





# Simplify revenue services: Naidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu emphasised on Friday that all services related to the Revenue Department must be simplified and made available online.

At a review meeting held at the State Secretariat, the Chief Minister stressed that in today's digital age, citizens should not have to visit government offices to obtain certificates. He urged that essential documents, such as birth certificates, death certificates, caste certificates, and income certificates, should be accessible online. The focus of the meeting was on addressing the appeals and complaints received from the public regarding the Revenue Department.

Of the 1,74,720 appeals received, 67,928 pertained to the Revenue Department, particularly concerning revenue records, land encroachments, and assigned lands. Officers informed the Chief Minister about these issues, and he



directed them to take immediate action to resolve the problems with permanent solutions. He made it clear that citizens should no longer be made to visit government offices repeatedly to resolve their issues.

"If a complaint is received, it must be addressed comprehensively and resolved permanently. Resolving it just for the sake of it will not be tolerated," the Chief Minister stated. He acknowledged the difficulties people face in the Revenue Department, a situation wors-

ened by policies implemented by the previous government, which had forced the public to repeatedly visit government offices in search of solutions.

The Chief Minister stressed the urgent need to reform the Revenue Department to make services more accessible to the public. He also suggested that a third-party audit be conducted to assess how much time is being taken to resolve each issue and whether the complainants are satisfied with the solutions.

Officers briefed the Chief

Minister on actions being taken regarding illegal land encroachments, fake transactions, and disputes that have occurred in the past five years. Upon hearing the details of large-scale irregularities in land transactions, the Chief Minister ordered officials to submit a detailed report on the involvement of officers in these illegal transactions, those responsible for the irregularities, any benami transactions, and the involvement of political leaders.

Officials also informed the Chief Minister that resurvey work has been completed in 6,698 villages, covering 85 lakh acres out of a total of 16,816 villages. The Chief Minister noted that 2,79,148 complaints have been received in the course of the resurvey, and these must be resolved amicably. He also stressed the importance of ensuring that future surveys are conducted in a transparent manner, free from complaints.

Revenue Minister Anagani Satya Prasad reported that the photos of the former Chief Minister on field marks are being removed, at a cost of ₹15 per photo. He explained that the total cost to remove all such photos in the state amounts to ₹12 crore.

The Chief Minister also instructed officials to resolve issues related to land under Section 22A, which had been threatened with acquisition by the previous government. He reiterated the need to tackle the land mafia effectively by enforcing the Preventive Detention Act and the Anti-Land Grabbing Act.

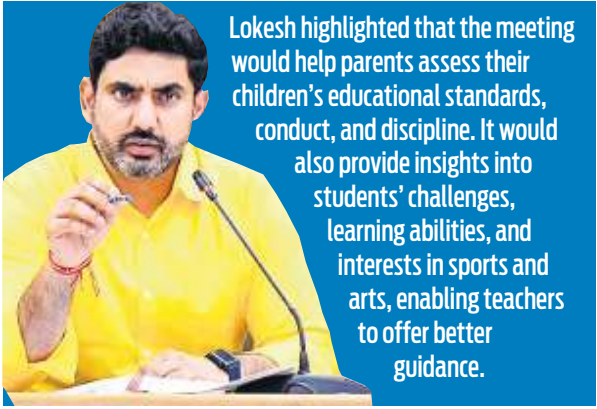
# Lokesh urges public to support mega parent-teacher meet

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Education, IT, and Electronics Nara Lokesh has called upon the public to attend the mega parent-teacher meeting scheduled for December 7 in large numbers.

In an open letter, Lokesh called for the event's success beyond political considerations, emphasising its importance for strengthening schools and addressing academic challenges.

Describing the meeting as a step towards bridging gaps between teachers, students, and parents, Lokesh said it would serve as a platform to understand and resolve issues in the education sector. "For the first time in the country, a parent-teacher meeting is being organised across the State in a festive atmosphere. I appeal to public representatives, from ward members to the Chief Minister, to participate without political affiliations," he stated.



Lokesh highlighted that the meeting would help parents assess their children's educational standards, conduct, and discipline. It would also provide insights into students' challenges, learning abilities, and interests in sports and arts, enabling teachers to offer better guidance.

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The Minister emphasised that the State government aims

to keep the education system free from politics and strengthen the bond between students, parents, and schools. He requested participants to avoid carrying political flags or scarves to the event.

Lokesh welcomed donors, alumni, and voluntary organisations contributing to school development and invited them to participate actively in the initiative.

## No change in Polavaram dam...

Continued from Page 1

Dr Ramanaidu also referred to a revelation made by the Polavaram Project Authority (PPA), obtained through an RTI query, which confirmed that the YSRCP government had proposed limiting water storage to 41.15 metres, contradicting their current position and severely damaging the YSRCP's false narrative.

The Minister further emphasised the importance of river interlinking, an initiative first envisioned by Chandrababu Naidu, which is closely tied to the Polavaram project. He explained that surplus water from the Godavari River would be diverted to meet the irrigation and drinking water needs of North Andhra and Rayalaseema regions.

With the NDA-led "double-engine government" at both the state and central levels, Dr Ramanaidu expressed confidence that the Polavaram project would be completed swiftly under Chandrababu Naidu's leadership, ensuring its full benefits for the state.

## HC asks police...

Continued from Page 1

The petition challenges multiple FIRs registered against him for allegedly posting objectionable content on social media.

The FIRs, lodged at various police stations across the State, on posts that reportedly included morphed images of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan. Varma's counsel contended that filing multiple FIRs for the same alleged offence violates Supreme Court guidelines. Despite this, the police have proceeded with their actions, prompting Varma to seek legal intervention.

The High Court has scheduled the next hearing in the case for December 2, 2024.

# Govt to focus on industries to drive growth: Minister Kollu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Mines, Geology, and Excise, Kollu Ravindra, has said that the establishment of industries will not only create job opportunities but also improve the State's economic situation. He made these remarks while inaugurating the AP Chamber of Commerce and Industry Federation Business Expo at the SS Convention in Vijayawada on Friday.

The Minister commended the Chamber's initiative to provide guidance and advice to those interested in setting up industries. During his visit to the expo, he was accompanied by Minister Kondapalli Srinivas, APIIC Chairman Mantena Rama Rao, AP Tourism Development Corporation Chairman Nookasani Balaji, Vijay Dairy Chairman Anjaneyulu, and other dignitaries.

Minister Ravindra highlighted the abundant resources available in the



state, which create a conducive environment for industrial growth. He pointed out that with approximately 900 km of coastline, there are ample opportunities in tourism, fisheries, and agricultural product exports. The Minister encouraged the youth to utilise the state's mineral wealth to establish thriving industries.

"Vision is essential to achieve any goal," said Ravindra. "The Vision 2020 launched by Nara Chandrababu Naidu serves

as a perfect example. Though many mocked it at the time, today we are reaping the benefits. Major educational institutions like ISB and companies like Microsoft have come to the state, creating millions of job opportunities. The state has undergone a remarkable transformation since 2014 due to this vision. Despite the setbacks caused by the previous government, the public remains hopeful about recovery. With that belief, we have developed Vision 2047, which focuses on future development and welfare," he said. Ravindra also criticised the Mallapalli project as an example of the current administration's destructive policies, contrasting it with Naidu's vision.

The Minister reaffirmed Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's continued encouragement for youth to venture into the industrial sector, urging them not only to seek jobs but also to become job

creators. He highlighted the importance of effectively utilising government support. Ravindra also mentioned that the construction of a port in the Machilipatnam constituency is nearing completion, and urged young industrialists to invest in the region and set up ancillary industries.

"We have already conducted a Skill Census in AP to transform the state into a knowledge hub. There are numerous employment opportunities in tourism as well. By investing in these sectors, a plethora of job opportunities will arise. We have announced policies to enable development across all sectors. Unlike previous administrations that focused on destruction, we are committed to development. Through Vision 2047, we aim to make the state a leading one in the country, with the cooperation of industrialists," Minister Kollu Ravindra concluded.



## MP Sivanath meets Collector Lakshmisha

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath extended his congratulations to Dr G Lakshmisha, who recently assumed the office of Collector of the NTR district. On Friday, the MP visited the NTR district Collector's office and presented a bouquet to Collector Lakshmisha, wishing him the best in his new role.

MP Kesineni expressed his hopes that NTR district would lead the state in terms of development and assured

his full support to the Collector in achieving this goal. He also emphasized the importance of special initiatives for the progress of the Vijayawada parliamentary constituency and for the welfare of the underprivileged. He urged that transparent services be provided to the public.

Following the meeting, both the MP and the Collector discussed key issues facing the NTR district and outlined various development programmes to be implemented in the near future.

## Cong to fight for upholding 'integrity of poll process'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress Working Committee met here on Friday and adopted a resolution alleging the integrity of the entire electoral process was being severely compromised against which the party would soon launch a movement. In the resolution of the top body of the Congress, the party said free and fair elections is a Constitutional mandate that was being called into "serious question by the partisan functioning of the Election Commission".

The CWC, which met amid the ongoing Winter Session of Parliament, said the session has been a washout so far because of the Narendra Modi governments' 'stubborn refusal' to have an immediate discussion on three pressing national issues -- "the recent revelations regarding corruption by a business group, and the violence in Manipur and Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal".

## Storm Fengal...

Continued from Page 1

The report further noted that dry weather prevailed in Coastal Andhra Pradesh, with rainfall recorded at one or two places in Rayalaseema. Meanwhile, the latest weather update indicates that Cyclonic Storm 'Fengal' over the southwest Bay of Bengal has moved northwards at a speed of 15 kmph (previously 13 kmph) in the past six hours.

At 1730 hours on Friday, the storm was located about 330 km north-northeast of Trincomalee, 240 km east-northeast of Nagapattinam, 230 km east-southeast of Puducherry, and 250 km southeast of Chennai.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Krishna Paksha

Tithi:

Chaturdashi:

Nov 29 08:40 AM to Nov 30 10:30 AM

Amavasya:

Nov 30 10:30 AM to Dec 01 11:51 AM

Nakshatram:

Visakha:

Nov 29 10:18 AM to Nov 30 12:34 PM

Anuradha:

Nov 30 12:34 PM to Dec 01 02:23 PM

Rahukalam:

9:19 AM to 10:42 AM

Yamagandam:

1:27 PM to 2:50 PM

Varjyam:

04:52 PM to 06:36 PM

Gulika:

6:33 AM to 7:56 AM

Amritakalam:

03:12 AM to 04:55 AM

Abhijit Muhurtham:

11:42 AM to 12:26 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Showers

Temp: 28°

Humidity: 80%

Sunrise: 6:19 AM

Sunset: 5:33 PM

Updated: November 29, 2024 5:00 PM

## Govt neglecting farmers: Karumuri

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former minister Karumuri Nageswara Rao has criticised the coalition government for failing to address the hardships faced by farmers, particularly in paddy procurement.

Speaking to the media on Friday, he alleged that the government had abandoned systems designed to benefit farmers, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation. Highlighting the achievements of the previous YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government, Nageswara Rao said, "Our government procured paddy directly from over 35 lakh farmers and ensured payments were deposited directly into their bank accounts. In contrast, middlemen and millers' syndicates are now exploiting farmers under the coalition

government."

He accused the current administration of failing to implement key mechanisms such as e-cropping and insurance schemes. "Paddy is left in heaps on roadsides because the government has taken no steps to procure it.

During our tenure, we tracked paddy movement through tagging, but that system has been dismantled," he stated.

Nageswara Rao also pointed out that under the YS Jagan government, farmers received Rs 13,500 annually through the Rythu Bharosa scheme, whereas no similar initiatives are being implemented now. The former minister further alleged that mafia groups were illegally exporting subsidised rice meant for the Public Distribution System (PDS) to other countries. "We provided a range of essentials through PDS, but this government has limited it to rice and sugar," he remarked.

He urged the coalition government to prioritise farmers' welfare by immediately initiating paddy procurement and implementing robust support systems.

## CM Naidu firm on...

Continued from Page 1

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu emphasised the importance of active public participation in shaping the state's future roadmap.

The government aims to position Andhra Pradesh as a leader in India while setting a global benchmark for sustainable and inclusive development.

Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad, senior officials from various departments, and officers from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) attended the review meeting to finalise preparations for the document's release.

## SC notice to Bhaskar...

Continued from Page 1

After considering the arguments, the Supreme Court issued the notice.

Bhaskar Reddy's lawyers stated that they would submit a rejoinder to the Apex Court.

It may be recalled that former MP YS Vivekananda Reddy was brutally murdered at his residence in Pulivendula, Kadapa district, on March 15, 2019.

The incident sent shockwaves across the State.

## Jagan focusing on...

Continued from Page 1

He plans to stay in the constituencies, interacting with party cadre from three Assembly segments on Wednesday and four on Thursday.

This initiative, titled 'Jagananna with Party Cadre - Strengthening YSRCP', aims to foster direct interaction and build stronger connections between the leadership and grassroots workers.

Jagan emphasised the need for robust grassroots-level committees and leveraging social media to highlight public issues and expose government failures.

Encouraging resilience among party workers, Jagan stressed that facing challenges while in opposition would strengthen their character and credibility. He concluded with a call to action, urging party members to work towards reducing the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) to single digits in the upcoming elections.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION DEPARTMENT

No. 17 to 122/2024-25 E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE Date: 23-11-2024

Online tenders are being invited on e-procurement portal for execution of 122 works by the Executive Engineer, Paders of Aluri Sthanama Raju district for maintenance of protected drinking water schemes under JANMAN-PVTG grants in Peddapalli, Munchingipati, Paduru, G Madagala, Koyyuru, GK Veechi, Hukumpati, Kuravaram, Chintaru, Manduramilli, Aranalagiri, Dunturugudi mandals and to upgrade the existing drinking water schemes at a cost of Rs 1272.59 lakh during 2024-25. Availability of tenders: From 11.00 am onwards on 08-12-2024 till 3.00pm on 23-12-2024. For further details website: <https://www.approcurement.gov.in>

Sd/- Executive Engineer, RWS&S Department, Paduru

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# 147 overhead tanks to mitigate drinking water scarcity in Penukonda: Minister

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

Minister for BC, EWS Welfare, and Textiles, S. Savitha, announced that 147 Overhead Reservoir (ORH) tanks would be constructed across the Penukonda constituency at a cost of ₹72 crore to resolve drinking water scarcity.

