

Agriculture Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu highlighted farming as the backbone of the State's economy and underscored the government's commitment to supporting farmers.

Anitha hails Rs 8,495 cr for Home Ministry

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Home Minister V. Anitha has welcomed the allocation of Rs 8,495 crore for the Home Department in the 2024-25 budget, asserting that the Budget reflects a strong commitment to development and welfare.

Speaking in response to the budgetary allocations on Monday, the Home Minister said that the substantial allocation of Rs 8,495 crore would restore the past glory of the State Home Ministry and the Police Department. She expressed confidence that this allocation would greatly benefit law enforcement and security personnel in the state.

“For the first time, the Police Department has received a record allocation of Rs 8,495 crore in the 2024-25 budget. Under the previous YSRCP government, the Home Ministry was allocated insufficient funds, leaving the police force under-equipped and struggling with inadequate facilities,” Anitha lamented. “Now, with this signif-

icant budget allocation, the much-needed amenities will be provided to our police personnel."

The Home Minister also emphasized that a revamp of the police department is underway, with efforts to modernize the police force through the provision of advanced infrastructure. "A sum of Rs 62 crore has already been released for upgrading police infrastructure," she added.

Anitha further announced the establishment of four new special police battalions in Srikakulam, Chittoor, Prakasam, and Rajamahendravaram, as part of the government's commitment to strengthening the police force. The Minister also reaffirmed the government's resolve to tackle the drug menace in the state, stating that an Anti-Narcotic Task Force would be set up specifically to combat the growing drug issue.

In addition, 13 Fast Track NDPS (Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances) courts will be established to expedite the resolution of drug-related cases. "We are also setting up cyber police stations in every district to combat cybercrimes effectively," she disclosed.

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Tata Group will remain a key partner in AP's growth: Naidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday acknowledged the Tata Group's continued importance as a key stakeholder in the growth of Andhra Pradesh.

In a meeting with the Executive Chairman of the Tata Group, N. Chandrasekaran, the Chief Minister reflected on the remarkable legacy of the late Ratan Tata. In a message later shared on 'X' (formerly Twitter), Chandrababu Naidu praised Ratan Tata's visionary leadership and significant contribution to India's industrial landscape.

"Ratan Tata made immense contributions to the growth of Andhra Pradesh. The Tata Group will continue to be an integral part of the state's progress," said Chandrababu. He added, "During my meeting with Mr. Chandrasekaran, we discussed several key areas of growth where both the Andhra Pradesh Government and the Tata Group could collaborate."



Chandrababu highlighted the Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) commitment to establishing a new IT Development Centre in Visakhapatnam, which is expected to create up to 10,000 jobs. He also mentioned that Indian Hotels is exploring plans to set up 20 new hotels across the state, including Taj, Vivanta, Gateway, SeleCtions, and Ginger Hotels, along with a large convention centre, to

boost tourism and industrial growth.

Additionally, Tata Power is evaluating the possibility of setting up plants to generate over five gigawatts (GW) of solar and wind energy, with an estimated investment of ₹40,000 crore, the Chief Minister said.

"We also discussed potential collaborations to develop deep tech and Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions for primary healthcare. The Ratan Tata

Innovation Hub will mentor entrepreneurs across the state, supporting our 'One Family-One Entrepreneur' vision, which is a fitting tribute to the legend who believed in empowering grassroots communities," Chandrababu noted in his message on 'X'.

The Chief Minister expressed confidence that these initiatives would play a crucial role in driving the growth and development of the state.

15% growth rate is our target: CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, on Monday expressed confidence to achieve 15 per cent growth rate by formulating and implementing various plans.

"Creating wealth is possible only by providing various kinds of opportunities following which the living conditions of the poor can be increased by distributing this wealth to them," Chandrababu Naidu said while interacting with various industrial giants during a Task Force meeting on the steps to be taken to achieve the goal of Vision-2047. Recalling that 13.5 per cent growth rate was achieved during the previous TDP regime, the Chief Minister expressed confidence that now 15 per cent growth rate will certainly

be achieved.

Making it clear that the State Government will certainly take the decisions to implement the necessary plans and policies to reach this target, Chandrababu said. The maiden Task Force meeting held under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister dwelt at length on various issues. All the Cabinet Ministers, the representatives of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), senior officers from various departments and several industrial giants were present at the meeting for which the Executive Chairman of the Tata Group, Chandrasekharan is the co-chairman of this Task Force.

Chandrababu shared his views on Vision-2047 with all of them and also discussed various steps that need to be

taken in different sectors besides the policies being implemented by the State Government. He also invited suggestions from all of them on various subjects to achieve the goal.

"Now the technology is more advanced and there is every need that we should properly utilise this technology. If opportunities are provided to the youth we will get excellent results," the Chief Minister said. Observing that the State has all kinds of facilities like natural resources, human resources, basic amenities, necessary highways and airports, Chandrababu felt that the State should be a platform for new innovations and new ideas.

"We once talked about Ease of Doing Business but now we are focussing on Speed of Doing Business.

We then worked hard that every household should have one IT employee but now we are moving ahead with the goal that every family should have one entrepreneur," the Chief Minister stated. This is the reason as to why the State Government has adopted the best policies in this regard to reach the best results in the industrial sector, he added.

The Executive Chairman of the Tata Sons, Chandrasekharan, the Director General of CII, Chandrajit Benerjee, the Chairman of the GMR Group, GM Rao, Chairman of the L&T, SN Subrahmanyan, the TVS Company Chairman, Venu Srinivasan, the Reddy Labs Chairman, Sateesh Reddy, and several others were present at the meeting.

Jagan meets MLCs to discuss strategies against govt's failures

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADAA

YSRCP president and former chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy held a meeting with the party's Legislative Council Members (MLCs) at the party's central office on Monday, focusing on strategies to expose the government's failures, question its policies, and address the ruling party's refusal to officially recognise YSRCP as the opposition.

During the meeting, YS Jagan highlighted that the YSRCP had filed a petition in the High Court seeking official Opposition status in the Assembly, but the Speaker had yet to respond to the party's plea. He pointed out that despite YSRCP being the only opposition party in the Assembly, the government has not acknowledged its rightful status. Jagan expressed his concern that the ruling party is unwilling to



grant opposition recognition, as it would require allocating time and opportunities for the opposition to hold the government accountable.

YS Jagan criticised the government's disregard for the Opposition's voice, noting that YSRCP, which secured 40% of the vote share, continues to be sidelined. He mentioned that senior leaders and MLAs have been raising important issues through the media to ensure public awareness, and assured that the party would persist in questioning the government's actions with solid evidence and facts.

The YSRCP president urged

the MLCs to hold the government accountable for its unfulfilled promises and to challenge its efforts to suppress dissent. He remarked that within just six months of the elections, the public has already recognised the deceptive and false nature of Chandrababu Naidu's actions. Encouraging party members to remain resilient, Jagan expressed confidence that YSRCP would return to power by staying true to its values and principles.

Concluding the meeting, YS Jagan called on the MLCs to intensify efforts to expose the government's failures and to stand firm in questioning its policies and decisions. He expressed optimism that, in time, the public would recognise the contributions and achievements of YSRCP. He also mentioned the possibility of early and urged the members to stay prepared for any political development.

Minorities Welfare Day celebrated

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADAA

The National Minority Welfare Day was observed on Monday at Tummalapalli Kalakshetram, marking the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. The event was organized by the Minority Welfare Department and highlighted the contributions of Azad to education and minority welfare.

State Minister for Minority Welfare, NMD Farooq, emphasized the importance of following Azad's path for the development of minorities. He noted that Azad's birthday is celebrated annually as National Education Day and Minority Welfare Day in recognition of his pivotal role in these fields. Minister Farooq also praised Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu for implementing various schemes, including Dulhan and Ramadan Tohfa, for the welfare of Muslims. He highlighted efforts to protect Waqf properties and the establishment of Urdu schools under the Roshini scheme.



Stray dogs maul 2-yr-old boy to death

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADAA

In a shocking incident, a pack of stray dogs mauled a two-year-old boy to death at Penuganchiprolu village in NTR district on Monday.

Police said that the deceased boy Thoti Prem Kumar (2) was playing on the road with other children at Toofan colony.

A pack of stray dogs suddenly attacked the boy and dragged him into the nearby fields. The stray dogs severely bit the boy. The passerby heard the screams and rushed there. They shoed away the stray dogs and the boy died while being taken to the GGH in Nandigama. The deceased boy belonged to the Toofan colony of Penuganchiprolu village.

Ambati slams Pawan for remarks on Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADAA

Former Minister Ambati Rambabu lashed out at Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan over his comments on YSRCP leader Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. Pawan Kalyan had claimed that Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy was threatening the police and suggesting that cases should be booked suo moto.

Addressing the media on Monday, Ambati Rambabu defended Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's statement, which had previously mentioned that police officers failing to work within the legal framework would be held accountable once the YSRCP comes to power. "What's wrong with that? We are simply reiterating our commitment to addressing

those who operate outside the law, including illegal detentions, harassment, and torture of social media and party activists," Rambabu said.

He also accused Pawan Kalyan of acting as a mouthpiece for TDP leader N. Chandrababu Naidu. "Pawan Kalyan has been parroting Naidu's words without even understanding their real meaning," he said, adding that the allegation of Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy threatening the police was a deliberate misinterpretation.

Rambabu reminded that when both Chandrababu Naidu and Pawan Kalyan were in the opposition, they had made similar threatening remarks against the police. "While objectionable remarks and posts were made against

former Minister Vidadala Rajani, what action was taken? Nothing," he pointed out.

He further criticised Pawan Kalyan for damaging his own image by blindly following Naidu's rhetoric. "On one hand, Naidu and Kalyan boast about women's safety, while on the other, incidents like the torture of Sudha Rani continue to occur under their watch," Rambabu added.

The former Minister also accused the government of being vindictive towards senior police officers. "Top IPS officers are being kept without posting, ordered to attend office and stay put till further orders—this is unprecedented and speaks volumes about the government's vindictive attitude," he said.

Free DSC coaching for BC students

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADAA

In a major initiative to support Backward Classes candidates preparing for the DSC (District Selection Committee) exams, the state government will soon launch free coaching centres across the state under the guidance of BC Study Circles. This announcement was made by S Savita, Minister for BC, EWS, Handlooms, and Weaving, at a press conference held at the State Secretariat in Velagapudi, Amaravati, on Monday.

The minister stated that, as promised during the elections, CM Chandrababu Naidu signed the first order for the Mega DSC initiative upon assuming office. Inspired by the CM's vision, the government has decided to offer free DSC coaching for BC candidates under the BC Study Circles, starting from November 16.

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A concerning pattern of missing files linked to the controversial demolition of the Rushikonda resort and the consequent construction of a new palace has prompted serious questions regarding transparency and accountability within the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC). Key documents, including construction permits for the new palace and records pertaining to the resort's demolition, have reportedly vanished, raising alarms among officials and local stakeholders alike.

The once-thriving Rushikonda resort, a premier tourist destination featuring 80 elegant rooms, a function hall, a well-regarded bar, and an upscale restaurant, has been demolished in record time to make way for a new royal estate. However, this rapid transition has led to the



alarming disappearance of critical records from the resort's closure, including essential permits and inventories of valuable equipment worth around Rs. 50 crores—items such as air conditioning units and commercial refrigerators.

An APTDC official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, voiced serious concerns: "We are deeply troubled by the lack of accountability and transparency regarding the disappearance of these assets. Our officials are

puzzled about the whereabouts of this equipment or the protocols followed during the demolition."

Compounding the issue, vital records delineating the handling of equipment from the resort's closure were reportedly placed in a separate file by the Andhra Pradesh Development Corporation (APDDC). This file has also vanished, coinciding suspiciously with a recent government shift. Standard procedure for decommissioning such facilities necessitates

either redistributing assets to other resorts or transparently auctioning them on the open market. "We seem to have bypassed the standard protocol, and we lack any trace of what has transpired with the assets in this case," lamented a senior tourism official.

As the bulldozers cleared the resort's premises for the palace's construction, it emerged that Division Managers across the state were instructed to gather necessary furniture for their divisions, while APTDC officials may have liquidated remaining resources. However, the corporation currently lacks documentation on what items were taken or sold, leaving a significant accountability gap. "Without accurate records, accountability becomes impossible," stated a source familiar with the ongoing investigation. "This raises serious concerns about the officials responsible for managing these files."

RGV booked for posting morphed images of CM

PNS ■ MADDIPADU

A case was registered against film-maker Ram Gopal Varma for allegedly posting morphed images of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on social media.

Prakasam district superintendent of police AR Damodar said Varma was booked for allegedly morphing the pictures of Naidu, Kalyan and their family members and posting them on social media.

"We registered a case



against Ram Gopal Varma at Maddipadu police station (Prakasam district) for mor-

phing the photographs of the present CM (Naidu), Deputy CM (Kalyan) and his family members in an offensive way," Damodar said. According to the official, the case was registered on the basis of a complaint received from Ramalingam (45).

The complaint was lodged on Sunday night against the film-maker for allegedly uploading derogatory posts on social media, which reportedly undermined the standing of the CM, Deputy CM and their family members in the society.

Rs 43,402 cr Budget for agriculture...

Continued from Page 2

Atchannaidu emphasised that these initiatives aim to support the 62% of Andhra Pradesh's population that depends on agriculture. He also focused on the importance of rural development and boosting agricultural growth through substantial investment and modernised infrastructure. "Around 62% of the state's population depends on agriculture, so my government will continue the Polam Pilustondi programme to create awareness among farmers during both the Kharif and Rabi seasons," he said.

Key agricultural initiatives

The Minister further discussed the government's plans to introduce a new Tenant Protection Act in the Assembly, noting that the existing laws had failed to provide adequate safeguards for tenant farmers. "We have noticed that the current legal framework does not adequately protect tenant farmers, so we are introducing new legislation to ensure their security," Atchannaidu said.

Criticising the previous YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government for neglecting the agricultural sector, Atchannaidu

promised to revive several farmer welfare schemes that had been suspended during the previous regime. "We are already conducting large-scale soil testing across the state to help farmers optimise the use of pesticides and fertilisers," he added.

The government is also planning to revolutionise agricultural practices with the use of drones for precision farming. Remote sensing agencies will be employed to provide farmers with accurate soil testing reports. The government has allocated ₹38.88 crore exclusively for soil testing and will spend ₹240 crore on seed distribution and ₹40 crore on subsidising fertilisers.

Natural farming and support for farmers

Minister Atchannaidu emphasised the government's focus on encouraging natural farming practices to reduce the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. "The reduction in chemical inputs will help farmers significantly cut their costs," he explained. The government has committed Rs 422 crore for promoting natural farming, which aims to produce healthier crops while minimising environmental impact.

YSRCP MLAs boycott Assembly...

Continued from Page 2

This allowed the party to maintain a presence in the legislative proceedings and voice its concerns regarding the crucial budget for the year 2024-25.

The YSRCP MLAs, led by Opposition Leader in the Council, Botsa Satyanarayana, participated in the session, which was chaired by Council Chairman Koyye Moshen Raju. Notably, the YSRCP MLAs had also boycotted previous Assembly session in July. Upon entering the Council hall, several MLAs, including senior members like Ummareddy Venkateswarlu, were seen searching for their seats.

Minister for Mines and Geology, Kollu Ravindra, presented the annual budget for the financial year 2024-25, while Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development, P Narayana, presented the Agriculture Budget in the Council. Other ministers, including Nara Lokesh, NMD Farooq, Mandipalli Ram Prasad Reddy, V Anitha, and Sandhya Rani, were also present in the Council. Before the presentation of the annual budget, Council Chairman Koyye Moshen Raju called upon the members to maintain decorum and work together to enhance the reputation of the government in the Council. He also urged members to cooperate in ensuring that the budget sessions proceeded smoothly.

