

I thought the BRS's defeat would change the language used in politics. Revanth is continuing the ungentlemanly language introduced by KCR. Revanth should change his language style as he is occupying a responsible post. I am ready for an open debate on implemented promises if Revanth promises that he will not use KCR's language

- G. Kishan Reddy, Union Minister



'IMEE corridor will be source of regional peace, stability'
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INDIA SHOULD
 FOCUS ON LOCAL CURRENCY TRADING: GTRI
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Peelings song IS OUT
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DON'T MISS...

Construction of new OGH building

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy conducted a detailed review of the construction plans for the new Osmania General Hospital at the Goshamahal Stadium in Hyderabad on Sunday. The Chief Minister emphasised the importance of a comprehensive planning to ensure the project meets the city's healthcare demands for years to come. Revanth Reddy instructed officials to begin the survey for the construction of roads leading to the hospital site, ensuring seamless connectivity from various parts of the...

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Every couple should have at least 3 kids

Expressing concern over declining population growth, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday said India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR), the average number of children a woman gives birth to in her lifetime, should be at least 3, well above the present one of 2.1. Speaking at the 'Kathale Kul (clan) Sammelan' in Nagpur, Bhagwat also highlighted the vital role of families, and warned that according to population science, if a society's total fertility rate dips below 2.1, it could face extinction. "A declining population..."

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Commercial LPG up Rs 16.5 per cylinder

Jet fuel, or ATF, price on Sunday was hiked by 1.45 per cent and rates of commercial LPG used in hotels and restaurants increased by Rs 16.5 per 19-kg cylinder in the monthly revision done in line with international oil price trends. The aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was increased by Rs 1,318.12 per kilolitre, or 1.45 per cent, to Rs 91,856.84 per kl in the national capital - home to one of the busiest airports in the country, according to state-owned fuel retailers. This is the second straight monthly...

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Sindhu, Lakshya clinch singles titles

Top seeded Indians P V Sindhu and Lakshya Sen showcased their class and dominance to clinch the women's and men's singles titles, respectively, at the Syed Modi International badminton tournament here on Sunday. Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medalist, ended her long title drought by outplaying China's world number 119 Wu Luo Yu 21-14, 21-16 to lift the trophy for the third time, having previously triumphed in 2017 and 2022. In the men's singles final, Lakshya, a 2021 World Championships...

-SPORTS

CM preferred Burra to restore faith in TGPSC

In a move aimed at restoring the credibility of the Telangana Public Service Commission (TGPSC), the government has appointed senior IAS officer Burra Venkatesham as its Chairman. Venkatesham is expected to take charge this week after completing his Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) formalities. He has three more years of service in the IAS. Venkatesham formally met Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on Sunday. Sources said the Chief Minister personally selected Venkatesham for the role, emphasising the need for a trustworthy official to rejuvenate the institution. Sources close to the development said that Venkatesham was approached and encouraged to apply marking him as the ideal candidate for this pivotal post. His

'Committed to farmers' welfare'

Rythu Bharosa will be launched after Sankranti, says CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy reaffirmed his government's commitment to farmers' welfare at a press conference here on Sunday.

Addressing the media, he outlined his administration's achievements over the last year, emphasised the fulfilment of the promises made to farmers, and announced that the Rythu Bharosa scheme would be launched after Sankranti.

He said the Rythu Bharosa scheme would be launched after Sankranti, fulfilling a promise made during the elections.

"This is Sonia Gandhi's guarantee, and we will implement it without fail," he said, adding that a cabinet sub-committee has been constituted to finalise the scheme's modalities, which will be discussed in the Assembly.

He said that lakhs of farmers attended the Rythu Panduga held in Palamuru and across 568 Rythu Vedikas in Telangana, giving their blessings to the Congress-led government. "The support of farmers gives us immense strength and we will meet their expectations," he said.

The Chief Minister criticised the BRS government for its failure to support farmers adequately. He claimed his government inherited a debt of Rs 7 lakh crore but has still managed to waive farm loans amounting to Rs 20,616 crore, benefiting over 25 lakh farmers.

"Within 25 days, we waived loans amounting to Rs 17,869 crore for 22.22 lakh farmers, setting a national record. We waived loans amounting to Rs 2,747 crore in the fourth instalment. No other state in India has done so much in such a short time," he asserted.

The government has also cleared pending Rythu Bandhu dues left by the BRS administration and had disbursed Rs 7,625 crore immediately after assuming power.

The Chief Minister assured farmers that the Rs 500 bonus for fine variety paddy would

continue into the next season. He encouraged the cultivation of high-yielding paddy varieties like Telangana Sona, BPT and HMT, which are widely consumed in the state.

"Our government has already procured 31 lakh tonnes of paddy this season and will continue supporting

farmers," he said.

Revanth also announced plans to distribute locally produced rice through fair-price shops and provide fine rice meals to students in social welfare hostels, ensuring that the benefits of Telangana's agricultural revolution reached everyone.

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Tenant farmers may not get Rythu Bharosa funds

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government's Rythu Bharosa scheme, which promises Rs 15,000 per acre annually to farmers, may not be extended to tenant farmers due to problems in identifying them.

While the scheme aims to provide direct financial support to farmers, the issue of tenant farmers remains unresolved, top sources close to the Chief Minister indicated. One of the

guarantees under Rythu Bharosa is Rs 12,000 for farm labourers.

The Dharani Portal, introduced to streamline land records, has made it difficult to distinguish between tenant farmers and landowners, as it does not include specific data on land leases. "In the past, tenant farmers were identified through 'pani nakal' records, but now there is nothing to identify them," sources said.

However, the government says

that tenant farmers are directly benefiting from the government's Rs 500 per quintal bonus on fine variety paddy, which is seen as a significant relief for those cultivating rented lands.

Sources said the bonus surpasses the financial assistance provided under schemes like Rythu Bandhu, thereby addressing the needs of tenant farmers in a different way.

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'KCR ready for KTR's arrest'

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) supremo K. Chandrasekhar Rao is reportedly well prepared for the potential arrest of his son BRS leader KT Rama Rao, knowledgeable sources said.

Unlike the arrest of his daughter Kavitha, which caused political ripples, KCR appears to have anticipated this move and is treating it as part of a broader political strategy.

Insiders said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is keen to push for KTR's arrest to underline his admin-

Treats it as part of the game

istration's commitment to probe KCR's family. However, with the Formula-E probe awaiting the Governor's nod, things have slowed down. While Lagacherla was another incident in which KTR's name was included, it didn't go further.

Meanwhile, KTR also wants to be arrested and keeps talking about it. Despite this, KCR is reportedly unfazed. "Political arrests are a known tactic, and KCR views this as an expected move in the political battle," a source close to him said.

Sources added that facilities at the Charlapalli and Chanchalguda jails in Telangana are far better compared to Bihar where Kavitha was kept, which adds to KCR's readiness.

The sources also emphasised that KCR will minimise the potential fallout in his party from KTR's eventual arrest. "This won't affect him or the BRS's strategies much," sources added, reflecting the former CM's seasoned political manoeuvring.

Observers see this as a calculated political game, with Revanth aiming to weaken the BRS's foothold while KCR maintains focus on ensuring stability and long-term strategies.

'No difference between Cong and BRS'

• BJP releases 'chargesheet' • Says Cong failed to take action against land grabbers

KOLISHETTY VENKATESHWARLU venkat.k.warlu@gmail.com ■ HYDERABAD

Pointing out that there is no difference between the BRS and Congress governments, the BJP alleged in its charge sheet that the Congress government had failed to initiate action against land grabbers although it had assured during its election campaign that it would take strong action against land grabbers if it is voted to power.

The BJP released a 12-page charge sheet against the Congress government on Sunday titled, 'Congress Guarantees Garadi-6 lies and 66 Deceptions.'



Telangana BJP leaders releasing a chargesheet on Congress government's one year rule on Sunday in Hyderabad

In its charge sheet, the BJP said the Congress government had failed to implement its assurances to appoint a 'Land Commission' and to solve the problem of land rights.

Recalling the Congress allegation that the BRS government had engaged in illegal acts using the Dharani

Portal and that it would dump the Dharani Portal in the Bay of Bengal and introduce the Bhumatha Portal immediately after coming to power, the BJP charge sheet pointed out that the Congress government had not taken any action against anyone.

Continued on Page 2

'Harness double AI power'

PM tells police on threats from digital frauds, cybercrimes

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday expressed concern over the potential threats generated on account of digital frauds, cybercrime, and AI technology, particularly the potential of deepfake to disrupt social and familial relations.

Addressing the concluding session of the 59th All India Conference of Director Generals/Inspector Generals of Police, the prime min-



ister also called for the use of technology to reduce the workload of the police constabulary and suggested that the police station be made the focal point for resource allocation.

Continued on Page 2

Chargesheet sheer hungama: Cong

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP released a charge sheet against the Congress government's one year in office just because Prime Minister Narendra Modi warned Telangana BJP leaders, Transport Minister Ponnampalapati Prabhakar said.

"Is it not right that Modi warned Telangana BJP MLAs and MPs when they met him recently and asked them to launch an attack on the TG Congress government?" Ponnampalapati asked.

Criticising the BJP for releasing a charge sheet against the Congress government, Ponnampalapati asked BJP leaders to reveal whether they are



ready for an open debate on Modi's guarantees, the BJP's 2014, 2019 and 2024 election manifestos and the Congress's six guarantees.

He said that Telangana BJP leaders are creating hungama in the name of the charge sheet after

Modi's warning. The BJP deceived people in the name of 'Modi's Guarantee' during the 2024 Parliament elections, Ponnampalapati added.

The Congress is ready for a debate on the implementation of Modi's Guarantees and asked BJP leaders whether they are ready for it. The Congress is also ready for a debate on its six-guarantees and Modi's guarantees, he said and added that the Centre deceived Telangana in the last 10 years. Are the BJP leaders ready to speak about what the BJP-led Centre did to the State in the last 10 years? he asked.

Continued on Page 2

CM to open Rs1,000 cr Coca-Cola greenfield plant today
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AP, TG officials to discuss bifurcation issues today

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

A crucial meeting between officials of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana is scheduled at the APAC office in Mangalagiri on Monday. The meeting will focus on addressing the unresolved issues that remained after the bifurcation of the two states.

The discussions will be held under the leadership of the Chief Secretaries of both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Officials are expected to deliberate on a range of pending matters, ensuring solutions are reached in a collaborative manner. The bifurcation-related issues, including resource sharing, institutional allocations and other critical aspects, have remained contentious for years. This meeting is seen as a significant step toward resolving these long-standing disputes.

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PNS ■ HYDERABAD



tenure will be nearly 5.5 years.

Venkatesham's appointment is being seen as a win-win move for the government. Not only does he bring extensive administrative experience, but his background as a BC official underscores the administration's commitment to inclusivity.

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TG GOVT SUPPORTS 1.66 LAKH FAMILIES

CMRF sets new record with Rs 830 cr aid

Children with hearing disabilities receive a new lease on life

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has set a new milestone by extending swift and generous assistance to those in distress through the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF). In his first year in office, the government disbursed Rs 830 crore, directly benefiting over 1.66 lakh poor and middle-class families in Telangana.

This marks a sharp contrast to the previous administration, which allocated Rs 2,400 crore over five years, averaging Rs 480 crore annually. Demonstrating his commitment, Revanth Reddy surpassed that average in just one year, highlighting his



File picture of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy providing CMRF financial assistance of Rs2 lakh to family members of the Swiggy food delivery executive who lost life in December 2023

empathy for those in need.

The Rs 830 crore assistance included Rs. 590 crore for treatments not covered under Aarogyasri, Telangana's flagship health scheme. Remaining was given under LoC. Many families unable to afford high-cost treatments approached the government through public representatives, enabling them to secure vital medical care.

Medical procedures were often conducted in leading hospitals in Hyderabad, including NIMS, MNJ Cancer Institute, Niloufer Hospital, Osmania, and Gandhi Hospital.

Continued on Page 2

Monday Mirchi

SELF GOAL BY GOVERNMENT STAFF IN CROP LOAN WAIVER

One ringing appeal of the Revanth Reddy government in Telangana is that all its programmes must be tom-tommed to reach all sections of people so that no one would get a chance to blame the authorities for renegeing on the ruling Congress's pre-poll framework of Six guarantees. Reflecting the gaping gaps between pious pronouncements and ground reality, even with regard to the crucial crop loan waiver the Revanth government appears to have been caught on the wrong foot. For, while Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has gone ahead and announced the 'completion' of crop loan waiver of up to Rs. 2 lakh, there is disturbing disquiet among a sizeable section of the employees in his immediate circle as they apparently have not got the waiver. If the system has not been fair to those within the earshot of the Chief Minister, one can imagine the plight of remote segments of the intended beneficiaries. Aside from staff assisting the Chief Minister, many out-sourced employees engaged by Ministers too have been left out. Top officials are reportedly uneasy about the potential fallout of this widespread discontent at close quarters. Although top officials are on a fire-fighting mode, trying to plug further leaks from departments; the unforeseen consequences of the exclusion of lower-rung employees could put the departments concerned, including the Chief Minister's Office, in the spotlight for the wrong reasons. A little bird told us that the Chief Minister ought to have addressed these gaps, on priority within his close quarters, before claiming success of the crop loan waiver.

MINISTER MIFFED AT AD HOCISM IN ENDOWMENTS DEPT

With the Endowments Department seeing three occupants in the Commissioner's chair in little over a year, the ad-hocism in workflow amid the unintended game of musical chairs has exposed the pitfalls of having at the helm only a person with full additional charge, instead of a full-timer with a definite tenure. The buzz among insiders is that the Minister is miffed at this revolving door policy as she prefers steady hands so as to feel her grip over the department. But here's the juicy bit: a little birdie chirps that the Minister and her aides are bidding their time for a change at the very top — at the Chief Secretary level. The grapevine has it they are not too happy with how appointments are being shuffled around like a deck of cards. Is a shake-up from the top on the cards? Only time will tell!

IS IAS ASSOCIATION'S BARK WORSE THAN ITS BITE?

The Telangana IAS Officers Association has just stirred the chattering classes by its recent statements condemning the attack on Vikarabad Collector Prateek Jain as well as KT Rama Rao's remarks about Rajanna Sircilla Collector Sandeep Kumar Jha. The related resolutions were notably signed by its general secretary Jayesh Ranjan, with the association president Shashank Goel remaining backstage. Whispers within the bureau-

cratic corridors suggest a significant deviation from the norm because such resolutions are typically passed after formal discussions in a meeting. This time, however, the statements were reportedly issued under pressure, obviating the scope for any such consultation. Those in the know say the association's bark is worse than its bite. Whatever it may be, the association has at last found its voice, raising hopes among officers that the momentum will continue, resulting in more proactive and well-coordinated efforts for addressing pressing issues facing babus.

METRO'S HASTY MEDIA BRIEFING SPARKS SPECULATIONS

Are the Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited and L&T Metro Rail on the same page with regard to the achievements of Hyderabad Metro? Well, some have their own doubts as Hyderabad Metro's seven-year milestone celebrations saw moments that got on the nerves of HMRL's MD for reasons that outsiders cannot fathom. The flurry of media activity involving NVS Reddy briefing raised more questions than it answered. NVS Reddy, seemingly caught off guard by L&T Metro Rail's scheduled press meet, rustled up his own briefing before them. This left newshounds buzzing about the last-minute gyan from the top. While L&T's session appeared planned, NVS's responses came across as rushed, with scribes struggling to find celebratory elements. The usual polish of NVS was missing and, going by his tone, he appeared more defensive than commemorative. Adding to the drama, NVS's visible annoyance at phone interruptions during the session didn't go unnoticed. Pausing each time a journalist's phone rang, his irritation heightened the palpable tension in the room. The back-to-back events sparked speculations about the coordination—or lack thereof—between Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited and L&T Metro Rail. For now, the media is left wondering if this is just a case of poor planning or something reflective of a deeper malaise impinging on the dynamics between the two entities.

DID LOCAL POLITICS INFLUENCE SP TO SKIP DY CM'S VISIT TO PORT?

Local politics outweigh coalition dynamics. The conspicuous absence of Kakinada Superintendent of Police Vikrant Patil during AP Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan's recent visit to Kakinada Port has drawn flak, with the Dy CM himself highlighting the matter. A little bird told us that there was no prior information about Pawan's visit. Besides, local political dynamics played a key role, considering that several leaders, including those from Telugu Desam Party and Jana Sena Party, were reportedly unhappy with the Dy CM's visit. For, over 10,000 individuals depend on port-related activities for their livelihood. Tensions have been building up within TDP and JSP circles in Kakinada and surrounding areas ever since the NDA formed the government. The SP perhaps wanted to ward off trouble stemming from unresolved local issues with heavy damage potential.

--Yours truly

Congress to focus on GHMC elections

- CM to launch developmental projects costing thousands of crores in the next 2 days
- Plans Praja Vijayotsavalu carnivals on Dec 7, 8 and 9 in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress is now concentrating on GHMC elections. Hyderabad district in-charge Minister Ponnambhakkar conducted a review meeting with GHMC councillors, MLAs, DCC presidents, MLA contestants and others on Sunday at the Ministers' Quarters.

AICC in-charge General Secretary Deepa Das Munshi, TPCC President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud and CMs Advisor Vem Narender Reddy were the chief guests at the meeting.

Ponnambhakkar asked GHMC councillors that they should work for the party so that it can win the GHMC elections. He suggested that the councillors should take the word about the government schemes implemented last year to the people apart from conducting 'Praja Palana Vijayotsavalu-2024' successfully. He said the Chief Minister would lay foundation stones and inaugurate development projects costing thousands of



Minister Ponnambhakkar addressing the review meeting with leaders of Hyderabad city on Sunday at Ministers Quarters

crores as part of 'Raising Hyderabad' during Praja Vijayotsavalu. The Minister appealed to all Congress leaders to make programmes planned on December 7, 8 and 9 a big success.

He said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is going to launch developmental projects costing Rs 20,000 crore to Rs 30,000 crore in the next two days.

Ponnambhakkar said that Congress leaders should launch padayatras in their divisions and make the Telangana Thalli statue inauguration at the Secretariat and the Praja Palana Vijayotsavalu on Tank Bund on December 9 a big

success. He asked Congress activists to rebut the criticisms of the BJP and the BRS appropriately and to prepare an action plan to win the GHMC elections. He also asked them to make everyone part of the Praja Palana Vijayotsavalu programme and to organise carnivals in Hyderabad on December 7, 8 and 9.

Deepa Das Munshi said the Congress is weak in the GHMC area and that party activists should prepare a special action plan to strengthen the party and win the GHMC elections. She assured that Hyderabad Congress leaders would get nominated posts soon.

CMRF sets new...

Continued from Page 1

The government bore the expenses by issuing Letters of Credit (LOCs) directly to these institutions, ensuring timely and efficient care.

In a record-breaking move, 13,000 LOCs amounting to Rs 240 crore were issued this year, primarily benefiting children requiring surgeries and specialised treatments. The process, which was expedited to deliver LOCs within 24 hours, continued even during weekends and holidays, following the Chief Minister's directive to ensure no delays in emergency care.

Sources said that under the previous administration, corruption plagued CMRF, with reports of forged medical bills and funds being siphoned off. The Revanth Reddy government has implemented a robust online application system, ensuring transparency and eliminating middlemen. Beneficiaries can now track their applications, while CMRF cheques are issued with recipients' names and bank account details to prevent misuse.

