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Sukumar's daughter Sukriti shaves her head for the **FILM** P11



QUOTE OF THE DAY

the pioneer

Revanth Reddy has set up a six-member extortion gang which is wreaking havoc in the state. This "Ali Baba and his half a dozen thieves," consisting of Tirupathi Reddy, Kondal Reddy, Vem Narendra Reddy, Ronin Reddy, Faheem Qureshi and AV Reddy is involved in blackmail, extortion, land grabbing and other illegal activities. Congress leaders like Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi must answer their silence regarding Revanth's extortion activities



- KTR, BRS MLA

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DON'T MISS...

Tirupati to host ITCX from Feb 17

The sacred city of Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, will host the second edition of the International Temples Convention and Expo (ITCX) from February 17 to 19, 2025. Following the resounding success of its inaugural event in 2023, which drew praise from dignitaries including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, ITCX 2025 promises an even larger and more impactful gathering. Organized by Temple Connect (India), ITCX is the world's first platform dedicated to the comprehensive management of temples...

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Submit report on ACB cases: Dy CM

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj, K. Pawan Kalyan, has directed the Principal Secretaries of the Panchayat Raj, Rural Development, and Forest Departments to expedite the inquiry process concerning delinquent employees and submit a report on pending Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) cases. Pawan Kalyan emphasised the need for the Principal Secretaries to maintain a vigilant eye on the performance of employees. "This will help them remain alert and perform optimally....

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'Rs 2,500 monthly aid to women

The BJP on Friday released the first part of its manifesto for the February 5 Delhi polls, keeping women at the centre of its poll pitch by promising Rs 2,500 monthly aid for them, Rs 21,000 for every pregnant woman, LPG cylinders at Rs 500 and also Rs 2,500 pension for senior citizens. BJP president J P Nadda unveiled the 'Sankalp Patra' at a press conference here, and asserted the manifesto -- which reflects a direct attempt by the BJP to rival AAP's welfare-focused governance model -- would serve as...

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Economic growth poised to rebound

India's economic growth is poised to rebound as domestic demand regains strength, though the stickiness in food inflation warrants careful monitoring, the latest RBI Bulletin released on Friday said. An article on the 'State of the Economy' published in the January Bulletin also noted that the economic outlook for 2025 is divergent across countries with some loss of speed in the US; weak-to-modest recoveries in Europe and Japan; more moderate growth profiles in emerging and developing countries...

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UNION CABINET'S HISTORIC DECISION

Rs 11,440 cr for RINL revival

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet has approved a Rs 11,440 crore revival plan for debt-laden Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL), according to a statement released on Friday. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the revival plan for RINL for Rs 11,440 crore, it added.

The infusion includes Rs 10,300 crore as equity capital into RINL and conversion of Rs 1,140 crore working capital loan as 7 per cent non-cumulative preference share capital redeemable after 10 years to keep RINL as a going concern, the official statement said. With this revival package, many of the legacy problems that RINL used to face will be resolved, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

The equity infusion of Rs 10,300 crore into RINL will help it overcome the operational problems related to raising working capital and start blast furnace operations most productively, the statement said.

The revival package would allow the company to gradually reach its full production capacity, which is critical and is in the national interest to have stability in the Indian steel market by augmenting steel production and also save the livelihoods of employees (regular and contractual) and those dependent on the operations of the steel plant. Continued on Page 2

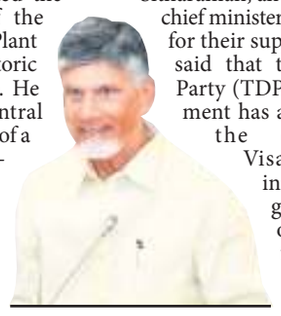


- Rs 10,300 crore is equity infusion, and Rs 1,140 crore is loan conversion
- Package resolves operational issues and restarts blast furnaces
- Full production targets are set for January and August 2025
- RINL's isakhapatnam Steel Plant has a 7.3 Mtpa capacity
- Plan safeguards steel market stability and employee livelihoods
- RINL faced financial distress, defaults, and borrowing limits

'We have saved VSP'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday hailed the successful revival of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), marking a historic moment for the State. He commended the Central government's approval of a financial support package of Rs 11,440 crore for the steel industry, a move that he believes will strengthen the region's industrial future.



Naidu expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and former Karnataka chief minister HD Kumaraswamy for their support of the VSP. He said that the Telugu Desam Party (TDP)-led State government has always championed the cause of the Visakhapatnam steel industry, ensuring its growth despite various challenges over the years.

Continued on Page

Privatisation a closed chapter: CM Naidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday said that the issue of privatising the Vizag Steel Plant will no longer arise as the Centre has approved financial support of Rs 11,440 crore.

Addressing a press conference in Undavalli, Naidu stated that everyone must work hard and utilise taxpayers' funds efficiently to revive the steel plant. Continued on Page 2

ADDITIONAL PADDY PROCUREMENT



Cabinet nod for Rs 700 cr loan

Rs 294 cr for protective wall along Krishna River in Guntur dist approved

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet, led by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, on Friday, approved a Rs 700 crore loan to the Civil Supplies Corporation for additional paddy procurement, the establishment of 63 new Anna Canteens, and the Construction of a protective wall along the Krishna River.

Addressing a press conference, Information & Public Relations Minister K Parthasarathy outlined the key decisions taken by the Cabinet. He explained that the Rs 700 crore will facilitate the procurement of additional paddy during the 2024-25 Kharif season.

"Paddy procurement has been a top priority for the State government. Unlike anywhere else in the country, this government is committed to making payments to farmers within 24 hours of procurement, and in some cases, within six to seven hours," Parthasarathy stated.

So far, the State has transferred Rs 6,200 crore to 4.6 lakh farmers for the procurement of 29 lakh tonnes of paddy.

In another significant decision, the Cabinet approved the establishment of 63 additional Anna canteens, which provide subsidised meals to the poor. Each Anna Canteen will be set up in one of the 63 constituencies for Rs 61 lakh, with a total expenditure of Rs 38 crore. A separate society will be formed for the management of the canteens, with advisory committees aimed at ensuring their self-sufficiency and smooth operation.

Continued on Page 2

TDP-led NDA coalition in AP hails Union Cabinet's move







PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Agriculture Minister K Atchennaidu has praised the NDA government for revitalizing the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) with a substantial financial package, stating that it has brought new life to the plant. He criticized the YSRCP government for its neglect of the plant and commended the NDA for keeping it operational without resorting to privatization, as promised during the elections.

Atchennaidu expressed confidence that the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant would become the number one steel plant in the country within two years. He emphasized that the NDA government's efforts are focused on clearing the plant's debt and ensuring its sustained growth.

The Rs 11,440 crore package has been widely welcomed by the people of the state, particularly in North Andhra. The Minister highlighted that the slogan "Visakh Steel is the right of Andhra people" continues to resonate deeply with the public.

Minister for Labour, Vasanmsetti Subhash, expressed immense joy over the Central Government's announcement of the Rs 11,440 crore revival package for the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. He hailed the move as a reflection of the coalition government's commitment to development.

Subhash extended his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for allocating the Rs 11,440 crore to the steel plant, describing it as a crucial step towards revitalizing the region's industrial infrastructure.

He also criticised YSRCP leaders, accusing them of looting Visakhapatnam under the guise of developing the state capital. He pointed out their extravagant spending at Rishikonda, funded by the people. In contrast, he claimed that the coalition government has focused on genuine development since taking office.

BJP State President Daggubati Purandeswari lauded the central government's historic decision to allocate Rs 11,440 crore for the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant.

She extended her thanks to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and Union Minister Kumar Swamy for their support.



4 pilgrims killed, 13 hurt as private bus rams lorry

PNS ■ CHITTOOR

A tragic road accident occurred near Gangasagar village early this morning, claiming the lives of four pilgrims and injuring 13 others. The private travel bus, carrying a group of 25 pilgrims returning to Madurai after visiting the Tirumala temple, collided with a stationary tipper lorry on National Highway 40.

The impact of the collision was severe, resulting in the immediate death of four passengers. The injured were rushed to the Government General Hospital (GGH) in Chittoor, Christian Medical College (CMC) Hospital in Vellore, and Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences (SVIMS) in Tirupati.

District Collector Sumit Kumar promptly visited the injured at the GGH and inquired about their condition from the medical staff. He instructed the doctors to provide the best possible medical care to the injured. The accident led to a traffic jam on both sides of the highway.

Lokesh's Davos visit from Jan 20 to focus on wooing investments

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Education, Information Technology (IT), and Electronics, Nara Lokesh, who is also the chairman of the Investments Task Force Committee, is attending the World Economic Forum (WEF) summit in Davos from January 20 to 24. His primary objectives are to secure significant investments for the State and create employment opportunities for the youth.

During the five-day summit, Lokesh will meet with ambassadors from over 50 countries, prominent industrialists, and top business leaders. At the Andhra Pradesh Pavilion, he is scheduled to hold discussions with more than 30 globally renowned industrialists, focusing on attracting investments across various sectors in the State.

Leveraging the WEF as a global platform, Lokesh will actively participate in the meeting of academic sector governors, where he will address transformative changes in education worldwide. He is also set to meet experts to discuss building ecosystems for intelligent industries, the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the modern world, and promoting gender parity.



Additionally, Lokesh will participate in a roundtable conference with representatives from Google and Nvidia, focusing on next-generation AI, data factories, and establishing an AI university. The Minister is expected to attend several other key meetings during the summit.

Sisodia to head panel to probe charges against Sr IPS officer Sunil Kumar

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has ordered the formation of an inquiry commission to investigate charges against Senior IPS officer PV Sunil Kumar, former chief of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). Currently listed as Director General of Police (DGP) on the waiting list, Sunil Kumar is facing disciplinary action, as formalised in a Government Order issued on Friday. The inquiry commission will be led by RP Sisodia, Special Chief Secretary to the Revenue Department, who has been appointed as the inquiring authority. Harish Kumar Gupta (1992), Director General of Vigilance and Enforcement, will serve as the presenting officer.



The charges against Sunil Kumar were framed in October 2024. Continued on Page 2

NISG ready to help AP over smart governance

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a significant step towards fostering technological advancement and innovation in governance, Rajiv Bansal, CEO of the National Institute for Smart Governance (NISG), expressed the organisation's readiness to collaborate with the Andhra Pradesh government by providing crucial technical support. This partnership is expected to play a pivotal role in achieving the state's ambitious "Swarnandhra@2047" vision.

Continued on Page 2

INDIA'S FIRST PVT EV PARK

People Tech signs MoU with AP govt

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

People Tech Enterprises Pvt. Ltd., part of the People Tech Group, has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Andhra Pradesh to develop India's first private Electric Vehicle (EV) Park, Orvakal Mobility Valley, in the Kurnool district. Spread over 1,200 acres, the park is poised to be a major hub for the country's growing EV ecosystem.

The project, which involves a total investment of ₹1,800 crores, will feature cutting-edge infrastructure designed to support the manufacturing of EVs and allied industries. Upon becoming fully operational, Orvakal Mobility Valley is expected to draw an additional investment of ?13,000 crores (₹1.5 billion) and generate up to 25,000 job opportunities.



People Tech Enterprises will serve as the anchor unit, establishing an Electric Two-Wheeler (E2W) manufacturing facility with an investment of ₹300 crores.

The park will also encourage the development of the EV industry by providing essential infrastructure, including Research and Development (R&D) centres, testing tracks, plug-and-play industrial spaces, and ready-made plots for industries.

Staff shortage hinders Tribal Univ's expansion

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

The Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh (CTUAP) is facing a major staffing shortage that is affecting its growth and ability to offer new courses. With just 18 teaching staff and 12 non-teaching staff, the university is struggling to manage its current 13 courses.

To expand and meet the needs of its growing student population, the university has requested 77 new teaching positions and 48 non-teaching roles.

This would help set up 11 new departments and increase student intake from 400 to 1,000. However, the shortage of staff is holding back these plans.

"We're finding it hard to manage with the current staff," said a university official. "Without more teachers and support staff, we can't introduce new courses or grow as we need to."

Students are also facing challenges due to a lack of proper facilities, especially fully-equipped laboratories.

The university is still operating out of old Andhra University buildings, which aren't able to meet the demands of its increasing student numbers. "The lack of hostels is a big issue," said a student from the biotechnology course. "Many students are reluctant to join because there's no place to stay. It's the only university in the state without hostels, and that's a major concern."



Vaba Yogi, the State vice-president of Adivasi Samkshema Parishad, has criticised both the Union and State governments for neglecting the university. "The government must act quickly," Yogi said. "This university has the potential to uplift tribal students, and the government has to ensure it functions properly."

Vaba Yogi, the State vice-president of Adivasi Samkshema Parishad, has criticised both the Union and State governments for neglecting the university. "The government must act quickly," Yogi said.

"This university has the potential to uplift tribal students, and the government has to ensure it functions properly."

The future of CTUAP depends on prompt government action. Both students and tribal organizations are calling for faster construction of hostels and immediate approval of staff positions to help the university operate smoothly.

Omar's change in stance signals sea change in J&K

For decades, the people of Jammu and Kashmir suffered cross-border terrorism, religious extremism and communal atrocities. Consequently, the people of J&K paid a heavy price with their lives and livelihoods. Not only did India's internal security, economy and social fabric suffer damage, but the situation in J&K also became a strong lever for nations who wanted to throttle India's rise.

Since Independence, J&K have been victims of the Congress's muddled thinking, beginning with Jawaharlal Nehru's. Two disastrous ideas dominated this thinking. Nehru's irrational ideological moorings formed the basis for the first. It was the idea that Indian Muslims were somehow different from the rest of the Indians. So, a Muslim-majority state needed special treatment, resulting in Nehru, an avowed secularist, bringing in Article 370 and a separate Constitution for J&K.

Of course, Pakistan was quick to grasp the significance of this blunder and projected India's positioning of J&K among Indian states as India's acknowledgement of its disputed status. It used terrorism and falsely projected the resultant death and mayhem as the consequence of a struggle against India and the Indian State's violent put-down of the same. International platforms, from the United Nations (UN) to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), became forums for Pakistan to raise the J&K 'dispute,' forcing India to play defence and spend considerable diplomatic energies to maintain the status quo.

The second dominant aspect of the muddled thinking was the lack of strategic depth when it came to reading the intentions and nature of our neighbours. Consequently, India had to fight multiple wars on two fronts and lost territory. In more recent decades, the same lack of imagination in strategic thinking led to Pakistan succeeding in portraying J&K as a dispute between two nuclear-armed rivals and warning the world of a nuclear war if India retaliated against its proxy war. Pakistan could plan, sponsor and direct the 26/11 Mumbai terrorist attacks, among many and get away scot-free with mass murder as the then Congress-led government stood stupefied.

Luckily for India, the same level of thinking that created, escalated and perpetuated the J&K issue did not burden Modi. His actions since then and the change we see today in J&K prove Einstein's words, "We cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them," as accurate

On the one hand, Pakistan succeeded in convincing many Islamic countries - despite India being a secular country with the second-largest Muslim population in the world - as an Islamic issue and concern. On the other hand,



KISHORE POREDDY

regional parties, who recognised the advantage Article 370 provided to perpetuate their power and enrich themselves, made it a mission to build a false narrative projecting Article 370 as the saviour of J&K Muslim's interests. With Congress and their so-called 'secular' allies supporting the same false narrative for their vote bank politics, a widespread perception took root in the country that India could do nothing against Pakistan's proxy war and set things right in J&K.

Modi and the BJP always believed, from Jan Sangh days, that Nehru's Article 370 spelt only trouble for India and its integrity. Jan Sangh's first president, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee's famous slogan 'Ek desh mein do vidhaan, do pradhaan aur do nishaan nahi chalenge (There cannot be two constitutions, two PMs and two flags in one nation)" eloquently portrays this stand.

When Modi became Prime Minister in 2014, this fatalistic attitude dominated the nation's approach to the situation in J&K. Luckily for India, the same level of thinking that created, escalated and perpetuated the J&K issue did not burden Modi. His actions since then and the change we see today in J&K prove Einstein's words, "We cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them," as accurate.

Modi's next level of thinking becomes clear when we go through the timeline of his actions vis-a-vis J&K. His first move was to invite Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to his swearing-in ceremony in 2014. He followed that with a surprise visit to Pakistan and a birthday greeting for Sharif, earning global goodwill. Yet, when Pakistan, true to its nature, sponsored militant attacks on an Indian army base in Uri, he followed it up with surgical strikes across the Line of Control (LoC), calling Pakistan's nuclear bluff.

With Pakistan's "ultimate" threat defanged, he revoked J&K's special status under Article 370 in a meticulously planned swift move soon after coming to power in 2019, to the utter shock of the entire opposition, which believed he couldn't do it even if he became the Prime Minister for 10 terms. He separated Ladakh from J&K and made them Union Territories, to supervise a smooth transition into a new, peaceful J&K.

Omar Abdullah, the leader of the National Conference and the newly elected Chief Minister of J&K, said during the Z-Morh tunnel inauguration in Sonamarg this week that J&K trusts Modi and that he has kept his promise to eliminate the "Dil and Dilli ki doori.' This indicates a positive sea change and a new, peaceful era in J&K — the change India hoped for decades — a cause for celebration for all Indians.

(The author is BJP TS spokesperson)

'Norms soon for allotment of house sites to the poor'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Minister for Information and Public Relations, Kolusu Parthasarathi, announced that the Cabinet also approved the regularisation of houses built by the poor on government land, provided there are no legal complications. In a move to strengthen real-time governance at the village and ward levels, the Cabinet also approved the rationalisation of functionaries at the secretariats.

The State government will soon issue guidelines for the distribution of house sites to the homeless, both in rural and urban areas. These house sites will be provided under the flagship 'Houses for All the Poor (Pedalandariki Illu)' programme.

At a State Cabinet meeting held at the Secretariat on Friday, chaired by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, the proposal was cleared. Under this plan, three cents of land will be allocated to the homeless in rural areas, while two cents will be given in urban areas. This initiative is open to those who have not previously availed of any home loans under the Housing Scheme. Speaking to the media about the decisions taken by the Cabinet, the Minister for Information and Public Relations, Kolusu Parthasarathi, announced that the Cabinet also approved the regularisation of houses built by the poor on government land, provided there are no legal complications. In a move to strengthen real-time governance at the village and ward levels, the Cabinet also approved the rationalisation of functionaries at the secretariats.

