

CM Revanth Reddy holds the education portfolio himself but lacks any vision for the sector. This reflects poorly on his leadership. Atleast allocate Education Department to Kodandaram.

If everything is fine in Gurukulas, why is the government blocking our study teams? What are they trying to hide?

- Jagadish Reddy, BRS MLA

P2



Rahul indulging in fear-mongering: **BJP**



**GOYAL CALLS** FOR SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION PATTERN



Chandrika Ravi embodies the sizzling spirit of **SILK SMITHA**

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**DON'T MISS...**

Sumps planned at 141 waterlogging points

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy inspected the ongoing construction of a rainwater sump near Lake View Guest House as part of the government's flood mitigation efforts. During the review, the CM provided several directives to officials, emphasising the need for comprehensive solutions to prevent urban flooding and reduce traffic disruptions caused by waterlogging. Highlighting the issue ...

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**Delhi's air quality improves**

Delhi has received a respite from toxic air in the first two days of December as the city's AQI remained in the 'poor' category on Monday, recording a reading of 280. The 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) of the city was recorded at 280 at 4 pm, registering a slight improvement from 285 on Sunday. The air quality shifted from 'poor' to 'very poor' on October 30, after which it intermittently remained ...

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**Centre reviewing India-US trade ties**

The commerce ministry is reviewing various aspects of India-US trade relations focusing on implications of statements made by US President-elect Donald Trump during his election campaign and after the results, an official said. The official added that there are no irritants in the relations between the two countries that can lead to discriminatory tariffs against India. Trump, during his election campaign, has called India ...

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**We have found the right mix: Hardik**

Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya has expressed his delight at the way things panned out for them in the IPL mega auction in Jeddah and said the franchise has "found the right mix" of players. The star all-rounder said they had a clear plan of having a blend of youth and experienced players. "I was in touch with the table as well, exactly who we are going for, and I think we came out pretty well from the auction and how the team is looking," he said in an MI video posted on ...

-SPORTS

**CM heralds Arogya Telangana**

- ❖ Launches multiple initiatives
- ❖ Inaugurates 16 nursing, 28 govt affiliated colleges
- ❖ Elaborates achievements in one year of rule

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy flagged off 213 newly procured ambulances. He also took part in the Arogya Utsav programme and launched healthcare programmes for Telangana. The CM will virtually inaugurate 16 nursing colleges, 28 government-affiliated healthcare colleges and 32 transgender clinics. The Chief Minister, along with Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha

handed over appointment letters to 442 Civil Assistant Surgeons and 24 Food Safety Officers under the Medical, Health, and Family Welfare Department. Speaking on the occasion Chief Minister Revanth Reddy said, "Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha has been efficiently leading the Medical and Health Department. In a year, 14,000 posts were filled in the health department, including appointments of 7,750 paramedical staff."



Chief Minister Revanth Reddy with Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha during the launch of new programmes under Arogya Utsav

Telangana youth played a crucial role in the statehood movement to demand employment and opportunities. We made history by filling 50,000 posts in a single year, an achievement unmatched in India's 75-year history, he said. Despite obstacles, DSC exams

were conducted, and appointment letters were issued to 55 candidates within 55 days, he said. Group-1 exams, which were not conducted for 13 years, were held by the TGSP-SC, he added. 563 Group-1 officers will soon get appointment letters and will join

Continued on Page 2



Chief Minister Revanth Reddy inaugurating a nursing college

**HM throws light on future plans for health**

Health Minister Damodar Rajanarasimha has thrown light on future plans for the Health department in Telangana. Speaking with the media at the Secretariat after the Arogya Utsav, Minister Raja Narasimha has highlighted, "The 213 new ambulances, expanding the State's ambulance

from 790 to 1,003 are not enough and we have plans for 80 more ambulances which will be inaugurated in Telangana as the Health department is on the duty to reduce the 20 to 18 minutes to 10 minutes and improve golden hour emergency treatment for accident cases and the foundation stone for Osmania General Hospital will be laid with Rs 2000 crore in a month. This facility

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Continued on Page 2

**Petitions flood SC panel**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The single-member commission appointed to study the sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes (SCs) witnessed a flood of petitions on Monday. Led by retired High Court Judge Dr Justice Shameem Akhtar, the commission has been functioning from the Burgula Ramakrishna Rao Bhavan in Hyderabad since November 11, focusing on examining the socio-economic status and needs of the 59 sub-castes within the SC community. Representatives, leaders and individuals from various SC sub-castes

have been meeting the commission daily from 10:30 am to 5 pm, submitting written pleas regarding their caste's backwardness and challenges in accessing educational and employment opportunities. Today, over 100 representatives of sub-castes like Mala, Madiga and minority groups like Madiga Kurava, Kolupula, Mala Jangam, Chindu, Beda/Budaga Jangam, Bindla, Mang, Arundhatiya and Mithaiyallwar met Justice Shameem Akhtar. They shared their experiences of marginalisation, emphasizing the systemic injustices they face in securing benefits under the reservation system.