Additionally, hospital verification processes have been tightened to deter fraudulent claims, ensuring funds reach the deserving.

Gurukul staff hired by Praveen trying to damage Govt image: TPCC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The TPCC said that when RS Praveen Kumar was the Secretary of Gurukuls, he used to nominate food contractors and hostel workers. As these people are still there, Praveen is conspiring with them to spoil the image of the government using his close ties with them, the TPCC said.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the TPCC's official spokesperson, Vedire Yogeshwar Reddy, said that BRS leaders are raking up the food poisoning incident at the

Gurukul Ashram School to tarnish the image of the Congress government, which is moving ahead with many public welfare programmes.

Yogeshwar said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had increased the food and cosmetic charges allotted in welfare hostels and that has increased the students' trust in the government. The education policy is also being implemented, he said.

Seeing this, the opposition is playing with the lives of students by engaging in huge conspiracies to damage the government's image and

undermine the self-confidence of students, he said.

"I am warning that if they commit such misdeeds, the people will teach the BRS and Praveen a befitting lesson. It is not right to politicise the food eaten by the poor and middle-class students. Today, the youth are happy with the decisions taken by the government. It may take some time to fulfil all promises made to the people in the Congress manifesto, but all promises would be fulfilled. The opposition has ruined the state with its corruption and anti-people policies," he said.

BRS govt helped 'brokers' & 'millers': Jupally

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BRS government had helped 'brokers' and 'millers' in the name of course rice, Excise and Prohibition, Tourism and Culture Minister Jupally Krishna Rao said.

He said the BRS government had looted the state as it liked and helped contractors. The state which had a surplus budget became debt-riddled due to the BRS's policies, he pointed out.

"The Congress government is paying Rs 6,000 crore as interest for the loans taken by the BRS government. There would have been no shortage of funds for Rythu Bharosa and other schemes if the state did not have to pay interest for loans taken earlier. Why did the BRS government sell ORR if their rule was so great? Is it not right that the BRS government gave Rythu Bandhu funds using the money it got from selling ORR?" he said.

Addressing the media at the Gandhi Bhavan on Sunday along with MLAs Yennam Srinivas Reddy and Anirudh Reddy, Jupally said that BRS leaders are unable to sleep due to the success of Rythu Bandhu.

He said the BRS government spent lakhs of crores on the Kaleshwaram Project, but it failed to allocate funds for the Jurala and Bhima projects.

KCR, who assured that he will complete Palamuru projects failed to give even a single drop of water, Jupally said. Farmers are now happy with the Rs 500 bonus they get for fine variety paddy, he added.

Chargesheet ...

Continued from Page 1

Ponnambhakkar said the Congress government will implement Rythu Bharosa after Sankranti. He said the government had sanctioned 3,500 houses in every constituency and the selection of beneficiaries is going on.

He demanded that the Prime Minister should reveal what he did for Telangana and asked the Union Ministers and BJP leaders from Telangana to explain what they are doing. In another statement, TPCC President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud said the BJP had toppled many Congress governments undemocratically. He said the BJP had inducted 411 MLAs from various parties into its ranks, is engaged in communal politics and is now preaching ethics.

Mahesh said that they are ready for a debate on anything and that BJP leaders should come for the debate if they have the guts to discuss the points in the BJP's charge sheet.

He said that Prime Minister Modi had warned Telangana BJP leaders for joining hands with the BRS, and so they are creating hoo-ha in the name of their charge sheet.

'Harness double ...

Continued from Page 1

Deliberations were held on emerging security concerns along the border with Bangladesh and Myanmar, trends in urban policing and strategies for countering malicious narratives, according to an official statement.

In-depth discussions were held on existing and emerging challenges to national security, including counter-terrorism, leftwing extremism, cybercrime, economic security, immigration, coastal security and narco-trafficking. Modi noted that wide-ranging discussions were held on national and international dimensions of security challenges and expressed satisfaction on the counter strategies that emerged during the conference, the statement said.

As a countermeasure to the potential threats generated by digital frauds, cybercrime, and AI technology, the prime minister called on the police leadership to convert the challenge

into an opportunity by harnessing India's double AI power of artificial intelligence and Aspirational India.

Appreciating the steps taken in urban policing, Modi suggested that each initiative be collated and implemented entirely in 100 cities. He expanded the mantra of SMART policing and called on the police to become strategic, meticulous, adaptable, reliable and transparent.

The SMART policing idea was introduced by the prime minister at the 2014 conference in Guwahati. It envisaged systematic changes to transform the Indian police to be Strict and Sensitive, Modern and Mobile, Alert and Accountable, Reliable and Responsive, Techno-savvy and Trained (SMART).

Further, a review of the implementation of the newly-enacted major criminal laws, initiatives and best practices in policing, and the security situation in the neighbourhood was undertaken.

New thinking needed for India's economy: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi expressed concern on Sunday over India's GDP growth rate declining to its lowest in two years and said the country's economy cannot progress as long as a handful of billionaires accrue its benefits.

He said a new thinking is required for India's economy and a new deal for businesses should be an important part of it.

"When everyone gets an equal opportunity to move forward, only then will the wheel of our economy move forward," he said in a post in Hindi on X.

the Lok Sabha said India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate has fallen to 5.4 per cent, its lowest in two years.

"The thing is clear -- the Indian economy cannot progress as long as a handful of billionaires are accruing its benefits and the farmers, labourers, middle class and the poor are struggling with various economic problems," he asserted.

Sharing some facts, Gandhi said it is a worrying situation as retail inflation has risen to a 14-month high of 6.21 per cent.

The price of potatoes and onions has increased by almost 50 per cent this year compared to October last year, he noted.

Kannada film actress ends life in Hyd residence

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Kannada film and TV actress Shobitha has allegedly committed suicide at her residence in Gachibowli on Sunday. Shobitha (32) was found hanging from a ceiling fan by a sari in her bedroom, according to police. Shobitha, who had appeared in TV serials and films in Kannada, had been residing in Hyderabad after her marriage last year.

Police stated that the exact reasons behind her alleged suicide are under investigation. No suicide note was found, a senior police official said, based on preliminary findings.

TODAY ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha

Tithi: Pratipada: Dec 01 11:51 AM to Dec 02 12:43 PM
Dwitiya: Dec 02 12:43 PM to Dec 03 01:09 PM

Nakshatram: Jyeshtha: Dec 01 02:23 PM to Dec 02 03:45 PM
Moola: Dec 02 03:45 PM to Dec 03 04:41 PM

Rahukalam: 7:57 AM to 9:20 AM
Yamaganadam: 10:42 AM to 12:05 PM
Varjyam: 03:02 PM to 04:41 PM
Gulika: 1:28 PM to 2:51 PM
Amritkalam: None
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:43 AM to 12:27 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Cloudy
Temp: 28°
Humidity: 79%
Sunrise: 6:31 AM
Sunset: 5:40 PM
Updated: December 1, 2024 5:00 PM

'Committed to...

Continued from Page 1

Taking aim at the BJP and the BRS, the CM accused them of spreading lies and betraying farmers. He said the BRS had failed to fulfil its promises, including the timely waiver of farm loans up to Rs 1 lakh and proper implementation of the Rythu Bandhu scheme.

Reacting to Modi's recent statement that people are fed up with the Congress, Revanth said, "All leader will tell their party activists that they are good. After all, it was a meeting of their own party."

The Chief Minister also criticised BJP's claims of prohibition in Gujarat, stating, "I am ready to show the liquor brands available in Gujarat despite their claim of total prohibition." He dismissed Kishan Reddy's comments on Telangana saying, "He has no connection to Telangana and has no right to speak about our state."

The CM concluded by appealing to farmers to reject the opposition's misinformation campaigns.

"Our government has proven its commitment to farmers by implementing loan waivers and support schemes. We will continue to stand by you and ensure your welfare," he said.

Tenant farmers may not get ...

Continued from Page 1

"The bonus is going to the person who cultivates, so it should not be an issue with tenant farmers," sources said.

The government sees bonuses as a big hit among farmers. Sources said that even the feedback from farmers during the consultative meeting was that the government's move to give Rs 500 as a bonus to tenant farmers would benefit them as they are the ones who actually cultivate crops.

For now, the government's focus remains on delivering the Rs 15,000 Rythu Bharosa payments to land-owning farmers, ensuring that the scheme's benefits reach as many farmers as possible.

The cabinet sub-committee report on Rythu Bharosa will be tabled in the Assembly and they are likely to set a ceiling on the area cultivated.

CM preferred Burra to restore ...

Continued from Page 1

"Having a son of the soil who understands the struggles of job hopefuls will help rebuild confidence in the TGPSC," sources said.

Sources said the decision highlights the Chief Minister's focus on addressing the concerns of unemployed youth in the state and ensuring fairness in the recruitment process for government jobs.

"By placing an official of Venkatesham's stature at the helm, the government aims to send a clear message about its dedication to transparency and accountability in recruiting hands for government service," the sources added.

'No difference between ...

Continued from Page 1

Pointing out the Congress admin's soft corner towards BRS leaders the BJP said the Congress government is colluding with the BRS.

The BJP said that around 10 lakh acres belonging to farmers disappeared during the BRS government and now the Congress government is getting ready to demolish lakhs of houses in the name of HYDRAA and Fourth City.

Declaring that there is no difference between the administrations of the BRS and the Congress, the BJP said that the BRS government pocketed Rs 1 lakh crore through the Kaleshwaram Project and that the Congress government is trying to loot Rs 1.5 lakh crore through the Musi Project.

The BJP charge sheet said

the BRS government extorted money in the name of K-Tax and the Congress government is collecting money as RR-Tax.

The BJP charge sheet pointed out that the Congress had assured that it would cancel the Pharma City project and give back the lands to farmers as per the HC's directions. However, the Congress admin is now trying to seize more land from farmers in the name of Future City, the BJP said.

The BJP charge sheet said the Congress government has not only failed to launch the promised Indiramma Housing scheme but instead, it is demolishing houses in the name of Musi cleaning and is filing false cases against those who oppose the demolitions. The Congress government has scrapped the scheme to provide house sites to Hyderabad journalists, it said.

Tenant ...

Continued from Page 1

"The bonus is going to the person who cultivates, so it should not be an issue with tenant farmers," sources said.

The government sees bonuses as a big hit among farmers. Sources said that even the feedback from farmers during the consultative meeting was that the government's move to give Rs 500 as a bonus to tenant farmers would benefit them as they are the ones who actually cultivate crops.

For now, the government's focus remains on delivering the Rs 15,000 Rythu Bharosa payments to land-owning farmers, ensuring that the scheme's benefits reach as many farmers as possible.

The cabinet sub-committee report on Rythu Bharosa will be tabled in the Assembly and they are likely to set a ceiling on the area cultivated.

City Pioneer

the pioneer

HYDERABAD | MONDAY | DECEMBER 2, 2024

03



CITY EVENTS

Chinmaya Mission

Lecture By Swami Swaroopananda

Venue

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (Cultural Venue) December 2 (5 pm to 10 pm)

Live Musical Orchestra

By Veena Paani Kala Nilayam

Venue

Sri Thyagaraja Gana Sabha December 2 (4:30 pm)

Live Performance

By Raag (Band)

Venue

LoKo Rooftop Bistro and Bar December 2 (8 pm)

National Silk Expo

Direct Weavers Exhibition & Sale

Venue

Sri Satya Sai Nigamagmam December 2 (10 am)

Workshop

On Overcome Anxiety & Tension

Venue

Swamy Vivekananda Institute Of Human Excellence (Language Schools) December 2 to 6 (6 pm)

Weekend kids cooking camp

Master cooking and baking in 09 fun weekends

Venue

Culinary Guru Institute, Hyderabad. Till January 11, 2025.

NYU CARNIVAL

With singer KARTHIK

Venue

Boulder Hills, Hyderabad December 31

TGCSB arrests two persons in Rs 8.14 cr trading fraud

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Cyber Security Bureau (TGCSB) arrested two men for defrauding a Hyderabad resident of Rs 8.14 crore in a trading scam. The victim was lured through a fake trading app after joining a WhatsApp group promoting fraudulent investments in IPOs and block trades.

According to the Police, the accused used fake trading platforms to show false profits and demanded additional payments under pretexts like regulatory fees. When victims tried to withdraw funds, they faced errors or further demands, leading to financial loss. Rahul Dangi, 21, managed a bank account where Rs 75 lakh was transferred and later distributed to 25 accounts. Meanwhile, Rahul Bhoi, 25, supplied bank accounts for the fraud. Both were arrested in Udaipur, Rajasthan. TGCSB stated that the investigations are ongoing.

TGCSB urges caution against online trading scams. Avoid unknown investment groups and verify platforms before transferring money. Report cyber frauds to the helpline 1930 or the Cyber Crime Portal.

Steps taken to curb industrial pollution

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Environment, Forests, and Endowments, Konda Surekha, emphasised the collective responsibility of safeguarding earth, the only habitable planet, for future generations.

Highlighting the state's efforts, Surekha stated that the Telangana government is implementing measures to curb industrial pollution. Awareness campaigns aim to educate citizens and industries about sustainable practices. Programmes will address the management and regulation of potential industrial disasters and promote the adoption of pollution control mechanisms.

She spoke on the eve of National Pollution Control Day highlighting the need for individuals to collaborate with the government in controlling pollution.

DANA KISHORE APPOINTED AS NODAL OFFICER

CM reviews construction of new Osmania General Hospital

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy conducted a detailed review of the construction plans for the new Osmania General Hospital at the Goshamahal Stadium in Hyderabad on Sunday. The Chief Minister emphasised the importance of a comprehensive planning to ensure the project meets the city's healthcare demands for years to come.

Revanth Reddy instructed officials to begin the survey for the construction of roads leading to the hospital site, ensuring seamless connectivity from various parts of the city. "Adequate road infrastructure is crucial for accessibility and the survey must begin immediately," the Chief Minister



also stressed the need to develop essential facilities such as drinking water supply, uninterrupted electricity and an efficient drainage system to support the hospital's operations. He directed officials to integrate these into the master plan for the hospital's development.

Senior IAS officer Dana Kishore has been appointed as the nodal officer to coordinate efforts across various departments. The Chief Minister reiterated that effective inter-departmental coordination is vital for timely completion of the project.

The meeting was attended by key officials, including State Municipal Administration and Urban Development Principal Secretary Dana Kishore, CM's Special Secretary Ajith Reddy, Hyderabad Collector Anudeep and Hyderabad City Police Commissioner CV Anand, among others.

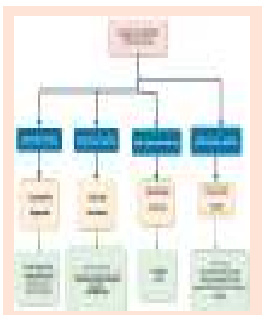
PR's growing role in AI, algorithm age highlighted

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Exclusive Boot Camp, organised by the Public Relations Society of India (Hyderabad chapter) with Dr BR Ambedkar College, focused on AI and algorithm-based communication in public relations. Media teachers and PR professionals participated in the event on Sunday.

The Dean of Mahindra University, Prof. Shashi Nanjundiah, highlighted the disruption caused by technology in communication, emphasising the need for truth, ethics and active listening. PR Prof. Josh Dalrymple of Woxsen University encouraged students to network professionally and use social media to access hidden job opportunities.

The NMDC's Corporate Communication Head, Jay Prakash, stressed responsi-



ble communication in the AI era, while S Ramesh of All India Radio noted the rarity of pure communication amidst information overload.

In a panel discussion, experts advised students to view AI as an opportunity. Boot camp organisers Krishna Baji and Rajeswari Iyer stated it was the first such initiative for journalism and PR students in Hyderabad, guided by faculty leaders.

Three arrested ; 57 kgs of ganja confiscated

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Chandanagar Police have arrested three individuals for transporting 57 kilograms of dry ganja and seized material worth Rs 18 lakh. The accused have been identified as Chaman from Haryana's Dhiwani district, Shivampet's Umakanth, and Hyderabad's Arjuna Sai Krishna. Another accused, Rakesh from Haryana, is absconding.

According to Madhapur DCP Vineeth, the arrests were made during a vehicle check near Hanuman temple, Gangaram, on November 29. Anjaneyulu, Inspector of Chandanagar Police Station and his team stopped a Mahindra XUV 300 driving suspiciously. Upon searching the vehicle, police discovered 60 brown bundles emitting a strong odour, which were confirmed to be dry

ganja. During interrogation, driver Chaman admitted to transporting the ganja from Odisha at a low price to sell it at higher rates in Hyderabad. He revealed that Rakesh of Haryana, who is currently absconding, had arranged the consignment. The accused picked up the contraband in Odisha and were en route to Hyderabad when others joined to assist

in the delivery of ganja across the twin cities. The seized items include Mahindra XUV 300 car, Pulsar 125 motorcycle, Realme black smartphone, Redmi purple smartphone and OKO black smartphone. The case is being investigated by Detective Inspector A Ravi Kumar of Chandanagar Police Station under Section 8(c) r/w 20(b)(ii) of the NDPS Act.



Bollywood actress Ameesha Patel at the BIG Impact Awards Hyderabad 2024 programme on Sunday

Changemakers shaping the city's future honoured

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BIG Impact Awards Hyderabad 2024 celebrated entrepreneurs and changemakers shaping the city's future across various sectors. Hosted by BIG FM, a leading Indian radio network, the event took place at Aahwanam Resort, Gandipet. Bollywood actress Ameesha Patel and actor Sudheer Babu presented the awards to the winners.

The awards recognised innovative businesses making a positive societal impact, emphasising Hyderabad's rise as a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship. Honourees spanned industries like Food & Beverages, Real Estate, Hospitality, Health & Wellness, Education and Lifestyle. Key winners included PMJ Jewels Diamonds & Gold for Jewellery, A2A Homeland for Real Estate-Construction and Mangalagowri Shopping Mall for Retail - Textiles.

Addressing the event, COO of BIG FM Sunil Kumaran highlighted the initiative's goal to celebrate and amplify the stories of changemakers driving progress. He congratulated the winners for their dedication and outstanding contributions to inspiring future generations.



Guv hosts Nagaland Formation Day fete

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As part of the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative, Governor Jishnu Dev Varma hosted a special celebration for Nagaland's State Formation Day at the Durbar Hall of Raj Bhavan on Sunday. Nagaland became the 16th State of India on December 1, 1963.

The Governor extended warm greetings to the people of Nagaland and honoured the leaders and citizens who contributed to the state's creation. He stressed the importance of such events in

promoting mutual respect and understanding of India's diverse cultures.

The celebration included colourful cultural performances, featuring traditional songs and dances by Nagaland artists. Nagaland residents in Hyderabad, along with Raj Bhavan officers and staff, participated.

The event reflected the spirit of unity and cultural diversity promoted by the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative, emphasising harmony among India's many communities.

TG BC students call for Chalo Collectorates protest

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana BC Students Association has announced a State-wide Chalo Collectorates protest on December 10, demanding payment of pending fee arrears affecting 16.75 lakh students. BC Student Union president Vemula Ramakrishna announced during a core committee meeting on Sunday.

Ramakrishna highlighted that student scholarship bills have been unpaid for three years. He criticised the Congress government, stating that no funds have been allocated since they assumed power. Despite students protesting for four months, the government remains unresponsive. He alleged favouritism toward contractors while ignoring students needs.