The government will leverage technology, including drones, Artificial Intelligence, and the Internet of Things (IoT), to enhance governance efficiency. Panchayat secretaries will head the village and ward secretariat staff, while surplus staff will be reassigned to various departments based on eligibility, the Minister explained.

The Cabinet also focused on freehold land and the list of prohibitory lands as per the Registration Act of 1908. Several people have expressed concerns about efforts to bring various lands under the freehold category. The State Government aims to ensure that no injustice is done to the poor regarding their land rights, Parthasarathi added.

On another front, the TDP-led NDA Government is credited with transferring funds to the accounts of farmers within 24 hours, sometimes even within seven hours, of purchasing their farm produce. This season, 28,083,238 metric tonnes of farm products were purchased from 4.6 lakh farmers, with Rs 6,469 crore deposited into their accounts.

The Cabinet also approved the proposal to set up 63 more Anna Canteens in the remaining 62 Assembly segments, with an expenditure of Rs 61 lakh each. A total of 203 Anna Canteens have been opened across the State so far, Parthasarathi stated.

In concluding remarks, the entire Cabinet extended its best wishes to the Chief Minister for the success of his upcoming visit to Davos. Parthasarathi added that the Chief Minister had asked all Ministers to work diligently towards improving the State's economic condition.

Coalition govt betrayed volunteers: ex-APNGOA chief

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

N Chandra Shekhar Reddy, former President of the APNGOs Association, has strongly criticised the neglect and mistreatment of the 2.5 lakh volunteers in the state by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. Highlighting the issue, he stated that Naidu had promised a monthly salary of ?10,000 for volunteers ahead of the elections but failed to deliver on that assurance.

Adding to their plight, volunteers have not received their salaries for the past seven months, pushing them into severe financial distress. Chandra Shekhar Reddy condemned the recent house arrests of volunteers who tried to raise their grievances through the "Chalo Vijayawada" protest, terming it a disgraceful act against those who serve the public selflessly.

He also criticised Pawan Kalyan and Lokesh for making promises to volunteers but not acting on them. Further, he demanded that the government honour its manifesto commitments by implementing the promised salary hike and ensuring timely disbursement of salaries. He called upon the Panchayati Raj Department, which engaged volunteers' services during the previous government, to reinstate them immediately and acknowledge their vital role in governance.

Tirupati to host intl temples meet in Feb

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



The sacred city of Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, will host the second edition of the International Temples Convention and Expo (ITCX) from February 17 to 19, 2025. Following the resounding success of its inaugural event in 2023, which drew praise from dignitaries including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, ITCX 2025 promises an even larger and more impactful gathering.

Organized by Temple Connect (India), ITCX is the world's first platform dedicated to the comprehensive management of temples. The convention focuses on enhancing the administration, operations, and development of temple ecosystems, bringing together temple leaders, administrators, and stakeholders from across the globe. Attendees can look forward to expert-led workshops, presentations, best practices, and Temple Talks designed to enrich their knowledge and practices.

Giresh Kulkarni, founder of Temple Connect and ITCX, expressed his enthusiasm:

We are excited to announce that ITCX 2025 will be held in the revered city of Tirupati. Building on the success of our inaugural event, which welcomed representatives from hundreds of temples worldwide, we aim to unite over 1,580 temples (1,200 in-person and 351 online) from 58+ countries this year. With over 2,400 delegates, this hybrid event fosters collaboration and elevates our temple ecosystems. This Maha Kumbh of Temples is a step towards strengthening spiritual communities globally."

ITCX 2025 is co-led by Giresh Kulkarni and Prasad Lad, Chairman of the convention and Member of the Maharashtra Legislative Council.

The Ministry of Tourism supports the event under the "Incredible India" initiative and aims to advance temple tourism and pilgrimage internationally.

Temple managers and representatives are encouraged to register by January 31, 2025. Registration is free for two representatives per temple, with accommodation included. Additional trustees can participate for a nominal fee and gain deeper insights by joining the event committees.

Rs 11,440 cr...

Continued from Page 1

The revival plan envisages that RINI will start full production with two blast furnaces in January 2025 and with three blast furnaces by August 2025. Under the Ministry of Steel, RINL operates the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP), the only offshore steel plant in Andhra Pradesh. It has an installed capacity of 7.3 Mtpa of liquid steel. As per the statement, the financial condition of RINL is critical.

RINL has exhausted the sanctioned borrowing limits from banks for working capital and was not in a position to get further loans from banks.

'We have saved...

Continued from Page 1

"The Visakhapatnam Steel Industry holds immense significance for the people of Andhra Pradesh," Naidu remarked. "Through close coordination between the NDA government at the Centre and the TDP government in the State, we overcame multiple obstacles, saving the plant and setting the stage for its future expansion. In just seven months, we have made remarkable progress, attracting substantial investments and creating a steel hub in the Visakh-Anakapalli region." He further assured that VSP would see further development under this new package.

Naidu outlined the State's major achievements in the past seven months, including attracting Rs 4 lakh crore in investments, establishing of Amaravati as the state capital, securing vital funds for the Polavaram project, and initiating work on the Visakhapatnam Railway Zone. "Our government is committed to fulfilling every promise made to the people, with a focus on welfare and development across all sectors," Naidu said. "We will continue striving towards progress and ask the people to unite in their efforts to protect the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant."

In a tweet following the announcement of the financial support, Naidu expressed his deep emotional connection to the plant and the state, calling the decision a testament to the collective efforts of the state and central governments. He specifically thanked Modi for his support and reiterated the government's resolve to honour its commitments to the people. Deputy Chief Minister K Pawan Kalyan also paid tribute to the sacrifices made by individuals like Amruta Rao, who lost their lives in the fight for the steel plant in 1966.

NISG ready to...

Continued from Page 1

On Friday, a team of NISG representatives met senior state government officials at the Real-Time Governance Society (RTGS) office in the Secretariat. During the meeting, Bansal presented NISG's initiatives across Andhra Pradesh and other states, highlighting the organisation's role as a non-profit body that offers strategic planning, e-governance solutions, and consultancy services at minimal costs to enable governments to harness emerging technologies for greater efficiency.

Bansal detailed NISG's extensive two-decade track record, which includes training over 30,000 government employees and managing more than 200 projects across states and Union Territories. Recalling Andhra Pradesh's foundational support for NISG, he reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to deepening this partnership.

"We are dedicated to supporting Andhra Pradesh in achieving its technological and governance aspirations," Bansal said. "By working together strategically, we aim to empower the state to adopt cutting-edge technologies for smarter, more efficient governance systems."

RP Sisodia, Special Chief Secretary of the Revenue Department, welcomed NISG's proposal, stressing that technical solutions are essential for addressing operational challenges in government departments. He noted that NISG's expertise could significantly modernise the state's systems and improve service delivery to citizens.

S Suresh Kumar, Principal Secretary of the Investment and Infrastructure Department, emphasised the state's proactive approach to adopting emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, drone technology, and deep tech. He expressed the state's intention to leverage NISG's support to further integrate these technologies into its governance and infrastructure.

Sisodia...

Continued from Page 1

He is accused of misconduct for posting comments on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) regarding an FIR filed at the Nagarampalem police station in the Guntur district.

The allegations suggest that these actions violated Rule 7 of the All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968, as amended.

The FIR was filed following a complaint by MLA K. Raghurama Krishnam Raju, and Sunil Kumar's social media post, which criticised the FIR, is central to the charges.

Sunil Kumar has denied the allegations and submitted a written defence in November, requesting the charges be dropped.

However, the government has decided to proceed with a full inquiry.

The investigation will be conducted under the guidelines of Rule 8(2) of the All India Services (Discipline & Appeal) Rules, 1969.

The appointed authority has been directed to expedite the inquiry and submit a detailed report at the earliest.

Cabinet nod...

Continued from Page 1

The Cabinet also extended tariff and electricity tax exemptions for the AP Ferro Alloys Producers Association for six more months, until March 31, 2025, at an additional burden of Rs 300 crore to the state.

Furthermore, the Cabinet approved Rs 294 crore for the construction of a retaining wall along the right bank of the Krishna River in Tadepalli village, Guntur district. This project, stretching from 0.9 km to 2.61 km downstream of the Prakasam Barrage, aims to protect the area from flooding, erosion, and loss of assets. In a move to support industrial development, the Cabinet exempted stamp duty and registration fees for the transfer of 2,596 acres of land to the Andhra Pradesh Industrial Corridors Development Corporation (APIDC) Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) in Kadapa district. Additionally, the Cabinet approved a proposal to regularise houses built by the poor on encroached government lands, provided there were no objections. The Cabinet also endorsed the rationalisation of ward and village secretariats to enhance real-time governance in the state. These measures are expected to boost infrastructure, support agriculture, and improve governance in Andhra Pradesh.

Privatisation a closed...

Continued from Page 1

"With the revival package in place, the problem of steel plant privatisation will no longer exist. This is taxpayers' money, and we need to use it responsibly," he said. The CM urged the Centre to immediately appoint a professional management team and bring in a capable CEO to run the plant effectively.

He also mentioned that the state government would collaborate with the National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) to procure iron ore and other raw materials. Promising to transform VSP into a strong organisation, Naidu highlighted the plant's valuable 20,000-acre land bank, which is unmatched by any other steel plant in India. "We must revive VSP and demonstrate that the Centre's decision was the right one. I appeal to the workers to come forward and support this effort," he added.

The chief minister pointed out that the TDP-led NDA government is fulfilling its election promises, citing the Rs 15,000 crore allocation for Amaravati's greenfield capital and the Rs 12,157 crore sanctioned for the Polavaram Project as examples.

He further noted that the NDA government had provided land for the Visakhapatnam railway zone and attracted Rs 4 lakh crore in investments within seven months.

Naidu also emphasised the government's commitment to the North Andhra region, highlighting upcoming projects such as the Google data centre, the ArcelorMittal steel plant, and others, which will merge Anakapalli with the port city of Vizag.

The CM mentioned that a 14 MT ArcelorMittal steel plant near Anakapalli, involving an investment of Rs 1.7 lakh crore, is in progress. He stated that raw materials would be transported via slurry pipelines from Nakkapalli in the first phase.

According to Naidu, the Centre has agreed to supply 7 MT of iron ore, with the deal expected to be formalised soon. Work on the project is also set to begin shortly.

Naidu thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for fulfilling the NDA's promises and extending cooperation in various ways.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Krishna Paksha
Tithi:	
Panchami:	Jan 18 05:30 AM to Jan 19 07:31 AM
Nakshatram:	
Purva Phalguni:	Jan 17 12:44 PM to Jan 18 02:51 PM
Uttara Phalguni:	Jan 18 02:51 PM to Jan 19 05:30 PM
Rahukalam:	9:40 AM to 11:03 AM
Yamagandam:	1:49 PM to 3:13 PM
Varjyam:	10:51 PM to 12:37 AM
Gulika:	6:53 AM to 8:16 AM
Amritakalam:	07:53 AM to 09:38 AM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	12:04 PM to 12:48 PM

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy
Temp: 32°c
Humidity: 54%
Sunrise: 6:39 AM
Sunset: 5:56 PM

Updated: January 17, 2025 5:00 PM

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MP proposes self-employment through cottage industries

NREGS, Panchayati Raj Dept conducting awareness programmes

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Vijayawada MP, Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni), has opined that self-employment through cottage industries in every household in rural areas can significantly improve the economic status of families. He was addressing a meeting with the presidents of the district's all mandal DWCRA associations, which was held at his office in Vijayawada on Friday.

The MP said that as per the directives of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, the government is working with the objective of creating one entrepreneur in every household. To achieve this goal, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) and the Panchayati Raj Department are conducting awareness programmes on various cottage industry-based employment opportunities.

He also informed that for the second time, the DWCRA presidents from all mandals of the district are being sent to Hyderabad to attend a programme organised by NREGS. During this programme, they will be exposed to various cottage industries, and they are expected to study whether such industries could be implemented in their respective mandals.

MP Sivanath assured that he will work towards implementing several Central government schemes in the district aimed at providing employment to the unemployed youth.

He encouraged DWCRA members and unemployed youngsters in the district to take advantage of these opportunities.

The programme was attended by officials, mandal presidents of DWCRA associations, district president of DWCRA K Kalpana, programme coordinators GV Narasimha Rao, Song Sanjay Verma, Telugu Mahila president and Corporator Chennupati Usharani and leaders of the Telugu Desam Party.



Plots allocated to 39 Amaravati farmers through e-lottery

72 returnable plots allocated to farmers from five villages

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A total of 72 plots have been allocated to 39 farmers from five villages of the Amaravati capital region, under the Land Pooling Scheme (LPS) for the construction of the capital. The plots were assigned during an e-lottery event held at the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) office in Vijayawada on Friday, following the instructions of APCRDA Commissioner.

In the presence of the farmers, the e-lottery process was conducted using an online random system. A trial run was carried out for residential and commercial plots before the actual lottery process took place. To provide clarity to the farmers on the geographical location of their assigned plots, the APCRDA engaged GIS staff and village surveyors to explain the details.

The 72 returnable plots were allocated to 39 farmers from the villages of Abbarajupalem, Rayapudi 1&2, Kondamarajupalem, Velagapudi and Mandadam 1&2. The farmers were also informed that for their convenience, the State government has set up nine registration centres in Amaravati for the smooth completion of the registration process.

The e-lottery event was attended by Guntur District Joint Collector A Bhargavateja, APCRDA Special Deputy Collectors KS Bhagyarakha and K Swarnamiri, Director of the Planning Department B Suresh Kumar, Tahsildar Arunadevi, and other officials.

Land allocated for 100-bed Area Hospital in Mangalagiri

Existing government hospital site found to be unsuitable

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Government of Andhra Pradesh has issued an order GO Ms No 9 on Friday allocating four acres of land in Chinakakani village, Mangalagiri, for the construction of a 100-bed Area Hospital.

The land, originally allocated to the Yarlagadda Venkanna Chowdary Medical Foundation Trust for a cancer hospital, will now be used to establish the upgraded hospital, which is set to be developed under the administrative control of the Directorate of Secondary Health.

The decision follows a detailed examination of the existing government hospital site in Mangalagiri, which was found to be unsuitable due to its narrow roads, proximity to a temple, and limited access for patients and ambulances. The new location is expected to address these issues, providing better infrastructure and accessibility for patients from surrounding areas.

The project, with an estimated cost of ?52.2 crore, will increase the hospital's capacity from 30 beds to 100, and includes the creation of 73 new posts. The Andhra Pradesh Medical Services and Infrastructure Development Corporation (APMSIDC) has been tasked with identifying suitable land for the construction and ensuring the remaining land is utilised for future healthcare needs.

The Director of Medical Education, Director of Secondary Health, and the MD of APMSIDC are expected to take necessary steps to facilitate the project's implementation.

April online quota details announced by TTD



PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) will release the April quota of tickets for various Arjita Sevas, including Suprabhatam, Tomala, Archana, and Ashtadala Pada Padmaradhana, online on January 18 at 10 AM.

Online registration for these seva tickets will be available from January 18 to 20, until 10 AM. Those who secure tickets will be allotted their tickets through a Lucky Dip, provided they make the payment before 12 noon between January 20 and 22.

Additionally, tickets for Kalyanotsavam, Unjal Seva, Arjita Brahmotsavam, Sahasra Deepalankara Seva, and Arjita Sevas for Srivari Salakatla Vasantotsavam, scheduled from April 10 to 12, will be released on January 21 at 10 AM.

The April quota for virtual sevas and darshan slots will be available online on January 21 at 3 PM.

On January 23, TTD will release the Angapradakshinam tokens at 10 AM, followed by SRIVANI Trust tickets at 11 AM. The privilege darshan tokens for the elderly, disabled, and those with chronic conditions will be released at 3 PM on the same day.

The Rs. 300 Special Entry Darshan tickets will be made available online on January 24 at 10 AM, and accommodation in Tirumala and Tirupati will be released at 3 PM on the same day.

Finally, on January 27, tickets for Srivari Seva for General, Navaneeta, and Parakamani will be released at 11 AM, 12 noon, and 1 PM, respectively.

38 trainee IAS officers visit Eastern Naval Command



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A group of 38 trainee IAS officers from the 2024 batch, hailing from the prestigious Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration in Mussoorie, Uttarakhand, visited the Eastern Naval Command in two groups from January 9 to January 15, as part of their winter study tour.

The purpose of the naval attachment was to provide the young officers with an insightful overview of naval operations and to familiarise them with the roles and responsibilities of the Indian Navy's operational commands.

During the visit, the trainees were given an interactive presentation detailing the critical functions and strategic importance of the Eastern Naval Command. The session offered a deeper understanding of the operational framework of the Navy, and the trainees had the opportunity to engage with senior officers about various aspects of naval defence and coordination.

This visit is part of a broader initiative aimed at expanding the knowledge of trainee civil servants about the workings of different defence and security establishments in India.

Dist administration gears up for Swachh Andhra-Swachh Diwas

Monthly themes, comprehensive action plan for Statewide cleanliness initiative

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM



District Collector M N Harendhira Prasad has directed officials to ensure the successful implementation of the 'Swachh Andhra - Swachh Diwas' programme. The initiative aims to make Andhra Pradesh the cleanest State in the country. In a virtual review meeting, Prasad emphasised the need for a comprehensive action plan and suitable activities for the initiative.

The Collector stressed the importance of coordinated efforts and unwavering commitment from all levels to ensure the programme's successful implementation on the ground. Each month from January to December will have a unique theme. The 'New Year - Clean Start' theme will kick off the programme on Saturday. The cleanliness drive will encompass a range of activities, including cleaning government offices, removing garbage, and ensuring proper sanitation of toilets. The Collector encouraged the use of social media to share updates on the progress of these activities.

Furthermore, public toilets and bus stops will be included in the cleanliness initiative. In line with the Swachh Visakha campaign, the programme aims to foster a sense of community pride by improving cleanliness in local wards and panchayats. The Collector also called for a strict ban on plastic within government offices, and emphasised the importance of maintaining cleanliness in government hospitals and PHCs.

Given that schools and colleges are on holiday today, the Collector clarified that the programme will be held next Saturday. Other planned activities include water tank cleaning, drain cleaning, and door-to-door awareness campaigns conducted through Panchayat Raj.

