pawan Kalyan at the state office on Wednesday. BJP's Tirupathi LS candidate Vara Prasad also paid a visit to Kalyan.

NTR DIST COLLECTOR TELLS CEO

‘Poll code being enforced strictly’

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

NTR District Collector Dr S Dilli Rao has informed Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Mukhesh Kumar Meena that his administration is effectively implementing the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and addressing all election-related complaints received through cVIGIL after thorough verification.

Andhra Pradesh CEO, Mukhesh Kumar Meena, conducted a video conference with district collectors, including NTR District Collector Dr Dilli Rao, Joint Collector Dr P Sampath Kumar, Vijayawada Municipal Commissioner Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar, and KRC Special Deputy Collector Kiranmayi.

During the conference, Dr



Dilli Rao mentioned receiving 188 complaints through cVIGIL, which are being addressed in line with CEO guidelines. Besides, 198 requests for permissions were received, with 23 about Lok Sabha and the rest to Assembly constituencies.

In Krishna district, Collector P Raja Babu informed CEO Mukhesh Kumar about intensified border checks to prevent illegal transportation of cash, liquor, ganja, and other goods. The district administration is focused on enforcing the Model Code of Conduct, Home Voting, Postal Ballot, and other election-related matters.

Dr Dilli Rao highlighted the strict implementation of Election Seizure Management through coordination with Enforcement Department Officers.

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The district administration is focused on enforcing the Model Code of Conduct, Home Voting, Postal Ballot, and other election-related matters. Joint Collector Geethanjali Sharma, DRO K Chandrasekhar Rao, Additional SP G Venkateswara Rao, ROs, and other officials also participated in the conference.

Vizag Airport runway resurfacing project completed ahead of schedule

Flight operations set to resume 24/7 from April 1

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakhapatnam Airport runway resurfacing project, overseen by the Indian Navy, has been completed ahead of schedule. The final layer of surfacing has been applied and approved by the runway inspection agency. This accomplishment has been praised for its quality and timely execution.

Operations at the airport are set to resume 24/7 starting April 1, coinciding with the upcoming summer schedule. This achievement is significant for INS Dega, which has been a vital part of Visakhapatnam's aviation infrastructure since 1999.

The project was initiated to meet the increasing demand for air travel services in Visakhapatnam. The goal was to improve the efficiency and safety of the airfield to accommodate both domestic and international flights. The 10,000-foot runway, which was opened in 2007, needed upgrading due to over 15 years of use and a rise in daily movements exceeding 75-80 flights.



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Despite initial delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project was completed ahead of schedule, thanks to the efforts of the ENC headquarters. Careful planning ensured the minimal disruption to commercial flights by scheduling the resurfacing work during the winter schedule of civil aviation. Closure windows were limited to 9:00 AM and 8:00

PM, with flexibility to accommodate over 30 flights outside these hours during emergencies such as Cyclone Michaung.

The early completion of the runway resurfacing project highlights the Indian Navy's commitment to maintaining operational readiness and ensuring a safe aviation infrastructure for Visakhapatnam.

YSRCP flays TDP's 'drama' over container near CM's camp office

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

YSR Congress Party's (YSRCP) North Andhra regional coordinator YV Subba Reddy has strongly criticised the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) for what he calls 'unnecessary drama' surrounding a container that was seen at the Chief Minister's camp office. Addressing the media during an election campaign in Visakhapatnam South Constituency on Wednesday, Subba Reddy dismissed the claims made by TDP leaders regarding the contents of the container. He clarified that the CM camp office houses several government departments, suggesting that the container may have been carrying routine goods for these offices.

Subba Reddy particularly refuted allegations made by TDP's national general secretary Nara Lokesh, who had insinuated the presence of narcotic drugs or illicit money in the container. He emphasised that the



people are well aware that the container in question belongs to the relatives of Lokesh.

The remarks from the YSR Congress Party come in response to a recent controversy stirred by the TDP's allegations regarding the contents of the container intercepted in Visakhapatnam. The incident has created a fresh wave of political tension in the region ahead of the upcoming elections. The YSR Congress Party's stance suggests a firm dismissal of the TDP's claims, positioning the incident as an attempt to create unnecessary sensationalism during the election season.



Durga temple richer by Rs 3.78 cr

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam atop Indrakeeladri in Vijayawada received a hundi collection of Rs 3.78 crore for 25 days. The average collection per day is Rs.15.14 lakh.

On Wednesday, the temple authorities conducted the hundi counting at the Sri Mallikharjuna Maha Mandapam. Temple Executive Officer KS Rama Rao supervised the counting.

Besides, the devotees also offered 900 grams of gold ornaments and 7.820 kg of silver ornaments to the presiding deity goddess Sri Kanaka Durga.

Additionally, Rs 1.22 lakh was earned from e-hundi.

The temple also received foreign currency including 3,633 US Dollars, 100 Oman Riyals, 20 UK Pounds, 30 Australian Dollars, 135 Euros, 138 Singapore Dollars, 30 UAE Dirhams, 2.5 Kuwait Dinar, 104 Qatar Riyals, and 60 Indonesia Rupees.

IIM Vizag shines bright with 100% placement record

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a testament to its unwavering commitment to excellence, IIM Visakhapatnam, affectionately known as the sunrise IIM, has once again achieved a remarkable feat in the realm of high-quality management education. The Institute proudly announces the successful conclusion of both the final and summer placements for the batches of PGP 2022-24 and PGP 2023-25 respectively.

The Institute achieved a stellar

100% placement record for its 8th graduating MBA batch 2022-24. Witnessing four international offers for the first time, the Institute set a new benchmark with an average salary of Rs 19.50 LPA. Notably, the overall average package stood at Rs 15.64 LPA, with recruiters recognizing exceptional potential by offering packages reaching up to an impressive Rs 43.25 LPA, marking a 25% increase from the previous year. The top 10%, 25%, and 50% of students



secured average packages of Rs 28.60 LPA, Rs 24.62 LPA, and Rs 21.05 LPA respectively, showcasing outstanding performance despite market challenges.

Equally successful were the summer placements, with students experiencing exciting opportunities during their internships. The highest stipend offered reached Rs. 2.40 lakh, reflecting recruiters' confidence in the talented pool. The average stipend stood at Rs. 0.69 lakh, with notable figures

such as the top 10% and 25% of students receiving average stipends of Rs. 1.58 lakh and Rs. 1.17 lakh respectively. A total of 177 companies participated in the placement process, with 117 new recruiters offering roles across various domains, including Consulting, Strategy, Finance, and IT among others. Prominent recruiters such as Accenture, Deloitte, Goldman Sachs, Infosys, and Tata Communications among others, vouched for the Institute's

talent pool, contributing to the grand success of the placement seasons.

Expressing jubilation at the outcomes, Director Prof. M Chandrasekhar commended the students and Career Development Services team for their exemplary performance. He highlighted the Institute's Pedigree, Pride, Passion, Purpose, and Potential as driving forces behind its high performance and position.

Prof. Deepika Gupta extended her gratitude to all recruiters

for their faith in the Institute and students. She acknowledged the challenges posed by global uncertainties but celebrated the triumph of both batches exceeding expectations, emphasizing the resilience and responsiveness of the Institute's systems, people, and processes. Amidst global economic uncertainties, IIM Visakhapatnam continues to shine brightly, setting new benchmarks and reaffirming its status as a beacon of excellence in management education.

Special days in Tirumala in April

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The following are the details of the special days to be celebrated in April in Tirumala.

April 5 - Sri Annamacharya Vardhanti, April 7-Masashivratr, April 8 - Sarva Amavasya, April 9-Sri Krodhinama Samvatsara Ugadi Asthanam at Srivari Temple, April 11- Matsya Jayanthi, April 17 - Sri Ramanavami Asthanam, April 18- Sri Rama Pattabhishekam Asthanam, April 19 - Sarva Ekadasi and April 21 to 23- Salakatta Vasanthotsavams.

‘Run for Jesus’ rallies at 370 places in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

For Christians, Good Friday and Easter are very important and on March 30 at 5:30 am 'Run for Jesus' (RFJ) rally will be organized at about 370 centres across Andhra Pradesh, said Rev Bellamkonda Sivajiraju on Wednesday through a release.

He said that Catholics, Protestants, the Federation of

Telugu churches and other Christian organisations jointly will organize the Run for Jesus on March 30. He recalled that in the year 2011, this Run for Jesus was organized for the first time by Aradhana TV in 30 various places successfully. Later on every year they have been organizing it in both the Telugu states including Karnataka, Maharashtra and other places in more than

500 centres.

He said that fir this year Run for Jesus programme will be organized in about 370 places across Andhra Pradesh and Bishops, Priests, Pastors, RFJ coordinators, youth, believers and others will participate in the programme and a plan has been made to organize the programme successfully. He said that for the rally permissions have been taken from the concerned police in those places and appealed to participate in the rally in large numbers and make it a grand success.



Vij railway division earns record freight revenue of Rs 3,975 cr

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Railway Division, South Central Railway has achieved its highest-ever freight revenue of Rs 3,975 crore, with a record 36.2 Million Tonnes of Originating Freight Loading during the current financial year, as announced by Narendra A Patil, Divisional Railway Manager. This milestone reached on March 26 2024, marks the best-ever performance in freight revenue since the division's inception. Notably, this achievement surpasses the previous best of Rs 3,968 crore recorded during FY 2018-19.

Patil highlighted that the Division had already exceeded last year's earnings of Rs 3,875



crore by March 16, 2024, with a year-on-year growth of Originating Freight Loading at 8%.

Patil expressed confidence in Vijayawada Division's potential to surpass the Rs 4,000 crore mark in freight earnings, with a monthly average of Rs 331 crore and a strong loading trend. Additionally, the Division aims

for another significant milestone of earning Rs 5,500 crore for the first time in its history. Notably, Adani Krishnapatnam Port remains the highest earning avenue, followed by Kakinada Sea Port, with coal being the top commodity transported across the Division, amounting to 19.36 MT, along with 6.68 MT of fertilisers.

TIGER TRIUMPH 2024

Indian Army takes part in second exercise

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM-KAKINADA

The Indian Army is actively engaged in the second iteration of the Tri-Services India-US Amphibious Exercise, codenamed "Tiger Triumph 2024." This large-scale exercise, which commenced on March 18, 2024, signifies a major development in the strategic partnership between India and the United States. The 14-day wargame unfolds in two distinct phases: a harbour phase recently concluded in Visakhapatnam and an ongoing sea phase currently underway in Kakinada. The primary objective of the exercise revolves around enhancing interoperability between Indian and US forces, fostering stronger bilateral relations, and refining critical skills in Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations alongside sub-conventional warfare tactics.

The Indian Army's contribution to the exercise manifests in the form of an integrated battalion group exceeding 700 personnel. This contingent serves as a platform to showcase India's recent advancements in military technology and weaponry. The composition of the group encompasses diverse branches such as Infantry, Mechanised Infantry, Parachute Special Forces, Artillery, Engineers, and supporting arms. Additionally, the Indian Army has deployed a range of sophisticated equip-



ment, including unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), counter-unmanned aerial systems (C-UAS), Infantry Combat Vehicles (ICVs), and an assortment of support systems.

The harbour phase prioritised establishing robust communication channels to ensure seamless cooperation between participating forces. Soldiers from both nations engaged in reciprocal visits aboard each

other's vessels, fostering a deeper understanding and collaborative spirit. These interactions not only strengthened personal bonds but also facilitated the exchange of best practices and combat techniques.

The ongoing sea phase has transitioned the focus to a simulated scenario involving a strategic deployment towards a hypothetical island nation. This sets the stage for a series of



intricate operations, with the initial major exercise being a ship-to-shore movement. This critical manoeuvre will evaluate the precision and coordinated effort required for amphibious assaults. The exercise will assess the troops' ability to swiftly disembark and establish a secure beachhead, highlighting their professionalism and preparedness to operate in challenging environments.

A pivotal aspect of the exer-

cise involves the establishment of an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp. This scenario underscores the unwavering commitment of both Indian and US forces to providing humanitarian aid. Setting up such a camp necessitates exceptional logistical skills and coordinated efforts, emphasizing the importance of efficient planning and execution during disaster relief operations.

CEO reviews MCC implementation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Kumar Meena has directed the District Election Officers to refrain from removing existing hoardings of political advertisements in the permanent offices of political parties at the state and district levels, as per local laws and regulations. On Wednesday, the CEO held a video conference with election officers from all districts and reviewed the arrangements being made in advance for the elections and the strict implementation of the code of conduct.

During the meeting, the CEO mentioned that in a previous meeting with representatives of all political parties on Tuesday, many issues were raised regarding the removal of hoardings in permanent party offices. The parties expressed their desire to retain the hoardings that have been approved in party offices for an extended period. However, they were advised to reinforce weak struc-



tures for safety reasons. In preparation for the general elections, a 4X8 feet banner and a placard should be permitted in temporary party offices. The CEO emphasised that prior approval is necessary for political party programmes, with applications to be submitted 48 hours in advance through the Suvidha portal. However, in emergencies where parties cannot apply in advance, emergency applications should be accepted offline, with all details recorded in the Encore portal for timely permissions.

The political party representatives appealed for a review of the rule requiring prior permission for door-to-door campaigning. The CEO assured them that this matter, along with the procedures followed by various states, has been brought to the attention of the Election Commission of India, and a decision will be made soon.

Furthermore, the CEO advised District Election Officers to grant permissions in accordance with guidelines from the Election Commission of India, as well as relevant state laws,

regarding political advertisements. Current rules prohibit political advertisements, hoardings, posters, and banners in commercial areas and government/public sector offices. Hoardings along national and main highways should be allocated equally among all political parties, with no new permissions granted. Wall paintings on private buildings are prohibited, and existing ones must be removed promptly. Hoardings and cut-outs on private buildings require government permission and must undergo safety checks.

- Political advertisements are subject to local laws and regulations.
- Hoardings are permitted in state and district-level party offices according to law and regulations.
- A 4X8 feet banner and one placard are allowed in temporary offices.
- A proper decision on the matter of issuing permits for door-to-door campaigns will be made soon, according to CEO Meena.

Small banners and flags may be allowed with prior permission in private premises.

Additionally, the meeting addressed issues such as the timely resolution of complaints received through C-Whistle and the effective implementation of the Election Seizure Management System.

The meeting was attended by Additional CEOs P Koteswara Rao, MN Harendhira Prasad, Joint CEO A Venkateswara Rao, Deputy CEOs K Visveswara Rao, S Mallibabu, and other election officers from all districts.