A 'disappointing' Budget..

Continued from Page 2

He also noted that the budget speech referred to the previous government 21 times, highlighting the comparison being drawn, while also pointing out that the revenue deficit had grown alarmingly when compared to the previous government's figures.

Buggana further reminded the media that the previous TDP government had left outstanding power dues during the 2014-2019 term, which the YSRCP government later cleared. He called this "a recurring pattern of the TDP government" dating back to the pre-2004 period as well as the 2014-2019 period.

On the issue of financial discipline, Buggana accused the current government of indulging in false propaganda. "They have criticised the Delhi trips to get loans, yet their own documents show the loan component to be Rs 6.46 lakh crore. During the elections, they exaggerated this figure to

over Rs 14 lakh crore to mislead the people," he said, referring to the statements made by Chandrababu Naidu, Pawan Kalyan, and Purandeswari.

Buggana also recalled how during Chandrababu Naidu's previous term, false promises were made about waiving farm loans of Rs 87,000 crore, dues to Self-Help Groups, and providing zero-interest loans.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, K P Rupalatha Reddy is legally wedded spouse of Army No 13626059P Rank Hav, Name P Bhaskar Reddy. I have changed my Name from K P Rupalatha Reddy to K P Rupa Latha that both names pertain to one and the same person vide affidavit Dt. 04.11.2024, Tirupati.

Bhavani Deeksha initiation begins at Durga Temple

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The conferment of 41 days of Bhavani Deeksha began at Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam (SDMSD) atop Indrakeeladri on Monday. During the conferment of the 41-day Mandala Deeksha, the temple premises reverberated with chants 'Jai Durga', and 'Jai Jai Durga'.

Signalling the commencement of the Deeksha mahotsavam, temple Vedic committee members, Sthanacharya Vishnubotla Siva Prasad Sharma, Temple Executive Officer (EO) KS Rama Rao and priests performed rituals such as Vigneshwara Puja, Kalasa Sthapana and Punyahavachanam to the procession idol and brought it to the sixth floor of Mallikarjuna Maha Mandapam with all temple honours.

Devotees received their Bhavani Deeksha from Guru Bhavani, Yaddhanapudi Nagaraju Sastry and Yanamandra Uma Kantha Sarma on behalf of the Durga Temple. Later, EO Rama Rao presented 'Sri Nidhi' and 'Lalitha Sahasra Namam' donated by the Bollineni Krishna couple, written by Purnanapada Srinivas.

The five-day Bhavani Deeksha conferment process will conclude on November 15



for Mandala Deeksha. Similarly, for the Artha mandala (half months) Deeksha conferment will begin on December 1, and end on December 5. The relinquishment of Bhavani Deeksha is scheduled from December 21-25. Devotees from various places thronged the Durga Temple and joined queue lines after having a holy dip in River Krishna.

EO Rao said elaborate arrangements have been made for the general public to have the darshan of goddess Kanaka Durga without any disturbance due to the ongoing Bhavani Deeksha conferment. The Kalasa Jyothula procession will be organised at the Sivaramakrishna Kshetram at Satyanarayanapuram in Vijayawada on December 14, he

said. They are planning to conduct both the Deeksha conferment and relinquishment process on the lines of the Dasara festival, he added.

On the occasion of the conferment of the Bhavani Deeksha, Vedic Committee members R Srinivasa Sastry, Vedic Pundit V Maharshi, Archaka IV Rajasekhar and others were present.

Sri Varaha Pushakarini to host 'Punya Nadi Harathi'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The historic 'Sri Varaha Pushakarini' located at the foothills of Simhachalam and renowned for hosting the annual Teppotsavam float festival, will be the site for the 'Punya Nadi Harathi' ritual on November 15, coinciding with the auspicious 'Karthika Pournami'.

Temple Executive Officer V Trinadha Rao announced that this special ritual is being organised in line with the Endowments Department's instructions to mark the holy day with ceremonies at ancient temples and 'punya kshetrams' (sacred places). The event will commence at 4.30 p.m., allowing devotees to gather and participate in the spiritual celebration.

The highlight of the ritual will involve the 'utsava murthis' (processional deities) of Lord Sri Venkateswara, which will be ceremoniously carried in a palanquin from the foothill temple to the Sri Varaha Pushkarini. Special pujas will be conducted, culminating in the 'harathi' offered to the deities and the pushkarini, followed by the distribution of 'prasadam'.

Collector unveils poster with helpline numbers

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a significant move to enhance public access to emergency services, District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad has launched a new initiative, unveiling a poster that displays critical helpline numbers. This innovative project, conceptualised by the Collector himself, provides citizens with easy access to emergency contacts across multiple departments, making it a valuable resource in times of crisis.

The poster features essential helpline numbers, including

Child Helpline (1098), Women Helpline (181), Police Helpline (100), National Emergency Helpline (112), Emergency Medical Service Helpline (108), Medical Helpline (104), Cyber Crimes Helpline (1930), Fire Helpline (101), LPG Gas Leak Helpline (1906), and Road Accident Helpline (1073).

The poster was revealed during a public grievance redressal system (PGRS) programme attended by prominent officials, including Joint Collector K Mayur Ashok, District Revenue Officer B.H. Bhavani Shankar, RDO P.

Slrekha, GVMC ADC Verma, and ICDS PD Jayadevi.

Collector Prasad emphasised the importance of widespread awareness about these helpline numbers, directing officials to actively inform the public. By making emergency contact information accessible and visible, response times can be significantly reduced, and safety outcomes improved. This initiative is a significant step towards strengthening the region's emergency response framework, ensuring every citizen has life-saving information at their fingertips.



Responsible youth essential for shaping India's future: GITAM V-C

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

GITAM Deemed to be University, in collaboration with Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Samithi, ignited young minds with the inauguration of the Regional Children Science Congress-2024 on Monday. The event, held at GITAM's Visakhapatnam campus, brought together esteemed academics, educators, and aspiring young scientists.

Prof. Y Gowtham Rao, the In-Charge Vice-Chancellor of GITAM, emphasised the crucial role of responsible youth in shaping the nation's future. In his address, he highlighted the importance of fostering a deep understanding of science alongside critical thinking skills. "Technology is a fusion of various sciences," he remarked. "By nurturing intellectual growth, students can contribute significantly to a prosperous future."

Adding to the discourse, Prof. KS Krishna, a distinguished scientist and Dean of GITAM School of Science, underscored the significance of curiosity as a driving force in scientific exploration. He



urged students to observe their surroundings closely and pursue their scientific interests passionately. "The new education policy," he noted, "is creating an environment that supports aspiring scientists."

Dr E Umapathi Reddy, Assistant Commissioner (in-charge) of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Samithi for the Hyderabad Region, expressed pride in the expansion of Navodaya Schools across India, emphasising the importance of the Children Science Congress in promoting science education among young learners.

The inaugural programme featured a captivating painting exhibition that showcased the artistic talents of students, merging art and science in a creative display. Throughout the week, participants will engage in a series of enriching activities, including scientific lectures, lab visits, and quiz competitions, designed to challenge and inspire them.

The event was attended by GITAM's Registrar Prof. D. Gunasekharan, School of Science Principal Prof K Vedavathi, and JNV Visakhapatnam Principal Dr Y. Chandrasekhar.

School receives acclaim for textbook-free approach

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The School of Wonder Kids in the port city has garnered attention from educators across Telangana for its progressive 'Edu Easy Concept,' prioritizing practical skill-building over traditional rote learning. Recently, nine school heads and 80 teachers visited the institution to explore its unique methodology, which fosters 21st-century skills in young learners. "We are truly impressed with how the school fosters foundational skills and curiosity in young children," remarked a visiting principal. "The methods here offer a refreshing alternative that we are eager to learn from."

During their visit, educators observed students from Pre-K to Class 7 demonstrating exceptional skills and academic performance. Pre-schoolers confidently answered 500 questions, while LKG students tackled 1,000 general inquiries, identifying Indian states, capitals, and geographical features.

UKG students impressed visitors by naming countries and



capitals worldwide. "The confidence and knowledge these children display at such a young age are simply outstanding," commented a visiting teacher. The school's commitment to holistic education was evident in students' proficiency in language, critical thinking, and problem-solving. They engaged in mathematical calculations, read English magazines, and explored science concepts.

Malla Ramu Naidu, Director of the School of Wonder Kids, led training sessions for visiting educators, introducing creative

techniques to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. "Our goal is to create an environment where children are excited to learn and confident to explore new ideas," Naidu emphasized.

The visit sparked enthusiasm among principals, who expressed intentions to incorporate these innovative methodologies into their own institutions. "We are eager to bring back these practices to our schools and encourage similar growth among our students," one principal shared.



APSRTC bags Skoch Award for cashless tickets

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC), now known as the Andhra Pradesh Public Transport Department (APPTD), has been selected for the prestigious Skoch Award for 2024.

This honour was awarded for the successful implemen-

tation of an app that facilitates cashless transactions and issues paperless tickets in all RTC buses. Additionally, the APSRTC received the award for implementing digital tickets and establishing a tracking system for all buses.

On behalf of APSRTC Vice-Chairman & Managing Director (VC&MD) Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao,

Executive Director (Admin) Ravi Varma received the Skoch Award virtually on Monday. He attended the Zoom meeting organised by the Skoch Group from the RTC House.

APSRTC Chief Engineer (IT) V Sudhakar, Deputy Chief Engineer (IT) Y Srinivasa Rao and others attended the Zoom meeting.

Endowments Secy sworn in as ex officio member of TTD Board

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

State Endowments Secretary (FAC) and Commissioner S. Satyanarayana took oath as an ex-officio member of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Trust Board at the Tirumala Srivari Temple on Monday.

The oath was administered by TTD Additional Executive Officer (EO) Ch. Venkaiah Chowdary at the Bangaru Vakili of the temple.

After taking the oath, Satyanarayana had the darshan of Lord Srivari, followed by Vedic blessings from the temple's scholars at the Ranganayakula Mandapam.

The Additional EO present-



ed Tirtha Prasadam and a portrait of Lord Srivari to Satyanarayana as part of the ceremony.

Temple Deputy EO Lokanatham, Peishkar Ramakrishna, and other officials also participated in the event.

Concern over rising sexual crimes against minors

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Visakhapatnam is witnessing a surge in sexual crimes against minors, often linked to social media, substance abuse, and a lack of parental supervision. Experts warn that these social ills are putting the safety and futures of countless children at risk.

Special Public Prosecutor at the Visakhapatnam POCOS Court, Karnam Krishna, highlighted the significant impact of social media, alcohol, and drugs on the youths' behaviour. "A decrease in crime can only occur if drug use is controlled," he asserted. "We must strengthen educational programmes to inform students about sexual crimes and their severe consequences."

Under the current YSRCP regime, over 163 POCOS cases have been recorded, indicating a worrying escalation in sexual harassment incidents targeting young girls. Many offenders hail from impoverished backgrounds where parents, often working multiple jobs, are

unable to provide adequate supervision.

A senior police official noted, "Most of the accused are daily wage labourers or individuals living below the poverty line. The absence of parental oversight, combined with exposure to drugs and explicit online content, creates a dangerous environment for young people."

Recent cases underscore the gravity of the situation. Aravind, 26, from West Godavari, was sentenced to 25 years in prison for the horrific sexual assault of two young sisters. The girls' mother expressed her shock and disbelief, stating, "We trusted him; he was part of our community. I never imagined he would betray us like this." Similarly, Gudla Venkataramana, a 27-year-old labourer, received



Under the current YSRCP regime, over 163 POCOS cases have been recorded, indicating a worrying escalation in sexual harassment incidents targeting young girls. Many offenders hail from impoverished backgrounds where parents, often working multiple jobs, are unable to provide adequate supervision

a 20-year sentence for assaulting a 13-year-old girl. POCOS court officials emphasised the need for greater societal awareness and accountability.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has reiterated the government's commitment to the safety of children and women, calling for strict action against perpetrators and increased community awareness.

Experts stress the importance of parental involvement and education. "Parents need to prioritise engagement, monitor their children's online activity, and intervene when they notice concerning behaviour," said Krishna. "Counselling should be provided immediately if there are signs of bad habits or addictions."

Domestic violence: Young woman ends life

Rajasekhar continually pressed her family for more financial support to fund his business ventures

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Twenty-five-year-old Kadgala Delhishwari ended her life following relentless abuse from her husband, Kadgala Rajasekhar, and his mother, Uma Maheshwari. The case is currently under investigation by the Fourth Town Police.

Delhishwari, originally from China Mangalapuram near Palakonda, married Rajasekhar, also known as Akhilji, in February 2022. Despite her family providing a substantial dowry—including Rs 18 lakh, 10 tolas of gold, and an additional Rs 5 lakh—Rajasekhar continually pressed for more financial support to fund his business ventures. Her father, Kimidi Suribabu, recalled that his son-in-law demanded an additional Rs 6 lakh, which added immense strain to their relationship.

Delhishwari's father painted a painful picture of her suffering, describing how she would often call, crying, and express that she could no longer endure the abuse. Her husband's demands and the emo-



tional abuse from him and his mother weighed heavily on her. Despite efforts from her parents to intervene, they were repeatedly rebuffed, and in one instance, even assaulted during a visit to check on her wellbeing.

Delhishwari ingested a toxic substance, Vasmol-33, last Sunday in an act of despair. Her husband delayed informing her family about her critical condition, which only became known when neighbours alerted her mother. Rushing to her aid, her family brought her to a corporate hospital, but financial issues and delays in securing treatment led to a transfer between hospitals.

Previous govt totally destroyed academic Sector: Lokesh

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The previous government completely destroyed the academic sector, just as it did with all other systems, said Nara Lokesh, Minister for Education, Information Technology (IT) and Electronics, here on Monday.

"Decisions were implemented arbitrarily, as if made overnight after consulting no one but themselves," Lokesh remarked while addressing a programme to distribute the 'Best Teacher' awards, in honour of National Education Day, held in Vijayawada. He expressed regret that many schools had been shut down under Government Order 117 and lamented that not a single

teacher vacancy had been filled in the full five years of the previous government's tenure. He also highlighted the decision to introduce exams modelled on the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in over 1,000 schools, a move he deemed poorly planned.

"About 90 per cent of the students failed in the exams we conducted after coming to power. This is nothing short of playing with their futures," Lokesh stated, emphasising that many such decisions had been taken without any understanding of the issues at hand, including those related to the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

The Minister for Education stressed that decisions regard-



"Decisions were implemented arbitrarily, as if made overnight after consulting no one but themselves," Lokesh remarked while addressing a programme to distribute the 'Best Teacher' awards, in honour of National Education Day, held in Vijayawada. He expressed regret that many schools had been shut down under Government Order 117 and lamented that not a single teacher vacancy had been filled in the full five years of the previous government's tenure.

ing the academic sector cannot be taken lightly, as they affect the futures of lakhs of students. He explained that every decision in this sector is made only after

extensive consultation with experts and detailed study to ensure that both teachers and students are prepared for the changes.

"The previous government was more focused on publicity than performance," Lokesh said. "As a result, this government now faces a ₹6,500 crore burden

in fee reimbursements and various unpaid bills. Additionally, the total number of students in government schools has decreased by four lakh, which is why we are now reviewing all such decisions."

Lokesh expressed confidence that the academic sector would be restored to its rightful place by the next academic year. "It is the teacher who shapes the future of every student, and I salute every teacher for their invaluable contributions," he added.

The Education Minister also took the opportunity to honour Dr. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first Union Minister for Education, who brought about revolutionary reforms in the education system. "I am happy

that National Education Day is being observed on his birth anniversary," Lokesh remarked.

He also expressed regret that Teachers' Day could not be celebrated this year due to the devastating floods that hit the state. "The teaching profession reminds us of great leaders like Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan," Lokesh said. "Unlike the previous government, which dehumanised teachers, this government gives the highest regard to the entire teaching community."