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**TG, AP agree on three key issues**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Chief Secretaries of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana held a crucial meeting in Amaravati to address long-pending issues stemming from bifurcation. The committee of high-ranking officials, led by the Chief Secretaries of both states, deliberated

Chief Secys discuss pending bifurcation issues

for two hours and reached agreements on three key issues, while other matters remain unresolved.

One of the main discussions revolved around electricity dues. However, the deliberations on this issue did not yield a clear resolution. On a positive note, both states agreed to address the labour cess issue and decided to remit Rs 861 crore between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

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**'Many firsts in one year of Cong rule'**

Uttam says govt set new records in welfare, development

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister Capt. N Uttam Kumar Reddy outlined the achievements of the Congress Government on Monday on the first anniversary of its rule in Telangana. He described the year as historic, with the government setting numerous records that reflected its commitment to inclusive growth, sustainable development and efficient governance.

Uttam was addressing the media after inaugurating development projects in the Kodad constituency of Suryapet district. Accompanied by Kodad MLA Uttam Padmavathi Reddy, he laid foundation stones for road works and other projects. He said the Congress government implemented the highest-ever farm loan waiver in Independent India, filled the largest number of vacancies in government service in any state, provided the highest bonus for fine rice to farmers and achieved the highest paddy production since 1947. He said the government reclaimed lakes by halting encroachments for the first time in 40 years and is launching a project to clean the Musi River after over five decades of neglect. Hyderabad became the first Indian city to undertake a complete structural overhaul to address climate challenges, ensuring sustainable

Continued on Page 2

**Sindhu set to tie the knot on December 22**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Two-time Olympic medalist shuttler PV Sindhu will tie the knot on December 22 in Udaipur. The former world champion, who ended a long title drought with victory at the Syed Modi International in Lucknow on Sunday, will marry Hyderabad-based Venkata Datta Sai, who is an executive director at Posidex Technologies. "The two families knew each other but it was only a month ago that everything was finalised. This was the only possible window as her schedule will be hectic from January," Sindhu's father, PV Ramana, told PTI. "So that is the reason the two families decided to have the marriage ceremony on December 22. The reception will be held in Hyderabad on December 24."



2

**IT Dept collects Rs 59,000 crore from AP & TG**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

"The Income Tax collection target for Telangana & Andhra Pradesh during the current fiscal is Rs 1,21,000 crore. We have already collected Rs 59,000 crore and we hope to achieve the target, said Mitali Madusmita, the Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax of AP and Telangana. The growth of tax collection compared to last year is 15%. Telangana is showing a good growth rate, however, that is not the case with Andhra Pradesh. Last year Telangana posted 22% growth, the officer added while interacting with the media. Around Rs 2 lakh crore is pending as tax in both states put together and is under dispute, she said. Mitali was speaking at an interactive meeting on 'Faceless Assessment under Income Tax and Vivad-Set-



The growth of tax collection compared to last year is 15%. Telangana is showing a good growth rate, however, that is not the case with Andhra Pradesh. Last year Telangana posted 22% growth, the officer added while interacting with the media

Vishwas Scheme' on Monday organised by the Federation of Telangana Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FTCCI). The Direct Taxes

Committee of FTCCI organised the interactive programme. India has the most progressive tax regime in the world, she said. The motto of the Income Tax department under the Union Ministry of Finance is voluntary compliance and it aims to facilitate business, she added. Our duty is to collect more tax for the government. Speaking about the Faceless Income Tax Assessment, Mitali said that Faceless Assessment is a system in which Income Tax assessments are conducted electronically without any direct interaction between the taxpayer and the assessing officer and is here to stay. It is irreversible and there is no going back. The scheme which was introduced in 2019 to impart efficiency, transparency and accountability to the assessment process by inter alia eliminating the interface between the Assessing

