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Published From: VIJAYAWADA HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN



**WARBURG PINCUS, BLACKSTONE; SEEKS INVESTMENTS** 

Swag is one of the top films in my career: SREE VISHNO

the pioneer BRS's social media activists are uncultured and they are ignorant of the difference between elder sister, younger sister and mother. As a younger brother, I offered a handloom garland to Minister Surekha after getting her permission. When Prime Minister Modi came also, I offered such a garland. As a brother, I am deeply sorry for the insult suffered by my sister. The details of trollers have been collected and a complaint has been filed with the

QUOTE OF THE DAY

- Raghunandan Rao, BJP MLA TG

#### Senior citizens' clubs in villages for...

Minister for Social Welfare Dola Bala Veeranjaneyulu has said that the government has decided to set up senior citizens clubs at the village level across the State to address the grievances of senior citizens. The Minister, flanked by Prakasam district Collector Thameem Ansariya and MLA BN Vijay Kumar, participated in a programme organized to mark the 34th International Senior Citizens Day here on Tuesday. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that steps would be taken to set up special wards in the Government General Hospitals..

#### **Genetic study** finds 'dilution...

A genetic study has charted the migration history of elephants in India from north to south. revealing multiple bottlenecks encountered along the way that threatened their existence and likely caused a "dilution of genetic diversity". Genetic diversity is important for a resilience to disease and long-term survival, including an ability to adapt to environmental changes. The findings can help shape the future of elephant species in India by informing conservation strategies, researchers from..

## India's power

consumption at...

India's power consumption remained almost flat at 141.36 billion units (BU) year-on-year in September, mainly due to the above-normal rainfall across the country, which reduced the use of ances like ai conditioners and desert coolers. According to the Indian Meteorological Department, the country experienced a rainfall excess of 10.6 per cent in September. In September 2023, the power consumption stood at 141.29 BU, according to official data. The highest..

-PAGE: 8

#### **Ashwin Ties** Muralitharan Man...

Indian off-spinner Ravichandaran Ashwin has etched his name in the ecords book once again, equalling the most number of Player of the Series in Test cricket's history, with his stellar performances in Bangladesh series Ashwin now stands with Sri Lankan spinner Muttiah Muralitharan. They both now shares the 11 Player of the Series accolades, Ashwin performance in the Bangladesh series conquered many records in history of cricket. Ashwin's took 11 wickets and scored 114 runs in both the innings two..

## Rayalaseema to be turned into green energy hub: CM

#### Promises to complete pending irrigation projects in the region



■ HIGH COURT BENCH: CM assures the establishment of a High Court bench

■ FREE GAS CYLINDERS: Announces that free cooking gas cylinders will be distributed from Deepavali under the Super Six schemes.

■ PENSION SCHEME: Rs 4,000 per month is being distributed to pensioners under the NTR Bharosa scheme, with regular distribution on the 1st of every month.

■ EMPLOYMENT AND SKILL **DEVELOPMENT: Opening of 175** Anna Canteens and skill census centres to provide job opportunities; plans to create 20

Speaking at the 'Pedala Sevalo' (In

Service of the Poor) programme at

Putchakayalamada village of

Pattikonda Assembly segment in

Kurnool district, he said the region

would be equipped with facilities to

lakh jobs through training.

■ INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT: National highway to be built from Kurnool to Bellary; Orvakallu to be developed as an industrial hub.

■ IRRIGATION SUBSIDIES: 90% subsidy on drip irrigation and recruitment of 16,347 posts through DSC in December.

■ ECONOMIC CHALLENGES: State burdened with Rs 10 lakh crore debt; despite this, key irrigation projects to be completed.

■ HOUSING AND INDUSTRY: Naidu promises to provide houses to the homeless and promote small-scale industries in Ravalaseema.

providing employment opportuni-

ties for the youth. The Chief Minister also assured that irrigation water will be supplied to every acre in the region by completing all pending projects swiftly. generate solar and wind power,

towards establishing a High Court bench in Kurnool.

"As part of the Super Six schemes, free cooking gas cylinders will be provided from Deepavali," Naidu said. During the programme, he distributed pensions to beneficiaries, visiting homes and checking on the welfare of pensioners.

Referring to the NTR Bharosa scheme, the CM noted that Rs 4,000 is being provided to each pensioner every month, recalling that the late N T Rama Rao initially introduced the scheme with a Rs 35 pen-

He assured that pensions will continue to be distributed on the 1st of every month, alongside the salaries

of government employees.
The Chief Minister highlighted the opening of 175 Anna Canteens across the state and the setting up of skill census centres to create employment opportunities for the youth. He pledged to take Andhra Pradesh on a progressive path similar to the development of Hyderabad during his tenure as Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh.

## AP's new liquor policy to allow pvt retailers

#### State expects to generate Rs 5,500 cr in revenue from new policy

 Licenses for selling Indian-made foreign liquor (IMFL) and foreign liquor (FL) will be granted to private entities through a selection process. The licensing period will run from October 12, 2024, to Sept 30, 2026.

Out of the total shops, 3,396 will be in the open category, while 340 will be reserved for the 'Geetha Kulalu' (toddy tappers) community to promote equity and social justice.

Applicants can apply for multiple shop licences, with a non-refundable application fee of Rs 2 lakh per shop. There are no restrictions

on the number of licences one can hold. Retailers will receive a margin of 20% on the issue price across all categories,

including beer and wine. The policy includes 12 Premium Store Licences for high-end retail experiences, to be located in major cities like Vijayawada and

Visakhapatnam. A cabinet sub-committee reviewed excise policies from various states and sought feedback from stakeholders before formulating the new policy, considering public health impacts

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has notified a new liquor policy, allowing private retailers to sell spirits on the lines of Haryana and others with the State expecting to rake in Rs 5,500 crore rev-

In a complete overhaul of excise policy based on best practices from other states, Andhra Pradesh has decided retail sales of liquor through 3,736 notified private shops across the State.

The new policy will take effect from October 12, 2024, as per the notification dated September 30,

The permission to sell IMFL (Indian-made foreign liquor) and FL (foreign liquor) will be granted to private persons or entities through a selection process, the notification said.

The period of licence for selling IMFL and FL by shops shall be from October 12, 2024, to September 30, 2026, it added.

#### **VG Venkat Reddy** to be quizzed by **ACB** for 3 days

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu

Naidu on Tuesday announced plans

to make Rayalaseema a green ener-

gy hub, promising multiple benefits

for the people of Andhra Pradesh.

PNS VIJAYAWADA

PNS KURNOOL

The ACB court in Vijayawada has granted three-day custody of former director of Mines and Geology, VG Venkata Reddy, for further investiin connection with illegal sand mining and produced before the ACB court on 27th September. While the ACB had sought sevenday custody, the court sanctioned three days, beginning from Wednesday.

The ACB's investigation has uncovered that Venkat Reddy allegedly colluded with private companies for personal gains. He is accused of facilitating these companies in misappropriating government funds and bypassing procedures. One major violation involves the illegal release of bank guarantees worth Rs 120 crores, which led to a loss of Rs 2,566 crores to the state exchequer. The probe also revealed that the accused companies exceeded their lease boundaries, mined beyond permitted depths, and operated without mandatory environmental clearances, violating the Mines and Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.

Venkat Reddy was apprehended at a resort in Rangareddy district, Telangana, on September 27 and later brought to Vijayawada. A case has been registered under multiple sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 2018 and other

near the Om turning point. The admin-

istration is focusing on bathing ghats,

hygiene maintenance, drinking water

## SIT probe on hold as *laddu* case is sub judice: AP DGP



Andhra Pradesh DGP Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao on Tuesday said that the State government-constituted Special Investigation Team (SIT) will temporarily stall its probe into the alleged 'adulteration' of 'Tirupati

laddus' with animal fats case as the matter is sub-judice in the Supreme

Over the last two days, the SIT has probed the procurement and stand how it is possible to adulterate the laddus, said Rao.

"First they (SIT) have to understand the process, study it and take all the information, but in the meantime, an order has come from the Supreme Court and in line with that, we have stopped it (probe)," the DGP said while speaking to

When the case is being examined under the purview of the apex court, it is not appropriate to speak more, he said.

#### 'PRAYASCHITA DEEKSHA'

## Pawan on 3-day visit to Tirumala



Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Tuesday embarked on a three-day visit to Tirumala as part of his 11-day penance to proalleged adulteration of Tirupati

The Deputy Chief Minister has reached Tirumala and is currently taking the Alipiri Srivari Padala steps route for the temple.

This is not just about one prasad' issue (laddu adulteration). Maybe it came out. Maybe this was a triggering point to initiate this. 'Prayaschitta Deeksha' (penance) is (the) commitment to take forward Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism) protection. (It) is very essential. That is the order of

the day," Kalyan told reporters while leaving for Tirumala.

According to the actor-politician, temple desecrations occurred continuously in the past five years under the previous Highlighting that alleged dese-

crations should be addressed at a different level, the Janasena founder said his penance has entered the 10th day and after renouncing it tomorrow, a declaration would be released.

Calling for a permanent addressing mechanism for these issues, Kalyan said they are going to unveil a roadmap for it on Wednesday.

Kalyan' will return from Tirumala on Thursday evening to

Vijayawada.

## 4,200 VSP staff laid off, triggering protests



PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

The Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) saw a tense situation as thousands of contract workers protested after Works building to express their anger over the layoffs

and demanded immediate reinstatement.

The VSP announced on September 28, 2024, that gate passes for 3,600 contract workers were cancelled. This around 4,200 employees reduced the number of con-were laid off. The protesters, tract workers at the plant tract workers at the plant along with their families, from 14,000 to 10,000, causgathered around the ED ing outrage among the workfrom 14,000 to 10,000, caus-

Rama Mohana Rao, Central MLA

Bonda Uma Maheswara Rao, West

MLA Yalamanchili Sujana Chowdary,

NTR district collector Dr G. Srijana,

Police Commissioner S.V. Rajasekhar

Babu, and Temple EO K.S. Rama Rao

attended the meeting, along with other department heads. After the

meeting, they inspected the

Krishnamma Harathi trial run at

Sources suggest the State govern-

Continued on Page 2



## CS: Aim for more Central schemes and funds for AP

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad has emphasised to officials that numerous Centrally-Sponsored Schemes (CSS) are currently being implemented in the State and must be expedited to secure additional schemes and funding from the Centre. On Tuesday, he conducted a review of the CSS with officials from the Health, Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries, Municipal Administration, Housing, and Finance Departments at the State Secretariat.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary noted that timely completion of CSS as per the specified deadlines will enhance the state's chances of obtaining more schemes and funding. He stressed the importance of addressing the challenges faced in the implementation of existing schemes, urging officials to

pursue more funds from the Centre. He instructed Aggarwal, the Resident Commissioner at Delhi's AP Bhawan, along with the relevant secretaries, to take necessary actions regarding schemes introduced by the Centre.

progress without delay and active-

With the aqua sector contributng to three-quarters of the state's GDP, the Chief Secretary urged department officials to implement measures to attract additional funds and schemes. He suggested that all data related to fish and shrimp ponds should be fully digitized, appropriate laboratories should be established for testing, and steps must be taken to promote the export of quality aqua products from the state. He recommended efforts to secure adequate funding through NABARD and MPEDA.

## Durga temple decked out for Dasara from tomorrow

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam, situated atop the Indrakeeladri in the city, is all set to host the Dasara Sarannavaratri celebrations from October 3 to 12. The temple authorities, with the cooperation of 13 departments, have made elaborate arrangements to ensure the smooth conduct of the festivities.

The NTR district administration, in coordination with the endowments and police departments, is overseeing the preparations. The State government expects around 15 lakh devotees to visit the temple for the 'Durga Devi darshan'. On the auspicious day of 'Moola Nakshatram, over 2 lakh devotees are anticipated. Queue lines and 'prasadam' counters have been arranged. Two free queue lines and three paid queue lines, with ticket prices of Rs 100, Rs 300, and Rs 500, are available. VIPs will access the temple via Ghat Road, with entry 15 lakh devotees expected to visit the shrine for darshan of the deity Ghat. Vijayawada East MLA Gadde



The administration is focusing on bathing ghats, hygiene maintenance, drinking water supply, and powe arrangements. Cultural programmes will also be held. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu will offer silk robes to the Goddess on October 9, during 'Moola Nakshatram' between 3 pm and 4 pm on behalf of the state

Ramanarayana Reddy, Home Minister

ment will announce a special festival committee for the Sarannavaratri fesand MP have recommended 18 members for the Utsav Committee.

Durga Ghat.

supply, and power arrangements. Ministers review arrangements Cultural programmes will also be held. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu

the state government. Endowments Minister Anam

between 3 pm and 4 pm on behalf of

will offer silk robes to the Goddess on October 9, during 'Moola Nakshatram', Vangalapudi Anitha, Mines & Geology Minister Kollu Ravindra, and Vijayawada MP Kesineni Nani conducted a review meeting on Tuesday at the Model Guest House near Durga

tivities soon. The committee will work alongside temple authorities and government officials to oversee arrangements. Although the temple board has yet to be appointed, the local MLAs

## Jagan must revitalize YSRCP; prove he is down, but not out!

ven a supremely confident political leader may become diffident if his party is decimated in the elections. Andhra Pradesh's for-POINT mer chief minister and YSRCP president YS Jagan Moĥan Reddy, given his party's drubbing in the recent Assembly elections, may not look diffident; yet it is high time he took concrete steps to

galvanize the party again.

The issues that bedevil Jagan and his party include sacrilege of Tirumala Srivari laddu and the narrow-minded response to the recent floods that devastated Vijayawada, among others. Jagan's apparent unwillingness to sign the faith declaration for

visiting Tirumala has assumed added significance, considering that Months after defeat in the Assembly polls, YSRCP, left other prominent personalities like former without even the tag of principal president Abdul Kalam and former Congress president Sonia opposition in AP, is yet to be revitalized by Jagan to present Gandhi have signed the mandatory declaration in the itself as an alternative political past when they visited force that is alive. Tirumala temple.

> vention of the Court (instead of SIT's probe) and has not demanded a CBI enquiry into the issue alleged desecration of Srivari laddu.

area of Vijayawada city. Likewise, with regard to floods, YSRCP preferred to Considering that the devastation caused by floods of highlight the two-kilometre Budameru has been significant,

it may not be appropriate for the party to highlight that one point. It may be mentioned nere that the VI Nizam of

Hyderabad princely state Mir Mahaboob Ali Khan had taken great corrective measures after the devastating floods of river Musi on 28 September, 1908. The reservoirs then constructed on both sides of river Musi in the limits of Hyderabad are still capable of preventing floods.

Months after defeat in the Assembly polls, YSRCP, left without even the tag of princi-pal opposition in AP, is yet to be revitalized by Jagan to present itself as an alternative political force that is alive. The legacy of late Dr. YS Rajasekhara Reddy helped his son Jagan a lot in building an alternative to both then ruling and opposition parties,

Congress and TDP respectively in 2011, after he had decided to part ways with the Congress, with whose blessings his father could become chief minister after a long wait of 23 years. Jagan chose a different path to become the chief minister of residual AP post bifurcation.

Today, the party's cadre is missing Jagan's enthusiasm in rebuilding the organization. The cadre is rather confused over the future of the party, given the desertions of public representatives and senior leaders. They are not able to digest the exit of leaders with the party head making no efforts to retain them.

Given the spree of desertions, YSRCP may lose its sheen in the

national political arena, particularly with the exit of its Rajya Sabha members. YSRCP is losing its strength in the Upper House of Parliament.

No state level meeting has been convened so far to review the party's defeat in the Assembly elections. This also means no opportunity is being given to grassroots-level workers to interact with the party leadership.

In such trying circumstances, YS Jaganmohan Reddy is yet to start the next phase of his political journey by learning lessons from the recent past. It is high time he galvanized the party and positioned himself as an effective leader who is down but not

## **Traditional purification** ritual held in Tirumala

Jagan has cancelled his visit,

leaving common people won-dering why he backed down. As for the laddu issue, the

Supreme Court has just issued

orders asking rulers to "keep

Gods out of politics". This is

also the least that common

people expect from netas.

YSRCP has sought the inter-

#### 'Koil Alwar' performed 4 times in a year: TTD EO

PNS TIRUMALA

The traditional temple cleansing ritual, 'Koil Alwar Tirumanjanam' was performed with utmost religious fervour in Tirumala temple on Tuesday.

After the completion of the ritual, speaking to media outside the temple, TTD EO J Syamala Rao said, this unique Tirumanjanam was performed in view of the annual Brahmotsavams which are scheduled from October 4 to 12. Usually, it is observed four times a year on the preceding Tuesday before Telugu Ugadi, Anivara Asthanam, annual Brahmotsavams Vaikuntha Ekadasi festivals in Tirumala temple.

As a part of it, the entire



deity was covered with a white veil and after the completion of the cleaning programme, the cover was removed. Later on special pujas and naivedyams were offered to the presiding

The entire activity took place deity", the EO said. The devotees will be allowed from 6 am till 10 am. During this time, the main for darshan after noon onwards. In view of the Koil Alwar Tirumanjanam, TTD has cancelled Astadala Pada Padmaradhana, VIP break on Tuesday. TTD Additional EO Ch Venkaiah Chowdhary, HEO (H&E) Goutami, CVSO Sridhar, DyEO Lokanatham, Peishkar Ramakrishna and other officials were also present.

retaining wall constructed dur-

ing Jagan's rule to protect peo-

ple from floods of River

Krishna in the Krishna lanka

#### 28 injured as lorry collides with bus

PNS KADAPA

As many as 28 persons were injured when a lorry collided with a bus at Angallu village at Sarkar

Thopu in Kurabalakota village in Annamayya district on Tuesday.

The bus was going to Galaiveedu Gurramkonda with about 40 passengers when the mishap took place. A speeding lorry collided with the bus in which 28 bus passengers were injured. They were extricated from the ill-fated bus and shifted to various hospitals in Madanapalle.

The lorry driver was also injured in the mishap and he was stuck in the cabin. A JCB was used to extricate the driver from the cabin of the ill-fated lorry. The police registered a case and removed the two vehicles from the road and cleared the traffic.

## 6,100 constables to be recruited: HM

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Home and Disaster Management Minister Vangalapudi Anitha has announced that the coalition government is prioritising the constable recruitment process in the State, which had previously come to a halt. The Minister confirmed that the physical ability tests (PMT and PET) for filling 6,100 posts will be completed within five months.

The Minister reported that 4,59,182 candidates had appeared for the preliminary examination conducted in 2022, out of which 95,209 were selected for the next stage. The recruitment process for 3,580 Civil Constables and 2,520 APSP Constables was postponed due to MLC elections and other reasons.