BC Students' Union president Vemula Ramakrishna announced a State-wide Chalo Collectorates protest after its core committee meeting on Sunday

Ramakrishna said that many students face difficulties due to unpaid dues. Colleges are withholding certificates, affecting students opportunities for higher education, jobs and foreign studies. He urged the government to release the budget in two phases and increase scholarships from Rs 5,500 to

Rs 20,000 per year, citing rising living costs.

BC leader R Krishnaiah also criticised the unchanged scholarship rates over 12 years and poor hostel facilities. He demanded immediate action, warning of worsening student struggles without intervention.

172 offenders held in drunk driving check

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Cyberabad Traffic Police have conducted a robust campaign against drunk driving and have apprehended 172 offenders.

The Police also seized a total of 123 two-wheelers, 11 three-wheelers, 37 four-wheelers and one truck during the campaign. Eighteen offenders were caught with blood alcohol concentrations (BAC) ranging between 200 mg/100 ml and 550 mg/100 ml. All those apprehended will be produced before the court, said Cyberabad Traffic Police.

If anyone is found driving under the influence of alcohol and causes accidents resulting in fatalities, they will be arrested and prosecuted under Section 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

CM to inaugurate Rs1,000 cr Coca-Cola greenfield plant today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister of Telangana A Revanth Reddy, will inaugurate the Rs1,000 crore Coca-Cola Greenfield Plant at the Bandathimmapur Food Processing Park in Siddipet district on Monday.

Earlier in June 2024, the Chief Minister assured Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (HCCB) of full government support to ensure ease of business operations. A high-level HCCB delegation, led by Himanshu Priyadarshi, Chief of Public Affairs, Communications, and Sustainability, discussed the company's total investment of over Rs 3,000 crore in Telangana. The delegation promised continued efforts toward regional community development. This is HCCB's second bottling plant in



Telangana. The HCCB's Avinya Factory inauguration is scheduled for 12 noon, with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, IT and Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu, presiding the event, along with HCCB CEO Juan Pablo Rodriguez to be present. Built with an investment of Rs 1,000 crore, the plant will employ 400 people at full

capacity. It features advanced technology and sustainable practices, boosting the region's industrial and economic development.

This project highlights Telangana's dedication to attracting major investments and enhancing industrial growth, solidifying its status as a hub for world-class infrastructure and opportunities.

Global Day of Persons with Disabilities tomorrow

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Ashray Akruiti will conduct an awareness programme in commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPwD) on December 3, 2024. The event will take place at Sri Sathya Sai Nigamagmam, Srinagar Colony, Hyderabad, from 11:00 am to 4:45 pm. This year's theme, "Amplifying Ability for an Inclusive Tomorrow," will focus on the critical themes of inclusivity, dignity, potential, well-being and diversity, embodying Ashray Akruiti's vision of a society where every individual can

realise their full potential.

The celebration is expected to attract over 1,400 attendees, including students, parents, donors, corporate partners, well-wishers, volunteers, and staff. The event aims to acknowledge the resilience, creativity, and achievements of persons with disabilities while fostering awareness and collaboration among diverse communities.

Attendees will enjoy a rich variety of activities, including insightful talks, the presentation of CSR and Volunteer Appreciation Awards, Employee Awards, and inspiring performances by students.

Women from slums grateful for free tailoring skill

DEEPIKA PASHAM deepikapasham2015@gmail.com ■ HYDERABAD

A group of 100 women from the Shaikpet slums expressed their gratitude after completing a nine-month tailoring training programme organised by Sakina Foundation. The women, who received certificates on Sunday, are now equipped with skills and confidence to become breadwinners for their families. They also received a tailoring kit worth Rs 4,500, sponsored by Amazon, and are eagerly awaiting the distribution of sewing machines.

Bushra, one of the participants, shared her experience

with The Pioneer: "I can now stitch dresses and blouses. My husband is mentally disabled, and it would have been impossible for me to afford Rs15,000 or more for external training. I am thankful and excited about educating my eight-year-old son with this new skill."

Founder-chairman Mohammed Asif Hussain Sohail said, "This programme is not just about stitching garments - it is about stitching brighter futures for women who have been held back by circumstances. Each participant received a monthly stipend of Rs 500 and a tailoring kit, ensuring they could focus on learning without

Stitching dreams



financial stress. Out of 150 women who started, 100 passed the final exam despite challenges, including some being initially discouraged from attending."

Sohail added that the trainees were paid a monthly salary and highlighted future plans. "The women have already received uniform orders from a client, which we

will confirm soon. We are seeking support from organisations to sponsor tailoring machines, which cost between Rs15,000 and Rs19,000. Our second batch of training will begin in January."

Another participant, M Aruna, shared her journey, saying, "Initially, I hesitated, wondering if the foundation would accommodate Telugu speakers, but I was welcomed warmly. I have learned to stitch almost everything and am confident about opening a shop. This skill allows married women with family responsibilities to earn from home. I have saved Rs10,000 thanks to this free training."



POOR SHOW IN 2017 & 2022

Officials hope students will do well this time

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

In light of the disappointing performance of students from Mahabubnagar district in the National Achievement Survey (NAS) held in 2017 and 2022, officials are keeping their fingers crossed that the students will perform well in the upcoming test on December 4. Elementary and high school students in the district have been preparing for the test. The officials of the Education Department and teachers have taken all precautions and conducted special classes. The teachers conducted three model tests also. In the 2017 NAS, students in

classes 3, 5, and 8 performed poorly. Eighth and ninth graders struggled with basic reading skills, writing, and simple arithmetic operations like addition and subtraction. Alarmingly, at least 10 students failed to score 75 per cent in Telugu and mathematics. A staggering 746 out of every 1,000 students could not identify the alphabet.

The 2022 NAS in which 21,321 students from both government and private schools in classes 3, 5, 8, and 10 participated saw similarly poor outcomes. In Nagarkurnool district, only 47 per cent of students could recognise letters and read poems, while the

rest of the districts performed slightly better. Fewer than 60 per cent of students across districts could identify animals, birds, or familial relationships. Eighth-grade students showed relatively better skills, but SSC students, especially in English and mathematics, lagged significantly behind.

Another concern is the dual role of primary school teachers, who were also employed as enumerators for the recent state government family survey. Teachers have expressed worries that their involvement in both teaching and survey duties may negatively affect the performance of class-III stu-



dents, who are expected to take the NAS on December 4. The teachers conducted classes until the afternoon and then participated in the survey, which may have disrupted their regular teaching schedule.

The upcoming NAS will involve 78,545 students from government schools, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, and model schools across classes 3, 6, and 9. Students will take the test in either Telugu or English. Class 3 students will be tested in language, mathematics, and environmental

science, while class 6 and 9 students will be tested in language, mathematics, social studies, and science. The students will complete their assessments on OMR sheets, with class 3 students answering 45 questions in 90 minutes, class 6 students answering 51 questions in 90 minutes, and class 9 students answering 60 questions in two hours.

In preparation for the survey, education department officials are busy identifying volunteers and invigilators to ensure the smooth conduct of the NAS.



Masks being distributed to people in Kumaram Bheem Asifabad district to ward off tiger attack

People asked to wear masks right to ward off tiger attack

PNS ■ KUMARAM BHEEM ASIFABAD

In Kumaram Bheem Asifabad district, a big tiger is still on the prowl. Not only has it killed a woman, but also attacked a farmer. With this, the Forest officials are on an alert and are warning the people to protect themselves from the tiger. They are trying to raise awareness in the villages and at the same time distributing masks to the people. The masks are to be worn on the back of the head to deter the tiger from attacking. Wearing a mask on the back of the head creates the illusion of being watched and it would deter the tiger from attacking, the Forest officials said.

It is said that the tiger attacks from behind, not from the front. The tiger has attacked a woman from behind.

If they wear a mask, the tiger will think that the person it may intend to attack is facing it and it will step back. Authorities have clearly explained this and are distributing these masks for protection.

In light of the tiger's movement, authorities are issuing several safety guidelines to the public. Villagers are advised not to venture into forest areas. At least 8 to 10 people should go together to agricultural

fields for tasks like harvesting crops or other farming activities. Two people in the group should be appointed as sentries. They should make noise using a drum or whistle to alert others.

The Forest Department officials issued some guidelines to people. Farmers should stay on a platform in the field while working to protect themselves. Shepherds should move in groups, and they should not take livestock more than 2 km from the village into the forest for grazing. Shepherds should go out for grazing after 10 am and return by 4 pm. Every villager in the fields should carry a protective stick and a small bell.

Both farmers working in the fields and shepherds should also wear face masks on the back of their heads.

The village protection committee should be formed with the sarpanch as the chairperson, the Forest Beat Officer as the convenor, and a police officer nominated by the sub-inspector, the officials advised the people.

The officials urged the people to immediately report to the village protection committee and Forest authorities if any evidence of tiger movement or tracks is found.

Sports strengthen mental well-being: Collector

PNS ■ KUMARAM BHEEM ASIFABAD

District Collector Venkatesh Dhotre has emphasised that sports would contribute to mental well-being and physical fitness. As part of the statewide celebrations Praja Palana Vijayotsavam to mark one year in office and in connection with the CM Cup competitions, a 2K Run event was held in the district headquarters in Kumaram Bheem Asifabad on Sunday. The Collector flagged off the event.

In this event, a 2K Run was conducted from the Integrated Office Complex to Ambedkar Chowk with the Collector, officials, students, and youth participating enthusiastically. Speaking on the occasion, District Collector Venkatesh Dhotre mentioned that the State government would celebrate the festival from December 1 to December 9 with grandeur. As part of these



Kumaram Bheem Asifabad District Collector Venkatesh Dhotre flagging off the 2K Run in Asifabad on Sunday

celebrations, a 2K Run was organised in Kumaram Bheem Asifabad district. The Collector also congratulated the students and youth for their active participation in the event.

The Collector urged students and youth to devote time for sports every day along with their studies. He also stated that the state government is making efforts to bring out the hidden talents of ath-

letes from rural and urban areas and to prepare them for state, national, and international level competitions. He asked athletes to make the best use of the facilities provided by the state government.

The event was attended by DYSO Ramadevi, PDOs, PETs, volleyball academy athletes, youth, students from government and private schools, women's groups, and the public.

Need to make Khammam district HIV-free stressed

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

District Medical and Health Officer, Dr B Kalavati Bai, emphasised the key role of youth in making Khammam district HIV-free.

She mentioned that the ultimate goal of HIV eradication can only be achieved if the youth are fully aware of disease. She flagged off the World AIDS Day rally on Sunday, which started from the local government district hospital and went through SR & BGNR College.

Addressing the rally, she urged HIV patients to take their medications regularly, consume nutritious food, and maintain self-confidence to succeed in all aspects of life.

Dr D Ramarao, District Additional Medical and Health Officer (AIDS and Leprosy), emphasised the importance

of youth understanding HIV and taking necessary precautions. He appealed to the youth to create awareness. He stressed that awareness should not only come from the medical sector but also from all sections of society.

Dr Kiran Kumar, Superintendent of District General Hospital, spoke about the importance of preventing HIV transmission from mother to child by following proper precautions and taking regular medications.

Dr Jay Kumar, ART Medical Officer, advised HIV-positive individuals to adhere to their medication regimen and consult healthcare providers promptly for any health issues.

The rally saw participation from students and staff of Mamatha Nursing College, volunteers from various organisations, legal authorities, and healthcare workers.



District Medical and Health Officer B Kalavati Bai flagging off World AIDS Day rally in Khammam on Sunday



Brothers carrying their mother on a rented cart to hospital in Shadnagar on Sunday

Brothers sell PDS rice to fund mother's medical treatment

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

In a heart-wrenching incident that highlights the plight of the underprivileged, two brothers from Shadnagar in Rangareddy district resorted to selling rice they got under public distribution system to fund medical treatment for their ailing mother.

The incident, which happened in a colony near Shadnagar, underscored the severe hardships faced by many in the region.

When Ghaus Pasha and Shahzuddin were spotted transporting their elderly mother, Jinnabi, to the hospital on a rented cart, they revealed their dire situation to passersby. According to them,

auto-rickshaws refused to enter their colony, and they lacked the financial means to arrange alternate transportation. In desperation, the brothers sold their ration rice, using part of the money for their mother's medical treatment and the remaining Rs 200 to rent a cart.

This incident sheds light on the systemic issues faced by marginalised communities in accessing basic healthcare and transportation. Despite being close to a metropolitan city like Hyderabad, such challenges continue to persist in areas like Shadnagar, calling for urgent attention from authorities to address these issues and provide support to those in need.



Relatives of a woman, who died in a private hospital, staging protests in Gadwal on Sunday

Death of woman sparks protests in Gadwal

PNS ■ GADWAL

A 30-year-old woman, Kavitha, from Aijipattanam, had visited a private hospital in Gadwal three days ago, complaining that she was unable to breathe.

The doctors at the hospital diagnosed that there was a blockage in her nose and recommended surgery, informing her family that the procedure would cost Rs 20,000.

As they could not afford the full amount, Kavitha's relatives offered pay Rs 15,000. Without conducting any tests, the doctors allegedly administered an anesthesia injection before the surgery, which reportedly caused Kavitha to experience a seizure. As a

result, she slipped into a coma.

She was later transferred to a private hospital in Kurnool where doctors continued treatment. However, despite the treatment, Kavitha did not regain consciousness. The doctors suggested that she would not recover from the coma and advised her family to take her home.

Her family, devastated by the news, became anxious. After further treatment in Kurnool, Kavitha passed away. Relatives gathered outside the hospital, demanding justice and action against the doctor responsible for her death, as the hospital failed to take any steps regarding the doctor's negligence.

Revenue Minister to visit Khammam district today

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy will undertake a tour of Khammam district on Monday and will lay foundation stones for development of roads in various tribal hamlets.

He is scheduled to leave the State Capital at 6:30 am and reach Tekulapalli in Bhadrachalam district at 10:30 am. He is scheduled to tour Tekulapallimandal till 2 pm.

At 4:30 pm, he will lay the foundation stone CC Road development works in Guvvaladum village of Nelakondapallimandal and perform Bhumi Puja for CC Road development works at KottaKotturu. Later, he will distribute CMRF cheques among beneficiaries of Nelakondapallimandal beneficiaries. He is scheduled to take part in foundation stone laying ceremonies for development of CC Roads in Bhairavunipalli (5:30 pm), Rayigudem (6 pm), Mangapuram (6:30 pm) tribal hamlets.

PRAJA PALANA VIJAYOTSAVAM

2K run held in Yadadri Bhuvangiri district

PNS ■ BHONGIR

As part of the Praja Palana Vijayotsavam celebrations marking one year of the Revanth Reddy-led Congress government, a 2K run was organised in Bhongir on Sunday. The event saw participants running a distance of two kilometers, starting from the Government Junior College for Boys and ending at the historic Bhongir Fort.

The run was flagged off by Additional Collector Veera Reddy, who encouraged government officials to actively engage with the public and raise awareness about various government schemes.

Revenue Divisional Officer Krishna Reddy, Municipal Commissioner Ramanjaneya Reddy, Municipal Chairman Pothamshetty Venkateswarlu, District Youth and Sports Officer K. Dhananneyulu,

Heritage Committee Member Venkat Reddy, national sports persons, youth, physical education teachers, and many others participated in the event.

An essay-writing competition was held at Vedire Ramachandra Reddy ZP High School in Bhudan Pochampally, focusing on the theme of renewable energy resources. Bhongir District Collector Hanumantha Rao distributed prizes

to the top three winners. He also offered guidance to SSC students, encouraging them to study diligently and urging teachers to deliver lessons in a clear and engaging manner.

Municipal Chairperson Vijayalakshmi, Mandal Education Officer Prabhakar, Headmaster of ZP High School Manohar, and other local dignitaries were present at the event.

Govt filled 50,000 posts in 10 months: Uttam

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

About one lakh are expected to attend the public meeting to be organised at Rangampalli Substation in Peddapalli district on December 4. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy will participate, said Minister for Irrigation and Municipal Administration, Uttam Kumar Reddy on Sunday.

Uttam Kumar Reddy, along with Information Technology Minister D Sridhar Babu, Transport Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar and Government Advisor for Protocol and Public Relations, Harkara Venugopal, inspected the venue for the Chief Minister's public meeting at the Rangampalli Substation in Peddapalli Mandal. They gave several suggestions to the officials regarding the necessary arrangements.

Speaking to the media afterwards, the Minister stated that the people of Telangana have given a historic verdict in the 2023 elections, leading to the formation of a people's government on December 7.

He added that the government has worked for the welfare of Telangana farmers, people belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, marginalised communities, and women in the past year.

He said that the government has created 50,000 government jobs within 10 months, aiming to speed up employment for the youth.

He also highlighted that under the leadership of the Chief Minister and IT Minister, Telangana had attracted investments worth thousands of crores of rupees, which would lead to the estab-

lishment of industries in sectors like IT and pharma, thereby providing local youth with job opportunities.

He called on the people to attend the Chief Minister's meeting on December 4 in large numbers and make it a success, as the government has been successfully implementing various public welfare and development programs.

Minister Sridhar Babu mentioned that the government had released Rs 2,740 crore the previous day, completing loan waiver for three lakh farmers. He also noted that despite opposition parties creating several obstacles, the government successfully conducted Group I exams, which the previous government had failed to do.

The meeting was attended by MLC Jeevan Reddy, Government Whip Adhuri



Minister for Irrigation N Uttam Kumar Reddy addressing the media in Peddapalli t on Sunday. Ministers D Sridhar Babu and Ponnamp Prabhakar are also present

Lakshman Kumar, MLAs Chintakunta Vijaya Ramana Rao, Makkani Singh Raj Thakur, Kavvampalli Satya Narayana, Karimnagar District Collector Pamela Sathpathy,

Sircilla District Collector Sandeep Kumar Jh, Jagityala District Collector B. Sathya Prasad, Peddapalli Additional Collectors D. Venu and J. Aruna Sri, and other officials.

Govt hostel student drowned in agricultural well

PNS ■ SURYAPET

In a tragic incident in Anantagiri mandal of Suryapet district, a government hostel student fell into an agricultural well and drowned. The incident took place in an agricultural field owned by a teacher who provided tuition to students.

According to police, the victim was a student from an integrat-

ed children's home located in Shanthinagar.

Bhathini Veerababu, who worked as a tutor at the hostel, took the students along with him to his farm. Bhathini, who was initially swimming in the agricultural well, allegedly encouraged the student to jump into the well. When the student did not surface after a while, Bhathini Veerababu fled the scene, the police said.

The incident was reported by fellow students to the police. Upon arrival at the scene, the police, along with a rescue team, recovered the body of the student, identified as Thirumalesh, from the well. The body was then transported to the government hospital for a post-mortem examination.

The police have initiated an investigation into the incident.

ACROSS THE STATES



ISKCON holds prayer for safety of Hindus in Bangla

The ISKCON here joined its other centres in different parts of the world on Sunday in holding prayer meetings and 'kirtan' for the safety and security of Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh, an official said. Stating that atrocities on the religious minorities are "not stopping" in Bangladesh even after 100 days of such incidents, International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) spokesperson Radharam Das said that disciples and followers held prayer meetings in 150 countries across the world. "We held prayers and 'kirtan' for the safety and security of Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh," he said. ISKCON followers held prayers and 'kirtan' at its Albert Road centre in Kolkata to highlight the plight of Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh, where they are suffering atrocities, Das said. He said that the religious minorities in Bangladesh are seeking help and support from world bodies such as the United Nations.