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**Will make TG a palm oil cultivation hub: Tummala**

Says even software engineers are likely to switch over

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageshwara Rao said that even software engineers are likely to switch over to lucrative palm oil cultivation. My aim is to make Telangana the hub of oil palm cultivation in India, he added. Addressing the media here on Monday, Tummala said that his dream is to make farmers kings through the cultivation of oil palms. "Oil palm is a crop that will provide farm-

ers a sure source of income and it would not cause losses to them. The prices of oil palms have increased substantially in the last one year. Now the price of oil palm bunches have touched Rs 20,413 a ton," he said. He said that increasing import duties will benefit domestic oil palm farmers. "We are preparing a plan to launch oil palm cultivation on one lakh acres a year," he said. The Minister said that farmers stand to gain through the cultivation of



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**No poison used in Mulugu encounter: DGP**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Director General of Police, Dr Jitender, strongly refuted allegations by the Telangana Civil Rights Society that toxic substances were used during the Mulugu district encounter to incapacitate individuals before the encounter. Describing it as baseless propaganda, he said the allegations were false. Giving details, Dr Jitender said that before the encounter, two tribal men, Uyika Ramesh and Uyika Arjun, were murdered by Maoists due to suspicion that they were police informers.



2



# Govt launches steps to develop Telangana temples

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Government is trying to strengthen the bond between worshippers and temples and uphold age-old traditions. Focusing on reviving cultural heritage and ensuring modern facilities, the government is spearheading projects

to develop temples. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy reiterated his commitment to preserving the sanctity of rituals stating, "Our goal is to honour the customs and traditions of our temples and enhance facilities for worshippers." The iconic Yadagirigutta Temple has been transformed and its tradi-

tional identity has been restored. After reverting to the name 'Yadagirigutta', from 'Yadadri' the government launched programmes for devotees. The construction of dormitories for devotees staying overnight on the hill is underway. The government has also reintroduced auto-rick access to the hill.

Facilities like shaded queue lines, lactation rooms for mothers, additional toilets, LCD screens for live darshan and German hangars for shelter during summers have been provided. The gold plating of the temple's vimana gopuram using 60 kg gold costing Rs 8 crore is nearing completion and will be ready by the time of Brahmotsavams.

Known as Dakshina Kashi, the Vemulawada Temple is receiving special attention from the government. This includes expanding the temple complex, improving roads and drainage and constructing shelters for cattle offered as part of the temple's rituals. Funds amounting to Rs 127.65 crore have been sanctioned for these projects.

The Bhadrachalam Temple is also undergoing a massive upgrade. The government has sanctioned Rs 180 crore for its development, including flood protection measures like the construction of retaining walls along the Godavari River.

Similarly, the Medaram Sannakka-Saralamma Jatara, often referred to as Telangana's Kumbh Mela, has received a massive allotment of Rs 110 crore. The government has also launched steps to reclaim encroached temple lands. Notable recoveries are 16 acres belonging to the Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple in Vikarabad and 26 acres of prime property in Rangareddy.

## Biggest waiver of farm loans, record paddy harvest mark govt's first year

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Government led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy released its list of achievements in its first year, which includes achieving milestones across sectors and setting several national and state records.

with a relief of Rs 21,000 crore. The state also achieved the highest paddy production since 1947 and introduced the most generous fine rice bonus for farmers.

"Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's tireless 18-hour workdays have driven these achievements, showcasing an unwavering commitment to making Telangana the 'Future State.'" Balancing welfare with fiscal prudence, the government has begun rebuilding a state burdened by a debt of Rs 7,00,000 crore inherited from its predecessor, officials said.

Over 50,000 vacancies in government service were filled, the highest by any state in India in a single year.

The administration's initiatives have positioned Telangana as a model state, blending welfare and development with visionary policies. Telangana recorded the largest waiver of farm loans in independent India, benefitting farmers

Encroachments on lakes were completely stopped after four decades, and the rejuvenation of the Musi River was initiated after 50 years of neglect.

Hyderabad became the first Indian city to undergo a comprehensive structural overhaul to address climate crisis challenges, ensuring sustainable growth for the next five decades.

## Police allowed to quiz Suresh Raj in Collector attack case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Kondangal court granted police custody of Suresh Raj, the second accused (A2) in the Lagacharla incident in Vikarabad district, where a violent attack was carried out on the Collector and other officials. The court permitted two days of interrogation and the police will question Suresh Raj on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Suresh Raj, who surrendered before the Kondangal court on November 19 is alleged to have played the pivotal role in provoking the attack during the Dudyal Gram Sabha on November 11. The attack started as the Collector's team was at the village for an official visit. It is believed that Suresh Raj incited local people leading to the incident.