BJP Narasapuram LS candidate accorded warm welcome

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

BJP candidate of Narasapuram Lok Sabha constituency Bhupatiraju Srinivas Varma was accorded a warm welcome when he arrived in West Godavari district on Wednesday.

When the BJP candidate reached Akividu, he was accorded a rousing welcome by a large number of BJP, TDP and Jana Sena activists. He was taken to Bhimavaram from Akividu in a huge rally. When he reached Bhimavaram, he prostrated before the BJP's

lotus symbol at the BJP party office with emotion.

Speaking on the occasion, Srinivasa Varma said that his three decades of service to the BJP yielded results today in the form of being allocated a ticket to contest to the Lok Sabha from Narasapuram constituency. He said that he was overwhelmingly happy with the allocation of a ticket by the BJP to contest from the Narasapuram constituency.

He said that he would be grateful forever to the BJP activists for their strong support to him. He revealed that

a strategy would be formulated to carry out election campaigns jointly with the TDP and JSP.

Srinivasa Varma recalled that he had striven for the election victory of BJP MPs Krishnamraju and Gokaraju Gangaraju previously and this time he is himself contesting from Narasapuram constituency. He exuded confidence that the alliance candidates would win not only in the Narasapuram Lok Sabha constituency but also in all seven Assembly segments in WG district.

BJP picks ex-serviceman for Anaparthi Assembly seat

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

The BJP has picked up an ex-army man Mulagapati Shivarama Krishna Raju as its candidate to contest from the Anaparthi Assembly constituency. Shivarama Krishna Raju belongs to Rangapuram village in Bikkavolu mandal. He worked in the Indian Army and worked in 9 states in the military intelligence wing. After his retirement in the army, he joined

the RSS and worked as Prachar Pramukh for a long time.

He was appointed as constituency coordinator and district media panelist by the BJP leadership. He organized the 'Manamodigram' programme efficiently. Considering his Hindutva ideology and RSS background, the BJP selected Shivarama Krishna Raju as its candidate to contest from Anaparthi, a BJP leader said.

Officials told to purchase paddy from farmers

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

East Godavari District Collector K Madhavi Latha has directed the officials to take steps to procure rabi paddy from farmers by paying MSP.

The Collector inaugurated training programmes for the marketing, civil supplies, agriculture and revenue department staff on purchasing paddy of rabi season from the farmers here on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, she said that 3.20 lakh metric tonnes of paddy of rabi season would be purchased through 231 paddy procurement centres in the district. She said that Rs 2,183

would be paid for a quintal for the ordinary variety and Rs 2,203 would be paid for the 'A' variety of paddy.

The Collector said that in the current 2023-24 Rabi season, the authorities should work in a coordinated manner to purchase paddy from the farmers in the district. She said that a plan should be prepared to bring the harvested paddy produce from the agriculture fields to the procurement centers and from there to the millers.

She directed the officials to ensure that there would be no mediators between farmers and the rice millers. The officials should monitor the paddy pur-

TDP's 'Super Six' plan to help people prosper: Naidu

PNS ■ PALAMANER

TDP chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu has criticised Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, accusing him of neglecting the irrigation sector, particularly in Rayalaseema. Naidu highlighted a lack of irrigation water supply over the past five years and alleged an increase in the distribution of illegal substances like liquor and drugs under Jagan's tenure. Naidu voiced concerns about Jagan's alleged focus on personal gain at the expense of the public.

Speaking at a public gathering in Palamaner, he pledged to enhance revenue for citizens through initiatives like the 'Super Six' programme. Naidu expressed worry over the detrimental effects of substance abuse, especially on the youth, attributing it to Jagan's administration.

Naidu urged the public to unite against the YSRCP government, citing grievances such as delayed salaries for employees and irregular pension disbursements. He promised improved water supply and employment opportunities if the NDA came to power, mentioning plans to utilize Godavari waters for irrigation in the region. Naidu reiterated his commitment to welfare schemes, including financial aid for women and farmers, free gas cylinder distribution, and job creation initiatives. He emphasised his dedication to providing employment opportunities for the youth, proposing monthly unemployment allowances until they secure jobs.



Ensure 24/7 power supply in summer: CS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a bid to ensure uninterrupted power supply across the State, particularly during the summer months and amid student examinations, Chief Secretary to the Government, Dr KS Jawahar Reddy, has issued directions to officials of the Energy Department. These measures aim to prevent any disruptions in power distribution.

The Chief Secretary chaired a review meeting with Energy Department officials at the State Secretariat on Wednesday to assess the current power supply situation.

Addressing the officials, Dr Jawahar Reddy emphasised the importance of maintaining stable electricity provision, especially in rural and urban areas. He underscored the need to safeguard essential services like fresh water supply schemes from any potential interruptions. Prompt action on complaints lodged via the toll-free number 1912 was also stressed by the Chief Secretary.

Furthermore, Dr Jawahar Reddy directed officials to ensure the uninterrupted provision of nine hours of free electricity to agricultural sectors. He emphasised the significance of vigilance through Load Monitoring Cells (LMCs) to continually assess power supply conditions. The

Chief Secretary mandated a thorough review of actions taken by electricity distribution companies to address any negative media reports regarding power supply.

Encouraging public engagement, Dr. Jawahar Reddy urged citizens to utilize the toll-free helpline for reporting electricity supply interruptions or any related issues. He instructed Customer Care Centers to promptly respond to complaints and take necessary actions. Additionally, he called for enhanced public awareness campaigns by distribution companies to prevent electricity-related accidents.

During the meeting, K Vijayanand, Special Principal Secretary of the Energy Department, provided insights into the state's power supply situation. He highlighted the continuous monitoring of power stations and district-level control rooms to swiftly address any breakdowns or interruptions. Vijayanand outlined the rigorous monitoring mechanisms employed by the state's three power distribution companies across various formats daily.

The meeting was attended by Directors Bhaskar Reddy, APCPDCL MD Santosh Rao, EPDCL MD Prithvi Tej, Finance Principal Secretary Sourava Gaur, Finance Secretary KVV Satyanarayana, and other officials.

YS Vijayamma prays for CM Jagan's success again

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YS Vijayalakshmi (Vijayamma), mother of YSR Congress party president and chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, stood by him as a towering support when the latter visited Idupulapaya to pay homage to his father and begin the election campaign on Wednesday taking everyone by surprise.

It can be recalled that the opposition parties in the state often accuse Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy of neglecting his mother and ignoring her in difficult times. Jagan also came under sharp criticism, when he stripped Vijayamma of her post of honorary president of YSRCP two years ago, thereby keeping her away from all the party activities. On the other hand, Vijayamma stood by her daughter YS Sharmila when she launched the YSR Telangana Party and even addressed a few meetings with her, requesting the people to bless her daughter.

To the surprise of all the opposition parties in the state, on Wednesday, Vijayamma accom-



panied Jagan to Idupulapaya, where he paid floral tribute to his father late YSR before kickstarting the "Memantha Siddham" bus yatra. She blessed Jagan and kissed him on the forehead in her typical fashion, wishing him all the best in his campaign. She also prayed to Lord Jesus to bestow him with power for a second term.

She prayed to God to bless Jagan with success and make him the chief minister for a second time, which was widely circulated among the media.

Vijayamma's prayer for Jagan

is understandable, but one wonders what she would be wishing for her daughter YS Sharmila. She is going all guns blazing against Jagan and has given a call to the people to end Jagan's dictatorial rule. She also accused Jagan of shielding culprits in the murder of her uncle YS Vivekananda Reddy five years ago. She is going to contest the coming parliament elections from Kadapa.

If that is the case, will Vijayamma support Sharmila and conduct similar prayers for her to wait and see.

'Health officials must check maternity deaths'

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari District Collector Sumit Kumar has directed the health officials to ensure that no maternal death takes place in the district.

The Collector held a meeting with the government and private doctors, ICDS officials, ASHA workers and ANMs and reviewed the deliveries in the government hospital and maternal deaths.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that maternal deaths should not take place under any circumstances and he ordered that the health conditions of pregnant women should be thoroughly examined and appropriate treatment should be provided.

The Collector directed the ICDS Project Director to review with the ICDS staff once every 15 days the nutrition the pregnant women get since the day of conception and take appropriate action.

He said that it has come to his notice that the ambulance rates are very high in the case of transporting a pregnant woman to better medical care in an emer-



The Collector held a meeting with the government and private doctors, ICDS officials, ASHA workers and ANMs and reviewed the deliveries in the government hospital and maternal deaths.

gency and a meeting would be held to control these and determine the rate per kilometre.

Collector Sumit Kumar said an inquiry was conducted and orders were issued in connection with six maternal deaths during the meeting. DMHO Dr D Maheswar Rao, DCHS Dr P Suryanarayana, district immunisation officer Dr D Sudhalakshmi, district Arogyasri coordinator Dr S Keerthi Kiran and district ICDS officer B Sujata Rani were among those who were present.

the directions of task force AP Srinivas and led by Kadapa sub-division RI Chiranjeevulu, conducted a combing.

The police team noticed three persons moving suspiciously in the area. When the police team approached, two of them fled the scene. However the police arrested one person Sayyad Muktiyar

alias Basha. During the questioning, he revealed that 51 red sander logs were concealed behind bushes in the forest area. Task force police SI Rafi seized the 51 red sander logs and registered a case. A search was launched to arrest two red sander smugglers Ambotula Shiva and Rangaiah.

One killed as lorry knocks down bike

PNS ■ KADAPA

One person was killed and his wife was critically injured when a lorry knocked down their motorcycle at Ashok Garden on the outskirts of Rajampet town in

Annamayya district on Wednesday.

Police said that a lorry knocked down a motorcycle killing Burusu Hari Krishna (22) instantaneously. His wife Srilekha was critically injured in the mishap and was admit-

ted to the GGH in Rajampet. The deceased and injured belonged to D.Vaddepalli village in Chitvel mandal. The police registered a case and shifted the body to the GGH for postmortem. The lorry driver is absconding.



BRS working president KT Rama Rao speaking at the Malkajigiri parliamentary segment meeting held at Telangana Bhavan Wednesday

Cops may have tapped a few phones: KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtia Samithi working president KT Rama Rao has conceded that cops "may have tapped a few phones". He said, "I saw a video which said 10 lakh phones were tapped by KCR. Yes, a few calls might have been tapped. They might have done -- of thieves, the police might have done. That is the job of police, right?"

KTR said that Congressmen had been making a lot of fuss around phone tapping as if it was an international scam. KTR dubbed Revanth Reddy as 'Leak-Veerudu' for giving leaks to YouTube channels about phone tapping. He said that Revanth Reddy could probe the case.

KTR challenged Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to contest from Malkajigiri. He emphasised that should Revanth Reddy step down from his chief ministership and decide to enter the electoral fray, he would confront him in the Lok Sabha elections. KTR criticized Revanth Reddy for his reluctance to accept a direct challenge thrown at him.

Speaking at the Malkajigiri parliamentary segment meeting held at Telangana Bhavan, KTR highlighted Revanth Reddy's avoidance of his challenge to contest from Malkajigiri and pointed to the 'silence' maintained by the Chief Minister on this matter.

Furthermore, KTR criticized Revanth Reddy's political affili-

ations, noting his tendency to switch parties. He reiterated that Revanth Reddy would align with the BJP along with several Congress MLAs after the Lok Sabha elections, considering his history of changing allegiances like ABVP, TRS, TDP, and Congress.

KTR reiterated his allegation that Revanth Reddy's actions resembled those of a BJP leader and cited the Chief Minister's stances on BJP and Modi in contrast to those of Rahul Gandhi and the Congress party. KTR also commented on Etela Rajender's candidacy in Malkajigiri. He pointed out that, after facing rejection in Gajwel in Huzurabad, Etela Rajender was now contesting in Malkajigiri.

INDIA CORNER

Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev discharged from hospital after brain surgery

Spiritual leader Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev was discharged from a private hospital here on Wednesday, days after he underwent an emergency brain surgery after suffering a "life-threatening" bleeding in the skull, the Isha Foundation said. The foundation issued a statement that quoted joint managing director of the Apollo Hospitals Group Sangita Reddy as saying that doctors have expressed satisfaction with his recovery and healing. "Even as he is recovering, Sadhguru has maintained the same spirit. His commitment to the global good, his sharp mind, and his sense of humour are all intact. I think this is good news for all the millions of people who have been inquiring about his health," Reddy said in the statement. According to the Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, the surgery was carried out on March 17. Several of Sadhguru's followers gathered at the hospital gate as he was being discharged.



Daylight theft of Rs 50 lakh from private vehicle in Kerala

In a huge daylight robbery, Rs 50 lakh in cash was stolen from the vehicle of a private agency at Uppala near Manjeshwar here on Wednesday. An officer of Manjeshwar police station said that the incident occurred due to a security lapse on the part of the private agency's staff. "There was no grill on the rear windows of the vehicle. The staff had to fill Rs 20 lakh in a bank ATM, but they took out two bundles of Rs 50 lakh each. They took one bundle to the ATM and left one on the back seat of the vehicle. 'Though the vehicle was locked, there was no one inside it,' the officer said. The thief broke the right side rear window and took away the cash bundle kept there, he said. A man wearing blue pants, white-soled sports shoes and a light khaki coloured shirt was seen leaving the site carrying a bag, police said, adding that the person is suspected to have committed the robbery.



Temperatures cross 40-degree mark in parts of K'taka, Gujarat

Temperatures crossed the 40-degree-Celsius mark in parts of Karnataka, Gujarat and Rajasthan on Wednesday, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) warning of heatwave conditions over these places for the next two days. The mercury touched 41.6 degrees Celsius in Bhuj, 41.1 degrees Celsius in Rajkot, 41.5 degrees Celsius in Akola and 41.4 degrees Celsius in Washim. An IMD official said the maximum temperatures were two to three notches above normal over these regions on Wednesday but did not meet the criteria for heatwave conditions. The threshold for a heatwave is met when the maximum temperature of a station reaches at least 40 degrees Celsius in the plains, 37 degrees Celsius in coastal areas and 30 degrees Celsius in hilly regions, with a departure of at least four-and-a-half notches from normal. In a statement, the IMD said heatwave conditions are very likely in isolated pockets over North Interior Karnataka.



Jaishankar calls on Malaysian PM; discusses cooperation

PNS ■ KUALA LUMPUR

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday called on Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim and the two leaders exchanged views and discussed cooperation in the areas of trade, science and technology, education, agriculture, tourism, defence and also on regional issues including Myanmar.