Additionally, she mentioned that 3,622 Home Guards participated in the preliminary written test, with only 382 qualifying. One hundred Home Guards who did not qualify filed 14 writ petitions in the High Court, requesting the court to declare a separate merit list for Home Guards, treating them as a distinct category. The Home Minister explained that the court had issued an interim order allowing these hundred Home



stage. She noted that the previous government had halted the recruitment process without reaching any decision after that. Following the coalition gov-

ernment's awareness of this issue, the Minister stated that they would seek legal opinion and promptly continue with the second phase (PMT/PET) of the recruitment process. Minister Vangalapudi Anitha

also mentioned that complete details regarding the secondstage application form will be made available on the State Level Police Recruitment Board's web-(slprb.ap.gov.in). Furthermore, she indicated that the third phase, which involves the main examination (Final Written Exam), will be conducted for those who qualify in the

Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh thanked Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha who announced that the constable recruitment examination process which was stopped halfway immediately. The minister said that the unemployed people who came to Praja Darbhar brought to his notice the difficulties they were facing due to the postponement of the physical fitness tests which were to be conducted in the second stage of recruitment after the preliminary examination. When their request was sent to the Home Minister for consideration, the HM responded positively and announced that the recruitment process would be initiated which is a positive move for the unemployed who passed the Constable Eligibility Test, said Minister

## 4,200 VSP...

Continued from Page 1

Protests erupted at the plant gates as they voiced their concerns. In response, a large number of police and Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel were deployed to maintain order and ensure the safety of the protesters and the local community tract workers raised alarms about their sudden dismissal, calling for job security and condemning the unfair treatment. "We were not given any prior notice or explanation," said one protester. "Our livelihoods are at stake, and we demand justice."

The VSP management confirmed the cancellation of the passes but defended their decision. "Many of the suspended passes belonged to bogus workers who were hired due to political pressure," a management source explained. "This is part of a necessary workforce reduction, especially with the potential merger with SAIL." CITU State general secretary Ch. Narasinga Rao criticised the management's actions and raised concerns about the Ministry of Steel's involvement. "Joint Secretary Sanjay Roy has been pressuring VSP officials to make a list of workers to be terminated," Rao claimed.

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#### **Govt liquor shop workers boycott work**

PNS VIJAYAWADA

temple, deities, puja utensils

were cleaned while a special

aromatic mixture called

"Parimalam" was smeared all

along the walls, roofs, pillars of

the temple complex.

Government liquor shop workers across the State boycotted work from 11 am. to 5 pm on Tuesday demanding that they be adjusted in other departments as their contract ended on Monday (September govern-While the AP ment requested the workers to keep the shops open for another 10 days, the staff refused, knowing they would be out of jobs after the private liquor shops opened statewide. However, they opened the shops in the evening following an assurance for talks.

Most of the 3,240 wine shops remained shut, leaving

customers in a fix. With the closure, the only option for those seeking liquor was to visit bars, where prices are higher than in wine shops.

Pasala Ramachandra Rao, a representative of the Government Liquor Shop Staff Association, said that their contracts, initially established by the previous government, had ended.

He noted that the earlier administration had set up 3,600 government-run liquor shops across the State under the Andhra Pradesh State Beverages Corporation, hiring 15,000 staff through an outsourcing process overseen by

#### APSRTC to run 6,100 Dasara specials from Oct 4 to 20

PNS VIJAYAWADA

In anticipation of the upcoming Dasara festival, the Andhra Pradesh State Corporation (APSRTC) has Bheemavaram, he operation of 6,100 special buses from October 4 to 20 to accommodate the increased passenger demand during the celebrations.

In a release on Monday, APSRTC officials stated that, in addition to regular services, special buses will be deployed to major cities and towns across Andhra

including Pradesh, Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Kurnool, Tirupati, Rajamahendravaram, Anantapur, Vizianagaram, Transport Kakinada, Kadapa, Amalanuram Markanuran Srisailam, Ongole, Tuni, Srikakulam, and Nellore. Services will also extend to significant cities outside the state, such as Chennai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Bhadrachalam.

The special bus services will commence on October 4 and continue until October 20.

#### Girl student from Nunna dies of heart attack in US

PNS VIJAYAWADA

In a tragic incident, Avuthu Divya, a 22-year-old student from Nunna near Vijayawada in the NTR district, passed away due to a heart atta USA. Divya had gone to the U.S. last year to pursue her MS.

Upon learning of the incident, local TDP leaders informed Gannavaram MLA Yarlagadda Venkata Rao, who reached out to the Telugu Association of North America (TANA) to assist in repatriating Divya's body. The MLA's company has pledged to cover the expenses.

## The Supreme Court, while

hearing on October 3, the apex court asked the top law officer to Chandrababu Naidu has constituted the nine-member SIT, headed by Guntur Range inspector gen-

The SIT took over the case filed Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), the official custodian of Sri Venkateswara temple in Tirupati, against AR Dairy in Tirupati East police station for allegedly supplying adulterated ghee.

The SIT formed teams to investigate everyone responsible for the adulterated ghee and also indicated that there was no definite time period to submit its report. It was planning to quiz TTD board members, officials and workers. The SIT officials also visited Tirumala laddu Potu (laddu kitchen), laddu points of sale and spoke to Sri Vaishnavas on Monday, who prepare the consecrated sweet, among others.

Deputy Chief Minister

SIT probe on hold as... extraneous issue.

Continued from Page 1

hearing a batch of petitions on the laddu case on Monday, tasked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to assist it in deciding whether the investigation by the state-appointed SIT should continue or the probe should be conducted by an independent

While posting the matter for ponder over the issue and assist it in this regard. Chief Minister N eral of police (IGP) Sarvashresth

Pawan Kalyan claimed that Supreme Court judges did not say that it (ghee) was 'unadulterated' but there was 'confusion'. Andhra Pradesh BJP chief D Purandeswari said that CM Naidu spoke about issues pertaining to the State as its constitutional head, not on any On Monday, TDP spokesper-

son Pattabhiram Kommareddy asserted that the TDP stands by its statements on 'Tirupati laddus' alleged adulteration and also welcomed a court-monitored probe by a central agency.

leader and former irrigation minister Ambati Rambabu said an SIT probe ordered by Naidu into the alleged Tirupati laddu adulteration case is insufficient, calling for a Supreme Courtmonitored investigation. Echoing Rambabu,

Sudhakar Reddy, former additional advocate general, said that the truth in the laddu allegations should not emanate from an investigation agency working under Naidu. The State government's deci-

sion to halt the SIT probe comes a day after the top court raised several questions on Naidu's claims while hearing a batch of pleas, including those seeking a court-monitored probe into the alleged use of animal fats in making Tirupati laddus. Highlighting that lab reports on alleged adulterated ghee were 'not clear at all' and prima facie indicated that rejected ghee' was subjected to tests, the apex court observed that Gods must be kept away from politics, and also questioned Naidu's claims on animal fats being used during YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led regime to make Tirupati laddus.

During a recent NDA legislative party meeting in the southern state, Naidu had alleged that the erstwhile YSRCP government did not even spare Sri Venkateswara temple and used substandard ingredients and animal fats for making laddus, which are revered and sought after by crores of devotees.

TODAY

**ALMANAC** 

#### Rayalaseema... AP's new liquor...

Continued from Page 1

Naidu expressed concern about the financial condition of the State, stating that when he assumed office, the State was burdened with a debt of Rs 10 lakh crore, with Rs 1 lakh crore being paid as interest every month. Despite these challenges, he promised to complete the Vedavathi, Guru Raghavendra, KC Canal, and Gundrevula projects on time to supply water to every acre in Rayalaseema.

The Chief Minister also announced a 90 per cent subsidy for drip irrigation and plans to conduct a test in December to fill 16,347 posts through DSC. He shared plans to create 20 lakh jobs for the youth by providing training in various fields of interest.

Additionally, Naidu said a national highway will be constructed from Kurnool to Bellary, and Orvakallu will be developed as an industrial hub. He mentioned that a new excise policy has curbed the supply of spurious liquor and that initiatives under the 'Swarnandhra@2047' plan are underway to position Andhra Pradesh as a leading state in the country.

Finally, the Chief Minister assured that houses will be provided to those without homes, and small-scale industries will be promoted in Rayalaseema.

Continued from Page 1

Out of the total number of shops to be licensed in 2024-26, as many as 3,396 will be in the open category, while 340 shops will be reserved for allocation to 'Geetha Kulalu' (a toddy tapping community) to empower them and promote equity and social justice.

The selection process for granting licence will be through a draw of lots and an applicant can apply for more than one shop. There shall be no restriction on the number of shop licences a person can hold, it added. Applicants will have to deposit a nonrefundable fee of Rs 2 lakh for each shop. As per the notification, the retail excise tax (RET) ranges from

Rs 50 lakh for locality with population of 10,000 to Rs 85 lakh per annum for a municipality or municipal corporation having population above 5 lakh during the fiscal 2024-2025. It will be increased by 10 per cent for 2025-26. The overall exercise is estimated to result in the State government raking in Rs 5,500 crore.

The RET per annum shall be paid in six equal advance instalments as applicable for each year during the licence period 2024-26. As per the notification, the retailer margin will be 20 per cent on issue price across all categories of IMFL and FL, including beer, wine and RTDs (ready to drink).

For the premium stores, the notification said, "In order to pro-

vide an enhanced and high-end retail experience within the state

of Andhra Pradesh, a total of 12 Premium Store Licenses shall be granted as a separate category." These premium stores shall be strategically located across major municipal corporation cities namely Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Rajamahendravaram, Kakinada, Guntur, Nellore, Kurnool, Kadapa, Anantapur or any other city as notified by the state government from time to time, it added. A cabinet sub-committee of the state government had studied the excise policies of states such as Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and also took extensive feedback from key stake-

holders, before framing the latest policy. It had assessed the performance of the existing policy with respect to public health impact and other critical metrics including revenue generation efficiency, the state government said.

## CS: Aim for...

Continued from Page 1

Chief Secretary Prasad also advised officials to formulate a plan for the Backward Area Development of Rayalaseema and North Andhra districts, as there is potential for obtaining funds from the Centre for the development of these areas.

While discussing CSS related to the Primary Medical and Health Department, Special Chief Secretary MT Krishnababu stated that under the Prime Minister's Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM), ?367 crore has been allocated over five years to enhance medical infrastructure, including increasing bed capacity and establishing critical care blocks in various government medical colleges. Additionally, under the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, a plan is in place to provide ?5,000 to pregnant

AP Tidco Housing Special Chief Secretary Anil Kumar Singhar outlined that the Tidco Housing scheme, valued at ?21,377 crore, comprises a central share of ?3,924 crore, a state government share of ?8,595 crore, and a beneficiaries' share of ?8,856 crore. Works worth ?16,900 crore have been completed, while ?7,000 crore worth of work remains pending.

Special Chief Secretary for Agriculture B Raja Sekhar noted that under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, eight schemes with a budget of ?737 crore are being implemented in the Agriculture Department, with ?442 crore funded by the Centre and ?295 crore by the State Government.

#### GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH AP POLICE DEPARTMENT TENDER NOTIFICATION No.100/H1/2024, Dt.30.09.2024 Tender ID No.756615

Inviting tenders for Facility Management/Housekeeping and Gardening Service for a period of two years for A.P. Police Headquarters Buildings at Mangalagiri incl Arms Dump, APSP HO, Vijayawada and Hydersbad w.e.f. 01.11.2024 (ECV Rs. 3.24 Crore). Details in website: https://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in from 7.00 PM on 30.09.2024 to 10 AM upto 16.10.2024. Sdi-Inspector General of R.O.No: 14191/CL/ADVT/11/0021-22, Dt. 01.18.2824

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## **CM** to attend 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign today

PNS VIJAYAWADA

As part of the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign, Chief Minister N Chandrababu

Naidu will be participating in a programme in Machilipatnam on Wednesday, to mark Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary. The CM, along with people's representatives, officials, and students, will take part in the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' initiative.

In connection with this, Minister for Mines & Geology and Excise Kollu Ravindra, Krishna District Collector DK Balaji, and SP R Gangadhara Rao inspected the arrangements in Machilipatnam on Tuesday. Also, they convened a meeting with the officials concerned regarding the Chief tour Minister<sup>†</sup>s Machilipatnam.

Minister Ravindra visited the National Degree College and inspected the arrangements of the helipad. Later, he inspected the college's surrounding areas and instructed the officials to keep the city clean and green. Minister Ravindra, Collector Balaji, and SP Gangadhara Rao visited Mudusthambhala Centre, Ladies Club, TTD Kalyana Mandapam, Rythu Bazar, Sundaraiah Colony, Mustakhan Peta and other

During the inspection, the Collector stated that CM Chandrababu will attend the Safai Karmachari Sanitation workers' meeting to be held at the TTD Kalyana Mandapam. After a face-toface interaction with the sanitation workers, the CM will distribute clothes and safety equipment to them, he



Minister Kollu Ravindra, Machilipatnam MP Bala Shoury, Pedana MLA Krishna Prasad and others participating in the tree plantation drive at Machavaram on Tuesday

Joint Collector Geethanjali Chandrasekhar, ZP CEO Kannama Naidu, DPO Dr Aruna, R & B Officer Lokesh, Municipal Commissioners Bapi Raju, Gopala Rao, Venkateswara Rao, Srinivasa Rao, Pollution Control Board EE Srinivas, Fire Officer Narasimha Rao. Public Health EE Ram Prasad and others were pre-

Environment protection everyone's responsibility As part of the campaign, Minister Kollu Ravindra and

Machilipatnam Vallabhaneni Balashowry planted saplings at Rice Mill at Machavaram on Tuesday. The programme was organised by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

They participated in cleaning roads and planted saplings. Also, they organ-



Minister Kollu Ravindra, Krishna District Collector DK Balaji and SP Gangadhara Rao inspecting the arrangements for CM Chandrababu Naidu's tour programme in Machilipatnam on Tuesday

ised a cycle rally to create awareness among the public. Minister Ravindra said that sapling plants and protecting the environment are everyone's responsibilities.

Pedana MLA Kagitha

Krishna Prasad, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways Chief Engineer Kumar, Ex-Municipal Chairman M Baba Prasad, and others were pre-

#### PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) has made a key decision to distribute drinking water to the devotees waiting in queue lines for having darshan of goddess Durga Devi during the Dasara Sarannavaratri festicities and the tivities at the Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam in Vijayawada. The Dasara festivities will take place from October 3 to 12. The responsibility of drinking water distribution has been entrusted to the

In view of the Dasara celebrations which will begin in the city on October 3, Municipal Commissioner HM Dhyanachandra held a key meeting with the VMC department heads at the Command Control Room on Command Control Room on Tuesday. The conference focused on providing drinking water, sanitation facilities, temporary toilets, cloakrooms, and other amenities.

Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner Dhyanachandra said that although 25 water distribution points have been established, necessary steps should be taken to provide drinking water directly to the devotees standing in queue lines. Additional staff should be

to devotees in queues

VMC to distribute water

25 water distribution points set up in city



VMC Commissioner HM Dhyanachandra conducting a meeting of department heads ahead of the Dasara festivities, at the Command Control Room on Tuesday

deployed to ensure that the devotees between two water points do not face any shortage of water. For that, necessary instructions have been issued to all department heads, he added.

Further, he emphasised the need for uninterrupted basic amenities for the devotees. He stressed the importance of ensuring that facilities like drinking water, temporary toilets, and cloakrooms are fully operational and maintained cleanly. He instructed

the officials to increase staff

Besides, Dhyanachandra directed the officials to ensure that temporary toilets are regularly cleaned and maintained without any lapses. He also emphasised monitoring sanitation in 31 designated areas, instructing officials to ensure that sanitation workers are

He said that for the convenience of devotees, the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation has set up free

cloakrooms and shoe stands at six locations: Rath Centre, in front of the VMC main office, Seethamma Vari Paadalu, Kummaripalem Centre, Punnami Ghat, and

Padmavati Ghat. VMC Chief Medical Health Officer (CMOH) Dr P Ratnavali, Chief City Planner GVGSV Prasad, Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Ġ Srijana, in-charge Chief Engineer Rammohana Rao, Estate Officer T Srinivas and others were present.

## City MP Sivanath gets invite for Navaratri

Colony on Tuesday. Vedic scholar Chitti Ghanapathi gave Vedic blessings to MP Kesineni Sivanath.



## PNS VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada MP Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni) has been invited to attend the Dussehra Sharannavaratri mahotsavam that will commence from October 3 to 12 at Sri Durgamalleswara Swamy Varla Devasthanam, atop Indrakiladri hill. Temple EO KS Rama Rao, Chief Priests L Durga Prasad and R Srinivasa Sastri presented the invitation card along with the goddess Prasadas and Sesha Vastra to MP Kesineni Sivanath at NTR Bhavan, in Guru Nanak

Later, the MP felicitated the temple EO and others with a shawl. The MP asked about the arrangements for the Sharannavaratri mahotsavam being held on Indrakiladri.



## Ex-MP Margani Bharat slams CM Naidu for Polavaram 'misdeeds'

Former MP Margani Bharat has criticised Chief Minister Chandral to Nich Chief Minister Chief Minist managing the Polavaram project by violating technical rules and demanded that Naidu take responsibility and apologize to the public.

Speaking to the media at the party office in Rajahmundry, the former MP said Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu went against established protocols and technical standards, prioritising personal gain over the suc-

cessful completion of the project. Margani Bharat emphasised that as per project protocol, the cofferdams should have been completed first, followed by the diaphragm wall. However, Naidu proceeded in the reverse order, allegedly driven by greed for commissions and the desire to increase project bills. This deviation from the norms, Bharat stated, resulted in the project's disarray. He further cited reports from international expert committees that highlighted these same issues, stressing that Naidu should be held

publicly apologise to the people, as the mistakes under his leadership led to significant financial losses, with the diaphragm wall being damaged and crores of rupees wasted. He challenged Naidu to explain why the diaphragm wall was constructed before completing the cofferdams and urged him to address the real facts rather than blaming the former government led by former Chief Minister Ys Jagan Mohan Reddy. Bharat also said that the previous government has completed the spillway and installed hydraulic gates but asserted that the damage caused under Naidu's leadership is evident. He noted that a new expert committee has been appointed, and according to their findings, work on the diaphragm wall is set to begin in November 2024, with completion targeted before the monsoon season in April 2025.



PM will virtual inaugurate two Ekalavya Model Residential Schools in Pedabayalu and Araku Valley mandals

## PM to interact virtually with tribals today

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually interact with tribals from Alluri Sitharama Raju district on Wednesday, as part of the PM Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JAN-MAN) programme. The interaction will take place with tribals from Jharkhand, while villagers from Palanakudi in Araku Valley mandal will gather to participate in the event.

The Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) has been actively involved in organising the

programme. ITDA Project schools in Hukumpeta and the opportunity to interact Officer V. Abhishek said, Chintapalli mandals. "The with the Prime Minister. She "We are making all necessary arrangements to ensure the success of the programme and to facilitate smooth interaction between the Prime Minister and the tribal communities.

A major highlight of the event will be the virtual inauguration of two Ekalavya Model Residential Schools in Pedabayalu and Araku Valley mandals, which were constructed at a budget of ?40 crore. Additionally, Prime Minister Modi will perform the 'Bhoomi Puja' for the construction of two more

Ekalavya Model Residential Schools will significantly improve access to quality education for tribal students, especially from remote areas," added Abhishek.