Recalling that many leaders had advised him against taking up the Education portfolio because of its challenges, Lokesh shared that he accepted it because he believed, as a product of Stanford University, he was uniquely positioned to make a

difference. "Strengthening the academic sector is my top priority," he said, adding that plans are underway to bring radical changes across all levels of education, from kindergarten to post-graduate studies.

Lokesh further stated that every classroom should have at least one teacher and that a decision has been made to provide mid-day meals to students on a zone-wise basis. He also assured that there would be no compromise on the quality of food served.

"Let us all join hands to restore the past glory of the academic sector. My sole aim is to transform our students into job creators, not job seekers, and to shape them into 'super kids,'" Nara Lokesh concluded.

Collector, MP pay tributes to Maulana on his birth anniversary

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District Collector A Thameem Ansariya and MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy paid tributes to Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, the former Union Education Minister, on his birth anniversary, which is also observed as National Education Day.

The Collector and MP paid their respects by garlanding the statue of Maulana Azad located on the campus of Mother Teresa High School.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Ansariya recalled the significant reforms Maulana Azad had introduced in the education sector and urged students to draw inspiration from his vision. She emphasized the importance of education for the youth, encouraging them to pursue knowledge and build successful lives.

Ansariya also pointed out that the Prakasam district, with a literacy rate of only 62%, is considered backwards in terms of education. She called for collective efforts to achieve 100% literacy and ensure that



Collector Ansariya recalled the transformative reforms Maulana Azad had introduced in the education sector and urged students to draw inspiration from his vision. She emphasised the importance of education for the youth, encouraging them to pursue knowledge and build successful lives

every child in the district receives a proper education.

Highlighting the issue of child marriages in the district, the Collector stressed that it was the responsibility of everyone to work towards their prevention. She assured that the district administration is paying special attention to the education of girls through initia-

tives like the Golden Childhood Programme.

"Efforts are being made to achieve sustainable development goals by prioritizing education, to make Prakasam district free from child marriages," she said. "The state government is implementing various reforms to improve the quality of education," she added, appealing to parents to invest in their children's education.

MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy recalled that Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad served as Union Education Minister for 11 years, during which he implemented key reforms in the education sector post-independence. He urged everyone to strive to follow Azad's ideology for the betterment of the nation.

Mayor Gangada Sujata also addressed the gathering, while several officials, including Social Welfare DD Lakshmi Nayak, BC Welfare Officer Anjala, District Minority Welfare Officer Narayana, and Municipal Commissioner Venkateswara Rao, participated in the programme.



Collector asks people to utilise solar energy

PNS ■ ELURU

Collector K Vetri Selvi has appealed to people to make use of solar energy to save money and she underlined the need to create awareness about utilising non-conventional energy.

The Collector inspected the Solar Power Plant on the premises of the Social Welfare girls' hostel, located at Ameenapet here on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that the Roof Top Solar System is a good project and the plant set up here is good and expressed satisfaction. She said that along with saving electricity, the Rooftop

Solar system would provide electricity at a very low price.

On the occasion, APEPDCL SE P Salmon Raju said that a solar plant with a capacity of 3 KW has been set up in the social welfare girls' hostel. He said that before the installation of the solar plant in the hostel, the consumption of power was 950 units per month and after the installation of 3 KW solar, it had come down to 432 units.

Salman Raju said that in the past, electricity charges were up to Rs 9,000 per month, but due to the installation of the solar plant, the bill was reduced to Rs 4500 per month. Social Welfare JD V Jayaprakash,

municipal commissioner M Bhanu Pratap, Electricity DE Ambedkar and ADE Raj Kumar were among those who were present.

Meanwhile, Collector Vetri Selvi took part in the PGRS programme here on Monday and received grievances from the people. The Collector said that 236 grievances were received on Monday from people and steps were taken to resolve them. Joint Collector P Dhatri Reddy, DRO V Visweswara Rao, RDO Achyut Ambarish and DRDA PD R Vijayraju were among those who received grievances from the people.

Minister lays stone for Rs 20 cr worth of projects

PNS ■ ELURU

Minister for Housing and I&PR K Parthasarathy has laid the foundation stone for the development works to be taken up at a cost of Rs 20 crore in the Nuzvid constituency.

The Minister laid the stone for the construction of CC roads at Kottaravicharla and Patharavichrla in Nuzvid mandal.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Parthasarathy said that works for the construction of roads, drainages and drinking water projects would be carried out in Nuzvid constituency by spending Rs 20 crore.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is determined to provide governance in accordance with the hopes and aspirations of the people, the Minister said, adding that Chandrababu Naidu had taken the initiative to implement five assurances.

The Minister highlighted



that a notification was issued to conduct DSC examinations to fill up 16,700 posts. Many development programmes are being carried out in the State with Rs 1600 crores. The pension was hiked from Rs 3000 to Rs 4000 as per the promise and differently-abled are being disbursed Rs 6000 pension.

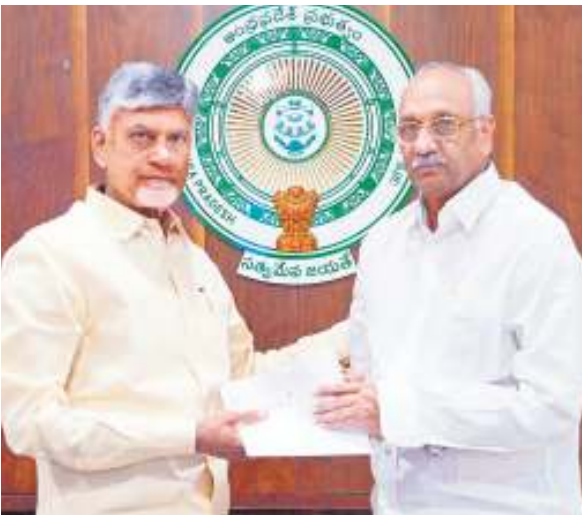
The Minister asserted that the controversial Land Titling Act was abolished as per the aspirations of the people. The government aims to set up skill development centres to impart technical training to the unem-

ployed youth, the Minister observed.

Regarding the free bus travel to women, Minister Parthasarathy made it clear that the free gas cylinders scheme was started implemented from Deepawali and the free bus travel for women would be provided soon.

Though the erstwhile YSRCP crippled the State's financial position, the NDA-led government is taking steps to rebuild a robust financial system and develop the State rapidly.

MLA Anjibabu donates Rs 1.02 cr for CMRF



PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Bhimavaram MLA Pulavarthi Ramanjaneyulu (Anjibabu) has handed over a cheque of Rs 1,02,00,000 to the Chief Minister to extend support to the flood victims. The MLA met Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu in the

Secretariat and handed over the cheque.

The MLA said that the people of Bhimavaram responded to the appeal and donated Rs 1.02 crore to extend support to the flood victims. The MLA thanked those who donated money to extend help to the flood victims.

3 candidates in race for MLC bypoll

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

The deadline for filing nominations for the Legislative Council local bodies constituency by-election concluded at 3 pm on Monday. Joint Collector and Returning Officer S. Sethu Madhavan announced that a total of three candidates filed six sets of nominations by the close of the nomination period.

On the final day, two candidates filed their nominations. Indukuri Subbalakshmi from Boddavara, S. Kota mandal, submitted two sets of nominations as an independent candidate. Additionally, Karukonda Venkatarao of Vasi village in S. Kota mandal filed one set of nomination papers, also as an independent candidate. Meanwhile, Shambangi Venkata Chinappala Naidu, representing the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), had previously filed three sets of nomination papers.

In total, three candidates have entered the race, with the YSR Congress candidate S V Chinnappalanaidu formally submitted his B-Form to the Returning Officer on Monday. The scrutiny of the nomination papers is scheduled for Tuesday, marking the next step in the by-election process.



Badminton tourney gets underway

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Local MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy, Superintendent of Police Dhamodhar and Badminton Academy Chairman Siddha Sudheer Kumar inaugurated the Under-11 badminton tournament here on Monday.

State president Dwaraka Nath welcomed the players and guests. Badminton Association State Secretary Ankamma Chaudhary appreciated the efforts of Lord Krishna Badminton Academy for the development of badminton.

He said that the services rendered by Lord Krishna Badminton Academy to aspiring badminton players not only in the Prakasam district but also in the state of Andhra Pradesh are appreciable. He lauded the Lord Krishna Academy for making arrangements and facilities needed for the players and foreign coaches.

In addition to the best training for the players, Lord Krishna Academy has taken the lead in the state in exploring the talent of children and training badminton players in Andhra Pradesh, Chowdary added.

Ankamma Chaudhary congratulated Academy Chairman Sidda Sudheer Kumar and Founder President Adnaki Murali Krishna for establishing a non-profit academy and promoting the sport of badminton.

SP Damodar took salute from the players. AP Badminton Association president Mukkala Dwarakanath, Association secretary Vijay Krishna, Pranya property MD Prathiatu Prasad, Dr Sita Ramaiah and Lord Krishna Badminton Academy members Raghubabu, Dandu Srinivasa Rao and Kode Srinivasa Rao were among those who took part in the event.

V-SAT 2025-26 notification for admissions issued

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vignan University Vice-Chancellor Colonel Prof. P. Nagabhushan, on Monday, released the V-SAT 2025-26 notification, inviting applications for admission to various undergraduate and postgraduate programmes for the 2025-26 academic year. The available programmes include B.Tech, B.Pharmacy, BBA, BCA, B.Sc., BA LLB (Honors), BBA LLB (Honors), B.Sc. (Honors) Agriculture, and Pharm-D.

Prof. Nagabhushan highlighted the wide range of B.Tech specialisations offered at the university, including Agriculture, Biotechnology, Bioinformatics, Biomedical, Chemical, Civil, Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Cyber Security, Data Science, IoT,



and Communication Engineering (ECE), VLSI, Electrical and Electronics Engineering (EEE), Food Technology, IT, Mechanical, Robotics and Automation, and Textile Technology. Additionally, the university offers programmes in B.Pharmacy, Pharm-D, M.Pharmacy, and other fields. Scholarships will be available for top performers in the V-

SAT entrance test, which is conducted nationwide for admissions to B.Tech, B.Pharmacy, and Pharm-D.

Prof. Nagabhushan also shared that Vignan's Hyderabad Off-Campus, an extension of the main Vadlamudi campus in Guntur District, offers a variety of multidisciplinary courses, including B.Tech, B.Com, B.Sc (Psychology), M.Sc. (Psychology), M.Sc.

(Pharmaceutical Chemistry), M.Tech, and Ph.D. programmes in Computer Science Engineering (CSE), Electronics and Communication Engineering (ECE), Management, Chemistry, Physics, Biotechnology, Pharmacy, and more.

The university's commitment to academic excellence has earned it several prestigious national and international

recognitions. Vignan University is the first institution in the two Telugu States to achieve ABET (USA) accreditation for five engineering branches — CSE, ECE, EEE, Mechanical, and Biotechnology simultaneously. It is also ranked 72nd nationally and 91st in engineering according to the 2024 National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) released by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Moreover, Vignan University has been awarded the NAAC A+ grade and NBA Tier 1 accreditation for five of its undergraduate programmes.

Dr MS Raghunathan, Registrar, Dr KV Krishnakishore, Dean of Admissions, and Deputy Registrar A Gouri Sankar Rao were also present at the announcement event.

Samagra Shiksha, KGBV employees to get pay during strike period

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has approved the payment of honorarium and remuneration to Samagra Shiksha contract and outsourced employees, including those working in the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), for a strike that lasted up to 21 days. The government has classified the strike period as 'leave', under the condition that employees must fulfil their duties

for an equal number of holidays. Following directions from Minister for Human Resources Nara Lokesh, Secretary of the School Education Department Kona Sasidhar issued a memo on Monday. He instructed the Samagra Shiksha State Project Director (SPD) Srinivasa Rao to implement the necessary steps.

The contract and outsourced employees associated with Samagra Shiksha, including those in KGBVs, participated in

the 21-day strike from December 20, 2023, to January 10, 2024, demanding an increase in their honorarium and remuneration. Subsequently, the government raised their honorarium by 23 per cent, and a memo was released in January. However, the government clarified that the 23 per cent increase would only apply to employees whose wages had not been raised prior to 2019.

ACROSS THE STATES



Delhi sees record high chikungunya, malaria cases

Delhi registered a record high number of Chikungunya and Malaria cases in the past five years, while dengue cases declined, according to official data. As of November 9 this year, 728 malaria cases and 172 chikungunya cases were reported in the city. In 2020, there were 228 malaria cases, in 2021, 167 cases, in 2022, 263 cases, and in 2023, 426 cases. The tally includes 19 cases reported in the week leading up to November 9, according to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi's weekly report on mosquito-borne diseases. The number of chikungunya cases in 2020 stood at 111, in 2021, there were 89 cases, in 2022, 48 cases, and in 2023, 65 cases. This year, as of November 9, the number of chikungunya cases was 172. Meanwhile, 4,533 dengue cases were reported in Delhi in 2024, including 472 cases in November. In comparison, there were 9,266 dengue cases reported in 2023. The number of dengue cases has sharply declined since last month, when it doubled to 2,431 cases from 1,052 cases in September.



SC rejects bail plea of ex-MP Prajwal Revanna

The Supreme Court on Monday denied bail to former JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna, accused of rape and sexual assault. Rejecting the plea, a bench of Justices Bela M Trivedi and Satish Chandra Sharma observed Revanna was a "very influential person". Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, representing the politician, argued that the chargesheet had been filed in the case without the charge of Section 376 (rape) of the IPC. The bench, however, observed it could not interfere with the Karnataka High Court's October 21 decision denying him bail. Subsequently, Rohatgi sought the liberty to approach the court after six months. The bench said it could not say anything about it and dismissed the plea. In August, a special investigation team (SIT) in Karnataka which is probing four cases of sexual assault and harassment against Revanna submitted a 2,144-page chargesheet.



Blast triggers fire at IOCL refinery in Vadodara

A fire broke out at the Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL) refinery in Vadodara on Monday following a blast in its storage tank, a police officer said. No casualties are reported and the final head count is being conducted, said Vadodara Police Commissioner Narasimha Komar, adding that things are under control. The blast at the IOCL refinery in the Koyali area on the outskirts of Vadodara occurred at 4 PM, triggering the blaze. Visuals showed thick plumes emerging from the refinery which can be seen from kilometres away. Several workers were evacuated and can be seen exiting the IOCL campus. "A benzene storage tank caught fire after a blast at the refinery. They (IOCL) have isolated the affected storage unit. Fire tenders are deployed to control the situation," Komar said. The police officer said no casualty has been reported even as the final head count is being done to find if anybody is missing, which prima facie seems unlikely. Komar said fluid circulation in the IOCL complex was stopped as per the standard operating procedure.

Modi calls for unity among SC, ST, OBC communities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress is trying to break the collective strength of SC, ST and OBC by creating divisions among them to weaken their voice and eventually end the reservation for them, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday as he called for unity among these communities.

"That's why I keep saying 'ek rahenge, toh safe rahenge' (if you remain united, you would be safe)," he said while interacting with BJP workers in Jharkhand under the 'mera booth sabse mazboot' programme through the NaMo app.

Modi also highlighted the "failures" of the JMM-Congress-RJD combine's five-year rule and said the state has to be freed from "corruption, mafiaism and misrule" to put it on the path of progress.

The kind of blessings that the BJP is receiving at booth levels, it's clear that the "corrupt" JMM-led government is set to be ousted, Modi asserted. "The countdown has begun," he said.

Modi said "everyone from the royal family" of the Congress -- from Jawaharlal Nehru to Rajiv Gandhi -- were "staunch opponents" of the provision of reservation and the party crushed all the voices rising in its favour till it was at the helm from "panchayat to Parliament" as the Dalit, OBC and Adivasi societies were scattered then.