The Minister performed the bhoomi pooja for the construction of an ORH reservoir at Kodampalli village in Penukonda mandal on Friday. Each tank will be constructed at a cost of ₹30 lakh.

Addressing the gathering, Minister Savitha expressed gratitude to Minister for Panchayat Raj, K. Pawan Kalyan, for sanctioning the required funds for the project. She stated, "Drinking water tap connections will be provided to every household, and water will be supplied from the Gollapalli reservoir. Proposals for this project have already been submitted to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan."



THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO EMPOWER WOMEN AS ENTREPRENEURS BY PROVIDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THROUGH MSME AND BC CORPORATION

S. SAVITHA

Minister for BC, EWS Welfare, and Textiles

The Minister also highlighted plans to establish an ITI in the region to address the Kia industry's need for skilled workers. "ITI classes will commence from the next academic year, enabling youths to gain technical skills and secure employment in the Kia industry," she noted.

Expressing gratitude to the villagers of Rampuram for their overwhelming support in the last elections, Minister Savitha promised to develop Rampuram into a model panchayat. She announced that CC roads and drainage works had already commenced in the village.

She further asserted that the coalition government is committed to creating 20 lakh jobs in the state over the next five years. "The government plans to empower women as entrepreneurs by providing financial assistance through MSME and BC Corporation," she added.

Taking a swipe at the previous YSRCP regime, the Minister accused it of crippling village panchayats by diverting their funds, leaving them under-resourced.

## Amarnath condemns propaganda by Government, media

■ Says power sale agreement was finalised after thorough discussions in Cabinet

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Former minister Gudivada Amarnath strongly condemned the 'false propaganda' being spread by the coalition government and its allied media against YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Speaking to the media on Friday, Amarnath emphasised that 'this malicious campaign' has been going on ever since YS Jagan founded the party, with baseless allegations aimed at tarnishing his reputation.

"For the past 15 years, there has been a persistent and vicious campaign against our leader," Amarnath stated. "Despite our leader providing a detailed account of the power sale agreement with SECI, these vested interests continue to spread lies. We have made it clear that the agreement was signed between SECI and the State government, and individuals have no role to play in this matter."

Amarnath further explained that the power sale agreement was finalised after thorough discussions within the Cabinet. A dedicated committee was formed to review the agreement, which studied it for 45 days before making its recommendations. "The process was transparent and followed all the necessary procedures," he added.

Addressing the ongoing allegations, Amarnath questioned how these vested interests could label SECI as a "broker for the

Central government". He also compared the power purchase agreements under the previous government led by N. Chandrababu Naidu and the current YSRCP government. "Chandrababu Naidu bought power at Rs 5 per unit, while our government has secured it at Rs 2.49 per unit," he pointed out. "This highlights the difference in governance and whose leadership has actually benefited the people."

Amarnath also hit out at the contradictory narratives surrounding industrialist Adani's meetings with political leaders. "When Adani meets YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, they accuse him of having ulterior motives, but when the same industrialist meets Chandrababu Naidu, no such allegations are made," he remarked. Highlighting the efficiency of the YSRCP government, Amarnath said, "Many States have entered into agreements with SECI, and Andhra Pradesh's deal is the cheapest of them all." He concluded by criticising Chandrababu's economic record. "Chandrababu Naidu left the State with a debt of Rs 86,000 crore, while under Jagan Mohan Reddy's leadership, we have saved over Rs 1.10 lakh crore. He has failed to keep his election promise of reducing power charges and instead burdened the people with Rs 20,000 crore in additional debt. We will continue to expose these issues and fight for the people's interests."

## MISSING STUDENT FOUND MURDERED

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

In a gruesome incident, an Eighth Class student was brutally murdered by miscreants at Pavagada village, located in a forest area.

CI Ragi Ramaiah informed the media that the deceased, Chetan (13), was a student at the government school in Amtalagundi village. He hailed from Maruvapalli village in Madakasira mandal of SSS district.

According to reports, the boy had gone to the forest area on Thursday with an acquaintance, Ashok. However, he went missing, prompting the police to register a case and initiate an investigation. On Friday, the boy's body was discovered in the forest.

The victim's parents alleged that their son had been kidnapped and subsequently murdered. A case has been registered, and the body has been sent to the Government General Hospital (GGH) for post-mortem.

Madakasira MLA MS Raju expressed shock and grief over the boy's death. He urged the police to take stringent action to ensure such incidents do not recur in the constituency.



## Workshop held on Skill development for Global Career

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Under the leadership of G Ganesh Kumar, Managing Director & CEO of Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC), an international workshop was conducted at the APSSDC Head Office in Tadepalli as part of the Skill International initiative on Friday. The workshop focused on the theme "Transforming Talent: International Skill Development for Global Careers".

The event, a significant step forward in skill development, saw participation from the Andhra Pradesh Nurses and Midwives Council (APNMC), principals and deans of nursing colleges across Andhra Pradesh and representatives from global organisations including NSDCI, 2Coms, Cura Personal, and SM Care. Discussions revolved around leveraging international opportunities for nursing professionals.

Interactive sessions covered vital topics such as cross-cultural communication, language and digital proficiency, and emerging job trends in the global healthcare sector. These sessions aimed to prepare participants for thriving in diverse international environments.

Addressing the gathering, Ganesh Kumar stressed that the workshop marks the beginning of a transformative journey for nursing professionals, equipping them with skills for international training and placements. He highlighted the corporation's commitment to upskilling talent in Andhra Pradesh.

V Krishna Javaji, renowned entrepreneur based in Germany, shed light on placement opportunities in Germany and Austria. He urged the integration of German language training into the nursing curriculum during the final semesters to meet the growing demand for healthcare professionals in these countries.

Prof K Sushila, Registrar of APNMC, lauded the initiative and stressed the benefits of in-depth workshops, networking with international industry experts, and access to resources for ongoing skill enhancement. Officials from the Ministry of External Affairs including Krishna Kumar from O/o Protector of Emigrants (POE), Hyderabad, provided insights into visa processes and emigration clearance requirements.

## ₹60K cr investments in 4 months: Gottipati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Energy, Gottipati Ravi Kumar, has claimed that over Rs 60,000 crore worth of investments have flowed into the state in the last four months, indicating financial progress for Andhra Pradesh.

The Minister made the statement while participating in the Praja Vedika programme at Korisapadu village on Friday. Addressing the gathering, Ravi Kumar revealed that several prominent companies are keen on establishing industries in the state. "Godrej has committed to investing Rs 3,000 crore, while HCL will invest Rs 15,000 crore in Andhra Pradesh. Apart from these, many reputed companies have shown interest in setting up their operations here. Creating wealth is an art that the YSRCP leaders do not understand," Ravi Kumar said.

He highlighted that the establishment of industries in the state would reduce the unemployment rate and simultaneously enhance the state's financial standing. The Minister further stated that Chief Minister Chandrababu



The YSRCP government had taken Rs 450 crore from the NTR Health University. Additionally, loans were borrowed from various institutions

GOTTIPATI RAVI KUMAR

Minister for Energy

Naidu and IT Minister Nara Lokesh are working diligently to attract investments to the state. He reiterated that the coalition government is fully committed to the overall devel-

opment of Andhra Pradesh. Ravi Kumar also expressed his intention to strengthen village panchayats by providing them with additional funds and criticised the previous YSRCP regime for depriving these panchayats of their rightful funds. He stressed the importance of addressing the drinking water crisis in rural areas of Prakasam district.

The Minister directed the concerned officials to expedite the completion of drainage and drinking water projects in rural areas. He also instructed them to ensure the timely disbursement of salaries to village panchayat workers.

Ravi Kumar regretted that fee reimbursement arrears had accumulated to Rs 3,400 crore during the 2023-24 period under the YSRCP government. He also pointed out that pension and medical reimbursements were not paid to retired employees during the YSRCP rule. "The YSRCP government had taken Rs 450 crore from the NTR Health University. Additionally, loans were borrowed from various institutions," Gottipati Ravi Kumar criticised.

## Addressing public issues top priority: Yaarlagadda

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Gannavaram MLA and Government Whip Yaarlagadda Venkata Rao has been working tirelessly to address citizens' concerns. The MLA resolved a critical issue within 24 hours of it being brought to his attention through social media.

Yaarlagadda instructed National Highway authorities to install speed breakers near the service roads at Gollapudi and Chinna Avutapalli to control vehicle speed and prevent further accidents. The issue was brought to his notice on November 26.

Similarly, uneven road conditions near the Gandhi Bomma Centre in



Gannavaram were causing accidents for two-wheeler riders. Responding immediately, he ensured swift action to resolve the problem.

The MLA's prompt actions have been met with widespread appreciation from the public.

## FARMERS' INTERESTS REMAIN PRIORITY OF CONG GOVT: MINISTERS

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy has asserted that farmers' interest will remain the top priority for the Congress government in Telangana. Speaking at the Rythu Panduga (farmers' festival) programme in Mahabubnagar on Friday, Uttam Kumar Reddy highlighted key initiatives and achievements aimed at supporting farmers. The meeting was a prelude to a massive public meeting to be addressed by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Saturday. "Many farmers were saying that bonus is better than Rythu Bandhu assistance; keep only bonus as every farmer is getting Rs10,000-15,000. We will continue only those schemes that benefit you. We will not mislead you

(farmers) and make false assurances by saying Rythu Bharosa, bonus and crop insurance will be offered. We will speak the truth and deliver what is committed to you," Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageshwar Rao said. Nageshwar Rao stated that Congress government prioritises farmers' welfare over political gains. He said that farmers have been expressing happiness with the pro-farmers measures being taken by the government which shows its commitment to their welfare. Continuing his address, Uttam Kumar Reddy, along with Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageshwar Rao, reviewed the arrangements for the public meeting in the undivided Mahabubnagar district MLAs and other leaders.



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A global delegation of 51 agroecology experts, farmers, and researchers from 20 countries visited the Kuppam constituency in Andhra Pradesh on Friday to explore the state's innovative natural farming practices. This visit was part of a Global Agroecology Learning Exchange organised by the Andhra Pradesh Community Managed Natural Farming (APCNF) programme, under the guidance of the Rythu Sadhikara Samstha (RySS).

In response to questions from the delegation, the Regional Project Coordinator (RPC) explained that while the certification process for the external market is underway, most farmers are current-

ly selling their products locally and earning a premium price for their natural farming produce. The District Agriculture Officer, J Murali Krishna, addressed the delegates and highlighted the support of around 8,000 human resources across the state for Natural Farming practitioners. He emphasised the success of models such as A-Grade, ATM, and Drought-Proof, as well as the improved health outcomes for families engaged in natural farming.

Morgan Ody, a representative from the French agricultural union that supports small-scale farmers, praised the natural farming principles, calling them both beautiful and a significant opportunity for the world. She stressed the importance of understanding and seizing this opportunity and also commended T Vijay Kumar, the retired executive vice chairman of RySS, for his visionary leadership. The delegation consisted of 51 members from 20 countries, including advocates for agroecological reforms and practitioners, researchers, farmer leaders, and agricultural experts. The group included professionals from Panama, Brazil, Gambia, South Korea, Indonesia, and the Netherlands, who actively participated in this knowledge-sharing initiative.

## Mid-day meal scheme facing crisis

■ Delayed payments and inadequate funds push administrators to the brink

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI

The mid-day meal scheme, a crucial lifeline for millions of schoolchildren, is facing a severe financial crisis in Anakapalli. Administrators overseeing the programme are struggling to provide nutritious meals due to drastically reduced government funding and the rising cost of essential commodities. "We are in a dire situation," said Prasanna, president of the District Mid-Day Meal Operators Association. "The funds we receive are simply not enough to cover the increasing costs of food and other expenses. We've had to resort to borrowing money to keep the programme running."

The district is responsible for overseeing mid-day meals in a vast network of schools: 1,033 primary schools, 148 upper primary schools, and 226 government/Zilla Parishad

high schools, collectively serving 23,378 students in primary schools, 9,500 in upper primary schools, and 62,559 in high schools. Despite this large reach, the administrators face the daunting task of sourcing food within an increasingly limited budget. While the government supplies rice and eggs, administrators must secure vegetables, pulses, and cooking gas on their own. The current daily allowance of Rs 7.75 per student is woefully insufficient to keep up with the rising costs of essential items such as tomatoes, sweet potatoes, turnips, onions, lentils, chilies, and cooking oil. "Despite our best efforts, we are forced to cut portions or compromise on quality," said one mid-day meal operator. "Sambhar and curries are served in such small quantities that students are being deprived of adequate nutrition."

The government-mandated weekly menu, designed to offer a variety of nutritious meals, is becoming increasingly difficult to implement. As financial constraints tighten, students are growing dissatisfied with the meals, leading to reduced consumption and, in some cases, parents sending food from home. The delayed payments and mounting debts have pushed meal operators to the brink of financial ruin. "Our salaries barely cover the interest on the loans we've taken," said Prasanna.

To draw attention to the crisis, the District Mid-Day Meal Operators Association is organising a protest in Delhi on December 3. "We urge the Central government to address this issue urgently," said Prasanna. "Without immediate intervention, the future of this vital programme is at stake."



ACROSS THE STATES



Rlys collected Rs 12,159 cr from passenger services

Railways revenues from passenger services during the festive months of September and October in 2024 was Rs 12,159.35 crore, the government informed the Lok Sabha in a written reply on Wednesday. TMC MP Mala Roy raised queries regarding the earnings of Railways through ticket sale and cancellation during festive months. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that from September 1 to October 31, 2024, passenger revenue of the Indian Railways is Rs 12,159.35 crore. "Amount credited on account of cancellation of tickets by passengers is not maintained separately," Vaishnaw said. The minister also gave zone-wise data of number of passengers travelled during the period from September 1 to November 10, 2024, according to which, total 143.71 crore people took train journey between the said period and the highest number of travel among all zones was from the Central Railway Zone, ie, 31.63 crore.