The PM-JANMAN programme, aimed at uplifting Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), has been an ongoing initiative to improve their socio-eco-nomic conditions. The Araku Valley region previously hosted the programme in January, where Swabi Ganga, a PVTG woman from Gadyaguda village, had with the Prime Minister. She will now meet him in person in Jharkhand during the

Speaking about the programme, Swabi Ganga expressed her excitement, saying, "Meeting the Prime Minister in person is a dream-come-true for me. His concern for the development of our communities gives us hope for a better future." This initiative highlights the government's continued efforts to focus on the welfare and development of tribal communities across

## 41.79 million MT of cargo handled by VPA

6% growth compared to the same period in previous year

The Visakhapatnam Port Authority (VPA) has reached a significant milestone, handling 41.79 million metric tonnes (MMTs) of cargo in the first half of the financial year 2024-25. This achievement reflects a six-per cent growth compared to the 39.60 MMTs handled during the same period in the previous year. According to Chairman of VPA Dr Madhaiyaan Angamuthu, , "Our consistent growth and operational advancements are in line with the government's ambitious vision for India's progress."

The increased handling of critical commodities such as crude oil, LPG, coal, and other cargoes has contributed to this remarkable achievement, reinforcing VPA's status as one of India's premier ports. As part of Prime

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM Minister Narendra Modi's 100-day Action Plan, VPA has undertaken strategic initiatives across digital transformation, green energy adoption, and infrastructure upgrades. "The implementa-tion of NLP has significantly enhanced the Port's operational efficiency," said Dr Angamuthu, highlighting the importance of the National Logistics Portal Marine (NLP) in streamlining processes.

Visakhapatnam Port has emerged as a 100 per cent renewable energy user, setting a benchmark among all major ports in India. The Port has introduced CNG-powered buses and deployed sweeping machines and fire tenders to improve air quality and safety. VPA's '1 Million Plantation Drive' aims to plant and distribute one million saplings to enhance green cover across the region.

## Farmers' welfare key to prosperous society: Collector Reduce agricultural costs, increase yields to make farming more profitable

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

District Collector MN Harendhira Prasad underscored the critical role of farmers in building a prosperous society. "A society thrives when its farmers thrive," he said. Speaking at the Polam Pilustondi programme, organ-ised by the Department of Agriculture, at Rajula Tallavalasa in Bheemili mandal on Tuesday, the Collector emphasised the need to reduce agricultural costs and increase vields to make farming more

profitable.

"The goal of this initiative is to bring direct support to farmers, particularly in agriculture and allied sectors like dairy, fishery, and horticulture. We want to address their problems and help them achieve better productivity," said the Collector, who was the chief

guest at the event. He explained that as part of the programme, he visits villages every Tuesday and Wednesday to engage with farmers and understand their

"We are working to resolve issues related to fertilisers and seeds, ensuring farmers have what they need to reduce costs and increase yields," he added. "Through this programme, we aim to make farming more remunerative.'

The programme also aims to promote agricultural mechanisation. "We are providing equipment based on farmers' needs, and currently, chop cutters are being distributed with subsidies. All farmers who have requested them will receive them in the coming days," the Collector assured.

Additionally, he announced that drip and sprinkler systems for horticultural crops will be



provided through the APMIP. We will conduct a survey to evaluate the performance of previously installed systems and ensure proper distribution to farmers with borewells," he said. The Collector also took the opportunity to inspect registered crops at the field level to monitor the progress of the programme. Key officials including K.

Appala Swamy, JD of Agriculture, Ramakrishna from Animal Husbandry, Scientist Srilatha, APMIP PD Manmadharao, AP CNF DPM A. Mohana Rao, Agriculture Department AD Vijaya Prasad, Horticulture Officer Swathi, Tahsildar Rama Rao, Local Agriculture Officer Siva Komali, ZPTC G. Venkatappadu, and several farmers and officials from var-

ious departments attended the

### APCPDCL posts SEs for all seven districts

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The Chairman and Managing Director of the Andhra Pradesh Central Power Distribution Corporation Limited (APCPDCL), Ravi Pattanshetti, recently appointed Superintending Engineers (SEs) for all seven districts, including a special post for the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA), following the State's new district divisions. Previously, APCPDCL covered only three districts: Vijayawada (Krishna), Guntur, and Ongole. However, with the government's division of 13 disment's division of 13 districts into 26, the corporation has now assigned SEs to all seven districts.

A Murali Mohan was retained as the SE for Vijayawada. A new SE post created



Machilipatnam, with M Satyanandam appointed to the position. Other appointments include: P Subramanyam as SE for CRDA, P Vijaya Kumar for Cuntur C. Anianayah for Guntur, G Anjaneyulu for Bapatla, and K Venkateswarlu has been posted as SE for Ongole.



## Senior citizens' clubs in villages for grievance redressal: Minister

Minister for Social Welfare Dola Bala Veeranjanevulu has said that the government has decided to set up senior citizens clubs at the village level across the State to address the grievances of senior citizens.

The Minister, flanked by Prakasam district Collector Thameem Ansariya and MLA BN Vijay Kumar, participated in a programme organized to mark the 34th International Senior Citizens Day here on

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that steps would be taken to set up special wards in the Government General Hospitals, especially for senior citizens and give priority to them during the registration of Out Patients. The Minister revealed that steps would be taken to revive the toll-free number 14567 to receive complaints from elderly people on their grievances.

Physiotherapy services are provided to the elderly people in the community health centres and the centres will be



linked up with the Department of Elderly Welfare to ensure that the elderly people properly utilize the services," the Minister made it clear.

Minister Veeranjaneyulu highlighted that the Narendra Modi-headed Central government has provided PM Voya Vandana health scheme to benefit those above 70 years, irrespective of their financial status. The State government is providing wheelchairs, hearing buds, and optical at free of cost to eligible senior citizens. The Minister also highlighted that the State government is disbursing Rs 4000 to the elderly

Collector Thameem Ansariya assured of taking steps to protect the rights of elderly people and provide all benefits to them under various schemes. MLA Vijaya Kumar stressed the need of uplifting the living standards of elderly people in the State.

Senior Citizen Welfare Department Director B Ravi Prakash Reddy, MD M A Kumar Raja, AP Senior Citizens Welfare Association state president V Narayana Muerthy and ASP K

Nageswara Rao also spoke. Later some senior citizens were felicitated.

## 1 kg of red gram at Rs 67 at fair price shops: Nadendla

Ration card holders can now purchase 1 kg red gram for ?67 and half a kg of sugar for ?17 at fair price shops. Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar inaugurated the distribution of these subsidised items at ration shops

here on Tuesday.

Speaking at the event,
Nadendla Manohar stated that arrangements have been made to provide 1 kg of red gram at ?67 and half a kg of sugar at ?17 to 1,48,43,671 ration cardholders across the

The Minister mentioned that following the directives Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan, efforts were made to reduce the prices of rice and red gram twice.

He noted that currently, 1 kg red gram is priced at ?150, while one kilogram of rice (steamed BPT/Sona Masuri) is available for ?48 in Rythu Bazars across the state. Ration card holders can now buy one kilogram of red gram at a subsidised rate of



?67 in the ration shops. Nadendla Manohar also emphasised that the govern-ment had provided 25 kilograms of rice, one kilogram recent floods.

of edible oil, 1 kg of sugar, 1 kg of red gram, 2 kg of onions, and 2 kg of potatoes to flood victims during the

#### **DPR** preparation for railway line will begin soon: JSP MP Balashowry

PNS MACHILIPATNAM

Machilipatnam Lok Sabha member Balashowry has announced that the longstanding dream and decadelong demand of the people of Diviseema in Krishna District for the Machilipatnam-Repalle railway line has taken its first

Speaking at a press meet held here on Tuesday, MP Balashowry stated that this railway line was a promise which he made during the last elections and after continuous efforts the first step has now been taken. "The survey and DPR (Detailed Project Report) for the railway line will be prepared soon" The MP said.

"I have prioritized the construction of the Machilipatnam - Repalle railway line in my manifesto. With the intention

met with Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw several times and convinced him about the importance of this project," he mentioned.

Initially, the plan was to build a railway line from Machilipatnam to Repalle. However, it would seem impractical for trains to have to turn back to reach Tenali, he explained, adding that therefore, he requested the Railway Minister to extend the line from Machilipatnam to Challapalli, Bhattiprolu, Nidubrolu, and Bapatla.

This extension would reduce both distance and travel time, as well as save costs, which we communicated to the railway officials. They are now supportive of undertaking this project.

"Additionally, a railway line from Narsapuram to of ensuring its completion, I Machilipatnam has already time as well.

been sanctioned. If a new railway line from Machilipatnam to Bapatla is established, together these lines will form a Čoastal Railway Line along the seashore. This line will not only benefit passengers but will also be highly useful for freight transportation," he highlight-

Vijayawada station is one of the busiest railway stations in India. With numerous goods and express trains passing through, it is becoming increasingly congested. In this context, if a new railway line from Machilipatnam to Bapatla is established, the traffic burden on Vijayawada Junction will be reduced. The distance for passengers travelling from Machilipatnam to Tirupati and Chennai will be reduced by 70-80 kilometres, saving a significant amount of



#### 32 students have miraculous escape as college bus overturns

PNS TIRUPATI

As many as 32 engineering college students had a miraculous escape as their college bus overturned at Chintavaram in Chillakuru mandal on Tuesday. Police said that a private engineering college bus was going to College with students.

The mishap took place when the bus picked up students at Muthukur village and was going to the College, located at Vidyanagar. The driver lost control over the bus resulting in it

veering off the road and overturned in an agriculture field. All the 32 students, who were going to College on the bus, escaped

The passersby rushed to the accident place and extricated the students, who struck inside the ill-fated bus. The school management and the officials heaved a sigh of relief as no one suffered a major injury in the accident. Rash driving the bus driver was suspected to be the reason for the mishap. The police registered a case and held the bus driver.

## Two inter-district bike lifters held, 45 vehicles recovered

The police arrested two interdistrict notorious bike lifters and recovered 45 motorcycles and an autorickshaw in Ganapavaram.

DSP D Sravan Kumar told the media on Tuesday that the police arrested two notorious inter-district bike lifters and recovered 45 motorcycles and an auto rickshaw, worth about Rs 40 lakh. The police arrested Shetti Chinna on September 9 and recovered 29 motorcycles worth Rs 22 lakh. According to the information provided by Shetti Chinna, the police arrested Chappadi Musalaiah on October 1 and recovered 14 motorcycles and an auto rickshaw.

The police recovered a total of 45 motorcycles and an auto



rickshaw, worth about Rs 40 lakh, from the two notorious bike lifters. The police registered cases as Cr. No.129/2024 U/s 331(4), 305 BNS Act in the Gannavaram police sta-

Superintendent of Police K Prathap Shiva Kishore appre-

ciated Ganapavaram SI A Mani Kumar, Constables AUG Shankar, B Hemasundar, P Kanthaiah, D Ratna Babu, K Satyanarayana and P Jagapathi Babu for arresting the two notorious bike lifters and recovering the bikes and auto

## Interstate gang of burglars busted Rs 70 L worth of booty recovered

PNS AMALAPURAM

The Konaseema district police arrested a five-member notorious burglar gang and recovered Rs 70 lakh worth of booty, including gold jewellery and silver ornaments.

SP B Krishna Rao told the media on Tuesday that the burglars committed a major heist in the Venkateswara temple, located on the premises of KIMS hospital, here 20 days

The police set up a Special Investigation Team to arrest the burglars. The SIT police team examined the CCTV footage identified the burglars and arrested them.

The police recovered gold

jewellery, and silver ornaments worth over Rs 70 lakh from the burglars gang. The gang was involved in 37 burglaries and other offences in Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, Guntur and Medak districts. The SP announced cash rewards to the police team which arrested the interstate burglars and recovered the booty.



#### PROTECTING ENVIRONMENT

## People's role imperative: Collector

District Collector K Vetri Selvi has called upon people to come forward to protect the environment by cleaning the surroundings clean and tidy. A cycle rally was taken out here on Tuesday to create awareness on environmental protection.

The rally was flagged off by District Revenue Officer D Pushpamani and Collector Vetri Selvi and MLA Badeti Radhakrishnaiah were among those who took part in the cycle rally. The cycle rally began at the Alluri Sitarama Raju statue at Jute Mill Centre and ended at Sir CRR Engineering College after covering 3 km.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, Collector Vetri Selvi said that the cycle rally was taken out to create environmental awareness among all the people. She called upon the people to participate in the Swachhata Hi Seva programme and cooperate to make the district clean and tidy. The Collector made it clear that keeping the surroundings clean and tidy is a collective responsibility of all and public participation in the programme is very important.



The Collector noted that as part of the Swachhata Hi Seva programme, awareness about keeping the environment clean and tidy was created and health camps were set up. Medicines and other facilities required for sanitation programmes were also provided, she added. Collector Vetri Selvi highlighted that Eluru district had stood at the top in the State by comvarious events organized as part of the Swaccha Hi Seva programme, organized across the

district. Radhakrishnaiah (Chanti) underlined the need of keep surroundings clean to protect health. In order to educate people to keep their surroundings clean and tidy, the cycle rally was taken out today, he

ZP CEO K Subba Rao said that so far garbage removal had been carried out at 795 units so far in the district. DRDA PD R Vijaya Raju, Municipal Commissioner N Bhanu Pratap DSDO Srinivasa Rao and animal husbandry JD G Nehru Babu were among those who were present. A large number of students from various educational institutions participated in the cycle rally.

#### **Ganja worth** Rs 2 cr seized

PNS ■ PADERU

The police seized 850 kg of ganja, worth over Rs 2 crore, while being transported illegally, at Bhudarala village in Koyyuru mandal in ASR district and arrested two peddlers. Police said that on a tipoff, a police team conducted checking of vehicles.

The police found 850 kg of ganja, which was neatly packed in 279 packets, was being transported in two cars. The police arrested two persons and seized 850 kg of ganja, worth about Rs 2 crore, two cars, one motorcycle and a mobile phone.

Five persons were absconding and the police have launched a search to arrest them. The two arrested peddlers were produced before the court which sent them to judicial remand.



## Raghunandan lashes out at BRS social media activists

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

Declaring that the BRS's social media warriors are uncultured and that they do not appreciate the differences between an elder sister, younger sister and mother, the BJP's Medak MP, M. Raghunandan Rao, said that as a younger brother he stands by Éndowment Minister Konda Śurekha and that cases will be filed against those who post offensive material on social

"BRS social media activists posted uncultured material on

the relationship between mother, elder sister and younger sister. As a younger brother, I offered a handloom garland to Surekha after getting her permission. When Prime Minister Modi came, I offered such a garland. The BRS spread lies regarding this. As a brother, I am deeply sorry for the pain caused to my sister. Those who posted this will be dragged to court. There is a photo of Harish Rao and KCR on the person's DP. Are BRS leaders having no control over their social media warriors? If those

who post offensive material are yours hand them over to the police. Details of the trollers have been collected and a complaint has been filed with the police," Raghunandan said.

He said that he had offered the handloom garland to Surekha to bring handloom weavers' problems to her atten-

"I did not expect that they would speak in such an uncultured manner. KTR and Harish Rao should respond to this and control their social media warriors and also apologise. The



BRS has no regard for women. The BRS did not give a place to women in Telangana's first cabinet. It is painful to see the criticism as the programme was held in the presence of thou-sands of people. I am sorry for the inconvenience caused to my sister Surekha," he said.

Raghunandan said that BRS leaders have to face adversaries politically and must not post material against women. The police must arrest such people within 24 hours or they will do such things again, he

#### Flood rescue team lauded

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Agriculture and Cooperative Department Special Chief Secretary Budithi Rajasekhar and Agriculture Department Director Dr S Dilli Rao commended a flood rescue team during a special event held at the secretariat on Tuesday. The team, comprising Ravikumar, Karri Posaiah, Karri Nani, Malladi Charan, and Vinod from a fishermen's boat society in Gollapudi, was recognised for  $\,$ their courageous efforts in saving numerous people during the heavy rains on September 24.

Living in Gollapudi for 15 years and running Sairam Catering, the team used boats to rescue elderly citizens, women, children, and other residents from flood-affected, low-lying areas. Their humanitarian actions ensured the safe evacuation of people whose homes were submerged by floodwaters.

Special Chief Secretary Budithi Rajasekhar, who acted as the special officer during the calamity, praised the team's bravery and recognised their selfless service as an essential part of the flood relief



#### ACROSS THE STATES



#### **Govinda injured after** revolver accident, safe

ctor Govinda was injured in the leg on Tuesday after his revolver accidentally went off at his Mumbai residence When he was about to leave for the airport, police said. Dr Ramesh Agarwal, who tended to the 60-year-old actor actor after the accident, said Govinda is recuperating at a private hospital and will be discharged in a few days. Govinda, a favourite with audiences for his impeccable comic timing and dancing skills, later issued a statement informing his fans he is doing better. "With the blessings of my fans, my parents and god, I am doing better now. I was hit by a bullet, which has now been removed. "I thank the doctor here, Dr Agarwal ji. I thank all of you for your prayers," the "Hero No 1" actor and a member of the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena said in the audio message. According to the doctor, the bullet hit him below his left knee and that he had



#### **Doval calls on French Prez**; conveys PM greetings

ational Security Advisor Ajit Doval on Tuesday called on French President Emmanuel Macron and conveyed French President Emmanuel Macroni and conveyed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's greetings. He also met the Armed Forces Minister of France and discussed enhancing bilateral defence relations and advancing space collaboration, as well as the "evolving" global situation. "NSA Ajit Doval calls on French President HE @EmmanuelMacron. Conveyed PM @narendramodi's greetings. Reiterated commitment to implement the India-France Horizon 2047 roadmap," the Indian embassy in France said in a post on X. "President stressed the value of India-France efforts to advance peace and address global challenges; appreciated PM Modi's initiatives," it added. Doval held extensive discussions with French Armed Forces Minister Sebastien



#### **Chirag calls Bihar flood** situation 'frightening'

mid grim flood situation in Bihar with 11.84 lakh people reeling under water. Union Minister Chirag Paswan, who Ahails from the state, visited the affected areas and said that he would share details of the "frightening" conditions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi Chief Minister Nitish Kumar who returned from New Delhi a day ago, also undertook an aerial survey of the areas inundated as a result of release of millions of cusecs of water, in a barrage along the border, by Nepal which was battered by record rainfall over the weekend. According to the state disaster management department. packets of food and other relief materials were air-dropped by Indian Air Force helicopters which benefitted more than two lakh people in Sitamarhi and Darbhanga districts. Deputy Chief Minister and BJP leader Samrat Choudhary, who met Union Jalshakti Minister C R Patil in Delhi a day ago, said he has urged the latter to consider construction of "an additional barrage" to check recurring floods that wreak devastation in areas bordering Nepal every year.