The case also involves former Bharasa MLA Patnam Narendra Reddy, who has been charged and arrested as the main accused. Suresh Raj's surrender speeded up the investigation, as the police tried to uncover details about the events leading to the attack.

The incident sparked widespread condemnation, with officials demanding swift justice and measures to ensure the safety of government representatives during field visits.

## KCR not a sapling but a blazing comet: Kavitha

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLC Kavitha, criticised the Congress Government for hounding BRS activists with politically motivated cases.

Responding to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's remarks referring to KCR as a "sapling," Kavitha replied, "KCR is no sapling to be uprooted. He is a blazing comet. He fought and achieved Telangana, leaving even his critics in awe."

She also expressed disappointment with the Modi government for imposing GST on handlooms calling it a "tragic move against India's heritage."

Kavitha accused the Congress's TG government of suppressing voices critical of its governance.

"When the BRS was in power, Congress leaders criticised us freely, but we never resorted to social harassment. Now, even speaking the truth on social media results in cases against our workers," she said.

She highlighted the establishment of a legal team by the BRS to fight back against false cases filed against its workers. "Harassment of BRS workers won't be tolerated. We stood strong during the Telangana Movement, and we'll stand strong now," she declared. Kavitha urged BRS workers to prepare for the upcoming local body elections,



advising them to expose the Congress government's failures and broken promises. "In tough times, those who stand with the party prove to be its true strength," she emphasised.

## No poison used ...

Continued from page 1

The incident underscored the severity of Maoist violence in the region leading to intensified patrolling by the police.

During the encounter, Maoists reportedly opened fire on the patrolling team using advanced weapons. The exchange resulted in the deaths of seven armed Maoists. Dr Jitender said

that postmortem exams of the deceased are being conducted as per the guidelines issued by the High Court and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

He also said that a Deputy Superintendent of Police from another district has been appointed as the investigating officer to ensure impartiality in the inquiry.

## 'Many firsts ...

Continued from page 1

growth for the next 50 years, he said. Uttam also said that the Congress Government laid the foundation to establish India's first comprehensive, industry-led skill university and South India's largest sports university.

He said lakhs of women benefited from schemes that saved them nearly Rs 10,000 monthly, including free bus services, subsidised Rs 500 LPG cylinders, and free electricity for households consuming less than 200 units a month. In a major transportation initiative, around 3,000 electric buses would replace petrol and diesel buses in Hyderabad. Farmers were provided free 24x7 electricity, he said.

"The Congress Government met Hyderabad's drinking water needs by supplying water from the Godavari and began finalising a master plan for a Future City to complement Hyderabad, Secunderabad and Cyberabad. Budgets for food and personal care in residential schools were increased after a decade of neglect. Loans and entrepreneurial support for women self-help groups aimed to create one crore 'Mahila Kotisaruluru.' A comprehensive caste survey was conducted to review and improve policy allocations, while residential schools for Dalits, tribals, OBCs and minorities were integrated with world-class facilities," he said.

Uttam said the controversial Dharani Portal was handed over to the National Informatics Centre for a complete overhaul.

## Cabinet expansion in new year?

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy had said the Cabinet would be expanded after the Maharashtra elections. However, there seems to be no move now regarding Cabinet expansion.

Indications are that the Cabinet may be expanded during New Year 2025. According to sources, the Congress high command is not concentrating on expanding the Telangana Cabinet.

The Congress high command, which is upset with the loss in Maharashtra, is now concentrating on Parliament's winter session. So it may take time to expand the TG cabinet, a Congress leader told 'The Pioneer'

on condition of anonymity. However, he said that anything can happen as decision-making is in the hands of the high command.

According to sources, the Telangana government is in favour of expanding the Cabinet. However, the high command has to take a final decision. TPCC chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud said that cabinet expansion is in the hands of the high command and the Chief Minister.

Political observers had expected that the Assembly's winter session may see the full Cabinet after the statement of the Chief Minister that it will take place after the Maharashtra elections.