Says Cong trying to create divisions



Modi said that the Congress wants Dalits, tribals and other backward classes to break into "hundreds of smaller castes", instead of collectively being the SC, ST and OBC, so that they get scattered, lose their identity and fight with each other

tered then.

But, gradually they started understanding what BR Ambedkar had said and came together posing a challenge to the Congress in many of the states, he said.

"The OBC society could not come together till 1990. But when they came together, the Congress suffered severe losses.

"Since then, the Congress has not been able to form its gov-

ernment with a full majority. It has its government in just three states in the country today," he added.

Modi said that the Congress has decided to break "the collective strength" of the Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and the Other backward Classes (OBC) as its "royal family is angry".

"It has become their (Congress) agenda over the past few years. It's because the

states, which have the highest number of Dalits, OBC, Adivasis, are under the BJP-NDA rule today and there is no possibility of the Congress coming to power in these states," he said.

Modi said that the Congress wants Dalits, tribals and other backward classes to break into "hundreds of smaller castes", instead of collectively being the SC, ST and OBC, so that they get scattered, lose their identity and fight with each other.

"When these societies break into smaller castes, their voice as SC, ST and OBC will become weak. The day this happens, the Congress' conspiracy will succeed. It will take away reservation as well," he said.

"That's why I keep saying 'ek rahenge, toh safe rahenge' (if you remain united, you would be safe). All the OBC, SC and ST societies should remain united," Modi said.

"People have shared on social media an old advertisement given by the Congress during elections... Perhaps Rajiv Gandhi was the leader of the party then.

"The SC, ST and OBC have been painted so ugly in this advertisement. In their advertisement, they have clearly said that reservation has to be taken away from the SC, ST and the OBC," he added.

11 militants killed in gunfight with security forces in Manipur



PNS ■ IMPHAL

Eleven suspected militants were killed in a gunfight with security forces in Manipur's Jiribam district on Monday, officials said.

Two CRPF personnel also sustained injuries during the heavy exchange of fire that happened at Jakurador Karong in the Borobekra sub-division. The condition of one of them was stated to be critical.

Militants in camouflage uniforms, armed with sophisticated weapons, fired indiscriminately at the Borobekra police station, and the CRPF camp located alongside it around 2.30 pm, officials said.

A few of the militants broke out and went to the Jakurador Karong market, around 100 metres away, and torched several shops, besides attacking some houses, they said.

As the security forces retaliated, a heavy exchange of fire began and 11 suspected militants were killed, they added.

The gunfight lasted a little over an hour, officials said.

A relief camp was also located within the premises of the police station, and five people living there went missing, they said.

It was not clear whether these civilians were kidnapped by the retreating militants or went into hiding after the attack began, they said, adding that a search was underway for them.

The bodies of those killed were brought to the Borobekra police station, officials said.

Following the incident, prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the BNSS were imposed in the area, according to a notification.

"There is apprehension of widespread disturbance to peace and public tranquility or a riot or any affray in the area and grave danger to human lives and properties because of unlawful activities of some anti social elements," said the notification, prohibiting assembly of five or more persons.

Govt will cover medical expenses of needy: UP CM

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR (UP)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday said all expenses of individuals seeking financial aid for treatment for serious illnesses will be covered so they can get care at top hospitals.

He attended a 'Janata Darshan' programme in Gorakhpur today.

Before departing for the Jharkhand Assembly election campaign in Mirzapur, he met around 150 people at the programme organised at the Gorakhpur Temple, an official statement said.

Adityanath instructed officials to expedite the process of issuing Ayushman cards to those who don't have it and require financial assistance, it said.

"Adequate funds will be provided from the Chief Minister's Discretionary Fund to assist every eligible individual," he said.



Adityanath emphasised that no one should feel anxious, as all problems would be addressed with the utmost seriousness and sensitivity, the statement added.

He further directed officials to take swift action to resolve public grievances and warned against any negligence on their part.

During the programme, a woman shared her financial difficulties in securing treatment for a family member at a private hospital.

In response, CM Adityanath advised her to obtain an estimate from the hospital after admission and assured her that the government would cover the treatment costs.

AMID ACCUSATIONS AND CONTROVERSIES

Campaign ends for Bengal bypolls

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The intense campaign for the bypolls across six assembly constituencies in West Bengal concluded on Monday, marked by allegations, show-cause notices, and controversies.

The by-elections, scheduled for November 13, will be held in Sitai, Madarihat, Naihati, Haroa, Medinipur, and Taldanga constituencies.

The bypolls will be a test for the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) amid ongoing protests over the alleged rape and murder of a doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital.

The ruling party repeatedly targeted the Election Commission (EC) over alleged delays in addressing their complaints.

The TMC claimed that despite approaching the EC on Saturday, their concerns

including "misuse of central forces" were not promptly addressed.

However, the EC refuted these claims on Monday, asserting it acted "within 20 hours" of receiving the TMC's complaints.

In a letter to TMC's Rajya Sabha Parliamentary Party leader Derek O'Brien, the EC said it was "surprising" that accusations of delay were being made despite the Commission's "prompt action."

TMC leaders, however, alleged that the Commission's actions favoured the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), diminishing the election's impartiality.

The ruling party accused central force personnel of entering private residences without the required presence of state police, reportedly intimidating voters and attempting to influence them in favour of the BJP.

TERROR CONSPIRACY BY AL-QAIDA NETWORK

NIA conducts pan-India searches

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday conducted extensive searches at multiple locations across the country in connection with the activities promoted by some Bangladeshi nationals as part of terror group Al-Qaida's conspiracy to destabilise India, according to an official statement.

The crackdown at nine locations, linked with individuals suspected of supporting and funding the activities of the proscribed terrorist organisation Al-Qaida,



started early in the morning in Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, West Bengal, Bihar, Tripura and Assam, it said.

The searches led to the recovery of incriminating documents

showing detailed banking transactions, digital devices including mobile phones, and other evidence related to terror funding activities, the statement issued by the NIA said.

As per NIA investigations, the suspects whose premises were raided are sympathisers of a Bangladesh-based Al-Qaida network.

The searches were part of NIA's ongoing investigations into a 2023 case pertaining to a conspiracy orchestrated by Bangladesh-based Al-Qaida operatives in collaboration with

the arrested individuals, it said.

The conspiracy was aimed at propagating Al-Qaida's terrorist activities and radicalising glibble youths in India, the probe agency said.

In November last year, NIA had filed a charge sheet against five accused, including four Bangladeshi nationals -- Mohd Sojbimyan, Munna Khalid Ansari alias Munna Khan, Azarul Islam alias Jahangir or Akash Khan, Abdul Latif alias Mominul Ansari, it added.

The fifth accused, Farid, is an Indian national.

FEAR OF NAXAL INFLUX

MP govt seeks CRPF battalions from Centre

PNS ■ BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh government has requested the Centre to sanction two additional battalions of CRPF for deployment in the Naxalite-affected Balaghat area given a looming possibility of the influx of armed cadres from two border states, a senior police officer said.

Currently, three battalions of CRPF are deployed in Madhya Pradesh, he said.

The police assessed the potential crossover of Naxals, facing heat in bordering Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, to Madhya Pradesh, the officer said, adding that the state is keen to ramp up security and intensify vigil along the borders.

Inspector General of Police (Balaghat zone) Sanjay Kumar has confirmed to PTI the request made for sanctioning two more CRPF (Central reserve Police Force) battalions, each comprising 1,000 personnel.

Kumar said out of four security camps, one with around 50 personnel and a building has been set up near the border for domination. "Such camps have come up in the Bastar area of Chhattisgarh," said Kumar.

The Balaghat zone includes Naxal-hit Balaghat, Mandla



The police assessed the potential crossover of Naxals, facing heat in bordering Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, to Madhya Pradesh, the officer said, adding that the state is keen to ramp up security and intensify vigil along the borders

and Dindori districts in MP.

"We are alert. They (Naxalites) can flee (from Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra) and enter MP. They created the Maharashtra, MP and Chhattisgarh (MMC) zone in 2015-16 to expand their footprint. We are keeping a hawk's eye along the borders," Kumar added.

The police officer disclosed that MP Police held interstate meetings with Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra and conducted joint operations, reflecting "very fast interstate coordination".

Disruption in liver-brain link behind overeating: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Working odd hours or night shifts was found to disrupt signals the liver sends to the brain telling it if eating is happening in sync with the body's clock, a result that researchers said could help treat the negative effects of eating at unusual times, such as overeating.

Eating at irregular times is said to be related to weight gain and diabetes, largely because it is not in sync with one's body clock, or circadian rhythm -- a 24-hour cycle of physical, mental, and behavioural changes, including sleeping and eating.

Researchers from the University of Pennsylvania,

US, found that working unusual hours disturbs the liver's internal clock and its signals, because of which the brain overcompensates, thereby leading to overeating at the wrong times.

The results, published in the journal Science, suggested that targeting specific parts of the vagus nerve -- via which the liver communicates with the brain -- could help address overeating in people working night shifts or experiencing jet lag, the team said.

"Both mice and humans normally eat at times when they are awake and alert, and this circuit provides feedback from the liver to the central



clock in the brain that keeps the system running smoothly," senior author Mitchell Lazar, a professor of diabetes and meta-

bolic diseases, University of Pennsylvania, said.

"This feedback is through a nerve connection from the

liver to the brain," Lazar said.

For the study, researchers looked at the REV-ERB genes in mice, which are known to have genetic material and biological processes similar to those in humans, and help them both control the body clock.

Turning off these genes made the mice's liver develop a faulty clock, because of which eating habits were found to change dramatically, with more food being consumed during less active hours, the team said.

However, the negative effects could be reversible, as cutting the nerve connection in obese mice was found to restore nor-

mal eating habits and reduce food intake.

"This suggests that targeting this liver-brain communication (route) could be a promising approach for weight management in individuals with disrupted circadian rhythms," author Lauren N Woodie, a post-doctoral researcher in Lazar's lab, said.

"Our findings reveal a homeostatic feedback signal that relies on communication between the liver and the brain to control circadian food intake patterns. This identifies the hepatic vagus nerve as a potential therapeutic target for obesity in the setting of chronodisruption," they wrote.

India bears the brunt

This year's high death toll and losses due to climate change underscore the urgent need for policy action

With over 3,200 fatalities, extensive crop damage across 3.2 million hectares, and 2.3 lakh buildings destroyed in the first nine months of 2024 alone, the country's vulnerability to extreme weather events is undeniable. These findings of the 'India Climate Report 2024' from the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) give a shocking picture of the impact of climate change on the country. The report underscores that 93 per cent of the days between January and September were marked by extreme weather, a clear indication that climate-related disasters are becoming not only more frequent but also more severe. The report's findings reveal a staggering increase in extreme weather events. In 2024, India faced climate extremes on 255 out of 274 days, a record when compared to previous years. Notably, over 35 of the 36 states and union territories experienced such events, with states like Karnataka, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh witnessing over 40 additional days of climate extremes compared to 2023.



The grim statistics point to a significant toll on human life and livelihoods. Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Assam were the hardest-hit states in terms of fatalities, while Andhra Pradesh saw the greatest destruction of homes, and Maharashtra experienced the largest crop damage. Among the notable phenomena in 2024 were prolonged heatwaves and an unprecedented number of warm nights. Besides, the monsoon season was particularly disastrous, with heavy rains, floods and landslides occurring every single day from June through September. Assam, for example, faced extreme weather on 111 days out of 122, highlighting the relentless impact of intense rainfall and flooding. The 2024

India Climate Report also points to a significant data gap. While the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has made strides in tracking events like warm nights, it lacks absolute temperature benchmarks, which many other countries use to enhance climate data accuracy. The lack of comprehensive, real-time data on climate-related damages impedes effective planning and resource allocation, especially in vulnerable regions. Several factors have contributed to India's vulnerability which must be addressed. The lopsided development, scant regard to the climate impact and allowing reckless construction in hills must stop. This pattern of 'bad development' worsens the impact of natural disasters, transforming regions with poor infrastructure or unplanned urban sprawl into high-risk areas. As the world approaches the dangerous threshold of 1.5°C of warming above pre-industrial levels, India's situation signals the urgent need for effective climate policies, mitigation strategies and public awareness. The 'India Climate Report 2024' serves as a somber reminder of the escalating costs of climate inaction. A collective and urgent response is needed, one that includes better data collection, sustainable urban planning and policies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Only then can India hope to protect its people and environment.

PICTALK



A baby monkey eats a slice of bread by the side of a road, in New Delhi

PTI

A Journey of imagination, resilience and self-discovery

Dreams can teach us resilience, guide us through adversities and keep us striving for something more

All of us dream with our eyes open. It matters not whether we succeed in all of these. The beauty of the journey also enriches our lives in ways that we may not immediately fathom. My innumerable dreams keep me moving. My father got me a comic adaptation of David Copperfield by Charles Dickens when I was 6. I was impressed by the way David tackled the adversities in his life. He was sent to the boarding school by his stepfather and was saved from being bullied by James Steerforth. The two formed an unlikely friendship that ended with the death of James. Steerforth was a rakish scoundrel, but David looked at all that was good in him. My dream at that tender age depended on my frame of mind. Sometimes I would want to be like David, overcoming all adversities, other times I would want to be a loveable scoundrel like James, ready to help friends. I guess I imbibed a bit of both. I had studied mostly



in Hindi medium all boys' schools in my formative years. I was shy of speaking to girls the first time that I went to a co-ed school when I was only 12. I would look enviously at boys who could speak with girls in fluent English. I would want to be like them. In later years, I understood that it was important to communicate, language was secondary. Two heroes entered my life around this time. Sunil Gavaskar from the cricket world and Bjorn Borg of the lawn tennis fame. I looked enviously at their ability to display no emotions whether winning or losing. I was and continue

to be sentimental. My face is transparent and displays all my emotions. However, I have come to realise that being sentimental is also akin to being passionate about your goals and is not a weakness. My dreams were not so spectacular in my intervening professional years. They were the routine dreams about going up the career ladder to reach the top, whether in the government sector, where you are bound to move up at a steady pace to a point predetermined by your age and seniority; or to earn better money in the private sector. Then I quit the system. Free of the invisible shackles, I went berserk with my dreams. I spent a lot of time in the kitchen during the COVID-19 days, baking bread and making wine. Surprisingly, even my wife stopped objecting to my presence in a space that she had always considered as her private domain. I started harbouring dreams of recognition as a renowned chef. I also started writing at

this late stage in life and another dream was born. I started thinking of winning a Booker prize or a Sahitya Akademi award. Once you have crossed 60, you want to be immortal. What could be better than to be remembered centuries after you are gone? My dream is for my books to occupy pride of place on someone's bookshelf in the 23rd century; like the books of my favourite author, Charles Dickens, on my bookshelf, 200 years later. I now understand that no dream is irrational, outlandish, bizarre, or not worth pursuing. What is this life if we do not dream and strive for them? We may fail to attain many, but we will succeed in a few. That is what makes life extraordinary. Lee Kuan Yew's words are apt, "If you are just realistic, you become pedestrian, you will fail. You must be able to soar above the reality and say, 'this is also possible'." (The author is an electrical engineer with the Indian Railways and conducts classes in creative writing; views are personal)



SANJAY CHANDRA

Trump's win sets stage for 'America First' revival



V K BAHUGUNA

Trump's second term promises to reshape alliances and influence critical issues, including US-India relations, climate policy and the global energy market

Donald Trump has made history by winning the 2024 US Presidential election, securing 292 Electoral College votes and defeating Kamala Harris, the media's favoured candidate. His resounding victory marks a significant comeback and has reignited debates globally about what his second term might bring. This election wasn't without its drama, as Trump survived an assassination attempt on September 15, 2024, amid allegations of interference from powerful interest groups attempting to prevent his reelection. The victory was further shaped by the support of influential figures, including Indian American Vivek Ramaswamy, a former Republican hopeful who backed Trump. "Trump's comeback is America's comeback," Ramaswamy remarked, applauding Trump's strong persona as a "badass Commander-in-Chief" that many believe the US needs. A substantial part of Trump's campaign success was due to substantial financial support from allies like Elon Musk, who reportedly contributed \$119 million to the campaign. Musk's active presence on X (formerly Twitter) and outspoken defence of Trump against media criticism played a key role, particularly in swing states like Texas, Pennsylvania, Georgia, North Carolina and Florida. This unconventional alliance between Trump and Musk has sparked speculation and surprise, even influencing figures abroad, such as Bangladesh's Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus. Previously critical of Trump, Yunus has become a reluctant admirer following Trump's success. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also likely pleased with Trump's return. The two leaders share a warm rapport, marked by a mutual understanding rooted in their strong nationalist stances. Though Modi was unable to meet Trump during his September 2024 visit to the US due to protocol issues, Trump's victory strengthens India-US ties and suggests a renewed focus on strategic cooperation between the two nations.