Purchase of endangered porcupine rays: Four held

Four fishermen from Tamil Nadu have been arrested by forest officials here and remanded in judicial custody for the illegal purchase of 10 endangered porcupine rays -- a schedule-I species according to the Wildlife Protection Act. The purchased marine species -- whose scientific name is Urogymnus asperimus -- together weighed about 424 kilograms and were recovered from a vessel which was only authorised to collect fish from the Lakshadweep islands and to transport them to the mainland, a forest officer said. "In spite of the conditions stipulated by the Department of Fisheries not to collect or transport any wildlife scheduled species they were trying to transport the rare Porcupine rays due to their very high market value," the release said. The forest department is investigating the case to try and find out from whom they purchased the rare marine species, a forest officer said.



One-horned rhino released into open forest

After four decades of conservation efforts, Dudhwa National Park has marked a significant milestone by releasing its first one-horned rhinoceros into the open forests, with three more likely to follow. The release of a 12 to 15-year-old male rhino, named Raghu, took place on Thursday in the 27-square-kilometer rhino rehabilitation area (RRA-1). Field Director of Dudhwa Tiger Reserve (DTR) Lalit Verma said. This marks a significant step in the park's ongoing efforts to reintroduce the species to their natural habitat, Verma told PTI. Raghu was one of four rhinos selected for release after an extensive evaluation by experts and three female rhinos are expected to be released by Friday evening, he said. The release followed careful assessments by rhino experts from Assam's Kaziranga and specialists from World Wide Fund-India and the Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), Verma said. The experts studied the behaviour, health and overall condition of around 10 rhinos in the fenced rehabilitation area before selecting Raghu and the others for release, the field director said.

Delhi run by gangsters, says Kejriwal; slams Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal launched an attack on the BJP-led central government during a legislative assembly session, alleging that Delhi is being run by "gangsters" amid a worsening law and order situation.

Earlier, Speaker Ram Niwas Goel marshalled out Leader of Opposition Vijendra Gupta who launched an offensive against Kejriwal during the discussion. The remaining BJP MLAs followed Gupta and walked out of the House.

Speaking during a discussion on the 'rising crime rates and

the law and order situation', Kejriwal expressed grave concern over the safety of Delhiites. "Shootouts are happening openly on a daily basis. It feels like Delhi is run by gangs. "Businesspeople live in fear of extortion calls, followed by violent attacks on their shops or show-rooms," he said. Kejriwal also questioned the activities of notorious gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, who is allegedly operating extortion rackets in Delhi and beyond. "Who is Lawrence Bishnoi and is he protected by the BJP? Otherwise, how is he running these extortion rackets?" he asked, demanding accountability from the central government.



Tough decisions have to be taken: Kharge

Need to learn from Assembly polls' results, says Congress chief

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the Congress smarting from defeats in Maharashtra and Haryana Assembly polls, party chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday asserted that "tough decisions" will have to be taken, accountability be fixed and shortcomings removed by learning lessons from the election results.

In his address during the

Congress Working Committee meeting at the AICC headquarters here, Kharge said he believes that the EVMs have made the electoral process "suspect" and stressed that it is the constitutional responsibility of the Election Commission to ensure free and fair elections in the country.

Kharge also hit out at internal bickering in the party, and asserting that the lack of unity and statements against own

party leaders harms the party a lot. "Unless we fight elections unitedly and stop making statements against each other, how will we be able to defeat our opponents politically?" the Congress president said.

"Therefore, it is important that we strictly follow discipline. We have to remain united under all circumstances. The party also has the weapon of disciplining. But we do not

want to put our comrades in any bondage. "Therefore, everyone needs to think that a victory of the Congress party is our victory and a defeat is our defeat. Our strength lies in the strength of the party," the Congress president said.

Noting that the Congress made a comeback with new enthusiasm riding on its performance in the Lok Sabha polls, Kharge said.

‘Opposition parties regularly engage in spreading propaganda against NDA’

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday hit out at opposition parties, alleging that they regularly engage in spreading propaganda against the BJP-led central government.

Modi, addressing party workers here, also said that the opposition has only one aim, "to somehow capture power by misleading people".

"Those who consider



power as their birthright have not been in power at the Centre for the last decade," he said in an apparent dig at the opposition.

The prime minister said the BJP dedicatedly worked for the development of Odisha, even when the party was not in power in the eastern state.

CBI files chargesheet in Assam online trading scam



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has filed a charge sheet against Ranjit Kakoty of tradingfx for alleged swindling of Rs 260 crore belonging to 1.5 lakh investors in one of the 41 cases pertaining to online trading scams in Assam, officials said Friday.

Kakoty, who is under judicial custody, allegedly deceived investors through misleading plan documents, false promises, and other fraudulent practices to misappropriate their

hard-earned money for personal enrichment, the agency said.

"The CBI used advanced forensic tools to identify the majority of the investors who were victims of the fraudulent scheme perpetrated by the accused through the online platform www.tradingfx.live," the agency said in a statement.

This is one of the 41 Assam investment scam cases being investigated by the CBI on the request of the state government, it said.

11 killed, 23 injured as bus overturns in Maharashtra

PNS ■ GONDIA

At least 11 passengers were killed and 23 others injured after a Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) bus overturned in Gondia district of the state on Friday afternoon, police said.

The bus, operated under the service name 'Shiv Shahi', was carrying 36 passengers and heading to Gondia district from Bhandara in eastern Maharashtra when it flipped over at Davva village under Sadak Arjuni taluka after its driver applied brakes to avoid hitting a two-wheeler that suddenly came in the front, a senior police official said.

"Eleven passengers were killed and 23 others injured in the accident which took place at around 12.30 pm," he said.

The injured passengers were shifted to different hospitals, the official added. The deceased included a 32-year-old woman police personnel, identified as Smita Suryavanshi from Morgaon in Gondia, police said.

Of the 11 deceased passengers, nine have been identified so far, while the identity of two others in their 50s is yet to be ascertained, he said.

‘Konkan Railway needs major upgrades’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The infrastructure of Konkan Railway Corporation Limited has become more than 25 years old, requiring major renewal of capital assets to ensure safety of traffic, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw informed the Lok Sabha in a written reply on Wednesday.

Vaishnaw said the infrastructure replacement requires major capital expenditure and the five shareholders of KRCL - Ministry of Railways, Government of Maharashtra, Government of



Karnataka, Government of Goa and Government of Kerala - have been approached by the Ministry of Railways to contribute for capital expenditure or to relinquish their share in favour of the ministry.

The minister replied to questions raised by BJP MP Kota Srinivas Poojary, who wanted to know the status of

merger of Konkan Railway. "There are five shareholders in Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL) namely the Ministry of Railways, Government of Maharashtra, Government of Karnataka, Government of Goa and Government of Kerala," Vaishnaw said.

The infrastructure of KRCL has become more than 25 years old, requiring major renewal/replacement of capital assets to ensure safety of traffic including doubling and rehabilitation of tunnels.

Nagaland Hornbill Festival from Dec 1

PNS ■ KOHIMA

The 25th edition of the 10-day-long Hornbill Festival in Nagaland is set to begin on December 1.

This year, the festival will feature four country partners—Wales, the US, Japan, and Peru—along with two state partners, Sikkim and Telangana. Tourism Minister Temjen Imna Along said at a press conference here on Friday.

The festival is a flagship tourism event designed to promote, preserve and showcase the state's rich cultural heritage. The Hornbill Festival is held at the picturesque Naga Heritage Village in Kisama, 12 km from the state capital on the Kohima-Imphal National Highway, with structures erected depicting the map of Nagaland.

"The festival, which kicks off in just two days, will mark a significant milestone in

Nagaland's history," the minister said. Known as the festival of festivals, the



event attracts visitors from across the world to witness the state's vibrant traditions, food, arts and crafts, he said.

These partners will participate in various events, including business roundtables, cultural exhibitions, and tourism promotions, he said.

The inaugural ceremony will take place at 4 pm on December 1, in the presence of the dignitaries of the partner countries as honoured guests, Governor La Ganesan as the chief host and Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio as the host.

The economic impact of the festival is expected to be significant, with the state government's investments reaching over Rs 100 crore for various infrastructure development and also upgrading the seating capacity of the main arena of the festival to 5,000 people with prefab structures, he said.

RIFT IN KARNATAKA BJP

Renukacharya faction wants party to expel Yatnal



PNS ■ BENGALURU

A group of former BJP legislators in Karnataka led by M P Renukacharya on Friday urged the high command to expel senior MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal for his open criticism of the leadership, especially the state President B Y Vijayendra.

Renukacharya along with a few "like-minded" party leaders said they plan to hold a mega rally in Davangere in the coming days, which is expected to be a show of strength.

The faction led by Renukacharya, consisting Katta Subramanya Naidu, Hartal Halappa, Roopali Naik, Basavaraj Dadesugur among others, is seen as supportive of Vijayendra. This faction plans to take out a tour in various parts of the state including temples, starting from Kurudumale in Kolar district today reportedly to instill confidence among party workers amid the confusion being created by a few, and to strengthen the hands of the leadership.

Over 40 pleas on EVM rejected by SC, HCs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Nearly 42 petitions have been filed in the Supreme Court and various high courts questioning the electronic voting machines (EVMs), with the higher judiciary repeatedly holding that the machines are credible, reliable and tamper-proof, the government said in Lok Sabha on Friday.

Responding to a question on safeguards to prevent tamper-



ing or hacking of the machines, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said according to the Election Commission (EC), EVM is a standalone machine with no radio frequency com-

munication capability, hence it cannot communicate through wireless, bluetooth and Wi-Fi.

"The machine is electronically protected to prevent any tampering or manipulation. It incorporates several technical security features such as one time programmable chip, unauthorised access detect module, advance encryption techniques, strong mutual authentication capability," the minister said in a written reply.



clashed with security personnel, leading to stone pelting and arson. Four people died and scores of others, including

policemen, were injured in the violence. Police have denied firing at the protesters opposing the survey.

Internet services restored in UP's Sambhal

PNS ■ SAMBHAL

Internet services were restored in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal on Friday, days after communal violence in the district, an official said.

"Internet services were restored in Sambhal at 4.00 pm on Friday," District Information Officer Brijesh

Kumar said.

The move comes barely hours after Friday prayers passed off peacefully at the Shahi Jama Masjid and other places in the district, which witnessed violence following a survey of the Mughal-era mosque.

Ahead of the prayers, district authorities had issued an appeal urging residents to

A note by SP state chief Pal shared on 'X' said that the delegation includes Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly Mata Prasad Pandey, Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council Lal Bihari Yadav, SP state president Shyam Lal Pal, MPs Ziaur Rahman Barq, Harendra Malik, Ruchi Veera, Iqra Hasan and Neeraj Maurya.

Ziaur Rahman Barq, who would be part of the delegation, has been booked in connection with the November 24 violence for allegedly committing "provocative acts".

MAHA CM HEADS FOR HIS VILLAGE

Shinde is not upset, says Uday Samant

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena leader Uday Samant on Friday dismissed speculation that caretaker Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde was upset and hence left for his native village in Satara district even as government formation has been delayed.

The Shiv Sena president

was unwell when he met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi on Thursday night, he told reporters.

Shinde, who has made it clear that he would accept the decision of the BJP top brass on the next chief minister, should be part of the new government, added Samant, a minister in the previous Shinde-led cabinet.

Prostitution racket busted; five women rescued

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police busted a prostitution racket operating in the southwest of the city, rescuing five women and arresting a 45-year-old woman broker, an officer said on Friday.

Based on a tip-off, a police team deployed decoy customers to gather evidence. The operation took place on November 26 at a house behind Rama Market in Munirka village, the officer said.



## Unjust arrest

The arrest of Chinmoy Krishna Das in Bangladesh underscores the persistent challenges faced by its religious minorities

The recent arrest of Chinmoy Krishna Das, a prominent Hindu monk and spokesperson for the Bangladesh Sammiliti Sanatan Jagran Jote, has spotlighted the precarious situation of religious minorities in Bangladesh. Das, known for his advocacy on behalf of Hindu communities, was apprehended on sedition charges after a religious flag was reportedly hoisted above the Bangladeshi national flag during a rally in Chittagong. This incident has sparked heated debates, both domestically and internationally, about the treatment of minorities in Bangladesh and its implications for regional stability. Chinmoy Krishna Das, a senior figure within ISKCON and leader of the 'Sanatan Jagaran Mancha,' has been vocal about the rights of Hindus in Bangladesh. His arrest follows an incident on October 25, when the ISKCON flag was placed above the Bangladeshi national flag at a protest. The act, perceived by authorities as a threat to national sovereignty, led to sedition charges under Bangladeshi law. While the government views



the flag incident as an affront to national integrity, critics argue that the charges are politically motivated, aiming to suppress minority voices. Das and the 'Sanatan Jagaran Mancha' have articulated an eight-point agenda, emphasising structural reforms to protect minorities in Bangladesh. They are demanding a dedicated ministry for minority affairs and establishment of a tribunal to expedite justice for crimes against minorities and other safeguards for preserving their identity. Their demands reflect a long-standing plea for systemic changes to safeguard minority communities, which constitute approximately 10 per cent of Bangladesh's population. The arrest has triggered widespread criticism. Former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina condemned the government's action, calling for the monk's immediate release and emphasising the importance of religious freedom. The incident also drew attention to recent waves of violence against minorities, including the burning of a Hindu temple in Chittagong and attacks on other religious groups. This episode has exposed the interim government's struggle to maintain law and order, with opposition leaders accusing it of targeting minorities to divert attention from economic mismanagement and political instability. While New Delhi often raises concerns about the safety of Hindus in Bangladesh, it must tread cautiously to avoid exacerbating tensions. India's position must be consistent. While advocating for minority rights abroad, India must also reflect on its domestic challenges. Rising incidents of communal violence and rhetoric against minorities in India undermine its credibility on the global stage. By ensuring that its own minorities feel secure and respected, India can lead by example and strengthen its moral authority when engaging with Bangladesh. For Bangladesh, the way forward lies in embracing its pluralistic heritage and ensuring that all its citizens, regardless of faith, feel safe and valued. Only then can it achieve sustainable stability and international respect it deserves.