#### **DEMOLITION OF PROPERTIES**

## Will lay down pan-India guidelines, asserts SC

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it will lay down pan-India guidelines on demolition of properties and any religious structure in the middle of a road, be it a 'dargah' or a temple, "has to go" because public interest is paramount.

Observing that merely because somebody is an accused or even a convict cannot be a ground for demolition of property, the apex court reserved its verdict on a batch of pleas which have alleged that properties, including of those accused of crime, were being demolished in

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and KV Viswanathan said unauthorised construction made by any person, irrespective of his religion or belief, has to be

removed. The bench said its September 17 order, which had said there will be no demolition of properties till October 1 without its permission, will continue

till it decides the matter. "Whatever we are laying down, we are a secular country. We are laying it down for all the citizens, for all the institutions,

not for any particular community," the bench said.

"On the first day we had pointed out, if there is any religious structure on the middle of a road, may it be a 'dargah' or some temple, it has to go because public safety and public interest

is paramount," it said. The bench also observed that a particular religion.

"We are going to make it clear that merely because somebody is an accused, or even somebody is a convict, can't be a ground for demolition," it said.

The apex court made it clear that it will not protect any encroachment on public places, roads, footpaths, government lands, forests, water bodies and the likes. "Whatever directions we issue, it will be applicable pan-India," it said, adding, "We will take care to ensure that our order does not help the encroachers on any of the public places."

During the hearing, the bench observed that notices for demolition of properties be sent through registered post to the owners and it should also be displayed on an online portal so that a digital record is there.

pension was to hand over the

defence budget to Adani.

He alleged that a company

owned by Adani was putting its labels on weapons which were manufactured by foreign compa-

"Modi only wanted to give a defence contract to Adani," he

charged. "On one side the pen-

sion of jawans was snatched, martyr status and the same money goes into Adani's pock-

He raised the drug menace

issue in Haryana and said every-

one knows drugs are spreading

tentacles. "I want to ask Modi ji

when thousands of kilos of

heroin was seized from your

friend Adani's Mundra port,

what action did you take? How

many did you send to jails for

this," he asked. "When thou-

sands of kilos of drugs were

seized, Narendra Modi, Gujarat

government did not take any

et," he alleged.

## K'taka CM Siddaramaiah rules out resignation

Questions ED for slapping money-laundering case



PNS BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday questioned the ED slapping a money laundering case against him in the MUDA 'scam' and once again ruled out his resignation over the issue.

Siddaramaiah also alleged that his wife Parvathi B M, who decided to relinquish the ownership and possession of 14 plots that was allotted to her by the MUDA (Mysuru Urban Development Authority), was a victim of 'politics of hate' against him and he was surprised by her move. A team of Lokayukta police probing MUDA site allotment case against Siddaramaiah and others on Tuesday surveyed the land, in lieu of which 14 sites were "illegally" allotted

to his wife in Mysuru. Hours after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) booked Siddaramaiah in a money laundering case, his wife on Monday wrote to MUDA conveying her decision to return the 14 plots stating that no site, home, asset and wealth is bigger for her than her husband's respect, dignity,

honour and peace of mind. "I don't know on what grounds it's a money-laundering case. Probably you (reporters) too feel the same. According to me, it does not attract the money laundering case because compensatory sites were given. So, how is it a money-launder-

Cong kept every important issue

ing case?", the Chief Minister said here.

The ED registered an **Enforcement Case Information** Report (ECIR), equivalent to an FIR by police, against the Chief Minister over the alleged irregularities in allotment of 14 sites to his wife by the MUDA. The agency had also invoked relevant sections of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) case against him.

Meanwhile, the Lokayukta police team that visited the 3.16 acre land was joined by the special land acquisition officer, surveyors and town planning members from the MUDA, and they surveyed the land and took notes, official sources said.

Social activist Snehamayi Krishna on whose complaint the Lokayukta police has regis-tered an FIR against Siddaramaiah, his wife and two others, was also present, they said, adding, he also appeared before the Lokayukta police in Mysuru, following the notice issued to him by the investigating officers.

Parvathi's letter conveying her a decision to return the plots, was personally submitted to MUDA Commissioner A N Raghunandan's office by her son MLC Siddaramaiah, in Mysuru earlier today. "The letter received will be processed after going through the provisions in the

## Modi working for handful of billionaires: Rahul

PNS SONIPAT

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday accused the Narendra Modi government of attacking the Constitution and also slammed it over various issues including unemployment, the Agniveer scheme and form the Agniveer scheme and farmers' welfare.

Addressing a public meeting in Sonipat while campaigning for the October 5 Haryana assembly polls, he also alleged that the government was working for a handful of billionaires in the

"While en route to this place, a man stopped me. He told me he runs a small business. He said Modi and the Haryana government destroyed him," the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said as he blamed demonetisation and "wrong" GST.

"He (the man) told me they did this to help Adani and Ambani," claimed Gandhi.

Political strategist-turned-activist

Prashant Kishor on Tuesday

said people have sent out a clear

message in the recent Lok Sabha

polls that they cannot tolerate

arrogance" or allow any leader

In an interview with PTI on

the eve of launching his own

political party, Kishor said the

poll results have also removed

the question mark over Rahul

Gandhi's ability to lead the

Congress but added that the

Leader of the Opposition in the

Lok Sabha still has to cover some

distance before the country can

now believe that the Congress

can be revived under him. But

there is also another dimension.

Has the country accepted him as

a leader? I don't think so," Kishor

Asked about his reading of the Lok Sabha poll results, Kishor

said, "The results tell us that no

"Ĥis (Gandhi's) supporters

accept him as its leader.

to take them for granted.

PNS PATNA



"Everyone knows that the central and Haryana governments are being run to help twothree 'arabpatis'. Whatever avenues of employment you had, they have been shut," he

Attacking the BJP-led government over the issue of the Agnipath scheme, he alleged "the military recruitment programme was a way to "steal" a

cannot tolerate arrogance: PK

LS polls showed people

soldier's pension, canteen facilities and martyr status he gets (when he lays down life for his motherland).

Earlier, there used to be public sector, government factories, these have been privatised. Wherever, you see, you will only see Adani and Ambani names, he further alleged.

Gandhi claimed that the motive behind "stealing" jawans'

also put up a strong show, defy-

ing predictions. Without naming

Modi, Kishor said the voters

decided that even if they had to

hand him power, they would do

ruling party tried to create an

impression that the masses lack

understanding and will go by

whatever claims it made irre-

spective of its work. "The BJP

thought votes will be inevitably

cast in Modi's name. Voters told

the party that they may appear

points in time before turning

focus entirely to his Jan Suraaj

campaign in his home state

Slamming the BJP, he said the

so with certain curbs

## important entangled: Modi

PNS PALWAL (HAR)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday mounted his attack on the Congress, saying it kept every matter important for the country entangled, as he hit out at the opposition party over several issues including reservation.

Making a strong appeal to people to vote back the ruling BJP to power in Haryana in the October 5 polls, Modi said Congress's politics is limited to false promises whereas the BJP's politics is to put in hard work and is result-oriented.

Addressing his last poll rally in Palwal after having earlier addressed rallies at Kurukshetra, Gohana and Hisar last month for the Harvana polls, he said the BJP is going to come to power for a third consecutive term in the state.

"This is my final public meeting for this polls," Modi told the Palwal gathering.

"In village after village, there is a BJP wave. Everywhere, one



voice is heard --"Bharosa dil se, BJP phir se," he said.

Attacking the Congress, Modi said its politics remains limited to false promises, whereas the BJP's politics is to put in hard work and is result-orient-

Those who looted rights of poor, gave slogan of 'Garibi hatao', he said. Modi said the Congress kept

every issue important for the country entangled. "Woh uljane mein expert rahe hai."

'Congress did not let Ram temple to be built in Ayodhya, they did allow B R Ambedkar's Constitution to be fully implemented in Jammu & Kashmir, they kept our sisters deprived of reservation in Parliament and vidhan sabha, they kept Muslim sisters entangled in triple talaq problem," he said.

The Congress did not resolve problems of country and countrymen, but they put all their might in establishing their son, daughter and family, he said.

## Stop stoking fire in Manipur cauldron: BJP to Congress

PNS NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday asked the Congress to stop "stoking fire" in the "cauldron" of Manipur and join the efforts being made to resolve the issues in the state.

The party's remark came a day after Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with his Israeli counterpart Beniamin Netanyahu but had not found time to speak to the lawmakers or political leaders from Manipur.

"I will ask a counter question. Does he support the stand of Prime Minister Modi so far as unity against terrorism is concerned," BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad told a press



conference here when asked for comment.

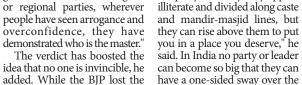
"Congress party needs to come out beyond Manipur. Manipur is a sensitive area. All of us need to work together. Work is going on. Let the Congress stop stoking fire in the cauldron of Manipur," he said.

The Manipur problem should be resolved, attempts are being made...All of us should collectively join ..." he added.

Slamming the Congress over Ramesh's comments, Prasad also asked the Congress to clear its stand on the nowscrapped Article 370 of the Constitution and terrorism.

"Congress maintains a conspicuous silence. It should clear its stand. They neither speak on 370, nor Kashmir, nor terrorism," he said, adding, "Only harping about Manipur and maintaining silence on other issues is not right."

Hitting back, Ramesh in a post on X said, "Will Mr Ravi Shankar Prasad answer a simple question. Why has the nonbiological PM not found the time as yet to visit Manipur since May 2023 when he has gone all over the world as selfstyled Vishwabandhu / Vishwaguru?'



idea that no one is invincible, he added. While the BJP lost the majority in the polls for the first time in the last three elections under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the National Democratic Alliance led by the party comfortably crossed the halfway

leader in this country can take

people for granted. People can

stand anything but not arro-

gance. Be it the BJP, the Congress

country, said Kishor, who as an election strategist worked for all major parties, including the BJP and the Congress, at different

The opposition INDIA bloc

#### **MIGRATION HISTORY OF ELEPHANTS**

## Genetic study finds 'dilution of diversity'

PNS NEW DELHI

A genetic study has charted the migration history of elephants in India from north to south, revealing multiple bottlenecks encountered along the way that threatened their existence and likely caused a "dilution of genetic diversity".

Genetic diversity is important for a resilience to disease and long-term survival, including an ability to adapt to environmental changes.

The findings can help shape the future of elephant species in India by informing conservation strategies, researchers from the National Centre for Biological Sciences and the Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru, said.

The Asian elephant has been listed as 'Endangered' species on the IUCN Red List since 1986.



The list was established by the International Union for Conservation of Nature in 1964.

Elephants in India -- known to make up 60 per cent of the global Asian elephant population --started migrating about 1,00,000 years ago, eventually settling in different parts of the country.

The researchers analysed 34 whole genome sequences, obtained from blood samples

taken from wild elephants across the country's landscapes.

The analysis, published in the ournal Current Biology, identified five genetically distinct populations, as opposed to previously reported three or four, "emphasising their antiquity and unique evolutionary histories", according to the authors.

Of the five distinct breeds, two are located in north and central

arated by the Palghat and Shencottah Gaps or 'breaks' in the Western Ghats, they said.

The Palghat Gap lies between Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu and Palakkad in Kerala, while the Shencottah Gap connects Tamil Nadu's Madurai with the district Kottayam, Kerala.

Further, the northern breeds were found to be more genetically diverse and have low inbreeding -- where creatures having very similar genetic material breed -- compared to the southern ones, two of which had low diversity and were inbred, they

said. Co-lead author Uma Ramakrishnan, a molecular ecologist and a professor at the National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bengaluru, told PTI that the team observed a "dilu-

"Imagine an ink blot on a filter paper, dropped at the top right corner. The further we go from this, towards the bottom left, the less dark the ink is. Similarly, the diversity in southern western ghats is less than that in the northeast and north populations," she said.

Ramakrishnan added that the inbreeding in the southern populations suggested that there has been either a bottleneck, or mating between relatives recently"

The researchers also found evidence of historical exploitation endured by the land mammals in the form of "bottlenecks". Wild elephants in India are known to be regularly exploited for military and domestic use, since they began to be tamed during Harappan times.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

## **Saving Ladakh**

Sonam Wangchuk's foot march highlights the urgent need for ecological protection and local autonomy of Ladakh

adakh, a region known for its breathtaking landscapes and unique culture, is now under threat from an ecological disaster. Climate change and unchecked development are eroding its delicate environment, pushing it towards a tipping point. In the face of this growing crisis, climate activist Sonam Wangchuk has emerged as a key figure in the fight to protect Ladakh. Recently, he, along with over 100 supporters, embarked on a foot march from Leh to New Delhi to demand concrete steps for safeguarding Ladakh's fragile ecosystem and securing the region's autonomy under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. However, upon reaching Delhi's Singhu border, Wangchuk and his supporters were detained by the police for violating prohibitory orders. Despite this setback, the march has already sparked widespread attention and support for his demands. Ladakh's environment is one of the most sensitive in India. Nestled in the Himalayan range, the region is already witnessing alarming impacts of climate change. Melting glac-

iers, shrinking water sources, and unpredictable weather patterns are threatening not only the ecosystem but also the livelihoods of the local population.

The rapid melting of glaciers is particularly concerning as they are the primary source of water for the region. This has caused Ladakh to face a severe water crisis, with rivers and streams drying up at an unprecedented rate. Unchecked tourism and infrastructure development further exacerbate the issue. Waste management remains a significant challenge, and the increasing construction of roads and buildings has disrupted the natural landscape. Wangchuk, who is known for his innovative environmental solutions like the 'Ice

Stupa' project, has been vocal about the need for sustainable development in Ladakh. His demands are not only about preserving the environment but also about giving the local people the power to manage their resources and protect their cultural identity. One of his primary demands is to include Ladakh under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. The Sixth Schedule provides special protections and autonomy to certain tribal areas in India, allowing them to preserve their culture, manage their resources, and have law-making powers over local matters. Ladakh, with its predominantly tribal population and distinct cultural heritage, has been seeking similar protection. The people of Ladakh in general have expressed disappointment with the current governance structure, which is led by a Lieutenant Governor appointed by the central government. Right now the people of Ladkah have a limited say in decision making. Granting Ladakh Sixth Schedule status would empower its people to make decisions that are in line with their unique environmental and cultural needs. It would allow them to enact laws that protect their fragile ecosystem, manage resources more effectively, and ensure sustainable development. The people of Ladakh are making their voices heard. Now, it is up to the government and the rest of the nation to listen and take meaningful action.



A view of Humayun's Tomb, a UNESCO world heritage site, in New Delhi

# Walking through the woods in UK



Suspension of winter fuel allowances, Starmer's push to reset relations with Europe, and the forgotten legacy of the Gorkhas are echoing in the woods of the UK

adlow Stair is a village in Tonbridge Kent, UK, with the Old Hadlow Road leading to it. Tonbridge is a poorer cousin of the historic Tunbridge Wells but a great place for a walking-talking vacation this September when the sun broke through the clouds permitting invigorating small walks. Hadlow Stair is the perfect escape from rain-spoilt London, just 40 minutes away by train to Charing Cross in Trafalgar Square. Ordinary Brits have been stunned by the new Labour, suspending Pound 200 winter fuel allowance to pensioners, ostensibly to fill the Pound 22 bn deficit left by the Tories though inflation is below 3 per cent. In the village, most read newspapers only on the weekend: the talk is about Ukraine, Gaza and Lebanon and Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his wife accepting gifts. Former civil servant Sue Gray who sorted out Boris Johnson for his indiscretions during the pandemic is now the chief advisor to Starmer with a pay package of Pounds 180,000, surpassing the wages the PM gets. Modernising Britain's Continuous Sea Deterrence as well as upgrading its nuclear submarines from Vanguard to Dreadnought class is also underway. Peers in the House of Lords warned that 2.5 per cent on defence spending (at present 2.3 per cent) may not be enough to meet the challenges and fix the military.

Here too, there is a Pound 10 bn hole which is proposed to be filled up by taxes. India's spending is below 2 per cent with immeasurably bigger threats. But who cares! All this and more, John Lawson, my walking companion shares with me. Amongst all the walks the one in the undulating woods nearby is most enjoyable as John takes myriad routes and detours along the soggy earthy soil. You can do a dozen different trails here and not know they are n the same woods from Hadlow Road past the Scottish St Andrews Church across fields and through apple orchards with apples to eat and apples to cook. But there are no pickers due to Brexit, laments



The Chinese have invented an apple-picking machine which is yet to make its commercial debut. Here, in the fields too, John has manufactured several walking trails - the special one is along the Medway river to Tonbridge town which has everything from Marks and Spencers to Waitrose and Sainsburys to Kathmandu Valley and Dalchini restaurants to Humphrey and Bean Pub where we were privy to a brawl. There is also the Tonbridge Castle.

My favourite walk though is through the Higham Woods. This I did every morning, meeting making friends with people walking their dogs. Every house here has a cat or a dog or even a horse! Almost every afternoon John and I did serious walking bringing the milometer to roughly 120 plus miles in 12 days. In his spare time, John moves auto parts and trucks in the UK and Europe where too, Brexit means cost and time overruns. At the Labour Party annual conference, Starmer said he wants to reset relations with European Union and make Brexit work with the EU reset. The biggest applause at the conference was reserved for the Home Secretary, who decried the recent racial riots. Migrants continue to sail



THE PLAN TO RAISE A THIRD BATTALION OF GORKHA RIFLES WAS ABANDONED THOUGH THREE GORKHA COMPANIES WERE RAISED FOR THE SPECIAL FORCES. ALDERSHOT IS WHERE RETIRED GORKHAS ALLOWED RESIDENCY IN WHILE THE BATTALION IS FURTHER SOUTH

Rwanda is a closed issue, they will be settled in Britain. I've been travelling to the UK since the 1970s and can say this: Indian or Asian or coloured are no longer looked down upon even though many of the menial jobs are still being done by them. I was horrified to learn that there is a Gorkha Cleaning Company in Kent. The Gorkhas, the Brits once worshipped in battle are all but forgotten except by the likes of Joanna Lumley. This became more evident in London where along a side lane from Whitehall Avenue resides the life-sized stone statue of the eternal Gorkha soldier. The plan to raise a third battalion of Gorkha Rifles was abandoned though three Gorkha companies were raised for the Special Forces. Aldershot is where retired Gorkhas allowed residency in Britain live, while the battalion is further south. The other battalion is in Brunei for which recognise the badges of the must learn. Gorǩha Regiment any more. Why blame the Brits when we have offered the poor choice of Agniveer to Nepali Gorkhas who stopped joining five years ago? The British Army is 70,000 (with a reserve of

less than the size of our Gorkha Brigade. The Navy and Air Force together make another 70,000 warriors but all field state-of-the-art equipment including conventional and strategic forces which are the best in Europe.