Trump's "America First" policy will likely shape his approach to foreign relations in this term. Expect him to push allies, including NATO and the European Union, to shoulder more of their defence costs. He may scale back US involvement in international conflicts, aiming instead to negotiate peace agreements that align with American interests. A notable example is his stance on Ukraine: Trump's re-election could mean a reduction in US military and financial support for Ukraine, possibly pressuring the country toward a peace settlement with Russia—a development that could lead to a significant de-escalation of the conflict. In the Indo-Pacific region, Trump's focus will likely remain on curbing China's influence and India could play a pivotal role in these efforts. India's strategic importance as a counterbalance to China in the region aligns well with Trump's vision. The US-India partnership could expand in sectors like defence, technology and energy security. Trump's push for "reshoring" American manufacturing from China may create new investment opportunities for India, especially in high-growth industries like pharmaceuticals, electronics, and renewable energy. Energy collaboration will also likely be a highlight of US-



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India relations. With India's growing energy needs, Trump's focus on US energy independence could lead to mutually beneficial trade in oil, natural gas, and renewable technologies, while US firms may look to invest in India's energy infrastructure. However, Trump's immigration policies, particularly concerning H-1B visas for skilled workers, may remain a point of contention. While Trump generally supports highly skilled professionals, further restrictions on visas could push India to enhance its own tech ecosystem, promoting more in-country growth and innovation. Trump's stance on climate change negotiations may remain divisive. Given his scepticism toward multilateral climate agreements, he could once again withdraw the US from global climate accords. This could impact the efficacy of initiatives like the Paris Agreement, where developed countries have pledged \$100 billion to support developing nations. So far, only a fraction of this amount has materialised, raising concerns about the long-term viability of global climate targets. Trump's reluctance to support these accords without substantial changes could weaken international resolve on climate issues. India will closely watch Trump's policies on counterterrorism, particularly regard-

ing Pakistan, a country that has historically been linked to terrorism in the region. Trump's past rhetoric and strong stance against terrorism suggest he may align with India's concerns. A tougher US stance on Pakistan could address India's longstanding issues with cross-border terrorism, potentially strengthening US-India ties in this area. Trump's complex relationship with the US media, especially during the 2024 campaign, added another layer to the narrative. Musk was one of the few who openly supported Trump on X, condemning what they saw as a biased media landscape that often criticised Trump. This approach may have contributed to his strong showing in swing states, bolstered by Musk's strategic influence on social media. As Trump prepares to re-enter the White House in January 2025, the world anticipates how his policies will unfold. His administration's priorities are expected to bring significant shifts in US domestic and foreign policy, from trade and immigration to international alliances and climate action. Global leaders and citizens alike are waiting to see how Trump's assertive approach to governance will redefine America's role on the world stage. (The writer is former member of Indian Forest Service; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AMERICA CHOOSES TRUMP

Madam — With 295 electoral votes, the American people have chosen Donald Trump as the 47th President of the United States. Many entrepreneurs from the business sector have welcomed Trump's reelection, indicating that development is a key issue for the US. According to Google CEO Sundar Pichai, of Indian descent, "We are in the golden age of transformation in America and are committed to working with the administration. This will benefit everyone. Similarly, Jindal also responded positively to Trump's win. Trump's strong opponent, Kamala Harris, who received 226 votes, mentioned that the process of transitioning power would be completed as quickly and peacefully as possible. In her concession speech, Harris emphasised moving forward but mentioned that she would resist when given the opportunity. Speaking at her alma mater, Harvard University, Harris stated, "Never give up. Our allegiance remains with the American Constitution, and the fight to protect the country's fundamental principles will continue. Overall, the US presidential election was thrilling and closely contested. In the coming period, a key point of interest will be how the new administration under Trump addresses issues faced by immigrants and tackles unemployment in the country. But the business world is happy. Dattaprasad Shirodkar | Mumbai

CANADA VISA BARRIER

Madam — Apropos of the headlines (Nov 10), the impasse over Student Direct Stream for Indian students chasing for studies in Canadian universities in furtherance of diplomatic tussle is going beyond proportions. This should be seen as an opportunity, as the compulsively foreign-bound students should explore alternatives and preferably shed their obsession for foreign universities, as the standards of our premier engineering, medical and management institutions are superb and provide better

Manipur needs peace



It is unfortunate that ethnic conflict between the valley-based Meitei and the hills-based Kuki-Zo tribal communities began on May 3, 2023, still unabated. The latest incident

happened in the Bishanpur district of Manipur on Saturday, when militants fired a group of farmers, killing a 34-year-old woman. Since the ethnic violence erupted in Manipur, it has so far claimed the lives of more than 250 people and about 60,000 others were displaced, besides a devastating economic loss to the state. Despite a great loss of men and material, the government (Centre and state) has done very little to initiate a meaningful dialogue between the warring communities. To obviate further clashes, there is a greater need to maintain peace in the entire state but deploying force alone cannot quell a situation that requires sensitivity and compassion in equal measure.

S K Khosla | Chandigarh

AMU MINORITY STATUS

Madam — The simple logic that guided the 5-judge SC judgement depriving the minority status of AMU, "that the university was neither established by Muslims nor administered by Muslims," has been declared null and void by a majority judgement of the 7-judge bench of the Supreme Court of India. Surprisingly, the majority of SC judges led by the CJI overlooked the fact that it is a Central University run by the Union of India constituted under a Constitution that is essentially SECULAR. It took 7 long years for the bench to arrive at the judgement declaring Status Quo about the question, and according to Dipankar Dutta, one of the dissenting judges, this judgement was hastily delivered without the ideal procedure of consultations and discussions before the final draft. Still, the Supreme Judges expect the highest regard for their deeds from the people of this country.

Jai Prakash Gupta | Ambala Cantt

Vinod Johri | Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF BURNOUT

Addressing mental health with managerial support is essential for a healthy workplace



SAKSHI SETHI

Numerous studies found that high job demands, low control, low social support and job insecurity are significant risk factors for depression in the workplace while, factors such as excessive workload, lack of control, poor work-life balance and unsupportive work environments trigger burnout. Research in all these areas has grown substantially in recent years, revealing valuable insights into how these mental health challenges affect individual employees and organisations. In today's fast-paced and high-pressure work environment, burnout and depression have become prevalent challenges affecting employees across industries. While burnout is often a result of chronic workplace stress characterised by exhaustion, cynicism and a feeling of reduced accomplishment, depression on the other side, is a mental health disorder marked by persistent sadness, lack of motivation and feelings of hopelessness that may affect all areas of a person's life. Both can severely impact employee wellbeing, workplace productivity and organisational success. Burnout and depression in the workplace are typically rooted in multiple factors often exacerbated by modern work conditions and expectations such as excessive workload and unrealistic expectations, lack of control and autonomy, poor work-life balance, toxic work environment and insufficient recognition and reward. There is no denying that when employees lack the time and resources to recover and recharge or have no input into their work, their sense of helplessness can contribute to both, they become more susceptible to burnout and over time, even depression. Moreover, a hostile or untrusting work environment can erode employee morale and mental health contributing to burnout and, in some cases, even depression. The impact of burnout and depression extends beyond individual suffering and affects the workplace as a whole. As stated earlier, to maintain productivity, employees experience burnout and depression which may consequently lead to decline in productivity thereby impacting the profitability and overall performance. It is quite often stated that absenteeism and presenteeism both have significant implications for workplace productivity and team morale. Now when the levels of burnout and depression within an organisation are high, it will create a culture of dissatisfaction, resulting in a lack of engagement and trust among employees and as a result can harm collaboration, innovation and the company's reputation, thereby making it difficult to attract and retain top talent. It will end up driving employees to leave their jobs in search of a healthier work environment. Addressing burnout and depression in the workplace requires both—structural changes within the organisation as well as individual efforts. By creating a culture where employers foster an environment that values open communication and employees express concerns without the fear of stigma or reprisal; training managers to identify symptoms of burnout and depression and to respond effectively; providing small gestures of appreciation through praise, bonuses, or other rewards can significantly improve job satisfaction, and help in reducing stress and the likelihood of burnout. Organisations can create a healthier, more productive and more sustainable work environment where employees and the company can thrive.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)



Trump's return and the US-India trade challenge



SHIVAJI SARKAR

The evolving global trade landscape may offer India an opportunity to capture markets left by China, positioning it as a key partner in America's strategy to diversify supply chains



The world is galvanised, shaken, in a trance with Donald Trump's return to the US presidency. There are hope, aspirations, anxiety and speculations of a changing world. One knows the reality but the uncertainties around rock. Would it be a stable or turbulent India? Sizeable Indians are celebrating his victory against Kamla Harris, who possibly lost because she is a woman than any other reason. Not surprisingly, Indians obsessed with Trump, who exceeded the limits of decency, in the uses of words and even a 'B....' word are rejoicing. An Indian newspaper headline was eloquent or jocular as its banner blared "Kamala Harris", an intended pun may be to express the happiness that she was destined to lose. 'Harris' in Hindi and some other Indian languages means defeat. So, an unsavoury person gets the support against a dignified woman, whose Indian origin did not enamour Indians either in the US or India. Would Trump, supposedly a 'friend' of India, spread out the red carpet for India? Does India matter much for the US, strategically or economically? The US is India's export partner with total exports of \$77.5 billion in FY24 and total bilateral trade was about \$120 billion. Obviously, this balance of trade in favour of India spurs the US to counterbalance it. Trump has often criticised India's trade policies for creating barriers to American products, framing them as unfairly protectionist. During his previous term, Trump argued that India imposes some of the highest tariffs in the world, pointing to examples such as the 100 per cent tariff on Harley-Davidson motorcycles, though it was later reduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi

“DURING HIS PREVIOUS TERM, TRUMP ARGUED THAT INDIA IMPOSES SOME OF THE HIGHEST TARIFFS IN THE WORLD, POINTING TO EXAMPLES SUCH AS THE 100 PER CENT TARIFF ON HARLEY-DAVIDSON MOTORCYCLES, THOUGH IT WAS LATER REDUCED BY PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

terms. The new US President's economic policy is expected to focus on higher tariffs on all imports – 10 per cent across the board, and as high as 60 per cent on those from China, restrictions on immigration as well a reduction of corporate tax rate to 15 per cent for all companies manufacturing in the US. All this could eventually fuel higher inflation in the US and subsequent action by the Federal Reserve. For India, it could impact key export sectors such as pharmaceuticals, textiles and IT services. This may affect sectors where India has maintained high tariffs to protect domestic industries, such as agriculture and manufacturing. This is a highly sensitive issue for the Indian policymakers. The NDA government has taken conscience steps to ensure protection for the domestic industry, agriculture and other sectors. The IT companies, like TCS, Infosys and Wipro, rely heavily on the US for both revenue and talent deployment. "It could make Indian exports less competitive in the US market, impacting revenue," says a report by the economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI). It may hit China the most being the largest US trade partner. Many Indians believe that Indian exporters could benefit from the vacuum created as they also expect to fill the Bangladesh garment export fall by 6.2 per cent. The expectations may not be a reality, as the US itself strives to be a manufacturing hub, which is termed "America First". Besides, if a new tariff regime begins it may require intense effort and allowing concessions for increasing Indian exports. While the

barriers are high, apart from the government's diplomacy, some large companies are already in touch with the Trump coterie to mollify the issues as they are keen on setting up new ventures in the US or with US companies. His previous immigration policies affected Indian professionals, especially those reliant on H-1B visas. Stricter immigration conditions may hinder the mobility of Indian IT workers and engineers to the US, posing potential challenges for the Indian tech industry. The IT companies are giving preference to indigenous US workers. It reduces opportunities for new entrants. India's leading status as a generic drug exporter to the US could be hit with new regulatory hurdles and tariffs, impacting companies like Sun Pharma and Dr Reddy's. Additionally, India's steel and aluminium industries may suffer if Trump reinstates tariffs on these metals, as he did during his previous term. His preference for fossil fuels and his resistance to international climate commitments could discourage joint US-India investments in renewable energy, a priority for India. It could impact Indian solar and renewable energy companies. Trump's support for India in defence and security matters is unpredictable. His prior attempts to mediate between India and Pakistan on issues like Kashmir created unease in New Delhi, which values its autonomy in regional matters. Possibly sensing this China entered into a border agreement with India after four years of logjam. An Indian concern is that the West Asia war zone extends to Iran now. India is simultaneously developing ties with the Taliban in Afghanistan. The recent rate cut by the US Fed

Reserve and the latest presidential polls have disturbed Indian stock markets, which continue to fall. Along with this, rupee parity with the dollar touches new lows with a one-day fall of 21 paise to Rs 84.30 on November 6 and a further decline to Rs 84.38 on November 8. It may go down to Rs 85, the market says. There are also positive aspects in the US-India relationships, which Trump ensured earlier too. His personal equation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi had warmed up the ties. It is expected that high-profile events like Howdy Modi in Houston and Namaste Trump at Ahmedabad will be repeated to cement public engagements, and personal diplomacy and strengthen people-to-people ties. Indian exports and trade with the US might increase under Donald Trump for several reasons, despite his protectionist "America First" stance. India, with its growing manufacturing sector and cost advantages, emerged as a potential alternative to China for certain goods. If Trump continues to push for decoupling from China, India could benefit by positioning itself as a substitute supplier in many areas including semiconductors. Despite many issues, it is expected that US firms moving away from China could set up shops in India. Some like Ford set up 200,000 vehicle manufacturing units in Chennai for exports. McDonald's is also expanding. Ups and downs apart, India and the US are likely to have better ties for strategic reasons by engaging in intense negotiations also to end proposed sanctions against 19 Indian companies.