Artist paints a wall as beautification drive ahead of the Rising Rajasthan event, in Jaipur

## Antimicrobial resistance: An invisible risk for women health

With AMR deaths projected to exceed 10 million annually by 2050, a gender-sensitive, intersectional approach is critical to tackling this silent epidemic

When antibiotics or antimicrobials, impactful the first few times, lose their efficacy as their intake increases, sometimes unthinkingly and unnecessarily, it indicates that the bacteria, fungi, viruses and parasites it was being used to treat have become resistant to these drugs. Prevention and treatment of infections then become increasingly difficult and can lead to fatal consequences. While this antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is invisible, the people affected by it are not. In 2021, deaths linked to AMR numbered a staggering 4.7 million and approximately 1.5 million were directly caused by it. Worryingly, India has one of the world's highest AMR rates. Equally worrying is that the impacts of AMR are not the same for everyone. Since the drivers of AMR in India include lack of access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and limited access to healthcare facilities among others, AMR disproportionately affects certain groups compared with others. Thus, marginalised and vulnerable communities, espe-



cially women, face a higher risk of acquiring bacterial infections, including drug-resistant infections and AMR. It is a good fact that women face more barriers to accessing health information than men. Limited mobility prevents them from attending public health awareness events and learning about the safe use of antibiotics. Low levels of education lead to ignorance on the use and misuse of antibiotics not just for themselves, but for their children also. Studies have found that misuse of antibiotics while breastfeeding can contribute to the development of AMR, particularly in intestinal microbiota in a child, through breast milk transfer. They are more prone to seeking antibiotics to get better as fast as possible, to

work. Medicines used for self-medication are often purchased without prescriptions from unlicensed local shops as limited financial resources often dictate whether it is worth paying a visit to a health facility. It has been proven that treating viral infections with antibiotics, not buying the full course of treatment, interrupting treatment and sharing medicines can lead to an increased risk of AMR with the emergence of resistant strains of bacteria. Sexual orientation and associated sexual behaviours among individuals also contribute to the risks of acquiring AMR. Laws that criminalise homosexual relationships coupled with stigma are deterrents to health-seeking behaviour by key populations such as men having sex with men (MSM), lesbian gay, bi, trans, queer and other identities (LGBTQ+) individuals. This enhances their exposure to pathogens, such as an increased risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and antimicrobial drug resistance. Gender-based violence also plays a significant role in AMR among women.

Multiple studies have shown that women, including married women, are at a higher risk than men of being exposed to STIs through sexual violence, having a spouse with multiple partners, male resistance to condom use and women's low ability to negotiate safe sex. This increases women's risk of contracting STIs, particularly gonorrhoea, one of the most transmitted STIs which has the potential for drug resistance. The more frequent the UTIs, the greater the use of ciprofloxacin and the higher the risk of AMR. With the possibility of deaths associated with AMR rising to over 10 million annually by 2050, there is an urgent need to adopt a robust intersectionality approach. Greater data disaggregated by sex, gender, disability, geographical location, occupation, sexual orientation and socio-economic status is urgently needed to implement policies to prevent AMR, especially among women, LGBTQ, people living with HIV and other vulnerable groups. (The author is a journalist writing on development and gender; views are personal)



SWAPNA MAJUMDAR

According to the report, "The Status of Elephants in India 2022-23", there has been a nearly 20 per cent decline in India's elephant population between 2017 and 2022. Authorities have dubbed the printed version, compiled by the Wildlife Institute of India, which is under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, as an interim report because census data from the country's north-eastern part have yet to be completed. The final report will be released by the end of June, 2025. The final figures from the north-eastern part are unlikely to make a significant difference to the percentage of decline. This is because of the pattern of development in the region where, according to the report, elephant populations are scattered in a mosaic dominated by human habitations, tea plantations, mines, oil refineries and linear infrastructure (roads and railway lines), which makes their movements and lives precarious. Poaching for ivory as another menace. More or less the same causes account for the challenges elephants face in other parts of the country. Not only are their habitats encroached upon, the 88 elephant corridors, through which the behemoths migrate for food and water, are encroached upon by human settlements and have railway lines and roads running across them. While efforts have been made to ensure safe passage by building over-bridges for elephants to cross railway lines, most elephants do not use them and cross roads and railway lines on foot. Not surprisingly, over 200 of them have perished in train accidents over the last 10 years. Their habitats being encroached upon, and movements under pressure, elephants are migrating to new areas abutting human settlements. Human-elephant conflicts have consequently increased steeply, with the number of people killed increasing from 457 in 2018-19 to 605 in 2022-23. Three hundred elephants have been killed in the last three years. They

## Save India's elephants from multiple threats

Encroachments on migration corridors, poaching and deadly interactions with humans and infrastructure are creating a precarious future for these gentle giants



also suffer casualties as offshoots of wider human-animal conflict. The killings are often done with appalling cruelty. On August 15, 2024, a cow elephant died in agony in Jhargram, West Bengal, after being pierced by a flaming spear by a band of about 35 men forming a "hulla" (loud noise) party—the nomenclature given to groups, armed with mashaals (flaming torches) and tasked by state forest departments with driving wild elephants away from human habitations. In this case, the party was reportedly mobilised by West Bengal's Forest department to chase away a herd of six elephants which had entered a human habitation and killed a senior citizen. The cow elephant continued to be hit even after she was wounded. Moving forward, dragging her hind feet and writhing in agony, she finally collapsed and died eight hours later despite the forest department's efforts to treat her. A report by Jayashree Nandi and Joydeep Thakur in The Hindustan Times datelined August 20, 2024, quoted a representative of the Human & Environment Alliance League (HEAL), a Kolkata-based non-profit organisation, as saying, "Hulla drives happen in mob



WHILE EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO ENSURE SAFE PASSAGE BY BUILDING OVER-BRIDGES FOR ELEPHANTS TO CROSS RAILWAY LINES, MOST ELEPHANTS DO NOT USE THEM

situations... The elephants suffer emotional trauma because of these invasive measures, in addition to physical distress. There is an urgent need to completely stop the use of mashaals by state authorities to drive [out] elephants." The report quoted an environmentalist, who had asked not to be named, as saying, that the whole idea behind having a hulla party was to chase elephants away by using light. "We know that animals are instinctively scared of fire. But we have seen in the past that hulla groups, employed by the forest department, are in [an] inebriated condition and resort to all kinds of horrific torture. Locals are extremely disturbed about this. Moreover, all corridors that can help these elephants escape are now encroached upon so conflict is rising." Sometime, death is a collateral development. On May 27, 2020, a pregnant elephant collapsed in Veliyar river in Kerala's Palakkad district and died, after having stood there since May 25. According to the post-mortem report on the tragedy, the immediate cause of her death was drowning. On May 12, 2020, she had tried to eat a coconut that had been stuffed with explosives to kill wild boars that ate up crops.

The result was serious, incapacitating wounds in her oral cavity. "This", the post-mortem report continued, "resulted in excruciating pain and distress in the region and prevented the animal from taking food and water for nearly two weeks. Severe debility and weakness, in turn, resulted in a final collapse in water that led to drowning." According to a report by Sujit Bisoyi in The Indian Express (datelined November 18, 2024), three elephants, including a calf, died after falling into an electrified trap, laid by poachers for killing wild boars, in Odisha's Sambalpur district. The question is: should wild boars be killed in this terrible way? The human-animal conflict is making demons out of people. Meanwhile, there is good news from across the border. Under the auspices of Four Paws, a global animal welfare organisation, Madhubala, an African elephant, was shifted on November 26, 2024, from the Karachi Zoo to Karachi Safari Park, to join her two sisters, Malika and Sonia, in open air. One hopes, brought from Africa when young, they live happily hereafter. (The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer; the views expressed are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**REMEMBERING PHILLIP HUGHES**  
Madam — A decade has passed since the tragic death of the Australian cricketer Phillip Hughes. The painful irony is that Hughes was killed by the very game that he loved most. As a thumb rule, cricket ought to provide entertainment to all of us. But, in Hughes' demise, the game dealt a severe blow to the cricketing fraternity, from which it could not come to terms till today. Numbers 408 and 63 that denote Hughes' Test cap and the last runs scored by him, respectively, will ever remain a shadow bigger than his frame. As the cricket world pauses to reflect on Hughes' contributions and untimely loss, the commemorations that Cricket Australia is preparing to pay a heartfelt tribute to him, marking his 10th death anniversary, serve as a reminder of the unity and resilience within the cricketing community. Hughes' legacy continues to inspire players and fans alike, reinforcing the profound and lasting impact he had on Australian cricket. Perhaps the bulbs that bloom on the grass at the Sydney Cricket Ground every day are not snowdrops but are droplets of tears in memory of the deceased young Australian cricketer.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

**PRIYANKA IN PARLIAMENT**  
Madam — History sometimes records the rarest of the rare incidence in its book and in Indian history, the Congress party is renowned for creating multiple such historic incidences. The Gandhi family has once again done something similar to having three members in the Parliament from one family only. After Sonia and Rahul Gandhi, the newest MP in the house, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is all set to begin her new league in the temple of Indian democracy, the Indian parliament. Initiating her spectacular victory this election from Wayanad with the huge margin of around four lakh votes, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is paving the way to represent the aspirations of Wayanad on the floor of Parliament itself. Her oath catch-

## Ceasefire a huge respite for Lebanon



propos to "Glimmer of Hope," published on November 28. The Lebanon ceasefire is definitely a huge respite. Over one million have been forced to flee their homes by Israeli military action and more than 3,500 citizens have been killed in Israeli attacks and

homes of tens of thousands have been destroyed. Though few people in Israel feel that this ceasefire would collapse as Netanyahu himself said that this is the time to give breathers to his forces and replenish stocks. The US and France will have to ensure that this ceasefire holds. As of now, the Israeli army would remain in the southern part of Lebanon and adapt the wait-and-watch policy. Israel has eliminated the whole top leadership of Hezbollah and we should be hopeful that they do not backtrack. Lebanon should focus on rebuilding its battered infrastructure. It is a moment of cautious hope as peace has been elusive in this part of the world. Both parties should avoid provocations and prioritise the lives of civilians over the politics of war. The world would watch with bated breath.

Bal Govind | Noida

es the attention, as she holds the copy of the Constitution in her hand and takes the oath simultaneously. Now, Priyanka Gandhi is also there, Rahul Gandhi, who is the current Leader of the Opposition from Congress, can represent the Opposition opinion more strongly. Priyanka can contribute the southern aspirations and perspective more explicitly due to her southern representation in the Parliament. Beginning the new political league at the parliament at the age of 52 needs strong zeal. She has taken the oath and become the Member of Parliament, we hope that she will be able to walk the talk and keep the Constitution at the epitome during her service period as MP.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

**ONLINE SERVICES DISRUPTED**  
Madam — Since the afternoon of Thursday, November 28, people and companies using net banking and online services in the country have been facing problems. The OTP i.e. 'One Time Password', that comes on the registered mobile number while making any transaction has start-

ed arriving very late. After which, on entering the OTP, a message comes that the 'One Time Password' has expired. This is happening because due to the new rules of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, i.e. TRAI, there has been a delay in receiving the One Time Password (OTP). TRAI claims that under this, they want to ensure that online users do not become victims of any kind of cyber fraud. But to prevent them from becoming victims of fraud, the work of people, institutions and companies has now come to a halt. Now we will have to go back to the manual era and for every transaction like NEFT, i.e. National Electronic Fund Transfer and RTGS, i.e. 'Real Time Gross Settlement' fund transfer work, we will have to stand in queues at the counters of banks. These transactions will not be possible on holidays. TRAI needs to reconsider its decision. This will start having an adverse effect on the business of billions of rupees every day.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

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FIRST COLUMN

TRANSFORMING THE SPORTING MINDSET

A holistic approach, encompassing administration, training and spiritual discipline, can transform sports



RAVI VALLURI


On your marks, set, go. The gunshot fired and the cauldron rose rambunctiously as Usain Bolt scorched the track, adding to his ever-growing tally of medals. Contrast this with Indian athletes. Why is our mind prepared for the also-ran? Indian athletes need to possess the single-minded pursuit, the talent, the eye and the mind of an Arjuna. He was a successful archer as he honed his skills and had immense faith in his Guru—Dronacharya and his sakha—Lord Krishna. He was rewarded by both. Lord Krishna blessed him with a divine vision to capture the SOHAM Swaroop, the Vishwarup Darshan. Dronacharya equipped his favourite tutee by filling his arsenal with all the weaponry at his disposal. The elasticity, malleability and humility of Arjuna's mind enabled him to conquer his fears and his opponents, by fortuitously overcoming the cobwebs in his mind. Arjuna's mind was Ajatashatru and thus became his ally. True, the spirit and motto of the Olympics as coined by Pierre de Coubertin in 1894 was and is Citius, Altius, Fortius (Faster, Higher, Stronger), and one should play in the spirit of sportsmanship. But the drive to excel and stand at the podium is dismally missing. The passion to climb, not clamber to the podium, What makes the minds of those athletes tick, where we fail? We do not possess the wherewithal. Cricket remains the Holy Grail of the nation and these days it is the Indian Premier League that dominates our sporting arena. At one end of the spectrum is cricket and all other sports are at the other end. It is



a virtual denouncing of all other sports. Sakshi Malik, Olympic bronze medalist works with the Northern Railway and the first woman Olympic silver medalist, PV Sindhu's father is the sports officer of South-Central Railway. The mindsets of these women of substance were akin to Ajatashatru as they turned around gruelling situations into triumphant ones. These mindsets indicate the indomitable spirit which should be embraced by all sportspersons. The mindset and approach of the Ministry of Sports need to be altered radically. The administration of this department needs a vigorous overhaul. Indian Railways and Indian Defence Forces should be actively involved in revamping the moribund organisation along with the participation of the private sector to provide an adequate corpus of funds through their Corporate Social Responsibility programme. However, doubts should not arise in the corners of the minds of the administrators. They should be willing to take the risks. Their minds too should be flexible in approach and become Ajatashatru. Most sportsmen find relaxation with the latest gizmos and listening to music and in the entertainment industry. Perhaps it will be a profitable exercise to begin the rigorous schedule by practising yoga, and pranayama and then resume their normal routine. The day should end with the practice of Sudarshan Kriya and meditation. This will make the bodies and minds supple. Several East Asian countries and China follow a regimen of spiritual teachings like Vipassana to enhance the quality of performance of their athletes. China takes several pages from the works of Tsung Tzu to learn the craft of war to train the minds of their sportspersons. This dynamic approach produces champions. "Endurance is one of the most difficult disciplines, but it is to the one who endures that the final victory comes," said Buddha. It is a matter of honour to climb the podium. Let us begin our preparations yesterday with earnestness and train our sportspersons to become truly Ajatashatru. (The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

Trump re-elected as the US President: Nationalism rises amid global shifts

His re-election is set to influence US immigration, trade and foreign policies while creating ripple effects across the globe



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

Donald Trump has been re-elected as President of the United States, defeating Kamala Harris in a closely watched election. His return to power has sparked global speculation about potential shifts in US economic and social policies. Trump's previous tenure was marked by transformative changes, and his "America First" doctrine remains central to his administration.