The military component of the Indian High Commission in Aldwych has been downsised from three officers to just one with a Naval Commodore holding the fort instead of the Army Brigadier. Returning to my trudge on the tarmac along Whitehall Avenue, the old MoD has become Raffles Hotel, RUSI next door renovated and a few meters ahead are bronze statues of leaders who won fame in India: Field Marshals Slim, Auchinleck, and Allanbrooke. Another Indian famous is the Duke of Wellington honoured in Trafalgar Square and Wellington Corner. The Brits nurture the military and that's one reason they are respected. Thoughts that wafted during the Sultan pays. Sadly, very few the walk in the woods. We

> General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff; The views expressed are

## Remembering Gandhi: A journey of justice and simplicity



Gandhi's transformative journey, which began with racial discrimination in South Africa, helped shape his lifelong pursuit of justice, equality and nonviolence

n September 11, 2024, Union Minister for Culture, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, inaugurated a restored railway coach at Gandhi Darshan, Rajghat, New Delhi. This coach, donated by the Ministry of Railways and painted in brown with a "III" marking for third class, represents Mahatma Gandhi's simple lifestyle and his close relationship with the Indian railways. A life-size sculpture of Gandhi stepping off the train further emphasises his connection with the masses. Organised by the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, the exhibition offers an immersive experience of Gandhi's rail journeys. Shekhawat, in his address, highlighted how Gandhi turned the freedom struggle into a mass movement, remarking that the coach will inspire future generations to uphold the values of justice, equality, and peace for which Gandhi stood.

Gandhi's association with the railways was deeply symbolic and formative in his transformation from an ordinary lawyer to the leader of India's independence movement.



1893, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, when Gandhi, then a young barrister, was forcibly removed from a first-class train compartment despite having a valid ticket. This act of racial discrimination left a lasting impact on Gandhi and ignited his lifelong dedication to justice and nonviolent resistance. He often referred to this incident as the turning point that set him on the path toward becoming the Mahatma.

Gopal Krishna Gandhi, Gandhi's grandson, poignantly reflected on this moment. He wrote that when Gandhi was thrown off the train, an Indian fell, but when Gandhi rose, both India and South Africa rose with him. The experience transformed Gandhi, turning a personal

cause. What began as a

lawyer's indignation became

a revolutionary's commit-

ment to human justice. His later train journeys in South Africa, including those to Johannesburg and Pretoria, deepened his understanding of racial discrimination in the railway system. Gandhi confronted railway officials and managed to negotiate some concessions for Indian passengers, marking the beginning of his use of negotiation and protest as tools for

change. Upon returning to India in 1914, Gandhi's relationship with the railways grew stronger. He followed the advice of his mentor, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, by traveling in third-class compartments to stay connected with India's impoverished masses. For

Gandhi, trains were a means to engage with ordinary people and understand their struggles firsthand.

The challenging conditions he faced—overcrowded compartments, unsanitary surroundings—only strengthened his resolve to fight for social justice. His decision to travel third class symbolised his commitment to egalitarianism and helped transform the freedom struggle into a mass movement that resonated with the broader popula-

Gandhi traveled by train from Calcutta to Delhi' and stayed at Birla House where he spent the last 144 days of his life. During this time, he tirelessly worked for peace amidst the communal violence of Partition.

His assassination in January 1948 ended a life devoted to nonviolence and service to humanity. As we celebrate Gandhi Jayanti today as the International Day of Nonviolence, we are reminded of Gandhi's self-sacrifice, dedication, and compassion.

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

#### **WEST ASIA TURMOIL**

Madam — Apropos, 'West Asia on fire' (September 30). Israel which had vowed 'enough is enough' in the aftermath of a brutal terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7 last year, has dealt a body blow to Hezbollah, the most powerful militant and political force in Lebanon, by eliminating its head Hassan Nasrallah, who had been a global figurehead of anti-Israel resistance for decades. He had been a prime target of Israel since the last Lebanon War of 2008. Now, Hezbollah, considered the vital part of the Axis of Resistance, is leaderless and thus rudderless.

However, Nasrallah's demise may only keep Hezbollah lying down for a while. It cannot be written off. Wounded but not destroyed, it may not be long before Hezbollah tries to avenge Nasrallah by raining a barrage of missiles on Israel to keep its people from returning to the northern region. Netanyahu stakes his political fortunes on this. Meanwhile, with thousands of its citizens fleeing northern Israel in wake of Hezbollah strikes, Israel's main task remains unaccomplished. Its bombarding Lebanon may go on till Netanyahu gets war-weary and domestic pressures mount or until breakthrough on the hostage issue. It is an opportune time for the international community should it desire to prevail upon Tel Aviv to agree for ceasefire. But peace is unlikely to return to Gaza till Hamas frees hostages and a ceasefire is

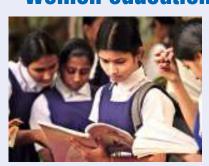
N Sadhasiva Reddy | Washington

#### **NON BJP STATES WITHDRAW CBI CONSENT**

Madam — Karnataka has joined the long list of states that have withdrawn general consent to the CBI to conduct investigations relating to corruption, economic offences and crime or violence in that particular state. The Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act, 1946, under which the CBI was setup, has defined general consent and

#### **Women education empowers India**

30,000) soldiers and Infantry



rice President Jagdeep Dhankhar made insightful remarks on the significance of women's education. He said that a developed India is incomplete without women's empowerment, which is a powerful reminder of the crucial role they play in our society. Women constitute a substantial portion of our

specific consent that can be accorded by the states to the CBI to function in their

Only the Supreme Court and the High Courts can order a CBI investigation in any state without the state's nod if consent is withdrawn. It has to be remembered that states that have refused permission for the CBI are non-BJP ruled thereby underscoring the political undertones in the issue.

The Supreme Court, in 2013, said the CBI was a 'caged parrot' following the orders of its 'master', the government. The federal system of governance in India has clearly demarcated powers between the Centre and the states. By the 1946 rule itself, the CBI is an agency that has no autonomous powers. The apex court has said that keeping in mind the federal structure of the country the CBI cannot infringe upon the states. By the same token, if the agency is accorded unbridled power without making it an autonomous body, its misuse may be

the order of the day. Ganapathi Bhat | Akola population, and their active participation in all spheres of life is essential for holistic development. By investing in women's education, we not only unlock their individual potential but also empower their families and communities. Educated women are more likely to make informed decisions regarding health, nutrition, and child-rearing, leading to healthier and more prosperous families.

Moreover, women's education is a catalyst for economic growth. When women have access to education and employment opportunities, they contribute to the workforce, boost GDP, and reduce poverty. Their participation in decision-making processes ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, leading to more inclusive and equitable policies.

Fiza Fatima | Hyderabad

#### **POTHOLES OF CORRUPTION**

Madam -No matter which party is in power, the conditions of the roads all over the nation are pathetic. It requires no rocket science to understand why this is happening. Corruption is the root cause as inferior quality materials are used due to cuts taken by everybody from top to bottom in passing tenders and clearing bills. Therefore, it is hard to be enthused about the promise of pothole free roads by the CM of Delhi Atishi Marlena. Accidents caused by bad roads have come at a great cost including injury and sometimes fatality with no accountability fixed for the loss, what is worse, it is not just potholes but literally craters the vehicles are expected to navigate. Recently, there was a container truck that was completely swallowed by the road. This despite the vehicle owners being made to pay all kinds of taxes for permission to park their vehicles on such roads!

**Anthony Henriques** | *Mumbai* 

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Send your feedback to:

## **FIRST COLUMN**

#### **SLEEP, SPIRITUALITY** AND THE MODERN MIND

Reclaiming quality sleep requires reconnecting with spiritual practices



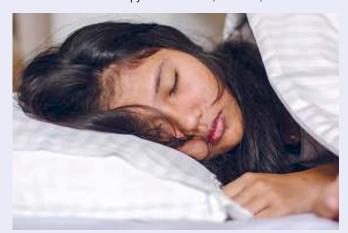
AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

In the famous poem "Childhood", Ravindra Nath Tagore bemoans the loss of innocence as a child grows up. One thing we can all agree that to sleep like a child is a great asset. But as we grow up our minds begin to play havoc with our sleep. Before I go any further let us understand the basics of sleep. Sleep is one of the most important biological functions and inadequate sleep can cause many problems. Sleep is the time when the body rejuvenates itself. Sleep restores physical well-being and removes fatigue related to emotional activi-

Our brains are beehives of activities during sleep, including the time when one is dreaming. How much sleep is required? It depends on each individual according to age, type of activities, level of activities, etc. Lord Krishna has mentioned sleep as one of the four activities, which must be appropriate. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 6.17) We need sleep excellence. What does the modern man do? There are three types. One cuts on sleep and another cannot fall asleep and resorts to drinks and drugs.

The third sleeps too much wasting precious human life. Taking up the busy ones, they have no respect for rules made by God - the Creator of our bodies. They feel that they can do with less sleep and nothing adverse will happen. But they get harmed in many ways.

The first causality is the energy level; it goes down. Physical health is affected in many ways, but it takes a long; one feels that he is fine until hit by some serious health problem. Performance declines; cognitive ability reduces; memory consolidation is affected as does mental health. You cannot copy someone else, because, as stated earli-



er, it is, person specific - a bodily necessity. The second group suffers no less, if anything substantially more in the long term.

One thinks that he can order the body to sleep whenever one wants. Have you tried to postpone sleep? What happens? Circadian rhythms are 24-hour cycles that are part of the body's internal clock. Its primary function is sleeping and waking.

We cannot take charge; it controls us. So what does the modern man do? He resorts to artificially induced sleep by taking drinks and drugs. We all know what drinks do to our liver. And drugs are similarly harmful to the brain. Both are habit forming. One is stuck once this is continued over some time. Why is one unable to fall asleep, when bodily and mentally tired? Because we have allowed our minds to take charge of our lives.

We have unlimited desires for a sense of enjoyment, power, fame, etc. We are being driven by emotions like lust, greed, anger, hate, etc. By the way, drinks and drugs do not stop bad and scary dreams from

coming, which leave a very bad feeling upon waking up. The third kind harms oneself in more ways than one by making sleep one's shelter. Let us come to our senses. Shelter is available in God. There are simple spiritual practices, which connect one to God. He will help us curb our wrong tendencies, as only God can. But one has to first accept that one is wrong; one has to give up overblown

It is quite strange that a small, ignorant and helpless soul has such a big ego. What is the conclusion? There is only one shelter, as instructed by Lord Krishna. You will get plenty of sleep and of good quality too sans bad dreams.

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

# Transforming lives of the Indian farmers



Through modern infrastructure, expanded credit support, and sustainable farming methods, PM Modi's policies are revolutionising Indian agriculture

rime Minister Narendra Modi's deep concern and sensitivity owards farmers is visible in the decisions, policies and plans taken for the farming community. Transforming the lives of our food providers (Annadatas) is the first and foremost goal of our Prime Minister. This is the reason why agriculture and farmers remained the top priorities in the first 100 days of the third term of the NDA government. Under his leadership, the government is making unprecedented efforts for the empowerment and upliftment of the agriculture sector. We are committed to increasing farmers' income, which is reflected in schemes such as the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF), and PM AASHA. Post-harvest losses in India are a major challenge, which threatens the production capacity of the agricultural sector and it also adversely impacts the hard work put in by lakhs of farmers. According to the latest estimates, about 16-18 per cent of the total food production is affected every year in India due

These losses can be attributed to various stages of agriculture such as harvesting, threshing, storage, transportation and processing. Lack of proper storage, cold chain, inadequate processing units, and lack of efficient logistic contribute to these huge losses, as a result of which the overall food security of our country gets affected.

Keeping all these factors in mind, the Modi government is working with renewed enthusiasm towards strengthening this. Under the able leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government is making efforts to take the research of scientists from lab to land, due to which the cost of production has reduced considerably and profits have increased for farmers. The Prime Minister with a visionary approach launched the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) way back in July 2020 as a transformative initiative under the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative. Its objective is to increase the income of farmers and address post-harvest management issues through farm assets to reduce food wastage. These challenges have to be addressed by promoting new projects and new age technologies. Under AIF, banks provide interest subvention of 3 per cent per annum with an interest cap of 9 per and financial institutions will provide loans up to Rs 2 crore with credit guarantee coverage under CGTMSE (Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises) for loans. Through this initiative, the government aims to not only increase production to preserve quality and quantity, but also help farmers access markets more efficiently, and as a result, their income will also increase.

Due to the able leadership of the Prime Minister, the benefits of the scheme, till August 2024, the amount sanctioned under this scheme has crossed Rs 47,500 crore. Of this, more than Rs 30,000 crore has already been disbursed for various projects. Notably, 54 per cent of the projects that were sanctioned are linked to farmers, cooperative societies, agricultural production organisations and self-help groups (SHGs), which is in line with the Prime Minister's vision. It reflects the strong participation of farmers in providing farm-gate level infrastructure.Prime Minister Modi is very committed towards strengthening farm gate infrastructure to solve the major problem postharvest losses in agricultural produce. He prioritised the development of infra-

structure in storage (dry and cold), transportation, etc., so that farmers could be protected from such crop loss. In terms of dry storage, in comparison to food grain production, India has an infrastructure in terms of 1,740 lakh metric tonnes of storage capacity, and at present, there is a shortage of 44 per cent in the storage capacity for the overall grain production in India, which is very

concerning. Similarly, for horticulture produce, about 441.9 lakh metric tonnes of cold storage is available in India, while the cold chain capacity is only 15.72 per cent of the production of fruits and vegetables in the country. AIF initiative has helped bridge the storage capacity gap by approximately 500 lakh metric tonnes. Contributing to saving about Rs 5,700 crore post-harvest losses for the nation. Furthermore, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the development of proper cold storage facilities has reduced the loss of horticulture products by 10 per cent, due to which 3.5 lakh metric tonnes of produce is being secured post harvest and about Rs 1,250 crore is being saved every year. This commitment of the Prime Minister ment of Rs 78,702 crore in the agri-BHARAT' culture sector since 2015, which marks significant progress in the sector. Prime Minister Modi has encouraged entrepreneurship among farmers, as approximately 50,000 new agricultural enterprises have been set up in the country. These efforts have helped create more than 8,00,000 employment

tually leading to the creation of 2.5 aeroponic farming, polyhouse and million jobs, directly or indirectly. aeroponic farming, polyhouse and greenhouse, are reserved for only The Prime Minister's welfare policies have brought about positive changes in the working style of farmers. The creation of advanced infrastructure on farms has facilitated farmers to sell directly to a wider consumer base, thereby enhancing price realisation and increasing their overall income. Due to modern packaging and cold storage systems, farmers can time their market sales more strategically, resulting in better value realisation.

On average, this infrastructure initiative has enabled farmers to get 11-14 per cent higher prices for their produce. Prime Minister Modi's policies will not only encourage the development of agricultural infra-structure but also reduce credit risk. Through credit guarantee support and interest subvention, lending institutions can give loans with minimal risk, thereby helping their customers. This helps in expanding their base and portfolio diversification. Significantly, this fund is involved in the creation of agricultural infrastructure in collaboration with the refinance facility of NABARD, reducing the effective interest rate for Primary Agricultural

Cooperative Societies (PACS) to This has brought significant benefits to thousands of farmers associated with such PACS. Under AIF, 9,573 PACS projects have been approved with a loan amount of Rs 2,970 crore to date by NABARD. In an important step under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the central government has approved the progressive expansion of the ambitious Agriculture Infrastructure Fund scheme, making it more inclusive and substantially more influential. The make agriculture a profitable business we have come up with a six-point strategy to increase the income of farmers, such as increasing production, reducing the cost of farming, fair prices for production, providing the appropriate amount of relief during natural disasters, diversification of agriculture and natural

farming. At present, some promising projects for agricultural asset development, such as hydroponic farming, mushgreenhouse, are reserved for only farmer groups and collectives.

Now by expanding the scheme coverage to include integrated processing projects, farmers will get better prices for their produce through the creation of integrated processing plants, which include both primary and secondary processing.In addition to this, component A of PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan) Yojana provides the facility for the installation of solar power plants up to 2 MW on barren, fallow, cultivable, pasture or marshy lands, and it can be easily be converged with the AIF scheme. This strategic convergence will help individual farmers and empower farmer groups, enhancing their role from being 'Annadaata' (food givers) to 'Urjadata' (energy providers). The dedicated credit guarantee cover window, which was exclusively kept for FPOs, i.e. NAB Sanrakshan Trustee Company Private Limited, will remain open for AIF beneficiaries as well, where they will be eligible for guarantee fee reimbursement. These changes will increase processing capabilities, diversify food production, and increase and improve the quality of

They will increase the shelf life of the produce, boost transport capacity and improve rural supply by linking it to the urban demand. Additionally, these changes will help in generating rural employ-ment opportunities. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund is making a significant contribution towards the development of the agriculture sector and empowerment of Indian farmers, by providing a sustainable solution. Due to the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, even the minutest problems faced by farmers are being resolved, intense communication and combined efforts have brought a new dawn in the context of farmers' welfare, and this will prove to be a key milestone to fulfil the dreams of a developed agriculture sector of a 'Viksit Bharat.

(The writer is the Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Rural Development; views



THE PRIME MINISTER WITH LAUNCHED THE AGRICULTURE INFRASTRUCTURE FUND (AIF) WAY BACK IN JULY UNDER THE 'ATMANIRBHAR INITIATIVE

A VISIONARY towards the agriculture sector and farmers will not only ensure economic empowerment but also raise their standard of living. Under the guidance of the Prime Minister, the AIF is providing new impetus to the growth and development of agricultural infrastructure. As of August 2024, as many as 74,695 agriculture infrastructure-related initiatives across the country have been approved under AIF. These include 18,508 custom hiring centres, 16,238 2020 AS A TRANSFORMATIVE primary processing centres, 13,702 warehouses, 3,095 sorting and grad-INITIATIVE ing units, 1,901 cold stores and cold chains, and 21,251 other types of infrastructure facilities. These 74,695 projects have attracted a total invest-

opportunities, and this number

will only increase in the future, even-

room cultivation, vertical farming,

## Navigating manufacturing landscape: Bridging growth, disparities, and industrial ambitions India stands as the world's fifth-largest manufacturing powerhouse, generating nearly \$560 billion in goods annually

ndia is the world's fifth largest manufacturing pow-Lerhouse producing nearly 560 Billion Dollars' worth of goods per year but our share in global manufacturing output is below 3 per cent. And the share of manufacturing in India's Gross Value Added (GVA) is stuck at just 17 per cent, not far ahead of the share of agriculture. It is often stated that India seems to be of growth poles first protransitioning directly from a primary sector-dominant economy into one dominated by the service sector.

The question often asked is whether manufacturing is going to play its part in India's often paradoxical and counterintuitive growth story. However, one element of experience. quite predictable. The concepts up new industrial townships in



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

pounded by the French Economist Perroux along with its accompanying concepts of the inevitability of unbalanced regional growth in industrial clusters, with an agglomeration effect that will accentuate regional diversity, seems pretty close to India's development

India's industrial landscape is Thus, even where India had set

places like Rourkela, Bokaro or even Jamshedpur in an earlier era, these do not appear to have led to broader regional development, with the nearby hinterland areas remaining under-developed for the most

The broader issue of regional disparities that have emerged in India has been sought to be addressed institutionally by the various Finance Commission's devolution formula which gives overwhelming weightage to per capita income and, therefore, ensures higher resource flows into backward areas.