IIM Visakhapatnam celebrates 11th Foundation Day

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Indian Institute of Management Visakhapatnam (IIMV) celebrated its 11th Foundation Day on Friday, marking a decade of fostering entrepreneurial leadership and academic excellence. The event, held on the Institute's expansive 241-acre campus in Gambheeram, was attended by Dr Samir V Kamat, Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Defence R&D & Chairman of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), and Malavika R. Harita, member of the Board of Governors, IIM Visakhapatnam & IIM Bangalore.

Prof. M. Chandrasekhar, Director of IIMV, reflected on the Institute's journey. "IIMV has consistently strived to provide high-quality management education that prepares students to navigate the complexities of the modern business world," he said. He expressed gratitude for the support from the Central and State governments in making IIMV a beacon of learning and innovation.

Malavika R. Harita emphasised the profound impact of knowledge, citing the ancient Indian proverb, 'Vidya Param Daivatam', which means 'knowledge is the supreme deity'. This philosophy aligns perfectly with IIMV's vision of education, development, and progress.

Dr. Kamat delivered a thought-provoking address on 'Defence R&D: The Road Ahead', highlighting the crucial synergy between academia, DRDO, and industry. He stressed the importance of technology transfer, collaborative efforts, risk-taking, and learning from failures, echoing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

IIMV has emerged as a global destination for management education, offering diverse programs and boasting a 100 per cent placement rate for its flagship MBA programme.



'Public participation crucial for accident prevention'

Ensure success of Road Safety Month observance: Deputy Transport Officer

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Transport Officer A Mohan has stressed that public participation is crucial for accident prevention. He added that through the Road Safety Month celebrations, efforts are being made to raise awareness among the public regarding road safety. The celebrations are being held across the district until February 15, to create awareness and educate people on road safety.

Speaking to the media persons on Friday, Mohan briefed the activities planned by the District Transport Department as part of the Road Safety Month. He mentioned that a series of programmes will be conducted over the next month to educate people about road safety and motor vehicle laws. He also noted that in collaboration with the police, Health Department, R&B, National Highways and voluntary organisations, several initiatives have been taken up to reduce accidents.

Mohan stated that tightened measures have been implemented to prevent road accidents, including making the use of seat belts and helmets mandatory. He further informed that strict actions are being taken against those violating traffic rules, such as truck and bus drivers, with special awareness workshops being organised to ensure adherence to traffic laws.



According to Mohan, during the previous year, 1,343 road accidents were reported in the district, resulting in 431 deaths and 1,159 injuries. He highlighted that driving under the influence of alcohol and using mobile phones while driving were major contributors to road accidents. Violations like overloading passengers, rash driving and jumping signals are also causes for accidents, despite surveillance and the filing of cases against offenders.

To address these issues, the Transport Department is conducting various awareness programmes during the Road Safety Month. These include rallies, free medical camps for drivers, awareness seminars, essay writing and drawing competitions. Additionally, sessions are being held in colleges and schools to educate students about the causes of accidents. Short films showcasing the impact of minor driving errors on people's lives are being screened to raise awareness.

Phase III nominated appointments: Intense lobbying ensues

TDP, Jana Sena, and BJP leaders vie for influential roles

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As the third phase of nominated appointments draws near, political leaders from across the ruling alliance are intensifying efforts to secure influential positions. With two phases of nominations already completed, attention has shifted to the final round of appointments, where key roles remain up for grabs. Aspirants are focused on securing positions that will enhance their influence within their parties and across the political spectrum.

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP), a significant partner in the ruling coalition, has already successfully placed several of its leaders in important positions. Many of these appointees were unable to contest the previous general elections for various reasons but, with assurances from party leadership, rallied behind alliance candidates.

Notable figures among them include former Anakapalli MLA Peela Govinda Satyanarayana, who now heads the Urban Finance and Infrastructure Development Corporation, and TDP district president Battula Tatayya Babu, appointed Chairman of the Housing Corporation. Other prominent appointees include Pragada Nageswara Rao, heading the Road Development Corporation, PVG Kumar, who chairs the Velama Welfare Corporation, and Malla Surendra, who is now the Chairman of the Gavara Welfare Corporation.

As the third phase approaches, leaders from the Jana Sena Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are also hopeful of securing their share of influential roles. A recent statement by IT and HRD Minister Nara Lokesh indicated that nominations would be finalised soon, prompting a surge in lobbying among aspirants.

Prestigious positions, such as the Chairmanship of the District Cooperative Central Bank (DCCB), District Cooperative Marketing Society (DCMS), and the District Library, are among the most sought-after, alongside key posts at the State and joint district levels.

A growing list of aspirants is now vying for these positions, with former MLAs such as Gavireddy Ramanaidu and Bolem Muthyala Papa, as well as former Zilla Parishad Chairperson Lalam Bhavani, submitting their biodata. TDP leaders like State secretary Kotni Balaji and district general secretary Lalam Kasi Naidu are also in the running for roles within the DCCB, DCMS, or the District Library.

The Jana Sena Party, led by Pawan Kalyan, has its own share of hopefuls, including Chodavaram constituency incharge PVSN Raju, who recently met with Kalyan to request a nominated post. With the third phase of appointments set to be finalised soon, the competition for these prestigious roles is heating up. The outcome will not only shape the future of the party, but also influence the direction of the ruling coalition.

Expedite resolution of revenue disputes: Collector

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY



East Godavari District Collector, P Prashanthi, has directed officials to expedite the resolution of public revenue disputes and ensure accountability in their processes.

Addressing a meeting with revenue officials on Friday, the Collector reviewed the progress on grievances received from the public.

Speaking on the occasion, she highlighted that a significant number of petitions pertain to revenue-related issues. She urged the officials to prioritise resolving these petitions promptly.

The Collector noted that the majority of grievances fall under five key categories of revenue complaints on mutations (1,079), income correction in revenue records (879), SLA Certificates (Revenue) (835), requests for corrections in ROR Data (334), service issues of revenue employees, including requests for increments, promotions, and medical reimbursement (319).

Several reopened petitions were also under review, including 15 cases of revenue corrections, 12 complaints against employees, 7 instances of delayed certificate issuance, 8 cases of unpaid compensation for acquired land, and 7 matters related to land acquisition. The Collector instructed Revenue Division Officers to conduct daily reviews, Tahsildar-wise, to monitor the progress of these petitions.

Emphasising the need for swift action, she urged officials to prioritise petitions forwarded from the Chief Minister's Office, ministers, and state-level departments. She underlined the crucial role of revenue officials in addressing public issues effectively.

Joint Collector S. Chinna Ramudu added that many grievances are brought forth by elderly citizens, who should be treated with respect and assured of timely resolutions to their concerns. DRO T. Sitarama Murthy and AOMD Ali were also present at the meeting.

The Collector further directed officials to make elaborate arrangements for celebrating the 76th Republic Day. She stressed that the tableaux should highlight the district's achievements over the last six months, along with the implementation of welfare schemes.

Cultural programmes by students should reflect patriotism, showcase the district's cultural heritage, and be engaging. She also instructed the officials to prepare tableaux showcasing initiatives like paddy procurement, the midday meal scheme, agriculture, Akhanda Godavari, Jal Jeevan Mission, road safety measures, and Anna Canteens.

Man hacks wife to death over property row

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

In a shocking incident, a man brutally murdered his wife with a hunting sickle during a family meeting to resolve a property dispute in Tadipatri on Friday.

The deceased, Pushpavati (35), had been estranged from her husband, Venkateswara Reddy of Vengannapalli village, for the past four months due to ongoing disputes. The meeting, convened by Pushpavati's family, was an attempt to reconcile the couple. However, Venkateswara Reddy, enraged by the ongoing disagreements, attacked his wife with the sickle, killing her instantly in front of her parents and relatives.

Following the gruesome act, the accused fled the scene. The Tadipatri police have registered a case and launched a manhunt for the assailant. The body of the deceased has been shifted for post-mortem, and the hunting sickle used in the crime has been seized as evidence.

Efficient implementation of 'PM Janman Scheme' stressed

PNS ■ ONGOLE



Prakasam District Collector A Thameem Ansariya has directed officials to ensure the efficient implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM Janman) scheme, aimed at the development and uplift of tribal communities in the district.

Chairing a meeting with officials from various departments, including Housing, Panchayat Raj, APCPDCL, Health, Education, Rural Water Supply, BSNL, and Women and Child Welfare, the Collector reviewed the proposals and progress under the scheme. She emphasised the importance of inter-departmental coordination to achieve the scheme's objectives.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Thameem Ansariya highlighted that the Central Government has identified 11 key indicators for the scheme, encompassing safe housing, access to clean drinking water, better healthcare, education, nutrition, road and telecom connectivity, and sustainable livelihood opportunities in tribal habitations, including those of the Chenchu community.

She urged officials to closely monitor the works sanctioned under these indicators and strive to enhance the living standards of tribal populations. "The departments concerned must conduct regular reviews and ensure the timely execution of all sanctioned works," the Collector said.

The Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) Project Officer (PO) was specifically instructed to coordinate with the departments involved and focus on expediting the completion of all ongoing projects under the PM Janman scheme.

Among those present at the meeting were DFO Sandip Krupakar, ITDA PO Venkata Shiva Prasad, PD Housing Srinivas Prasad, DEO Kiran Kumar, and DMHO Dr. Venkateswarulu.

Submit report on ACB cases: Dy CM



PNS ■ GUNTUR

Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Panchayat Raj, K. Pawan Kalyan, has directed the Principal Secretaries of the Panchayat Raj, Rural Development, and Forest Departments to expedite the inquiry process concerning delinquent employees and submit a report on pending Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) cases.

Pawan Kalyan emphasised the need for the Principal Secretaries to maintain a vigilant eye on the performance of employees.

"This will help them remain alert and perform optimally. It will serve as a microscope for assessing the honesty, performance, and commitment of employees. However, the fact that vigilance cases, departmental inquiries, and investigations remain pending for years is affecting employee performance," Pawan Kalyan said during a review meeting at his camp office in Mangalagiri on Friday.

The Deputy Chief Minister focused on the issue of long-pending disciplinary actions and departmental inquiries, directing the Principal Secretaries of the concerned departments to submit a comprehensive report detailing the Vigilance, ACB, and departmental cases in the Panchayat Raj, Rural Development, Rural Water Supply (RWS), Forest, and Environment departments. The report should include the duration of the pendency and the reasons behind the delays.

Pawan Kalyan mentioned that some cases had been pending for as long as 20 years. "As a result, officers and staff members have not received their retirement benefits, even after retiring," he said with regret. He also pointed out that staff members have been denied promotions during their tenure due to pending cases.

In this context, Pawan Kalyan instructed that the report on pending vigilance cases be submitted within three weeks. Officials informed him that the delay in investigations was caused by the unavailability of appropriate documents when the investigations against the accused were initiated.

Prema Sagar wins bronze at University Weightlifting Championship

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



In the All-India Universities Weightlifting Championship-2025 held at Lovely Professional University in Punjab, 18-year-old Devarkonda Prema Sagar from Cheeral of Bapatla district won bronze medal in the 81kg weight category. With this achievement, he not only upheld the honour of the Telugu community, but also enhanced the reputation of Andhra Pradesh.

Following his victory, Prema Sagar was congratulated by Chittoor MP Daggumalla Prasad Rao and Radhey Group CEO Radhey. Notably, Radhey, who is based in Hyderabad, recognised the skill of weightlifter Prema Sagar and extended full support and encouragement to the young athlete. In return, Prema Sagar has continued to showcase his talent and determination, garnering praise from everyone and excelling in weightlifting competitions.

Prema Sagar, under the leadership of Ram Subbareddy, the Sports Director of Yogi Vemana University in Kadapa, participated in the All-India Universities Weightlifting Championship in Punjab and secured the bronze medal, further elevating the reputation of his university.

Prema Sagar, who received weightlifting training under the guidance of coaches Dinesh Babu and B Venkata Ramayya in Eluru, has honed his skills to excel in all categories.

1 killed as 2 bikes collide

PNS ■ NANDYALA

A man was killed and another critically injured when two motorcycles collided at Chakravartula Palli village in Chagalamarri mandal on Friday.

According to the police, the deceased, Balagani Nagaraju (52), was riding his motorcycle to his agricultural field when another bike, ridden by Manikantha, collided with him. Nagaraju died on the spot.

Manikantha sustained severe head and leg injuries and was admitted to the GGH in Nandyala, where his condition remains critical. The police have registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem at the GGH.

Durgesh to inaugurate 'Flamingo Festival'

PNS ■ GUNTUR



Minister for Tourism and Cinematography, Kandula Durgesh, will inaugurate the Flamingo Festival at the Government Junior College campus in Sullurpet on January 18.

Speaking to the media at the Secretariat on Friday, the Tourism Minister announced that the Flamingo Festival-2025 will be held from January 18 to 20, aimed at attracting national and international tourists to the Pulicat Lake and Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary.

Minister Kandula Durgesh urged the people of the state to participate in the Flamingo Festival-2025 and make it a grand success, emphasising that the state government is organising the event with great pride. He recalled that the government had included the Flamingo Festival in the official tourism calendar of the state.

The Minister further highlighted that the government has launched a campaign to develop Pulicat Lake and Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary into an international ecotourism destination.

Various programmes will be organised during the Flamingo Festival-2025 at Nelapattu, Atakanithippa, Sullurpet, B.V. Palem, and Sri City, Minister Durgesh announced. He added that the festival aims to promote eco-tourism, revive cultural and environmental heritage, and raise awareness about environmental protection.

94% teachers & 69% parents believe EdTech bridging geographical divide

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In all, 94% teachers and 69% parents believe that EdTech is bridging the geographical divide in education, according to a report from the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and Grant Thornton Bharat. The study, titled 'Impact Study of EdTech in India: Driving innovation & creating opportunities,' highlights how EdTech platforms are making quality education accessible to millions, especially in remote areas. The report emphasises that EdTech provides resources like video lectures, interactive modules and virtual classrooms, helping students access learning materials that may not be available locally. The study also shows that 94% students and 84% teachers find EdTech content engaging and 85% students report improved learning outcomes.

Anakapalli dist to develop four key tourist destinations

Plans unveiled for development of Bojjannakonda, Devipuram, Seethapalam Beach, and Thantadi Beach

PNS ■ ANAKAPALLI



The Anakapalli district administration has announced plans to develop four major tourist destinations—Bojjannakonda, Devipuram, Seethapalam Beach, and Thantadi Beach. These sites are expected to attract visitors from across India and abroad, boosting tourism and contributing to the district's economic growth.

District Collector Vijaya Krishnan shared that initial meetings with hotel managers and tour operators have been conducted to understand current facilities and identify improvement areas. Detailed plans will be finalised by March after ongoing stakeholder discussions. The administration is exploring funding options, including Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contributions from local industries, to ensure sustainable development.

Each destination will receive tailored improvements. Seethapalam Beach, known for its scenic beauty, will be developed with resorts, eateries, and recreational facilities. Devipuram, a unique temple with spiritual and architectural importance, will be promoted as a top spiritual destination. Thantadi Beach will see infrastructure upgrades, while Bojjannakonda, a historic Buddhist site, will gain better amenities like washrooms, streetlights, eateries, and accommodations.

The administration aims to address the lack of basic infrastructure that currently limits the tourist experience. By providing proper amenities and resorts, these destinations are set to become highlights of Anakapalli. Additionally, this development is expected to reduce the strain on Visakhapatnam city, which is reaching its tourism capacity.

The next meeting with stakeholders is planned for March, with work expected to begin in April. Officials are optimistic that the project will not only attract more tourists but also create job opportunities and support local communities, transforming Anakapalli into a tourism hub in Andhra Pradesh.



DPCL Season 3 kicks off in Vizag

Call for steps to popularise carrom

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Deccan Premier Carrom League (DPCL), Season 3, has officially begun at the S3 Sports Arena in Visakhapatnam, promising an exciting three-day event. Organised by Vajra Sports Private Limited, this annual league has quickly become a prestigious platform for showcasing India's top carrom talent.

Dr. Neeraj Kumar Sampathy, Chairman of DPCL, opened the event with a call for action to popularise carrom as a fun, strategic, and highly beneficial game that promotes concentration, discipline, and neuromuscular coordination. He also emphasised the game's potential to serve as a valuable bonding tool for families, especially in today's digital age.

Launched in 2022, the DPCL aims to elevate the standard of carrom by offering players the opportunity to compete at the highest level, while also boosting the sport's visibility and financial potential. Season 3 promises to continue that tradition, with cash prizes of ?12 lakh on offer.

This year's competition features eight teams, each consisting of seven players— six men and one woman—competing in a round-robin format. The top four teams will advance to the knockout stage, where they will vie for the championship trophy. Each round consists of five matches, with teams needing three wins to secure a victory. Matches are played in the best-of-three sets, with each set comprising eight boards or 25 points, whichever is reached first.

The Andhra State Carrom Association (ASCA) is providing crucial officiating and technical support to ensure the event runs smoothly.

The event is being attended by several dignitaries, including TSR Prasad, retired SP and chairman of the Visakhapatnam District Olympic Association; VD Narayan, secretary general of the International Carrom Federation (ICF); Bharti Narayan, general secretary of the All-India Carrom Federation (AICF); Dr Preeti Sampathy, member of the DPCL governing body; and Sk Abdul Jaleel, general secretary of ASCA, who is also the event's Chief Referee.

Revanth running extortion gang, fleecing companies: KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



BRS Working President KT Rama Rao (KTR) launched a blistering attack on Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and accused him of running an "extortion gang" which has been extorting money from companies throughout the state.

Addressing the media, KTR said that Revanth, along with six of his associates, has been conducting blackmail operations and illegal land dealings to amass wealth.

KTR named the members of this alleged "Ali Baba and his six thieves gang" as Tirupati Reddy, Kondal Reddy, Vem Narendra Reddy, Ronin Reddy, Faheem Qureshi and AV Reddy, and said that they were involved in systematic extortion and blackmail.

"This gang has been terrorizing businesses and threatening them to cough up money. They are also deeply involved in land grabbing," he said.

KTR said that last year's promises of investments of Rs 40,000 crore from Davos have not translated into anything concrete for Telangana.