Jaishankar, who is here on a two-day official visit, met Anwar at the Prime Minister's Office and the meeting lasted about an hour, the official Bernama news agency reported.

In a statement issued after the meeting, the Prime Minister's Office said that Anwar and Jaishankar exchanged views and discussed cooperation in the areas of trade, science and technology, education, agriculture, tourism, defence and digital, and also on regional issues including Myanmar.

Anwar gave his commitment



to facilitate the establishment of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) branch campus in Malaysia, it added.

The Prime Minister also expressed appreciation to his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi for assisting Malaysia when the country was hit by a shortage of rice and hoped for further facilitation on the import of agricultural produce from India.

"May the Malaysian-Indian

relationship continue to grow and blossom for the benefit of the people of both friendly countries," Anwar said.

The Prime Minister looks forward to visit India soon, the statement said.

Jaishankar, who is in Kuala Lumpur on the third and last leg of his three-nation tour to Singapore, the Philippines and Malaysia, conveyed the warm greetings of Prime Minister Modi.

"Honour to call on Prime Minister @anwaribrahim of Malaysia. Conveyed the warm greetings of PM @narendramodi," Jaishankar said in a post on X.

Praising the Malaysian prime minister's vision for a stronger bilateral relationship, he said, "His vision for stronger India-Malaysia ties, both in traditional and new-age areas, will help us craft a more ambitious agenda for the relationship."

"Benefitted from his guidance and insights on regional developments," he added.

Earlier, Jaishankar met his Malaysian counterpart Mohamad bin Haji Hasan.

The two foreign ministers held a "productive and frank discussion, including exchanging views on the multifaceted dimensions of Malaysia-India bilateral affairs as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest," the Malaysian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in an official statement.

Ex-IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt convicted in drug seizure

PNS ■ PALANPUR

A sessions court in Palanpur town of Gujarat's Banaskantha district on Wednesday convicted former IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt in a drug seizure case dating back to 1996.

The court is expected to pronounce the quantum of punishment on Thursday afternoon.

The sessions court held Bhatt guilty of falsely implicating a Rajasthan-based lawyer by claiming that in 1996 police had seized drugs from a hotel room in Palanpur where the lawyer was staying.

Bhatt, who was sacked from the Indian Police Service in 2015, was then serving as the superintendent of police of Banaskantha district.

The district police under him had arrested Rajasthan lawyer Sumersingh Rajpurohit, claiming they had seized drugs from a hotel room in Palanpur where he was staying.

TAKES A DIG AT AAP DISPENSATION

Delhi govt will not be run from jail, says Lt Governor

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi government will not be run from jail, Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena said on Wednesday in the backdrop of statements by AAP leaders that Arvind Kejriwal will continue as chief minister even if he is behind bars.

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Kejriwal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on March 21 in the Delhi excise policy-linked money laundering case and subsequently remanded in the agency's custody till March 28 by a court here.

AAP leaders on several occasions ruled out Kejriwal's resignation, insisting that he will run his government from inside the jail.

Replying to a query at the Times Now Summit, the Delhi LG said, "I can assure the people of Delhi that the government will not be run from jail." Kejriwal issued his second



work order from ED's custody on Tuesday instructing Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj to ensure that medicines and tests are available to people at all government hospitals and Mohalla Clinics.

Earlier on Sunday, the Aam Aadmi Party supreme gave instructions to Water Minister Atishi to solve water and sewer-related problems in some areas of the city.

In an apparent attack on the AAP dispensation, Saxena said, "As kids, we all have heard the proverb 'lohe ke chane cha-

bana' (to face great difficulty). After coming to Delhi I actually realised the meaning of this proverb.

"In this city to get any work done it feels like 'lohe ke chane chabana'. Whatever you try to do, there are some forces that put their entire strength into stopping that work. And if you are able to successfully complete that work, then these forces try to take credit."

After Kejriwal's arrest on March 21st, Delhi Cabinet minister Atishi said that he would continue as the chief minister and run the city government from prison if needed. Kejriwal's Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann also said that the party's supreme cannot be replaced.

Meanwhile, AAP and the Bharatiya Janata Party leaders have been holding protests with Kejriwal's party demanding his release while the latter is pressing for his resignation. Kejriwal has challenged his arrest in court.

PMLA NA if charge not related to scheduled offence

Says SC dismissing review plea

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has dismissed a petition seeking review of its verdict which held that a person cannot be booked under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) by invoking Section 120B of the IPC if the alleged criminal conspiracy was not related to a scheduled offence under PMLA.

Section 120 B of the IPC provides for punishment for a criminal conspiracy.

A bench of justices Abhay S Oka and Pankaj Mithal dismissed the petition seeking review of the November 29, 2023 verdict that also said it is not necessary that a person against whom the offence under Section 3 of the PMLA is alleged must have been shown as the accused in the scheduled offence.

"Applications seeking hearing



of the review petitions in Open Court are rejected. Delay condoned. We have perused the judgement and order dated November 29, 2023, which has been sought to be reviewed. There is no error apparent on the record. Even otherwise, there is no ground for review. Review petitions are dismissed," the bench ordered in its recent order.

On November 29, the top court held, "The offence punish-

able under Section 120 B of the IPC will become a scheduled offence only if the conspiracy alleged is of committing an offence which is specifically included in the Schedule."

In the verdict, the top court had interpreted the provisions of the PMLA and said while giving effect to the legislature's intention, if two reasonable interpretations can be given to a particular provision of a penal statute, the court should generally adopt the interpretation that avoids the imposition of penal consequences.

In other words, a more lenient interpretation of the two needs to be adopted, it had said. "The legislative intent which can be gathered from the definition of the scheduled offence under clause (y) of subsection (1) of section 2 of the PMLA is that every crime which may generate proceeds of crime need not be a scheduled offence.

RK Mission chief Swami Smaranananda passes away

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Ramakrishna Mission president Swami Smaranananda died on Tuesday night due to age-related ailments, doctors treating him said.

Swami Smaranananda, 94, was the 16th president of Ramakrishna Mission, which was founded by Swami Vivekananda.

"Srimat Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj, most revered President Maharaj of the Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission attained Mahasamadhi today at 8.14 pm," said a statement issued by the organisation.

The monk was admitted to the Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan in Kolkata on

January 29 with an existing urinary tract infection. He later developed respiratory failure for which he was put on a ventilator on March 3, doctors said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee paid rich tributes to Swami Smaranananda.

In a post on X, PM Modi said, "He left an indelible mark on countless hearts and minds. His compassion and wisdom will continue to inspire generations." "I had a very close relationship with him over the years. I recall my visit to Belur Math in 2020 when I had interacted with him. A few weeks ago in Kolkata, I had also visited the hospital and enquired about his health," he added.

The chief minister said the



monk would remain the source of solace for millions of devotees across the globe.

"This great monk during his lifetime has given spiritual leadership to the world order of the Ramakrishnaite and remains the source of solace for millions of devotees across the globe," she said.

Ukraine Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba to visit India today: MEA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ukraine's Minister of Foreign Affairs Dmytro Kuleba is slated to arrive here on Thursday for a two-day official visit during which he will have meetings with his Indian counterpart and others to discuss matters related to the bilateral relationship.

His visit comes at the invitation of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

During his visit, Kuleba will have "a number of engagements, including official meetings with External Affairs Minister and Deputy NSA to



discuss matters pertaining to the bilateral partnership and cooperation on regional and global issues of mutual interest," the statement said.

He is also expected to interact with the business community.

Kuleba's visit comes amid the Russia-Ukraine war.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 20 had held separate conversations with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and asserted that dialogue and diplomacy were the way forward for the resolution of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Modi had spoken to Putin over a telephone call to congratulate him for winning a fifth term in office in the recent elections, and followed it up with a phone call to Zelenskyy to convey India's "consistent support" for all efforts for peace and bringing an early end to the ongoing conflict.

Garba's global popularity on the rise: PM Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Garba is a celebration of life, culture and devotion and it is gladdening to note that its global popularity is on the rise, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday.

The traditional dance form of Gujarat was inscribed in the 'Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity' in December.

"Garba is a celebration of life, culture and devotion. It also brings people together. It is gladdening to note that

Garba's global popularity is on the rise!

"Some time ago, Garba found a place in the @UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list. I am glad that the Certificate of Inscription was presented a few days back in Paris.

At the same time, a memorable Garba Night was also held in Paris, which was attended by the Indian community in large numbers," Modi posted on X.

He also shared some photographs of people enjoying garba and a copy of the UNESCO certificate.



AAP's lone MP Rinku joins BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The lone Lok Sabha member of the AAP, Sushil Kumar Rinku, joined the BJP on Wednesday along with Punjab MLA Sheetal Angural, dealing a blow to the party that is already facing a crisis following the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Rinku, the MP from Jalandhar, said he decided to join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for the development of Punjab, especially Jalandhar, and accused the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in the state of not helping him in development endeavours in his constituency. Thus, he could not honour the promises he had made to the voters, Rinku added.

He said he was impressed by the working style of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah and lauded the BJP-led Centre for its development initiatives, including the boost in flight services and launch of new trains to Jalandhar.

"I have no greed for power. I am doing a new experiment for the betterment of Jalandhar," Rinku told reporters at his joining ceremony here.

He and Angural, who was elected to the Punjab Assembly from Jalandhar West, joined the BJP in the presence of Union minister

Hardeep Singh Puri, the party's national general secretary Vinod Tawde and Punjab unit chief Sunil Jakhar.

Rinku quit the Congress to join the AAP last year to contest the bypoll to the Jalandhar Lok Sabha seat. He was a vocal critic of the BJP in the Lower House of Parliament. Rinku was even suspended from the Lok Sabha for his unruly protests.

The BJP is likely to field him in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls as it inducts a number of influential leaders from different political parties in Punjab to emerge as a strong force in the state that has 13 parliamentary constituencies.

Puri and Tawde said the joining of the AAP leaders will boost the BJP following its decision to go it alone in Punjab, which is set to a witness a four-cornered poll contest, with the AAP, Congress and Shiromani Akali Dal being the three other main forces.

Jakhar slammed the AAP, alleging that the excise scam in Punjab is many times bigger than the one in Delhi in which Kejriwal has been arrested. The AAP has failed to fulfil its promises made to people, the BJP leader said.

He said Rinku resigned from the Lok Sabha and AAP before joining the BJP. While Angural has quit the AAP, he will tender his resignation from the Assembly, Jakhar added.



FIRST COLUMN

CHALLENGES TO THE HOLISTIC IDEAL

We often overlook the crucial dimensions of social and moral well-being



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Since ancient times, the medical profession has been considered a noble profession, for its members render a valuable service to mankind by preventing, alleviating, controlling or eliminating disease, pain and suffering. Through the knowledge of the physical body and the laws of health and hygiene, doctors provide patients with measures of great relief and recovery when they are passing through a great physical or mental crisis, are facing the worst of physical troubles or mental tensions or are fighting for life. So, the members of the profession truly needed to be complimented by the society. However, it has been observed lately that many members of the medical profession in this era of increasing urbanisation and the spread of industrial civilisation and technological culture also face the great pressures of materialism and are hard-pressed for time. Being always in a hurry and with the object of providing medicine to the largest possible number of patients within the set time limits, they are now more and more preoccupied with only the physical well-being of their patients, almost overlooking the changes required in the outlook or personality traits of the patients. Even though they know that most diseases are psychosomatic and that the lifestyle, personality traits and behavioural patterns of a person also play a major role in causing stress or trauma or in aggravating the disease, they, for various reasons, do not or cannot pay adequate attention to the social and moral dimensions of health and disease.



The reason for this is that their main attention is on the symptoms and on prescribing suitable medicines. But, if we think deeper, we find that, without controlling, reducing or eliminating the psychic or the behavioural causes, there cannot be any lasting cure for many diseases. Another serious thing that occurs as a result of moral or social ill-health of a person but which is not given serious attention is that not only does the person himself suffer from its evil effects on his body but, as a result of these psychic factors, he causes ill-health to many others also who live with him, work with him or deal with him. For example, a person of an irritable nature, or one who easily loses his temper or is prone to anxiety, not only suffers from avoidable worry and tension but often causes mental tension and anxiety to others also. Worse still is the social strife, family turmoil or political upheaval the moral and social ill-health of a person creates. Hitler, for example, was socially and morally ill and mentally sick. Most of our present-day problems are due to the moral and social ill-health of our citizens, most of them generating a chain reaction and contributing peacelessness to the total atmosphere. So, while doctors talk of holistic health, hypertension, psychosomatic diseases, drug addiction or AIDS, we wish that due attention is also paid to the turmoil caused by one's moral sickness or social illness in the socio-political or socio-economic atmosphere of society.


(The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views are personal)

From addiction to artistry: Painting a new future

Decorative wall painting is transforming the lives of substance users in Manipur and beyond, giving them a purposeful life to the fullest extent

M a n g l e m b a

Ningombam was 29 when he started experimenting with drugs like many of his friends in his village in Imphal, Manipur. When it started to impact their lives, some of them were able to give it up. Ningombam wasn't one of them. Over the next 15 years, this addiction would spin his life into a vicious cycle of highs and lows. Personal crisis and the death of his parents exacerbated his loneliness, leading him to consider ending his life. Fortunately, a local NGO was able to reach out in time and admit him to a drug addiction and rehabilitation centre. This was to change his life forever. While admission to a reha-



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

bilitation centre provided the medical and counselling support to wean him off drugs, it was an innovative intervention conducted here that catalysed the transformation. Implemented jointly by Makers Foundation, a Manipur-based not-for-profit working to empower the alcohol and drug user community, and CADAP, a community-based organisation of drug users, the initiative

Mechanisation needed to tackle farm issues

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food Processing underscores the importance of mechanisation



The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Food Processing insists on the urgent need to increase the mechanisation of farms for small and marginal farmers in India. Their recent report highlights that wholesome mechanisation is not only essential but crucial to overcoming the multifaceted challenges faced by the farming sector, which plays a pivotal role in the country's economy. Despite India's accounts for only 2.4 per cent of the world's geographical area and 4 per cent of its water resources, its farming sector supports 17 per cent of the global population and 15 per cent of the livestock, contributing 20 per cent to the nation's GDP and creating employability to 65 per cent population. Therefore, there is a dire need to enhance productivity and profitability through increased mechanisation among small and marginal farmers and in low mechanisation areas to revitalise Indian agriculture and boosting farmers' incomes requires moving beyond traditional practices to advanced mechanisation.