The market, on the other hand, has responded to these disparities by the movement of migrant labour to the faster growing parts of the country, with the migrant labour being

the unsung hero of the construction and manufacturing growth in these areas. The concepts of growth poles and growth centres are now being supplemented by the phenomena of port-led industrial growth with major ports, old and new, serving as growth centres in many countries.

The National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP) takes on the challenges of accelerating India's manufacturing growth, creating multiple industrial growth foci and linking industrialisation to transport nodes, head-on.

The NICDP has focused on the development of industrial townships adjacent to 11 key transport corridors. Eight such townships had

been approved till the current



year, four of which are shovel-ready with the industrial plots being allotted, and four others are being implemented with trunk infrastructure being set up. As against eight projects implemented or under implementation over the last 17 years, the Government has recently approved twelve such smart industrial cities in 10 States, at one go, with a big bang approach which is characteristic of PM Modi's style which focuses on Speed and

All these sites have been validated using the geospatial data on the PM Gati Shakti National Platform to minimise disturbances to existing habitations and ecology, with prioritisation to availability of land parcels with the State Governments, covering land of relatively lesser agricultural value, with proximity to major transport modes for multi-

model connectivity. A new aspect of using PM Gati Shakti to not only ensure the enhancement of transport infrastructure for improved connectivity but also to combine such network planning with an area planning approach by asking States to start filling social infrastructure gaps (schools, Anganwadis, ITls, accommo-(schools, dation) concurrently with pro-

ject implementation, has been initiated. This combination of transport network planning and area

planning should lead to these green field industrial cities getting plug and play infrastructure and multi-model transport links ahead of demand for the private sector and particularly for foreign investors who wish to participate in India's growth story.It may be recalled that India's Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) ranking had improved from 143 in 2014 to 63 in 2020, in the last year that such rankings were published by the World Bank. While contract compliances and improvement are linked to the broader issue of judicial reform, the NICDP programme will substantially address, along with

parallel initiatives by the States, the issues of land availability and its transparent administration, for any investors seeking industrial sites in these cities. The NICDP Programme also de-risks the investor from one key compliance burden that new investors are concerned about, the issue of environmental clearances by ensuring that full environmental clearance for the entire township is already in place and is backed up by a full spectrum of utility services like power, sewage and waste treatment, roads etc., in a smart city with stateof-the-art infrastructure and digitized grievance redressal mechanisms.

(The writer is former Secretary, DPIIT and currently OSD, Ministry of Defence; views are

#### IN BRIEF



#### **Gold snaps 10-day rally;** declines Rs 200

Grams, snapping a 10-day winning streak, in the national capital on Tuesday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal closed at Rs 78,300 per 10 grams on Monday. However, silver remained flat at Rs 92,500 per kilogram on Tuesday. Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity fell by Rs 200 to Rs 77,700 per 10 grams. It had finished at Rs 77,900 per 10 grams in the previous close on Monday. Meanwhile, in futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for December delivery jumped by Rs 347 or 0.46 per cent to Rs 75,958 per 10 grams. Silver also climbed Rs 441 or 0.49 per cent to trade at Rs 91,160 per kg on the bourse. "Gold prices traded positively with gains. Market participants are closely watching this data-packed week, with the prime focus on non-farm payrolls and unemployment data scheduled for



#### **Working with MCA to roll out PM Internship Scheme: CII**

he Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on Tuesday said it is working closely with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) to facilitate the implementation of the Prime Minister's Internship Scheme that was announced in the Budget. The PM Internship Scheme aims to provide internship opportunities to one crore youth in 500 top CSR spend companies in the next five years. CII is acting as a critical facilitator between the government and the industry, ensuring the scheme's effective rollout, the industry body stated. The PM Internship Scheme will enhance youth employability in India by offering them hands-on exposure to real-world business environments. The scheme will also benefit the industry by creating a pipeline of skilled, work-ready youth who can be employed post-internship both in large as well as micro, small and medium enterprise, CII stated.



#### Maruti Suzuki sales up 2 pc to 1,84,727 units

aruti Suzuki India on Tuesday reported a 2 per cent year-on-year increase in total sales at 1,84,727 units in September. The company had sold 1,81,343 units in the same month last year, Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said in a statement. Total domestic passenger vehicle sales were at 1,44,962 units as compared to 1,50,812 units in the year-ago month, a decline of 4 per cent, it added. Sales of mini segment cars, comprising Alto and S-Presso, grew to 10,363 units as against 10,351 units in September 2023. Sales of compact cars, including Baleno, Celerio, Dzire, Ignis, Swift, Tour S and WagonR, however, declined to 60,480 units as compared to 68,551 units in the year-ago month. Utility vehicles, consisting of Brezza, Ertiga, Grand Vitara and XL6. clocked sales of 61,549 units last month, as compared to 59,272 units earlier, a growth of 4 per cent. Sales of van Eeco were at 11,908 units last month as against 11,147 units in September 2023, while that of light commercial vehicle Super Carry stood at 3,099 units as against 2,294 units earlier.

#### Govt looking to tweak regulatory norms for MedTech, pharma

PNS NEW DELHI

The government is considering tweaking regulatory norms for MedTech and pharma sectors and sought industry inputs for the same, Niti Aayog member (Health) VK Paul said on Tuesday.

Speaking at an Assocham event here, he said that with changing times the regulatory framework also needs to be worked upon. "Under the ages of principal scientific adviser to the Government of India, regulatory improvements for medical technology and pharma are under active consider-

ation," Paul said. He sought industry participation in making the system

"We are working on it with a very open mind. We are conscious of the fact that even in the classical space, there is room for improvement. But certainly, when it comes to frontline technology, cell and gene therapies for the individualised care and perhaps even integrated systems that we are looking at, the regulatory system needs to be tweaked to be improved," Paul said.

As per the government's stated vision of making India a developed country by 2047, there is a need to enhance

exports from India, he added. The country should not only be the largest market for diagnostics but also the biggest creator of technologies in the sector, the member noted

## **Goyal meets Warburg Pincus, Blackstone**; seeks investments

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday held bilateral meetings with global private equity firm Warburg Pincus and global investment company Blackstone here to discuss investment opportunities in India in sectors like electronics and renewable energy.
At the invitation of United

States Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, Goyal is in the US till October 3, 2024. He will co-chair with Raimondo the India-USA CEO Forum on October 2, and the 6th India-USA Commercial Dialogue on October 3 in Washington D.C.

In a series of posts on social media platform X, Goyal said that he met Timothy F Geithner, Chairman of Warburg Pincus, and discussed the efforts made by India to facilitate business entry, ease of doing business, single-window clearances and industrial infrastructure.

'We explored new ideas and collaboration opportunities in sectors such as renew-



At the invitation of US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, Goyal is in the US till October 3, 2024. He will co-chair with Raimondo the India-USA CEO Forum on October 2, and the 6th India-USA Commercial Dialogue on October 3 in Washington D.C.

able energy, data infrastructure and R&D," he said. He also met Stephen A Schwarzman, Chairman, CEO

Co-Founder of Blackstone, and discussed the company's future investment plans as India continues its exponential growth trajecto-

"Invited them to explore

opportunities in sectors like infrastructure, housing and renewable energy, among oth-

manufacturing, data infra-structure and logistics sectors. "Also, highlighted how the country's consistent economic growth over the past decade and large consumer market offer a multitude of opportunities for its strategic invest-

Co. (KKR).

ments," he added. The minister invited American companies with expertise in high-tech manufacturing to 'Make In India' for the world.

Henry R Kravis, Co-Founder

of global investment firm

Kohlberg Kravis Roberts &

During that meeting, he emphasised upon the potential investment avenues for the

firm in India's electronics

The US is the largest trading partner of India. The ilateral trade was \$120 billion in 2023-24. India is also one of the major recipients of foreign direct investment from the US. The country received \$67 billion between April 2000 and June 2024



#### West Asia conflict hurting India's trade with Israel, Jordan, Lebanon: GTRI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The escalating conflict in West Asia is hurting India's trade with countries like Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon that are involved directly in the war, think tank GTRI said on Tuesday.

To navigate these turbulent times, India must stay vigilant and adaptable to the fast-changing geopolitical and trade landscape in West Asia, the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said.

During January-July 2024, India's trade with countries directly impacted by the conflict has faced significant challenges.

Exports to Israel dropped sharply by 63.5 per cent, Jordan saw a 38.5 per cent decline due to spillover effects, and Lebanon experienced a 6.8 per cent decrease," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said. He added that the Israel-Hamas war, which erupted in October 2023, has now extended to Lebanon, Syria, and is indirectly impacting Jordan and Iran. Key regional players like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar have thus far remained uninvolved in the conflict. "This neutrality has allowed India's trade with these Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to increase by 17.8 per cent between January and July 2024 compared to the same period the previous year,"

## NMDC hikes iron ore rates by Rs 400/tonne

PNS NEW DELHI

The country's largest iron ore miner NMDC on Tuesday increased the rates of lump ore and fines by Rs 400 per tonne with immediate effect.

The company has revised the price of lump ore -- containing 65.5 per cent iron

content -- to Rs 5,750 per tonne from Rs 5,350 a tonne fixed on August 8. The rate of fines or low-grade ore,

with 64 per cent

and below iron

content, has been hiked to Rs 5,010 per tonne from Rs 4,610 per tonne fixed in

August this year. The prices are effective from October 1 and include royalty and contributions towards the district mineral fund (DMF), and National Mineral Exploration Trust (DMET). It excludes cess, forest permit fees and other taxes, the com-

Iron ore is one of the key raw materials used in the manufacturing of steel, and any movement in its prices has a direct impact on rates of steel, an alloy widely used in segments like construction, infrastructure, automobile and

According to BigMint, the price hike is in line with the rise of global iron ore prices China recently announced a stimulus to boost its economy.

iron ore in the global market have moved up by around 15-20 per cent in the last one week after the announcement of a financial

"The rates of

package by the government in China," the markets research firm said. Hyderabad-based NMDC is India's largest iron ore mining company catering to the country's up to 20 per cent demand for steel-making

#### **Kumaraswamy** tells automakers to follow PM **E-DRIVE norms**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy told automakers to follow the guidelines while availing incentives under the Rs 10,900 crore PM E-DRIVE scheme launched on Tuesday, asserting that there should be "no scope" for controversy like in the FAME-II scheme.

ister's remarks assume significance as the second phase of FAME-II (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles) scheme was marred by allegations of some companies availing fiscal incentives by violating the norms.

The heavy industries min-

The FAME-II regulations permitted incentives for producing electric vehicles using made-in-India components. However, a probe by the heavy industries ministry had revealed that some companies purportedly utilized

## Sensex, Nifty fall on profit-taking in oil & gas, FMCG shares

PNS MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty edged lower on Tuesday, extending the losing run to the third day amid profit-taking in oil & gas and select FMCG shares.

The BSE Sensex dipped 33.49 points or 0.04 per cent to settle at 84,266.29. During the day, it hit a high of 84,648.40 and a low of 84,098.94.

The NSE Nifty closed marginally lower by 13.95 points or 0.05 per cent to 25,796.90.

Muted trends in global markets and heavy foreign fund outflows weighed on investor sentiment, analysts said.

Sensex has shed nearly 1,570 points or nearly 2 per cent and Nifty declined 419 points or 1.6 per cent since Friday after China announced stimulus measures to prop-up its econ-

Among 30 Sensex companies, IndusInd Bank fell the most by 2.68 per cent. Asian Paints dropped 1.54 per cent and Hindustan Unilever by



cent on disappointing September sales numbers. Tata Steel, Titan, Reliance Industries and NTPC were also among the major laggards. Triggered by the recent stim-

ulus policies by the Chinese central bank, funds are shifting to cheaper Chinese stocks from expensive markets like India. This, along with the possible increase in interest rates by the BoJ due to recent political changes, may impact the domestic market in the near term," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. IT shares bucked the helped indices trim

most by 2.93 per cent among Sensex shares. Mahindra & Mahindra rose by 2.22 per cent on strong sales numbers in September. Kotak Mahindra Bank,

State Bank of India were among the major gainers.

The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.56 per cent and mid-

Infosys, HCL Technologies and

cap index went up by 0.27 per Among the indices, telecom-

munication declined 0.86 per cent, oil & gas (0.71 per cent), utilities (0.35 per cent), realty (0.24 per cent) and power (0.17)

## Flood of IPOs: 13 cos file draft papers with Sebi

PNS NEW DELHI

A wave of initial public offerings (IPOs) is set to hit Dalal Street with over a dozen companies, including Vikram Solar, Aditya Infotech, and Varindera Constructions, filing preliminary papers with markets regulator Sebi in a single day.

These firms are expected to collectively garner at least Rs 8,000 crore, according to the draft papers filed by them on Monday. These IPOs are across sectors, deal size and combination of fresh issues and offer for sale (OFS). The filing comes at a time when the primary market is experiencing strong interest from

Moreover, 62 companies have already mobilised around Rs

both issuers and investors across



64,000 crore collectively via mainboard, marking a 29 per cent increase from Rs 49,436 crore collected by 57 firms through the route in the entire 2023. The strong momentum in IPO markets is driven by several key macroeconomic, sectorspecific factors and willingness of funds to look at new ideas, partially led by strong inflows into domestic mutual funds as well as the robust capital formation happening across corporate India, Munish Aggarwal, Managing Director Head - Equity Capital Markets at Equirus, said.

"Unless there is a major black swan event which disrupts global economy and markets, we expect the markets to continue with the momentum in 2025 with both number of transactions and issuance amount going up further," he added.

Apart from Vikram Solar, Aditya Infotech, and Varindera Constructions, other companies that filed draft papers on Monday are Ajax Engineering, Rahee Infratech, Vikran Engineering, Midwest, Viney Corporation, Sambhy Steel Tubes, Jaro Institute of Technology Management and Research, All Time Plastics Ltd, Scoda Tubes, and Dev

#### GST mop-up rises 6.5 pc to Rs 1.73 lakh cr

PNS NEW DELHI

Gross GST collection in September grew 6.5 per cent to about Rs 1.73 lakh crore, according to government data released on Tuesday.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue in September last year was Rs 1.63 lakh crore. In August 2024, the mop-up was Rs 1.75 lakh crore. Last month, domestic revenue grew 5.9 per cent to about Rs 1.27 lakh crore. Revenue from import of goods was up 8 per cent to Rs 45,390

Refunds worth Rs 20,458 crore were issued during the month, an increase of 31 per cent over the yearago period.

## India initiates dumping probe on six products imported from China

PNS NEW DELHI

India has initiated a probe into alleged dumping of as many as six products, including certain chemicals, and cold rolled electrical steel and black toner powder cartridge, imported from China following separate complaints from domestic play-

The commerce ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) is probing the dumping of 1,1,1,2-Tetrafluoroethane or R-134a; Acrylonitrile Butadiene Rubber; certain Antioxidants; polytetrafluoroethylene; black toner powder cartridge; and colled rolled non-oriented electrical steel from China.

According to six separate notifications, the applicants have alleged that material injury is being caused to the domestic industry due to the dumped imports of these products originating in or exported from China into India.

They have requested for imposition of anti-dumping duty on these imports with a view to guard them from cheap

SRF Ltd has filed an application for initiation of an anti-

refrigerant for automobile air conditioners. Apcotex Industries Ltd has filed the application for starting

dumping investigation on the

imports of 'Rl34a', primarily

used as a high-temperature

the probe on imports of Acrylonitrile Butadiene Rubber from China, the European Union, Korea and Russia. It is used in the oil and gas sector besides the auto segment as it is resistant to various chemicals and can withstand extreme temperatures.

Similarly, Vinati Organics Ltd has approached the DGTR for initiation of the anti-dumping investigation on certain antioxidants from China and Singapore. It is majorly used in petrochemical companies producing plastics.

The request application for dumping probe on polytetrafluoroethylene (used in electronic, mechanical and chemicals industries) imports was filled by Gujarat Fluorochemicals Ltd.

The applicant has alleged that dumped imports of the subject goods from China and Singapore are causing material injury...and has requested for the imposition of anti-dumping duty on the import," the DGTR has said.



## India's power consumption at 141.36 bn units

PNS NEW DELHI

various sectors.

India's power consumption remained almost flat at 141.36 billion units (BU) year-on-year in September, mainly due to the abovenormal rainfall across the country, which reduced the use of cooling appliances like air conditioners and desert

According to the Indian Meteorological Department, the country experienced a rainfall excess of 10.6 per cent

in September. In September 2023, the power consumption stood at 141.29 BU, according to official data.

The highest supply in a day (peak power demand met) contracted to 230.60W GW



in September 2024 against recorded in September 2023. 239.93 GW in the year-ago month. The peak power demand touched an all-time high of about 250 GW in May this year. The previous alltime high peak power demand of 243.27 GW was

Earlier this year, the power ministry projected a peak power demand of 235 GW during the day and 225 GW during evening hours for May, and 240 GW during daytime and 235 GW in the

may hit 260 GW this sum-Experts said the wide-

evening hours for June.

The ministry also estimat-

ed that peak power demand

spread above-normal rainfall in the country reduced the use of cooling appliances like air conditioners and desert coolers.

This led to a decline in power consumption as well as growth in power demand in the country in September, they said. The demand for power and consumption will continue to be steady in the coming days due to the end of the Monsoon season and more industrial and commercial activities in the country due to festivities, they Vijayawada | Wednesday October 2, 2024

## what's brewing?



## **Govinda hospitalised after** accidentally shooting himself in leg, condition stable

licensed revolver and injured his leg. Govinda's manager informed that the bullet has been taken out and Govinda is in a stable condition.

The event occurred at 4.45 am while Govinda was getting ready to leave, and he was polishing his licensed gun. Nevertheless, the gun discharged when it slipped out of his grasp and dropped. Sources mentioned that Govinda was getting ready to depart for Kolkata for a scheduled event.

The actor was taken to Mumbai's

ovinda was admitted to a hospital in Mumbai on Tuesday after he inadvertently discharged his ovinda's wife, Sunita Ahuja, was not present in Mumbai during the incident. Ahuja mentioned she was informed that Govinda was doing well and was no longer in danger. Govinda's daughter is currently in the hospital.

Govinda's manager, Shashi Sinha, said the bullet hit the actor below his knee. "Govinda was getting ready to leave for Kolkata and was putting his licensed revolver back in the cupboard when it slipped from his hand and the gun went off, hitting him in the leg," Sinha said.







## **LISA MISHRA TO**

usician Lisa Mishra is ready to take the OTT world by storm with her acting debut in not one but two highly anticipated shows. After capturing hearts with her melodious voice, Lisa is now stepping into the limelight as an actress with Call Me Bae and The Royals.