He said the Congress was bringing up irrelevant issues to divert public attention from its misdeeds. "Revanth's so-called Six Guarantees are nothing but jokes of the year. The people of TG are well aware of the Congress's deception," KTR said.

Taking a swipe at Revanth's political history, KTR accused him of having ties with the RSS and working for its printing press during his early years.

"Asaduddin Owaisi has already exposed how Revanth wore khaki shorts and worked for the ABVP and the RSS. It's ironic for someone like him to criticise others," KTR added.

KTR didn't spare the Congress either, accusing it of misleading the people with false promises. He cited examples of Congress's failures in Karnataka, where bus fares were hiked by 15%, and added that betrayals would happen in TG too.

"Revanth promised to support tenant farmers but hasn't spoken about the 22 lakh tenant farmers in Telangana. The Congress is merely using schemes like Rythu Bharosa to fool people," KTR said.

Highlighting BRS's contributions to Telangana, KTR said, "Under KCR's leadership, schemes like Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bima and irrigation initiatives have revolutionized the agricultural sector. No other government in the country has done so much for farmers."

KTR threw a direct challenge to Revanth, daring him to undergo a live lie detector test to prove his innocence.

"If Revanth has the guts, let him face the people and agree to a live debate and lie detector test. Why is he wasting public money on frivolous cases?" KTR asked.

Criticising the Congress Government for allegedly misusing state agencies like the ACB to target political opponents, KTR said, "The government has spent Rs 10 crore just to harass us. That money could have been used to support hundreds of farmers or senior citizens."

ACROSS THE STATES



Curbs revoked in Delhi-NCR amid dip in pollution

The Centre's panel on Delhi-NCR's air quality on Friday revoked curbs under stage 3 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) amid a dip in pollution due to favourable meteorological conditions, according to an official order. Calm winds, low temperatures and foggy conditions had allowed accumulation of pollutants in the region earlier this week, promoting the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to implement strictest curbs under stage 3 and 4 of GRAP. The panel decided to revoke stage 4 curbs on Thursday amid a dip in pollution levels following a spell of rain in the region. On Friday, air pollution level declined further amid strong winds, leading to revocation of stage 3 curbs. GRAP Stage 3 entails a ban on non-essential construction work. Classes up to grade 5 are required to shift to hybrid mode under Stage 3. Parents and students have the option to choose online education wherever available.



NCP fields 30 candidates for Delhi Assembly polls

Upset at being ignored by ally BJP, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) on Friday fielded 30 candidates for the Delhi Assembly elections. The NCP leaders are learnt to be upset at the BJP giving a cold shoulder to its key ally in Maharashtra, while granting a seat each to the Janata Dal (United) and LJP (Ram Vilas) -- the NDA partners from Bihar. Of the 30 candidates fielded by Ajit Pawar-led NCP, 13 belong to the minority community. "We believe these 30 candidates will represent the best of our values and are committed to the development and prosperity of Delhi," said NCP spokesperson Brijmohan Shrivastav. The NCP has fielded Vishvanath Agarwal from the New Delhi seat from where Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor Arvind Kejriwal is seeking re-election. The BJP has fielded former Lok Sabha MP Parvesh Verma from this seat, while Sandeep Dikshit is the Congress candidate.



No contradiction in position: MEA

There is no contradiction of position on the situation along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) asserted on Friday, days after Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi said a "degree" of standoff exists between Indian and Chinese militaries in the region. "We do not see any contradiction between what the Army Chief has said and the position we have taken," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. Following an understanding reached on October 21, the Indian and Chinese militaries sides completed the disengagement of troops at the two remaining friction points of Demchok and Depsang. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks on the margins of the BRICS Summit in Russia on October 23 and agreed to revive various bilateral dialogue mechanisms, signalling an intention to normalise the relations. Last month, NSA Ajit Doval travelled to Beijing and held Special Representatives talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the boundary dispute.

SAIF ATTACK CASE

Min rules out underworld link

PNS ■ MUMBAI



Mumbai cops question carpenter

Police are questioning a carpenter in connection with the knife attack on

Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan at his apartment in Mumbai's Bandra, while a Maharashtra minister on Friday ruled out underworld link to the stabbing incident.

The 54-year-old filmstar is recovering well at Lilavati Hospital, where he was taken after the brutal attack by an intruder in the early hours of Thursday that left him with multiple wounds, and is expected to be discharged in two to three days, doctors treating him said.

According to an official, the carpenter, identified as Waris Ali Salmani, was picked up and taken to the Bandra police station for questioning after he resembled the intruder who stabbed Khan in his 12th floor apartment during a robbery attempt.

The attacker's face was clearly captured in CCTV footage which surfaced on Thursday. The video showed the assailant, wearing a red scarf and carrying a backpack, scurrying down the stairs from the sixth floor of the 'Satguru Sharan' building, where Khan lives, at around 2.30 am.

Salmani had worked at the actor's flat two days before the incident and was informed about the attack by the contractor who had hired him for the carpentry assignment, the official said.

Hours after questioning, police took him to an undisclosed location, he said.

A second official, speaking on condition of anonymity, however, said the man brought to the police station for questioning was not related to the attack on Khan.

No one has been arrested yet, he said, adding more than 30 teams have been formed to track down and nab the attacker, who is said to be aged between 35 and 40 years.

Maharashtra Minister of State for Home (Urban) Yogesh Kadam said robbery was the motive behind the incident and clarified no underworld gang was involved in the knife attack.

The actor, who suffered multiple stab injuries, including in his neck, underwent an emergency surgery at Lilavati Hospital, where he was rushed in an autorickshaw.

"We are observing his progress and he is doing excellently well according to our expectations. As per his progress, we have advised him bed rest and if he is comfortable, then in two to three days we will discharge him," said Dr Nitin Dange, neurosurgeon at Lilavati Hospital.

He said a team of doctors checked on him and made him walk.

The actor is fit to be moved out of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and "we are shifting him to a special room," informed the neurosurgeon, who led the team of doctors who operated on Khan.

"Khan had three injuries, two on the hand and one on the right side of the neck. And the major part was at the back, which was in the spine, thoracic spine we call. A sharp object was lodged inside, which has gone very deep, touching the dura and the spinal cord, but it has not damaged the spinal cord," Dr Dange said.

Doctors have removed the sharp object and done repairing of the spinal injury, he explained.

An image of the sharp object, a knife blade, went viral on social media.

"He is very lucky. We repaired the leaking spinal fluid and the dura which was there. We had to do a repair, which was successful," Dr Dange added.

"Today when we made him walk, he was completely okay to walk. He is on a regular diet and that's why we have taken a decision to shift him from the ICU to a normal special room. He has been advised bed rest in view of the deeper injury to the spine. Today we will be restricting visitors as we want Khan to rest," he maintained.



MHA: Modi govt determined to end Naxalism

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Naxalism is the biggest enemy of democracy and the Narendra Modi government is determined to end it, Union Home Ministry said on Friday.

The comments came after 12 Maoists were neutralised in a fierce encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Thursday.

"Naxalism is the biggest enemy of democracy and the Modi government is determined to end it. Yesterday, a joint team of central security forces and state police launched an operation in Bijapur (Chhattisgarh) and achieved great success against Naxalites. The Modi government is moving forward towards making 'Naxal Mukt Bharat' and the country will be Naxal-free by 31 March 2026," Union Home Minister Amit Shah's office wrote on X in Hindi.

The 12 were killed in the encounter with security forces in the dense forest of the Pamed-Basaguda-Usoor axis of Bijapur district.

Besides the bodies, weapons were also recovered from the site, police said.



'Rs 2,500 monthly aid to women, Rs 21K to expecting mothers'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday released the first part of its manifesto for the February 5 Delhi polls, keeping women at the centre of its poll pitch by promising Rs 2,500 monthly aid for them, Rs 21,000 for every pregnant woman, LPG cylinders at Rs 500 and also Rs 2,500 pension for senior citizens.

BJP president J P Nadda unveiled the 'Sankalp Patra' at a press conference here, and asserted the manifesto -- which reflects a direct attempt by the BJP to rival AAP's welfare-focused governance model -- would serve as the foundation for a "developed Delhi".

He also assured that all existing public welfare schemes in Delhi will continue if the BJP is voted to power.

"The BJP's resolution for a developed Delhi prioritises the empowerment of women and the welfare of senior citizens," he said.

Hitting out at the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party, he said all corruption charges in the public welfare schemes being run by his party's government will be investigated.

He promised that a BJP-led Delhi government will approve the implementation of the 'Ayushman Bharat ' in the city in its first Cabinet meeting, and also give additional health cover of Rs 5 lakh.

Nadda announced several pro-women measures including Rs 2,500 monthly aid for them under 'Mahila Samridhi Yojana', surpassing the AAP's poll promise of Rs 2,100.

Promises BJP first part of Delhi manifesto



Additionally, the party promised LPG cylinders at Rs 500 for the poor section, with one free cylinder to be provided on Holi and Diwali. The party also promised a financial assistance of Rs 21,000 and six nutrition kits for every pregnant woman.

The BJP president promised Rs 2,500 pension for senior citizens between the age of 60-70 and Rs 3,000 for those older than 70, widows, and persons with disabilities.

The national capital will vote on February 5 and the results will be announced on February 8.

The BJP, which has been out of power since 1998, has been making all-out efforts to dethrone the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party in the national capital.

The AAP-led Delhi government has implemented several welfare schemes including free electricity of up to 200 units, free bus travel for women, free water and free pilgrimage for senior citizens among others.

Hitting out at the BJP soon after its 'Sankalp Patra' was released, Kejriwal said the saffron party has "copied" the AAP and announced several 'revris' in its Delhi poll manifesto but Prime Minister Narendra Modi won't approve of the "freebies" promised by his party.

Guv as chancellor has major role in appointing VCs: UGC chief

PNS ■ KOLKATA



Emphasising the role of governors in appointing vice-chancellors of state varsities, University Grants Commission Chairman M Jagadesh Kumar has said states should adhere to UGC's recent draft notification that gives the governor a bigger role in appointing VCs.

Kumar's remarks gain significance in the wake of the TMC government's row with West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose over the appointment of VCs of 34 state universities.

The governor is the ex-officio chancellor of state universities.

"Since Independence, or even before that, it was the chancellor of universities who had the prerogative to appoint the VC. Hence, there is no new change in the draft regulation in which the issue of appointing VCs is spelt out," Kumar said.

The UGC chief was talking to reporters here after attending the convocation of St Xavier's College on Thursday.

Kumar said the 2010 UGC regulation had already accorded the chancellor the crucial role in appointing VCs.

About claims by West Bengal on the state having more role in the appointment of VCs than the chancellor, he said the representative of the state has a say in the selection committee, which forwards four-five names to the chancellor and he chooses one among them.

"Among the various proposals in the draft, one pertains to the chancellor's role in the appointment of VCs and that is relevant for both central and state universities," Kumar said.

"Whatever regulations are announced by the UGC, the sole objective is to make our universities globally competitive. It is our responsibility to work together to provide high-quality education," he said.

Bengal Education Minister Bratya Basu had earlier alleged in the assembly that the governor was "sitting" over appointments of VCs, ignoring the recommendations of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on the issue.

"The governor has to sign on the names recommended by the chief minister. But, he is not abiding by the Supreme Court order for appointing VCs in 34 universities. He is prolonging uncertainties, and not performing his constitutional role," Basu had said.

'Optimistic about India-US ties continuing on positive trajectory'



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days ahead of Donald Trump's swearing-in as the 47th president of the United States, some foreign policy experts said they were optimistic that the ties between both sides will continue on a "positive trajectory".

They, however, underlined the aspect of "unpredictability" associated with Trump, who will take the top office in Washington for the second time, and said they expected "certain challenges" as one goes into the new administration, dubbed popularly as Trump 2.0.

Mukesh Aghi, the president and CEO of US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF), expressed an optimistic note regarding the bilateral ties but cautioned that the "H1B visa issue" is going to get "a little more explosive" in Trump's second term.

Aghi put forth his views at an online conference titled "The Trump Card: India's Choices & Strategy" hosted by a think-tank.

Trump would be sworn-in as the US president on January 20 along with J D Vance as the vice president.

The 78-year-old Republican will replace outgoing President Joe Biden.

"We have an administration coming in which is focused on how to 'Make America Great Again'... Now, what we have is a scenario where you will see a lot of glass being broken, norms being challenged and a sense of unpredictability in an environment which is already very, very turbulent. So, we do expect certain challenges as we go into the new administration," said Aghi, who joined the conference from the US capital.

With regards to India and the US, you have the two countries where the trade is around USD 200 billion. But more importantly, geopolitically, they are "very much aligned" in every aspect, vis-a-vis especially in the Indo-Pacific, and especially towards China, the foreign policy expert said.

And, what is more important is that there are "roughly 5 million Indian-Americans, which make around 1.5 per cent of the population, but they are generating roughly around 6 per cent of the GDP", he asserted.



BJP, AAP indulge in vote-bank politics: Vinesh Phogat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader and Haryana MLA Vinesh Phogat accused the BJP and AAP on Friday of indulging in "vote-bank" politics, and said only the country's oldest political party fulfils its promises made to people.

Addressing a press conference here, Phogat said former Delhi chief minister Sheila Dikshit was the first to implement the Jat OBC reservation in the capital.

"The Congress has always stood with every section of the society. When the BJP brought three central farm laws, (AAP supremo and former Delhi chief minister) Arvind Kejriwal was the first to gave his nod to those. They are against farmers, Jats and Dalits. They only indulge in vote-bank politics," the wrestler-turned politician said.

In Haryana, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had promised to give Rs 2,100 per month to women, but it has been three months since the Assembly polls were held and the amount is yet to be paid, Phogat said.

Similarly, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) had promised to give Rs 1,000 per month to every woman in Punjab, but the promise has not been honoured even after three years of the party coming to power in the state, she added.

'Modi govt duped youngsters with false claims'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



"False claims, falsification of data and covering up the truth of declining jobs have become a habit of the Modi government. 82 per cent youth are looking for a job this year, 55 per cent said it became difficult to find a job last year. 37 per cent say they have given up hope of finding a new job in 2025," Kharge claimed in a post on X.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge accused the BJP-led Centre on Friday of duping the country's youngsters on employment generation by making false claims and coming up with false data on jobs.

He alleged that the government has only given paper leaks to youngsters and snatched their jobs with its bad policies.

"False claims, falsification of data and covering up the truth of declining jobs have become a habit of the Modi government. 82 per cent youth are looking for a job this year, 55 per cent said it became difficult to find a job last year. 37 per cent say they have given up hope of finding a new job in 2025," Kharge claimed in a post on X.

He further claimed that according to a separate survey, 69 per cent of Indian human resources (HR) professionals feel that finding qualified talent for a role has become more challenging now.

"Without conducting a census, by estimating and extrapolating old surveys using government data, the Modi government is misleading crores of youth in the name of generating employment. By converting unpaid labour into jobs and counting even one-hour work per week as jobs, it is deceiving the country.

"The Modi government has duped the youth with lies like paper leaks by the Mafia Raj, stampede for a few jobs, snatching jobs by shutting down MSME through bad policies like demonetisation and wrong GST, usurping the right to reservation, keeping government job posts vacant for years and promising two crore jobs annually," Kharge said.

The Congress has been targeting the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on employment generation and has questioned the Centre on its promise of providing two crore jobs every year to the country's youngsters.

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the pioneer

Opinion 06

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Bonanza before budget

The Cabinet has greenlit the 8th Pay Commission, setting the stage for a revision of salaries of central govt employees

The Union Cabinet's approval of the 8th Pay Commission ahead of the budget marks a significant step toward revising the salary and pension structure for over 49 lakh central government employees and nearly 65 lakh pensioners. Chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the decision emphasises improving quality of life and stimulating economic activity through enhanced consumption. The 8th Pay Commission will be tasked with revising salaries, allowances and pensions for central government employees and pensioners. Consultations will be held with central and state governments and other stakeholders before finalising its recommendations. The Commission's chairman and two members are to be appointed shortly, and its findings will replace the existing 7th Pay Commission framework, whose term ends in 2026. Historically, pay commissions are constituted every decade to address inflation, economic growth and employees' changing financial needs.



Prime Minister Modi underscored that the revised pay structure will boost consumption by increasing disposable incomes. Higher salaries and pensions are expected to lead to increased spending on goods and services, driving demand in sectors such as retail, real estate, and automobiles.

This consumption surge could further stimulate production and employment, creating a positive feedback loop in the economy. The Commission's recommendations are expected to address the rising cost of living and improve the financial wellbeing of central government employees and pensioners. While the revisions will inject liquidity into the economy, they will also impose a significant financial burden on the exchequer. Increased salary outlays may necessitate budgetary adjustments, potentially impacting allocations for other sectors like infrastructure and welfare. Although PSU and state government employees are outside the direct purview of central pay commissions, the 8th Pay Commission's recommendations often set a benchmark. Many state governments and PSUs align their pay scales with central government standards, amplifying the financial impact across the broader public sector. This could also have adverse effect on the economy. Higher disposable incomes could lead to demand-pull inflation, particularly in essential goods and services. Managing inflation will require a balanced monetary policy. Besides, the exclusion of PSU employees and 'gramin dak sevaks' from central pay commission benefits may intensify demands for similar revisions, potentially leading to unrest and political pressure. Increased spending on salaries and pensions may constrain the government's ability to invest in capital-intensive projects, potentially slowing long-term economic growth. Despite challenges, it can serve as a catalyst for the economy by generating demand and boosting production.

PICTALK



Tourists at Mall Road amid snowfall, in Manali PTI

A spectacle of faith, unity and cosmic significance



RAJDEEP **PATHAK**

The Kumbh Mela highlights the blend of tradition and modernity. It links cosmic phenomena with earthly rituals while fostering community feeling



The grand Maha Kumbh Mela, one of the most magnificent spiritual gatherings in the world, is here. The Uttar Pradesh government has meticulously prepared to host this sacred festival – happening once every 12 years – with Prime Minister Narendra Modi personally monitoring the developments. Began on January 13, 2025, the Maha Kumbh is anticipated to draw an awe-inspiring congregation of over 45 crores – a footfall of around 450 million pilgrims, saints, ascetics and tourists – devotees.