Odisha targets zero new HIV infection : Minister

The Odisha government has been taking all measures to create awareness about AIDS and has set a goal to ensure no new cases of HIV infection by 2030, a minister said on Sunday. Odisha has recorded around 50,000 active AIDS cases so far, Health and Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling said, while speaking on the occasion of World AIDS Day. "The state is witnessing a steady decline in the number of AIDS patients. The government aims at achieving zero new infection by 2030," he said. Noting that AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) cases were detected in all the 30 districts of the state, the minister said Ganjam accounts for the highest number of infections at 19,155 while Sonepur reports the lowest at 146. Stating that the health department has intensified efforts to ensure that "no new HIV cases emerge by 2030", the minister said the government is implementing preventive measures and raising awareness to achieve the goal.



Delhi's AQI drops to below 300

Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) dropped below 300 for the first time on Sunday after a month as dry northwesterly winds and ample sunlight aided in the dispersion of pollutants. The air quality in the national capital has oscillated between "very poor" (AQI between 301-400) and "severe" (over 400) categories for the past 32 days. Delhi's 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded at 285 at 4 PM on Sunday, an improvement to the "poor" category. The city's air quality was last recorded in the "poor" category on October 29, with an AQI of 268, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). On Saturday, the AQI was 346 in the "very poor" category. The air quality slipped from "poor" to the "very poor" category on October 30 and stayed there for 15 consecutive days before deteriorating further into the "severe" category. On Sunday, out of 38 monitoring stations in the capital, 11 recorded air quality in the "very poor" category, while the remaining 27 recorded it in the "poor" category, according to the Sameer app. The CPCB classifies AQI between 0 and 50 as "good", between 51 and 100 as "satisfactory", between 101 and 200 as "moderate", between 201 and 300 as "poor", between 301 and 400 as "very poor", and over 400 as "severe".

'Will support BJP's decision on Maha CM'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra's outgoing Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said the BJP will decide on the new CM and assured his full support while ruling out differences among Mahayuti allies over the government formation.



Amid speculations that Shinde's son Shrikant Shinde might get the deputy CM's post and Shiv Sena is keen on the Home portfolio, Shinde said the Mahayuti allies- BJP, NCP, and Shiv Sena- will decide the government formation through consensus. Notably, more than a week after the Mahayuti clinched a massive victory in

Maharashtra polls with the BJP emerging as the single largest party with 132 seats, the new government is yet to be sworn in. The BJP is moving cautiously as aspirations of its allies, especially Shiv Sena, are high after the massive poll victory. Interestingly, the BJP leg-

'IMEE corridor will be source of regional peace, stability'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) will enhance strategic supply chains and boost security in economic and energy sectors, and it will be a source of regional peace and stability, French foreign trade minister Sophie Primas has said. In an interview, Primas said France looks at the proposed corridor as a key to regional integration, stability, and an opportunity to hasten the decarbonisation of trade routes.

Billed as a pathbreaking initiative, the IMEEC envisages vast road, railroad and shipping networks among India, Saudi Arabia, the United States and Europe with an aim to ensure integration among Asia, Middle East and West. "This project is vital for national interests, enhancing strategic supply chains and boosting security in economic, energy, and health sectors across India, Europe, and the Middle East," Primas said at the end of her three-day visit to India.

The IMEEC was firmed up on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in September last year in Delhi. An agreement was signed by India, Saudi Arabia,



"This project is vital for national interests, enhancing strategic supply chains and boosting security in economic, energy, and health sectors across India, Europe, and the Middle East," Primas said at the end of her three-day visit to India

the European Union, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the US and some other G20

partners for the corridor.

Following the announcement at the G20 summit, France promptly appointed Gerard Mestrallet as a dedicated sherpa for the IMEEC project. The French sherpa accompanied Primas during her visit to India from November 27 to 29. "France also sees this corridor as a key to regional integration, stability, and an opportunity to hasten the decarbonisation of trade routes, providing substantial business prospects for French companies in logistics, energy, and digital sectors," the French trade minister said.

"France is keen to lead in this initiative, positioning Marseille

as the strategic European gateway for the corridor," she said. Outlining France's vision for the mega project, Primas said the corridor will also act as a source for regional peace and stability. There has been a delay in rolling out the initiative on the ground in view of precarious security situation in West Asia. The IMEEC also envisages an electricity cable network, a hydrogen pipeline, high-speed data cable network to facilitate overall economic growth in the partner countries. The project is also seen as an initiative by like-minded nations to gain strategic influence in the face of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which has faced increasing criticism over lack of transparency and disregard for sovereignty of the nations.

The BRI is a mega connectivity project that connects China with Southeast Asia, Central Asia, Russia, and Europe. India has been holding talks with various key stakeholders including France and the US on implementation of the IMEEC.

In an address at a business conclave in September, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said the IMEEC would become a "cornerstone of global connectivity".

Italy can be India's landing base for Europe: Minister Urso

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Italian minister Adolfo Urso has said his country can be India's "landing base" to access the European market.

Similarly, India can act as the landing base for Italy, the European country's minister for business and "Made in Italy" told PTI here on Saturday.

Speaking on the sidelines of 93-year-old Italian ship Amerigo Vespucci's call on Mumbai port and the Villaggio Italia exposition arranged to coincide with that, Urso also said "new geopolitical events" make it necessary to consolidate the lines of communication between the two countries. "India can be for Europe the landing base in Asia in the great



south-eastern Asian basin, and Italy can be for India the landing base in Europe, for the most significant and richest world market," he said in an interview to PTI.

This line of communication passes through the Arabian peninsula which has a very important place in the

economic realm, he added.

While this is a preferred line of commercial communication between the two continents of Asia and Europe, the same route can also double up as a significantly important line of connectivity in terms of data and information, Urso said.

"It is certainly the preferred main line of commercial communication between our continents, but it can also be the line of connectivity as regards the transport of data and therefore of information, on one side above the seas, maritime trade; on the other side under the seas, the connection lines that transport information and data," he said. He also stressed the need to take India-Italy ties beyond commerce, and pitched for greater cooperation in other areas such as scientific advancement, technology and industrial production.

The Vespucci's call at Mumbai, the financial capital of India, is an attempt to get both the countries closer beyond commerce, the minister said.

'Every second in Parl must be utilised for people's welfare'

PNS ■ KANPUR

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday said Parliament is meant for the cause of public welfare and stressed that every second of its working should be utilised for the welfare of the people.

The remarks of the vice president, who is also the chairman of the Rajya Sabha, came after protests over various issues like the controversy involving the Adani Group and violence in Sambhal and Manipur rocked both houses of Parliament the past week, disrupting routine work. "We have entered the fourth quarter of the century of adoption of the Indian Constitution. Therefore, we must resolve that every second in the temple of democracy is utilised for the welfare of the people at large," Dhankhar said here.

Every couple should have at least 3 kids, says RSS chief

PNS ■ NAGPUR

Expressing concern over declining population growth, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday said India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR), the average number of children a woman gives birth to in her lifetime, should be at least 3, well above the present one of 2.1.

Speaking at the 'Kathale Kul (clan) Sammelan' in Nagpur, Bhagwat also highlighted the vital role of families, and warned that according to population science, if a society's total fertility rate dips below



2.1, it could face extinction. "A declining population is a serious concern. Demographic studies suggest that when a society's total fertility rate falls below 2.1, it risks facing extinction. This decline does not necessarily

require external threats; a society can gradually fade away on its own," Bhagwat said. "Many languages and cultures have already disappeared due to this issue. Thus, it is essential to maintain a fertility rate above 2.1," Bhagwat said, and emphasized that "kutumb" (family) is an integral part of society and every family serves as a vital building bloc.

"Our country's population policy, formulated either in 1998 or 2002, clearly says that the total fertility rate should not be below 2.1. Now when we say 2.1, it is not feasible to have children in fraction.



WAYANAD REHABILITATION

Will write to Kerala CM, 'pressure' Centre: Priyanka

PNS ■ WAYANAD

Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday said she will write to Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and put as much as pressure on the Centre to provide the rehabilitation of Wayanad landslide victims.

"I will be writing to the Chief Minister of Kerala and trying to put as much as pressure possible on the Centre as well to provide the rehabilitation that they deserved," she said while addressing a meeting at Kalpetta here. "But I would like to urge both the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister to provide this rehabilitation, regardless of politics," she added.

The Congress general secretary said she would ask them to recognise that what happened there was beyond any kind of politics. "What happened here was a deep and devastating human tragedy," she stated. Priyanka, who was on a two-day visit to the hill constituency after being elected, highlighted the issues of the massive landslide that hit here on July 30 along with launching a scathing attack against the BJP-led Centre.

"I will be writing to the Chief Minister of Kerala and trying to put as much as pressure possible on the Centre as well to provide the rehabilitation that they deserved," she said while addressing a meeting at Kalpetta here

Due to what happened in the landslide and the amount of publicity across India many people still believe that it is unsafe to come here but they don't realise the nature's fury concentrated in a very small geographical area and the rest is beautiful place and is absolutely safe to visit, she pointed out. "We must make a special effort now to invite more tourists to show them that it is safe, it is beautiful and this is the best place to come," she urged. Priyanka said, the UDF, the INDIA alliance and the Congress are engaged in a big battle to save the institutions of democracy from the destructiveness of the BJP and its policies.

Manipur situation will impact Assam: Himanta



PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Sunday that the situation in neighbouring Manipur will have an impact on the state.

Additional police forces have been deployed in Barak Valley which shares a border with violence-hit Manipur to ensure no spill-over effects.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of a programme in Cachar district, Sarma said, "I think the situation in Manipur will definitely have some impact on Assam. That is why we have deployed additional police forces in Barak Valley to see that nothing spills over to Assam." The Barak Valley of Cachar district shares a border with Jiribam of Manipur.

The ethnically diverse

Jiribam, which was largely untouched by the clashes in Imphal Valley and the adjoining hills, witnessed violence after the mutilated body of a farmer was found in a field in June this year.

More than 250 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Imphal Valley-based Meiteis and adjoining hills-based Kuki-Zo groups since May last year.

The violence escalated in Manipur after three women and three children belonging to the Meitei community had gone missing from a relief camp in Jiribam district, following a gunfight between security forces and suspected Kuki-Zo militants that resulted in the deaths of 10 insurgents on November 11. Bodies of those six were later found.

World's first tilted LED dome planetarium to open in Mysuru

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

The world's first-ever tilted dome LED planetarium is taking shape in Mysuru. Once it opens in September 2025, it will offer visitors an immersive experience of the night sky.

The Rs 91-crore project is being constructed by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIAP) and the University of Mysore at its Chamundi Hills campus. "Unlike a conventional projector-based full-dome system widely used in planetaria, the LED dome system produces images using LED elements that emit light on an immense colour spectrum," IIAP Director Annapurni Subramanian told PTI on the sidelines of the India International Science Festival (IISF) here.

Subramanian said the planetarium will comprise a 15-metre diameter dome tilted at an angle of 15 degrees which will allow users to view the



night sky right in front of them instead of sitting in reclining chairs and craning their necks. Characterised by its higher luminance and wider colour gamut, the LED dome system can reproduce highly realistic beautiful starry skies

and astronomy visuals, she said, adding that the 8K LED lights are controlled by SkyExplorer astronomical software of French firm RSA Cosmos. "The construction and the work of building the planetarium on site is progress-

ing rapidly and we hope to inaugurate the planetarium by September next year," Subramanian said.

RSA Cosmos was awarded the contract to build the LED dome planetarium by the IIAP and the installation will be car-

The Rs 91-crore project is being constructed by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIAP) and the University of Mysore at its Chamundi Hills campus

ried out by Orbit Animate Pvt. Ltd., the Indian subsidiary of the French firm.

The Cosmology Education and Research Training Centre (COSMOS) of the IIAP along with the planetarium will be a high-tech hub for education and training that can upskill students and teachers, and conduct outreach and awareness programmes for society, Subramanian said.

This project is financially supported by MPLADS (Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme) funds of Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Atomic Energy and Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser, Government of India.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Trump's tariff threat

Trump risks alienating key partners, intensifying global economic tensions and accelerating efforts to bypass the dollar

Trump presidency is yet to begin but the president-elect has already spoken his mind on the US policy and it is not good news for the developing countries. US President-elect Donald Trump has issued a stern warning to the BRICS nations—Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa and their expanding coalition—which seek to challenge the dominance of the US dollar. Trump's announcement of a potential 100 per cent tariff on these nations underscores the rising tensions across the globe as the BRICS bloc explores alternatives to the dollar. This move highlights the friction between the US and developing economies and could reshape global trade dynamics. It was widely expected that Trump would do everything possible to bail out the US out of debt and would not hesitate to take harsh measures against countries who are harming the US interests regardless of their friendship with the US. For decades, the US dollar has been the cornerstone of global commerce, widely used in trade and serving as the reserve currency for most nations. However, the BRICS coalition and other developing economies have expressed growing frustration over the disproportionate control that the US wields over the global financial system. Nations within the BRICS bloc are already discussing plans for a new global currency or expanded use of their local currencies to reduce reliance on the dollar. There is no doubt that Trump's threat of 100 per cent tariffs on BRICS nations reflects a protectionist stance and his determination to defend US economic interests. But that is Trump for you, he doesn't mind taking tough decision even if the whole world is against him. Be it environment or trade or military expeditions



Trump is capable of taking decisions which might be frowned upon the world over. He has categorically said that any attempt to undermine the dollar's dominance would result in severe consequences, including exclusion from the US market. The big problem for developing nations is they depend upon the US market in a big way for their incomes and exporting revenue. Trump's approach reveals his readiness to employ punitive measures against both allies and rivals in the global south, regardless of their historical ties with the US. The implications of such tariffs would be profound, potentially disrupting trade flows, exacerbating economic tensions and alienating key developing nations. A 100 per cent tariff would significantly raise the cost of exporting goods to the US, impacting industries that rely on American consumers. For economies like Brazil and South Africa, which are heavily reliant on exports, this could lead to economic slowdown. But ironically Trump's threats may be counter-productive as many countries may further incentivise their search for alternatives to the dollar. Besides, Trump's hardline stance may push developing countries closer together, fostering stronger ties within the BRICS bloc and beyond. Indeed raising tariff wall in today's world is not a good idea but then Trump has mind of his own.

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PICTALK



Devotees attend 'Ganga Aarti' at Har Ki Pauri, in Haridwar

Unveiling transnational drug syndicate

The Coast Guard's drug seizure near Andaman islands underscores the ongoing challenge of tackling transnational syndicates engaged in illicit trafficking near the Indian coast



BHOPINDER SINGH

Heading to their motto of Vayam Rakshamah (We Protect), the Indian Coast Guard personnel executed a befitting operation in the Andaman and Nicobar waters to mark one of the largest drug busts in Indian maritime history. The haul of nearly 6000 kgs of the banned Methamphetamine near Barren Islands (150 km away from Port Blair) is estimated at around 36,000 crores in the international market. The picture-perfect operation was triggered by the presence of a suspicious trawler (Soe Wai Yan Htoo) in the Indian waters by a Coast Guard Dornier reconnaissance plane which then swooped down and asked the trawler to lower its speed, whilst informing the base. Soon enough, fast patrolling vessels of the Coast Guard were tasked to the place, and they towed the six Myanmar crew trawler to Port Blair, for further investigations. Ongoing interrogations reveal the presence of an unyielding, trained and secretive crew with the presence of a satellite phone that has all the hallmarks of a major and international drug syndicate. But for now, it marks the ever-vigil capabilities of the Indian Coast Guard in ensuring the integrity of our maritime borders and policing against transnational crime. While the geographical location of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands naturally lends itself towards fructifying India's strategic "Look East" opportunity (as also dominates the sensitive and narrow Malacca Straits that facilitates 40% of global trade) – it is also in the crosshairs of Myanmar, the largest producer of illegal methamphetamine, which is then exported to markets in the US, Europe to Eastern countries. The restive Shan State of Myanmar (bordering China with an ethnic Han-Chinese populace and multiple insurgent groups widely believed to be supported by China) is also home to the infamous Cantonese Chinese drugs syndicate, Sam Gor (popularly known as "The Company"). This notorious set-up is involved in global drug trafficking and is said to be in control of over 40 per



cent of Asian-Pacific trade in substances like methamphetamine, heroin, ketamine, fentanyl etc. This lucrative trade is believed to generate earnings up to a staggering \$8 billion, annually. Currently, it is believed to be headed by a Chinese gangster called Tse Chi Lop, who is also widely known by the moniker "El Chapo of Asia". Even though Tse Chi Lop is currently in custody and facing trials in Australia – his organisation Sam Gor and its affiliated operations are continuing, unabated. Ironically, he could have created such a vast drug infrastructure and empire in a region contiguous to the Chinese mainland, where the Chinese have many beholden armed militias, but he never got targeted or arrested by the Chinese authorities. Also strange is the fact that he never attempted to ship his produce towards the Chinese mainland, raising serious doubts if he were to have enjoyed some sort of official patronage from the Chinese authorities. Unsurprisingly, Tse Chi Lop's rise has not been marked by the usual stories of violence and gore of drug lords but by the unusual route of steady industrialisation and establishing well-maintained networks of key international



THIS LUCRATIVE TRADE IS BELIEVED TO GENERATE EARNINGS UP TO A STAGGERING \$8 BILLION, ANNUALLY. CURRENTLY, IT IS BELIEVED TO BE HEADED BY A CHINESE GANGSTER CALLED TSE CHI LOP, WHO IS ALSO WIDELY KNOWN BY THE MONIKER "EL CHAPO OF ASIA"

partnerships, which are impossible without some sort of sovereign backing. And the Chinese are the masters of asymmetric subterfuge in that they patronise proxies and bad elements, as long as they do the bidding of the Chinese government, and do not direct their illicit trade towards the Chinese mainland. While it is too early to confirm the exact hand behind the recent cache in the Andaman and Nicobar waters, the quantity/value of drugs involved, the location of the trawler arrest, and the nationality of the trawler crew, all point to origins that seem disconcertingly familiar. That the restive Myanmar mainland (with areas like Shan State that are 'no-go' zones to even the Myanmar military) is closer to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands than the Indian mainland, makes the threat real and perennial. It is a testy region given too much Chinese intrigues and ambitions – in fact, the Myanmar-owned Coco Coco Islands (barely 50 km from the northernmost tip of the Andaman Islands range) were believed to have had Chinese militaristic assets, but the same was never proved. The Chinese have planned substantial investments in Myanmar via its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which includes projects like the

China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) or even the development of the deep-sea port of Kyaukpyu, in Myanmar's Rakhine State. The Chinese have a vested interest in keeping their footprints in the region and it is not beyond them to oscillate from making pure investments in the Myanmar Government to patronising rebel militias or even drug lords, towards its objectives in the region. India must safeguard its interests and strategic imperatives that beset its distant outpost in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Sadly, it is not the first and it wouldn't be the last such operation. Situational status suggests that this specific haul was destined for Thailand, which typically sees a surge around the onsetting festive season, but this too is in the realm of conjecture, as yet. And the real concern is not if this consignment was the handiwork of the Chinese Sam Gor gang (or of the El Mencho-run Jalisco New Generation Cartel), but of the murky linkages with the Chinese authorities, which is always a possibility. (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ENSURE MINORITY SAFETY

Madam — The fresh row of violence against the Hindu minorities once again began in Bangladesh, leading to an escalation of disturbance between Indo-Bangladesh relations. In an immediate response, the government of India has slammed the interim government run by Muhammad Yunus for not taking any action against Bangladeshi miscreants. The arrest and denial of bail by the Chittagong court to the Hindu monk and ISKCON priest Chinmoy Krishan Das has raised deep concerns about the safety and security of the Hindus in Bangladesh. The noted incidences of violence, arson, vandalism and desecration of the Hindu religious sites have stressed the whole matter. It is particularly disturbing to note that Hindus are not at all safe in Bangladesh, and the majority population there is not only opposing the minority but also nurturing anti-India feelings as a whole. So far, the anti-India sentiments are taking a sharp steep in many other countries in the last few days. First Canada took a stir against India by attacking Hindu temples and now Bangladesh is the new member in this chain. The democratic spirit had been killing down, and it is regrettable that Hindus are being targeted with brutality and animosity in both Canada as well as Bangladesh. The government of Bangladesh must immediately step in to halt such violence against the Hindu minority. Every religion must be respected and equally treated with the values of the democratic spirit. Bangladesh must not forget that it was these Hindus only who fought hard for their liberation and freedom; any attack on the Hindu population residing in Bangladesh will be considered as an attack on their liberators.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

INDIA'S GDP GROWTH DIPS

Madam— India's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth slumped to a seven-quarter low of 5.4 per cent in July-September, coming in much lower than the consensus estimates of 6.5 per cent. A "slug-

Suspense over Maharashtra CM



The delayed swearing-in of the Chief Minister in Maharashtra despite the thumping majority of Mahayuti is a cause of concern and raises very fundamental issues relating to government formation post-election. The highly ambitious leaders of political parties, though in the minority in the alliance, voted to power, stake claims on the Chief Minister post against demo-

cratic norms or turn to browbeating. The leader of the largest alliance partner ought to be sworn in as CM, but compromise is the new normal in the constitution of the ministries. Though this is not new, it is yet an unhealthy practice detrimental to the alliance in a larger perspective. Bihar CM Nitish Kumar having taken over as CM seven times on the same pattern in diagonally opposite RJD and BJP alliances is the stark example of how democracy runs at the root level. People give decisive mandates for governance, yet bypassing it is against the will of the people. If so, what is the sanctity of Abraham Lincoln's democratic principle 'Government of the people, by the people, for the people'?