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

Women waste pickers in India: Transforming waste management amidst challenges

Recognising the intersection of caste, gender and class in the waste sector is essential to building a cleaner, more equitable world for all

In India, women waste pickers play a vital role in waste management, particularly in urban and semi-urban areas. They are part of a larger, often invisible workforce within the informal waste sector, which comprises around 1.5 million workers. These women, mostly from marginalised backgrounds, undertake roles in waste collection, sorting, and sometimes even in supervisory capacities. Despite contributing significantly to recycling operations, they earn approximately 33 per cent less than their male counterparts, underscoring deep-rooted gender inequalities in this sector. The rise of initiatives like the Swachh Bharat Mission



SANJAY K GUPTA

(SBM) has shifted the landscape of waste management in India. Many Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) now employ more women in front-end roles, such as door-to-door waste collection and material sorting at Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs). This inclusion has led to improved Swachh Survekshan rankings for these ULBs, reflecting

enhanced cleanliness and waste management efficiency. Despite this progress, women waste pickers continue to face multifaceted challenges, including gender-based violence, caste discrimination and limited economic mobility. **Case Studies:** Studies from cities like Ambikapur, Bengaluru, and Tinsukia highlight the significant positive changes brought about by involving women in waste management. **Ambikapur, Chhattisgarh:** With a population of around 146,000, Ambikapur became the cleanest town in its population category, mainly due to a large female workforce in waste management. Out of 550 jobs created, 457 were filled by women, resulting in

an 80 per cent female workforce that greatly contributed to cleanliness and operational efficiency. **Bengaluru, Karnataka:** In collaboration with the NGO Hasiru Dala, Bengaluru created over 1,200 jobs in the waste sector, with 92 per cent occupied by women. These women played various roles, from collecting fees to supervising sorting operations, positively impacting the city's cleanliness and Swachh Survekshan rankings. **Tinsukia, Assam:** Once one of the dirtiest towns in Assam, Tinsukia witnessed a remarkable transformation due to the involvement of women waste workers employed by an NGO. Of 108 jobs created for waste collection and supervision,



46 were allocated to women, enabling the town to achieve the status of the fastest-moving clean city in its category. **Challenges Faced by Women Waste Pickers:** Despite their essential contributions, women in the waste sector face a range of difficulties. Hazardous working conditions expose them to toxins and diseases and their work often goes unrecognised. Many women waste pickers are Dalits or

Adivasis who endure societal stigma, which reinforces their marginalisation and limits their social mobility. They lack access to formal recognition, fair wages and safety measures, making them some of the most vulnerable in India's workforce. The absence of specific policies addressing women waste pickers aggravates these issues. The informal nature of their work, coupled with limited research on gender dynamics in waste management, restricts policy interventions, leaving women out of leadership roles and decision-making processes. **Intersection of Caste and Gender in Waste Work** Caste adds another layer to the marginalisation of women in waste manage-

ment. Often seen as "dirty work," waste picking and sorting are stigmatised, especially for women from marginalised castes. This reinforces social hierarchies that exclude them from fair participation and economic upliftment. Scholars like Nancy Fraser and Martha Chen emphasise that caste and gender intersectionality compounds discrimination, limiting women's bargaining power and political representation in waste management. Addressing such complex intersections requires policies that recognise these overlapping identities and create inclusive opportunities for women waste pickers. To address these challenges and create a more equitable waste management system,

policies should adopt a gender-sensitive approach, ensuring that women have access to leadership roles and opportunities for entrepreneurial development. By promoting women in management roles, their economic empowerment and social standing can be enhanced. The inclusion of women not only enhances cleanliness but also contributes to larger goals of social justice and economic empowerment. Recognising the intersection of caste, gender and class in the waste sector is essential to building a cleaner, more equitable world for all.

(The writer is Global Advisor and Consultant on waste management; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



Amul to enter Europe soon

Amul will enter the European market by the end of this month after launching its products in the US, GCMMF Managing Director Jayen S Mehta said on Monday. The Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) sells its dairy products under the popular Amul brand. "We will be launching milk...fresh products in Europe by the end of this month," he said at the annual convocation of Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) here. The company will launch the products in Spain first and then look at expanding to other countries in Europe. He also said that non-tariff barriers are being faced by the Indian dairy industry in other countries and removal of those will help in increasing exports. "Try to create a market opportunity for us," Mehta said adding that milk is a source of livelihood for more than 10 crore families in the country and most of the producers are small and marginal farmers. India allows the import of dairy goods at a 30 per cent duty.



Gold declines Rs 450 to Rs 79,550 per 10 grams

Gold prices declined by Rs 450 to Rs 79,550 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid weak trends in the international markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association. On Friday, the yellow metal had settled at Rs 80,000 per 10 grams. Silver also plunged Rs 600 to Rs 94,000 per kg on Monday against the previous close of Rs 94,600 per kg. Price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity fell Rs 450 to Rs 79,150 per 10 grams. The precious metal had closed at Rs 79,600 per 10 grams on Friday. Meanwhile, in futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for December delivery slumped Rs 460 or 0.6 per cent to trade at Rs 76,812 per 10 grams. "Gold prices are trading lower, with Comex down, slipping from Friday's close of USD 2,685 as the strengthening dollar index exerts pressure on the yellow metal. "The rise in US bond prices following Trump's election victory is contributing to the corrective trend in bullion," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.



Niva Bupa IPO gets 1.80 times subscription

The initial public offer of Niva Bupa Health Insurance Company Ltd, formerly Max Bupa Health Insurance Company, got subscribed 1.80 times on the closing day of share sale on Monday. The Initial Public Offering (IPO) received bids for 31,13,62,800 shares against 17,28,57,143 shares on offer, as per NSE data. The portion for Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) attracted 2.73 times subscription while the category for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) got subscribed 2.06 times. Non-Institutional Investors part fetched 68 per cent subscription. Niva Bupa Health Insurance Company Ltd on Wednesday said it has mobilised Rs 990 crore from anchor investors. The issue has a price band of Rs 70-74 per share. The Rs 2,200-crore IPO is a combination of fresh issuance of equity shares worth Rs 800 crore and an offer for sale of up to Rs 1,400 crore by promoters. The company reduced the issue size as it was earlier looking to raise Rs 3,000 crore.

India needs to expand local vaccine research: GTRI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India needs to expand its local vaccine manufacturing and research to give better control over safety of these pharma products, think tank GTRI said on Monday. The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) also suggested the government to launch an investigation to track all adverse health events post-vaccination as this could help make future vaccine rollouts more transparent, safe and effective. "Expanding local vaccine manufacturing and research can give India better control over vaccine safety, ensuring vaccines meet local needs and are tailored to the population's health characteristics," it said in a report. It added that these suggestions assume importance in the backdrop of the October 2024 release of "The Pfizer Papers: Crimes Against Humanity" which has ignited global debate over vaccine safety, ethics and transparency. "As the world prepares for future pandemics, there is need for more effective vaccination strategies," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

Collective effort required to achieve export target: Goyal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On Monday, New Delhi, Nov 11 (PTI) Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said collective effort is required to achieve the "big" exports target of \$2 trillion by 2030. Addressing the annual convocation of IIFT (Indian Institute of Foreign Trade) through video conference, he expressed confidence in achieving the target. "Let us partner to achieve the export target of \$2 trillion by 2030, given that we will cross \$800 billion this (fiscal) year. We will have to really put in a lot of effort collectively to achieve \$2 trillion. It will not happen by chance, it will happen by choice and I am confident that we can achieve this big target," Goyal said. In 2023-24, India's exports of goods and services stood at \$778 billion. He urged the students and faculty of the institute to contribute to studying the non-tariff barriers being faced by Indian products in other countries so that the officers can flag those. The ministry also announced that soon the IIFT will have its new campus in



We will have to really put in a lot of effort collectively to achieve USD 2 trillion. It will not happen by chance, it will happen by choice and I am confident that we can achieve this big target," Goyal said

Dubai.

Speaking at the event, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said that IIFT will also set up a centre for negotiations, as this is an important skill set required in areas like free trade agreements. It will help students learn about the expertise required in the FTA negotiations. Barthwal said that the insti-

tute is also working on preparing India-oriented case studies for students. Rakesh Mohan Joshi, IIFT Vice Chancellor, said that the ranking of the institute has moved up twelve places to 15th rank under the management category in the NIRF (National Institutional Ranking Framework) ranking 2024.

Urgent measures needed to reduce trade imbalances with Russia

PNS ■ MUMBAI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday called for "urgent" measures to address the issue of widening trade deficit between India and Russia. While India's exports to Russia stood at only USD 2.24 billion in April-August this fiscal, imports soared to USD 27.35 billion during the period. The trade deficit is aggregated at USD 25.11 billion. The high trade deficit is mainly due to crude imports.



Russia emerged as India's biggest supplier of crude oil, which is converted into fuels like petrol and diesel in refineries. Russian oil was available at a discount after some European nations shunned purchases from Moscow over its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Addressing the India-Russia Business Forum here, Jaishankar also pitched for the removal of non-tariff barriers and regulatory impediments to help improve the trade bal-

ance with Russia. "The balance of trade needs urgent redressal since it is so one-sided. It is imperative that non-tariff barriers and regulatory impediments are speedily addressed for this to happen," he said. The bilateral trade currently stands at USD 66 billion, and the goal of reaching USD 100 billion is "more than realistic", he added. Further, he advocated for mutual settlement of trade in the national currencies, especially in the "current circumstances". "Special Rupee Vostro Accounts are right now an effective mechanism. However, even in the short run, a better trade balance with national currency settlements is the answer," he added. Jaishankar said the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin at the Annual Summit in Moscow and last month in Kazan provided a "strategic direction".

BID TO ACQUIRE MAJORITY STAKE IN ORIENT CEMENT

Ambuja Cements seeks CCI nod

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Billionaire Gautam Adani-led Ambuja Cements has sought approval from the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to acquire a majority stake in CK Birla group firm Orient Cement Ltd in a Rs 8,100-crore deal. According to a CCI notice, the proposed transaction is a two-stage acquisition process, initiated through two share purchase agreements (SPAs) on October 22, 2024, will see Ambuja Cements initially acquiring a 46.80 per cent stake in Orient Cement. This includes a 37.90 per cent stake from the current promoter group and an additional 8.90 per cent from certain public shareholders. Pursuant to the acquisition of shares, it "triggers an obligation on the acquirer to make an open offer under Sebi's

SAST (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) rules for acquisition of up to 26 per cent of the expanded share capital of the target (open offer)", according to the notice. Assuming full acceptance of open offer, the stake of Ambuja Cements will stand at 72.8 per cent, said a notice filed with the CCI on Friday. In October, billionaire Gautam Adani-led Adani Group said it has signed a binding agreement for the acquisition of Orient Cement Ltd (OCL) at an equity value of Rs 8,100 crore. The acquisition will add 16.6 MTPA (million tonne per annum) capacity to Adani Cement, which operates through Ambuja Cements in the sector. Ambuja Cements, the cement and building material company of Adani Cement and is a part of the diversified Adani Group.

India giving excessive market support to wheat, rice

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Five WTO members - Argentina, Australia, Canada, Ukraine, and the US - have alleged that India provides excessive market support to wheat and rice which distorts global trade. In a communication of the World Trade Organization (WTO), these countries claimed that India's apparent MPS (market price support) for rice appears to have been over 87 per cent of the value of production (VoP) in each of the two covered years (2021-23) for which India has notified data to the multi-lateral body.



Equity MFs hit record Rs 41,887 cr inflow

SIP at fresh high of Rs 25,323 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Equity mutual funds witnessed a record inflow of Rs 41,887 crore in October, marking a surge of 21.7 per cent on a month-on-month basis, fuelled by robust investments in thematic funds, despite the heightened volatility in the stock market. This also marks the 44th consecutive month of net inflow in the equity-oriented funds, highlighting the ever-increasing appeal of mutual funds among investors, data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) showed on Monday. Moreover, monthly contributions from the Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) rose to an all-time high of Rs 25,323 crore last month against Rs 24,509 crore in September. The industry's robust growth is reflected in achieving the historic milestone of



retail folios crossing 17.23 crore. The continued surge in SIP accounts, now exceeding 10.12 crore, along with a record monthly SIP contribution demonstrates the growing preference for disciplined investing among Indian investors, Venkat Chalasani, Chief Executive of AMFI, said. The inflow came despite heightened volatility in stock markets with Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) sucking out a massive Rs 94,000 crore in the month

under review due to major global events, including the US elections. The correction in the markets during October provided a good investment opportunity for investors, which they did not fail to capitalise on. "The 5-6 per cent drop in both the Sensex and Nifty was one of the sharpest in recent years, similar to what we last saw in March 2020. Despite this, retail investors have shown remarkable resilience, with inflows exceeding Rs 40,000 crore," Santosh Joseph, Co-founder and CEO of Germinate Investor Services, said. Overall, the mutual fund industry witnessed an inflow of Rs 2.4 lakh crore in the month under review, after an outflow of Rs 71,114 crore in September. The huge inflow was due to investments to the tune of Rs 1.57 lakh crore into debt schemes.

Flipkart deploys over 10,000 electric vehicles in delivery fleet

PNS ■ MUMBAI

E-commerce major Flipkart on Monday said it has deployed over 10,000 electric vehicles (EVs) in its delivery fleet as part of a phased integration of EVs in the last mile delivery over the past few years. The strategic adoption of EVs has resulted in substantial operational efficiencies, lowering the cost per order at the hub level and improving the last-mile delivery speed by 20 per cent, compared to conventional delivery vehicles, Flipkart said.

UK CODE TO FLY INTO HISTORY

Air India-Vistara merger to be reality from today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The nearly 10-year-old Vistara is set to bid adieu to the skies as the well-regarded full service carrier will operate its last domestic and international flights as an independent airline late on Monday night. Vistara flight UK 986 will fly from Mumbai to Delhi and UK 115 will fly from Delhi to Singapore. It will be the last time that the flight code 'UK' will be dotting the firmament and from Tuesday onwards, Vistara flights will have the new code 'AI2XXX'.



Interestingly, when the airline commenced operations on January 9, 2015, it was the other way around as the maiden flight operated from Delhi to Mumbai. An official on Monday said Vistara's last flights on domestic and international routes are scheduled to be UK 986 and UK 115, respectively. UK 986 is to depart at around 2250 hours

from Mumbai to Delhi and UK 115 is to leave Delhi for Singapore at about 2345 hours. "Thank you for being part of this unforgettable journey and showering us with your #VistaraLove. We will forever cherish these memories. Please follow @airindia for all the latest updates," Vistara said in a post on X. A joint venture between Tata Group and Singapore, Vistara

will be merged with Air India, following which Singapore Airlines will have a 25.1 per cent stake in the enlarged entity. The merger will also mark the second major consolidation wave in the country's fast-growing civil aviation space after 2006-2007.

RPL STOCK CASE

SC dismisses Sebi's appeal against SAT order

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a plea filed by Sebi against a Securities Appellate Tribunal order which set aside the penalty imposed by the market regulator on RIL chairman Mukesh Ambani and two other entities in a case related to alleged manipulative trading in shares of the erstwhile Reliance Petroleum Ltd

(RPL) in November 2007. A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan said it was not inclined to interfere with the order passed by SAT. "Impugned order was passed in 2023 which was challenged in 2023 and after one year, now the matter is being circulated. "No question of law involved in this appeal warranting our interference.

Dismissed. You can't chase a person like this for years," the bench said. Sebi had moved the top court against the December 4, 2023, order of the Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT). The SAT ruling came after all the entities appealed before the tribunal against the order passed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) in January 2021. In January 2021, Sebi

imposed a Rs 25 crore fine on Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), Rs 15 crore on Ambani, who is the company's Chairman and Managing Director, Rs 20 crore on Navi Mumbai SEZ Pvt Ltd and Rs 10 crore on Mumbai SEZ Ltd in the RPL case. Navi Mumbai SEZ and Mumbai SEZ are promoted by Anand Jain, who once served in the Reliance Group. The tribunal had quashed

Sebi's order passed in 2021 against Ambani, Navi Mumbai SEZ and Mumbai SEZ. It had also directed the Sebi to return the fine amount in case it has been deposited by them with the regulator. The case pertains to the sale and purchase of RPL shares in the cash and futures segments in November 2007. This followed RIL's decision in March 2007 to sell

around 5 per cent stake in RPL, a listed subsidiary that was later merged with RIL in 2009. The tribunal had said that RIL's board had specifically authorised two persons to decide the disinvestment. Further, the tribunal noted that it cannot be suggested that the Managing Director is ipso facto responsible for every alleged contravention of law by the corporate entities.