Status of Mechanisation: Our country's agriculture mechanisation level is below 40 per cent lower than developing nations such as China 60 per cent and Brazil 75 per cent. It is worth noting that agrarian states like Punjab and Haryana had led the green revolution having mechanisation levels around 40 per cent, while in other areas such as the north-eastern states of India, it is negligible. The Committee has pointed out that 86 per cent of the total land holdings are in small and marginal size groups, which require special efforts for their mechanization. They have emphasized that small farmers face significant difficulties in purchasing machinery unless machines appropriate for small holdings are made available or farmland consolidation takes place. It is expected to take another 25 years to reach the level of 75 per cent mechanization. A Catalyst for Growth: The imperative



THE AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED SECTORS, LIKE LIVESTOCK FARMING, DEMAND CONTINUOUS MODERNISATION. THE DIVERSITY IN FARMING, WHETHER LARGE SCALE OR SMALL SCALE, AND RURAL LABOUR SCARCITY NECESSITATE A BROAD SPECTRUM OF AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT

role of farm mechanisation is instrumental in reducing cultivation costs and enhancing productivity through efficient resource utilisation. Experts and committees have highlighted that agricultural mechanisation in India contributes to making judicious and cost-effective use of inputs, leading to savings in seeds by 15-20 per cent, in fertilisers, an improvement in germination rate by 7-25 per cent, savings in time by 20-30 per cent, in weed by 20-40 per cent, in labour by 20-30 per cent, an increase in cropping intensity by 5-20 per cent, and an increase in crop yield by 13-23 per cent. This also helps in the conservation of natural resources like water, soil nutrients, etc.

Farm Machinery Landscape: The agriculture and allied sectors like livestock farming demand continuous modernization. The diversity in farming, whether large-scale or small-scale and rural labour scarcity necessitates a broad spectrum of agricultural equipment. From basic tractors to sophisticated combine harvesters, the sector requires a nuanced understanding of the equipment's specific applications and requirements, spanning feeding equipment, poultry tools, corral systems for cattle and more attributed to the Indian agricultural machinery market is estimated to be worth a whopping US\$16.73 billion in 2024 and is projected to reach an impressive US\$25.15 billion by 2029.

Steps to Propel Mechanisation: First, Establishment of the Directorate of Agricultural Engineering: The parliamentary Committee recommends that to monitor and implement the Government's mechanisation policy effectively and efficiently, a Directorate of Agricultural

Engineering is needed in each state. Currently, it only exists in Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, but the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) is working towards establishing it in all states. Agricultural Engineers are also needed at Block and District Levels as there is no engineering manpower to demonstrate, train, help in repairs/maintenance and guide farmers at their doorstep. Second, Farm Machinery Banks: Since farm machinery is expensive, small farmers find it difficult to purchase it. To address this issue, the Government has introduced custom hiring centres and farm machinery banks in almost all states, where farmers can share machines. However, the benefits of these schemes have not reached the gram panchayat level. Third, Full-fledged Scheme: In September 2022, the Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation was merged with Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, which diluted its mandate. Therefore, the Government should establish a full-fledged Agriculture mechanisation scheme to speed up the process. Fourth, Funding for R&D: The budget allocation for the Research and Development (R&D) of the Farm Mechanisation Scheme has been declining steadily over the past four years, with a significant decrease of 30 per cent from 2019-20 to 2023-24. Fifth, Tax and Duty Incentives: To promote low horsepower tractors, which are mostly used by small and marginal farmers and orchard growers, the tractor and its components attract 12 per cent GST. This means a small tractor costing about Rs 5-7 lakh leads the farmer to pay Rs 60-84 thousand as GST. GST can be reduced to nil or 5 per cent to make it more

affordable for small farmers. Tax and duty incentives are also essential to support manufacturing units in low-mechanisation areas for sustainable growth.

In conclusion we can only agree with the Standing Committee. The Parliamentary Standing Committee stresses the urgent need for enhanced farm mechanisation to support India's small and marginal farmers. Despite its significant agricultural contribution, India's mechanisation levels lag behind global counterparts, hindering productivity and profitability. With 86 per cent of land holdings in small and marginal categories, targeted efforts are crucial. Mechanisation not only reduces costs but also enhances productivity and conserves resources. To drive mechanisation, the committee recommends establishing agricultural engineering directorates, expanding access to farm machinery through banks, revitalising existing schemes, boosting funding for research and development, and offering tax incentives. These measures are essential for revitalising Indian agriculture, increasing farmers' incomes, and ensuring sustainable sectoral growth. By embracing comprehensive mechanisation, India can overcome multifaceted agricultural challenges and secure its position as a global agricultural leader while empowering its farming community.

-The Author is Vice-Chairman of Sonalika ITL Group, Vice-Chairman (Cabinet Minister rank) of the Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board, Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council and President, of Tractor and Mechanisation Association (TMA). Views expressed are personal.

to provide training in decorative wall painting has opened new doors. This skilling has given them a source of livelihood and income and the confidence to overcome stigma, a big barrier to recovery. Most importantly, it has brought hope and belief that a meaningful life without drugs is possible, thus also reducing the chances of drug abuse relapse. Ningombam, who was a part of the first batch of 400 trainees of this decorative wall painting programme started in 2022, is now its salaried lead trainer. Just how life-saving this journey has been can be gauged by the fact that there are more than 1.2 lakh psychoactive substance dependants in Manipur. The state's proximity to the Golden Drug Triangle (Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam) and its large-scale poppy cultivation means easy availability of drugs. It has given Manipur the dubious distinction of having one of the highest prevalence rates in opioid use and an increasing number of drug addicts in the state's rehabilitation centres. Internal conflict and lack of employment opportunities have compounded the problem, leading to a high percentage of relapse among those undergoing rehabilitation. It was this challenge that led to the focus on skill-building as a means to break the chain. Makers Foundation began exploring ways to



build the capacity of the substance-dependent community to become economically empowered once they had completed the treatment course. It hit upon the idea of decorative wall painting and partnered with AkzoNobel, a leading paints and coatings company, to

provide the training. Besides providing the monetary resources for the programme, AkzoNobel, which also runs paint academies for training in decorative painting, joined hands to provide the necessary skills. At the end of the 16-day training in decorative wall

painting, those with potential are selected for an advanced course of 30 days at AkzoNobel Training Centre in Kolkata. It is not just the self-confidence that this intervention has been able to restore among the trainees. It has also been accepted by their families. For Bhimo, 37, learning a new skill and getting a job as a trainer at Makers Foundation helped him not only to stay off his addiction to alcohol but also helped regain the trust, respect and support of his family. When positive impacts like this and the encouraging feedback from the community led to the scale-up of the intervention to Assam last year, Bhimo was sent as a trainer. This

was also in keeping with their Therapeutic Community Model based on the premise that a rehabilitated alcohol/drug user was better equipped to inspire other users to achieve their potential. Though it has been challenging, with 44 per cent of the 6.7 million substance users being adolescents, the initiative has so far trained 200 persons admitted to rehabilitation centres in Assam's Tinsukhia district. Hopefully, this initiative will now be able to empower the many invisible substance-dependent women and girls in need of a helping hand.

(The author is a journalist writing on development and gender. The views expressed are personal)

MONEY MATTERS

Renault to launch four products, expand product portfolio

The Renault Nissan Alliance, a joint venture between automakers Japan-based Nissan and France headquartered Renault would launch four new products in the near future, a top official said here on Wednesday. Renault Nissan Alliance Chairperson Jean-Dominique Senard said India is at the heart of the alliance and every part of car manufacturing happens at the India plant. Renault Nissan Automotive India Pvt Ltd is a joint venture company between Nissan and Renault in India and currently retails five products with two being sold under the Nissan platform and three with the Renault badge. On a short visit to the city, Senard, flanked by Nissan Motor Corporation President and CEO Makoto Uchida and Renault Group CEO Luca de Meo, said March 27th marks the 25th anniversary of the alliance in India. "This is our first visit to India and India will continue to have a major role in our alliance. The alliance has invested USD 1.8 billion so far," he told.



Gold rises Rs 150; silver declines Rs 250

Gold price rose Rs 150 to Rs 67,000 per 10 grams in the local market on Wednesday in line with firm trends globally, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 66,850 per 10 grams. However, silver prices declined by Rs 250 to Rs 77,250 per kg. In the previous close, it had settled at Rs 77,500 per kg. "Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 67,000 per 10 grams, up by Rs 150 from the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the international markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,180 per ounce, up by USD 7 from the previous close. Gold fluctuated within a range as traders avoided fresh directional bets prior to the release of US inflation data later this week, which could potentially influence the country's trajectory towards monetary policy easing, Gandhi added.



Crizac files draft papers for Rs 1,000 cr IPO

Student recruitment solution provider Crizac Ltd has filed preliminary papers with markets regulator Sebi to garner Rs 1,000 crore through an initial public offering. The initial public offering (IPO) is entirely an offer for sale (OFS) by promoters, Pinky Agarwal and Manish Agarwal, with no fresh issue component. The OFS consists of sale of equity shares worth Rs 841 crore by Pinky Agarwal and up to Rs 159 crore by Manish Agarwal. The offer includes a reservation for subscription by eligible employees, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) filed on Tuesday. Since the issue is an OFS, Crizac will not receive any proceeds from the IPO. The Kolkata-based company offers international student recruitment solutions to global institutions of higher education in the United Kingdom, Canada, the Republic of Ireland, Australia and New Zealand. Crizac has established partnerships with leading universities in the UK.



'India can push growth by implementing more reforms'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India can realistically push its economic growth close to 9 per cent from the current 7 per cent or so, by implementing a few more reforms in the next five years, Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission Arvind Panagariya said on Wednesday.

Panagariya said Prime Minister Narendra Modi worked hard over the past 10 years to make India a friendly place for businesses, so investment is coming in.

"Today, the economy is open. In the next 2-3 decades, we can sustain a very rapid growth," he said, while speaking at the Times Now Summit. India's economy grew at better-than-expected 8.4 per cent in the third quarter of FY24 -- the fastest in the past one-and-a-half years.

"India is currently growing in real rupees at about 7 per cent or so per year.

"Certainly with a few more reforms in the next five years,



"Certainly with a few more reforms in the next five years, we can realistically push it to close to 9 per cent, certainly somewhere at 8-9 per cent and that can be sustained easily for a couple of decades."

we can realistically push it to close to 9 per cent, certainly somewhere at 8-9 per cent and that can be sustained easily for a couple of decades," the economist said. Responding to a question on former chief economic adviser Arvind Subramanian saying India's latest gross domestic product (GDP) numbers are 'absolutely mystifying' and difficult to comprehend, Panagariya said, "If you are mystified, then first you have to check, (whether) mist is on your own glasses... or somewhere else."

Panagariya said the methodological change for calculating GDP during the Modi government was recommended by bodies appointed by the previous administration (UPA government).

"Nobody... has questioned the integrity of those who actually do these (GDP) numbers. This is a new kind of phenomenon, which I don't understand," he said.

Panagariya said if critics are saying there is some fault with the methodology of calculating GDP, "they have to come in

and point out about the fault so that we can talk about how to make the improvements".

Subramanian had recently said India's latest GDP numbers are "absolutely mystifying" and difficult to comprehend.

"I want to be honest with you that the latest GDP numbers, I just simply can not understand them.

"I say that with genuine respect and things. They are absolutely mystifying. They don't add up. I don't know what they mean," Subramanian had said.

DLF plans to raise Rs 600 cr through issue of debentures

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Realty firm DLF Ltd is raising Rs 600 crore through issue of non-convertible debentures (NCDs) to investors for refinancing of its existing debts.

In a regulatory filing on Wednesday, DLF informed that the company's wholly owned subsidiary DLF Home Developers Ltd has raised this amount. The Securities Allotment Committee of the Board of Directors of DHDL has approved the allotment of 60,000 NCDs, having face value of Rs 1 lakh each, for an aggregate principal amount of Rs 600 crore on a private placement basis to eligible investors. DLF, the country's largest real estate developer in terms of market capitalisation, did not mention where the amount would be utilised. Sources said the amount will be utilised for refinancing its existing debts.

DLF Group has 215 million square feet of development potential across residential and commercial segments. The group has an annuity portfolio of over 42 million square feet.

Govt plans to borrow Rs 7.5L cr from market

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre is planning to raise Rs 7.5 lakh crore through market borrowing in the April-September period of 2024-25 to fund the revenue gap to push economic growth, the finance ministry said on Wednesday.

Out of gross market borrowing of Rs 14.13 lakh crore estimated for 2024-25, Rs 7.5 lakh crore, or 53 per cent, is planned to be borrowed in the first half (H1), an official statement said.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in interim Budget proposed to borrow Rs 14.13 lakh crore by issuing dated securities to meet revenue shortfall in the next financial year.

This is lower than last year's gross borrowing estimate of Rs 15.43 lakh crore, which was the highest ever.

"The gross and net market borrowings through dated securities during 2024-25 are estimated at Rs 14.13 lakh crore and Rs 11.75 lakh crore, respectively. "Both will be less than that in 2023-24. Now that private investments



The gross and net market borrowings through dated securities during 2024-25 are estimated at Rs 14.13 lakh crore and Rs 11.75 lakh crore, respectively.

are happening at scale, the lower borrowings by the central government will facilitate larger availability of credit for the private sector," she had said. There are signs of private investment picking up in the steel and cement sector due to massive capital expenditure by the government.

Against the estimate of Rs 10 lakh crore for 2023-24, the government has earmarked Rs 11.11 lakh crore during the next year.

2 new platforms for retail, e-commerce players

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Retail software firm ETP Group on Wednesday announced the launch of two new platforms - Ordazle and ETP Unify- in the retail and e-commerce spaces.

Built for both online-only and online-offline retail businesses of all sizes, the two platforms offer capabilities to streamline multiple operations for seamless and consistent customer experiences to drive business growth, the company said.

Stating that the platforms are aimed at tapping the global retail and e-commerce market, ETP Group said it plans to make Ordazle and ETP Unify a key contributor to the USD 3.22 billion global retail and e-commerce software.

"Ordazle and ETP Unify are being simultaneously launched in India. The cloud-native, AI-powered SAAS platforms are built for scale. The platforms offer unmatched scalability and an intuitive user interface that ensures rapid adoption with minimal training time," said Naresh Ahuja, the Chairman and CEO of ETP Group.