Vinod Johri | Delhi

slightly lower than 9.5 per cent in Q1FY25. C K Ramani | Chennai

RESTRICTING HARMFUL ONLINE CONTENT

Madam — Australia has passed a law restricting children's use of internet media. The Government of India is also moving in this direction, which is a welcome step. However, solely creating laws related to social media is not enough to fully protect children from its adverse effects. Laws are necessary, but they alone are not sufficient. To keep children safe, the collective role of parents, teachers, and society is crucial. Children need to be educated about digital literacy, encouraged to practice responsible online behaviour, manage their screen time effectively, and focus on positive content. Additionally, social media companies must ensure their platforms are safe for children. A comprehensive approach is the only effective solution to this problem.

R K Jain | Barwani

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

From pages to people: Why writers need marketing to succeed

Writing a book is only half the battle. The other half — equally critical but often overlooked — is ensuring that it reaches its intended audience

As an author of seven books with a decent number of followers who swear by my work, I am still a largely unknown author. That's an anomaly, considering the long decades I have spent polishing my craft and bringing out the most distilled form of writing I am capable of. Beyond a loyal circle of readers who follow my work, much of the world remains unaware of what I have to offer. What did I lack? Not literary vivacity, but an appetite to market my writing in a way that would earn it a top spot among contemporaries. Just as we have conceived a negative perception of wealth and shunned any open display or accumulation of it as vulgar, we have slapped self-publicity also with some uncharitable notions. It's often said that writers are inherently shy, reclusive beings who prefer the company of their thoughts and words over the glare of public attention. Most of us dream of creating something so profound that the world discovers it and celebrates it without our having to lift a finger to promote it. We yearn for our books to find



their way into readers' hands through serendipity rather than strategy. While this dream is undeniably romantic, the reality is far from it. In a world brimming with voices clamouring for attention, invisibility is not an option. It took me time to understand that sharing my work is not an act of self-indulgence; it is an act of respect toward my craft. It is not hubris to present our work to the world; it is our responsibility. To my fellow writers and artists, I offer this perspective: showcasing our work is not something we do solely for ourselves. It's a way of expressing gratitude for the skills we've been granted. It is an acknowledgement of the universe's generosity and an effort to give back by letting our words reach those who might find meaning and inspiration in them. Let's face it: the literary world

is saturated. Thousands of books are published every single day, each jostling for space in an overcrowded marketplace. Amid this din, how can anyone possibly stumble upon a book unless it's brought to their notice? By showcasing our work, we're not seeking undue attention; we're simply ensuring that our creation has a chance to be seen and appreciated. Once upon a time, good writing was the golden ticket for a writer. Today, social media has taken on that role with unparalleled reach and immediacy. While humility is an admirable trait, excessive shyness can hinder the reach of our work. Imagine a painter hiding their masterpiece in an attic or a singer performing only in an empty room. Writing, like any art, is meant for sharing. When we shy away from showcasing our creations, we deny our craft the audience it deserves. We owe it to ourselves and our readers to overcome their reluctance and step forward. By sharing our work, we're saying, "Thank you for this talent. Here is what I've made of it." It's not about vanity; it's about paying homage to the

creative force within us. Writing can often feel like a solitary pursuit, but it doesn't have to be. Social media offers us a unique opportunity to find our tribe — fellow writers, readers, and supporters who understand and appreciate our journey. These connections not only amplify our reach but also provide encouragement, feedback, and camaraderie that enrich our creative process. There's a lingering misconception that marketing diminishes the purity of art. But let's reframe this: promoting our work is not about shouting louder than everyone else; it's about ensuring that our voice is heard. It's about creating a bridge between us and our readers, a pathway for our stories to travel and touch lives. It's an act of service — to our art and to those it might inspire. So let us set aside our hesitations and embrace the stage that the digital age has offered us. In doing so, we ensure that our words, our art, and our essence leave a lasting impact on the world. (The author is a columnist and writing coach based in Dubai; views are personal)



ASHA IYER KUMAR



FIRST COLUMN

LEARNING MUST GO ON

Learning opens the doors of possibilities, if it is stopped we are closing that door and impeding our own growth



SHAINY SHARMA

Learning is an essential and lifelong process. It is a cornerstone of human growth and evolution. However, beyond the mechanics of acquiring knowledge lies the nuanced art of learning - an approach that emphasises curiosity, creativity, adaptability and a passion for discovery.

Curiosity - the word says by itself is the fuel for lifelong learning. At its core, the art of learning involves more than the accumulation of facts and skills. It is a dynamic process that integrates intellectual, emotional and experiential dimensions. Learning becomes artful when it is purposeful, joyful and deeply connected to an individual's values and aspirations.

Unlike a rigid, standardised approach, the art of learning recognises that everyone has unique strengths, interests and ways of understanding the world. It encourages learners to embrace their individuality, explore diverse perspectives and find meaning in the learning process for knowledge doesn't only come from formal education or reading books rather it comes from life, conversations, experiences and unexpected encounters.

Individuals should stay open to new perspectives, whether from different cultures, professions or age groups. A growth mindset, as popularised by Carol Dweck, is the belief that intelligence and abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work which contrasts with a fixed mindset that assumes that the abilities are static.

With a growth mindset, setbacks are often seen as learning opportunities rather than failures while challenges are embraced as part



of the learning process. No matter how much one knows, there's always room to grow. Staying humble, and being open to feedback, criticism and constructive input from others can help an individual improve and refine their understanding. Another important factor that enhances the art of learning is the art of passion. Learners who pursue subjects that resonate with their interests, enter a state of flow, where effort feels effortless, and the process becomes intrinsically rewarding.

Passion sustains motivation and fosters deeper engagement, leading to mastery. Surrounding oneself with like-minded individuals who prioritise learning, engaging in discussions, attending workshops or collaborating on projects challenges an individual to learn and grow.

There is no denying that the most brilliant minds ask questions that others may take for granted. One must cultivate a habit of asking 'Why' and 'How' and not just about abstract ideas but in everyday situations too for these questions push the boundaries of one's thinking and can lead to deeper insights. It is always when one embraces learning as a lifelong practice, that can one open oneself to a world of possibilities, ideas and opportunities for personal as well as professional transformation.

Understanding learning as art transforms it from a mundane task into a profound journey of self-exploration and mastery for developing a passion for learning that will never cease to grow.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

Freebies: A winning strategy or economic pitfall?



UTTAM GUPTA

The growing trend of offering freebies in elections raises significant concerns about financial sustainability, governance and its impact on voters' mindset

A major factor contributing to the success of the respective political party in the just concluded elections in Maharashtra and Jharkhand was freebies - an acronym for "something given free of charge" - particularly those targeted at women. In Maharashtra, the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance launched the Ladki Bahin cash benefit scheme that offered Rs 1,500 a month to every woman with a family income of less than Rs 2,50,000 annually, in the age bracket of 21 to 65 years.

The amount was subsequently increased to Rs 2,500 per month. In Jharkhand, under Mukhyamantri Maiyan Samman Yojna (MMSY) Hemant Soren's JMM-Congress-RJD government had initially promised to give Rs 1000 per month to all women in the age group 18-25 years. The amount was later increased to Rs 2500 per month.

The domineering role of freebies in winning elections is visible in almost every State Assembly election held since 2020 when former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal came up with this brand of politics followed by Punjab in 2022 where the Aam Aadmi Party or AAP promised depositing Rs 1000 per month in the account of every woman aged 18 or above. In Karnataka elections held in early 2023, Congress had promised five guarantees including the much trumpeted Gruha Lakshmi under which every woman head of a house gets Rs 2000 a month. In elections held later in 2023, in Madhya Pradesh, BJP promised Rs 1,250 per month under Ladli Behna Yojana; the amount to be gradually hiked to Rs 3,000 per month. In Chhattisgarh, it promised Rs 12,000 per year to married women under the 'Mahtari Vandan Scheme'.

In Odisha, under the Subhadra Yojana, the BJP gives eligible women Rs 10,000 per year, in two instalments of Rs 5,000 each. In future elections, expect all parties to offer such freebies. Already, in the budget for 2024-25, Delhi finance minister Atishi announced the Mukhyamantri Mahila Samman Yojana (MMSY) under which, the AAP government will give Rs 1000 per month to all the women above the age of 18 in the national capital. Now, Arvind Kejriwal has announced six Revidis (another name for freebies) including free power, free water, free education, free healthcare and pilgrimage for the elderly. Freebies win elections but these lead to a host of negative outcomes. The most damaging is the abetment to corruption.

The Union Government's standards of financial propriety lay down inter alia that "no authority shall exercise its powers of sanctioning expenditure to pass an order which will be directly or indirectly, to its advantage; and the expenditure from public moneys should not be incurred for the benefit of a particular person or a section of the people unless a claim for the amount could be enforced in a court of law or the expenditure is in pursuance of a recognised policy or custom". The reckless spending of the taxpayer's money on freebies is neither a recognised policy nor is sanctioned in a court of law. It is blatant financial irregularity that amounts to bribing voters using public money solely for gaining advantage in electoral politics. Such a corrupt practice is much worse than the one that involves



IN ODISHA, UNDER THE SUBHADRA YOJANA, THE BJP GIVES ELIGIBLE WOMEN RS 10,000 PER YEAR, IN TWO INSTALMENTS OF RS 5,000 EACH. IN FUTURE ELECTIONS, EXPECT ALL PARTIES TO OFFER SUCH FREEBIES

an individual candidate distributing cash using his own money to garner votes. Second, unlike 'normal' budget expenses which are planned and backed by well-orchestrated efforts to garner revenue, additional financial liabilities imposed by the freebies promised in the election manifesto affect the budgetary position of the State in a totally 'uncontrolled' and 'unplanned' manner. There being no corresponding revenue generation against this liability (this being unplanned), this will be at the cost of slashing other essential expenditures including development.

Alternatively, this will result in additional borrowings and the resultant increase in debt to an unsustainable level. In Punjab, the freebies promised by AAP led to an additional expenditure of about Rs 20,000 crore per annum. Unable to foot the bill from its budget, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann had to approach the Central government to help it raise around Rs 50,000 crore. In Delhi, giving Rs 1000 per month or Rs 12,000 annually to each woman above 18 years for a total of 6.7 million women would cost the exchequer Rs 8000 crore per annum.

Already, the State government faces a fiscal deficit or FD - excess of total expenditure over total revenue - of Rs 18,000 crore during 2024-25 which is 80 per cent higher than the FD for 2023-24 at Rs 10,000 crore. This is despite a steep reduction of over 30 per cent in capital expenditure. The situation has come to

such a pass that CM Atishi has recently forwarded a request to the Centre seeking a loan of Rs 10,000 crore from the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF). In Karnataka, the five guarantees have punched a hole of over Rs 60,000 crore a year in the State budget leading to a doubling of its FD to over Rs 122,500 crore. The precariousness of the situation can be seen from a comment by the Deputy CM 'The government has no money to give to the MLAs for carrying out development work; courtesy the poll guarantees'.

In MP, at the current rate of Rs 1250 per month to 12.5 million beneficiaries, the Ladli Behna Yojana costs the state exchequer about Rs 18,750 crore per annum. This will go up to Rs 45,000 crore per annum as the quantum of assistance eventually goes up to Rs 3,000 per month. In Maharashtra, the Ladki Bahin Scheme will dent the State exchequer by Rs 46,000 crore annually.

Other states Jharkhand, Odisha etc are also feeling the pricks of promised freebies. Third, unlike a normal welfare scheme which has a sunset date, the freebies offered by winning parties have none. So, these will continue to be given 'eternally' - no matter which party rules - making perpetual holes in State budgets. Fourth, the money for freebies comes from taxpayers' pockets ('future' tax payers in case, the government borrows). When they know that taxes are used to give doles to all and sundry, it

may even trigger non-compliance amongst them.

Finally, assured of financial help to meet most of their basic needs 'perpetually', the freebies cult is changing the mindset of people in a way that makes them complacent towards work. This undermines the very foundation of economic growth.

Left to themselves, political parties will never shun freebies. Can the Supreme Court (SC) force them?

In an order in S Subramaniam Balaji vs the Government of Tamil Nadu & Ors in July 2013, the SC had observed that the distribution of freebies of any kind influences all people. "It shakes the root of free and fair elections to a large degree." Yet, it held "The promises in the election manifesto cannot be construed as 'corrupt practice' under the Representation of People Act (RPA), or any other prevailing law and, hence, distribution of freebies can't be stopped when the ruling party uses public funds for this purpose through the passage of Appropriation Acts in the state Assembly".

The SC hasn't changed its stance even as on January 25, 2022, hearing a PIL on 'freebies', it observed "This is no doubt a serious issue, budget for freebies is going above the regular Budget. This disturbs the level playing field". These exhortations won't help. It should direct the government to enact a law on curbing freebies.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views expressed are personal)

Political stability: A catalyst for India's renewable energy ambitions

India is poised to play a pivotal role in the global transition to sustainable energy but it must have political will to sustain the momentum

Domestic political stability or lack of it can have a considerable impact on the development of renewable energy projects and investment in the sector. A stable government is always considered as a growth enabler whereas an unstable political landscape can derail the growth engine. With political stability, India now India forges ahead towards ambitious renewable energy ambitions. Recently, the issues surrounding climate financing and global emissions were once again at the forefront of the 29th Conference of Parties (COP29) in Baku. The Indian government was in a strong position to challenge developed nations on climate change, carbon emissions, and green energy investment



ARIF AGA

because of political stability and notable advancements in renewable energy generation. For any nation, socio-economic development depends on political stability which plays a role of catalyst. Especially for developing countries like India, where renewable energy projects demand huge investments, a stable government is much

needed. Political stability provides the long-term vision and policy continuity needed for large-scale renewable projects with long gestation periods. Political stability provides consistent policy and regulatory frameworks that favour and incentivize both domestic and international stakeholders to invest without fear of abrupt policy changes.

With a decadal political stability and policy push, India has made significant progress and achieved a milestone of 200 gigawatts (GW) in non-fossil fuel capacity. However, it still faces gaps to meet the ambitious targets it has set for 2030: 319 GW in solar power and 110 GW in wind energy. As of October 2024, India's installed solar capacity stands at only 90.76 GW, and wind

capacity at 47.36 GW, highlighting a gap of over 200 GW that must be addressed within the next six years. Meeting these targets requires political stability to ensure consistent policies, reliable financing, and sustained foreign investments to fuel India's renewable ambitions.

Since the Modi government took office in 2014, India introduced ambitious targets and policies aimed at expanding renewable energy capacity. Key initiatives include the National Solar Mission, which set the stage for India's solar capacity expansion, and the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM), promoting solar energy adoption in rural areas. The Production Linked Incentive



(PLI) Scheme incentivized domestic manufacturing of solar panels and batteries, reducing reliance on imports and creating jobs.

Additionally, the government's commitment to phasing down coal and setting a target of 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030 reflects a strategic shift towards a sustainable energy mix, reinforcing investor confidence and

cementing India's role in the global renewable energy transition. Investors' confidence is the key. A stable government can attract foreign investments by creating a transparent, reliable business environment with minimal bureaucratic red tape. In contrast, political instability or uncertainty can lead to a fluctuating exchange rate, deter foreign direct investment (FDI), and increase pro-

ject costs. India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and renewable energy targets could be delayed if there are abrupt shifts in political agendas. Delays or changes in policy can lead to project uncertainty, forcing investors to reassess risks and potentially redirect funds to more stable markets. Indian states' thrust on renewable energy needs to be in sync with the Centre's policies and priorities. States with stable governments and favourable renewable policies attract more investments, while politically volatile states face challenges in attracting projects due to higher risks. Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra are leading

states in the Renewable Energy sector and these states made significant progress with policy consistency.

With political stability at national and state levels, India is expected to close the gap in its renewable energy targets soon and contribute meaningfully to global climate goals. Against the backdrop of the COP29 meeting and with political stability, further policy reforms and a robust regulatory framework would push both domestic and foreign investments in the sector. Hopefully, the country is all set to achieve its renewable energy ambitions and contribute to the global effort against climate change.

(The writer is director SgurrEnergy India; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



Petrol, diesel sales rebound on festival demand

India's petrol and diesel consumption soared in November as the festive season reversed a fall in demand witnessed in previous months, preliminary data of state-owned firms showed on Friday. While petrol sales had shown a year-on-year increase, diesel has been a laggard since monsoon and November was the first month that saw positive growth in consumption. Petrol sales of three state-owned firms, which control 90 per cent of the fuel market, soared 8.3 per cent to 3.1 million tonnes in November compared to 2.86 million tonnes of consumption in the same month last year. Diesel demand was up 5.9 per cent to 7.2 million tonnes. Petrol and diesel sales have been tepid during the monsoon months as rains reduced vehicular movement and demand for the agriculture sector. Petrol demand however soared once rains eased but diesel consumption lagged year-on-year. Month-on-month petrol sales were up 4.7 per cent when compared to 2.96 million tonnes of consumption in October. Diesel demand was almost 11 per cent more than 6.5 million tonnes of consumption in October.