At the heart of this divine celebration, is the (coming together) 'Sangam' – the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mystical Saraswati rivers. Millions of devotees will come together to take a holy dip, seeking spiritual cleansing and blessings. The Maha Kumbh is a timeless testament to faith, unity, and the eternal connection between humanity and the divine, that owes its origins to mythology and history. Devotees believe that a dip during the auspicious planetary alignments cleanses sins and paves the way for Moksha (liberation). Swami Sivananda, the Yoga Guru, and a proponent of Vedanta, rightly pointed out that "The holy dip at the Kumbh Mela is not just a ritual; it is a profound surrender to the divine." Mythologically connected, the legend of 'Samudra Manthan', or the Churning of the Ocean, is the cornerstone of its mythological significance. According to ancient scriptures, gods and demons churned the ocean to obtain the nectar of immortality (Amrit).

As the Gods carried away the nectar, a few drops fell at four locations – Haridwar, Prayagraj, Nashik and Ujjain – and these places became sacred. Thus began the tradition of the Kumbh Mela. Scholar Diana Eck, professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies at Harvard University notes that "The Kumbh Mela reflects the Indian ethos of integrating mythology with geography, turning the mundane into the sacred."

References to Kumbha appear in Vedic texts like the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, and Atharvaveda. It is also linked to the zodiac sign Aquarius, an astrological interpretation influenced by Greek ideas in the late 1st millennium CE. 'Mela' means "assembly" or "gathering" and signifies fairs or communal celebrations, as found in ancient Hindu texts. Together, Kumbha Mela refers to a "gathering centered around water or the nectar of immortality." Historically, the first recorded mention of the Kumbh Mela can be traced back to the writings of the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang in the 7th century CE. Hiuen Tsang documented several key events during Harsha's (Harshavardhana ruled over much of northern India from 606 to 647 AD and his reign is regarded as one of relative peace and prosperity) reign. Tsang also documented the Kumbh Mela festival in Prayag which Harsha attended.

Over centuries, the festival evolved from a modest gathering of ascetics to a colossal event that attracts millions. The historical transformation of the Kumbh Mela underscores its resilience and adaptability, blending spiritual fervour with societal changes. A defining feature of the Kumbh Mela is the presence of saints, seers, and spiritual leaders who guide the masses. Various 'Akharas' (monastic orders) play a pivotal role in preserving and propagating Sanatan Dharma. The ascetics, often clad in saffron robes or ash, symbolise the renunciation of worldly desires. The ritual bath in the rivers further holds deep symbolic meaning. It signifies the washing away of one's ego and sins, allowing a fresh spiritual beginning. Historian William Dalrymple observes, "The saints at the Kumbh Mela are the custodians of India's timeless spiritual heritage." The Kumbh Mela beautifully embodies the fusion of religion and science. Its timing, rooted in precise astronomical calculations, reflects the profound significance of Hindu cosmology. When Jupiter enters Aquarius and the Sun moves into Aries, planetary alignments create an auspicious period for spiritual connection.

> REFERENCES TO KUMBH APPEAR IN VEDIC TEXTS LIKE THE RIGVEDA, YAJURVEDA, SAMAVEDA, AND ATHARVAVEDA. IT IS ALSO LINKED TO THE ZODIAC SIGN AQUARIUS, AN ASTROLOGICAL INTERPRETATION INFLUENCED BY GREEK IDEAS IN THE LATE 1ST MILLENNIUM CE

This sacred festival links cosmic phenomena with earthly rituals, highlighting the deep interconnection between the universe and human spirituality. Aryabhata's pioneering work in celestial phenomena, including planetary motion and eclipses, continues to influence the Kumbh's timing. The Kumbh Mela is also a melting pot of cultures, philosophies, and humanity. Participants range from reclusive ascetics to common people and even international visitors. This diversity underscores the universality of the quest for spiritual enlightenment. Sociologist Sudhir Kakar once wrote that the "Kumbh Mela is not merely a religious event but a grand celebration of human interconnectedness." The exchange of ideas, rituals, and philosophies at the Mela fosters a unique sense of global unity.

Hosting millions of pilgrims at the Kumbh Mela demands meticulous planning, leveraging cutting-edge technologies like AI-powered crowd management systems, drone surveillance for security, and mobile health clinics to handle medical emergencies. Mobile apps and live-streaming services ensured smooth communication and global accessibility for devotees. The 2025 Kumbh will span an expanded area of 800 hectares, featuring 1.8 lakh tents and 101 smart parking facilities for five lakh vehicles daily. Despite the challenges, the event seamlessly blends tradition and modernity.

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

The silent struggles of a daughter-in-law: A call to change



RACHNA **LAKHPATI**

Allowing a daughter-in-law to flourish in her own right doesn't diminish the family's unity—it strengthens it



Living in a joint family is rarely simple, but for a daughter-in-law, it may be a delicate balancing act filled with judgement and criticism. In many households, the role of a daughter-in-law is laden with unspoken expectations, leaving little room for her individuality. It's time we acknowledge these silent struggles and push for a more inclusive and empathetic family dynamic.

A daughter-in-law often steps into a household as an outsider, expected to adapt seamlessly to a new way of life. From changing her surname to understanding the intricacies of family traditions, she embarks on a journey of transformation.

Yet, the term "in-law" itself can feel like a trap—a constant reminder of her peripheral status in the family. For many, this word symbolises the invisible cage of societal expectations and sacrifices that are seldom reciprocated. "It feels as though I'm constantly being watched," shares Anonymous, 37, who recently relocated to live with her in-laws following her marriage. "It can be exhausting to sense scrutiny at every corner, whether it's about your outfit or your manner of speaking." These tales are not one of a kind. Across the nation, countless women grapple with the challenge of fulfilling the expectations of others while striving to maintain their sense of self.

Some of my friends and cousins have admitted to bending the truth just to carve out a little time for themselves—a brief coffee catch-up or a quick getaway to relax with friends. Some even refer to it as a means of 'escaping' the steadfast pressures of family life. But why should it come to this? Why must a daughter-in-law justify her need for a breather? The narrative that has been perpetuated for generations—that she must be the glue holding the family together—needs an overhaul. Living in a joint family should not mean sacrificing one's freedom or sense of self. It's high time families rethink the dynamics and extend the same courtesy of individuality and space to their daughters-in-law that they offer their sons.

Empathy and equality within a household aren't luxuries; they are necessities for harmony. Allowing a daughter-in-law to flourish in her own right doesn't diminish the family's unity—it strengthens it. Moreover, it sets an example for future generations, teaching them to prioritise respect over rigid roles.

Transformation begins with dialogue. It is essential for families to recognise the contributions a daughter-in-law makes and to foster open communication regarding shared responsibilities. Partners also hold a crucial position in connecting their spouses with their families, making certain that everyone feels appreciated and heard. At its core, a family is about mutual love, respect, and support. Let's replace the stifling word "in-law" with something more inclusive—perhaps "in-love," symbolising acceptance and belonging. After all, isn't that what a family should truly be about? For daughters-in-law across the world, the message is clear: You are not alone in your struggle. For families, the challenge is to listen, adapt, and foster a space where everyone, regardless of their title, feels at home.

It's not just about rewriting roles—it's about rewriting the narrative for a more equitable tomorrow.

(The writer is a freelance writer; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ISRO'S DOCKING MISSION SUCCESSFUL

Madam — ISRO docking two fast-moving spacecraft in space is a highly complex operation with numerous benefits. Docking enables the assembly of modular space stations, telescopes, or other large structures in orbit that cannot be launched in one piece. Example: Docking was essential in constructing the International Space Station (ISS). Docking allows for the transfer of astronauts and cargo between spacecraft or from a spacecraft to a space station. This supports long-term missions, resupply and the exchange of crew. This extends the operational life of expensive assets like communication or scientific satellites. Docking technology allows spacecraft to refuel in space, enabling longer missions or supporting reusable spacecraft. This is crucial for deep space exploration missions.

Docking is a critical step for assembling spacecraft or transferring crew for missions to the Moon, Mars, or beyond. Modular spacecraft for such missions often require multiple launches and dockings to combine their components. Docking facilitates international cooperation, as different countries can launch modules or experiments that dock with a shared platform, like a space station. Docking provides a means for evacuation or rescue in case of emergencies aboard a spacecraft or space station. Spacecraft like crew capsules (e.g., SpaceX Dragon, ISRO's Gaganyaan) rely on docking to connect with orbital stations, making them reusable and cost-effective. Successfully executing docking operations demonstrates technological prowess, boosts national pride, and establishes the country as a leader in space exploration. Docking operations are a cornerstone of space exploration and mission sustainability, enabling long-term presence and work in space. This achievement has placed India in the exclusive and elite league of the US, Russia, and China! This docking was successful on January 16, 2025!

Gopalaswamy J | *Chennai*

India strengthens its naval fleet



After two days of the inauguration of the strategically important Z-Morh or Sonamarg Tunnel in Jammu and Kashmir, Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation three frontline naval combatants-the destroyer INS Surat, the frigate INS Nilgiri and the Scorpene-class submarine INS Vaghsheer on their commissioning at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai on the occasion of Army Day on Wednesday. It is for the first time that all three frontline platforms have been indigenously developed in the country.

The simultaneous commissioning of these vessels is a shot in the arm for the Indian Navy, which is preparing itself to challenge China's hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region. Equipped with the advanced technology, all three vessels have boosted the Indian Navy's capabilities to respond to various maritime challenges more effectively. In fact, public sector shipyards such as GRSE Kolkata, MDL Mazgaon, CSL Kochi, GSL Goa and HSL Vizag Besides immense contributions to defence preparation, the Indian Navy has contributed immensely to boosting operational preparedness of the Indian Navy by completing various shipbuilding projects in a very efficient and time-bound manner.

Manoj Parashar | *Ghaziabad*

ACTOR SAIF ALI KHAN ATTACKED

Madam— Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan was stabbed six times after confronting an intruder, who had a confrontation with Khan's maid before the actor intervened, resulting in a physical struggle, in his Bandra residence early Thursday morning. The intruder fled after a violent altercation, and Khan was rushed to Lilavati Hospital by his son, Ibrahim and a caretaker, where he has successfully emerged from surgery and is now out of danger. The actor is currently recovering, with doctors closely monitoring his condition.

People wonder how an intruder can enter the building and reach the 11th floor in a high-profile building that is well guarded and then escape also. Moreover, all in Bandra. An area that has the highest concentration of celebrities, which is supposed to have adequate security. No doubt 54-year-old Saif is a fit person, so he could face the intruder. Wishing Saif Ali Khan a speedy recovery, trusting that the law will take its course and those responsible will be held accountable.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | *Faridabad*

HAMAS-ISRAEL TRUCE DECLARED

Madam — The ceasefire accord emerged after mediation by Qatar, Egypt and the US to stop the war that began with deadly Hamas attacks on Israel and saw Israeli forces kill tens of thousands of Palestinians and devastate Gaza. It is a welcome move. As per the deal, Israel and Hamas have agreed to halt the war in Gaza and see the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners. It is the most significant breakthrough in 15 months of war that began in October 2023.

Firstly, hostages in Gaza and Palestinian prisoners in Israel would be freed, and Gazans who have been displaced would be allowed to start returning home. During this period, Israeli troops would pull out of all populated areas in Gaza while the Palestinians would also return to their neighbourhoods in all the areas of Gaza. The second stage would be a permanent end to the war, according to Biden.

P Victor Selvaraj | *Tirunelveli*

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

OUR ACTIONS SHAPE OUR LIVES

Karmaphalas—the results of our actions—are an undeniable force shaping our lives



AJIT KUMAR **BISHNOI**

We all should know about karmaphalas. These are the results of both good and bad karma (acts) done by us in the past with our minds, words and bodies. I have mentioned minds separately from bodies because karmas done by the mind are subtle. And they can be quite lethal. What is a mental disease? You have guessed right; it is caused by our minds.

Similarly, words are no less dangerous. Yes, words can be very deadly, as experienced by all of us, when we choose to speak foolishly. And these bad karmaphalas can manifest at any age but they hurt the most in old age when we are weak and not left with many options.

This is when a person laments about his bad luck and there are not many sympathisers. Aren't we written off as we age? This article describes what we can do about it. We are not so helpless after all. The first step is to stop doing all bad acts right from this moment. And we know what these are. Goodness has to increase in us by doing all acts of goodness.

We must speak pleasantly; we should see goodness programmes; we should stick to foods in goodness; and so on. What this will do is protect us from the ill effects of our present acts, to begin with. Controller mental must be curbed; one must become realistic because there is only one controller and that is God. If it wasn't so we will obtain whatever we desire, which hardly even happens. The ego must be curbed because there is only one superior entity, which is God. All our lives we try to prove our superiority and what happens? We become very unpopular with others, especially with our family members, whom we desperately need in our old age. Spiritual practices must be started in the right earnest.



They will make a lot of sense if we realise that we are souls, parts of God.

Shouldn't parts be dependent on the whole? Should we not be respectful towards God, just like a son is supposed to be towards his father? Don't we thank others when they do us some favour? God is forever doing us many favours. To begin with, He has provided all essentials free like the light of the sun, water, air containing oxygen, etc. God has to help ultimately because fate cannot be changed by anyone else. He also doesn't, but helps to deal with bad karmaphalas; we won't end up badly. (9.31) This is a very big 'kripa' but more important is His mercy in protecting us from our good karmaphalas, when we are most likely to hurt ourselves badly. Because it is hard to tolerate good times. And God and only God can help in improving our nature, which is also part of our fate.

Doesn't our nature let us down time and again? We see people destroying themselves by angry acts, lusty behaviour, envious attitudes, etc. God protects us from foolish acts, if we remain in His shelter.I am very scared about the prospect of ill fate in my old age when I am already weak. God has to protect me.

I am not taking any chances; I have taken God's shelter. Only God is the one who can help, being the owner and controller. God can intervene and God does for His devotees. (The Bhagavad-Geeta 18.58) Wouldn't this make us peaceful? It has made me gradually as my connection with God is getting strengthened by my spiritual practices. Please don't take chances.

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

Reverse brain drain: A game-changer for growth



WASEEM **JAVED**

By harnessing the knowledge, networks and expertise of these returnees, India is laying the foundation for a resilient and competitive economy



India has witnessed a mass exodus of talent for decades, as highly skilled professionals and students left the country in search of better opportunities abroad. This phenomenon, known as 'brain drain', has historically deprived the country of its brightest minds. However, the tide is reversing, with individuals returning to their home country, as seen in the recent past. With acquired skills and rich experience, the 'reverse brain drain' is increasingly becoming a powerful force in India's economic growth and development. This comes against the backdrop of India's fast-paced economic growth, combined with government initiatives and an evolving entrepreneurial ecosystem that has made the country an attractive destination for global talent, including those who once left its shores. This shift is not about just people coming back; it's about knowledge transfer, innovation, and global networks essential to building a competitive and resilient economy.

Economic and Entrepreneurial Opportunities Driving Return

In most cases, what has caused this reverse brain drain is the prospect of available opportunities in India. The growth pattern of India as a country with an upward economic trajectory brings with it demand for science, technology, and innovation skills from professionals in their fields.

Returnees easily get absorbed in suitable roles since their international experience puts them on top of the sought-after candidates at startups, large multinational companies, and research centres. Government initiatives like Make in India, Startup India, and Atmanirbhar Bharat have further made India more attractive. These initiatives encourage entrepreneurship, self-reliance, and innovation by offering financial incentives, regulatory support, and access to infrastructure. Thus, many Indian professionals who had earlier worked in global hubs such as Silicon Valley are returning to start their startups or take up leadership roles in Indian enterprises.

For example, several Indian entrepreneurs who have returned from the United States or the United Kingdom are at the helm of billion-dollar startups in India today.

They cut across fintech, e-commerce, health tech, and renewable energy among other sectors that create jobs and spur economic growth. Their global networks and access to venture capital give them a competitive edge that will allow them to scale their businesses quickly and effectively.

The Role of Overseas Education in Shaping Talent

Education in foreign lands serves as the core of the reverse brain drain. In 2024, more than 13.35 lakh students from India pursued education abroad, of which the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia, and Germany were among the top destinations. In general, courses in engineering, business management, medicine, and technology attract Indian students with promising career avenues.This international education equips students with advanced knowledge, technical skills, and a global perspective. Many also gain valuable work experience abroad before deciding to return to India.

A key facilitator in this journey has been the rise of AI-powered consultancy platforms that streamline the process of studying abroad. These platforms help students identify the best courses, universities, and countries based on their aspirations and career goals.

They also help with visa processes, and education loans, and even offer post-admission help, so everything goes off smoothly.

These consultancies not only empower students in terms of succeeding abroad but also lay the groundwork for their potential contributions upon returning to India while bridging the gap between students and global education systems.

> GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES LIKE MAKE IN INDIA, STARTUP INDIA, AND ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT HAVE FURTHER MADE INDIA MORE ATTRACTIVE. THESE INITIATIVES ENCOURAGE ENTREPRENEURSHIP, SELF-RELIANCE, AND INNOVATION BY OFFERING FINANCIAL INCENTIVES, REGULATORY SUPPORT AND ACCESS TO INFRASTRUCTURE

Benefits of Reverse Brain Drain for India

The reverse brain drain is an economy-changing force for India, bringing skilled professionals back to drive progress across sectors. In the case of technology, returnees provide cutting-edge expertise in areas like artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and clean energy, which ensure that India is not left behind globally.

The knowledge that these returnees provide creates technological advances that benefit both industries and society. Entrepreneurship and innovation also pick up pace as returnees start new ventures, create jobs, and develop innovative products and services that address local and global challenges. This not only increases employment but also makes India a creative solutions hub.

Furthermore, these professionals enhance scientific collaboration by connecting Indian institutions with international research networks, thereby facilitating the exchange of ideas and resources in areas such as healthcare and renewable energy.The economic impact is equally strong as the reverse brain drain strengthens productivity, draws in foreign investment, and propels GDP growth.

Key Challenges and the Way Forward

Although reverse brain drain promises to boost Indian growth immensely, bureaucratic red tape, infrastructural inadequacies, and differing work environments in India versus the developed world will still prevent most professionals from coming back. This will only come true when registration procedures, tax regimes, and the regime for intellectual property become more simplified, paving the way for returnees to establish enterprises or meaningfully contribute to organizations.