REC board approves overall borrowing of Rs 1.6 lakh cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned REC Ltd on Wednesday said its board has approved an overall borrowing limit of Rs 1,60,000 crore for 2024-25.

The board in its meeting held on Wednesday approved a borrowing limit of Rs 1.6 lakh crore, including Rs 1,45,000 bonds and term loans, Rs 5000 crore of short-term loans and Rs 10,000 crore of commercial papers, REC said in a filing.

Funds under the proposed borrowing programme for 2024-25 shall be raised for different maturities, through different instruments, depending upon the actual requirement of funds, asset-liability position and prevailing market conditions, with the approval of Competent Authority, the filing stated.

The Board has approved the amendment in 'Policy on Criteria for determining Materiality of Events or Information for disclosure to Stock Exchanges'.

REC, a non-banking finance company, provides financing to power infrastructure projects in the country. It meets the funding requirements through borrowings.



Sensex rises 526 pts, Nifty ends above 22,100

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex climbed 526 points while Nifty closed above the 22,100 level on Wednesday following buying in banking, auto and oil shares after positive macro data.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 526.01 points or 0.73 per cent to settle at 72,996.31 with 18 of its stocks advancing and 12 closing lower. During the day, it jumped 668.43 points or 0.92 per cent to 73,138.73. The broader Nifty of NSE rebounded by 118.95 points or 0.54 per cent to close at 22,123.65. As many as 22 Nifty shares gained while 27 declined and one closed unchanged.

Auto, banking and energy shares supported the recovery while FMCG and IT shares declined due to profit taking.

Among Sensex shares, Reliance Industries rose the most by 3.6 per cent, adding more than 312 points to the upside. Maruti, Bajaj Finance, Titan, Kotak Mahindra Bank,

Stock-specific actions and positive undercurrents due to a healthy economic growth forecast led the market towards a positive closure.

HDFC Bank, IndusInd Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra and Larsen & Toubro were among the major gainers.

Wipro, HCL Technologies, Nestle, Tata Consultancy Services and Tata Motors were among the laggards.

"Stock-specific actions and positive undercurrents due to a healthy economic growth forecast led the market towards a positive closure. However,

due to the holiday-led truncated week, investors are now focusing on US GDP data tomorrow and next week's RBI policy announcement to gauge market direction.

90% of employees in India highly motivated

PNS ■ MUMBAI

With work seen as a source of meaning and fulfilment, 89 per cent of employees interviewed in India claim to be highly motivated by challenges and extra responsibility, claims a study.

Over 89 per cent of respondents in India claim to be highly motivated by challenges and extra responsibility at work while 84 per cent believe that their managers care and have empathy for them, according to a global study by HR think tank UKG Workforce Institute.

The study was conducted across 10 countries, including India, surveying more than 4,000 employees, including managers and C-suite (top-level) executives.

In India, about three in four employees (72 per cent) respondents say their manager's support, encouragement, and their leadership directly motivate them to go above and beyond in the workplace, the study stated.

Two-fifths of employees (40 per cent) say having a good manager - one who's accessible but doesn't micromanage - makes them feel the most productive at work, it added.

'Growth in range of 7% good for India'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India should be satisfied with the current growth rate unless the external environment improves, Member of Economic Advisory Council to the PM, Sanjeev Sanyal, said on Wednesday, terming economic expansion in the range of 7 per cent perfectly good.

Sanyal further said it was necessary to protect the hard-earned macroeconomic stability. "Now look, it is possible for us to hit double-digit growth, but I would actually be rather careful about it. This whole game is about compounding growth," Sanyal said

while speaking at the Times Now Summit.

India's economy grew at better-than-expected 8.4 per cent in the final three months of 2023, logging the fastest pace in the past one-and-a-half years. The growth rate in October-December helped take the estimate for the current fiscal to 7.6 per cent.

"We should not attempt to grow this economy by anything more than what it is growing now. If the external environment does not dramatically improve, because what will happen then, is that our external accounts will begin to overheat, our inflation will



begin to overheat and so on," Sanyal said.

He noted that the key is not to lose control of macroeconomic stability as it was a very hard-earned thing. "You can only generate very high

rates of growth if the external environment is conducive, otherwise we should be satisfied with what we are doing or even something in the range of 7 per cent is perfectly good," Sanyal said.

According to him, India will choose stability over growth because this game is about compounding this growth rate over 25 years and in fact, 8.4 per cent in the final three months of 2023 is a wonderful surprise.

"Our own forecast was 6.5 per cent to 7 per cent. And if it grows at 7 per cent, we would have been perfectly happy," he said.

DPIIT plans to engage consultant to prepare logistics report for 3 yrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is planning to engage a research firm to prepare the Logistics Ease Across Different States and Union Territories for the next three years.

Every year, the department releases a Logistics Ease Across Different State (LEADS) report, ranking states and Union Territories (UTs) on the basis of their logistics ecosystem and highlights the key logistics-related challenges faced by stakeholders and includes suggestive recommendations.

The index is an indicator of the efficiency of logistical services necessary for promoting exports and economic



growth. The DPIIT has floated a request for proposal for the appointment of consultant for ranking of states on the basis of their logistics efficiency (LEADS report for 2024, 2025, and 2026). "The DPIIT intends to engage a research organisation/consulting or market research firm/academic institution (Consultant) with experience in preparing national/international level reports

based on robust data based analysis in the logistics/transport/infrastructure sector for the period of 36 months to prepare, LEADS reports for 2024, 2025, and 2026," according to the request for proposal document.

The objective of the current assignment for the consultant is to prepare the reports taking into account the methodology developed in the previous versions of LEADS.

The consultant, it said, is expected to review the LEADS methodology, identify potential enhancements, and propose a plan for data collection; and conduct perception-based surveys across the logistics ecosystem in India, developing a sampling frame, survey instruments, and objective data sets.

RBI announces MPC schedule for FY25, first rates decision on April 5

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday announced the schedule for the bi-monthly monetary policy committee meetings for the new fiscal.

The first meeting will be held from April 3-5, while the next will start on June 5, as per an official statement.

Typically, the six-member panel votes on a resolution on the third day of the meeting and the governor announces the decision in

the first half of the day after the vote is completed.

The first two days of the meeting are devoted to deliberations and pre-sentations by subject matter experts to the panel.

The second bi-monthly policy review meeting will end on June 7, the statement said, adding that this will be followed by three-day meetings in August, October, December, and February.

The six-member panel headed by the governor has three external members.



FLO REPORT ON TRANSFORMING INDIA

'Investment of 2.2% of GDP can generate 11 mn jobs'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Direct public investment of 2 per cent of India's GDP can potentially generate 11 million jobs, nearly 70 per cent of which will go to women, according to a report released by Ficci Ladies Organisation (FLO) on Wednesday.

The FLO also unveiled a roadmap for transforming India's care economy, including five key areas, leave policies, care service subsidies, investment in care infrastructure, skill training for care workers, and quality assurance mechanisms.

"In India, the Ministry of Labour and Employment can consider supporting MSMEs and startups financially for maternity leave, revising parental leave policies, and promoting care work leave and flexible work options. This could include introducing market-based financing for leave, such as parental leave insurance. Employers are encouraged to adopt gender-neutral care work leave and flexible work options," Ficci Ladies Organisation (FLO) stated.

It said collaboration between government agencies and



industry bodies can promote these initiatives, especially among smaller businesses, with a focus on monitoring and sharing success stories.

"Evidence from the International Labour

Organisation suggests that increasing investments in the care services sector have the potential to generate 475 million jobs globally by 2030. For India specifically, direct public investment equivalent to 2

per cent of GDP can potentially generate 11 million jobs, nearly 70 per cent of which will go to women," the report said.

In India, care service subsidies and incentives are typically offered through government schemes like Mission Shakti, focusing on women's safety, security, and empowerment. Enhancements to these schemes could involve wider financial support for child-care, elderly care, and long-term care services, particularly in rural and under-served areas.

Underlying the importance of the paid care sector, FLO President Sudha Shivkumar

said, "The paid care sector has to be regularised, it has to be organised, it has to be institutionalised. We need more skilled workers in that space, we need policies, we need very fair norms that govern them, we need insurance to support them".

According to her, the undervaluation and invisibility of care work, predominantly performed by women, has resulted in a market failure, where skilled and talented women are unable to realise their economic potential, leading to a misallocation of resources at the macroeconomic level.

KRITI KHARBANDA'S WEDDING
LEHENGA HONOURS A SPECIAL
WISH BY PULKIT'S LATE MOM



The recent nuptials of actors Kriti Kharbanda and Pulkit Samrat have captivated hearts worldwide, not only for their undeniable chemistry but also for the heartfelt symbolism woven into Kriti's choice of attire. As images from their wedding festivities continue to go viral, each moment captured reveals a story of love, remembrance, and celebration.

Amidst the resplendent hues and intricate designs that adorned the couple throughout their wedding journey, it was Kriti Kharbanda's stunning pink lehenga that garnered particular admiration. However, the significance behind this choice runs deeper than aesthetics alone. Close sources reveal that Pulkit's late mother held a cherished wish for her son's wedding: to see his bride adorned in a pink lehenga, her favorite colour. "Pulkit's mom's favorite colour was pink; she wanted to see Pulkit's bride in a pink lehenga and shared this wish with Kriti," the source disclosed. It was a heartfelt desire rooted in honoring the memory of Pulkit's beloved mother.

Kriti's involvement in the attire selection process further underscored the personal significance of their wedding ensembles. Embracing Pulkit's late mother's wish as a heartfelt blessing, Kriti meticulously ensured that every detail resonated with Indian ethnic charm, guided by the beloved pink hue from the very inception of the planning stages. This thoughtful touch not only paid homage to Pulkit's family legacy but also added a profound layer of meaning to their union, symbolising love, remembrance, and the blending of past and present.

As the world celebrates the union of Kriti Kharbanda and Pulkit Samrat, their wedding serves as a poignant reminder that love transcends boundaries, intertwining with cherished memories to create an everlasting tapestry of joy and affection.



HENRY GAVILL SAVED
ALEX PETTYFER'S LIFE!

Actor Alex Pettyfer recently opened up about a touching incident in which co-star Henry Cavill saved his life while they were filming *The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare*. The film, which was directed by Guy Ritchie, tells the story of the valiant actions of the first British special forces squad during World War II.

Pettyfer conveyed his admiration for Cavill's modest demeanour and diligent work ethic while on set.

Notwithstanding obstacles, Cavill is committed to giving a memorable performance in the movie and solidifying his status as a powerful actor in Hollywood. This endearing story not only high-

lights Cavill's bravery both on and off screen, but it also builds excitement for the upcoming film, which will allow fans to experience the chemistry and friendship between Cavill and Pettyfer for themselves.

The information clarifies Cavill's persona as a kind and considerate coworker, since he went above and beyond to make sure Pettyfer was safe while filming. Pettyfer's comments demonstrate Cavill's professionalism and regard for his fellow actors and crew members, providing a model for all those engaged in the show. Cavill is hoping to bounce back from a string of box office setbacks in recent years, so his next role in *The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare* is important to him. He narrated a story in which, when they were filming a scene together, Cavill prevented him from drowning. Pettyfer expressed his gratitude for Cavill's presence on the shoot while praising Cavill's bravery and fast thinking.

Adarsh Gourav
'overwhelmed'
collaborating
with legendary
director
Ridley Scott

Acclaimed actor Adarsh Gourav, known for his standout performances in films like *The White Tiger*, is currently basking in the exhilaration of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Adarsh is currently shooting in Thailand for the highly anticipated international series *Alien*, under the direction of the legendary filmmaker Ridley Scott.

For Adarsh, collaborating with Ridley Scott is akin to a dream come true. "Ridley Scott is a maverick filmmaker; collaborating with him for *Alien* is something like a dream come true," Gourav expressed with excitement. "Working with the legendary filmmaker is every actor's dream. It's overwhelming, and sharing the same spot with him is a lifetime opportunity."

Alien marks a significant milestone in his acting career, showcasing his versatility and talent on a global platform. Amidst expressing his gratitude for the opportunity to work with Ridley Scott, Adarsh also shared his enthusiasm for the series, hinting at the thrilling journey ahead. Beyond *Alien*, Adarsh Gourav is gearing up for the second season of *Guns and Gulaabs*, further solidifying his presence in Bollywood. Additionally, he has recently completed shooting for *Malegaon ka Superman*, adding yet another feather to his cap.

KARTIK AARYAN TRANSFORMS
HIMSELF INTO *CHANDU CHAMPION* WITH
14 MONTHS OF BOXING TRAINING

Presenting an extraordinary tale, the collaboration between two cinematic powerhouses, Sajid Nadiadwala and Kabir Khan, *Chandu Champion*, emerges as the cinematic spectacle of the year. At it's forefront is the charismatic Kartik Aaryan, who has embarked on a relentless 14-month boxing journey to impeccably portray this remarkable narrative to the world.

Kartik's dedication to his role in *Chandu Champion* is evident in his remarkable transformation, one that was far from easy, demanding rigorous boxing training

over 14 months. He is stepping into such a role for the first time, and is leaving no stone unturned in his pursuit of perfection.

Alongside intense training in the middleweight category, Kartik meticulously tailored his diet, completely eliminating sugar and shedding an impressive 20 kg to embody the physique of a boxer. To enhance the film's authenticity, Kartik immersed himself in the world of professional boxing, sharing the ring with real-world champions.

The anticipation surrounding *Chandu Champion* is palpable, with its compelling storyline, grand scale, and intriguing premise captivating audiences' imaginations.

Jointly produced by Sajid Nadiadwala and Kabir Khan, *Chandu Champion* is poised for a June 14, 2024 release, poised to leave an indelible mark on the hearts of audiences worldwide.



Timothée
Chalamet signs a first-
look deal with Warner Bros

Following the success of *Wonka* and the *Dune* movies, Warner Bros. is staying in the Timothée Chalamet business. The star signed a first look deal with the studio to collaborate on future projects as an actor and producer, Warner Bros. said on Tuesday.

This doesn't mean that Timothée can only make movies with Warner Bros., just that the studio is entitled to a right of first refusal. The terms of the deal were not released, but it is a "multi-year" agreement. Warner Bros. Motion Picture Group co-chairs and CEOs Mike De Luca and Pam Abdy said in a statement that they've admired his "commitment to his craft" and his "unwavering dedication to give 100% of his time and attention to every project he has made."