## Allot education ministry to Kodandaram: Jagadish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS demanded that the government allot education portfolio to Professor Kodandaram Reddy. BRS MLA Jagadish Reddy criticised the government for neglecting key departments, particularly the absence of a dedicated education minister. "Revanth Reddy holds the education portfolio himself but lacks any vision for the sector. This reflects poorly on his leadership. At least allocate education department to Kodandaram," he remarked.

Former minister Jagadish Reddy, former MLA Balka Suman, and BRS Vidhyarthi president Gellu Srinivas Yadav sharply criticized the Congress government, accusing it of failing to govern effectively in its first year. Jagadish Reddy lambasted the Congress administration for allegedly using police as a tool for governance, stating, "Revanth Reddy's government has

shown its incapability within just one year. Governance is limited to police interventions, and they are blocking even our educational visits."

The leaders expressed concern over the condition of Gurukula schools under the Congress government. Jagadish Reddy pointed out, "During KCR's tenure, under RS Praveen Kumar's leadership, Gurukul flourished. Students scaled Mount Everest and Kilimanjaro. But now, the Revanth-led government is systematically destroying this legacy." The leaders questioned the government's motives behind obstructing BRS Vidhyarthi teams from visiting the schools. "If everything is fine in Gurukulas, why is the government blocking our study teams? What are they trying to hide?" asked Jagadish Reddy.

Highlighting administrative failures, Jagadish Reddy said, "The Congress government is incapable of addressing core issues.

## Harish lashes out at CM's 'double standards'



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLA Harish Rao criticised Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and accused him of practising "double standards" on critical issues like social welfare schemes and governance.

Addressing a press conference at the Telangana Bhavan, Harish said that Revanth's inconsistent statements and policies highlight his lack of commitment and clarity in leadership. He likened Revanth to a "double-tongued leader," stating, "A two-headed snake might frighten us, but it's harmless. However, a double-tongued person like Revanth is dangerous to both people and governance."

He accused Revanth of making contradictory promises and decisions,

shifting his stance overnight on key issues, and misleading the public. Harish accused Revanth of halting Rythu Bandhu payments to farmers despite promising to extend benefits. "KCR ensured consistent payments, disbursing Rs 82,000 crore in 11 instalments. Revanth's government, however, has betrayed farmers by freezing the scheme," he said.

## Revanth must explain what he did during TG stir: BJP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Demanding to know what the Congress Government had achieved by conducting Praja Palana celebrations, the BJP asked Chief Minister Revanth Reddy who had said that the BRS Government left debts, to explain why the government had been spending crores for the celebrations.

Speaking to the media at the State BJP office here on Monday, Telangana BJP General Secretary Kasam Venkateswarlu asked the Chief Minister to explain what his role was in the Telangana Movement.

"Did you ever chant 'Jai Telangana' during the Telangana Movement," he asked and pointed out that Revanth had once attacked Telangana activists with a gun. "Telangana hated Revanth during the Telangana Movement. Revanth has no moral right to speak about Telangana. Revanth became the Chief Minister through sheer luck. However, Kishan took part in the Telangana Movement, created awareness among the people and went to jail several times. The CM must come for a debate on this if he has the guts," Venkateswarlu said.

## Sindhu set ...

Continued from page 1  
She will start her training soon after as the next season is going to be important."

The wedding-related events will begin on December 20. Sindhu is regarded as one of India's greatest athletes with five world championship medals, including a gold in 2019, besides her silver and bronze at the Olympic Games.

The champion badminton player won back-to-back Olympic medals at Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020, and achieved a career-high world ranking of No. 2 in 2017

## CM heralds ...

Continued from page 1  
TG government service, the CM said. The government appointed Burra Venkatesam as the TGSPSC Chairman, moving away from the policy of making politically determined appointments by previous administrations.

The Arogyasri scheme's limit has been increased to ₹10 lakh. Over ₹835 crore have been distributed through the Chief Minister's Relief Fund in a year setting a record.

## IT Dept collects ...

Continued from page 1  
Officer and the assessee is now five years old and is going well. The response of assesses to our notices is not very satisfactory. She urged people to cooperate with the Income Tax Department and respond to notices issued by the department seeking more information.

Unfortunately, the response to Vivad se Vishwas and the Dispute Resolution Committee ('DRC') is lukewarm. We anticipated getting inundated with cases, but, unfortunately, that has not hap-

pened. Shruvan Kumar Gotru, the Principal Commissioner of Income Tax (Review Unit-I), urged people to use the opportunity.