To tap into returning talent effectively, India must improve its infrastructure: world-class research facilities, modern educational institutions, and strong health care. More competitive incentives to attract international talent include tax breaks, grants for research, and easier access to funding. Only then will the reverse brain drain convert into practical input toward the nation's economic growth and innovation.

Government Initiatives and Policy Support

The Indian government has been proactively capitalising on reverse brain drain. By setting up innovation hubs, funding startup companies, and collaborating with world-class research institutes, the country is attracting much-needed talent as well as fostering innovation. Many countries have implemented policies and incentives to encourage skilled professionals to return to their home countries. For example, Taiwan created the Hsinchu Science Park and offered tax cuts to encourage the development of high-tech industries. Such policies not only encourage the return of skilled professionals but also provide them with a platform to flourish.

The Global Context and Its Implications

Interestingly, reverse brain drain is not an Indian phenomenon alone. Developed countries like the United States and the United Kingdom are losing talent due to restrictive immigration policies and limited opportunities for career advancement. For example, America's flawed immigration policies have inadvertently driven away skilled professionals who are now contributing to India's growth.

This shift points to a wider paradigm wherein developing countries are transformational centres of innovation and economic activity. It could also help India emerge as a global leader in sectors ranging from technology to healthcare.

A Bright Future for Reverse Brain Drain

The reverse brain drain represents a new paradigm in India's journey to become a global economic superpower. In this new scenario, talent can be an asset to the country by nurturing innovation and fostering collaboration. With government support, private sector participation, and an emphasis on developing world-class infrastructure, the country is poised to turn reverse brain drain into a sustained growth driver.

In doing so, this movement is not only for India but reshapes the global talent landscape with a new reality of importance- inclusive and dynamic economies in a more integrated and interconnected world.

(The writer is the founder and CEO of EduVib; views are personal)

Andhra Pradesh's journey towards zero hunger and inclusive education

The Dokka Seethamma Mid-Day Meal scheme is a testament to the State's commitment to inclusivity and reforming the education system



T V **KATTIMANI**

Since Independence, food security has been a significant concern in India. Despite notable progress toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2: Zero Hunger, India still grapples with the challenge of undernutrition.

According to a United Nations report, the country accounts for nearly 195 million undernourished individuals, with children constituting 43 per cent of this population. Various initiatives, such as the Public Distribution System (PDS) and the PM Poshan Mid-Day Meal scheme, have been implemented to address this pressing issue.

Historical Roots of Mid-Day Meal Schemes

The origins of the Mid-Day Meal scheme in India can be traced back to the colonial era. In 1925, the Madras Presidency proposed the first-ever Mid-Day Meal initiative for underprivileged children. Tamil Nadu became the first state to implement this idea, with Sourashtra Boys Higher Secondary School in Madurai serving meals to children in 1955.

By the 1980s, this programme gained widespread acceptance, particularly with the introduction of the "Nutritious Noon-Meal Scheme" by Tamil Nadu's then Chief Minister, M G Ramachandran. This initiative aimed to provide food to 6.8 million malnourished children in the state. Over the years, the programme has demonstrated the strong correlation between nutritious meals and improved education. For children in tribal and socio-economically disadvantaged communities, the scheme has proven to be a lifeline. Many of these children, previously engaged in household activities or income generation due to food insecurity, could now attend school and pursue their right to education. The programme also had a transformative impact on children from Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, De-notified Tribes, Nomadic Tribes, and girl children.

Dokka Seethamma Mid-Day Meal Scheme

In a significant step forward, the Andhra Pradesh government recently launched the "Dokka Seethamma Mid-Day Meal Scheme." This initiative, named after Dokka Seethamma—revered as Apara Annapurna—provides free meals to students in junior colleges across the state. Seethamma, born in 1841 in Mandapet village, was renowned for her compassion and dedication to serving the needy. Despite limited formal education, she imbibed strong moral values through



stories and songs from her childhood. Along with her husband, Dokka Joganna, she provided food and shelter to travelers and disaster-stricken communities near the Godavari River. Her legacy of humanitarian service remains a beacon of inclusivity and maternal love.

The Dokka Seethamma scheme is the first of its kind in India, targeting intermediate students. Benefiting 148,419 students across 475 government junior colleges in Andhra Pradesh, the programme aims to reduce dropout rates, enhance academic focus, and improve overall student health. By lessening the financial burden on low-income families, the initiative also promotes greater equity in education. It sets a model for other states to emulate, addressing hunger while fostering a nurturing environment for academic and personal growth.

Complementary Initiatives for Inclusivity

In addition to the Dokka Seethamma scheme, Andhra Pradesh has revived the "Anna Canteens" initiative. This program offers wholesome meals at just Rs 5 to economically disadvantaged individuals, significantly alleviating hunger and improving living standards. By ensuring affordable access to food, the state aims to bridge socioeconomic disparities and support marginalised communities.

For tribal students, particularly girls, the Dokka Seethamma scheme has been a game-changer. Tribal communities often face acute food insecurity due to geographical remoteness and limited resources. Free nutritious meals enable tribal children to focus on their education instead of household chores or income generation. The scheme also addresses educational inequity by encouraging families to prioritise their children's schooling. For tribal girls, the program has a transformative impact. Social and financial pressures often force girls to leave school prematurely, but free meals reduce family burdens and promote their continued education.

A Vision for a Better Future

The Mid-Day Meal scheme and similar initiatives signify more than just food distribution—they represent a commitment to empowering the marginalised and uplifting the underprivileged. These programs not only ensure access to nutritious meals but also encourage higher education, better living standards, and healthier lifestyles. By fostering cooperation among teachers, students, and staff, the scheme revives the ancient "Gurukula" system of holistic education, emphasising both mental and physical wellbeing.

(The writer is Vice Chancellor of Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh; views are personal)

the pioneer

Money 08

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IN BRIEF



Sembcorp to set up green hydrogen facility in Odisha

Sembcorp Industries on Friday signed two non-binding memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with the Government of Odisha to explore setting up of green hydrogen production facility in the state. Sembcorp's wholly-owned subsidiaries Sembcorp Green Hydrogen India Pvt Ltd (SGHIPL) and Sembcorp Development Ltd signed the MOUs in the presence of Singapore's Minister for Transport and Second Minister for Finance Chee Hong Tat and Odiha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, the company said in a statement.
"Under the MOU signed with Industrial Promotion & Investment Corporation of Odisha Limited, SGHIPL will explore the development of a production facility for green hydrogen and its derivatives, with an anticipated production capacity of 720,000 tonnes per annum. The facility, to be strategically located in Odisha, is expected to generate over 2,000 employment opportunities during its operational phase," it said.
Sembcorp Development Ltd has also signed a non-binding MOU with Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation to assess the potential for the development of an industrial park in Odisha, India.



'Govt considering KIOCL-NMDC merger'

The government is considering merging pellet maker KIOCL with iron ore major NMDC. Union Steel Minister HD Kumaraswamy said that KIOCL is in critical condition. "The process is on to consider merging KIOCL and NMDC. KIOCL has also reported losses," he said on the sidelines of a press meet here to announce a revival package of Rs 11,440 crore for Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL).
The minister said the situation has occurred due to non-cooperation of the state (Karnataka) government.
KIOCL Ltd, under the Ministry of Steel, operates a 3.5 million tonne per annum (MTPA) iron-oxide pellet plant and a blast furnace unit to manufacture 2.16 lakh tonne per annum pig iron at Mangaluru, Karnataka. NMDC is also an entity operating under the Steel Ministry. It caters to India's 20 per cent of iron ore demand.



BMW India launches first locally produced EV at Rs 49 lakh

German luxury car maker BMW India on Friday launched its first locally-produced electric vehicle priced at Rs 49 lakh (ex-showroom all India). The premium SUV was launched at the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025. The BMW X1 Long Wheelbase All Electric is locally produced at BMW Group plant in Chennai. BMW Group India President Vikram Pawah said, "It is the perfect premium SUV for the rising aspirations of new Bharat. As the first 'Make in India' EV from BMW, the X1 Long Wheelbase beacons a new era of innovation and excellence." He further said that BMW India is offering a comprehensive solution complemented by small financial plans, a widespread EV ecosystem with new services like destination charging, smart e-routing, charging concierge and much more. The car can be booked at BMW dealerships across the country from Friday onwards.

Growth in India slowed more than expected: IMF

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Led by a sharper-than-expected deceleration in industrial activity, economic growth in India slowed more than anticipated and is projected to remain at 6.5 per cent till 2026, the International Monetary Fund said on Friday.

"Growth in India slowed more than expected, led by a sharper-than-expected deceleration in industrial activity," the IMF said in its latest update of the World Economic Outlook, according to which the global economy is holding steady. In 2023, India's growth rate was 8.2 per cent, which dropped to 6.5 per cent in 2024.

The global growth is projected at 3.3 per cent in 2025 and 2026, below the historical (2000–19) average of 3.7 per cent. The forecast for 2025 is broadly unchanged from that in the October 2024 WEO, primarily on account of an upward revision in the US offsetting downward revisions in other major economies.

Global headline inflation is expected to decline to 4.2 per cent in 2025 and to 3.5 per cent in 2026, converging back to target earlier in advanced economies than in emerging markets and developing economies, it added.

According to IMF WEO, global growth is expected to remain stable, albeit lacklustre.

In the US, underlying demand remains robust,



reflecting strong wealth effects, a less restrictive monetary policy stance, and supportive financial conditions. The growth is projected to be at 2.7 per cent in 2025, the report said.

"In India, the growth is projected to be solid at 6.5 per cent in 2025 and 2026, as projected in October and in line with potential," the IMF said.

In 2023, India's growth rate was 8.2 per cent, which dropped to 6.5 per cent in 2024. It is expected to remain the same in 2025 and 2026, it said.

Economic growth poised to rebound, says RBI Bulletin

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India's economic growth is poised to rebound as domestic demand regains strength, though the stickiness in food inflation warrants careful monitoring, the latest RBI Bulletin released on Friday said.

An article on the 'State of the Economy' published in the January Bulletin also noted that the economic outlook for 2025 is divergent across countries with some loss of speed in the US; weak-to-modest recoveries in Europe and Japan; more moderate growth profiles in emerging and developing countries alongside a more gradual disinflation relative to advanced economies.

"In India, there is a conducive quickening of high-frequency indicators of economic activity in the second half of 2024-25, bearing out the implicit pick-up in real GDP growth for this period in the annual first advance estimates of the NSO," it said.

It further said, the headline inflation eased for the second successive month in December, although the stickiness in food inflation warrants careful monitoring of second order effects.

The article has been authored by a team lead by Michael Patra, who demitted the office of RBI Deputy Governor earlier this month.



"In India, there is a conducive quickening of high-frequency indicators of economic activity in the second half of 2024-25, bearing out the implicit pick-up in real GDP growth for this period in the annual first advance estimates of the NSO," it said

"India's economic growth is poised to rebound as domestic demand regains strength. Rural demand continues to gain momentum, reflecting a resilience in consumption, supported by brighter agricultural prospects," the article said.

A revival in public capex on infrastructure is likely to stimulate growth in key sectors.

It also noted that rising input cost pressures in the manufacturing sector, coupled with weather-related exigencies and global headwinds could, however, pose risks to this outlook.

The central bank, however, said the views expressed in the Bulletin are of the authors and do not represent the views of the Reserve Bank of India.

India's gem, jewellery exports fall $1,968 mn: GJEPC

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The overall gems and jewellery exports declined 10.29 per cent year-on-year to USD 1,967.98 million (Rs 16,719.460 crore) due to geopolitical tensions and a slowdown in demand in China, GJEPC said on Friday.

Gems and jewellery exports stood at USD 2,193.82 million (Rs 18,269.7 crore) in December 2023, according to data from industry apex body Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC).

"The geopolitical tensions continue to affect the overall demand. The slowdown in demand in key export destinations, including China, has also impacted the shipments," GJEPC chairman Vipul Shah said.

The overall export of Cut and Polished diamonds (CPD) declined 10.36 per cent to USD 773.1 million (Rs 6,569.7 crores) in December compared to USD 862.48 million (Rs 7,182.53 crores) in the same period of 2023.

Exports of Polished Lab Grown Diamonds fell 5.48 per cent to USD 78.93 million (in Rs 670.77 crore) against USD 83.51 million (Rs 695.48 crore) a year ago, according to provisional data by GJEPC.

Gold jumps Rs 700 to Rs 82K per 10 gms; nears record high

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rising for the third consecutive day, gold prices on Friday surged Rs 700 to trade near a record high at Rs 82,000 per 10 grams in the national capital due to persistent buying in the local markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal had settled at Rs 81,300 per 10 grams on Thursday.

The price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity continued to shine for the third straight day by jumping Rs 700 to Rs 81,600 per 10 grams against Rs 80,900 per 10 grams in the previous close.

However, silver prices declined Rs 500 to Rs 93,500 per kg on Friday. The metal had ended at Rs 94,000 per kg in the previous trading session.

On October 31 last year, gold of 99.9 per cent purity and 99.5 per cent purity hit a record high of Rs 82,400 and



Rs 82,000 per 10 grams, respectively, in the local markets.

Despite a weak trend in the international markets, the precious metal gained in the domestic market, mainly due to higher demand from jewellers, traders said.

Meanwhile, in futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for February delivery declined Rs 424 or 0.54 per cent to Rs 78,802 per 10 grams. "Gold witnessed minor profit booking from higher zones on MCX, retreating towards Rs 78,800," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

The decline comes as white flags emerge in the Middle East, signalling easing tensions, and the recent positive data from the US, including CPI, retail sales, and the Federal Reserve's dovish outlook, appear to have been largely priced in, Trivedi added. Silver contracts for March delivery plummeted Rs 1,093 or 1.18 per cent to Rs 91,710 per kg on the MCX on Friday.

Globally, Comex gold futures fell USD 21.10 per ounce or 0.77 per cent to USD 2,729.80 per ounce.

"Gold dipped slightly below USD 2,750 per ounce ahead of upcoming US housing and industrial production data," Kaynat Chainwala, AVP of Commodity Research at Kotak Securities, said.

Fed Governor Christopher Waller on Thursday said if economic data continues to weaken, the central bank might implement three or four rate cuts this year further stoking the optimism for rate cut expectations which lent support to the metal.

Additionally, Comex silver futures quoted 1.47 per cent lower in the Asian market hours at USD 31.26 per ounce.

Further, uncertainties surrounding US President-elect Donald Trump's trade policies and tariff plans should contribute to limiting losses for the safe-haven asset, according to commodities experts.

Centre says closely monitoring food prices

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The central government on Friday said it is closely monitoring the prices and availability of essential food commodities to ensure affordability to consumers and maintain a stable price regime.

Measures like incentivising domestic production and import and export policies to ensure the overall availability and affordability of essential food commodities are being taken up.

"The Centre is taking preemptive and timely decisions to maintain price stability in the interest of consumers and farmers," according to a statement issued by the Food Ministry.

The production of pulses and onion in the 2024-25 crop year (July- June) is estimated to increase over the last year due to good monsoon rains and favourable weather conditions.

The tur production is estimated to be 35.02 lakh tonnne in 2024-25, 2.5 per cent higher than the previous year's production of 34.17 lakh tonne.

The agriculture ministry has issued sanctions for the procurement of tur.

Kharif and late Kharif onion production has been estimated to be good on account of higher sowing.

Similarly, the rabi onion sowing has been progressing well.



Forex reserves drop by USD 8.714 bln to USD 625.871 bln

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India's forex reserves dropped by USD 8.714 billion to USD 625.871 billion in the week ended January 10, the RBI said on Friday.

Earlier, the overall kitty dropped by USD 5.693 billion to USD 634.585 billion in the week ended January 3, the Reserve Bank of India said.

The reserves have been on a declining trend for the last few weeks, and the drop has been attributed to revaluation along with forex market interventions by RBI to help reduce volatilities in the rupee. The forex reserves had increased to



an all-time high of USD 704.885 billion in end-September.

For the week ended January 10, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by USD 9.469 billion to USD 536.011 billion, the data released on Friday showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves increased by USD 792 million to USD 67.883 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by USD 33 million to USD 17.781 billion, the apex bank said.

India's reserve position with the IMF was down by USD 4 million at USD 4.195 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.

'Maha is now leading state in startups'

PNS ■ NAGPUR

Maharashtra has surpassed Bengaluru in Karnataka and has become the startup capital of the country both in terms of numbers as well as value in the last one year, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said on Friday. Addressing a gathering at tech exhibition COMP-EX 2025 here, he also emphasised the need to adapt to Artificial Intelligence (AI) and asserted that his government was promoting startups in this field.

Markets snap 3-day winning run on selloff in IT, banking stocks

SENSEX SLUMPS OVER 400 PTS

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Key benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty slipped into negative territory on Friday after a three-day rally, dragged by intense selling pressure in IT, banking and financial stocks.

Unabated foreign fund outflows and elevated crude prices in international markets also played spoilsport for the bourses.

In a volatile session, the 30-share benchmark declined 423.49 points or 0.55 per cent to settle at 76,619.33. During the day, it tumbled 779.53 points or 1 per cent to 76,263.29.

Similarly, the NSE Nifty dropped 108.60 points or 0.47 per cent to 23,203.20.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark tanked 759.58 points or 0.98 per cent, and the Nifty declined 228.3 points or 0.97 per cent.

"The markets remained volatile for yet another session, slipping half a per cent after three consecutive days of gains. Early weakness, driven by IT and banking heavyweights reacting to earnings, pulled the benchmark indices lower. However, resilience in key players like Reliance, ITC, and LT helped limit the decline.

"The ongoing tussle between bulls and bears reflects mixed market sentiment, with select heavyweights supporting recovery hopes on a rotational basis. However, persistent FII selling and a mixed start to the earnings season are restricting upward momentum," Ajit Mishra - SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.



From the 30-share blue-chip pack, Infosys dropped nearly 6 per cent despite raising its annual sales forecast for a third time this fiscal year.

Infosys Ltd, India's second-largest IT services firm, on Thursday reported an 11.46 per cent rise in the third quarter net profit on pick-up in demand, which also prompted the company to raise its annual sales forecast for a third time this fiscal year.

CRACKDOWN ON FRAUD COMMUNICATIONS

DoT launches *Sanchar Saathi* mobile app

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The telecom department on Friday launched the Sanchar Saathi mobile app to make it easier to report any suspected fraud communications by allowing the public to flag such incidents directly from their mobile phone call logs.