GST collection rises to Rs 1.82 lakh crore

Gross GST collections grew 8.5 per cent to over Rs 1.82 lakh crore in November on higher revenues from domestic transactions. The Central GST collection stood at Rs 34,141 crore, State GST at Rs 43,047 crore, Integrated GST at Rs 91,828 crore and cess at Rs 13,253 crore, according to government data released on Sunday. The total gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue grew 8.5 per cent to over Rs 1.82 lakh crore in November as compared to Rs 1.68 lakh crore in the same month a year ago, it said. In October, GST collections of Rs 1.87 lakh crore were the second-best GST mop-up with 9 per cent annual growth. The highest-ever collection was in April 2024 at over Rs 2.10 lakh crore. During the month under review, GST from domestic transactions grew 9.4 per cent to Rs 1.40 lakh crore, while revenues from tax on imports rose about 6 per cent to Rs 42,591 crore. Refunds worth Rs 19,259 crore were issued during the month, registering 8.9 per cent decline over the year-ago period.



Tata Motors overall sales up marginally at 74,753 units

Tata Motors Ltd on Sunday reported a marginal increase in overall sales at 74,753 units in November as compared to 74,172 units in the same month last year. Total domestic sales were up 1 per cent at 73,246 units last month as against 72,647 units in November 2023, Tata Motors said in a statement. Total passenger vehicle (PV) sales, including EVs, were at 47,117 units as compared to 46,143 units in the year-ago month, up 2 per cent, it added. Similarly, domestic PV sales, including EVs were up 2 per cent at 47,063 units as against 46,068 units in November 2023. Total commercial vehicles sales last month were down 1 per cent at 27,636 units as against 28,029 units in the same period last year.

RBI may continue status quo on interest rate: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The RBI is likely to keep the benchmark interest rate unchanged for one more time in its bilateral monetary policy review later in the week as inflation has breached its upper tolerance limit and may also moderate the growth forecast given the disappointing second quarter GDP numbers, experts say.

Reserve Bank Governor-headed six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is scheduled to meet on December 4 to 6, 2024. The decision of the rate-setting panel will be announced on December 6 by Governor Shaktikanta Das.

It was widely anticipated that the RBI would start reducing the benchmark interest rates soon but the central bank will have little option this time around as the latest print of retail inflation is above 6 per cent.

The Reserve Bank has kept the repo or short-term lending rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent since February 2023 and experts think some easing



could only be possible in February.

Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda said given the rather uncertain global environment and the possible impact on inflation and the fact that currently inflation has been averaging close to 5.9 per cent in the last two months, a status quo on repo rate will be the logical outcome from the policy.

"There would be a change in RBI projections for both inflation and GDP as inflation has been higher so far than the RBI forecast for Q3 and GDP growth has come much below expectations in Q2. It would hence be of interest to see what the projections this time are," Sabnavis said.

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

government data released on Friday.

Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist and Head - Research & Outreach, ICRA, said that with the CPI inflation having breached the 6 per cent upper limit of the medium-term range of 2-6 per cent in October 2024, ICRA anticipate a status quo from the MPC in its December 2024 meeting, in spite of the GDP growth print for Q2 FY2025 sharply undershooting the committee's expectations.

"At the same time, we anticipate that the MPC will moderate its growth forecast for FY2025 next week. A February 2025 rate cut may be forthcoming if the next two inflation prints recede," Nayar added.

The government has tasked the RBI to ensure that consumer price index (CPI) based retail inflation stays at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on the either side.

The central bank last hiked the repo rate to 6.5 per cent in February 2023 and since then it has held the rate at the same level.

India should focus on local currency trading: GTRI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The warning of US President-elect Donald Trump to BRICS countries to impose 100 per cent customs duties if the BRICS group would replace the US dollar is unrealistic, and India should focus on developing a workable local currency trading system, think tank GTRI said on Sunday.

BRICS, formed in 2009, is the only major international group of which the US is not a part. Its other members are South Africa, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the UAE. Over the past few years a few of its member countries, in particular Russia and China, are seeking an alternative to the US dollar or creating their own BRICS currency. India has so far not been part of the move.

On Saturday, Trump warned BRICS nations against such a move. The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that tar-

iffs of this scale would harm the US consumers only as it would push prices on imports, disrupt global trade, and risk retaliation from key trading partners.

"Trump's threat to impose 100 per cent tariffs on countries adopting a BRICS currency is unrealistic and more symbolic than practical.

For India, the prudent approach is to focus on making local currency trading workable by establishing a transparent and open currency exchange," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

He said that India's best interests lie neither in the domination of the US dollar nor in fully adopting a BRICS currency at this stage.

"By enhancing its own financial infrastructure, India can better navigate the shifting dynamics of global trade," he said, adding threatening sovereign nations undermines diplomatic relations and disregards the multipolar nature of today's world.



Hinduja Tech completes acquisition of TECOSIM Group

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Hinduja Tech Ltd has completed the acquisition of Germany based engineering services provider TECOSIM Group GmbH, marking a significant milestone in its vision to become top 10 global mobility engineering companies.

Hinduja Tech Ltd, a subsidiary of heavy commercial vehicle maker Ashok Leyland, is a mobility focused global engineering, research and development technology company. The strategic move highlights Hinduja Tech Ltd's ongoing commitment to enhancing its global automotive engineering market leadership. The acquisition would provide operational efficiencies, increased competitiveness, and a stronger global market presence, Hinduja Tech Ltd said in a company statement.

Commercial LPG up Rs 16.5 per cylinder

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Jet fuel, or ATF, price on Sunday was hiked by 1.45 per cent and rates of commercial LPG used in hotels and restaurants increased by Rs 16.5 per 19-kg cylinder in the monthly revision done in line with international oil price trends.

The aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was increased by Rs 1,318.12 per kilolitre, or 1.45 per cent, to Rs 91,856.84 per kl in the national capital-

home to one of the busiest airports in the country, according to state-owned fuel retailers. This is the second straight monthly increase in jet fuel prices. Rates were increased by Rs 2,941.5 per kl (3.3 per cent) on November 1. That hike came after two rounds of reduction which had taken the rates to their lowest level this year. ATF price on October 1 was cut by 6.3 per cent (Rs 5,883 per kl) and by Rs 4,495.5 per kl, or 4.58 per cent on

September 1.

The ATF price in Mumbai was increased to Rs 85,861.02 per kl on Sunday from Rs 84,642.91 previously.

Oil firms also increased the price of commercial LPG by Rs 16.5 to Rs 1818.50 per 19-kg cylinder.

This is the fifth straight monthly hike in commercial LPG price. Rates were hiked by Rs 62 per 19-kg cylinder at the last revision on November 1.

In five price increases, commercial LPG rates have hiked by Rs 172.5 per 19-kg cylinder. Rates are now at their highest level in one year.

The increases negated the four monthly reductions prior to the current cycle that started in August. In the four rounds, prices had been cut by Rs 148 per 19-kg cylinder.

Commercial LPG now costs Rs 1771 per 19-kg cylinder in Mumbai, Rs 1,927 in Kolkata and Rs 1,980 in Chennai.

Auditing of companies has improved in the last 3-4 yrs: NFRA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Auditing of companies has improved in the last three to four years, NFRA chief Ajay Bhushan Prasad Pandey has said and highlighted the need for board as well as audit committee members to engage with auditors which will help in raising red flags and prevent possible corporate failures.

The National Financial Reporting Authority, constituted in October 2018 under the companies law, has passed more than 80 orders, including in Cafe Coffee Day, DHFL and a few other large cases, for lapses that led to corporate failures.

At the helm of the watchdog for more than two years, Pandey told PTI in an interview that many of the auditors were doing and are doing a good job.

"Overall, auditing of companies has improved over the last 3-4 years," the NFRA Chairperson said. However, he noted that



there is a certain section among the auditors and among the board members who were not that sensitive and alert due to which there have been many corporate failures. "People should be aware that these are the pitfalls and they have responsibilities".

Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Regulations) as well as various provisions under the Companies Act, 2013 have cast some responsibilities on auditors and companies board

members. Also, auditing standards require auditors to have a two-way communication with the members of the TCWG (Those Charged With Governance).

It is necessary for the board members and audit committee to engage with the auditors and then take a call.

In many of the cases that the NFRA has dealt with, Pandey said it was noticed that audit committees did not engage with auditors and did not ask the right questions to the auditors.

FDI inflows jump 45 pc to \$29.79 bn

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

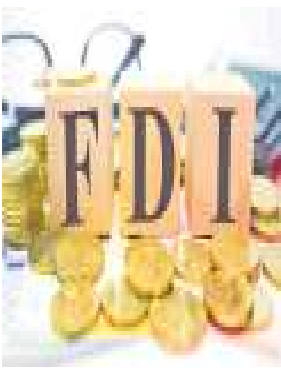
Foreign direct investment in India rose by 45 per cent year-on-year to USD 29.79 billion in April-September this fiscal on healthy inflows in services, computer, telecom and pharma sectors, according to government data.

FDI inflows were at USD 20.5 billion in April-September 2023-24.

In the July-September quarter, the inflows grew by about 43 per cent year-on-year to USD 13.6 billion against USD 9.52 billion in the same quarter last fiscal.

The foreign direct investment in India was up 47.8 per cent to USD 16.17 billion in the April-June quarter.

Total FDI, which includes equity inflows, reinvested earnings and other capital, grew by 28 per cent to USD 42.1 billion during the first half of this fiscal from USD 33.12 billion in April-September 2023-24, the



Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) data showed.

During the April-September period this financial year, FDI equity inflows rose from major countries, including Mauritius (USD 5.34 billion against USD 2.95 billion), Singapore (USD 7.53 billion against USD 5.22 billion), the US (USD 2.57 billion against USD 2 billion), the Netherlands (USD 3.58 billion against USD 1.92 billion), the UAE (USD 3.47 bil-

lion against USD 1.1 billion), Cayman Islands (USD 235 million against USD 145 million) and Cyprus (USD 808 million against USD 35 million).

However, inflows declined from Japan and the UK.

Sectorally, inflows rose in services, computer software and hardware, trading, telecommunication, automobile, pharma and chemicals.

FDI in services has increased to USD 5.69 billion during the first half of the current financial year as against USD 3.85 billion in the same period last year.

As per the data, FDI inflows in non-conventional energy stood at USD 2 billion.

The data also showed that Maharashtra received the highest inflow of USD 13.55 billion during April-September 2024-25. It was followed by Karnataka (USD 3.54 billion), Telangana (USD 1.54 billion) and Gujarat (about USD 4 billion).

Interest rate key factor for markets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Trading sentiment in the equity market this week will be guided by global trends, foreign fund movement, macroeconomic data announcements and RBI's interest rate decision, analysts said. The monthly auto sales data announcement would also be tracked by investors this week. "Looking ahead, markets are likely to react to the disappointing GDP growth of 5.4 pc on Monday. The upcoming RBI policy will be crucial, with both the interest rate decision and commentary being key focus areas. "On the global front, geopolitical tensions, particularly the Russia-Ukraine situation, remains a concern. Important macroeconomic data will also influence market sentiment."

FPIs' selling spree continues at Rs 21,612 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors pulled out Rs 21,612 crore (USD 2.56 billion) from the Indian equity market in November, mainly due to the rising US bond yields, strengthening dollar and expectation of a slowdown in the domestic economy.

While the sell-off continues, the quantum of net outflow significantly reduced compared to October, when FPIs recorded a massive withdrawal of Rs 94,017 crore (USD 11.2 billion).

With the latest pull out, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have experienced total net outflow of Rs 15,019 crore in 2024 so far.

Looking ahead, the flow of foreign investments into Indian equity markets will hinge on several key factors. These include the policies implemented under Donald Trump's presidency, the prevailing inflation and interest rate environment, and the evolving geopolitical landscape,

Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said. Additionally, the third-quarter earnings performance of Indian companies and the country's progress on the economic growth front will play a crucial role in shaping investor sentiment and influencing foreign inflows, he added.

According to the data, FPIs recorded a net outflow of Rs 21,612 crore in November. This came following a net withdrawal of Rs 94,017 crore in October, which was the worst monthly outflow.

However, in September, foreign investors made a nine-month high investment of Rs 57,724 crore.

Market analysts attributed the latest outflow to the rising US bond yields, strengthening dollar and expectation of a slowdown in the domestic economy.

Overall, November experienced net outflow but FPIs staged a notable reversal at the beginning of the week ended November 29, due to decisive victory of the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance in the Maharashtra Assembly elections.

The resulting political stability appears to have strengthened investor confidence, Srivastava said.

Huge import opportunities for UK apparel firms in India: AEPC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) on Sunday said huge import opportunities are there for British apparel firms in India and they should participate in large numbers in the upcoming mega textile show here next year.

Bharat Tex 2025 will be held here from February 14-17, 2025, at Bharat Mandapam and from February 12-15 next year at the India Expo Centre and Mart in Greater Noida. Companies will showcase

the entire textile value chain, with a special focus on key sectors such as Handicrafts, Apparel Machinery, Chemicals, and Dyes.

AEPC Chairman Sudhir Sekhri said that the UK is a global fashion hub and the sixth largest importer of apparel, with a total import value of USD 20.27 billion in 2023.

"India, with its robust textile and apparel sector, has long been a trusted partner for the UK.

In the past year (2023) alone, India's exports to the UK reached USD 1.2 billion,



securing a 6.14 per cent share of the UK's textile and apparel market," he said.

Exports of ready-made garments to the UK during April-October 2024-25 rose by 9.4 per cent, Sekhri added.

To attract British participation, the council has organized the Bharat Tex Roadshow in London from November 27 to 29.

Sekhri also said that at Bharat Tex 2025, UK brands such as Marks & Spencer, Primark, Next, Charles Tyrwhitt, Burberry, Dunhill, Clarks, and JW Anderson

already source high-quality products from India.

Fast-fashion leaders like Primark, Asos, and Boohoo also turn to India for innovative solutions that align with their commitment to quality and sustainability.

"These are the values that will take centre stage at Bharat Tex 2025, as we highlight India's advancements in eco-friendly materials, closed-loop manufacturing, and waste management principles that strongly resonate with the UK's commitment to a sustainable future," he said.



When Abigail Pande 'shifted gears & stole scenes' with her heart-pumping bike ride

TEJAL SINHA
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Like a supernova bursting forth in the firmament, Abigail Pande has exploded onto the Indian entertainment scene, casting a warm, golden glow over the industry. She has been a fixture in the Indian entertainment industry since quite a young age. With a career spanning multiple projects, including her debut, *Kya Dill Mein Hai*, *Tujh Sang Preet Lagai Sajna*, *Sajan Ghar Jaana Hai*, *Bandini*, *Yeh Hai Aashiqui*, *Pyaar Tune Kya Kiya*, *D4-Get Up and Dance* and goes on the list...Pande has consistently pushed herself to take on diverse roles.

As she takes on the role of Nikhat, aka Nikki, in her latest project, *Divorce Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Karega*, she sits down over a Zoom call with *The Pioneer* for an exclusive chat.

Her entry into the industry was not a planned one. "I had no intention of acting, to be honest," revealed the *Bandini* fame. However, as she began working on projects, she discovered a passion for acting. "When I started working, I realised I loved acting. It challenged me to become better as a person and a professional."

As she navigated her career, she began to realise what drew her to a particular project. "I want to do something that would challenge me, like something that I've not done too much in the past," she explained. The *Shakti—Astiva Ke Ehsaas Ki* fame looks for projects that push her out of her comfort zone, seeking roles that are different from her previous work.

"Now, with the rise of web series, I've become greedier for content-driven shows and meatier roles," she admitted. Her desire for challenging roles has led her to explore new and innovative projects.

Abigail's latest venture, *Divorce Ke Liye*

Kuch Bhi Karega, is a prime example of her desire for innovative and challenging projects. Without giving too many spoilers to our readers who haven't watched the show, she hinted that *Divorce Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Karega* offers a fresh perspective on a concept that is often overlooked.

"It's something that we generally don't think of," *Yeh Hai Aashiqui* fame teased. "While 'Pyaar Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Karega' is something we're familiar with, this is something new." Her enthusiasm for the project is evident and fans, as we had previously mentioned in our review, can expect to see her push the boundaries of her craft once again.

According to her, the name "Divorce" itself is a reflection of the show's distinctiveness. "When I heard the name for the first time, I thought it was apt for the show," she shared. "It's so different and I think that's what drew me to it."

Abigail revealed that the tone of this project is actually lighthearted and humorous, despite the show's focus on divorce proceedings. "It's definitely humorous," she emphasised. "The whole theme itself is very lighthearted. It's something that you can sit with your family and watch. It's more about competition and what you go through as a couple when you're filing for divorce. It's definitely very different."

The concept of divorce, she acknowledged, is often viewed as negative. "When you just hear the name of the show, it sounds like, 'Oh my God, who's getting divorced?'" It brings up a lot of serious and

The Pioneer catches up with **Abigail Pande** in an exclusive chat, where she talks about her latest role in *Divorce Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Karega*, the concept of divorce and more



"I don't think 'taboo' is the right word for divorce. People have kind of understood that if something is not working out, you might end it rather than staying in something toxic."

intense emotions," she said. "But I think when you watch the show, you'll realise that it's not as serious as it sounds."

She further credited the show's director, Ankush Bhatt, with handling the topic of divorce with care and sensitivity. "I think he's really managed that very well, where it's not offensive to anyone and it's not all intense and serious," she explained. "It's just a big goof-up that has happened and how we're trying to rectify that."

The show's unique blend of humour is expected to play a crucial role in making the concept of divorce more appealing and relatable to audiences. The *Gumrah* fame believes that the show's lighthearted tone will help viewers forget their initial reservations about the topic. "I think in the first episode only, you'll forget about that part of it," she said.

Her character, Nikhat Kothari, is pretty competitive and ambitious in life, who wants to be the best at whatever she's doing—a total perfectionist.

Pande drew parallels between her own personality and that of her character, highlighting their shared drive and focus on work. "I understand that part, like how work is such an important part of her life and how everything in her life is so calculated. She thinks everything through very carefully, and I think that part of it is very attractive to me as a character. Playing a practical, career-driven girl is going to be my first time ever."

According to Abigail, one of the primary misconceptions about divorce is that it's a straightforward process. "I've realised through the show that, okay, it's not just like how we've always seen it," she said. "There is a process that happens; there is a certain amount of time that you wait; there is a lot of back and forth with court trials and stuff that you know happens when you're filing for a divorce. I don't think 'taboo' is the right word, but people have a lot of old-school thinking that says, 'Oh my god, divorce is so bad.' But I think

it's 2024 and people have kind of understood that if something is not working out, you might as well end it rather than staying in something toxic."

Abigail's experience working with co-star Rishab was a highlight of the project. "I had so much fun shooting with him because he's also very competitive and both of us have known each other for so many years—over 10 years now. As an actor, he really challenges me to do better because of that competitive spirit he has. He's always trying to one-up me and I think that also challenged me as an actor to do better." Going ahead, Pande shared a memorable anecdote about filming a bike-riding sequence. "I had never ridden a bike in my life and I had learned it especially for this show. I was so nervous about that whole sequence because, you know, acting and all that is something I've done in the past. But when you're riding a bike, you're also shooting, you're also saying dialogues and you have another actor sitting right behind you."

Her apprehension about the sequence was alleviated when it was successfully completed. "It all went well and the outcome was great and I didn't fall or drop Rishab down," she said with relief. "So I think that was very important for me in the shoot."

As the spotlight fades on her latest project, she is already scripting her next act. Abigail is poised to take on new challenges and push the boundaries of her artistry. While her plate is full with several projects in the works, she is hesitant to reveal too much just yet. One project that she can confirm, however, is a music video slated for release next month.