**The Rise of Nationalism**

Globally, nationalism is surging amid challenges like globalisation, terrorism, religious extremism and economic upheaval. Trump's victory reflects this trend. During his first term, Trump emphasised reviving American manufacturing, limiting Chinese imports, and reform-

ing immigration policies to protect American jobs. His proposal to build a US-Mexico border wall became symbolic of his immigration stance. Trump also advocated reducing costly military interventions abroad and fostered a controversial friendship with Russian President Vladimir Putin, breaking traditional US-Russia dynamics. These policies resonated with a significant portion of the electorate, reinforcing Trump's popularity. Nationalism is also gaining traction in Europe. Post-World War II liberalism and globalisation have given way to a nationalist wave, driven by economic concerns and fears of societal erosion. Britain's Brexit epitomised this shift, and several European nations, including Italy, Finland and Hungary, now have nationalist governments. Even traditionally liberal countries like Germany and France are witnessing growing influence from nationalist parties. Rising extremism, as seen in recent violent incidents in France and England, has further fueled public discontent with liberal immigration policies, reinforcing nationalist sentiments.

**Implications of victory of Nationalism**

Trump's win represents a significant setback for liberal ideologies, including Wokeism and leftist movements. His administration's emphasis on American nationalism underscores a rejection of policies perceived as prioritising minority appeasement or extremism. While Trump has praised the contributions of Hindus in America, he has also vowed to take a hardline stance against extremism, including deporting Muslim immigrants linked to groups like Hamas. The Biden administration's perceived support for liberal and leftist ideologies con-



**Elon Musk's Role**

Elon Musk, a billionaire industrialist, played a pivotal role in the elections. Musk, a former critic of Trump, became a vocal supporter due to his personal experiences with Wokeism, particularly involving his family. California's Woke-influenced education policies led to a gender transition for Musk's son, causing a rift within his family. Disillusioned, Musk resolved to challenge Wokeism. After acquiring Twitter (now X), Musk reinstated Trump's account and actively supported his campaign. Musk's actions symbolise a broader cultural battle against Woke ideologies, aligning with Trump's nationalist narrative.

trasts with Trump's firm nationalist agenda. His "America First" slogan signifies a broader rejection of extremism and a commitment to protecting US interests. This ideological divide is emblematic of a global realignment favoring nationalism.


**Trump's Victory and Its Impact on India**

Trump's presidency has significant implications for India. His tough stance on China aligns with India's interests, potentially encouraging global firms to view India as a manufacturing alternative. This could bolster India's Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative. However, Trump's protectionist policies, such as potential tariff hikes and restrictions on H-1B visas, might pose challenges for Indian exporters and IT firms. Trump's administration may also bring geopolitical benefits for India. Strengthening ties with both the US and Russia could enhance India's global positioning. While Trump's climate change stance might hinder global environmental goals, his leadership could contribute to reducing extremism and terrorism, fostering stability.

**Conclusion**

Trump's re-election reflects a global shift toward nationalism, driven by dissatisfaction with liberal policies and rising concerns about extremism. His presidency promises significant changes in US domestic and foreign policies, emphasising economic protectionism, immigration reform, and geopolitical realignments. For India, Trump's leadership presents both opportunities and challenges, shaping its role in the evolving global landscape. (The author is Professor, PGDAV College, University of Delhi; views are personal)


The Eastern challenge to Western supremacy



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

As alliances between Eastern nations grow stronger, the American-led global order faces an existential challenge—one that could redefine the world's balance of power

What if everything you've been told about global conflicts is a carefully crafted narrative, designed to obscure the true motives behind the wars shaping our world? What if the West, in its pursuit of global dominance, has been engineering not only conflicts but also economic crises to maintain an order that ensures its supremacy? From secret military operations to covert sabotage of vital infrastructure, the unsettling reality is far darker and more strategic than we're led to believe. Take, for example, the US Space Force's secret X-37B spacecraft, a classified project performing manoeuvres unknown to the public. Officially seen as a technological marvel for testing new military systems, the X-37B reveals the West's obsession with space as the final frontier of warfare—a new realm for control, surveillance, and preparation for conflict beyond terrestrial borders. In Europe, Germany is quietly preparing for a war that might never be fought, but whose consequences will be felt across generations. The German government has begun drawing up plans for the construction and expansion of bunkers, turning buildings—metro stations, and underground car parks—into fortified shelters in case of conflict. The reasons for these preparations are not openly discussed, but anyone with a cursory knowledge of geopolitics can understand the strategic intent. At the heart of this is the fear of Russia, a fear that has taken root despite decades of diplomatic agreements and economic cooperation. But the true motive behind these moves, hidden beneath the veil of defence, is not just survival. It's about keeping Europe within the American orbit—controlling the narrative and preventing the rise of any bloc that might dare to challenge the order established in the aftermath of the Cold War. As the West tightens its grip on the war



ECONOMIC SANCTIONS, COVERT OPERATIONS, AND POLITICAL MANIPULATION ARE BUT TOOLS IN THE WEST'S ARSENAL, DEPLOYED TO DIVIDE AND CONQUER, ENSURING THAT PEACE BETWEEN CHINA, RUSSIA AND INDIA REMAINS AN UNTHINKABLE PROSPECT

in Ukraine, a much larger game is unfolding—one rooted in economic sabotage, echoing dark chapters from WWI and WWII. During WWI, the British naval blockade led to over 750,000 German deaths from starvation, while in WWII, both Axis and Allied powers exploited occupied economies. The US used sanctions and trade embargoes to cripple Germany, Japan, and Italy, before later pushing the Marshall Plan to prevent Soviet expansion. WWII's hidden agenda was to establish a new global economic order, cemented by institutions like the IMF and World Bank. Today, the destruction of the Nord Stream pipelines, a symbol of the West's desperation, exemplifies the lengths to which the West will go to control European energy resources. While it harms the German public and European markets, the US and its allies benefit from the uncertainty and dependence on their energy exports. This isn't a mere accident; it's economic warfare to weaken Russia and prevent Germany from growing too independent. A fragmented Europe is far easier to control than a self-sufficient one. But the true target of the West's fear is not merely Russia. It is the potential unity between China, India and Russia. These nations, once seen as geopolitical rivals, are now forging alliances that threaten to upend the balance of power in a way that the West cannot tolerate. The prospect of India, the world's most populous country, rising to become the third-largest economy in the world in the next few years is a nightmare for the West. India, with its growing manufac-

turing sector, burgeoning technological innovation, and rapidly expanding middle class, represents an existential threat to the economic order that has been so carefully crafted by the West over the last century. But there's something even more dangerous: the potential for India, China, and Russia to align themselves strategically, creating a bloc that could challenge the very foundations of the American-led global system. This is not mere conjecture. The relationship between these nations is growing stronger by the day, driven by mutual interests in trade, energy, and security. India's role as a bridge between the East and West has already made it a key player in the global economy, and its rise is inevitable—unless, of course, the West can sabotage it. From the ongoing conflict with Pakistan to the subtle manoeuvring within India's border countries, the West's tactics are clear: prevent India from becoming too powerful, too independent. The rise of India would disrupt the existing order, unseating the US dollar's global dominance, challenging the West's monopoly over technological innovation, and upsetting the very structure of global trade. For years, the West has maintained a delicate balance by keeping China, India, and Russia in a state of disunity, playing them off each other whenever possible. This disunity has been the foundation of Western power in the modern world, preventing the rise of any one nation that could unite the East and threaten the West's economic hegemony. The more these nations grow closer, the more the West fears losing its control over global affairs. A united East is the ultimate nightmare, and the West will stop at nothing to ensure it never happens. Economic sanctions, covert operations, and political manipulation are but tools in the West's arsenal, deployed to divide and conquer, ensuring that peace between China, Russia, and India remains an unthinkable prospect. But what if India, China, and Russia do unite? What if they form a powerful bloc, in addition to BRICS but similar to Five Eyes or AUKUS, one that can rival the economic and military might of the West? The very notion of peace in this region—the idea that these nations could cooperate, trade, and build mutual trust—strikes at the heart of Western strategy. Peace in the East is the West's greatest fear, and the possibility of such a peace emerging in the wake of current geopolitical turmoil is something the West cannot allow. It is the very foundation of the Western empire that stands on the brink of collapse, should this unity ever come to pass. If unity is ensured, the East may finally break free from the chains of Western manipulation, and the world may look very different from how it does today. The question remains: can the West survive in a world where it no longer controls the narrative, the economy, or the very fate of nations? Only time will tell, but the signs are already clear—if the West doesn't change its course, it will be its actions that lead to its downfall. (The writer is a journalist and author; Views expressed are personal)



IN BRIEF



House price index rises 4.3 pc in Q2: RBI data

All-India House Price Index (HPI) increased 4.3 per cent annually in the second quarter of the 2024-25 fiscal year as compared to 3.3 per cent growth in the previous quarter and 3.5 per cent growth a year ago, according to data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The RBI released its quarterly house price index for the September quarter of 2024-25 on Friday, based on transaction-level data received from the registration authorities in ten major cities. The cities are Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Jaipur, Kanpur, Kochi, Kolkata, Lucknow, and Mumbai. The RBI said the annual HPI growth varied widely across the cities -- ranging from a high growth of 8.8 per cent (Bengaluru) to a decline of (-) 2 per cent (Kanpur). On a sequential (quarter-on-quarter) basis, all-India HPI decreased 0.1 per cent in the July-September period. Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Kolkata and Chennai recorded a sequential rise in house prices during the latest quarter.



Forex reserves drop \$1.31 bn to \$656.5 bn

India's forex reserves dropped USD 1.31 billion to USD 656.582 billion for the week ended November 22, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said. The kitty had dropped a record USD 17.761 billion to USD 657.892 billion in the previous reporting week ending November 15. The reserves, which had hit an all-time high of USD 704.885 billion in end-September, have been declining for multiple weeks, at a time when the rupee has also been under pressure. For the week ended November 22, foreign currency assets -- a major component of the reserves -- decreased USD 3.043 billion to USD 566.791 billion, the data, which was released on Friday, showed. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound, and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves increased USD 1.828 billion to USD 67.573 billion during the week, the RBI said. The special drawing rights (SDRs) were down USD 79 million to USD 17.985 billion, the apex bank said.



Key infra sectors' growth drops to 3.1 pc in Oct

The output of eight key infrastructure sectors expanded by 3.1 per cent in October 2024, sharply down from a 12.7 per cent growth registered in the same month last year, according to official data released on Friday. On a monthly basis, the production growth of these sectors was higher than the 2.4 per cent expansion recorded in September 2024. In October, production of crude oil and natural gas declined. Production growth of coal, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity moderated to 7.8 per cent, 0.4 per cent, 4.2 per cent, and 0.6 per cent respectively, as against 18.4 per cent, 5.3 per cent, 16.9 per cent and 20.4 per cent in October last year. However, refinery products output rose to 5.2 per cent in the month under review. The growth of core sectors -- coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity -- was 4.1 per cent during April-October this fiscal. It was 8.8 per cent in the same period last fiscal. The eight core sectors contribute 40.27 per cent to the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) which measures overall industrial growth.

Nine Adani Group stocks settle higher; Adani Green soars almost 22 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of nine of the 11 listed Adani Group firms ended higher on Friday, with Adani Green Energy surging almost 22 per cent and Adani Energy climbing nearly 16 per cent. The stock of Adani Green Energy zoomed 21.72 per cent, Adani Energy Solutions surged 15.56 per cent, Ambuja Cements jumped 3.73 per cent, Adani Ports climbed 1.94 per cent, ACC went up 1.59 per cent, Adani Total Gas (1.03 per cent), Adani Enterprises (1.02 per cent), NDTV (0.60 per cent) and Adani Wilmar (0.05 per cent) on the BSE.

However, shares of Adani Power declined 1.01 per cent and Sanghi Industries dipped 0.45 per cent.

The BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 759.05 points, or 0.96 per cent, to settle at 79,802.79 and the NSE Nifty climbed 216.95 points, or 0.91 per cent, to 24,131.10.

Abu Dhabi's International Holding Company (IHC), one of the largest sovereign funds

that manages assets close to USD 100 billion, has reaffirmed its support to the Adani Group, saying its outlook on investments in the group remains unchanged despite the US indictment of the conglomerate's founder chairman Gautam Adani.