Timothée, in a statement, said of *De Luca and Abdy*: "These are studio heads who believe in real movie making, and I'm so grateful for their support as an actor, producer, and collaborator. This partnership feels like a natural next step. Let's go!" The 28-year-old recently became the first star in over four decades to be in two top-grossing films released within eight months of each other with *Dune: Part Two*, which has a running box office total of \$575.5 million, and *Wonka*, which made over \$632 million globally. The previous record-holder was John Travolta with *Grease* and *Saturday Night Fever*. Timothée was a producer on Luca Guadagnino's *Bones and All* and is also producing and starring in the upcoming Bob Dylan biopic, *A Complete Unknown*, which is currently filming.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



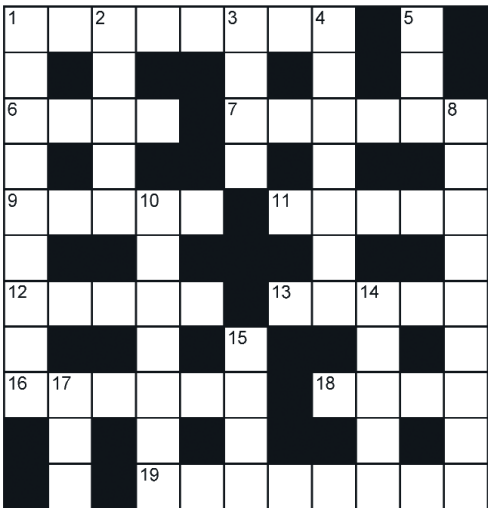
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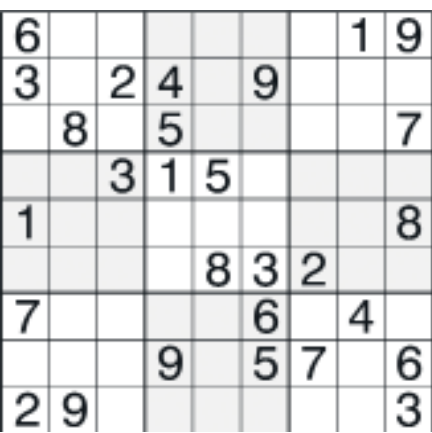
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

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

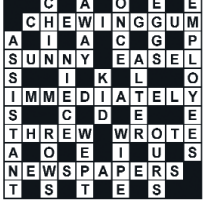
ACROSS

- Nice, enjoyable
- Decays
- An animal with a shell
- Causes pain to
- A witch's power
- Footwear
- A hot drink
- A medical professional
- Lengthy
- Inspected closely

DOWN

- Bought
- Go in
- Takes part in a play

- A violent storm with twisting winds
- Unwell
- Swapped
- Go to see shows here
- A king or queen wears this
- Length x width =
- Not at home



SHIKHA DUGGAL

As the globe struggles with environmental issues, Goodeebag steps forth as a trailblazer determined to transform garbage management and encourage environmentally friendly living. It was founded with a deep vision and steadfast dedication, and is a movement that speaks up for the voiceless people and creatures impacted by toxic waste, including our planet, animals, and the air we breathe.

The founder, Abhishiek Agarwal, is a visionary leader guiding this toward meaningful and sustainable trash management. With a degree from Hyderabad's G. Pulla Reddy Degree College, his journey demonstrates his spirit of entrepreneurship! "Our sustainability movement was born out of a deep-seated desire to solve the urgent problem of waste management in our neighbourhoods in Hyderabad and across. Having seen the harm that traditional garbage disposal techniques cause to the environment and public health, we were motivated to come up with a novel solution that reduces waste while also promoting a sustainable lifestyle. Our approach to garbage management mixes convenience, community involvement, and environmental conscience, setting us unique from traditional waste management options. We want to bring about a paradigm change towards responsible waste management practices by offering educational activities, and doorstep rubbish pickup services."

The goal, he says, is to lead the sustainability movement and speak for the voiceless. Informing all the citizens about the dangers of plastic and simplifying the disposal of waste by raising awareness and providing a digital platform is what the founder is trying to do. Beyond waste management, their vision looks forward to a day when people understand that their garbage can be used as a valuable raw material by industry! "Through community-focused programs, we elevate the voices of those impacted by toxic waste and are translated into concrete actions. By means of seminars, awareness campaigns, and collaborations with grassroots organisations, we proactively involve ourselves with local communities, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and resources to address waste-related issues. Furthermore, we put inclusion first by making sure that under-



served communities have fair access to our resources and networks of support, which encourages a feeling of community ownership and shared accountability for environmental stewardship."

Passionately, Abhishiek ventured into the waste management industry in 2022, hoping to reach important milestones in his mission to teach one crore families about sustainability! "There were several obstacles, such as cultural quirks to overcome when we decided to expand from Hyderabad to other major cities. However, we were able to overcome these obstacles and reach important benchmarks by using flexible management techniques. We collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders, including public and corporate organisations, through advocacy campaigns, policy discussions, and cooperative collaborations. To solve systemic difficulties in waste management, we encourage information exchange, resource sharing."

Goodeebag, which is now having a big impact in Hyderabad, plans to expand to three major cities in the next eight months.

To meet its ambitious target of gathering 2000 tons of plastic, they hope to have an impact on the lives of at least two lakh families by 2024. "As part of this, a proprietary mobile application will be created, allowing users to plan waste pickups, monitor their recycling efforts, and access instructional materials. We also use data analytics and will soon be using IoT devices to track recycling trends in real-time. To further our goals and increase our impact, we have formed a number of alliances. These associations, which involve talks and are almost finalised, are with government agencies, businesses, non-profits, and educational institutions. They

are in different phases of development. We want to increase our influence, share resources. Our continuous collaboration with the Vidya Jyothi Institute of Technology (VJIT) to advance waste management



research and teaching is one noteworthy example. We can empower upcoming sustainability leaders and reach new people by forming such coalitions."

Although there have been few official reactions from the government, private organisations recognise the importance of the program. The challenge is not so much in comprehending the issue as it is in turning aspirations into concrete action! The organisation is unfazed and continues to pursue its goal of bringing about significant change. "We use a combination of community empowerment, and educational programs to solve behaviour change obstacles and encourage eco-conscious behaviour. This includes distributing educational materials, launching campaigns to alter behaviour, and setting up incentive schemes for people and groups who embrace sustainable lifestyles. In order to promote positive behaviour change and establish a sustainable culture, we also use peer-to-peer learning networks, gamification components, and social norms marketing strategies."

As they look to the future, they want to revolutionise waste management on a broader scale and spark a fundamental shift toward sustainable living patterns! In addition, they hope to enable communities to take up the mantle of environmental stewardship. In the end, they see a time when trash is seen as a precious resource that can be recycled, repurposed, and reused within the framework of a circular economy, rather than as an issue that needs to be controlled.



'Oo Antava's feminist take roused Nachiket to design Samantha's costume

TEJAL SINHA

You name a celebrity, and Nachiket Barve would have worked with them. But he has certainly had an exciting journey, of course.

Being grateful for all the steps that have come his way, he had absolutely no fashion background to kind of speak with—not one of those kids who grew up with privilege and luxury or exposure to fashion. It was a very different upbringing. But fashion was something that he had a deep interest in. With luck and hard work, a lot of opportunities opened doors for him. We're also talking about a time about 15-16 years ago when fashion was not so prevalent, but today it is much more ubiquitous, and there is much more understanding and acceptance.

"My family was very supportive of my choices," he recalls as he further adds, "There were many steps along the way—whether it was showcasing at *Fashion Week* for the first time, the conception of the launch of the label, or being able to work in Paris before the big international boom happened in India. It was a bit of risk-taking and a lot of hard work. I think what has helped me along the way is to stick to my own signature and discover and hone my style. The national award was a very big moment because, you know, there are plenty of wonderful awards, but to get one from the President of India herself is a memorable and very proud moment."

But again, at the same time, he feels this is just the beginning of a journey in a certain way because India is changing rapidly, the future is changing rapidly, and one will have so much more to offer to the newer generation, whether they are young millennials or Gen Z. To our surprise, he revealed that he has been very privileged because his first day ever on a film set was with Amitabh and Jaya Bachchan. "I think once you've gone to deal with people who have 100 years of cinematic experience together, it really teaches you a lot. I've learned a lot from them, and it sets you up for the road ahead because you learn from the best. I've been very lucky because all the big stars that I've worked with, whether on *Tanhaji* or with Prabhas, and so many others, have all been wonderful professionals and very warm human beings. Whether it is the biggest task or the smallest, I believe in approaching both with the same level of commitment and

attention to detail," adds the national award-winning fashion designer.

As a designer, the journey that he has had with his label is what he showcased at the recent *Blenders Pride Glassware Fashion NXT Festival*.

His career began to gain momentum after he designed for the senior Bachchans, a Tanishq advertisement! Something that we informed you about earlier in this interview. But you know what? There has been another connection to the work he has had with Big B. His father was the personal physician of the *Shahenshah* of B'town. Thus, there was added pressure on him: "You don't want to disappoint and underperform at the task given to you, and for any creative professional, when you're working with stars of a certain stature, there is definitely added pressure, especially on a costume designer,

because on a set, if that doesn't work, then the whole shoot stalls, so it's a lot of expectation, but it's also wonderful because you step into it as a student and you learn so much about the craft, angles, lighting, and what works on camera with the best teams available and also with stars of such magnitude. I kind of treat that as my introduction to costume design and my first step there."

Nachiket's fashion philosophy is all about timely yet timeless fashion. It's about clothes that you can wear today and clothes you can wear perhaps 10 years later, and he feels that is a wonderful way to make fashion sustainable. In fact, Samantha Ruth Prabhu wears his design in the iconic *Oo Antava* song. She looks stunning, and it's a far cry from what he did in *Tanhaji* or *Adipurush*, for that matter. The team of *Pushpa*, he reveals, reached out to him and asked if he'd like to do something for Samantha. Who'd say no, after all? "I

think that's been the attitude that has kept me in good stead. I was inspired by the song and the lyrics. It was about a feminist take on an special song and how you empower women in that way. So, the inspiration started from a peacock, which is strutting around proudly, taking the colours of that and exploring them on the screen. I am a firm believer in the philosophy of the Gita that says, '*Karm karo fal ki iccha mat karo* (Do your job, but don't do it expecting a certain benefit out of it).' When you're doing a costume for a big star, an outfit for a bride, or something for a song shoot, it's with the intention of doing that job to the best of my ability, as opposed to what I would get out of it. You can't do a job working backward, saying this is the appreciation I'm going to get out. Also, a song like this lets me explore a more 'filmy' side of my personality, which otherwise would not have been brought to the fore with the work I do in the fashion industry," shares the couturier, adding that fashion can empower you, strengthen you, and can also be a mood lifter. True that! Moving ahead, Nachiket was fortunate to work not only in the Hindi film industry but also in regional industries. He feels that when we talk about something being a turning point, each of them has been turning points in their own way. But to name one, "I'd say *Tanhaji* and the national award that came home because that film was definitely a turning point, especially for a designer who has been trained in international fashion or working with a brand like Celine. It's been a very different take, and it really helped me explore a side of me that was untapped till then."

"I think what I do for the fashion label is one part of my brain, and what I do for costumes in films is an entirely different part," he goes on further to explain in this exclusive interview. "A film like *Tanhaji* required, I think, 2 years of pre-production research, so I went across museums all across the country and even abroad. So, whether it was the Salarjung Museum in Hyderabad, the craft museum in Delhi, the Chhatrapati Shivaji Vastu Sangrahalaya Museum in Bombay, the

Victorian Albert Museum in London, or the Kelkar Museum in Pune, extensive research—in fact, even raiding the collections of private families and collectors who had textiles from that era—recreated jewellery using original moulds that were over 400 years old. From the family who actually designed jewellery for the court of Chhatrapati Shivaji. So, it was recreating all of that. It was a lot of work because I was very clear that I wanted the film to look cinematically beautiful but also authentic."

Aging gracefully: Safeguarding kidney injury in the elderly

With progressing age, the risk of kidney injury increases. Kidneys play a pivotal role in overall health and well-being. An in-depth understanding of the factors that increase the risk of kidney injury and adopting proactive preventive strategies for prevention is paramount. Discussed here are the multitude of risk factors associated with kidney injury in the elderly and comprehensive tips for prevention.

Diabetes control: Regular screening for diabetes is essential to detect and manage the condition effectively. Achieving good control of blood sugar levels is crucial for preventing diabetes-related kidney complications.

Hypertension control: Regular home blood pressure monitoring aids in the early detection and management of hypertension. Following a DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) or a diet low in sodium (salts) and is rich in fresh fruits, vegetables, beans, and legumes, and fat-free or with heart-healthy oils and consistently taking prescribed medications is vital for maintaining optimal blood pressure levels.

Hyperlipidemia management: Annual lipid profile screenings help in monitoring cholesterol levels. Consistent use of prescribed medications assists in controlling lipid levels, reducing the risk of kidney injury.

Combating obesity: Weight loss strategies, regular exercise, and lifestyle modifications are instrumental in preventing kidney injury associated with obesity.

Polypharmacy awareness: Consulting physicians to identify potential drug interactions and nephrotoxic medications is crucial for minimizing the risk of kidney damage.

Addressing ischemic events: Seeking medical attention for symptoms indicative of ischemia helps preventing kidney injury.

Management of anemia: Monitoring for symptoms of anemia and undergoing relevant tests enable early detection and management, safeguarding kidney health.

Smoking and alcohol cessation: Quitting smoking and alcohol consumption reduces the risk of atherosclerosis, heart disease, and subsequent kidney injury.

Identification and management of nephrotoxic medications: Identifying and discontinuing nephrotoxic medications are vital steps in kidney injury prevention.

Avoidance of alternate medicines containing heavy metals: Avoiding of alternative medicines containing heavy metals is essential to prevent kidney damage.

Pre-existing CKD management: Monitoring pre-existing chronic kidney disease and adhering to prescribed treatments are crucial for preventing further renal deterioration.

Cardiovascular disease management: Proper management of cardiovascular diseases through medication adherence and lifestyle modifications preserves kidney function.

Liver disease management: Ceasing alcohol consumption and treating associated infections is vital for kidney health in individuals with liver disease.

Early detection of obstructive symptoms: Early detection and management of obstructive symptoms prevent kidney injury.

Vigilance for Myeloma: Suspicion of myeloma in unexplained kidney injury underscores the importance of thorough evaluation for timely intervention.

Minimising radiocontrast dye usage: Reducing the amount of radiocontrast dye used and opting for safer alternatives mitigate the risk of kidney injury.