Announcing this, telecom Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia also launched two other initiatives of the DoT -- Vision for National Broadband Mission 2.0 and Intra circle roaming at 'Digital Bharat Nidhi' funded 4G mobile sites.

The DoT's Sanchar Saathi portal, launched in 2023, has been an effective mechanism in the crackdown against fraud calls, and the new app will double down on these efforts by ensuring a secure environment for subscribers.

Unveiling the initiatives, Scindia said the Sanchar Saathi initiative provides "a safe and secure environment where privacy and security of each customer are safeguarded".



The new app - available for Android and iOS platforms - allows users to report suspected calls and SMS directly from phone logs. Users will also be able to identify and manage all mobile connections issued in their name, so there is no unauthorised usage.

Other features include blocking, tracing and recovery of lost or stolen mobile handsets, as well as the ability to verify the authenticity of mobile handsets, thus ensuring that users buy genuine devices.

"With over 90 crore smartphone users in the country, the Sanchar Saathi Mobile app aims to ensure that every individual has access to these vital services with just a few taps on their smartphone," an official release said.

The second initiative -- National Broadband Mission (NBM) 2.0 -- aims to position India strongly in the new era of digital transformation through high-speed broadband and meaningful connectivity for all.

the pioneer
Saturday January 18, 2025



Sunny Leone and Prabhudeva set the stage on fire with Hookstep Hookah Bar

Sunny Leone proves once again why she is a powerhouse performer as she shares the screen with none other than Prabhudeva in their upcoming song Hookstep Hookah Bar from the highly anticipated film Badass Ravi Kumar. Known for her impeccable energy and on-screen charm, Sunny lights up the frame with her electrifying moves, perfectly complementing Prabhudeva's iconic dance mastery.

Speaking about the experience, Sunny Leone said, "Working with Prabhudeva Sir again was amazing! He is one of the nicest actors I have worked with, and I feel privileged to share screen space with him again in this larger-than-life film." The duo's chemistry in Hookstep Hookah Bar is already creating buzz among fans, with Sunny effortlessly matching Prabhudeva's energy while adding her signature flair to the song.

Sunny Leone and Prabhudeva's collaboration has left fans eagerly awaiting the release, making it one of the most talked-about tracks of the year. Get ready to witness this dynamic duo as they redefine screen magic with their irresistible dance moves and electrifying presence.

Nora Fatehi's Snake with Jason Derulo brings exotic R&B vibes to the world

Global sensation Nora Fatehi and American pop megastar Jason Derulo's highly anticipated single, Snake, with Warner Music, has officially dropped. A genre-defying masterpiece in the R&B space, blending Moroccan and Middle Eastern musical elements with cutting-edge pop production, the song delivers an infectious rhythm guaranteed to dominate playlists and dance floors worldwide.

The music video for Snake is a visual spectacle, featuring high-energy choreography and breathtaking production. Belly dancing takes center stage in the video, underscoring Fatehi's status as a global star in both music and dance.

"I'm thrilled to present Snake to the world alongside the very talented Jason Derulo. This project has been a labor of love and a beautiful way for me to unite cultures and create something truly magical. Working with a world-renowned producer like Tommy Brown and his team on a track like this is something I've always wanted to do in my music career and im excited for the audience to see all the hard work and passion we've poured onto this project. This will be the first time the audience experiences my work in such an urban exotic r&b zone and I can't wait for people to play it loud and share the love," expressed Nora.

Remarkably, A-list American record producer Tommy Brown, along with his team Parker & Courtlin, are the masterminds behind this musical masterpiece. Brown is credited with multiple chart-topping albums, having worked with the likes of Ariana Grande, Selena Gomez, Blackpink, BTS, Justin Bieber, Chris Brown, Cardi B, Megan Thee Stallion, The Weeknd, and more.



The music video, directed by Moroccan Abderrafia El Abdioui and choreographed by India's Rajit Dev, was filmed amidst Marrakesh's breathtaking landscapes. Produced by Nora herself, the international crew worked tirelessly, putting in long hours to bring this bold vision to life. Fans from all corners of the globe are already raving about the song and the music video. Snake is set to top charts globally and become the go-to anthem for music lovers.



Kangana Ranaut's Emergency release paused in Punjab

Kangana Ranaut's much-anticipated political drama Emergency's release has been paused in the cities of Patiala, Amritsar, and Bathinda. The decision comes following communications from local administration authorities citing concerns over potential protests and the possibility of untoward incidents that could disrupt public order. Reports indicate that this precautionary measure is now spreading to other cities in Punjab as well.

Hitting theatres today, Emergency has already generated substantial buzz due to its controversial subject matter, which revisits the tumultuous period of the 1975 Emergency declared by then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The film delves deep into the historical and political upheaval of the time, shedding light on a chapter that continues to evoke polarising reactions across the nation.

Local administrations in the three Punjab cities have taken a preemptive stance, suggesting that the film's narrative might provoke unrest among certain groups. The authorities have emphasised maintaining peace and order, especially given the heightened sensitivity surrounding the film's content.

John Abraham's 'The Diplomat' on March 7

Action star John Abraham-starrer "The Diplomat", which is inspired by real events, is all set to release on March 7.

"The Diplomat" is inspired by a true story that shook the nation, the film promises a gripping tale of power, patriotism. Stepping into the shoes of a high-ranking government official, John will be seen taking the audiences on an edge-of-the-seat journey filled with intense drama and high-octane moments.

Directed by the acclaimed Shivam Nair and written by Ritesh Shah, 'The Diplomat' is poised to deliver an unforgettable cinematic experience.



The film is produced by T-Series, Bhushan Kumar & Krishan Kumar; John Abraham of JA Entertainment; Vipul D Shah, Ashwin Varde, Rajesh Bahl of Wakaoo Films, Sameer Dixit and Jatish Varma of Fortune Pictures, Rakesh Dang of Seeta Films.

The actor was last seen on screen in "Vedaa", an action drama film directed by Nikkhil Advani and written by Aseem Arora. The film, inspired by true events, stars John Abraham and Sharvari as the title character, alongside Abhishek Banerjee, Ashish Vidyarthi, Kumud Mishra, Rajendra Chawla, Tanvi Malhara, Anurag Thakur and Urvashi Dubey. It followed the story of a young woman, who embarks on a journey of resistance, challenging a repressive system while confronting an antagonist determined to uphold it.

Apart from "The Diplomat", the actor will also be seen in "Tehran", directed by Arun Gopalan and produced by Dinesh Vijan. She will be seen starring opposite actress Manushi Chhillar in the geo-political film.

Earlier this month, actor Rohit Roy revealed magic dieting advice he received from John.

In an old video, Rohit can be seen talking to Cyrus Broacha on the latter's podcast. He said, "I'll tell you a story about John. We were shooting for 'Mumbai Saga'. Another actor, Shaad Randhawa, he's the owner of Bayroute, an upmarket Mumbai restaurant. Outstanding food, and we were shooting in South Mumbai. So he'd say, 'come, let's call food from Bayroute'. So now Shaad would call a spread. Obviously, if John Abraham has called for Lunch, full kebabs and all, excellent food". He further mentioned, "However, John would not touch a single thing and he would make us eat the whole thing. And, he is a vegetarian. So the first day I realised, he wasn't eating. Second day, again the same thing. Then we realised he's calling for the food, feeding us, not eating anything. Then he said, 'Don't worry, you've eaten all this food, don't feel guilty. Tomorrow, don't eat carbs'. And that was the serious advice". "So the day you binge, like if today you have indulged in food, tomorrow just avoid carbs for the whole day", he added.

Deva Trailer: Kubbra Sait impresses as fierce police inspector

The much-anticipated trailer of "Deva," starring Kubbra Sait, has finally been released, and it has already created a buzz among fans and critics alike. The film, set to hit theaters on January 31st, promises to be a thrilling ride, and Kubbra Sait's portrayal of a fierce police inspector is one of the highlights.

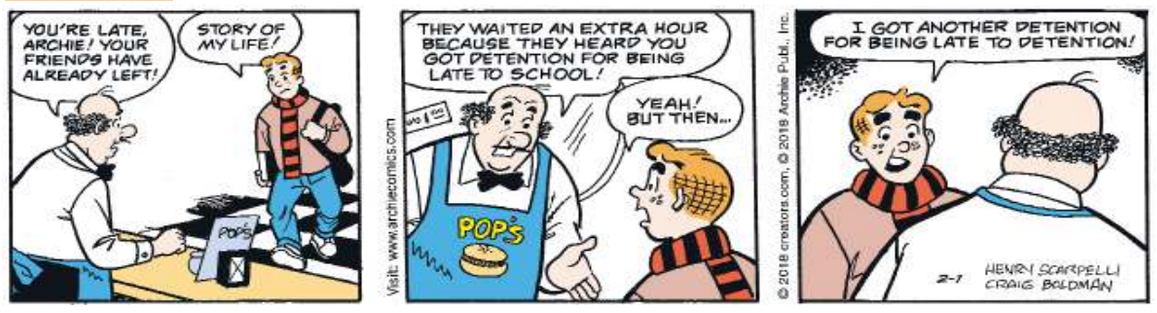
In the trailer, Kubbra Sait is seen donning the uniform and her powerful screen presence coupled with an intense performance. This has already garnered immense excitement among her fans, and many are eagerly looking forward to seeing her in this avatar.



Starring alongside Shahid Kapoor, one of Bollywood's most versatile actors, is a significant milestone in Kubbra's career. Their dynamic performances are expected to be a major draw for the audience. The film's gripping narrative, combined with stellar performances from the cast, promises to make it a must-watch. As the release date approaches, the excitement continues to build. Fans are eagerly counting down the days to witness Kubbra Sait and Shahid Kapoor's electrifying performances on the big screen. Directed by the acclaimed filmmaker Rosshan Andrrews, the trailer has set high expectations, and is poised to be one of the standout films of the year.

FUN

ARCHIE



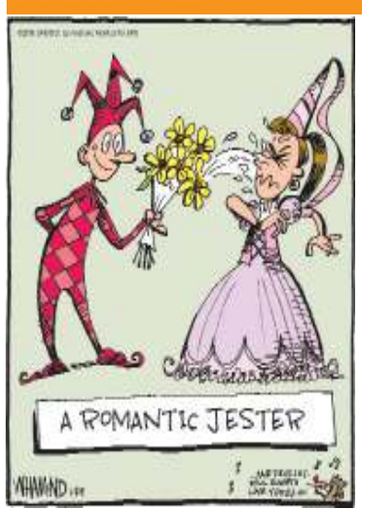
CALVIN AND HOBBES



GARFIELD



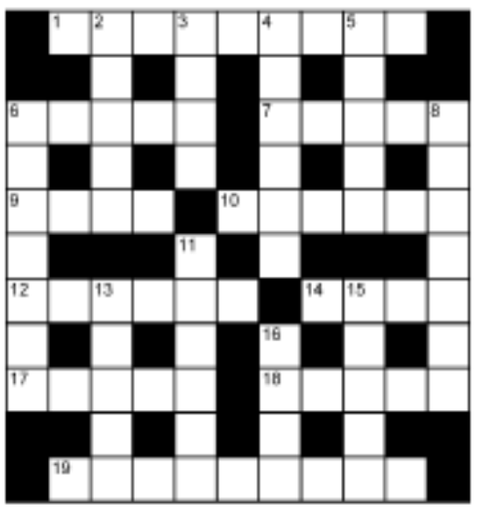
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1 People in jail
6 The centre of your eye
7 Have a quarrel
9 Things to play with
10 Flat dishes
12 Mistakes
14 The part along the side or end of something
17 A boat with sails
18 Flour is made from this
19 Scientific study of the sun, moon, planets and stars

DOWN

2 Answer
3 A fine glossy fabric
4 Almost
5 Correct
6 Mugs and other things made of baked clay
8 The least difficult
11 Author
13 Speed competitions
15 Something you imagine while asleep
16 A brother or sister the same age as you

SOLUTION



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Yesterday's solution

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

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

the pioneer
SATURDAY | JANUARY 18, 2025

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'EVERY BITE OF BIRYANI TELLS THE STORY OF HYDERABAD'S DIVERSE CULTURE'

IN AN EXCLUSIVE CHAT WITH THE PIONEER, RUBIN CHERIAN, THE GENERAL MANAGER OF NOVOTEL HYDERABAD CONVENTION CENTRE AND HYDERABAD INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, OPENS UP ABOUT HIS TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY IN THE DYNAMIC CITY OF HYDERABAD

HYDERABOND

TEJAL SINHA
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Hyderabad, a city famed for its rich culinary heritage, particularly the iconic Hyderabadi biryani, offers a harmonious blend of ancient traditions and contemporary innovation. This vibrant metropolis is a melting pot of diverse cultures, languages, and cuisines, where old-world charm meets modern progress, reflecting India's dynamic growth while preserving its historical roots. This week for our special segment of Hyderabond, Rubin Cherian, the General Manager of Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre and Hyderabad International Convention Centre, offers a unique perspective on how Hyderabad's fusion of heritage and modernity has not only shaped his professional trajectory but also enriched his personal life in profound ways.

"Hyderabad has been a truly transformative chapter in my professional and personal journey," Cherian begins. Recalling his first step into the vibrant metropolis, he shares how he took on the challenge of pre-opening the ibis hotel. "It was not just about building a business," he says. "It was about connecting with the heart of the city itself." Over the years, Cherian has witnessed Hyderabad's exponential growth, from its historic lanes surrounding the Charminar to its bustling tech hubs and skyscrapers. For him, Hyderabad is more than a place of work; it is where tradition meets innovation, and every day feels like a new adventure.

Reflecting on his association with Hyderabad, he notes how the city has consistently exceeded his expectations. Initially, he arrived with apprehensions, wondering how he would adapt to a city so different from the cosmopolitan places he had lived in before. However, he was quickly won over by Hyderabad's unique charm. "Hyderabad has a way of making people feel welcome," he remarks. "The city encourages you to let go of preconceived notions and dive into its world of possibilities." What initially seemed like challenges soon became cherished aspects of his experience, from the harmonious blend of modern conveniences and traditional values to the city's open-heartedness and vibrant cultural fabric.



Comparing Hyderabad to his hometown of Nagpur, he highlights the contrasting rhythms of the two cities. "While Nagpur is known for its tranquillity and simplicity, Hyderabad pulses with dynamic energy," he explains. "Hyderabad is the perfect blend of old and new. It's a city where centuries-old history walks hand-in-hand with futuristic innovation." The juxtaposition of bustling tech parks and rich cultural heritage has inspired and challenged him in equal measure, making Hyderabad an integral part of his journey.

When asked about what defines Hyderabad in a single word, his response was immediate: Biryani. He sees it as more than just a dish; it is a symbol of the city's soul. "Every bite tells the story of Hyderabad's rich history and its vibrant, diverse culture," he says. The experience of sharing Biryani, whether in the bustling streets of the Old City or a sophisticated restaurant, reflects Hyderabad's ability to unite people from all walks of life. "It's a reflection of Hyderabad itself – a city that celebrates diversity and invites you to savor its heritage while embracing its modern spirit," he adds.

Among Cherian's fondest memories in Hyderabad are the challenging days of the pandemic. He recalls the resilience and solidarity displayed by his team and the unwavering support of their guests. "In the midst of fear and chaos, what stood out most was the incredible strength of our team and the empathy of our guests," he shares. These moments, he says, revealed the true spirit of Hyderabad: strength, compassion, and hope.

Professionally, Hyderabad has been pivotal for him, providing an environment that fosters growth and innovation. As the leader of the Hyderabad International Convention Centre (HICC), he has had the privilege of showcasing Hyderabad's strengths as a global business destination. "HICC plays a vital role in representing Hyderabad and India on global platforms," he says. The opportunities to connect with global leaders and foster international collaborations have been among the most fulfilling aspects of his career. Despite the city's many virtues, he admits that the intense summer heat can be a challenge. However, he is quick to add that Hyderabad always finds ways to offer comfort, whether it's through a cool evening breeze or a refreshing Irani chai. "That's Hyderabad," he says with a smile. "A city that never fails to charm, even in the heat."

For Cherian, Hyderabad is not just a city; it is home. "Hyderabad has a way of welcoming you and making you feel like part of its story," he reflects. It has shaped his professional and personal growth, offering a blend of history, progress, and warmth that continues to inspire him every day. "Hyderabad is where I've learned, evolved, and found a sense of belonging. It is not just where I live; it is where I've truly come to call home," he concludes.

Pacing woes aside, Paatal Lok 2 is a genre-defining sequel

"PAATAL LOK" SEASON 2, RELEASED ON JANUARY 17, 2025, ON AMAZON PRIME VIDEO, CONTINUES THE GRIPPING NARRATIVE ESTABLISHED IN ITS INAUGURAL SEASON. THE SERIES, CREATED BY SUDIP SHARMA AND DIRECTED BY AVINASH ARUN DHAWARE, DELVES DEEPER INTO THE COMPLEXITIES OF INDIAN SOCIETY THROUGH THE LENS OF CRIME AND MORALITY

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

PLOT

The second season picks up with Inspector Hathi Ram Chaudhary, portrayed by Jaideep Ahlawat, facing new challenges in his professional and personal life. Now subordinate to Imran Ansari (Ishwak Singh), Hathi Ram navigates a labyrinth of crime and corruption that tests his principles and resilience. The narrative intricately weaves through various socio-political issues, reflecting the underbelly of contemporary India.

ANALYSIS

"Paatal Lok" Season 2 maintains the show's signature gritty realism, offering a nuanced portrayal of societal structures and individual dilemmas. The storytelling is layered, with each episode unraveling new facets of the characters and the world they inhabit. The series adeptly balances suspense with social commentary, making it both engaging and thought-provoking.

HIGHLIGHTS

Paatal Lok Season 2 captivates with its gritty narrative that dives deeper into the dark and complex world of crime, politics, and morality. The plot intricately weaves themes of systemic corruption, communal discord, and class struggles, offering a stark reflection of contemporary societal issues. The storytelling is layered and unrelenting, blending action, tension, and moments of introspection, keeping the audience engaged throughout. The series also masterfully balances its intense pacing with moments of emotional depth, making its exploration of human nature and moral ambiguity both gripping and thought-provoking.