The Royals explores the opulence, intrigue and power struggles within a high-class society, starring a stellar cast including Ishaan Khatter, Bhumi Pednekar and the legendary Zeenat Aman.



n the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, Applause Entertainment announced that Grammy Award winner and musical leg-end, A R Rahman, has come on board to compose the music for their highly anticipated series, Gandhi. Rahman, whose name is synonymous with musical brilliance, will bring his unparalleled craft to this sweeping saga of Indian Independence, elevating the series to new artistic heights. Directed by Hansal Mehta and based on Ramachandra Guha's definitive writings, this collaboration promises to weave together history, emotion and sound in ways never before experienced on screen. His compositions will not only support the visuals but also capture the essence of Gandhi's teachings on truth, love and non-violence, becoming a powerful part of the narrative.

"Watching Gandhiji's younger life is a revelation—his experi-ments with truth, life, and so many other things show the evolution of his character. I am deeply honored to be scoring the music for this story," shares the musical maestro.

Meanwhile, the director, Hansal Mehta, said, "Gandhi is a deeply human retelling of M K Gandhi's life story, a story that continues to inspire generations. Having A R Rahman join us on this journey is truly a dream come true. is music has the unique ability to elevate storytelling and for a project of this scale and significance, we couldn't think of anyone better to bring the emotional and spiritual nuances of Gandhi's life to the forefront."

#### **ARCHIE**









REALITY CHECK

MODERN CONVERSATION:

ARE YOU PAYING

ATTENTION BRIAN?

HELLO! MY EYES







#### GARFIELD









# ARE UP HERE!

## SPEED BUMP ON NOT SAYING THEY'RE GOSSIPERS, BUT THEY DO SNIFF A LOT OF SCUTTLEBUTTS.







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#### **ACROSS**

12 Mend

DOWN

1 A large group of

17 A slow-moving creature

19 People who hide on ships to avoid paying a fare

2 Wash the soap out of 3 A snake noise

18 Jewellery for fingers

**CROSSWORD** 

- 6 Goes back to a place musicians 8 Baby cats
- 6 The steps of a ladder 7 Do this when you are
  - 11 Rest your head on this
- 13 Pigtall thirsty 15 Pester 9 Knotted
- 16 The people working on 10 Opposite of newest a ship or aircraft 14 A holder for cut flowers

4 A seat on a horse 5 Lift up



#### **GINGER MEGGS**





DON'T JUST



#### 0 4 DIFFICULTY RATING: \*\*\*

# Vilayawaaa

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Wednesday October 2, 2024

## Asha Negi's stunning transformation for Honeymoon Photographer

Actress Asha Negi is

**TEJAL SINHA** tejal.sinha30@gmail.com

breakthrough that brought her the 'Stellar Performer of the Year', Asha Negi has certainly proved to be the well-deserved one. Pavitra Rishta, made our guest for the day a household name. She's now here exploring her prowess, not only refined to a particular medium but also

Currently, gaining much traction for her por-trayal of Ambika in the latest Jio Cinema show Honeymoon Photographer, the show revolves around her character, who is a photographer in the Maldives for a honeymoon shoot. She faces a terrible situation when the groom is discovered dead and she has no recollection of the previous evening upon waking up. As hidden truths come to light, she navigates a dangerous tangle of deceit to reveal the truth—or face destruction

"Ambika is like a girl next door," begins the *Ludo* fame in an exclusive chat with *The* Pioneer. "The show is a thriller and has a lot of suspense—a murder mystery, basically. She's not proactive. She's this vulnerable girl who is not proactive. She's this vulnerable girl who is also an artist, a photographer and this is the first time she's doing something like a honeymoon photography? Honeymoon Photographer introduces her character as this charming, self-confident girl who enjoys her work. As the story unfolds, "You get to see different versions of Ambika because of the challenges that she's going through. Just imagine a girl next door, a photographer, an artist, a simple girl; she happens to be involved in somebody's murder. How would that be? She's not prepared for anything like this. It just happens with her. How thing like this. It just happens with her. How she tackles all of it is how Ambika's character

is unfolding in the show."
Guess what? With this project, she discovered something new about herself. "I can also have abs and be this really fit and toned (she have abs and be this really fit and toned (she giggles)," shares the *Fear Factor: Khatron Ke Khiladi season 6* star, adding, "For other characters that I had played, I'd mostly be wearing salwar suit and don't really have to dress up like this character. As this project came my way, they'd told me that I might have to wear something like this bikini and shorts. I was like, okay, but I don't know if I can reach that level of confidence of wearing such clothes on screen. And secondly, I don't know if my body can actually become so fit and toned that I look good in that. This was something new that I faced. but Lam glad that thi character came my way. The entire fit-ness journey that people see on social media of mine happened only because of this show. Otherwise, I was very comfort-

able doing my basic." Well again, dance is something that she's always enjoyed and so do we, seeing her dance choreography. Haha! The Nach Baliye star affirms, "Everybody is making dance reels and that's why I was also like, why not me?" Getting back again to the show, she shares how she'd gone out of her comfort zone and not being monotonous. "I did push myself a little harder for this particular character."

Delving deeper into *Honeymoon Photographer*, the show also delves into the themes of love, relationships and personal growth. "Personal growth is very important," she fur-ther discusses in this chat, adding that it is the most important aspect when it comes to living your life. "I feel evolution; personal growth is actually my priority as a person. Other than that, yes, while the show has a murder mystery, it also has cheating and a lot of emotions related to the characters. Of course, cheating is something that is not tolerated. I think it is the same for all of us. Right? I think other than that, I would say there are many more emo-

no less than a talented star who certainly enraptures hearts every time on and

off-screen. In an exclusive chat with The Pioneer, she discusses her

character in Honeymoon Photographer, the transformation that

she brought in, being a director's actor and more

tions discovered in the project through different characters."

Well, Asha is just another of those director's actors, who is pretty good with following what the director has to say and what the director wants the actor to do. A lot of times, the *Collar Bomb* fame reveals, "I go blank and fill my slate with what the director has to instruct. That is how I also like my entire process to be. Of course, I do have my own pointers, my own way. I do put in my own style at the end of it, but I still love it when the director is very clear about the character and how the scene has to be portrayed. Even with *Honeymoon Photographer*, I did the same. The director, writers and team have

been on the story, on the characters, way before we joined the project."

The series also features stunning backdrops, where they were not just shooting but having fun too. But again, it was hectic!

"Outdoor shoots are not that easy, not that

fun," recalls the *Abhay* season 2 fame. Well, she was also all praises for her co-star Rajeev Siddhartha. "I think he's a phenomenal actor. Most of the time, I used to be in awe of his performance. He knows that and I have told him a couple of times too. I really got to learn a lot from him." Later, once the outdoor schedule was over, which was like the last but, guess what? "I have hogged and how? I ate 3-3 burgers in a go," she humourously tells us and we were like, 'Oh my god'. But why not? She was on a diet for the character, of course. "I think that it is the most fun part. I was really looking forward to it." Again, love and relationships were not something in her priority while shooting for this show. In fact, "I was very indulged in the murder and the mystery; the whole thriller and angle."

While the diaspora certainly brings a show or a film as a male starrer, reviews have made a mention of the 'Asha Negi-starrer'. Now that the women are given their due credit, we head towards the end of this chat as the for-mer Miss Uttarakhand says, "Trust me, I'd not even thought of it. But let me tell you, honestly, I'm very happy. Something that was actually seen as risky is finally happening. But again, this is

not something that I look into. Even if it wouldn't have happened, I'd still be happy."

I GO BLANK AND FILL

MY SLATE WITH WHAT THE DIRECTOR HAS TO **INSTRUCT. I DO HAVE** MY OWN POINTERS. BUT I STILL LOVE IT WHEN THE DIRECTOR **IS VERY CLEAR ABOUT THE CHARAC-TER AND HOW THE SCENE HAS TO BE** PORTRAYED.

— Actress

**ASHA NEGI** 

### **REDISCOVERING A GENIUS**

## **Father of Indian** Abstractionism's story

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n Indian art, Bimal Das Gupta was a pathfinder whose avant-garde abstract paintings com-pletely changed the field of modern art! His mastery of colours, particularly in water-colours—was his greatest asset as an artist. He had a captivating manner of blending and mixing, whether in a bright array or monochrome. His paintings have been forgotten for a long time, despite his tragic death and the deaths of his children in a car accident in 1995. Sources, however, inform us exclusively that his pieces have only begun to resurface at auction and are

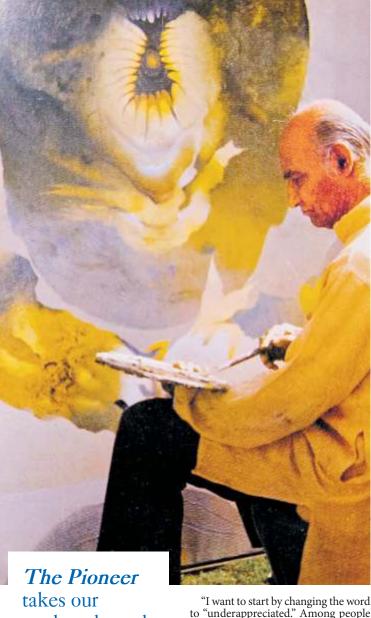
receiving positive reviews.

The main collector of artwork by is Vikram Mayor, Director of Gallery Silver Scapes. An intriguing discovery for our readers, reading this piece appears to be the experiences he reveals from people who have collaborated closely with him. "Bimal Da was always a creative genius with a vision that sought to continually rediscover himsought to continuary rediscover min-self. His early paintings from the 1930s include abstract-bordering landscapes and architectural pieces. He started his journey in the 1940s before moving on to tantric pieces. As a devoted Hindu, the Shiv Parivar from the 1940s, during what is known as his "brown period," is among his first known abstractions." His works created after the 1980s can be understood as a potent synthesis of his previous experiences into a fusion of Tantra and landscapes with a Darwinistic vibe. Artists typically begin to wane as they become older. Bimal Da was different and each work coming out

was different and each work confing out
was a masterpiece in its own rights.
"Every new piece the artist produced
over the course of six decades was a
development from the one before it; the journey was clear and will be on display when his works are shown. I wouldn't know how to characterise it other than as a transforming phase that lasted till his death in 1995," accompanies the jubilant art enthusiast. He goes on, "Das Gupta was a master of mediums, in actuality Librall about the false of his just have a support to the false of his just have a support of the suppor ality. Like all the artists of his time, he started with oils but gradually learned that he had a serious sensitivity to oil. Consequently, he started experimenting with medium to make up for his inability to utilise oil. He began combining materials like tempera, gouache, ink, and dye pastes. He was also the pioneer in ducing acrylics to Indi has been able to replicate or blend mediums in the same way as he did; therefore, his method of combining various mediums to achieve the outcomes he produced remains undisturbed and is evident in the works."

The art curator additionally stated, "Forty years of arduous labour. With each item being added as a drop. Being connected to the artist, we were aware of his brilliance; nothing surprised us, with the exception of some of his older catalogs, which showcase the artist's enchantment and his lineage—you'll have to wait to see them. I would say that the younger generations took cues from him and went on to become masters of their own accord, exactly as he

would have desired." We have also learned that he had planned to perform in Japan, to which he had devoted most of his legacy, but that never materialised. Post his passing, there being a paucity of his works and them being generations ahead of his time, Bimal Da started slowly fading with the new galleries only pushing artists they had access to. "With this exhibition, we hope to shed light on the genius that India possessed and the person our art historians should refer to as the Father of Indian Abstractionism. Due to the commercialisation of art and the lack of anyone to explain the work of this genius, educators who were only using basic formulas were unable to relate to this maestro, whose works are



readers through an intriguing discovery of Bimal Das Gupta, an innovator whose inventive abstract artworks revolutionised modern art!

futuristic even today," we hear from a few more perceptive recollections. India was only familiar with two artists: Das Gupta and Hussain. Guiral was an admirer of art and a friend of the artist; his brother, Satish Gujral, was also an artist. VP Singh came to learn painting from Bimal Da since he had heard so much about him. This show advances art in a way that goes beyond abstraction. The medium and methods employed by Bimal Da still remain the foundation of contemporary Indian art.
Aspiring artists would get a great opportunity to witness the works in person and get a firsthand look at the phenomenon known as Bimal Das Gupta. Abstract art is sometimes viewed as little more than a scattering of colours and textures, but with the pieces on show, they intend to change that perception.

to "underappreciated." Among people who are familiar with his works, Bimal Da has never been underappreciated and is not now. He is regarded as a visionary ahead of his time and a genius. In Indian art, however, the artist's genius is still being determined by his or her monetary than by the quality of their work. We want to alter that with this show. The artist's genius will be exposed to the world and nobody will be able to purchase their creations. After this event, I genuinely hope that artists will be pushed based on their quality rather than using a commercial, elitist, or nepotistic approach. The purpose of this exhibition is to alert the art market's eyes to the fact that a genius like Bimal Das Gupta was previously unknown."

Bimal's unconventional methods serve as the foundation for the education of today's young artists and his creations are proof of this genius's expertise. Many exploited the techniques discovered by Bimal Da but have not even come close to the expertise this genius demonstrated in his works! It has been the hard labour of Gallery Silver Scapes and Dhoomimal to bring to light the amazing works of Bimal Da. There is still a long way to go for this merit-ed artist, but his skill has ignited interest in an audience that has matured from three decades ago.

Travancore House is set to host Bimal Das Gupta: Tutelage - An Ode to a Legend on November 9 and 10, 2024. From the 1930s, when he initially deviated from the figurative styles that were prevalent in India after independence, to the later stages of his career, the exhibition charts his development as one of the nation's most influential and pioneering abstractionists.

## COMBATING MONSOON ACNE AND BREAKOU

ncreased humidity and dampness in the monsoon weather affects the skin deeply, making its care all the more essential. The high temperatures combined with humid conditions becomes an ideal breeding place for microbes, causing skin infections as well as breakouts.

Below mentioned is a detailed list of strategies that can be obeyed in order to deal with acne breakouts in this sticky weather:

Gentle cleansing of the face: Monsoon weather becomes highly unfriendly to the skin as excessive sweat and dirt can clog the skin pores, causing acne. So washing the face at least twice a day is quintessential, early in the morning and at bedtime. Choose an oil free non-comedogenic cleanser and wash your face with neither too hot nor too cold, rather lukewarm

water. Post a workout session or after profuse sweating, preferably cleanse the face too. The way of cleansing the face should be very gentle without scrubbing it.

Prefer skin exfoliation: Skin exfoliation is also a key practice behind a healthy skin-care routine. Use mild chemical exfoliants namely alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs) and beta hydroxy acids (BHAs) for breakout prone skin to remove dead cells that may clog the pores. Be cautious to not overdo exfoliation and only practice it once or twice a week as excessive exfoliation can damage the skin's natural oils.

Use a combination of moisturiser and sunscreen: Applying a gentle oil-free hydrating moisturiser after face cleansing is a must. It keeps the skin youthful and glowy. If you skip its application, skin pro-



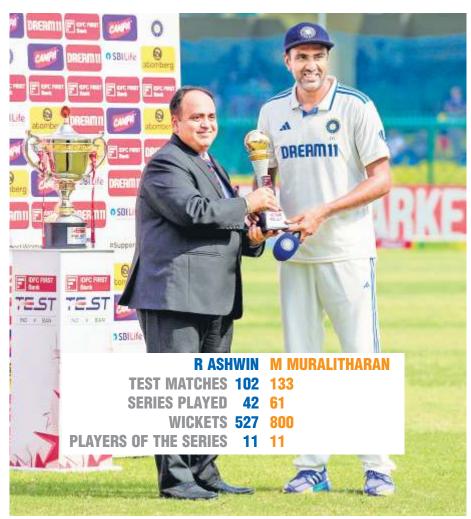
duces more sebum as a compensatory mechanism and its natural sebum is produced more, causing acne. After moisturizer, a gentle application of sunscreen is also important having a SPF of minimum 30. Even on cloudy days, do not skip it as ultraviolet rays of the sun can even pass through clouds. Apply a generous amount of sunscreen on all the exposed areas and regularly reapply it every 2 hours once out-

Hydration is must: Keep the skin well hydrated by drinking a minimum of 8 glasses of water daily and also eat more fruits and vegetables that are high in water content such as watermelon, cucumber, oranges etc. If your skin is devoid of moisture, it's compensatory mechanism to produce more sebum is activated that clogs the skin pores.

Wholesome diet: The food you eat is a great driving force behind your healthy and glowing skin. Consume raw fruits and vegetables as much as possible as they have bioactive compounds with anti-inflammatory properties and are rich in antioxidants. Keep a knowledge of your trigger foods behind acne and breakouts and refrain from their consumption. Most people have breakout triggers by eating foods high in sugars, milk and its products and junk food.

For keeping skin youthful and glowing even in the damp weather of monsoon, follow an adequate skin care routine. Also be mindful of what you eat and drink as your skin is the reflection of what you put inside.

> (The author, Dr. Rupika Singh, MBBS, MD, is a dermatologist and founder of Akiya Aesthetics)



## TIES MURALITHARAN

**RISHABH MALIK** ■ NEW DELHI

ndian off-spinner Ravichandaran Ashwin has Letched his name in the records book once again, equalling the most number of Player of the Series in Test cricket's history, with his stellar performances in Bangladesh series Ashwin now stands with Sri Lankan spinner Muttiah Muralitharan.

They both now shares the 11 Player of the Series accolades, Ashwin performance in the Bangladesh series conquered many records in history of cricket. Ashwin's took 11 wickets and scored 114 runs in both the innings two Test matches.

Ashwin performances throughout his test career gave many cherish moments for India, In first test match in Chennai his crucial knock of 113 runs gave team a fighting total and took 6 wickets in second innings for winning

the Test match. number of Player of the series.

hand Sri Lankan legend Muralitharan featured in a total of 61 series for Sri Lanka during his 18-year-long career and won the Player of the Series award on 11 occasions. In the list of most number of Player of the Series Ashwin alongside with muralitharan tops the list followed by Jacques kallis (South Africa)-9, Imran Khan (Pakistan)-8, Richard Hadlee(New

Zealand)-8, Shane Warne

(Australia)-8.

For India Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag are second in the list of India players with most Player of the Series awards in Tests five number of occasions they were rewarded. Virat Kohli has three Player of the Series awards to his name in Tests, whereas Kapil Dev, Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh, and Rahul Dravid in their careers with four Player of the Series awards each.

Ashwin who considered as an All-rounder batting at number eight scored six Ashwin awarded his 11th centuries allowed him to match New Zealander Daniel series so far. On the other order for their team. The 38 worldwide.

vear old spinner currently ranks number two in ICC Test All-rounder rankings.

Ashwin's heroic show in the second Test against Bangladesh has tossed him to the top of the wicket-takers list in the ongoing 2023-25 World Test Championship (WTC) cycle.

He has taken 53 wickets from 10 matches at an average of 21.18 and a strike rate of 37.30, surpassing Josh Hazlewood, who is second in the list of most wicket takers with 51 wickets.

It would be an epic battle to see in the upcoming Border Gavaskar Trophy later this year in Australia which might be his last Border Gavaskar feat in Australia currently he is second most wicket taker after Nathan Lyon in Border Gavaskar Trophy.