"Our partnership with the Adani Group reflects our confidence in their contributions to the green energy and sustainability sectors," IHC, one of Adani group's key foreign investors, said in a statement.

"As with all our investments, our team continues to evaluate relevant information and developments.

At this time, our outlook on these investments remains unchanged."

The IHC statement comes soon after the Adani group emphasised that its chairman and his aides have not been charged under the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act but faced three other charges, including securities and wire fraud that are punishable with monetary fines.



DLF JV firm sells IT park in Kolkata for Rs 637 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Realty major DLF joint venture firm DCCDL has sold an IT park in Kolkata to Primarc and RDB group for Rs 637 crore.

DLF Info City Developers (Kolkata) Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of DLF Cyber City Developers Ltd (DCCDL), has entered into a definitive agreement to sell and transfer its Kolkata Tech Park 1 business undertaking to RDB Primarc Techno Park LLP (an affiliate of Primarc & RDB group), on a slump sale basis for an aggregate consideration of about Rs 637 crore, DLF said in a regulatory filing.

Kolkata Tech Park 1 is one of the largest IT parks in eastern India with gross leasable area of about 1.49 million sq ft.

Indian spices not banned in Singapore and Hong Kong: Jadhav

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian spices have not been banned by countries like Singapore and Hong Kong according to information given by the Ministry of Commerce, Minister of State for Health Prataprao Jadhav told the Lok Sabha on Friday.

However, specific batches of few spice mixtures exported from India were earlier recalled by the Food Safety Authorities in Hong Kong and Singapore due to the presence of ethylene oxide (EtO) above permissible limits, Jadhav said in a written reply.

The Spices Board, Ministry of Commerce, has taken various steps, including mandatory pre-shipment testing of spices being exported to these destinations, issuance of comprehensive guidelines to be fol-

lowed by exporters to prevent possible EtO contamination at all stages.

Various measures include procurement of raw materials, processing, packing, storage, transportation etc. to meet the varying EtO limits of the importing country. Further, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is fully committed to ensure the availability of safe food products to the consumers across the country, Jadhav said.

Towards this, the FSSAI through states and Union Territories and its regional offices conducts regular surveillance, monitoring, inspection and random sampling of various food products, including spices, to check compliance with the quality and safety parameters.



Gold prices bounce back by Rs 700 to Rs 79,400 per 10 gm

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices rose by Rs 700 to Rs 79,400 per 10 grams in the national capital on Friday due to fresh buying by local jewellers and a firm overseas trend, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity closed at Rs 78,700 per 10 grams on Thursday.

Silver also climbed Rs 1,300 to Rs 92,200 per kg. On Thursday, the white metal prices crashed by Rs 4,900 to Rs 90,900 per kg.

Price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity advanced Rs 700 to hit Rs 79,000-mark against the previous close of Rs 78,300 per 10 grams on Thursday.

Traders said sentiment turned bullish due to positive trend overseas and rise in domestic demand, which mainly pushed gold prices higher.



Meanwhile, in futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for December delivery climbed Rs 602 or 0.79 per cent to trade at Rs 76,326 per 10 grams.

"Gold traded positively in MCX, supported by safe-haven demand amid ongoing geopolitical concerns," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said.

Silver contracts for December delivery advanced Rs 1,049 or 1.19 per cent to Rs

89,051 per kg on the bourse. Globally, Comex gold futures rose USD 20.60 per ounce or 0.77 per cent to USD 2,685.40 per ounce.

"Gold advanced in thin trading volume on Friday, buoyed by safe-haven buying and the likelihood of the US Federal Reserve continuing interest rate cuts at its December meeting despite slightly higher inflation data published earlier this week," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

Silver also traded 1.94 per cent higher at USD 31.15 per ounce in the Asian market hours.

"Spot gold has extended its recovery to the fourth straight day on Friday as geopolitical worries continue to support the metal," Praveen Singh - Associate VP, Fundamental Currencies and Commodities, Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said.

Zee Entertainment shares climb nearly 5 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd surged nearly 5 per cent on Friday after shareholders of the firm rejected a proposal for the reappointment of Punit Goenka as a director of the company.

The stock climbed 4.83 per cent to settle at Rs 129.10 on the BSE. During the day, it jumped 7.67 per cent to Rs 132.60.

At the NSE, it went up 4.91 per cent to Rs 129.16.

The company's market valuation climbed Rs 571.52 crore to Rs 12,400.31 crore.

The resolution for the reappointment of Goenka was defeated in the 42nd Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the company on Thursday, according to Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL).

POOR SHOW BY MANUFACTURING, MINING SECTORS

GDP growth slows to 2-year low

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



India's economic growth slowed to near two-year low of 5.4 per cent in the July-September quarter of this fiscal due to poor performance of manufacturing and mining sectors, but the country continued to remain the fastest-growing large economy, data showed on Friday.

The gross domestic product (GDP) had expanded by 8.1 per cent in the July-September quarter of 2023-24 fiscal.

The previous low level of GDP growth at 4.3 per cent was recorded in the third quarter (October-December 2022) of financial year 2022-23.

However, India remained the fastest-growing major economy as China's GDP growth in the July-September quarter this year was at 4.6 per cent. According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) data, the growth of agriculture sector GVA (Gross Value Added) accelerated to 3.5 per cent in the latest July-September quarter from 1.7 per cent a year ago.

The GVA in the manufacturing sector slowed to 2.2 per cent in the second quarter of the current fiscal compared to an expansion of 14.3 per cent in the year-ago period.

As per the data, the output (GVA) in the 'mining and

quarrying' contracted to 0.01 per cent in the second quarter against a growth of 11.1 per cent a year ago.

The expansion in financial, real estate and professional services' GVA was 6.7 per cent, up from 6.2 per cent in the year-ago quarter.

Electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services grew by 3.3 per cent, slower than 10.5 per cent a year ago.

The construction sector recorded a growth of 7.7 per cent in the second quarter, down from 13.6 per cent year on year.

The growth in gross domestic product (GDP) during the April-June quarter of 2024-25 remained unchanged at 6.7 per cent.

"Real GDP or GDP at constant prices in Q2 of 2024-25 is estimated at Rs 44.10 lakh crore, against Rs 41.86 lakh crore in Q2 of 2023-24, showing a growth rate of 5.4 per cent," the NSO said in a statement.

Shows reality far different from hype generated by PM Modi: Cong

The Congress on Friday attacked the government over India's economic growth slowing to near two-year low of 5.4 per cent in the July-September quarter of this fiscal, saying it simply shows the reality is far different from all the hype generated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and 'his cheerleaders'. Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said Prime Minister Modi's economic growth record remains far worse than it was under Dr Manmohan Singh's prime ministership, even after desperate 'recalculations' of earlier economic growth," Ramesh said. That is the harsh truth of so-called 'New India', he added. India's economic growth slowed to near two-year low of 5.4 per cent in the July-September quarter of this fiscal due to poor performance of manufacturing and mining sectors, but the country continued to remain the fastest-growing large economy, data showed on Friday. The gross domestic product (GDP) had expanded by 8.1 per cent in the July-September quarter of 2023-24 fiscal, he said. The previous low level of GDP growth at 4.3 per cent was recorded in the third quarter (October-December 2022) of financial year 2022-23.

manufacturing growth slowed to a shocking 2.2%. Exports have decelerated to 2.8% and imports have actually contracted -2.9%, showing serious domestic weakness. Mass consumption growth is sputtering," he said. "The non-biological PM's economic growth record remains far worse than it was under Dr Manmohan Singh's prime ministership, even after desperate 'recalculations' of earlier economic growth," Ramesh said. That is the harsh truth of so-called 'New India', he added. India's economic growth slowed to near two-year low of 5.4 per cent in the July-September quarter of this fiscal due to poor performance of manufacturing and mining sectors, but the country continued to remain the fastest-growing large economy, data showed on Friday. The gross domestic product (GDP) had expanded by 8.1 per cent in the July-September quarter of 2023-24 fiscal, he said. The previous low level of GDP growth at 4.3 per cent was recorded in the third quarter (October-December 2022) of financial year 2022-23.

Enviro Infra shares jump nearly 40 pc in debut trade

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of sewage treatment solutions provider Enviro Infra Engineers Ltd ended with a premium of nearly 40 per cent against the issue price of Rs 148 on Friday.

The stock started the trade at Rs 218, a jump of 47.29 per cent from the issue price on the BSE. During the day, it soared 57.77 per cent to Rs 233.50. Shares of the firm ended at Rs 207, rallying 39.86 per cent.

At the NSE, the stock listed at Rs 220, surged 48.64 per cent. It ended 39.97 per cent higher at Rs 207.16.

The company's market valuation stood at Rs 3,633.47 crore.

In traded volume terms, 45.06 lakh shares of the firm were traded at the BSE and 554.10 lakh shares on the NSE



during the day.

The Rs 650-crore initial public offering (IPO) of Enviro Infra Engineers was subscribed 89.90 times on the closing day of bidding on Tuesday.

The initial share sale had a price range of Rs 140-148 apiece.

The company's IPO had a combination of a fresh issue of 3.87 crore equity shares and an

offer for sale (OFS) component of 52.68 lakh shares by promoters.

Proceeds from the fresh issue to the tune of Rs 181 crore will be used to meet the working capital requirements, Rs 100 crore for payment of debt, Rs 30 crore will be infused into the company's subsidiary EIEL Mathura Infra Engineers to build 60 million litres per day sewage treatment plant (STP) at Mathura in Uttar Pradesh.

Besides, a portion will be used for general corporate purposes.

Enviro Infra Engineers is engaged in designing, construction, operation and maintenance of water and wastewater treatment plants and water supply scheme projects for government authorities/bodies.

Flipkart sets sight on expansion of quick commerce ops

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Walmart-owned Flipkart said on Friday that it was aiming to expand its quick commerce operations, driven by rising consumer demand for faster deliveries.

The e-commerce giant was piloting its quick commerce service under the brand 'Minutes' in Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Delhi NCR as it responds to growing competition from delivery platforms such as Blinkit, Swiggy Instamart, Zepto, and BigBasket.

The quick commerce market size is expected to reach USD 40 billion by 2030, a jump from USD 6.1 billion in 2024, according to a report by Datum Intelligence.

"Customer centricity is critical for us. In cities such as Kolkata, Delhi, Bangalore and Mumbai, customers are increasingly seeking faster deliveries. We are piloting this service, and already live in Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Delhi," Flipkart's Chief Corporate Affairs Officer Rajneesh Kumar said.

While Kumar did not provide a timeline for expanding to new cities, he highlighted the

untapped potential of India's e-commerce market.

Currently valued at USD 70 billion, online shopping accounts for only 7 per cent of the total retail market in the country.

"We believe that this will grow significantly as the retail sector in India grows as a whole. Industry numbers suggest that by 2028, e-commerce will account for around 12 per cent of India's retail market," Kumar said.

To cater to rural and semi-urban consumers, Flipkart has localised its app to support major Indian languages, enabling customers unfamiliar with English to shop online.

Kumar noted that the platform's growth is largely driven by small and micro-sellers, particularly artisans and nano-entrepreneurs.

"For example, in the fashion category, which is our largest category on the marketplace, we see significant contributions from small and micro-sellers. These businesses, often run by artisans and MSMEs, are playing a crucial role in driving the growth of digital commerce on our platform," he said.



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aster DM Healthcare Ltd and Blackstone-backed Quality Care India Ltd on Friday announced a merger deal through a share swap deal creating one of India's top three hospital chains.

The two companies have signed definitive agreements to merge, subject to regulatory, corporate and shareholders' approvals. Aster DM Healthcare (Aster) and Quality Care India Ltd (QCIL) said in a joint statement.

The merger will create one of the top three hospital chains in

India in terms of revenue and number of beds with 38 hospitals and over 10,150 beds with a strong presence across South and Central India in 27 cities, it added.

The merged listed entity will be named Aster DM Quality Care Ltd.

As part of the deal, Aster will purchase a 5 per cent stake in QCIL from Blackstone and TPG in consideration of primary share issuance by Aster for 3.6 per cent stake in it as an initial share acquisition.

Subsequently, QCIL will be merged into Aster by way of a scheme of amalgamation. Aster



expects the merger transaction to close by the third quarter of FY2025-26. The ratio for the initial share acquisition is the same as proposed for the merg-

er, the statement said. The merged entity will be jointly controlled by Aster promoters and Blackstone, holding 24 per cent and 30.7 per cent owner-

ship respectively, it added.

Based on the agreed swap ratio, Aster shareholders will hold 57.3 per cent and QCIL shareholders will hold 42.7 per cent in the merged entity.

Aster DM Healthcare Founder and Chairman Azad Moopen will continue in his role as the Executive Chairman and will oversee the merged entity -- Aster DM Quality Care. On the other hand, QCIL Group MD Varun Khanna will be the MD and Group CEO of the merged entity. In a regulatory filing, Aster said subject to mutually agreed thresholds Moopen will continue as the

executive chairman for a period of three years and six months after which, he will continue as non-executive Chairman. Aster promoters will retain the right to appoint the non-executive Chairman, with BCP having the right to appoint the Vice-Chairman.

"The integration of Aster and Quality Care's extensive network and deep operational expertise with backing from Blackstone and TPG among the most respected private equity firms will enhance our ability to deliver world-class healthcare services," Moopen said.





# what's brewing?

## Kundra's advocate dismisses rumours on ED's raid!

On Friday, reports claimed that searches were carried out by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) at the homes of several people, including Raj Kundra, a businessman who is married to Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty. The Enforcement Directorate's investigation is based on a case started by Mumbai police against Kundra in 2021 regarding the alleged production of pornography. In relation to the recent news, Shilpa Shetty Kundra's lawyer, Advocate

Prashant Patil said, "There have been reports in the media saying that my client Shilpa Shetty Kundra has been raided by the Enforcement Directorate. These reports are not true and are misleading. As per my instructions, there is no Enforcement Directorate raid on Shilpa Shetty Kundra as she has nothing to do with any offence of whatsoever nature. However, the case in question is an ongoing investigation regarding Raj Kundra and he is cooperating with the investigation



for truth to come out. Would request the electronic and print media to refrain from using the videos, pictures and name of Shilpa Shetty Kundra as she has nothing to do with the case. Strict cognisance shall be taken against irresponsible journalism wherein the pictures or videos of Shilpa Shetty Kundra are shared on this matter."