VIKRANT MASSEY OPENS UP ON HIS POLITICAL STANCE IN THE SABARMATI REPORT

Vikrant Massey is once again making waves, this time with his candid political commentary following the release of the gripping trailer for *The Sabarmati Report*. The film, which explores one of India's most devastating historical events, has sparked intense public discussion. During a recent talk show, Vikrant was asked about his political leanings, especially in relation to the film's portrayal of certain themes. Known for his secular views, Vikrant was questioned by the anchor about whether he had aligned himself with the rigid Hindu groups he had previously opposed. To this, Vikrant responded, "Jo chiz mujhe buri lagti thi, wo actually buri hain nahi. Log kehte hain musalman khatre mein hai, koi khatare mein nahi hai, sab sahi chalna hai. Toh isliye aaj main keh rahan hoon ki, I have changed over the last time." This statement sparked conversations about the evolving nature of his perspective and the broader political implications of the film. With such statements, Vikrant's remarks and the upcoming film are sure to continue captivating audiences and raising pertinent questions. *The Sabarmati Report*, directed by Dheeraj Sarna and produced by Shobha Kapoor and Ektaa R Kapoor, stars Vikrant Massey alongside Raashii Khanna and Ridhi Dogra. The film, set for release on November 15, 2024, promises to be a powerful addition to India's cinematic landscape.





HALF LOVE HALF ARRANGED 2 RETURNS WITH ROMANCE AND TWISTS!

Get ready to dive back into the world of romance, surprises, and tangled emotions as *Half Love Half Arranged* returns for an exciting second season on Amazon MX Player! The much-loved rom-com series by has just dropped its trailer, giving fans a glimpse into Riya's emotional journey as she searches for love amidst revelations and family expectations.

This season, *Half Love Half Arranged* brings back the beloved chemistry between Maanvi Gargroo's Riya and Karan Wahi's Jogi, along with a new twist in the form of Rithvikk Dhanjani, who joins the cast in a pivotal role. Set against the backdrop of modern romance, the series follows Riya as she finds herself at a crossroads, choosing between her heart's desires and a future fraught with challenges. With heartfelt moments and humorous twists, Season 2 promises to delve deeper into Riya's self-discovery and the delicate balance between personal happiness and family traditions. Karan Wahi, reprising his role as Jogi, reveals, "This season really pushes Jogi to confront himself, and I think his vulnerability will resonate with fans." Maanvi Gargroo's Riya returns with a powerful, relatable journey and Rithvikk Dhanjani's addition as Ved promises a new spark and charm to Riya's life.

Half Love Half Arranged Season 2, with its rollercoaster of emotions and heartfelt exploration of relationships.


Mona Singh gears up for fierce new role - fans can't wait!

Mona Singh, widely admired for her transformative on-screen performances, is stepping up her game in an intense new series. Known for her magnetic presence and natural charm, Mona is set to bring a fresh, action-packed energy to her latest role—a shift her fans are eagerly awaiting. Sources close to the actress share that Mona is fully immersing herself in her character, down to the smallest details. "Mona is gearing up for a power-packed, high-energy performance," an insider reveals. "She's changed her perfume to an intense, bold scent and has even revamped her playlist to high-bass tracks to create a fierce vibe. It's her way of tuning into the role, and she's going to create pure magic on screen." This rigorous preparation hints at the demanding nature of the role, suggesting fans will see a side of Mona they haven't seen before. With her dedication and attention to detail, Mona is ready to deliver a performance that's sure to stand out, embodying this new avatar with authenticity and grit. Fans can expect nothing short of riveting, high-stakes drama as she dives into this bold new chapter!



Prateik Babbar on healing and recovery with fiancée's support

Actor Prateik Babbar has recently opened up about his past struggles with drug addiction, offering a candid insight into his life and the challenges he faced. Speaking about the misconceptions surrounding his addiction, Prateik clarified that his battle with substances began long before he entered the film industry. In a revealing interview, the actor shared that he started using drugs at the tender age of 13, long before he found fame in Bollywood. He explained, "People think, 'Oh, he entered films, got fame and money, and then started taking drugs.' No, that's not true. My drug use began when I was thirteen or twelve-and-a-half years old. It wasn't because of the film industry." Prateik also touched upon the complicated family dynamics that influenced his early exposure to drugs, admitting that his upbringing played a significant role in his struggles. Reflecting on how addiction affected his personal and professional life, Prateik stated, "Drugs are associated with trauma. As long as that trauma isn't settled, it will continue to impact relationships and other areas of life." However, he emphasised that he has been working on healing and overcoming the past with the support of his fiancée, who he says has played a pivotal role in his recovery. "We're helping each other grow," he shared. On the professional front, Prateik is currently promoting his latest film, *Khwaabon Ka Jhamela*, which released on JioCinema on November 8. The film, directed by Danish Aslam, also stars Sayani Gupta and explores complex emotional themes.



Wonka sequel in works, Timothée Chalamet set to return

Following the success of the 2023 musical fantasy *Wonka*, director Paul King has confirmed that a sequel is in the works. The film, which delved into Willy Wonka's origin story, was praised for its music, performances and fresh take on the beloved character from Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

In a latest interview, King shared that the team has already started working on the script for *Wonka 2*. He revealed, "We've got about half of a draft. We've got a story that we like and we know where we want to take him." While the plot details are still being finalised, the sequel will likely continue the journey of Willy Wonka, exploring his life after the events of the first film.

King had previously expressed interest in exploring a follow-up to *Wonka* earlier in 2024. He mentioned, "I think if we came back to the character, it would probably be between here and Charlie because there's 30 years there to explore," adding that the challenge lies in finding the right story to continue the



tale. The sequel is slated for release on December 17, 2027. Although details about the cast are still being confirmed, Timothee Chalamet, who played Willy Wonka in the first film, is expected to return. The film's success at the box office, grossing over \$600 million worldwide, makes a sequel highly anticipated. Fans of *Wonka* can look forward to further developments as the team continues to craft the next chapter of Willy Wonka's magical journey.

LOOKBOOK

The Indian Sports Honours makes a grand return for its fifth edition, celebrating the remarkable accomplishments of India's finest athletes across a diverse range of sports. This prestigious event puts the spotlight on exceptional performances from Olympic and Paralympic sports, the Asian Games, Commonwealth Games and other key disciplines such as cricket, chess and squash. With a lineup of celebrated athletes and sports icons, the event recognises their dedication, passion and impact on the world of sports. Notable figures like Olympic medalists Vijender Singh and Yogeshwar Dutt, tennis legend Sania Mirza, shooter Abhinav Bindra, Paralympic star Avani Lekhara and actor Kartik Aaryan graced the occasion, making it an evening filled with inspiration, glamour and tributes to India's sporting excellence.



ARCHIE




GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

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19					

ACROSS

1 The first teenage year

6 A ship's right-hand side

7 A neck warmer

11 Be ill or die from lack of food

8 This makes bread rise

13 Get to

9 Having a meal

15 Stunned and not able to think properly

10 Expensive

16 Halt

12 A heat injury

14 An artist's workshop

17 Precise

18 Shave with this

19 A sheep minder

DOWN

1 Easily burnt breakfast food

2 Young child

3 Things to play with

4 Rub out

5 Puts together from separate parts

SUDOKU

	7	3	9	6	
1			5		
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Yesterday's solution

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

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.

DIFFICULTY RATINGS: ★★☆☆☆

Bumrah to lead, Rahul likely to open in Perth: Gambhir

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Head coach Gautam Gambhir on Monday said Jasprit Bumrah, as designated vice-captain, will lead India in the opening Test against Australia in Perth if regular skipper Rohit Sharma is unavailable for the game due to personal reasons. The straight-talking former opener also indicated that KL Rahul could be asked to open the innings in place of Rohit. The second batch of the Indian players is leaving for Perth, but Rohit has stayed back. Uncertainty remains if Rohit will compete in the series-opener. "At the moment, there is no confirmation. We will let you know exactly what the situation will be. Hopefully, he is going to be available, but everything you want to know, you will get to know before the start of the series," Gambhir said. "Bumrah is the vice-captain, so obviously If Rohit is not available, he is going to lead in Perth," the coach added. Rahul likely to open Rohit's possible absence also leaves a spot vacant at the top of the batting order and Gambhir said one among the uncapped

Abhimanyu Easwaran and KL Rahul, who both played in the unofficial Tests against Australia A for India A, will be picked. "Obviously, there is Easwaran, there is KL there. We will take a call closer to the first Test match if Rohit is not available. "There are options. There are quite a lot of options in this spot. Once it gets closer to the first Test match, we will try and play the best playing XI who is going to do the job for us," he added. However he gave enough indications that Rahul's experience might prevail over rookie Easwaran's current form. "There are times when you go with the experienced players as well and that is the quality of the man. He (Rahul) can actually bat at the top of the order, he can bat at number 3 and at number 6 as well," said the former southpaw. "So you need quite a lot of talent to be doing these kind of jobs as well and he has kept wickets in One-day format as well. So imagine how many countries have players like KL who can actually open the batting and can bat at number 6 as well?"



"So I feel that if needed be, I think he (Rahul) can do the job for us, especially if Rohit is not available for the first Test

match," Gambhir said. Team moving forward, coach hints on Shardul non-selection The coach backed uncapped

all-rounder Nitish Reddy, who has a batting average of 21 in first-class cricket, and was picked ahead of veteran pace

bowling all-rounder Shardul Thakur. "It is also about moving forward and I feel that this is the best set of players that

we have selected to do the job for the country," Gambhir said. Indicating that doors are closed on Shardul for the time being. Shardul was one of India's heroes at the Gabba with handful of wickets and a half-century. He has been seamer all-rounder in SENA countries. "We have picked the best squad who can do the job for us. Nitish Reddy, we all know that how incredibly talented he is and if given an option, he will deliver for us," Gambhir said. Why Harshit Rana wasn't sent for A tour? Rana was not sent with the India A squad for the unofficial 'Tests' in Australia to be ready for the BGT series but Gambhir said the management did not want to add to his workload by getting him to play First-Class games. "He had played a first-class game against Assam and he did reasonably well (took five-for and scored half-century). We all thought that he has had enough bowling under his belt rather than just sending and playing him another first-class game," Gambhir said. "For us, it is important for a fast bowler to be fresh as well. It is going to be a long tour, it is going to be a five-Test match

series. The bowling coach, the physios and the trainers thought that he has had enough under his belt and that was one of the reasons," he added. While there is no Mohammed Shami and tremendous pressure on Jasprit Bumrah to carry the pace bowling load, Gambhir feels that the attack is potent even with three inexperienced speedsters in Rana, Prasidh Krishna and Akash Deep. "We have got quality. We have got tall guys who can hit the deck like Prasidh and Harshit. All five guys have different skill sets. That makes our fast bowling attack very potent." 10 days of training good enough Gambhir, who will be travelling with the second batch of Indian squad on Monday, said adjusting to conditions in Australia over the next 10 days will be vital for the team. "We have got a lot of experienced players who have been to Australia a lot of times. Their experience will come in handy for the young players as well. These 10 days are going to be very crucial but come 22nd morning, we should be absolutely ready to fire from ball one," he said.



Ponting should be concerned about Australian cricket, not India's: Gambhir

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Head coach Gautam Gambhir on Monday fired a shot back at Ricky Ponting for questioning Virat Kohli's form and place in Indian team, saying the Australian legend should only be concerned about cricket in his country. Ponting had recently said Kohli's form is a concern, given the Indian batter has scored only two Test centuries in last five years but also felt that the Indian legend has it in him to roar back to form and there is no better place than Australia to do so. "What does Ponting have to do with Indian cricket? I think he should think about Australian cricket. More importantly, I have got no concerns whatsoever for Virat and Rohit," Gambhir said during an interaction with media before leaving for Australia. Kohli has just one fifty this year - 70 against Bangladesh in Kanpur Test - while his last Test century came in July 2023 against the West Indies. Someone, who averaged above 50 in Test cricket from 2016 to 2019, Kohli has managed only 1838 runs from 34 Tests at an

average of 31.68, with two centuries since then. In 2024, the 36-year-old averaged only 22.72 in six matches, the lowest in his career. Speaking in a recent episode of the ICC Review, Ponting said if it was not for Kohli, surviving in Test cricket was tough with such a dismal record. "I saw a stat the other day about Virat, it said he's only scored two (three) Test hundreds in the last five years. That didn't seem right to me, but if that is right, then that is, I mean, that's a concern," Ponting said. "There wouldn't be anyone else probably even playing international cricket as a top-order batsman that's only scored two Test match hundreds in five years." "I've said it before about Virat, you don't ever question the greats of the game. There's no doubt, he's a great of the game. He loves playing against Australia. In fact, I know he loves playing against Australia. And as I said, his record (in Australia) is very good. If there's a time for him to turn it around, it'd be this series. "So I wouldn't be surprised to see Virat make runs in the first

game." When asked if the form of the two Indian senior batters Kohli and captain Rohit Sharma, who scored 93 and 91 runs respectively in the team's 0-3 loss to New Zealand, is a concern, Gambhir said, "Not at all." "They are incredibly tough men, they have achieved a lot for Indian cricket and they will continue to achieve a lot in future as well. "For me, the most important thing is that they still work really hard and they are still passionate, they still want to achieve a lot more and that is something which is very important," he added. Gambhir said the hunger to do well is "incredibly important" for the Indian team especially after the loss to the Kiwis. "The hunger in that dressing room is incredibly important for me and for the entire group of people as well and especially after what has happened in the last series," he said. Indian batters were collectively exposed by New Zealand on a seaming track in Bengaluru in the first Test and spin-friendly pitches for the last two Tests at Pune and Mumbai.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former England captain Michael Vaughan says he "won't be surprised" if retired pacer Jimmy Anderson ends up at Chennai Super Kings as the former champions prefer a fast bowler who can swing the ball. The 42-year-old Anderson, who retired from Test cricket earlier this year, surprised everyone by registering himself for the IPL for the first time. "You mention James Anderson, I would not be surprised if Jimmy Anderson ends up at Chennai Super Kings," Vaughan said on the 'Club Prairie Fire Podcast' which also featured former Australian great Adam Gilchrist. "They are a team that like someone who can swing it inside the first few overs. They have always had a swinger, whether it is Shardul Thakur or



someone else. It would not surprise me if Jimmy Anderson ends up at Chennai," Vaughan added. The veteran pacer, who last played a T20 10 years ago in 2014, has never competed in a global franchise T20

league, prioritising red-ball cricket. He has a base price of Rs 1.25 crore for the mega auction. Asked about the decision, the veteran pacer said he has listed himself for the auction to enhance his knowledge

about the game. "There is still definitely something in me that thinks like I can still play. I have never done the IPL; I have never experienced it and I think for a number of reasons I feel like I have more to give as a player," Anderson had said on a BBC Radio podcast last week. "I have done a little bit of coaching since I have finished in the summer. I have been around the England team doing a bit of mentoring or whatever you like to call it," he said. "I just think opening my eyes to something like that and experiencing it, sort of might help me grow my knowledge of the game and help further down the line," Anderson had said. Over 1500 players have registered for the IPL mega auction, slated to take place on November 24 and 25 in Jeddah.

Shooters Aishwary, Samra disappoint as little-known Rameshbhai clinches silver

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Leading Indian rifle shooters Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar and Sift Kaur Samra failed to make an impact even as little-known Smit Rameshbhai Moradiya clinched the men's 10m air rifle silver after an extremely close fight for gold in the World University Shooting Championship here on Monday. On a day when Rameshbhai was the only Indian to win a medal, his more illustrious counterpart, Olympian Tomar finished fifth in the event, while Samra, a member of the Paris Games contingent, ended at fourth in the women's 50m rifle three-positions event. Rameshbhai, who hails from Gujarat, missed the gold medal to Czech Republic's Jiri Privratsky by just 0.1 point, scoring 252.1 in the final. It was a grand double for Privratsky, who shot 252.2 to claim the top-podium finish and add to the men's 50m rifle three-positions gold he won on Sunday. The 23-year-old Privratsky had recently clinched a silver (50m rifle 3-positions) and bronze (10m air



rifle) in the year-ending ISSF World Cup Final held at the Karni Singh Range here last month. Tomar shot 187.7 for a fifth-place finish, while

another Indian, Umamahesh Maddineni (208.8), finished fourth. Earlier, in the qualification round, Rameshbhai shot 630.0 to enter the eight-shooter final in second place. Umamahesh and Tomar shot 629.8 and 628.3 to enter the final in third and fifth place respectively. Samra, one of the best 50m rifle exponents in the country, was a big disappointment, finishing fourth with 439.6. France's Agathe Girard (462.3) won the gold medal, while Poland's Julia Piotrowska (462.0) and Anna Janssen (450.2) clinched the silver and bronze respectively. Samra had earlier secured a place in the eight-shooter final at seventh in the qualification round with a score of 587. India have so far won nine medals, including a gold struck by the 10m air pistol mixed team of Palak Gulia and Amit Sharma on Sunday. As many as 220 shooters from across 23 countries are competing in the championship. The event is being hosted by Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies.