This achievement further highlights Ashwin's crucial role in India's Test cricket success marks as one of the greatest spinners of his generation. Ashwin's ability to adapt to different conditions bowl effectively in all Back from his Test debut in Vettori who scored five phases of the game and made 2011 he has only played in 42 centuries batting at lower him a nightmare for batsmen

## We were willing to get all out for 100: Rohit on India's boldplay in Kanpur Test

**PTI** ■ KANPUR

India were willing to take the Prisk of being bowled for 100-odd in its bold push for a result in the weather-hit second Test against Bangladesh, said Rohit Sharma after the hosts pulled off a dramatic win here on Tuesday. India managed to win the game comfortably on day five

despite two full days were lost due to wet outfield at the

Green Park Stadium. Even on day one, only 35 overs possible. After bowling out Bangladesh for 233, India batted in T20 mode to smash 285 in 34.4 overs before declaring their first innings. Having lost two batters overnight, Bangladesh were bowled out in their second innings at stroke of lunch and India ended the game in the second session. Once we lost two and a half days, when we came on day 4 we wanted to get them out as quickly as possible and see what we can do with the bat. When they got bowled out for 230, it wasn't about the runs we



get but the overs we got at them," said Rohit at the post-

match presentation. 'To make a game out of it on that pitch was a superb effort. It was a risk we were willing to take because when you're trying to bat like that, you can be bundled out for a low score. But we were ready for it even if we got bowled out for 100-120. It was India's record extending 18th series win in a row at home. Among the new players, Rohit was pleased by Akash

Deep's relentless effort. "He's been good (Akash Deep). Lot of domestic cricket he has played. When Dravid.

you come up through the ranks like that, there are a lot of overs in the legs. He has the quality and the skill. Good body as well - can bowl long spells. You have to make sure you prepare your bench strength," said the skipper. It was the first Test series under new head coach Gautam Gambhir who overtook the responsibility from Rahul

We had a fantastic time (with Dravid) but life moves on. Gautam Gambhir, I've played with him and know what sort of mindset he comes in with," said Rohit.

Ashwin was named player of the series for his all-round show. He rated the improbable win was "massive" in the context of World Test Championship.

"When we bowled them out

yesterday, it was little after lunch. Rohit was keen that we needed 80 overs to bowl at

"And the moment he came inside out and gave that talk where we're going to go after it even if we get out under 230. It's not only him saying it, he went out there and hit his first ball for six. He set the tone that way," said the premier spinner. Opposition skipper Najmul Hasan Shanto said that team's batting through the two Test series let them down.

"Both the Tests we didn't bat well. In these conditions we need to bat well. If you look at our batters - we played 30-40 balls and got out. It's important in a Test match, when batsmen get in, you should look to score big runs," said Shanto.

"The way Ashwin and Jaddu batted at that time (in Chennai after India were six down) they batted really well. As a bowling unit we need to look at those moments - how we can get those wickets. That partnership cost us that game." added Shanto.

## Whenever it comes to the team, I and give my life out there: Rodrigues

PTI DUBAI

Jemimah Rodrigues feels adaptability and maintaining a team-first mentality will be key for India to achieve their dream of claiming a maiden ICC title at the T20 World Cup beginning here on Thursday.

India, who reached the finals of the women's T20 World Cup in 2020, will start their campaign in the ninth edition of the tournament against New Zealand on October 4.

"For me, it's all about assessing the conditions and playing the situation. I just want to keep it simple and do whatever it takes to help the team win and whatever the team needs," Rodrigues, who hit a 52 in the first warm-up game against West Indies, told Star Sports.
"When I put things in that perspective,

it gets the best out of me and motivates me. For me, whenever it comes to the team, I go and give my life out there. That gets me more passionate, energetic, and enthusiastic. I want Team India to win. We, as a unit, want Team India to win. For me, it's all about keeping it in that perspective."

The 24-year-old from Mumbai

emphasised on the importance of playing to the situation irrespective of

Bowlers can have off days, and as a inexperienced," Rodrigues said.



batter. I need to assess which bowler to attack and when to hold back. The satisfaction comes from playing smart and doing what's best for the team." In other ICC events, India has reached the finals of ODI World Cups in 2005 and 2017 but never gone the distance. Harmanpreet Kaur and Co, meanwhile, made a good start by winning the first warm-up match against West Indies by

"For this team, it's a mix of absolute youngsters and some like me who have experience. Richa (Ghosh) and "For me, it's not about specific bowlers Shafali (Verma) have also played World but about playing to the situation. Cups before, so we are young but not

'Then we have Harman and Smriti (Mandhana), who have played more World Cups than all of us. That coming together is the strength of this team. This team is special. There's something in this team, a fire to win, and at the same time, an energy and bond that's very special.

"We keep talking about sticking to our processes in team meetings and doing whatever it takes to help Team India win. That's the entire goal of this team." Talking about New Zealand legend Devine, Rodrigues said: remember watching her hit five sixes in a row at my first Under-19 camp at If I see her lifting the trophy, I know I'll Chinnaswamy Stadium. It was start crying."

incredible, and since then, I've always admired her game. We've prepared well to bowl against her, and now it's just

about executing our plans."
India will face Australia in a Group A clash in Sharjah on October 13, and Rodrigues stated that execution will be key against the former champions.

"I love playing against Australia because you have to bring your Agame. There's no other option if you want to win. The rivalry has been intense over the years, and it brings out the best in us.

"We've prepared well and put in the work. Now it's time to execute our plans."

Rodrigues lavished praise on senior colleagues - opener Mandhana and skipper Harmanpreet.

"What stands out about Smriti is her maturity. Even though she's young, she understands the game and her role so well. As the vice-captain, her inputs are invaluable, and she's developed a great understanding of players. She doesn't iust tell you to do something her way; she puts herself in your shoes and offers

advice that works for you." "Harman di is a big-match player. We've seen it time and again - from her 171 in the World Cup to her performances in kev matches. As a team, we know how much this World Cup means to her, and

## Associate nations might abandon 'costly' red-ball cricket: Whatmore

PTI ■ SHARJAH

World Cup-winning coach Dav Whatmore voiced concerns about the sustainability of the ICC's multi-million dollar initiative to support Test cricket suggesting that several countries, especially associate nations, may abandon the "costly" red-ball format entirely.

The International Cricket Council is mulling a dedicated fund of at least USD 15 million for Test cricket that would increase the minimum match payment for Test players and cover the cost of sending teams on overseas tours.

"Saving Test cricket is one of the challenges. The ICC is very keen to maintain some sort of status in Test match cricket. They have created a pool of money to assist countries that are struggling. A step in the right direction, but I'm not sure how sustainable that is," Whatmore told PTI on the sidelines of the Cricket Predicta Conclave here.

"There are a number of countries, particularly the Associates, which may abandon the red ball and focus on the white ball," he added.

The dedicated fund would support national boards that struggle to compete with the wages offered in global T20 competitions.
"It is a very costly format of the game.

A number of countries do it really well, and they're very successful at it, but there's also many who are struggling. India, Australia, and England appear

to be the only three countries prioritising Test cricket, with India reaching the finals of the World Test Championship on both occasions. Whatmore attributes this success to the presence of a strong red-ball

domestic calendar. "It appears as though those three



countries are very strong in their domestic red ball tournaments, and that reflects internationally," he said.
"New Zealand played in the championship not all that long ago.
They're also keen to be active in that format, but they're struggling when they travel to the subcontinent. They'll be tested again when they come to India."

The 70-year-old, who coached Sri Lanka to the World Cup in 1996, lauded India for its robust domestic calendar while adding that the IPL and the under-19 program contribute significantly to accelerating player development.

"Well, it's very robust. It's a very good, strong, healthy domestic calendar that

throws up very good new cricketers that come along, and then you add IPL onto that. It really does accelerate development for a lot of youngsters. "Add to that the Under-19 program, which is always successful. There's always been one or two boys that continue on with a very good form from every second year in the World Cup, and they've been successful in winning the World Cup too on many occasions. So all in all, it's a very good

While Bangladesh registered a historic Test series victory against Pakistan and host Sri Lanka defeated New Zealand, the two struggled against India and England respectively. Whatmore, who has coached both the teams in the past, feels they need to be

more consistent. Lanka were reasonably competitive in England, and they come back to their own conditions, which they are very familiar with and having won some very important tosses in Galle, makes it very difficult for touring teams, particularly the Western countries.

"So they're doing well, and so is Bangladesh. They did well against Pakistan, but then they had a real tough time in Chennai in the first against India.

So overall, they're very encouraging performances, but you've got to have consistency, and that's what will separate the teams," he added.



## Sabalenka extends winning streak, Osaka to play Gauff at China Open

**AP** ■ BEIJING

ryna Sabalenka's dominant Ahard-court season showed no signs of slowing down as she cruised to a 6-2, 6-2 win over Ashlyn Krueger at the China Open on Monday for her 14th consecutive victory. The three-time Grand Slam

winner started her streak with a title at Cincinnati in August and continued with a run to the championship at the U.S. Open earlier this month. She also won the Australian Open earlier in the year. The second-ranked Sabalenka

converted five of her seven breakpoint opportunities in a lopsided contest against Krueger and will next face Madison Keys, hoping to equal her career-best 15 consecutive victories set in 2020-21.

Keys had a 6-3, 6-3 win over Beatrice Haddad Maia of Brazil. Haddad Maia won the Korea Open last week but struggled to combat the baseline power of Keys.

Former No. 1 Naomi Osaka continued her positive start with new coach Patrick Mouratoglou with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over Katie Volynets, advancing to a round of 16 match against sixth-ranked Coco Gauff.

It will be the first meeting between the two Grand Slam champions in more than two vears, with the head-to-head series tied at 2-2.

"It's going to be a really cool test for me," Osaka said. "She's played really well this year. I'm excited to play the match, and I know people are excited to watch the match."

Osaka, who returned from maternity leave at the start of this season and is No. 73 in the current rankings, fired five aces and produced three service breaks.

The four-time major winner joined Mouratoglou shortly

before the China Open after splitting with Wim Fisette. Her run here so far is the first time since May that Osaka has had three consecutive wins.

Also, No. 14-ranked Anna Kalinskaya was leading 3-6, 6-3, 3-1 when Peyton Sterns retired from their match. She will next play Yu Starodubtseva of Ukraine.

Karolina Muchova beat Jaqueline Cristian 6-1, 6-3 and will play the winner of the match between Cristina Bucsa and 24th-seeded Elise Mertens in the fourth round.

In the men's draw, Andrey beat Alejandro Rublev Davidovich Fokina 6-4, 7-5 in a match that was carried over from Sunday because of a rain delay.

aces and 21 winners to extend his career record against Davidovich Fokina to 5-0. The fifth-seeded Russian will play local favorite No.

No. 6-ranked Rublev had six

## **Swag** is one of the top films in my career: Sree Vishnu

ree Vishnu, known for choosing diverse subjects and characters, is back with his latest film, *Swag*, in which he portrays four distinct roles. In a candid conversation, he discusses the film, his upcoming projects and his personal interests!

Sree Vishnu always experiments with different types of cinema and portrays unique roles in his films. His latest project, Swag, carries the Telugu title Swaganika Vamshaniki Swagatham and is directed by Hasith Goli. This marks their second collaboration after working together on Raja Raja Chola. "I'm playing four characters in this film, which is a completely new experience for me. I haven't played dual roles," said Sree

Regarding the film's title, he explained, "Nowadays, most youngsters aren't familiar with Telugu slang, so we used Swag for them. For those who appreciate the Telugu language, we kept the full title, Swaganika Vamshaniki Swagatham. We wanted everyone to be able to connect with the film, including those from other languages who can easily catch *Swag*. That's why we chose this dual title approach.

Sree Vishnu further elaborated, "Today, people only understand when you mention 'family tree,' but many in the current generation might not be familiar with *Vamsa Vruksham.* Our story revolves around gender issues and understanding one's lineage. It begins 1500 years ago and explores who held the upper hand—men or women. We've told this story in an entertaining, cat-and-mouse style." All four of Vishnu's characters belong to the same lineage, hence the similar appearance across generations! He praised Ritu Varma's role, saying, "She has portrayed her character beautifully. After this film, people will respect women even more. Women will definitely love Bhavabhuthi's

character.' Speaking about the challenges of playing these roles, he said, "Except for my present character, Singa, the

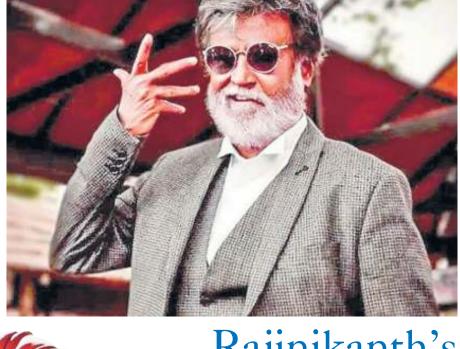
other three were challenging. They speak pure Telugu, with some Sanskrit mixed in, which required a lot of practice. One character involved prosthetic makeup, which took around four hours to apply and two hours to remove. The removal process used pure alcohol, which was quite irritating for hours. This film has been a unique and challenging experience."

Vishnu mentioned that, although it's a complex story, it has been narrated concisely. "After watching the film, you'll be amazed at how such a

large story was told in just two and a half hours. This is definitely one of the top films of my career. He also spoke about the production houses, noting that this is his second project with them. "After . Raja Raja Chola, we decided to make another film together.

Though the production house has faced some setbacks, I'm confident they will bounce back with Swag. This film feels like a prequel to Raja Raja Chola. Every 20 minutes, there's a new surprise," he added. Sree Vishnu expressed his love for folk

movies, stating, "I'd love to do a film in the folk genre. If anyone comes with a good script, I'm ready."
Regarding his upcoming projects, he revealed that he is working on a thriller and another film with the big production house, Geetha Arts.

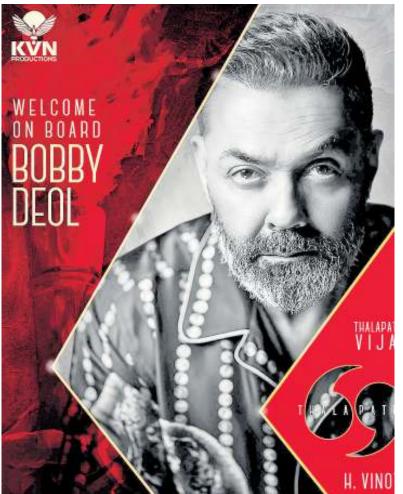


Rajinikanth's health stable; to be discharged soon

amil superstar Rajinikanth was admitted to Apollo Hospitals in Chennai on Monday evening after complaining of stomach pain. He was immediately rushed to the hospital, according to reports. In the latest health update, the veteran actor is reported to be stable and is expected to be discharged from the hospital within two to three days. "Rajinikanth has successfully undergone an elective procedure during which a stent was placed near his lower abdominal area. The procedure was carried out by a team of three specialty

doctors in a cath lab. Currently, he is stable and is being kept under observation. He will be recuperating at the hospital for the next 2-3 days before being discharged," said the reports. Rajinikanth's film *Vettaiyan* is slated to release on October 10. In the lead-up to its release, the actor has been actively promoting the film. He recently attended the pre-release event, where he danced alongside music director Anirudh Ravichander. The film is directed by Gnanavel. Rajinikanth has also begun shooting for his upcoming film Coolie, directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj. The actor has been actively involved in the pro-

duction over the past few



## **BOBBY ROPED** THALAPATHY'S **LAST FILM**

obby Deol offlate has been regular in South cinema, with multiple Telugu and Tamil films. The Bollywood actor is now roped in for another South film. He has now been roped in for Tamil superstar Vijav's film, Thalapathy 69, directed by H. Vinoth and with music by Anirudh Ravichander.

The production hous announced the cast on Tuesday, expressing their excitement to have Bobby Deol on board. This film marks Vijay's final project before he transitions to full-time politics, having announced his political party in February 2024 and intending to contest in the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections.

Thalapathy 69 has been generating significant buzz, especially after Vijay's recent film, GOAT, didn't quite live up to expectations at the box office. Despite this, Vijay decided to act in one more film and Thalapathy 69 is expected to be a high-octane action



A ctor Karthi is in Hyderabad promoting his recent film Satyam Sundaram. The film is directed by Prem Kumar of 96 fame, with Aravind Swamy as the other leading actor. Satyam Sundaram has received critical acclaim and the makers organised a success meet. On this occasion, Karthi spoke about similar films made long ago by directors Viswanath, Balachander and Dasari Narayana Rao. "When I first read the script, I had a doubt in my mind—would people watch this kind of film? But then I felt that if we come up with a new concept, the audience will definitely appreciate it. True to my words, today people are talking about this film," said Karthi. "I received calls from many people who got emotional while discussing the film with me. I felt happy about it, but this kind of film should also be commercially successful. If it succeeds commercially, producers will come forward to make more good films," Karthi added. He didn't want to say much more about the film's success. "When I came to this event, the way people received, hugged, wished me-made me emotional. I'm very happy with the response," he said



## Unstoppable with NBK 3 shooting begins in Hyderabad

Nandamuri Balakrishna is currently juggling his upcoming film, directed by K.S. Ravindra (Bobby) and the new season of his popular talk show Unstoppable on Aha. According to sources, the show is presently filming an episode featuring Malayalam superstar Dulquer Salmaan, who has gained popularity in Telugu cinema through his direct

However, a source revealed, "Dulquer Salmaan's episode won't be the first to air in the new season, which premieres on October 24 on Aha." According to the latest update, the shooting of the third season of *Unstoppable* has begun in Hyderabad. The first episode is expected to feature the team of *Lucky Baskhar*. SThe makers are planning to shoot additional episodes with notable actors like Chiranjeevi, Venkatesh, Ram Charan and Allu Arjun.

One question on everyone's mind is whether Balakrishna will invite Nagarjuna onto the show, given their reported long-standing rift. Notably, Balakrishna missed having Chiranjeevi on the show in the last two seasons, but the source confirms Chiranjeevi is on the guest list for this season

Last year, Chiranjeevi's brother Pawan Kalyan's appearance on the show was a massive hit.



rarun Tej's last successful film was Gaddalakonda Ganesh, which released in 2019. Since then, a few of his films have hit the big screen, but they were not successful at the box office. Now, Varun Tej teams up with *Palasa* director Karuna Kumar for the period drama Matka, where he takes on a unique avatar. According to the makers, it's a mass action entertainers and the shoot is nearing completion.

Matka is one of the highest-budget films in Varun Tej's career, produced by Dr. Vejender Reddy Teegala and Rajani Thalluri. Currently, they are shooting an important action sequence involving Varun Tej and fighters. With the production almost complete, the makers have officially locked the release date for November 14.

Varun Tej stuns in two distinct looks that beautifully depict his character's evolution over time. Director Karuna Kumar has crafted a powerful script with a peri-od backdrop spanning 24 years, from 1958 to 1982, showcasing Varun Tej in four different avatars. Meenakshi Chaudhry and Nora Fatehi star as the female leads opposite Varun Tej, while GV Prakash Kumar has