"I'm really, really looking forward to it," she shared and oh, her enthusiasm was quite evident. Although she couldn't provide further details on her upcoming projects, it's clear that Abigail is poised for a bright and busy future!

Weaving legacy of Bharatnatyam and culture

AARTI SREENATH
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Under the golden hues of a setting sun, Samudrala Madhavi Ramanujam's journey into Bharatanatyam began as a divine calling—a talent nurtured by her family's blessings and her undying passion for the ancient art form. "By God's grace, it's a gift," she recalls, her voice tinged with gratitude. Even as a child in first and second grade, her natural flair for performance captivated her family. She would effortlessly mimic actors, which sparked the realisation of her potential. Her father, grandmother and elder relatives made a pivotal decision to introduce her to the disciplined world of classical dance.

"My peddanna (uncle) and peddamma (aunt), who lived in Nallakunta, played a crucial role," Madhavi reminisces. Her elder sister was already learning Bharatanatyam under Kathayini Garu, a revered guru of the Tanjavur Sampradaya. Encouraged by her family, Madhavi joined the same classes. Under Kathayini Garu's guidance, she rigorously trained, completing her foundational studies in Bharatanatyam up to the graduation level.

Her academic journey was equally commendable. Madhavi pursued public personnel management and earned an MA in English from Osmania University, all while continuing her Bharatanatyam diploma through Telugu University. The intertwining of academia and art deepened her passion, prompting her to explore Kuchipudi. Dr. Uma Rama Rao, a legendary figure and recipient of the President's Award, Sangeetha Nataka Award and Mahila Ratna, shaped Madhavi's artistic sensibilities.

Marriage brought new challenges and opportunities. In the 1990s, she moved to Adilabad, a remote tribal region. Guided by Uma Rama Rao's advice, she decided to establish her Bharatanatyam classes there, despite limited resources. "Adilabad was untouched by such cultural exposure," she explains.

Starting in 1995 with only a certificate in Bharatanatyam, her determination drove her to compose intricate *Annamacharya kirtanas*, thus spreading the knowledge of this ancient dance form. Her institution became a beacon of cultural exchange, introducing students to new languages, subjects and traditions. In 1998, her passion culminated in the founding of the Vibhavari Dance Academy in Adilabad. There, she dedicated herself to teaching thousands of students. Over the years, the academy grew into a full-fledged institution offering graduation-level training, with students pursuing certification and diplomas through Telugu University.

Her influence has extended beyond her direct tutelage. Many of her students—now professionals in various fields like IT, medicine, education and more—continue her legacy by teaching Bharatanatyam while excelling in their careers. "It's heartening to see the art form thrive through their dedication," she shares, pride shining in her words.

In 2008, a new chapter unfolded when she received a life-changing invitation from Chinna Jeayar Swamiji, the revered acharya of the Sri Vaishnava tradition and founder of the JET (Jeayar Educational Trust). Swamiji entrusted her with the significant responsibility of teaching Bharatanatyam to tribal communities in Uttanur, Allam Palle and Katarinari Palem, places that have since become nationally renowned for cultural enrichment.

Balancing her role as an English lecturer at Vidyarthi Junior and Degree College in the mornings with Bharatanatyam instruction in the evenings, Madhavi's perseverance became the cornerstone of her legacy. Her work with JET blossomed, culminating in a grand performance in 2008 alongside the legendary singer S.P. Balasubrahmanyam. "It was a moment of great validation," she reflects, fondly recalling blessings from luminaries like Shailaja Amma and Balu.

Her success story is also one of partnership. Madhavi credits her husband, S.P. Ramanujachari—a writer, philosopher

and retired assistant general manager of Grameena Bank—with being her unwavering support system. Together, they produced over 18 ballets, blending her choreography with his storytelling. "He's not just my husband, but my friend, guide and philosopher," she says with heartfelt conviction.

Her career has been marked by monumental achievements that have firmly established her in the annals of Bharatanatyam. Each was brought to life under the spiritual guidance of Chinna Jeayar Swamiji, who provided the concepts inspired by Sri Ramanujacharya's teachings. One production, however, stands out as her magnum opus.

In 2012, Madhavi presented *Acharya Triumph*, a ballet celebrating the life and philosophy of Sri Ramanujacharya. "It was my breaking point," she recalls, remembering the grandeur of its debut on February 26, 2012. The event was graced by dignitaries, including ministers Sunita Lakshmi Reddy, Geeta Reddy and Savitha Reddy, as well as her revered guru and Dr. Alekha Punjala, the current Chairman of the Sangeet Natak Akademi. The ballet left an indelible impression on Swamiji, who posed a life-altering challenge: "Why won't you propagate the story of Ramanujacharya throughout the world for 120 performances?" With unwavering determination, she accepted the challenge. Madhavi performed *Acharya Triumph* in 13 countries and over 120 times, a feat that earned her recognition in the Asian Book of Records, Indian Book of Records and Telugu Book of Records.

"I became the only woman to perform a single ballet more than 120 times," she shares, her voice resonating with both pride and humility. Yet, the role of Ramanujacharya was no ordinary portrayal. "It's a very difficult character—it relies entirely on bhavam (expression)," she explains. Channelling the spiritual essence of the revered acharya, she infused every performance with soul-stirring emotions, making each one a profound experience for audiences worldwide.

Her journey into Bharatanatyam demanded not only artistic prowess but also extraordinary resilience. Her iconic portrayal of Ramanujacharya in *Acharya Triumph* became an immersive experience of abhinaya—the language of facial expressions. "It's all about expressions, the soul of the performance," she emphasises. However, embodying the character came with physical challenges.

To transform into the acharya, she wore a bald-cap prosthetic, which required adhesive that caused itching, allergies and even significant hair loss. Yet, these physical discomforts did not deter her. "I lost so much hair, but the joy of portraying Ramanujacharya was worth every struggle," she shares. While Madhavi played the acharya, her students brought other characters to life, creating a deeply collaborative and spiritual storytelling experience.

Her work has earned her numerous accolades, including the Vishishtha Puraskar. "One of my proudest moments was performing in front of 16 *Peethadhipathis*. It's the greatest honour of my life," she reflects, attributing her success to divine blessings. She has performed at temples and holy sites across India, such as Tirumala, Shivangam, Perumbudur and Melkote, spreading the teachings of Ramanujacharya. She has also taken her cultural legacy to international stages in the US and UK.

Today, she runs her academy, Natya Acharya Nilayam, in Nagol, inaugurated by Shri Chinna Jeayar Swamiji. "It's not just about dance; it's about imparting Sanskriti and culture to the next generation," she says.

Her performance in the UK stands out as an unforgettable moment. She and her troupe of 42 artists showcased a vibrant array of Indian classical dance forms, including Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, Kuchipudi, Manipuri and Perini. "The standing ovation we received lasted more than two minutes," she recalls with joy. "It brought me *Ananda Bhashpa*—tears of happiness. People were captivated by the story of Bhagavad Ramanujacharya, especially when they learned about the mantra 'Om Namo Narayana.' They were curious about the character and his teachings, and that engagement gave me immense fulfillment." On the opposite end of the spectrum, her performance in the remote village of Venkatapuram, Srikakulam, also left a lasting impact. "The villagers, who lead very simple lives, many of whom were uneducated, were moved to tears by our performance. Despite their limited exposure to art, they connected deeply with the message of equality and upliftment that Ramanujacharya propagated."

Her work is not confined to traditional venues—she has also branched into producing corporate ballets for the Times Group, as well as performances for charities like the Sudhira Trust. She continues to push boundaries, both creatively and spiritually, offering her audiences a rich, multifaceted experience of Bharatanatyam and culture.



From rescue to recovery

Rescuing and fostering cats is a compassionate act, but it requires attention to their nutritional needs to ensure they thrive in their new homes. The first step in properly feeding a rescued cat is to have them evaluated by a vet for any underlying health issues, malnutrition, or parasites. After the initial health check, it's important to transition them to a proper diet gradually, starting with easily digestible wet food, and slowly incorporating dry food once they stabilise. Nutritionally, a rescued cat's diet should prioritize animal-based proteins, healthy fats, taurine and essential vitamins and minerals to support their recovery and overall health. Dogs are typically fed two to three meals a day, while cats have a different eating pattern. Being natural nibblers, cats prefer small, frequent meals throughout the day. However, challenges like picky eating, digestive upset, or food aggression may arise, requiring patience and careful adjustments. It's important to avoid feeding cats toxic foods such as chocolate, onions, and dairy, and to consult a vet if the cat needs a specialized diet for allergies or other medical conditions. With the right care, patience, and nutrition, rescued cats can thrive in their new homes, enjoying both health and comfort.

However, when animal lovers rescue abandoned or injured puppies and kittens, their immediate care and feeding become crucial, especially during the initial period before a vet visit. These young animals are experiencing a new environment away from their mothers, making proper feeding and approach essential for their well-being.

1. How to approach and feed:

- **Be calm and gentle:** Approach the baby animal slowly and at their eye level to avoid intimidating them. Use soft tones and give them time to sniff and become familiar with your scent.
- **Create secure feeding space:** Choose a quiet and warm spot free from noise and other pets. This helps minimize stress, making the animal more receptive to feeding.
- **Use proper feeding tools:** For very young puppies and kittens, use a dropper or nursing bottle. Position them comfortably, preferably in a natural nursing posture (belly down), to avoid choking.

2. What to feed:

- **Hydration first:** If the animal appears dehydrated, offer lukewarm, unsalted chicken broth or an oral rehydration solution made for pets. Avoid forcing fluids; instead, offer slowly to avoid aspiration.
- **Milk replacers for young babies:** For very young, unweaned animals, a commercial pet milk replacer is recommended. Warm it to body temperature and feed every 2-3 hours. Do not use cow's milk, as it can lead to digestive issues.
- **Soft food for older babies:** If the animal is old enough for solids, start with wet puppy or kitten food, or softened dry kibble in gravy as a tasty topper on dry food. Gradually transition to a more solid consistency as they adjust to eating.
- **Small portions, frequent meals:** "Small Portions, Frequent Meals" is ideal for cats, as they prefer to nibble throughout the day. In contrast, dogs are usually fed larger meals, just 2 to 3 times a day.



3. Special considerations for feeding rescued animals:

- **Patience is key:** If the puppy or kitten refuses to eat initially, do not force it. Give them a few moments to acclimate and try again with gentle encouragement.
- **Body temperature awareness:** Cold or chilled animals may not want to eat, so ensure they are warm before feeding. You can use a heating pad set to low (but always ensure they can move away if it gets too warm).

The care and feeding of rescued puppies and kittens is a critical first step in ensuring their well-being as they adjust to a new environment. By providing the right nutrition, creating a calm and secure space, and offering patience, caregivers can make a significant difference in their recovery. This thoughtful approach, along with timely veterinary support, helps these young animals regain strength and confidence, setting them on the path to a happy and healthy life in their forever homes.

(The author, Dr. Punith G, is an assistant product and technocommunications manager, at Drools Pet Food Pvt Ltd.)



Chivas Alchemy, unveiled its 5th edition - a resplendent portrayal of 'Chrysalis', exploring the origin of luxury and creativity. It illuminated the modernity of art and design, transforming the concept of creation into a breathtaking spectacle. Joining hands with 4 Alchemists from the realms of craft, art, fashion and entertainment, it wove their extraordinary craftsmanship into a tapestry of metamorphosis. The definitive luxury experience arrived, redefining creativity in the heartland of luxury - Hyderabad. Laced with opulence, the evening unfolded as a masterful exploration of the intricate layers and elements that comprise the art of creation.



Pegasystems Inc. along with Teach for Change organised a grandstate-level competition that provided government school children a platform to showcase their exceptional talents. It united approximately 56,780 students from government schools across Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka for a vibrant festival of talent and literacy.



PARTY



The Parichay Art Foundation hosted a successful watercolour camp, bringing together 18 talented artists to create an impressive collection of artworks. Over the course of the camp, the artists produced a stunning total of 30 watercolor paintings. To further enrich the experience, the foundation also organised an art talk on Sunday, featuring renowned artists Sanjay Astaputre, Dr. Neeraj Raj and Jaywanth Naidu, who shared their insights and expertise with the participants. The event marked the presence of Sanjay Astaputre, Dr. Neeraj Raj and Dr. K. Lakshmi IAS, M.D. warehouse and Director State Gallery of Art.



At the closing ceremony of Poultry India Expo 2024, organised by the Indian Poultry Equipment Manufacturers Association (IPEMA), Governor of Tripura, Indrasena Reddy marked his presence and appreciated the efforts of the association and the expo.



Anantha Law College held its graduation convocation ceremony at RTC Kalyana Mandapam, RTC X Roads, Hyderabad, marking a significant milestone in the academic journey of its graduating students. The ceremony, held on December 1, 2024, acknowledged the hard work, dedication and achievements of the students over the past years.



A mega career fair was held at Meridian School in Madhapur, providing students with a valuable opportunity to explore higher education prospects. The event brought together representatives from over 75 prominent universities in India, the US, UK and Ireland and over 300 students benefited from the fair, which was attended by guests including Lolitha Naidu, President of the educational institution and Principal K Bhavani, who commended the event's success in bridging the gap between students and top universities.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



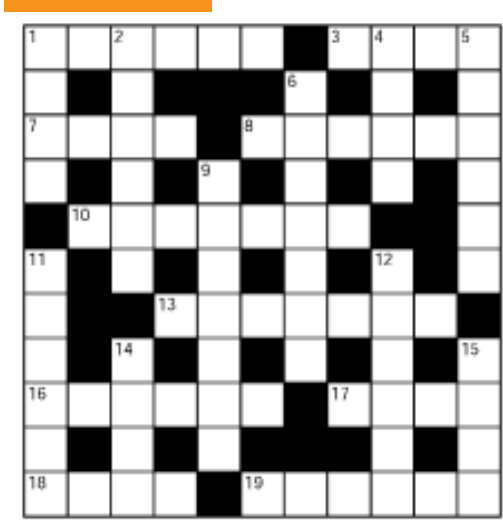
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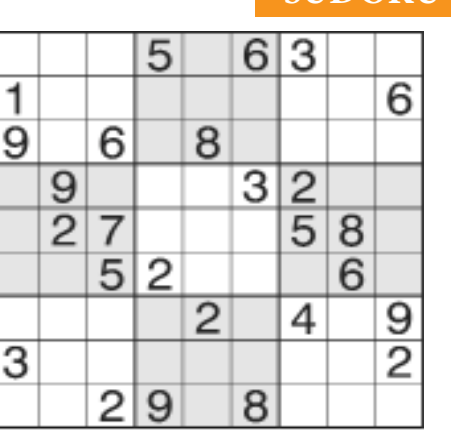
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution
4 3 7 1 9 6 8 2 5
5 6 2 8 7 4 3 1 9
8 1 9 2 5 3 7 4 6
3 5 8 4 2 7 9 6 1
7 2 1 6 8 9 5 3 4
6 9 4 3 1 5 2 7 8
1 8 5 7 4 2 6 9 3
9 7 3 5 6 1 4 8 2
2 4 6 9 3 8 1 5 7

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

ACROSS
1 Pepper might make you do this
3 Use needles and wool to make something
7 Quick
8 Spread this on bread
10 Rich
13 Injured
16 Repaired
17 Factual
18 Utters
19 A weight to stop a boat drifting

DOWN
1 Not in danger
2 Less difficult

SOLUTION
NEIGHBOUR
E R
A T R I O R
T I E J E W E L S
C K M S I
H I M T P L U G
E I T F E N
D U V E T L A M B S
E L A G O
A R G E N T I N A

GINGER MEGGS





DIVYENNDU JOINS RC16

Bollywood's powerhouse performer Divyenndu, fondly remembered as "Munna Bhaiya" from *Mirzapur*, has joined the cast of *RC16*. Known for his memorable roles in films like *Pyaar Ka Punchnama*, *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha* and *Madgaon Express*, Divyenndu's inclusion is set to elevate the film's appeal across audiences. He will begin filming in the second schedule, following the completion of the first schedule in Mysore. Expressing his enthusiasm, director Buchi Babu shared on social media, "My most favourite role revealing today. Our Bhayya... Your Bhayya... MUNNA BHAYYA! Welcome onboard dear @divyenndu brother. Let's rock it." Oscar-winning music maestro AR Rahman has been roped in to compose for the film, marking his first collaboration with Ram Charan.



PEELINGS SONG IS OUT

The wait is finally over! The highly anticipated mass blockbuster song, #Peelings, from the upcoming movie *Pushpa 2: The Rule* has been released. This energetic track is composed by the rockstar DSP and is sure to get you grooving and energise your playlist. Exuding sheer energy, Pushparaj and Srivalli set the screen ablaze with their blazing chemistry and vibrant performance. The song has been released in six languages - Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and Bengali - to cater to a wide audience. *Pushpa 2: The Rule* is all set for a grand worldwide release on December 5. The movie stars Icon Star Allu Arjun, Rashmika Mandanna, Fahadh Faasil and others. Directed by Sukumar and produced by Mythri Movie Makers, this movie is expected to be a blockbuster hit. The movie's team, including Allu Arjun, Rashmika Mandanna, Fahadh Faasil, Sukumar and others, have come together to promote the song and the movie. Fans are eagerly waiting for the movie's release and are expecting it to be a treat for them.

PUSHPA 2's SREELEELA IS A TRAINED CLASSICAL DANCER

Sreeleela, the rising star of Indian cinema, has set the screen ablaze with her spectacular performance in the song *Kissik* from *Pushpa 2: The Rule*. Sharing the screen with the National Award-winning Allu Arjun, Sreeleela has taken the dance number to unprecedented heights, making it one of the most buzzed-about tracks of the year. What many don't know about this young sensation is her deep connection with classical dance. A trained classical dancer, Sreeleela has even completed her *Arangetram*, showcasing her dedication to the art form. This rigorous training has not only honed her discipline but also shaped her as a performer capable of blending tradition with modernity. Interestingly, *Kissik* was a coveted number in the industry, with many top actresses vying for it, but it was Sreeleela who owned it with her electrifying moves. Speaking about the song, Sreeleela revealed in a recent press interaction that *Kissik* isn't just an item number—it has a strong narrative purpose that will unfold in the movie. From her previous hit, *Kurchi Madathapetti* with Mahesh Babu in *Guntur Kaaram*, to her latest triumph, Sreeleela continues to prove her versatility.



'Ghantasala's music transcends generations,' says Venkaiah Naidu

The legacy of the immortal singer Ghantasala Venkateswara Rao comes alive in the upcoming biographical film *Ghantasala the Great*. Featuring Krishna Chaitanya in the titular role and his wife Mridula as Ghantasala's spouse Savitri, the movie is a tribute to one of Telugu cinema's most revered figures. Directed by CH Rama Rao and produced by CH Srimati Phani under the Vriddhi Cinemas banner, the film is set to release on February 14. The release date poster was released at a special event at Prasad Labs, Hyderabad, graced by former Vice President Venkaiah Naidu. Personalities, including R Narayanamurthy, music director Madhavpeddi Suresh, producer Ashok Kumar and actress Jayavani, were also present to celebrate the occasion. Speaking at the event, Venkaiah Naidu emphasised the cultural importance of the film, calling it a responsibility for the Telugu audience to honor the legacy of Ghantasala by watching it. "Ghantasala's music transcends generations. His life as a freedom fighter, public per-

Sobhita Dhulipala wears mother and grandmother's jewellery for 'Raata' ceremony

As Sobhita Dhulipala and Naga Chaitanya prepare for their grand wedding, the pre-wedding festivities are in full swing. Not long ago, Sobhita performed the Raata ceremony, a significant ritual in Telugu traditions, wearing heirloom jewellery passed down from her mother and



grandmother. A close source revealed, "She adorned jewellery pieces from her mother and grandmother, making the moment even more special and emotional for her." The Raata ceremony involves planting a sacred bamboo stick adorned with mango, jamun and Jammi leaves. Rituals include worshipping the stick with sacred elements such as pancha loha (five metals), navaratan (nine gems), and navadhaanya (nine grains), along with prayers to the pancha bhuta (five elements) and directional deities. This ritual purifies and blesses the bride ahead of her wedding. Following this, Sobhita participated in the *Mangalasaanam*, the Telugu equivalent of the Haldi ceremony, where turmeric paste is applied to the bride as part of the pre-wedding cleansing process. Sobhita, radiant in her traditional attire, exuded elegance during the ceremonies. The couple, affectionately called #SoChay by fans, looked picture-perfect, leaving everyone eagerly awaiting their union.