Last three years were tough, changed everything about my bowling: Chakaravarthy

PTI ■ GOEBERHA

Mystery spinner Varun Chakaravarthy has described the three-year gap from international cricket as "tough," saying he had to completely overhaul his bowling after finding that his orthodox side-spin wasn't working at higher levels. The 33-year-old recorded his career-best figures of 5 for 17 in Sunday's second T20I against South Africa, though his efforts could not prevent India from losing by three wickets. "I had to go to the drawing board and check out all my videos. I figured out that I was bowling side spin and it was not working out in the higher levels," he told Jio Cinema. "I had to change everything about my bowling. It took me two years and I started bowling in the local leagues and IPL also. It worked there and I have started bowling it in the international stage and it's working out for me." While side spin creates enough revolutions to make the ball drift sideways, over-spin generates a

sharp bounce and turn. Talking about what worked for him as he added a fifer on Sunday to the three wickets he scalped in the first T20I in Durban, Chakaravarthy said: "It is a combination of both my consistency and overspin. "The overspin I bowl has more bite from the pitch and hopefully I can keep doing that and hopefully I can keep contributing for the country." Chakaravarthy was axed from the Indian team after going wicketless during the 2021 World Cup but he earned his place back after his exploits in the last two editions of the IPL. He snapped 20 wickets in IPL 2023 before finishing as the second highest wicket-taker this year. "Definitely, the last three years were a little tough," Chakaravarthy told media after the match. "The only thing I could do was play lots of cricket. And I started playing a lot of the domestic league (TNPL) in India. And that definitely helped me understand my game better. And that's what helped me."



Chakaravarthy was part of the Kolkata Knight Riders' IPL-winning team this year under Gambhir, who recently took over as the coach of the Indian team and he credited the role clarity provided by the coach for helping him to regain his lost form. "Yes, we played the Bangladesh tour and he was coaching the team. And definitely we spoke a lot and he gave me a lot of role clarity. "He told me, even if you go for 30-40 runs, it doesn't matter. All you have to look is to pick wickets. So that's your role in the team. The clarity which they gave definitely helped me." Chakaravarthy's match-changing spell reduced South Africa to 66 for 6 while chasing a modest target of 125, but a gritty partnership between Tristan Stubbs (47) and Gerald Coetzee (19) saw the hosts home in 19 overs, ending India's 11-match winning streak. "During the innings break, Surya (skipper Suryakumar Yadav) came and told us that let's not think about the result and let's just go all out. And that's what we tried to do.

We did our best and we could have pulled it off. "Obviously, the mindset has to be aggressive when the score is low. You have to pick wickets and that's when we can win the match. That has to be my approach in the next two games also because it's going to be a do-or-die match for us," he said. The spinner added that performing against a formidable team like South Africa would serve as a confidence booster heading into the remaining matches. "Definitely, when we came to South Africa, we knew that it's going to be a challenging tour because the Proteas, they are one of the best teams right now and they have a powerful batting lineup. "Doing well against them definitely gives me motivation to do more better and definitely I can. Hopefully I can do well in the upcoming games." India will face South Africa in the third and final T20Is on Wednesday and Friday at Centurion and Johannesburg, respectively.

‘WRITING A BIG STORY IS EASY, BUT MAKING IT IS CHALLENGING’

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Suriya is playing the lead in a high-budget period action movie *Kanguva*, which is directed by Siva. The film also stars Disha Patani and Bobby Deol in playing pivotal roles. The movie is hitting the screens on November 14 in all languages.

Interestingly, director Siva started his journey as director in Telugu first. “My journey in the Telugu film industry began as an assistant cameraman for the movie *Premante Idera*. Since childhood, I’ve been passionate about reading literature, which eventually led me to a love for writing. I’ve directed nine films so far and *Kanguva* is my tenth,” said Siva about his journey.

Siva earlier worked with Gnanavel in the production for the film *Siruthai*. Now, after a long break, he reunited with producer Gnanavel for *Kanguva*, now as director. “When I shared some of my scripts with him, he was highly impressed and asked me to narrate the story to Suriya. I told Suriya the script and he embraced me, saying it was excellent. He immediately agreed to be a part of the film and that’s how the journey of *Kanguva* began,” he said about *Kanguva*.

Suriya’s upcoming film *Kanguva* has been creating significant buzz. As the film is nearing its release, the film’s director Siva shares some interesting tidbits about the film, working with Suriya and more

For this, he revealed that he was working on this project for two and half years. They worked more on the pre-production, because they shot the film in 3D.

The director praises Suriya for his support, because there were times when they used to start shoot at 4 and 7 in the morning. “We shot in the hills and there was a lot of hill climbing involved. Suriya would join us on those climbs. On some days, 140 trucks would be used for shooting logistics,” said the director. Suriya is playing two different roles Kangu and Francis. Kangu, a period look, is a character from a thousand years ago, Francis, on the other hand, is a modern character, who can be controlled by certain elements.

“He is skilled in martial arts and also runs very well. His fitness played a significant role. At 50 years old, it’s not unusual for him to have a six-pack. He follows a strict diet and rigorous workout routine to maintain his physique,” said about

Suriya. Bobby Deol is playing the character of Udhiran, who is a ruthless character. Disha Patani is playing Angelina. “We aimed to present a new world to the audience,” he said. “Writing a big story is easy, but making it is challenging,” said the director. “This film unfolds across two time periods. *Kanguva* is a hero from a thousand years ago. On the other hand, we also show the character of Francis in the present day. *Kanguva*, however, won’t have a partner in this movie, but he will be featured in a sequel, where Disha will play Francis’ partner,” said the director.

“*Kanguva* will feature a surprising guest role that will lead into the sequel. You’ll have to wait and see who plays that character on screen. I also have plans to work with every star actor in the Telugu film industry,” said the director.



‘In South, if someone vouches for you, it’s like getting endorsed’

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Rohit Pathak is renowned for his outstanding performances as Banne Singh in *Theeran*, *Bheeshma Parvam*, *Gyaarah Gyaarah* and now *Martin*, where his versatile and passionate acting shines through. His journey in the entertainment industry has been marked by creativity, dedication and a relentless pursuit of excellence. Known for his work across various regional cinemas, particularly in South Indian films, Rohit has carved a unique niche for himself with his nuanced performances and his ability to immerse himself into diverse roles. From his humble beginnings in theater to becoming a sought-after name in both regional and Hindi cinema, his evolution as an actor reflects his hard work and adaptability.

What truly sets Rohit apart is his natural ability to transform into the characters he portrays, bringing a distinct energy and depth to every role. His approach to acting goes beyond merely delivering lines; he dives into the core of his characters, understanding their emotions, motivations and complexities. Whether playing a challenging role in a gritty thriller or embodying a lighter, more playful character, Rohit’s performances are always captivating and unforgettable.

When asked about his journey into the industry and what exactly drew him towards acting, he shared, “Sometimes, it just happens without clarity. Not everyone is like that, but for me, I didn’t have a clear sense of which field I wanted to pursue. You just feel an interest toward something, but you don’t always know if it’s right or wrong. That interest grew so much that it eventually led me to this field. That’s when I decided to make a career out of it. I started with theater, and that’s where my acting career began.”

Regarding the most challenging and fulfilling roles he’s played, he said, “I actually want to play a variety of roles. When you have a strong passion for something, there’s nothing really challenging about it. I don’t think about acting as a job. The characters are on paper and all you need is the costume and make-up. If you understand the character and follow what the director has envisioned, the material will naturally come out. As for the most fulfilling role, I can’t choose one because each experience is unique. But I will say, the role of Banne Singh in the 2017 Tamil film *Theeran* was a turning point for me. It was a different character and I had a lot of fun playing it. That role really got me noticed in South cinema and the love from the audience helped me gain more work and opened up opportunities. That was a significant turning point in my life.”

When asked about his experiences working across different regional cinemas and Bollywood, he emphasised, “I don’t think we should call it ‘regional cinema.’ It’s all Indian cinema. Hindi is just a bigger medium, the ‘big brother,’ while the other languages are like younger brothers. I feel a lot of job satisfaction working in the South because the industry is very organised and there’s a sense of community. People from the same language and culture work together, and there’s a natural understanding among us. That’s one of the reasons South cinema is loved globally. In Hindi cinema, which is a larger platform, there are more complexities because you’re dealing with a huge audience. In the South, if someone recommends you, there’s trust, and you’re more likely to get a role.”

He went on to reflect on his experiences: “Hindi is definitely a bigger platform and recognition from Bollywood is essential for global visibility. But I’ve noticed that in the South, there’s more direct support. People are more likely to trust a recommendation. In Bollywood, it’s more about proving yourself first. I want to get into Bollywood eventually, but I also recognise the unique challenges that come

with such a large-scale industry. It’s like managing a country, you have to manage 140 crore people. It’s not as simple as managing a smaller household.”

Speaking about his preparation for his role in *Martin*, he recalled, “When I was working on *Martin*, I was juggling three films at once. One in Malayalam, one in Telugu and *Martin* in Bengaluru. I was traveling to different cities every day, which was exhausting. It got to a point where I felt mentally drained. But I realised that in such times, I needed to keep my mind calm. I was able to play three very different characters and the challenge was keeping them distinct from one another. Despite the exhaustion, I was proud to have pulled it off. The directors were happy with my performance, and I was grateful for the support.”

Asked about his dream roles, he humbly replied, “My career is just starting, so there’s no particular dream role yet. But I believe in working hard and performing with the same energy in every film, treating each one as if it’s my first. The roles will come naturally, and the audience will decide what I’m good at. I don’t focus on dream roles. I just do my best in whatever I’m given, and that’s what keeps me going.”

He also spoke about his influences: “I come from a non-film background. My family didn’t have any connection to the film industry. People saw my confidence and suggested I try modeling. I didn’t know anything about acting or theater at the time. When I first heard about theater, I thought it was about watching movies in theaters, not performing. But when I joined a professional theater group, I realised it was about performing on stage. My journey started with that, and I was inspired by the films and actors I admired in my youth. There was a group of us who would watch every movie, even if it was a flop. The actors who stood out to me were the ones who made an impact, and I wanted to do the same.”

In an intimate and exclusive chat, Rohit Pathak, takes *The Pioneer* through behind the scenes of his most iconic roles, revealing the dedication and craft that have made him a beloved figure in Indian cinema



Telugu actors prefer North India for film promotions



The other day Telugu superstar Ram Charan was promoting his upcoming film *Game Changer* in Lucknow, capital of Uttar Pradesh. He released the teaser of his film in Lucknow to great fanfare! Now, his cousin and another superstar Allu Arjun has also decided to promote his upcoming film *Pushpa 2* in Patna, capital city of Bihar. It seems, Telugu actors wanted to go to North for their film promotions as most of the films are released in Hindi.

Directed by Sukumar, *Pushpa 2* is one of the most-awaited films. The first part *Pushpa: The Rise* was actually extraordinary in Hindi belt, so the makers now wanted to promote the sequel *Pushpa 2: The Rule* in Hindi belt more. The film is releasing on December 5 and the makers are starting the promotions on November 17, with a grand event in Patna, the capital city of Bihar.

Major promotional events are scheduled in cities such as Patna, Kolkata, Chennai, Kochi, Bengaluru, Mumbai and Hyderabad. As part of this, the massive trailer launch for *Pushpa-2: The Rule* will be held in Patna on November 17 in a grand event, marking it as a major milestone in Indian cinema’s promotional history.

Currently, the film is in its final stages of production, with post-production efforts happening simultaneously. Rashmika Mandanna is playing the female lead and she became a National Crush with the *Pushpa* part one and now she is there in the sequel too. Malayalam star Fahadh Fasil is playing the villain in this film.



Ananya Nagalla onboards *SDT18*

On Monday, the makers of Sai Dharam Tej’s next film had announced that actress Ananya Nagalla has joined the cast. Primeshow Entertainment took to their social media and wrote, “A multi-talented actress who effortlessly transitions between diverse roles.”

Meanwhile, the lead actor Sai Dharam Tej, had also welcomed Ananya as ‘Bundle of Talent’. Ajaneesh Loknath is the film’s music director and also stars Aishwarya Lekshmi. Touted to be a high-octane, period-action drama, the film will be released in Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Kannada and Malayalam.

Ananya’s latest release was *Pottel*, where she was seen playing the lead actress.

Sai Pallavi recalls her ‘sleepless nights, endless tears’ on *Shyam Singha Roy*

Actress Sai Pallavi is currently enjoying the massive success of her latest project *Amaran*, an action war film. Currently, she is also working on two projects simultaneously: Chandoo Mondeti’s *Thandel*, featuring Naga Chaitanya Akkineni as well and Nitesh Tiwari’s two-part epic mythological film *Ramayana*, wherein she will make her Bollywood debut as Sita opposite Ranbir Kapoor’s Ram.

Amongst several critically and commercially acclaimed films, director Rahul Sankrityan’s period romantic drama, *Shyam Singha Roy*, got her widespread recognition. Though the film did not receive the level of success the makers had expected, Pallavi’s portrayal of the devadasi Maithreyi alias Rosie was widely praised. Well, not to forget, her chemistry with Nani too.

Pallavi revealed how she often functioned on minimal sleep and how the producer responded when she brought up the issue. Sai Pallavi explained that since most of the scenes were filmed at night for almost 30 straight days, she frequently found herself working with minimal sleep.

“While shooting for *Shyam Singha Roy*, I would have been happy just to finish the shoot for the day. Most of our scenes were shot at night and I’m not fond of night shoots. I’m someone who can’t sleep during the day. So, imagine being awake all night, only to be awake again the next day. This wasn’t just for a day or two, but it went on for almost 30 days. I remember crying at one point and thinking to myself, ‘I want to act in films, but I just wish I



could get one day off.’ I never told anyone about it, but my younger sister saw me crying and went straight to the producer, saying, ‘She is crying and she just wants one day off.’

Creative Director Krish Jagarlamudi weds Dr Priti Challa

In an intimate and heartfelt registered marriage, creative director Krish Jagarlamudi and Dr. Priti Challa celebrated their union surrounded by close family members. Priti looked stunning in a traditional Paithani saree, its vibrant colors and intricate motifs accentuating her elegance and timeless beauty. The understated ceremony beautifully reflected their shared values, with simplicity and love at the heart of every moment. Priti’s graceful presence and the couple’s radiant smiles made the occasion truly special, marking the beginning of their journey together in the most meaningful way.

Director Krish Jagarlamudi, celebrated for his storytelling genius and his ability to bring powerful narratives to life, exuded warmth and joy on his special day. Known for his critically acclaimed films, Krish has long been admired for his thoughtful approach to cinema, blending history and emotion with cinematic finesse. On this day, however, it was his personal story with Dr. Priti Challa that took center stage—an inspiring union symbolising love, respect, and shared dreams. Their marriage marks a new chapter for the filmmaker, one filled with as much promise and beauty as the stories he masterfully crafts on screen.