Post-procedural monitoring: Vigilant monitoring for kidney injury post-cardiovascular and vascular procedures is crucial for timely intervention.

Addressing dementia and social factors: Addressing medication compliance issues in individuals with dementia and seeking familial support are essential for maintaining kidney health.

Nutritional awareness: Detecting signs of malnutrition and addressing nutritional deficiencies are vital for overall health, including kidney function.

(The author, Dr Krishna Reddy, is a Consultant - Nephrologist, at Manipal Hospital.)



National award-winning fashion designer Nachiket Barve, who has worked with several celebrities, right from Amitabh Bachchan to Saif Ali Khan, Kriti Sanon, Prabhas, and Samantha, gets candid with *The Pioneer* about his journey and more about mastering the skills in the films.



PANT AIMS TO SHAKE OFF RUSTINESS

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Skipper Rishabh Pant will look to overcome his rustiness as Delhi Capitals aim for an improved batting display in their bid for a first win of the IPL season when they take on Rajasthan Royals here on Thursday.

Pant's much-anticipated return to action 453 days after he suffered grievous injuries in a horrific car accident, lasted just 13 balls (18 runs) with Punjab Kings winning by four wickets at their new home ground in Mullanpur.

Pant, though, displayed his usual lively demeanour behind the stumps and also effected the stumping of Jitesh Sharma. Having overcome the early jitters and nervousness in his first game, Pant would be eager to regain his mojo quickly as his match-up against the likes of Trent Boult, Ravichandran Ashwin and Yuzvendra Chahal would be the highlight of the contest.

"It's exciting to have your captain back in the team. He is

our leader and heartbeat of this franchise and having him back is going to make this team a lot stronger," head coach Ricky Ponting had said of Pant ahead of the IPL.

Ponting chose David Warner and Mitchell Marsh to open the innings in the hope that the duo would score enough runs to take the pressure off Pant lower down the order. But the two failed to capitalise on good starts and the pressure soon came on Pant.

Wicketkeeper-batter Abhishek Porel's unbeaten 32-run cameo was the only bright spot in DC's batting, which lifted them to a respectable 174/9 from a precarious 138/7 at one stage.

Porel was used as an impact player as Delhi were a bowler short. The problem was worsened further after Ishant Sharma twisted his ankle. The lanky pacer could miss a few matches as well.

Delhi's spin duo of Kuldeep Yadav and Axar Patel will have a bigger role to play after what was witnessed on a dry surface at the Sawai Mansingh



Stadium the other day when Rajasthan Royals' opening duo of Jos Buttler and Yashasvi Jaiswal faced some early hiccups against Lucknow Super Giants.

However, Sanju Samson struck an unbeaten 82 as the Royals won by 20 runs. By scoring a fifty in his team's first match of the season for the fifth successive time, Samson has become an early contender for the hotly-contested spot for the wicketkeeper-batter's slot in the upcoming T20 World Cup.

With Riyan Parag also among the runs, the Royals top-four will pose questions to the Delhi bowling lineup, and here's where Kuldeep and Axar's overs will be crucial in the middle.

The Royals' bowling has also hit the right notes with Trent Boult leading the charge with the new ball. Sandeep Sharma has also been superb in the death overs.

The rookie Indian dismissed KL Rahul at 58 in the 17th over and also stymied Nicholas

Pooran in the penultimate over as RR restricted Lucknow Super Giants to 173/6.

SQUADS:

Rajasthan Royals: Sanju Samson (c), Abid Mushtaq, Avesh Khan, Dhruv Jurel, Donovan Ferreira, Jos Buttler, Kuldeep Sin, Kunal Singh Rathore, Nandre Burger, Navdeep Saini, Prasad Krishna, Ravichandran Ashwin, Riyan Parag, Sandeep Sharma, Shimron Hetmyer, Shubham Dubey, Rovman Powell, Tom Kohler-Cadmore, Trent Boult, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Yuzvendra Chahal and Tanush Kotian.

Delhi Capitals: Rishabh Pant (c), David Warner, Prithvi Shaw, Yash Dhill, Abishek Porel, Axar Patel, Lalit Yadav, Mitchell Marsh, Pravin Dubey, Vicky Ostwal, Anrich Nortje, Kuldeep Yadav, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Khaleel Ahmed, Ishant Sharma, Mukesh Kumar, Tristan Stubbs, Ricky Bhui, Kumar Kushagra, Rasikh Dar, Jhye Richardson, Sumit Kumar, Swastik Chikara and Shai Hope.

Want to remain fit to play all three formats for Windies: Shamar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

He is only 24, has endured a tough life growing up and is currently raising two toddlers with a young partner. One can't possibly blame Shamar Joseph for wanting the best of both worlds — "play all three formats for the West Indies" and also remain fit enough to ply his trade across the globe in franchise cricket.

Joseph has logged woods in the nondescript Guyanese village of Baracara, worked as a construction labourer at building sites before spending half a day as a security guard, a secure future for his family is all that he desires.

So, like a lot of West Indies players, who crisscross the globe playing IPL one day and Big Bash the next, Joseph too wants the best of both worlds.

"Look I haven't made up my mind (if preference given)," the pace sensation, who has come in as a replacement for England pacer Mark Wood in Lucknow Super Giants team, told PTI in an interview.

The hero of West Indies' recent Test win in Australia, who played through pain with a broken toe, feels that in the next few years, it his fitness will determine the workload he can take.

"I will like to play around the world to enhance my skills but if there are other opportunities (T20 Leagues), I will make myself available," Joseph said, adding, "...And I have confidence in my fitness and that won't be a problem for me."

"Definitely my fitness will be important since I have a long career ahead of mine, I would definitely like to play all three



formats for the West Indies whenever I am available. I will definitely make that time for them," said the youngster.

He has played only two T20 matches for Guyana Amazon Warriors in his short and eventful career so far but IPL will give him an opportunity to learn the tricks of the trade.

"It is a transformation from red ball to white ball cricket. There will be other (technical) changes and I get to learn from every opportunity that I get. I enjoyed playing Tests and now I will look to improve my white ball game."

"I am talking to all the experienced players, who are seniors and have played a certain amount of IPL, learning from them and enjoying being in the moment," said the soft-spoken fast bowler.

His senior Kemar Roach, who has played a few seasons of IPL

previously, did give him an idea of what to expect in January but back then, he had gone unsold.

But after the Australia series, even legends like Courtney Walsh and Curtly Ambrose have said good things about him.

"Definitely, Kemar and I had a lot of conversations about IPL when we were in Australia. Ambrose, after the (Australia) Tests, also gave me some good advice.

"Courtney Walsh, there have been words of encouragement from all these greats which will help me going forward," he added.

Having seen extreme poverty in Baracara to enjoying the financial windfall that comes with the IPL, Joseph has indeed come a long way.

"Life has been great so far. There has been all sorts of kind comments. It is my performance that brought me here. Happy to be here."

However, he remains a country boy at heart.

"I am always aware where I came from. I still remain a country boy and nothing changes for me. Yes, I will go with the flow but being a superstar doesn't change anything for me and it has been the same life," Joseph said.

Joseph is happy to have Justin Langer around, someone who has taken keen interest in his exploits since the tour of Australia.

"It is always great to be among legends and players who inspire you like KL (Rahul), our skipper and Justin Langer our head coach, he is an amazing person. He has talked to me and advised me from the Australian series.

Dhoni advised me to play my natural game: Rizvi

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings batter Sameer Rizvi has credited Mahendra Singh Dhoni for his brief but impactful knock in his first IPL match, saying the talismanic former India skipper advised him to play his natural game when he went out to bat against Gujarat Titans.

Against GT here on Tuesday night, Rizvi played a cameo of six-ball 14-run knock, which included two sixes against Rashid Khan.

"Bhaiya (Dhoni) told me to play how I generally play since it is all about the actual gameplay. He (Dhoni) said, 'There is nothing different. Skills remain the same, and it's all just about mindset. Never take any pressure or be



nervous, and play as per the situation," he said in a video on IPLT20.Com.

Rizvi recalled the moment he was picked up by the franchise during the auction ahead of the season for a whopping Rs 8.4 crore, as he felt that his dream of meeting Dhoni will eventually come true.

"When I was picked up during

the auction by CSK, my greatest happiness was my dream to meet Bhaiya (MS Dhoni) would be fulfilled. We also had net sessions together and got to learn a lot from him and the (support) staff. I intend to learn more and perform to the fullest."

Having played cricket for Uttar Pradesh, he has decent T20 numbers, scoring 309 runs in 10 innings at a strike rate of 137.33, including two half-centuries.

Speaking about his jersey number, the 20-year-old Meerut batter said, "My jersey number is seven, which is currently worn by Bhaiya and I can't get it. So, I liked the number 1, and I took it."

Rizvi also talked about the positive atmosphere in the CSK dressing room.

Dube no longer ducks, defends against short ball

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings batting coach Mike Hussey is in awe of Shivam Dube for transforming into a batter who no longer ducks or defends when faced with the short ball, an improvement that has been monitored personally by former captain and team talisman Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

The 30-year-old Dube was the top-scorer for CSK on Tuesday, striking a 23-ball 51 that included two fours and five sixes at a strike rate of 221.74. The side won by 63 runs against Gujarat Titans.

"Got to give a lot of credit to Dube for working



given it back to the bowlers, forcing them to try something new. It will benefit him in the IPL, and also if he gets a chance to play for his country, it will do him a lot of good," said Hussey.

tirelessly against the short ball, an area he needed to improve on. Hats off to him, and he is playing with confidence now. He is also dangerous against the spin.

"As the teams bowled short balls at him a few years ago, he would only duck and defend. Now, not only he can play the short ones, but he is also able to find boundaries.

"So, that's a testament to the work that he has put in and has given it back to the bowlers, forcing them to try something new. It will benefit him in the IPL, and also if he gets a chance to play for his country, it will do him a lot of good," said Hussey.



Any team is bound to miss a bowler like Shami: Mohit

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Gujarat Titans pace bowler Mohit Sharma conceded it was hard to replace a bowler of the calibre of Mohammed Shami as his team succumbed to a massive 63-run defeat at the hands of reigning IPL champions Chennai Super Kings here.

India's premier pacer Shami is sitting out of the IPL as he is recuperating from an ankle surgery. He is expected to make his comeback with the home Test series against Bangladesh later this year after missing the five-Test series against England. Shami will also miss the T20 World Cup to be jointly hosted by the West Indies and the USA in June.

"Any team is bound to miss a bowler like Shami, and you can't replace him with anyone. But injuries are uncontrollable, and you must see how to move ahead with it," said Sharma, who played for CSK between 2013 and 2015 and has been with the Titans since 2022, during the post-match press conference.

"As for GT, it's the first year for Spencer (Johnson) and Azmatullah (Omarzai). They haven't played much cricket yet. Therefore, we must be patient with them and not become too result-oriented.

"We must not bother about the runs leaked or the result of the contest, but how successful we are with our plans and how we are working on it backstage. These things would come in handy in the second half (of the event)," opined Sharma.

CSK posted a huge 206 for six, with openers Ruturaj Gaikwad (36) and Rachin Ravindra (46) being the stars alongside Shivam Dube (51). GT bowlers took a lot of beating with Umesh Yadav going for 27 in two overs, while the crafty Afghanistan ace spinner Rashid Khan went for 49 in four overs although he took a couple of wickets.

Sharma added that CSK milking runs in powerplay also contributed to the big loss.

"Not much of a difference (in CSK's strategy). It used to be the same when I used to play for CSK, and we usually tried to get the maximum out of the powerplay overs," he said. CSK were 69 for 1 after powerplay overs. "We knew it was going to be a similar scenario, especially with Rachin (Ravindra's) batting of late. However, we failed to execute our plans properly and also failed to judge the width and

length during our bowling.

"We failed in executing our plans properly. We began to bowl the slower ones too early and too wide off the off stump, leading to them scoring freely. It happens that the plans always don't get executed properly every time.

"But it's a big tournament, and we have ample time to go back to the drawing board, rectify our mistakes and start afresh.

"We had a target of 200 as the par score on this wicket, and CSK played just the way we had thought. They were on course for 225-230 before settling for 206, but since we failed to implement our plans, we believed we gave away 15-20 runs extra."

Sharma also defended the visitors' decision to bowl first, stating that dew is always a factor in night games, though, interestingly, there was hardly any dew on Tuesday night.

"Don't think the pitch has a role to play. Generally, if we win the toss and decide to bowl, it's because we know that the dew might play a factor later during the game.

"But, there was no dew (Tuesday). As usual, we decided to bowl and restrict them to a par total, while dew would have been an added positive for us.

"Had the wicket been drier, CSK would have moved in with two spinners. But, had the (GT) pacers bowled in the right areas, it would have been tough for them to hit," he considered.

'WON'T SAY WE FAILED TO SCORE RUNS, BUT CREDIT TO CSK BOWLERS': Despite the 63-run loss, Mohit refused to blame the batters for the poor show. CSK bowlers implemented their plan to perfection to restrict GT to 143/8 with Sai Sudharsan (37) being GT's top scorer.

"I won't say we failed to score runs, but credit to the CSK bowlers for bowling brilliantly. Deepak (Chahar) started well, and at the end of the day, it all boils down to the number of variations you possess and when and how to use them.

"Don't think it was a pressure scenario for us. The wicket was good, and 200 was a gettable total here.

"But the wickets that we lost initially, leading to lack of partnerships, followed by CSK bowlers bowling the right length, led to our inability to up the run rate, and we began lagging in every over," he signed off.

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former India cricketer Manoj Tiwary expects Mumbai Indians captain Hardik Pandya to be booed a "bit louder" when the team plays its first home IPL game here on April 1 but he feels that the flamboyant all-rounder has the temperament to deal with it.

Pandya, who replaced Rohit Sharma as MI captain before the start of the season, was booed by fans in Ahmedabad when the side played against his former franchise Gujarat Titans on Sunday.

MI lost the match by six runs and will take on Rajasthan Royals in their first home game at the Wankhede Stadium here on Monday next week.

"...You have to see how he gets welcomed here in Mumbai because I think he is going to get booed a bit louder here...Because as a fan, Mumbai fan or a Rohit Sharma fan, nobody expected that captaincy will be given to Hardik," Tiwary told PTI Videos in an interview.

"And despite Rohit giving five trophies to Mumbai Indians, he has to lose the captaincy. I don't know what are the reasons but I think it has not gone down well with the fans. And that is the reaction which you see on the field," he explained.