Malavika Mohanan spills beans on The Raja Saab!

Malavika Mohanan, known for her stunning on-screen performances and undeniable charm off-screen, stole the show at the Hyderabad Fashion Times Week. Walking the ramp with grace and confidence, she left the audience spellbound. In a post-show interaction, Malavika shared exciting updates about her much-anticipated Telugu debut alongside Prabhas in the horror rom-com *The Raja Saab*. "The shooting is almost complete and it's coming out really well! I'm thrilled for everyone to see it. Working with Prabhas, one of my favourite heroes, has been a dream," she revealed with excitement. Apart from *The Raja Saab*, Malavika is also gearing up for *Sardar 2*, further cementing her place as one of the most versatile actors in Indian cinema. With these highly anticipated projects in the pipeline, Malavika is all set to deliver yet another series of memorable performances.



Dhruva Sarja unveils intense first look of Kora



Kannada cinema's action Prince Dhruva Sarja, widely loved by audiences across the South, has taken on the role of presenter for the upcoming action-packed film *Kora*. Featuring Tsunami Kitty, Charishma and P. Murthy in lead roles, the movie is written and directed by Oratashree. The project is a joint venture between Sri Lakshmi Jyothi Creations and Rathnamma Movies, produced by Dr. AB Nandini, AN Balaji and P. Murthy. The latest first-look poster showcases Tsunami Kitty in a rugged and intense avatar, with visible injuries and a determined gaze. This striking visual promises an action entertainer that is set to break new ground in the genre. The film also boasts an impressive ensemble cast, including M.K. Mata, Muniraju and Ninasam Ashwath in pivotal roles. Behind the scenes, the technical team includes Selvam Mathappan as the cinematographer, B.R. Hemanth Kumar as the music director and K. Girish Kumar as the editor. *Kora* Chinnayya is choreographing the high-octane stunts, ensuring a visual treat for action lovers. With its promising visuals and powerful team, *Kora* is gearing up to be an unmissable spectacle for fans of intense action dramas.

Varun Tej joins forces with Merlapaka Gandhi for an entertainer!

Tollywood star Varun Tej is all set to collaborate with director Merlapaka Gandhi for an upcoming entertainer, promising a blend of engaging storytelling and mass appeal. This exciting project is being jointly produced by the renowned production houses UV Creations and First Frame Entertainment, known for delivering blockbuster hits. The film is currently in the pre-production phase, with preparations in full swing. The team is gearing up to commence filming in March 2025, creating a buzz among fans eagerly waiting to see Varun Tej in a fresh and dynamic avatar under Gandhi's directorial vision.



Sindhu, Lakshya clinch singles titles

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Top seeded Indians P V Sindhu and Lakshya Sen showcased their class and dominance to clinch the women's and men's singles titles, respectively, at the Syed Modi International badminton tournament here on Sunday.

Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medalist, ended her long title drought by outplaying China's world number 119 Wu Luo Yu 21-14, 21-16 to lift the trophy for the third time, having previously triumphed in 2017 and 2022. In the men's singles final, Lakshya, a 2021 World Championships bronze medalist, was at his dominant best as he demolished Singapore's Jia Heng Jason Teh 21-6, 21-7 in the title clash, displaying complete command over the match.

Sindhu's victory marks her

return to the top of the podium after over two years, with her last title win coming at the Singapore Open in July 2022. The world number 18 also reached the finals of the Malaysia Masters Super 500 earlier this year.

Lakshya's win comes as a balm after a disappointing loss in the bronze-medal playoff at the Paris Olympics. The victory will undoubtedly boost his confidence ahead of the new season.

Indian badminton had more to celebrate on the day as the women's doubles pair of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand clinched their maiden Super 300 title with a convincing 21-18, 21-11 win over China's Bao Li Jing and Li Qian.

The result made Treasa and Gayatri the first Indian women's doubles team to win the title at this tournament. The Commonwealth Games bronze medallists, who had



finished runners-up in 2022, went one step further this year with their solid performance. In the men's doubles final, Pruthvi Krishnamurthy Roy and Sai Pratheek K put up a valiant fight before going down 14-21, 21-19, 17-21 to China's Huang Di and Liu Yang in a marathon 71-minute clash.

Meanwhile, in the mixed doubles final, fifth seeds Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila started strong but couldn't sustain their momentum, losing 21-18, 14-21, 8-21 to Thailand's sixth-seeded pair of Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Supissara Paewsampran.

Sindhu vs Wu Sindhu was up 8-5 in the opening game and despite some resistance from Wu, the Indian managed to secure a two-point lead at 11-9. Sindhu changed gears after the break, surging to 15-10 and then kept a firm grip on the rallies to comfortably close out the opening game.

Sindhu opened strongly, racing to a 3-0 lead, but Wu quickly levelled the score and matched the Indian point-for-point till 10-10. The Chinese left-hander troubled Sindhu with precise drops, earning a slender 11-10 lead

at the break. After resumption, Sindhu shifted gears, drawing errors from Wu and regaining control with a 14-11 lead courtesy of a sharp straight smash. A bodyline smash further extended her lead to 15-11, as Wu misjudged the length on several occasions.

Sindhu's disguised forehand return at a crucial juncture brought her closer to victory, earning her four match points. She sealed the title with a powerful smash, capping off a dominant performance.

Lakshya vs Jia Lakshya, 23, was in a hurry to wrap up the proceedings, storming to a massive 8-0 lead early in the first game. Lakshya's fast-paced game left Teh struggling, with the Singaporean committing a series of unforced errors.

Two aggressive returns helped Teh claim a couple of points, but Lakshya quickly

regained control, securing seven game points at the interval. The Indian then won nine of the next 10 points to wrap up the first game in quick time.

Lakshya maintained his relentless attack in the second game, racing to a commanding 10-1 lead at the mid-game interval. Teh, demoralized and unable to match Lakshya's pace and precision, found himself on the backfoot throughout.

The Indian extended his lead to 15-5, and even when Teh tried to mount a comeback with a flurry of strokes, Lakshya's impeccable defense and fitness shone through.

At 16-7, the Indian showcased his versatility, mixing powerful down-the-line smashes with cross-court net shots to reach 20-7. The match ended with Teh sending a shot long, handing Lakshya his first Syed Modi International title.



Jamshedpur FC, Mohammedan SC look to resurrect campaigns in ISL

PTI ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Mohammedan SC and Jamshedpur FC will look to resurrect their respective campaigns when they face off in their Indian Super League clash here on Monday.

With three defeats in a row, Jamshedpur FC are going through a slump in form. They are placed ninth in the league table with 12 points from eight ties, with four wins and as many defeats. In their three-match losing streak, Jamshedpur FC have conceded three goals at least in each game which is a worrying sign.

The last time the club endured a forgettable run was between October and December 2023 when they lost four games on the trot. Jamshedpur FC need to work on their accuracy they have recorded a passing accuracy of 57.4 per cent in the opposition's half this season. Their overall passing accuracy of 67 per cent also demands more work from the players.

Mohammedan FC, on the other hand, are in the 12th spot in the ISL points table with only one victory and two draws so far in the

season. In their last outing, Mohammedan FC appeared to be turning their fortunes around when they took an early lead against Bengaluru FC.

While an eighth-minute strike by Cesar Manzoki put them in the driver's seat, it was after the 82nd minute in the contest when Sunil Chhetri scored a brace to break Mohammedan FC's hearts.

Mohammedan FC has scored on four occasions this ISL, which is the joint-lowest tally for any side after as many games in their debut ISL season, tied with Jamshedpur.

While the Black and White Brigade does have a formidable frontline, the team needs to supplement their strengths unflinchingly to net more goals.

The club has also been at the receiving end of the supreme aerial prowess of their opponents in this season, having conceded five headed goals, which is the most by any side this season.

Jamshedpur head coach Khalid Jamil admitted that the team needs to uplift its performance to get the desired results.

ICC: Jay Shah takes over as new chairman

PTI ■ DUBAI

Indian cricket administrator Jay Shah on Sunday took charge as the chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC) with an immediate goal of ending the impasse surrounding the Champions Trophy and a broader vision of making cricket a commercially viable Olympic sport.

The 36-year-old Shah, who headlined the BCCI as its secretary for the last five years, is the fifth Indian and the youngest ever to head the global cricket body.

He was the unanimous choice of the ICC's Board of Directors and replaced New Zealand attorney Greg Barclay, who didn't wish to continue for a third consecutive term.

Before Shah, businessman late Jagmohan Dalmiya, politician Sharad Pawar, lawyer Shashank Manohar and industrialist N Srinivasan have all headed the world cricket body.

Shah, the son of India's Home Minister Amit Shah, will have his task cut out as the ICC looks to find an acceptable solution to implement the 'Hybrid Model' for the Champions Trophy originally scheduled in Pakistan.



As of now, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has decided to accept the 'Hybrid Model' under which India play their matches in Dubai. But the PCB also wants the same courtesy to be accorded to Pakistan in all four ICC tournaments till 2031, which will be co-hosted or singularly hosted by the Indian cricket board.

Now, as the head of the global body and with less than 100 days left for the tournament to begin, Shah will have to coordinate with both the PCB and his former colleagues at the BCCI for an "acceptable solution" in order to organise a hassle-free tournament.

India have already refused to travel to Pakistan as it hasn't received clearance from its government.

Shah didn't make any comment on the Champions Trophy while outlining his priorities for his term which included leveraging the sport's inclusion in the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic Games as an opportunity and further accelerate the growth of the women's game.

"This is an exciting time for the sport as we prepare for the LA28 Olympic Games and work to make cricket more inclusive and engaging for fans worldwide," Shah said.

"We are at a critical juncture with the coexistence of multiple formats and the need to accelerate the growth of the women's game.

"Cricket holds immense potential globally, and I look forward to working closely with the ICC team and Member countries to seize these opportunities and take the sport to new heights."

Shah acknowledged Barclay's contributions to the ICC over the last four years.

"I would also like to thank Greg Barclay for his leadership in the role for the past four years and the milestones achieved during that period," he said.



Barcelona loses at home for the first time this season

AP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona lost at home for the first time this season when the Liga leader was stunned by Las Palmas 2-1.

Sandro Ramirez and Fábio Silva scored for the Canary Islands club on either side of Raphinha's equaliser to give Las Palmas its first win at Barcelona in more than 50 years on Saturday.

Barcelona played superbly in the first three months under new coach Hansi Flick and was flying high after convincing victories over Real Madrid in the domestic competition and Bayern Munich in the Champions League. It had won all eight of its home games.

But it has gone three rounds of La Liga without a win. Before Las Palmas, it fell at Real Sociedad 1-0 and drew at Celta Vigo 2-2 after squandering a two-goal lead in the final minutes.

The dropped points mean Madrid, despite its own troubles, especially in the Champions League, can move ahead of Barcelona in La Liga. It trails Barcelona by four points with two games in

hand. "I don't care about scoring, I care about winning," Raphinha said after his standout performance was unable to end Barcelona's slump.

"We have to take a hard look at what we are doing wrong. We have slipped in our form and are letting games get away from us. We have our next game on Tuesday (at Mallorca), and we need to turn this around so we can win the league."

Atletico Madrid was only two points behind Barcelona in second place — and with the same number of games played — after Antoine Griezmann scored a gem of a goal in a 5-0 demolition of last-placed Valladolid.

History for Las Palmas Las Palmas savored its first victory at Barcelona since the 1971-72 season and just its third victory at the Catalan club overall. The other visits by the modest side that wears all yellow uniforms to Barcelona have ended in 34 defeats and three draws.

"We are thrilled because we have made history," Sandro said.

10-man Botafogo wins its first Copa Libertadores title

AP ■ BUENOS AIRES

Botafogo overcame playing with 10 men to win its first Copa Libertadores title after beating fellow Brazilian side Atletico Mineiro 3-1 in the final at Monumental de Nunez Stadium.

After just 30 seconds, midfielder Gregore, one of Botafogo's best players, hit the head of Fausto Vera with his foot and was given a straight red card on Saturday.

"It was so hard to have one less so early in a final. It was an unfortunate move," Botafogo defender Alexander Barboza said.

"But Gregore deserves this title as much as we do. We made history and that won't ever be erased."

Winger Luiz Henrique scored first in the 35th minute from close range, and was fouled for



the penalty shot converted by Alex Telles in the 44th. Eduardo Vargas headed Mineiro's only goal in the 46th while Junior Santos, the top scorer in the Copa Libertadores with 10 goals, capped Botafogo's historic night with the third in injury time.

Brazil was assured of a sixth consecutive Copa Libertadores title and its 24th in history, just one less than Argentina.

It was also the third straight title for Rio de Janeiro clubs, after Fluminense in 2023 and Flamengo in 2022.

Botafogo, the last of the four big Rio clubs to win the Copa Libertadores, earned prize money of \$23 million and a spot in the Club World Cup in the United States next year.

Despite sensationally losing Grezore, Botafogo reset and Luiz Henrique scored the opener. Henrique surged on the right flank and crossed to Marlon Freitas, who took a shot that was deflected. Henrique was in the right place to strike through the legs of goalkeeper Ederson.

Henrique and Ederson met again near the end of the first half when the striker surprised the keeper on the edge of the box. A penalty was given after a video review and left back Telles calmly slotted the ball home.

Mineiro came back with a more aggressive formation in the second half and was rewarded when veteran Hulk took a corner kick and Vargas, who replaced midfielder Gustavo Scarpa during the break, didn't even need to jump to score with his head.

World Chess Championship: Gukesh holds Liren with black pieces to remain level on points

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Indian challenger D Gukesh held defending champion Ding Liren of China to a draw with black pieces in an intense sixth game of the World Chess Championship to remain level on points here Sunday.

The third draw in a row left both players on an identical tally of 3 points apiece, still shy of 4.5 more points in order to win the championship.

The two players signed peace after 46 moves. It was the fourth draw of the match.

It remains to be seen what strategy the players would opt for as the match moves towards the half-way mark.

The 32-year-old Liren had won the opening game while the 18-year-old Gukesh had emerged victorious in the third game.

The second, fourth and fifth games had ended in draws.

With eight games still remaining in the 14-round match, the battle will resume after the second rest day on Monday. If the scores are tied after the eight games, there is an extra day for tie-break games of shorter duration to decide the next world champion.

Gukesh later said he did not feel any real danger during the sixth game.

"I knew this position till Rb8 (Black's 16th move) and even though I did not know (the next) I thought maybe I am slightly worse but it should be really hard to convert it with white because you cannot push the queen side pawns easily and I always have play on his king.

"I wasn't really that worried at any point," Gukesh said in the post-game conference.

Asked about the rationale behind his decision to avoid repetition early, Gukesh said, "May be I am slightly worse, although I was not even sure about it, but with open files I thought I will have counter play.

"I thought since he's going for a repetition I will just play for a few more moves and see, obviously it was not playing for a win or anything."

Liren seemed to be gaining in confidence with each passing game even though he was written-off by most of the top players in the world.

Playing with white pieces, Liren for once solved all his opening problems without much ado as he went for the super-solid London system with his third white in the match and blitzed out the first 20 moves, conceding a mere seven minutes on the clock.

In the process though, all the



Knights and Bishops had changed hands, leading to a Queen and Rook endgame with equal pawns. Liren explained the reason behind his choice of opening.

"In the last world championship match (against Russian Ian Nepomniachtchi), I had played the same opening and won a nice game, I wanted to repeat the opening," he said.

Gukesh used up a little over 50 minutes in the first part of the game, giving Liren a 45-minute lead on the clock for the first time in the match. However, on the 20th move, Gukesh chose a dynamic continuation that required deep calculation as well as superior judgement.

Liren thought for a long time, spending all his extra time, and

decided to draw the game via repetition of moves.

Gukesh, known for his tremendous fighting qualities, repeated the position twice and then much to the surprise of the global audience, spurned down the unconditional draw offer by not going for the three-fold repetition.

The computers gave more than a

slight advantage for white following Gukesh's decision but the nature of the position remained complicated enough for both sides to have counter play.

Liren had to regain his composure as he was expecting Gukesh to repeat and he decided not to be over-aggressive in the heavy-pieces endgame.

Gukesh eventually went for the trade of the Queens when he may have been slightly worse but Liren just took a draw exchanging off a crucial king rook pawn after which the Indian had no other way than to repeat the position.

According to English Grandmaster David Howell, the official commentator, "Ding missed his big opportunity with Queens on the board".

The Chinese was again pressing with Gukesh's refusal to draw early but it was indeed a great fight in the sixth game that lasted till move 46.

World Championship toughest event in chess: Gukesh

Asked to compare the world championship with other strong events, Gukesh said, "It's probably the toughest event in chess, obviously there is more at stake but other than that it's just a very interesting and long match against a very strong opponent,

and at the end of the day we are still playing chess.

"It has been good so far, I still can improve my play, there are a lot more games, considering I was trailing after the first game I am happy to be here, it is too early," Gukesh remarked when asked if he was satisfied with his play thus far.

When asked who among the past world champions were their inspiration, Liren named (Veselin) Topalov and (Magnus) Carlsen while Gukesh mentioned the names of Viswanathan Anand, (Bobby) Fischer and Carlsen.

The Moves: 1.D4 Nf6 2.Bf4 d5 3.E3 e6 4.Nf3 c5 5.C3 Bd6 6.Bb5+ Nc6 7.Bxc6+ bxc6 8.Bxd6 Qxd6 9.Qa4 0-0 10.Qa3 Ne4 11.Nfd2 e5 12.Nxe4 dxe4 13.Qxc5 Qg6 14.Nd2 Qxg2 15.0-0-0 Qxf2 16.Dxe5 Rb8 17.Nc4 Be6 18.Rd2 Qf3 19.Re1 Bxc4 20.Qxc4 Qf5 21.Qxc6 Qxe5 22.Qd5 Qe7 23.Qd6 Qe5 24.Qd5 Qe7 25.Qd6 Qg5 26.Qd5 Qh4 27.Red1 g6 28.Qe5 Rbe8 29.Qg3 Qh5 30.Qf4 Qa5 31.A3 Qb5 32.Rd4 Qe2 33.R1d2 Qf3 34.Kc2 Qxf4 35.Exf4 f5 36.H4 e3 37.Re2 Re7 38.Kd3 Rfe8 39.H5 gxh5 40.Rd5 h4 41.Rxf5 Rd7+ 42.Kc2 Kg7 43.Rg2+ Kh8 44.Re2 Kg7 45.Rg2+ Kh8 46.Re2 Kg7. Game drawn.