DRAWBACKS

While Paatal Lok Season 2 largely lives up to its predecessor, it does falter in certain areas. The intricate plot, while compelling, occasionally becomes overly convoluted, requiring meticulous attention to detail that might overwhelm casual viewers. Some subplots, though intriguing, feel underdeveloped or unnecessary, detracting from the overall cohesion of the narrative. The pacing in the midsection drags slightly, with a few episodes leaning too heavily on exposition rather than action or character development. Additionally, certain new characters, while promising, fail to leave a lasting impact due to limited screen time or insufficient backstory. For fans of the first season, the heightened drama may also feel a bit excessive, edging closer to sensationalism in some moments. These minor missteps, however, don't overshadow the show's overall impact but could have been refined for a tighter, more focused narrative.



CREATED BY : Sudip Sharma
DIRECTED BY : Avinash Arun Dhaware
CAST : Jaideep Ahlawat, Ishwak Singh, Tillotama Shome, Gul Panag, Nagesh Kukunoor and Jahnu Barua
STREAMING ON : Amazon Prime Video
STREAMING ON : Zee5
RATING : 3.5/5

PERFORMANCE

The performances in Paatal Lok Season 2 are nothing short of extraordinary, with Jaideep Ahlawat leading the charge as the indomitable Hathiram Chaudhary. Ahlawat delivers a nuanced portrayal of a man grappling with his inner demons while navigating the murky waters of systemic corruption and personal loss. His transformation from a disillusioned cop to a relentless pursuer of justice is both gripping and heartfelt. Abhishek Banerjee as Hathoda Tyagi once again commands attention with his understated menace and layered vulnerability, proving why his character remains unforgettable. Neeraj Kabi, Swastika Mukherjee, and Gul Panag add depth to their roles, elevating the series with their compelling performances. The supporting cast, including the ensemble of antagonists and morally ambiguous characters, excels in adding realism and complexity to the narrative. Every actor, regardless of screen time, contributes significantly, creating a seamless ensemble effort that breathes life into the show's intense and multi-dimensional world.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Paatal Lok Season 2 is a testament to exceptional craftsmanship in its technical execution. The cinematography by Avinash Arun and Saurabh Goswami is a standout, seamlessly capturing the gritty realism of urban decay and the haunting landscapes of rural India. The use of lighting and color grading creates a foreboding atmosphere that perfectly aligns with the show's dark and intense tone. The editing is sharp, maintaining suspense and ensuring that the nonlinear storytelling doesn't lose its coherence. The background score, composed by Naren Chandavarkar and Benedict Taylor, heightens the tension with its understated yet impactful compositions, adding emotional depth to critical scenes. The sound design deserves special mention, immersing viewers in the chaotic world of Paatal Lok with precision and clarity. The production design authentically recreates diverse environments, from urban underbellies to political corridors, adding layers of authenticity to the narrative. Overall, the technical brilliance significantly amplifies the storytelling, ensuring the visuals and sound resonate powerfully with the audience.



VERDICT

"Paatal Lok" Season 2 successfully builds upon the foundation laid by its predecessor, delivering a series that is both entertaining and reflective. With stellar performances, particularly by Jaideep Ahlawat, and a narrative that delves into pertinent societal issues, the season stands out as a noteworthy addition to Indian web series. Despite minor pacing issues, it remains a must-watch for fans of the genre.

Preventive healthcare: Your best bet against heart disease



Cardiovascular diseases are one the leading cause of mortality worldwide. Among them, coronary artery disease hits the list. Recently there has been an increase in number of heart attacks among young people, especially in the age group 25-40 and around 25 percent of this heart attacks occur in less than 40 years of age. Contrary to the myth that heart attacks occur among older individuals with risk factors like diabetes and hypertension, the fact is that the younger population is equally affected and that is a reality. This is a cause of concern as in the last few years we've even seen heart attacks occurring in people in their 20's.

There are several factors contributing to this situation. Important ones include increased stress levels in younger people, higher incidence of smoking and lack of adequate physical activity. Adding to that is the large number of people diagnosed with diabetes, hypertension and high cholesterol levels at a very young age. This plays an important role in the development of coronary artery disease. A large section of the Indian population is genetically predisposed to cardiovascular disease. This genetic transmission is most commonly observed to be transmitted through the aternal side and affects the younger generation probably 5-10 years earlier than their previous generation.

It is aptly said that "Prevention is better than cure" and most important thing to prevent a heart attack is to take care of risk enhancers. If you are a diabetic, you should be extremely concerned about sugar control. Acceptable levels in India are fasting sugar level less than 130 with HbA1c less than 7.0. Younger people with hypertension should keep their blood pressure well controlled and preferably below 130/90 most of the times. High cholesterol levels are a concern and more so if you have a family history of the same. In such cases one should get a yearly lipid check-up done and consult your physician at regular intervals. However, if you are healthy and do not have the above issues, regular physical activity 30-45 minutes a day for at least five days a week is recommended. Exercises such as cycling, running and swimming are good for heart. Smoking should be stopped completely. One may develop a heart attack on consuming even one cigarette per day. One should be extremely careful about mental health and avoid excess stress. Including a good proportion of vegetables and fruits in your diet and use of unsaturated fatty acids in food and oil remains a good practice. At the same time keep a tab on salt intake and avoid sugary beverages like soft drinks. Do consult your physician if you have issues to chart out a good exercise routine.

Preventive healthcare should be the focus for everyone.

Long working hours are known to be responsible for about one-third of the total estimated work-related burden of disease and is established as the risk factor with the largest occupational disease burden. According to data published by WHO and ILO, working 55 or more hours per week is associated with an estimated 35% higher risk of a stroke and a 17% higher risk of dying from ischemic heart disease, compared to working 35-40 hours a week. So, is the "work intensification" new normal for many?

A possible explanation is that persons who have long working hours are more stressed and high concentrations of stress hormones can raise the risk of clogged arteries and the development of blood clots which can cause strokes and heart attacks.

HARMFUL EFFECTS OF LONG WORKING HOURS

Apart from the stress, there are many other ways by which working too much can impact your health.

1. ***You are not getting adequate sleeping time of 8 hours a day***
2. ***Either you are not eating food properly or having unhealthy food habits***
3. ***You are not exercising***
4. ***You are neglecting relationships***
5. ***Indulging in habits like smoking and alcoholism***
6. ***You are predisposed to other risk factors like high blood pressure, diabetes, overweight, high cholesterol and sedentary lifestyle activity***
7. ***Ignoring the warning signs leading to delay in treatment***

HOW TO MANAGE WORK STRESS AND EXCESS WORKING HOURS

One should always watch for signs of burnout or unhealthy work-life balance which includes self-neglect, not focusing on mental health, unmeaningful work, constant worry of job performance, difficult balancing between work and family life and developing loneliness.

It's important to have a work-life balance that will make you not only productive but overall healthier. It is important to set boundaries and make a routine. At the same time giving some hours of the day to activities like walking, cycling, swimming or yoga and meditation will be grateful to remove the work stress and keep the mind diverted. One should get out of the guilt of clocking out of the office when everyone else is at the workplace. No amount of guilt is larger than your wife, parents or child. At the same time, the government should regulate the working hours.

(The author, Dr M Sudhakar Rao, is a Consultant in cardiology, at Manipal Hospital Sarjapur)

SUKUMAR'S DAUGHTER SUKRITI SHAVES HER HEAD FOR THE FILM



Director Sukumar praises his daughter for her performance in her upcoming film *Gandhi Tatha Chettu*. Sukumar's wife Tabitha gets emotional seeing her acting in this film

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
sureshkavirayani@gmail.com

Top director Sukumar is a very proud father today. It is not that he delivered a blockbuster hit 'Pushpa 2', but it is about his daughter Sukruti. Sukumar and his wife Tabitha got emotional on Thursday evening at the promotion of the film 'Gandhi Tatha Chettu'. Sukriti plays the main lead in this film as the story revolves around a tree, grandfather and Gandhi played by Sukriti.

"Though I did many films, but when my daughter is calling someone as amma and anna, I was a bit emotional," said Sukumar about his daughter Sukriti. The director said that he never took his children to the shooting of his films. "Because, if they come, I can't concentrate on the shoot. So they never come. My daughter Sukriti wanted to be a singer and she is learning music. She never discussed acting. But when I saw this film, I was shocked to see her performance. Even though she didn't say anything about the film, her performance in this film is amazing," praised Sukumar about his daughter.

Padmavati Malladi is the director of this film, while Mythri Movie Makers and Sukumar Writings are producing it. Sukumar praises the director for coming up with a story that gets everyone emotional. "When Padmavati messaged me about her story and wanted to take Sukruti as the lead, I told my daughter about it. She initially said 'no', but later she wanted to talk to Padmavati. I don't know what she told my daughter, but she agreed to do this film," said Sukumar.

The director said that he spent months to rope in artists. "For 'Rangasthalam' I took nearly eight months to get the artists and for 'Pushpa 2' also the same. I expect my artistes to be versatile, but Sukriti surprised me with her performance in this film," said Sukumar.

"I have always believed that those who are good at narration can execute good films without fail," said Sukumar about director Padmavati. He added that she narrated the story in a very good way. He also gave an example of his own experience. "When I narrated 'Arya' script to Chiranjeevi, Allu Aravind asked him if an inexperienced person like me would be able to execute the project. Chiranjeevi told him that I will direct it efficiently because my narration was effective," recalls Sukumar.

Sukumar said that he provides entertainment and that is his message. "But if entertainment is matched with a message, it's a bonus. That's why I am jealous of those who have made 'Gandhi Tatha Chettu'," he said. He added that this film should do well for two people and those are producer Sindhu and director Padmavati.

Sukumar's wife Tabitha Sukumar said that she is also not confident about her daughter's acting skills. She said director Padmavati believes in her daughter Sukriti's acting skills. Tabitha turned emotional talking about her daughter's journey as she shaved her head for this film. "Generally teens didn't accept to shave their head and my daughter did it when she was thirteen," said an emotional Tabitha. Actually, the director auditioned hundreds of kids for this role, but no one agreed to shave their head. But when they approached Sukriti, she agreed to do it.

The film has already been screened at several international film festivals, winning multiple awards. Sukriti Veni also received the Best Child Artiste award for her performance. The film is releasing on January 24.

Pawan Kalyan's song is trending!

The song, which Pawan Kalyan sung, in the film 'Hari Hara Veera Mallu' is out now. After joining politics, the actor is busy doing his duty as Deputy Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and in between allocated dates to complete 'Hari Hara Veera Mallu'. Now, the makers started promoting this song which Pawan Kalyan has sung. They also released a video where they showed Pawan Kalyan and some other artistes in it.

The song begins with Pawan Kalyan in his element, delivering heartfelt lines in the Telangana dialect, 'Vinaali, Veeramallu Maata Chepithe Vinaali'. The song's core message revolves around the importance of listening to good words and the wisdom that comes from them.

The visuals are set in a forest backdrop, featuring a group of Veeramallu's followers gathered around a wildfire. Pawan Kalyan's simple yet graceful dance steps are bound to become a sensation on social media. MM Keeravaani provided the music, while the lyrics are penned by Penchal Das for Telugu. The song is released in other languages too, but different singers and lyric writers. The movie is in its final stages of shooting and post-production, gearing up for a grand worldwide release on March 28, 2025.





Ajith Kumar is in the news again!

Actor Ajith Kumar is in the news as his racing car met with an accident when he was practicing in Dubai. Later, in the original race, his team stood in the third position, which was greeted by many celebrities and Indians. Ajith is popular as an actor, but at the same time he shows his passion towards racing. Now, on the professional front, his upcoming film 'Pattudala' is all set to release on February 6. It is a Tamil film titled 'Vidaamuyarchi' and directed by Magizh Thirumeni, while top production house Lyca Productions is producing it. The makers wanted to release the film initially during Sankranti festival, but now they are coming on February 6. The film has been creating curiosity since its announcement and the excitement has only intensified with the release of its theatrical trailer. In this trailer it shows Ajith Kumar in a high-octane action role, portraying a determined man on a relentless mission. The trailer showcases Ajith performing breathtaking stunts, which are going to deliver an exhilarating experience to the audience in theatres. Trisha is playing the female lead opposite Ajith after a long time anmd so is Arjun Sarja. The trio is set to enthral audiences once again with their performances in this movie. Regina Cassandra is also there in an important role, while Anirudh Ravichander is the music director.

Annapurna Studios completes 50 years!

Akkineni Nagarjuna is happy to say that his Annapurna Studios has completed 50 years. The actor said that the studio provided life for many new technicians, artistes and directors. "I still didn't understand how my father built a big studio here when there were no proper roads," said Nagarjuna about the studio.

The actor said that his father is an inspiration for many people. "For every man's success, there is a woman behind and for my father's success, my mother Annapurna is there. That's the reason my father named this studio as Annapurna Studios," said Nagarjuna.

The actor said that the studio started during Sankranti festival and for every Sankranti, his parents used to come to the studio and have breakfast with studio employees. "I call them Annapurna Warriors and they are our family members. The tradition of having breakfast with Annapurna employees continues even now," said the actor. He thanked the employees and their strong support because the studio is running successfully till now.

The actor said his father is a big inspiration for him and his children. "Not only for my family, but many other people also. When I go outside, many people talk positively about my father and tell many inspirational stories," said Nagarjuna.



Vijay Sethupathi as Bold Kannan in 'Ace'



Last year, versatile actor Vijay Sethupathi delivered a big hit 'Maharaja'. Interestingly, that was his 50th film and it was successful both in Tamil and Telugu. After a long time, he gets a break with 'Maharaja' as lead actor. Another film of his 'Viduthalai' part two is also released, but it is not up to the expectations. Now, the actor is coming up with a romantic crime comedy film titled 'Ace'. He is playing Bold Kannan in this one, directed by Arumugakumar. Rukmini Vasanth is playing the female lead, while top Tamil comedian Yogi Babu is also playing an important role. Produced by Arumugakumar, the film has been made with a massive budget and promises an engaging cinematic experience. The teaser for the film's title created a buzz, garnering millions of views and setting records. Now, on the occasion of Vijay Sethupathi's birthday, the team has unveiled the glimpse of the actor from the film. He is playing Bold Kannan, wearing traditional attire, confidently walking through an airport in Malaysia. Known for his distinctive acting prowess, Vijay has not only captured the hearts of Indian audiences but also garnered a massive fan base in China and beyond.

Vishwak Sen is interesting as Laila



The teaser of Vishwak Sen's upcoming film 'Laila' was released on Friday. Directed by Ram Narayan, the film is produced by Sahu Garapati. The film is all set to release on February 14, the Valentines' Day. The makers started the promos and released the teaser and it shows Vishwak Sen's two avatars in the film. They reveal the character of Sonu as Vishwak Sen and on the other side he plays a female Laila. His female get-up is interesting as he perfectly fits into the role in this trailer.

It seems, the director has come up with an entertainer with 'Laila', as the teaser shows action and fun. Akanksha Sharma is playing the female lead, while music is by Leon James. Vishwak Sen's last films 'Mechanic Rocky' and 'Gangs of Godavari' didn't do well at the box-office and he hopes on 'Laila' for a break. The actor is coming up with different stories, but it seems, omehow they need some good emotions or entertainment.

Pragya Jaiswal gets a good break after a long time!

Pragya Jaiswal is popular with her debut Telugu film 'Kanche' where she delivered an intense performance in that period drama. Varun Tej played the lead actor, while Krish is the director. The film was released in 2015, but the actress didn't get another break till 2011 with 'Akhanda'. She played collector in this Boyapati and Balakrishna combination film and she tasted success after a long time.

Now, the actress is again paired opposite Balakrishna in the recently released 'Daaku Maharaaj'. It is a coincidence that the film was released on January 12, which is also Pragya's birthday. "I never expected that my birthday gift would be like this, and I should thank the Telugu audience for making my birthday more memorable as they made the film a great success," said Pragya. The actress tasted her first success in this New Year. "Balakrishna is my lucky mascot as I got a good break with 'Akhanda' and now with 'Daaku Maharaaj'," said the actress.

The actress is also pairing with Balakrishna once again in an upcoming film 'Akhanda 2' and the shooting of this film just started. She is also playing an important role in 'Tyson Naidu' that stars Bellamkonda Sai Srinivas.





ప్రతి నెల మూడవ శనివారం

స్వర్ణ ఆంధ్ర స్వచ్ఛ ఆంధ్ర

గౌరవ ముఖ్యమంత్రి
శ్రీ నారా చంద్రబాబు నాయుడు గారి పిలుపును
అందుకుందాం. ప్రతి నెల మూడవ శనివారాన్ని
'స్వర్ణ ఆంధ్ర-స్వచ్ఛ ఆంధ్ర' దినంగా పాటిద్దాం.

పరిశుభ్రం ఆరోగ్యం

ఒక అడుగు ముందుకు స్వచ్ఛత వైపు

మంచి ఆలోచనలు, ఆరోగ్యవంతమైన శరీరం, స్వచ్ఛమైన వాతావరణం, ఇంటి దగ్గర, పనిచేసే చోట శుభ్రతలతో మన రాష్ట్రాన్ని స్వర్ణ ఆంధ్రగా, స్వచ్ఛ ఆంధ్రగా తీర్చిదిద్దుకుందాం.













'స్వర్ణ ఆంధ్ర-స్వచ్ఛ ఆంధ్ర' లక్ష్యాలు

- ఇంటింటి నుంచి 100% చెత్త సేకరణ
- చెత్తను 100% తడి చెత్త, పొడి చెత్తగా వేరు చేయడం
- ఘన వ్యర్థాలను 100% శాస్త్రీయంగా ప్రాసెస్ చేయడం
- తిరిగి ఉపయోగించగల వ్యర్థాలను రీసైక్లింగ్ చేయడం
- చెత్త కుప్పలు లేని సమాజం
- 100% వాడుక నీటి నిర్వహణ
- 100% ఓడిఎఫ్ ప్లస్ ఆదర్శ గ్రామాలు

జారీ చేసినవారు : స్వచ్ఛ ఆంధ్ర కార్పొరేషన్

ప్రజలారా రండి! 'స్వర్ణ ఆంధ్ర-స్వచ్ఛ ఆంధ్ర' లక్ష్యాల సాధనలో ప్రభుత్వానికి సహకరించండి