Tiwary is, however, impressed with how Pandya has dealt with fan backlash.

"...Knowing him, whatever I have been observing of late through television, that despite getting booed, he kept his calm, he kept his nerve, which is the sign of a good

Pandya will be booed louder in Mumbai but his temperament impressive: Tiwary



temperament," he said.

The 38-year-old, who is the sports minister of West Bengal, said Pandya will have to cut out the noise and focus on his performance so that he is in good shape for the T20 World Cup starting June 1 in the Americas.

"I believe even if he was not booed, he

has to perform well to get into the Indian team to play the World cup. Because it is important for all the players to perform well and be fit as well to be available for selection.

"And him being the number one all-rounder...Obviously he has to be in form and to be in form he has to

perform," he said.

Tiwary competed for the Delhi franchise in the IPL and he is keenly observing how his former team is handling Rishabh Pant's comeback from a life-threatening car accident in 2022.

He believes the big-hitter would be



SINGER ANURADHA JUJU, WHO RECENTLY RELEASED HER LATEST SINGLE MITWA, GETS CANDID WITH THE PIONEER, SHARING ABOUT THE SONG, HER SOUTH STINT, AND MORE.



'SINGING IN A MOVIE IS A DREAM FOR ANY ARTIST, AND I AM NO EXCEPTION'

K. RAMYA SREE

Born into a South Indian family and having started her journey as a playback singer in the Kannada film industry, Anuradha Juju has done a solid amount of work in the South Indian film industry before doing some independent music. Her independent music scene is very lit now, with many successful songs to her credit.

Speaking to *The Pioneer* after the release of her latest single *Mitwa*, starring the late legendary Ustad Rashid Khan and Anuradha herself, the singer confessed to us that it was legendary actor Rajkumar who first heard her voice and encouraged her to pursue her music career. Narrating her journey in south Indian music, Anuradha shared, "I'm a South Indian, but I grew up in New Delhi. In 1988, I started my journey as a playback singer in a Kannada movie called *Rana Ranga*, composed by Hamsalekha. The legendary actor Rajkumar heard me sing and encouraged me to pursue playback singing in South Indian movies. Unfortunately, we left India in 1989 due to my husband's entrepreneurial journey. However, I returned to singing when I sang for a Telugu movie called *Ashita Chamma*, composed by Keeravani's brother. Afterward, I focused on South Asian music, incorporating my Carnatic music training into various performances and events."

There was a break in her career in singing for South Indian films, but Anuradha expressed that she is still willing to work in the South Indian music industry. "I'm open to opportunities if approached. However, I believe music is evolving beyond cinema, with

many independent artists creating original content. While I cherish the experience of singing for movies, I also enjoy performing live and collaborating with renowned artists like Vijay Prakash. In India, many artists are producing their own music, akin to the Western trend. This diversification is fantastic, and I encourage it. Music shouldn't solely be associated with cinema. If anyone approaches me to sing for a movie, be it Indian or South Indian cinema, I would be thrilled. I had the opportunity to perform with Vijay Prakash on stage last year, and I would love to sing for a South Indian movie. Singing in a movie is a dream for any artist, and I am no exception. So, absolutely, I am open to it," she added.

Taking us back to the 1990s and early 2000s, she recalled, "When it comes to memorable moments in the South Indian industry, recording my first playback song for a Kannada movie stands out. Initially, I was supposed to sing with SPB Bala Subramaniam, but during the recording, actor Dr. Shivaraj Rajkumar, a prominent figure in the Kannada film industry, expressed his desire to join me, despite not being a singer himself. It was quite interesting to record alongside him. Despite feeling nervous at the age of 20 or 21, I found comfort in the support of legends like Rajkumar and his son, Dr. Shivaraj Kumar. Singing in a recording studio for the first time was truly a memorable experience for me." She continued, "When it comes to South Indian directors, the top name that comes to mind is A.R. Rahman Saab, who is brilliant. Additionally, there's Arun, who directed the song *Tamma Tamma*, and he also worked on the recent Shah Rukh Khan movie *Jawan*."

She strongly believes that music shouldn't be associated with just cinema, and that is why she began doing independent music with some of the finest vocalists we have in India. The interviewee shares her experience with Ustad Rashid Khan, a talented Indian classical artist, with whom they collaborated for *Mitwa*: "I met him

last year when he performed in Boston for *Mithaz*, an MIT non-profit organisation promoting Indian classical music from South Asia, and I invited him for this song. Despite my background in semi-classical and Bollywood styles, Ustad was open-minded and appreciated the song, which was based on the classical raga *Bhin Nishadhai*."

While the very talented Ustad is not around now, his memories will live with us. It was very shocking for Anuradha as well to process the death of Ustad, and she reminisces, "Although I never imagined he would leave us so suddenly. We were eagerly anticipating the release of the song with him. He was like a bright sun shining upon me, and I felt immensely honoured and privileged. As a relatively small artist, I hoped to share in his glory. Sadly, he's no longer with us, which is the most crushing part. However, I find joy in knowing that I was part of his final project. It's now my responsibility to ensure that his last work reaches the world, and I feel the weight of this responsibility on my shoulders."

Speaking about the song, "*Mitwa* means "a friend." The song evolved to incorporate a love aspect, focusing on finding a soulmate. I aimed to depict a mature love story, not centered on young protagonists, but on dedicated artists consumed by their craft. The song's rhythms inspired the inclusion of a classical dancer and vocalist, portraying a story of how two artists meet, bond over their art, and discover love. Anuradha is next doing a project called *He Shaaarde*, a prayer dedicated to Goddess Saraswati, the deity of education and art, a fact that seems to be fading from people's memory. I aim to have this prayer sung by children and others in Indian schools to ensure the teaching of Indian classical music basics up to middle school. Another significant project of mine is an operatic movement depicting the story of 'Jatayu', focusing on his brave stand against Ravana during Sita's kidnapping, along with several others in the pipeline," she concluded.

FAMILY STAR DOP: I'VE NOT REFERRED MY DAUGHTER MALVIKA FOR ANY FILM

K. RAMYA SREE

On Wednesday, Vijay Deverakonda and producer Dil Raju performed a 'homam' at Dil Raju's office ahead of Vijay's *Family Star* release, on which the actor pinned many hopes.

Meanwhile, we have with us DOP KU Mohanan of *Family Star* speak about the making of the film. For those unaware of Ku Mohanan, he is the man behind the lens of films like *Don*, *Talash*, and *Andhadhun*. He also provided cinematography for Mahesh Babu's *Maharshi*.

He has now come on board with his cinematic prowess for *Family Star*, directed by Parasuram Patla, starring Mrunal Thakur as the female lead. And according to him, *Family Star* was a beautiful movie. "This is the story of a man from the middle class's tale. He sent a positive message with what he did for the family. The colony set is where we shot. I tried to capture the naturalness of the tale and the people in the images. Absent drone footage. For the family star, no superfluous photo shoots were shot. Additionally, the lighting is natural. However, the images appear as stunning as they should when viewing the film. It seems like our house when we watch a middle-class home on TV. The backdrop of this

film was produced by director Parasuram using a straightforward setup. Mrunal and Vijay gave me a lot of support. Filmmaking requires collaboration, therefore, crew members and artists assist one another," shared the DoP, who learned the art of cinematography from watching World Cinema. "We all watched commercial, larger than life movies. That's why we want the visuals to be more natural in terms of cinematography. I use new equipment for films only if it is necessary," he added.


Speaking of *Family Star*, he added that it is a movie that talks about family values, which we are neglecting. "India has transitioned to a nuclear family society. In this day and age, this film explores the relevance of our traditional family values. A familial tale from India. It contains a lovely love tale as well. This film was directed by Parasuram and has a distinct concept, attempted a novel approach. In it, he also demonstrated business fea-

tures. Parasuram was pleased with the way I worked. How much of a hit this movie will be is beyond me; it is impossible for the public to forecast how a movie will be regarded. Sometimes unremarkable films turn into huge hits, while other times, really good films don't do well at all." The cinematographer's daughter, Malvika, too, has made her debut as a heroine in Tollywood. She also worked with Pa Ranjith for *Thangalan*.

Speaking of it, he shared, "Malavika, my daughter, has become well-known. Her name is not one I've suggested for a film. If you believe doing so would be incorrect. She must demonstrate her acting ability. Malavika's reputation will improve thanks to the Pa Ranjith and Vikram film *Thangalan*. Although I contributed to the film *The Goat Life of Aadu Jeevitam*, I left the project because of how lengthy the film's production took."

Young pan-India star Raashii Khanna recently delivered an intriguing performance in the Sidharth Malhotra starrer *Yodha*. While the actress is looking forward to exploring her acting prowess by delving into varied genres, Raashii wants more opportunities to perform action on screen. The versatile powerhouse said she wants to be part of actioners, where she gets to "transform through intense physical training and learn some amazing fight choreography." Raashii's wishlist doesn't stop here, as she also wants to play a mythological character on screen! "I would love to play a character like Anushka Shetty from *Baahubali*," shared Raashii, adding, "With *Yodha*, I got to be a part of an actioner but didn't get an opportunity to perform action on-screen. So, I want to be a part of an action team where I get to go through intense physical training to get the physicality of my character right. I also want to learn and perform some amazing fight choreography on-screen. I am waiting for one such opportunity to come my way. I am sure it will be very exciting."

After receiving a heap of praise for her portrayal of a government official in *Yodha*, it looks like Raashii is gearing up to deliver performances that will establish her as a rising superstar. The versatile actress, on the work front, is currently looking forward to several interesting projects. The young pan-India star will be seen in *The Sabarmati Report* and *TME* with Vikrant Massey. She also has the Tamil film *Aaramanai 4* and the Telugu film *Telusu Kada* to her credit.






'Those who don't like movies will also like Kaliyugam Pattanamlo,' says Producer

Just yesterday, we were informed about why actor Vishva has come on board the project *Kaliyugam Pattanamlo*, directed by Ramakanth Reddy. The film, releasing tomorrow, is very busy promoting itself.

Speaking at one of the promotional events on Wednesday, producer Dr. Kandula Chandra Obul Reddy said, "I'm running engineering colleges as an educationist. I founded Nani Movie Works with the intention of providing a platform for the passion of talented people. I wanted to show the town where I grew up. I really liked the story told by Ramakanth Reddy. But the director said that the budget would be high. However, we have come forward to produce the movie. Even those who don't like movies were surprised when they saw our teaser and trailer. After this movie, many producers will give a chance to Ramakanth and such newcomers. Vishva Karthikeya always thinks about cinema. This is Ayushi Patel's first movie. I said that she would fit the role well when I saw her. All the best to the entire team. Everyone should watch our film in the theater on March 29."

People Media Factory backs Gopichand's film with Sreenu Vaitla

Renowned distributor and exhibitor Venu Donepudi's first production is the high-octane action entertainment #Gopichand32, directed by Sreenu Vaitla and starring Macho Star Gopichand. Chitralayam Studios and People Media Factory, work together. TG Vishwa Prasad becomes a producing partner in the film. The film's new shooting schedule commences on March 27. In this schedule, some crucial sequences involving the lead cast will be canned. With this, the entire talkie part will be completed. Sreenu Vaitla is presenting Gopichand in a new avatar in the movie. Gopi Mohan, who was associated with various blockbusters in Sreenu Vaitla, has written the screenplay. KV Guhan will crank the camera, whereas Chaitan Bharadwaj will helm the music department. The film's heroine and other details will be revealed soon.



Naveen Chandra: I spent around 100 days working on Inspector Rishi

Actor Naveen Chandra, a renowned figure in Tollywood, is back to entertain the south Indian audience with his Amazon Prime original series, *Inspector Rishi*, also starring Sunaina, Kanna Ravi, Srikrishna Dayal, Malini Jeevaratnam, and Kumar Vale in key roles. Directed by Nandini J.S. and produced by Sukh Dev Lahiri, the series is available for streaming tomorrow in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and Hindi. Promotions for the film are in full swing.

Hero Naveen Chandra said, "It's been a long time since I created any scary content. I was intrigued to see why not to create the *Inspector Rishi* web series after hearing about its plot, which I believed had elements of horror, thriller, suspense, and action. Do you think you're lucky to have met someone like that? In addition to this tale, my character has other facets. This horror-thriller series is going to be unique. I spent around 100 days working on this series. Because I had so many combo sequences



Siddharth, Aditi Rao Hydari ENTER THE WEDLOCK?

Actors Siddharth and Aditi Rao Hydari's relationship has been talked out for a long time, despite no confirmation made about their relationship. Having been spotted several times together, the duo never made their relationship official. They have always kept their relationship official. Meanwhile, according to a tweet made by a Tollywood PRO, it has been learned that the actor duo have tied the knot in a temple in Telangana.

A Tollywood PRO tweeted, "Congrats to Siddharth and Aditi Rao Hydari on tying the knot today! Wishing you both a lifetime of love and happiness." On the set of the Telugu-Tamil movie *Maha Samudram*, where Siddharth and Aditi Rao costarred, love began to blossom between them. Their bond did not deteriorate, even if they did not appear on screen together again following the movie. Fans can't help but be in awe of the couple whenever they are sighted together, since they both exude happiness and serenity. However, at the time of writing this report, no official confirmation has been made.



A DIVINE TREAT ON RAM CHARAN'S B'DAY

Celebrating actor Ram Charan's birthday, the makers of his upcoming film *Game Changer* released a song from the film, *Jaragandi*. The song has gained a lot of attention on social media, as his film has long been pending after the inception of the Ram Charan-Shankar film. The song's viral success on social media has added to the excitement surrounding the film.

The song is a captivating blend of passion and excitement, expertly performed by Sunidhi Chauhan and the renowned Punjabi pop vocalist Daler Mehndi. The song has a vibrant dance

rhythm thanks to Thaman's catchy sounds, which are expertly matched by Prabhu Deva's amazing choreography—also referred to as the Indian Michael Jackson. With their incredible dancing skills, Ram Charan and the gorgeous Kiara Advani are sure to enthrall spectators.

Meanwhile, the celebrity couple Ram Charan and Upasana Kamineni Konidela have visited Tirumala to seek the blessings of Lord Venkateswara. The heartfelt lyrics, penned by Ananth Sriram, combined with the vibrant visuals and Prabhu Deva's choreography create an enchanting visual experience for fans. The star-studded cast of *Game Changer*, including Kiara Advani, Anjali, SJ Suryah, Jayaram, Sunil, Srikanth, Samuthirakani, and Nassar, further amplifies the excitement surrounding the film.