## It's a girl! Sonnalli & Ashesh welcome their li'l bundle of joy

Actor Sonnalli Seygall and Ashesh L Sajani have become parents as they welcomed their first child. Ashesh Sajani, her husband, was thrilled to be expecting a child and shared a video of himself dancing with joy.

On his Instagram Stories, Sonnalli Seygall's husband, Ashesh, posted a video of himself dancing happily in the hospital room.

The video also records the noise of their newborn baby crying for the first time.

In August of this year, Sonnalli shared news of her pregnancy with her husband Ashesh L Sajani, whom she married in June of last year. The couple revealed on social media with a series of pictures that they are anticipating the arrival of their first child.



## Zoya Afroz on *Sikandar Ka Muqaddar*: 'Life has come full circle'

As *Sikandar Ka Muqaddar* releases this Friday, Zoya Afroz who plays Avinash Tiwary's romantic interest in the film, reveals she was destined to work with her co-actor. The *Hum Saath Saath Hai* child actor, was shortlisted as the lead in Imtiaz Ali's *Laila Majnu*, however, things didn't fall through back then. In an interesting turn of events, years later, Zoya is now seen opposite Avinash Tiwary in Neeraj Pandey's *Sikandar Ka Muqaddar*, which released tomorrow on Netflix.

Zoya shares, "I was originally shortlisted for *Laila Majnu*, but due to circumstances at the time, it didn't materialise. Now, life has come full circle, and I'm thrilled to be working with Avinash in *Sikandar Ka Muqaddar*. He's an incredible co-actor and we fed off each other's energies to deliver a chaotic yet beautiful chemistry in the film."

Entering the show business as a child actor, Zoya has been a part of iconic films like *Hum Saath Saath Hai*, *Mann*, *Kuch Na Kaho* amongst others. Scaling a journey through beauty pageants, Zoya has also delivered impactful performances in shows like *Mukhbir*. The is also set to captivate audiences alongside Pearl V Puri in her upcoming film, *Objection My Lord*.

## Shraddha Kapoor reflects on struggles behind success

Shraddha Kapoor has once again proven why she's one of Bollywood's most loved stars. With the resounding success of *Street 2*, Shraddha solidified her place at the top of her game, delivering yet another performance that left audiences and critics raving. But the journey to this zenith has been anything but simple.

"The film industry is all about the final product—a beautifully made film enjoyed in cinemas. But the hard work behind it often goes unnoticed," Shraddha shares candidly, reflect-

ing on the effort it takes to deliver box-office magic.

"With increasing audience interest in behind-the-scenes content, people are beginning to understand the sheer effort that goes into filmmaking. It's a rollercoaster. There are tough moments, but there are also incredible highs, especially when your work is accepted and loved by audiences. I consider myself incredibly fortunate to live my childhood dream. With gratitude as my compass, I stay focused on working hard and giving my best."



## STANDALONE



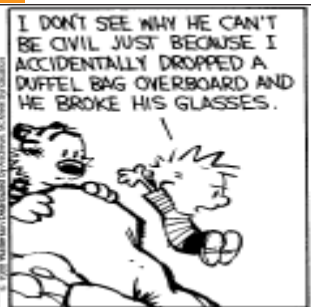
The season two of eagerly-awaited original series *Bandish Bandits* at the 55th edition of the prestigious *International Film Festival of India (IFFI)*, Goa. While the new season of the musical drama is scheduled to premiere December 13, the streaming platform treated the audience at *IFFI* with an immersive performance of the tracks *Padharo Mhare Des*, *Ghar Aa Mahi* and the series theme song by the exceptional Mame Khan, Nikita Gandhi and DigV (Digvijay Singh Parihar).

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



### NANCY



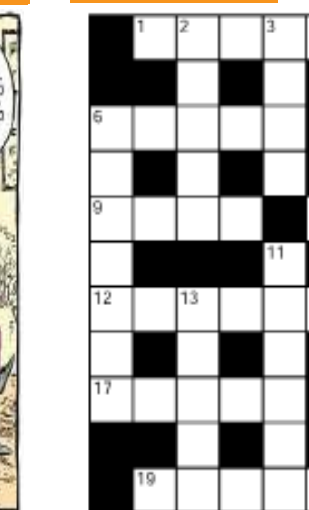
### GINGER MEGGS



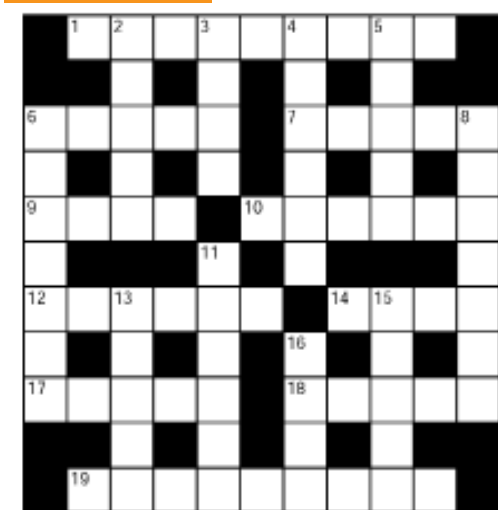
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

- The person next door
- Ships tie up here
- Someone in a play
- A drawer for money in a shop
- Precious stones
- A hard safety hat
- A stopper for a bath or sink
- A thick soft quilt used as a cover for a bed
- A sheep's babies
- A country in South America

- These stop a vehicle
- Unlace
- Observed
- Quits from a job
- Boil water in this
- A body organ
- A pale yellow colour
- Apartment

### DOWN

- A letter sent from one computer to another
- Birthday present



### SUDOKU

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

### Yesterday's solution

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

### 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 RATING: ★★★★★



FROM THE BUSTLING STREETS OF OLD CITY TO THE MODERN KITCHENS OF HYDERABAD, CHEF RIZWAN KHADER'S STORY IS AN EVIDENCE TO THE CITY'S ENDURING CULINARY LEGACY. IN A CANDID CONVERSATION WITH *THE PIONEER*, HE REVEALS THE SECRETS OF HYDERABADI CUISINE AND HIS CONNECTION TO THE CITY



"I was born and raised in Hyderabad," he begins, asserting his love for the city. "I started my career here after completing my hotel management in the city."

His connection to Hyderabad's food culture is deeply personal. He vividly recalls mornings spent exploring the Old City's bustling lanes. "Hyderabadi break-

He is passionate about preserving Hyderabad's rich culinary heritage amid

One example he shares is his twist on khichdi katta keema. "It's an authentic Hyderabadi breakfast dish. We've modernized it while retaining its soul. It's

When asked to describe Hyderabad in just three words, he takes a moment before responding. "Mother's place, soul and future," he says, encapsulating his deep connection to the city. His story is a flavorful journey of passion, innovation and heritage. Whether he's reimagining paya soup with beetroot crisps or preserving the essence of Hyderabadi biryani, his culinary artistry is a love letter to the city he calls home.

Perform this *pranavam* in tandem



# Gill returns to nets after thumb injury

PTI ■ CANBERRA

Shubman Gill returned to the India nets on Friday, showing enough signs of a full recovery from a thumb injury that ruled him out of the series opener against Australia in Perth. Gill's absence was not felt in Perth as India won the game by 295 runs but considering his impressive run on the previous tour, the visitors need him at his best over the course of the five-match series. The top-order batter was seen facing Yash Dayal and Akash Deep in the nets ahead of the pink-ball warm-up game against Australian PM's XI starting Saturday. "I was just trying to get a feel to be honest, see how the injury is reacting, if any kind of soreness is there but it went much better than what I and Kamlesh bhai (Kamlesh Jain, physio) expected. Very happy with that," Gill said in a video posted by BCCI on X after the training session here. Gill was naturally disappointed about getting injured ahead of the first Test but India's special



performance put him back in a positive frame of mind. "Any ball when it hits the middle of the bat, the feeling that you get, that is the feeling I play for. When I got to know about my injury, first couple of days I was quite low and disappointed. "Perth is the only venue we did not play last time around (2020-21). It is such an iconic venue. But the way we played at the end of it, I was very happy," the batter added. In Gill's absence, Devdutt Padikkal came at number three for India but could not deliver. However, it is not a given that Gill will return to his usual batting position as K L Rahul excelled as an opener in Perth in skipper Rohit Sharma's absence. While Rohit is expected to open alongside Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rahul could come in at three pushing Gill to number 5. It remains to be seen if India experiment in the batting order in the warm-up game as all batters would be allowed a hit in the middle considering it is not a first-class game.



## India look to make most of pink ball warm-up

PTI ■ CANBERRA

India would aim to figure out their batting combination for next week's day-night Test in Adelaide when they face Australia Prime Minister's XI in a two-day tour game at the Manuka Oval here from Saturday. India have played four day-night Tests thus far with their only loss coming at Adelaide four years ago when they were bowled out for 36 before making a winning comeback in the four-match Test series. The pink ball does a lot more compare to the red cherry, especially in the twilight period. Considering it is not a first-class game, majority of the Indian batters would like to get a feel of the ball in the middle. Coming from their most dominant win in Australia in the opening Test in Perth, the Indian dressing room is in high spirits. However, the arrival of Rohit Sharma, who missed the first Test due to the birth of his second child and expected return of a fit again Shubman Gill will force the think tank to rejig the batting order for the match beginning December 6. Rohit and Yashasvi Jaiswal are the designated openers but with the latter and K L Rahul excelling at the top in Perth, there is a case for the Indian skipper to drop himself down the order. If that does happen, Gill's position will also need to be adjusted. India will have to make those calls in the practice game before reaching Adelaide with full clarity. As it is only a two-day game,

India would be hoping to get a lot more time with the bat than the ball. The likes of Sarfaraz Khan, who are unlikely to be considered unless there is an injury, would also be hoping for some game time. The team is in a relaxed mood and had its first net session on Friday where Gill took guard, indicating that his recovery is well on course. India have been reluctant to play tour games as they are often not competitive enough. With Test players like Matt Renshaw and Scott Boland in the line-up, the visitors can hope for some decent match practice. The PM's XI will be led by all-rounder Jack Edwards and will also have Australia U-19 stars including Charlie Anderson, Mahli Beardman, Aidan O'Connor and Sam Konstas. Fast bowling all-rounder Hanno Jacobs will be another player to watch out for. The Squads: India: Rohit Sharma (C), Jasprit Bumrah (VC), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Rishabh Pant (WK), Sarfaraz Khan, Dhruv Jurel (WK), R Ashwin, R Jadeja, Mohd. Siraj, Akash Deep, Prasidh Krishna, Harshit Rana, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Washington Sundar. PM's XI: Jack Edwards (C), Charlie Anderson, Mahli Beardman, Scott Boland, Jack Clayton, Aidan O'Connor, Ollie Davies, Jayden Gooдин, Sam Harper, Hanno Jacobs, Sam Konstas, Lloyd Pope, Matthew Renshaw, Jem Ryan.



## KL should continue to open with Jaiswal, Rohit can come in at 3: Pujara

PTI ■ CANBERRA

Cheteshwar Pujara wants K L Rahul to open the batting alongside Yashasvi Jaiswal in the second Test against Australia despite the arrival of skipper Rohit Sharma. Rohit's absence in the series opener in Perth allowed India to move Rahul to the top of the order from the middle order. Pujara, the rock of Indian batting on the previous two tours of Australia, feels the opening combination should not be tinkered with after a 295-run win in the series opener. Jaiswal scored a memorable hundred while Rahul too was impressive, collecting 26 and 77 in the two innings in Perth. "I think, for some reason if we can carry on with the same batting order, like KL and Yashasvi to open, Rohit could come in at three, and Shubman could come in at five," Pujara said in a chat with ESPNcricinfo. "If Rohit wants to open, KL should bat at No. 3. Nothing later than that. I think he has

to bat top of the order, because it suits his game really well. I hope we don't tinker around with that." Gill, who missed the first Test due to a thumb injury, is also expected to feature in the playing eleven in the day-night Test beginning December 6. "Ideally No. 5 (for Gill). Because it allows him to come in at a time, even if we lose two wickets early, he is someone who can negotiate the new ball," Pujara said. "But if he walks in after, say, 25 or 30 overs, he can play his shots. He can play his natural game. And in case we lose the first three wickets early, Gill walks in and saves Rishabh Pant for the old ball. [Pant] doesn't have to face the new ball. I wouldn't want him to walk in to bat when the ball is hard and new," Pujara added. Gill has opened the batting in Australia but has now moved down to number three. India also play a two-day warm up game in Canberra ahead of the pink-ball Test in Adelaide.

## Australia let Kohli roll on to a hundred in Perth: Allan Border

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former Australia captain Allan Border has expressed his disappointment over the team's inability to contain Virat Kohli during the first Test in Perth and feels that can potentially cost the hosts the five-match series. Kohli, who had not scored a Test century in 18 months, roared back to form with an unbeaten 100 in the second innings as India secured a thumping 295-run victory over the hosts. "I was really disappointed in the way we let Kohli roll on to a hundred without much resistance," Border told SEN radio on Friday morning. "We don't want this guy full of confidence for the rest of the series." Border also questioned the tactics of skipper Pat Cummins, suggesting they



allowed Kohli to regain his rhythm after his struggles against New Zealand in the recent home series. Kohli's century marked his seventh ton on Australian soil. Former opener Matthew Hayden also took aim at Cummins, criticising the

field placements after Kohli's arrival in the middle. "They missed a few tricks with Virat Kohli in the early part of his innings. Nathan Lyon had mid-on back, one on the off-side catching and a mid-wicket. I felt like it was so easy for him to get off

strike," Hayden had told Channel 7 after India's win. "You can't cut a sucker an even break when a bloke is under pressure as he was. The field we actually finished with - two slips, no point, a man straight - it offered up the outside edge of his bat as well. He found it a little more frustrating. When he got the bit between the teeth, it was too late. Hayden also pointed to tactical lapses during India's earlier partnership, noting the delayed use of short-ball strategies. "Jaiswal looked vulnerable against it. Maybe tiny things with Pat Cummins, the ability to think through these decisions. They were shell-shocked from the average batting performance (in the first innings) and as we see now, again, bombs are going," he said.

## Harmanpreet unveils Indian women's cricket team ODI jersey

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Indian women's cricket team captain Harmanpreet Kaur and BCCI secretary Jay Shah on Friday unveiled the side's new ODI jersey at the Board's headquarters here. The women's team will don the new jersey during the three-match ODI series against the West Indies to be played in Vadodara from December 22. "It's an honour to unveil the jersey today and really happy that we are the first ones who is going to wear this jersey against the West Indies team," said Harmanpreet. "Really happy, really like the look. The tri-colour on the shoulder is looking really beautiful and really happy that



we've got a special ODI jersey," she added. Before the home series, the Harmanpreet-led Indian team will tour Australia for a three-match ODI series from December 5 to 11. Harmanpreet said wearing the Team India jersey was always special as a lot of hard work goes towards owning it. "I would like the Indian fans to also wear this jersey and feel proud."

## Battle of Equals: Gukesh, Liren draw fourth round game; remain level on points in WC

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh and defending champion Ding Liren played out a mostly risk-free draw in the fourth round to remain level on points in the World Chess Championship battle here on Friday. The two players signed peace after 42 moves vide repetition and are tied on two points each after four games of the 14-round showdown. The first to reach 7.5 points will be crowned the champion. The 18-year-old Gukesh, who was playing with black on Friday, is the youngest ever challenger for the title and had won the third game on Wednesday. "Towards the end, I had some chances to press better but with black this is all you can expect," Gukesh said after the game. "I am just trying to make good moves," he added when asked about the



prospect of becoming the youngest world champion. The 32-year-old Liren had won the opening game before the two played out a draw in the second game. "This round, I tried to play safe. It turns out I got a little bit of an advantage. The score is still balanced. There are more games to come," Liren said. "I had a rest day to recover from the tough loss. I am in a very good mood. It

worked well, not so bad," he added. With just 10 games remaining under the classical time control, Gukesh will have the advantage of playing white in the fifth game. On Friday, Liren started with the bird's opening trying to take out on the queen's bishop early in the opening which was a clear indication that the Chinese wanted to fight the Indian on the skill rather than preparation. Gukesh was up to the task in responding as he matched Liren move for move and the pieces traded hands leading to equality. The players eventually reached rook and pawns endgame which was theoretically drawn and the split of a point was a just result. Viswanathan Anand is so far the only Indian to have won the title, having claimed it five times in his career. The semi-retired legend made the ceremonial first move for Gukesh on Friday.

## Guardiola urges Man City hierarchy to give him time to fix faltering team as Nadal visits



AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola has urged the Abu Dhabi hierarchy to give him the chance to revive his faltering team amid its staggering run of poor results, saying Friday he will not "run away" from the challenge. City lost five games in a row before squandering a three-goal lead from the 75th minute to draw 3-3 with Feyenoord in the Champions League on Tuesday. The longest winless streak in Guardiola's coaching career could be extended on Sunday when City plays away to Liverpool, which is in first place in the Premier League and the Champions League. "It's not normal in the big clubs to do the results we have done, but what we have to do is accept it," Guardiola said. "For sure I want to stay here, I want to do it, but the moment I feel I'm not positive for the club, another one will come.

"But, I want the opportunity to try. I don't want to run away. I want to be there. I want to rebuild the team. I ask for that challenge. I ask for this opportunity to do it. Because I feel it. I know what I want to do. I know what we need. I know what we have to do." Guardiola, who has won the Premier League six times in his eight full seasons with City and the club's first Champions League title, said he is in regular communication with chairman Khaldoon Al Mubarak. "He knows we are going to find a solution," Guardiola said. "In the circumstances that it doesn't happen, the club will take the solution, the decision, it has to take." The Spanish coach said he deserved to be given time to turn things around. "I have it all on my shoulders. I want it," he said. "Here at the football club you have to win — if you don't win, you'll be in trouble. I know that. "People said, Oh, why is Pep not in

trouble? Why is he not sacked? What we have done the last eight years is why we have this margin." Guardiola played down talk of a "crisis" at City when asked by a reporter, but was unsure when the team would start winning again. After Liverpool, City plays seventh-place Nottingham Forest on Wednesday. "We will be back — I know that," Guardiola said. "I don't know when that is the truth. "We have to accept," he added, "that it is completely normal — maybe the exception was in the past, not what happened now. How we stand up again, this is the big success in life. It's how many times you stand up, again and again, and again, whatever happens. They are the greatest (people)." Rafael Nadal, the 22-time Grand Slam champion who retired from tennis this month, visited City's training ground on Thursday. He is a Real Madrid fan and was in

northwest England to watch the Spanish team play Liverpool in the Champions League on Tuesday. "It was a pleasure to see him. One of the most incredible athletes of all time," Guardiola said. "We spoke sport and everything and how it's difficult to maintain for many years — and how he, (Roger) Federer and (Novak) Djokovic have done for many, many years." Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta described City's poor spell as a "bump" and wasn't prepared to write off the champions in the title race. "For them, it's very strange because in nine years they've never had it," said Arteta, who was once an assistant to Guardiola at City. "But, that tells you the level and the environment we are in — everything has to be almost perfect, you know. The performance has to be perfect, the availability of your squad has to be perfect, things have to go your way.



## Keerthy Suresh confirms December wedding!



Tollywood is currently having its own wedding season going on. While on one hand, pictures of Naga Chaitanya's wedding with Sobhita Dhulipala have gone viral, adding to the list is actress Keerthy Suresh. Her relationship with Antony has been the talk-of-the-town. On Friday, Keerthy Suresh visited the Tirumala temple for the blessings of Lord Balaji ahead of her marriage and her Bollywood debut. After the darshan, the actress spoke about her marriage and revealed the venue also. "My marriage is going to be next month and it is going to be held in Goa," said the actress. Keerthy Suresh is making her debut in Bollywood with the Hindi film *Baby John*, where she stars alongside Varun Dhawan. It is a remake of Tamil film *Teri*. Few days back, the actress finally made her relationship official with her childhood love Antony. She said it is a 15-year-relationship and she is going to marry him next month. She shared a picture with Antony a few days back on her social media page. Apart from her Hindi film, the actress is also busy with a couple of Tamil films.



### Samantha's father no more!

Friday came out as a shock for many people including the film fraternity when actress Samantha announced that her father, Joseph Prabhu passed away. The actress took to her social media and shared an Instagram story saying, "Until we meet again Dad". At present, the cause of his death has been unknown. Not long ago, she spoke about her 'strained' relationship with her father. She said, "All my life growing up, I had to fight for validation. My father was kind of like... I think most Indian parents are like that. They think they're protecting you... He actually told me, 'You're not that smart. This is just the standard of Indian education. That's why even you can get a first rank.' When you say that to a child, I really believed for the longest time that I'm not smart and not good enough."

## Thalapathy Vijay's son Jason Sanjay's debut with Sundeep Kishan



Tamil superstar Thalapathy Vijay has ventured into politics and is now focusing more on his political career. Meanwhile, his son Jason Sanjay is set to carry forward his legacy in the film industry, but not as an actor. Instead, Jason Sanjay is making his debut as a director. The popular production house Lyca is producing his debut film. The official announcement of Jason Sanjay's directorial debut was made on Friday evening, revealing that Sundeep Kishan will play the lead role in the film. The movie will be made in both Telugu and Tamil. Thalapathy fans have been eagerly awaiting Jason's debut, and the time has finally arrived. The motion poster offers a glimpse into Jason's exceptional vision.

The story revolves around the theme of "searching for what you've lost in its original place" – but at what cost? According to the production house, when Jason Sanjay presented his story, it stood out as fresh and unique, with the potential to draw pan-Indian attention. They wanted to encourage young talent and believed that Jason's story had immense potential.

The production house also praised Sundeep Kishan, stating that he has consistently demonstrated his ability to captivate audiences across Tamil and Telugu regions. This collaboration promises to deliver an exciting cinematic experience. Thaman will compose the music for the film. The team plans to begin shooting in January 2025.

## Nayanthara takes a dig at Dhanush with her 'Karma' post



loan, it will come back to you with interest" (sic). This post has gone viral on the internet, with netizens commenting that the actress is targeting Dhanush with this message.

To recall, the documentary featured a three-second glimpse from the film *Naanum Rowdy Dhaan*, which Dhanush produced and Vijay Sethupathi starred in. Notably, this film holds special significance for Nayanthara, as it was during its production that she first met her husband and director, Vignesh Shivan. As a result, she wanted to feature this film in her documentary. However, Dhanush denied permission, and Nayanthara ultimately used some visuals from the film without his consent. This led to Dhanush filing a Rs 10 crore defamation petition in court. Nayanthara responded with a three-page open letter to Dhanush, but he did not reply and continued to pursue the legal battle. Now, with Nayanthara's recent post about the Karma theory, many believe it is aimed at Dhanush.

The dispute between Nayanthara and Dhanush regarding the documentary *Nayanthara: Beyond the Fairy Tale* is well-known. It appears that this issue is far from over, as Nayanthara recently posted a message about the Karma theory on her social media page. She posted, "Karma Says: When you destroy someone's life with lies, take it as a

Nayanthara's lawyer addressed Dhanush's legal notice, stating that they used the visuals from her personal library, which would not constitute a copyright issue.

## Chay, Sobhita haldi ceremony photos go viral



ing their wedding festivities with a traditional haldi ceremony on Friday. The wedding is scheduled to take place on December 4 at a specially erected mandapam at Annapurna Studios. Before the main event, the family gathered for the haldi ceremony, which was attended by close family members of both the bride and groom. Photos from these pre-wedding celebrations have gone viral on the internet and social media.

Chaitanya and Sobhita's wedding is being conducted in accordance with traditional Telugu customs. The couple wore traditional outfits to the haldi function and some of their close friends and family members were also seen in the pictures.

According to a source, the guest list includes close friends from the industry, such as the Mega Family, Mahesh Babu's family and the Daggubati family. Nagarajuna reportedly wanted to keep the event private, which is why Annapurna Studios was chosen as the venue.

The Akkineni family, including Naga Chaitanya and Sobhita Dhulipala, has entered a festive mood as they began celebrat-



## Working on *Shero* was 'truly transformative' for Sunny Leone

Sunny Leone is all set to captivate audiences with her next South Indian film *Shero* which marks a new milestone in her career. Shot in the serene and remote mountains of Kerala, the film offered a unique experience for Sunny, allowing her to fully immerse herself in the project.

From breathtaking landscapes to intense action

sequences, *Shero* stands out as one of her most demanding yet rewarding ventures.

"Working on *Shero* was truly transformative. Being secluded in the breathtaking mountains of Kerala allowed us to focus entirely on the project and the director's clarity made it one of the best experiences of my career. I even performed all the action scenes myself, which was both challenging and rewarding. It gave me a chance to truly showcase my acting, beyond just learning a South Indian language. Watching the playbacks while dubbing, I felt so proud of how beautifully it all turned out. I can't wait for people to see this project—it's something very close to my heart," Sunny shares.

## Nandamuri Mokshagnya confident about his debut

Nandamuri Balakrishna's son, Mokshagnya, is set to make his acting debut in an untitled film directed by Prashanth Varma, who previously helmed *HanuMan*. This project has generated significant buzz, with many eagerly awaiting Mokshagnya's entry into the film industry. Prashanth Varma has been entrusted with the responsibility of showcasing the young actor's talent on the big screen.

Before his film debut, Mokshagnya underwent comprehensive training in acting, fight choreography, and dance. The film's pre-production work is currently underway, and the makers have released a new photo of Mokshagnya. In this latest picture, he exudes confidence and promises a compelling performance.

Nandamuri fans are eagerly anticipating another star in the making, following in the footsteps of Mokshagnya's father, Balakrishna. This high-budget project will be pro-

duced by Sudhakar Cherukuri in collaboration with Legend Productions, with Balakrishna's daughter, Tejeswini Nandamuri, serving as the presenter. The movie draws inspiration from an ancient mythological legend and is currently in the final stages of pre-production.



## Sreeleela's 'new and different' B'wood debut on cards!

Following a stellar first episode that became the talk of the town, the highly anticipated second episode of *The Rana Daggubati Show* brings the charming Siddhartha Jonnalagadda, popularly known as Siddhu and the vivacious Sreeleela under one roof for a lively and spill-all conversation. From witty exchanges to laugh-out-loud moments, as well as insightful discussions about their personal and professional journeys, the episode breaks away from the traditional talk-show format, making it a delightful watch for viewers. Eager to get Sreeleela to spill the beans on her upcoming projects, Siddhu and Rana probe her about her Bollywood debut. With an official

announcement still under wraps, Sreeleela coyly tried to avoid revealing much. But at Rana's insistence, the actress eventually gave in and said, "That is true. This will be my first time working in Bollywood. It's new and different." The *Dhamaka* actress has recently grabbed attention and headlines for her exquisite performance in the Allu Arjun-starrer *Pushpa 2*'s electrifying dance number *Kissik*, with fans now excited to witness her much-awaited debut in Bollywood. Rana also made a curious and playful observation about Sreeleela's frequent presence at the gatherings he attends. Jokingly, he asked, "I see you and your mom at every wedding I go to, and I hear my cousins calling you your sister. What's going on here?" In response, Sreeleela revealed, "We're from Ongole, which is close to Karamchedu, your (Rana's) hometown. We used to visit often for Sankranti," referring to the fun-filled kite festival that marks the beginning of the harvest season.