The Direct Tax Vivad se Vishwas Rules, 2024, aim to streamline the resolution of direct tax disputes, ensuring an amicable closure of long-pending litigations. These rules, in continuation of the government's initiative through the Vivad se Vishwas

Scheme, provide taxpayers with a straightforward mechanism to settle disputes by paying specified amounts.

The DRC is a committee constituted by the Centre as per provisions of the Income-tax Act to resolve tax disputes. Under this scheme, taxpayers meeting specific criteria outlined in the relevant section of the Act can electronically submit an application to the designated DRC of the region overseen by the Principal Chief Commissioner of Income-tax with jurisdiction over the taxpayer, he added.

**TODAY**  
**ALMANAC**  
Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha  
Tithi: Dec 02 12:43 PM to Dec 03 01:09 PM  
Dvitiya: Dec 03 01:09 PM to Dec 03 01:09 PM  
Tritiya: Dec 03 01:09 PM to Dec 04 01:10 PM  
Nakshatram: Moola: Dec 02 03:45 PM to Dec 03 04:41 PM  
Purva Ashadha: Dec 03 04:41 PM to Dec 04 05:14 PM  
Rahukalam: 2:51 PM to 4:14 PM  
Yamagandam: 9:20 AM to 10:43 AM  
Varjyam: 02:31 AM to 04:09 AM  
Gulika: 12:06 PM to 1:28 PM  
Amritakalam: 10:07 AM to 11:47 AM  
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:44 AM to 12:28 PM  
**HYDERABAD WEATHER**  
Forecast: Partly Cloudy  
Temp: 28°  
Humidity: 78%  
Sunrise: 6:31 AM  
Sunset: 5:40 PM  
Updated: December 2, 2024 5:00 PM



# City Pioneer

the pioneer

HYDERABAD | TUESDAY | DECEMBER 3, 2024

03



## CITY EVENTS

### Musical Orchestra

By JanaPriya Fine Arts

#### Venue

Sri Thyagaraja Gana Sabha, Behind Sudha Hotel, Ashok Nagar, Chikkadpally, Hyderabad: December 3, 9:00 am.

### Live Performance

By Moksha (Band)

#### Venue

LoKo Rooftop Bistro and Bar, 5TH FLOOR, 642, Rd Number 36, Aditya Enclave, CBI Colony, Jubilee Hills December 3, 8:00 pm

### Workshop On Kalari Payattu

Our Sacred Space

#### Venue

9-1-84/1/C, Sardar Patel Road, Marredpally, December 3, 6:30 am to 7:30 am.

### Lulu Beauty Fest 2024

LuLu Mall (Hyderabad)

#### Venue

Survey No. 1050, Balanagar Mandal, Rd Number 3, Kukatpally Housing Board Colony, Kukatpally, Hyderabad December 3, 10:30 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

## Degrees conferred to 100 UG students at Apollo Medical College

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Apollo Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (AIMSR) celebrated the convocation ceremony for its 2018 under-graduate batch at the RNR Auditorium, Jubilee Hills. The ceremony, graced by Dr D Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman and Founder of the Asian Institute of Gastroenterology, saw 100 students receive their medical degrees.

Dr Nageshwar Reddy, a Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan awardee, addressed the graduating students, urging them to embrace life-long learning and pursue their careers with passion and humility. He emphasised the importance of combining science, art, and empathy to become great doctors, while also highlighting the transformative potential of emerging technologies in healthcare.

The event also recognised Siddhant Barnecha as the recipient of the prestigious Dr Pratap C Reddy's Gold Medal for the best outgoing student. The medal was awarded in honor of the late Dr KVR Prasad, a renowned physician.

## STEADY GROWTH IN REAL ESTATE SECTOR

# Hyd sees modest rise in housing prices

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad continues to showcase steady growth in the real estate sector, contributing significantly to the national momentum highlighted in the Housing Price-Tracker Report Q3 2024 by CREDAI, Colliers, and Lias Foras.

While average housing prices in Hyderabad rose modestly by 3% year-on-year to Rs 11,351 per square foot, the city maintained a balanced trajectory amidst India's broader trends of rising property values. Hyderabad recorded a slight dip in unsold inventory levels on a quarterly basis, despite a 28% increase year-on-year. This indicates robust demand, coupled with developers recalibrating their strategies to cater to specific market segments.

The city's unsold inventory aligns with the national trend of cautious new launches, reflecting the evolving preferences of homebuyers. Across the top eight cities in India, housing prices rose

- The city maintained a balanced trajectory amidst broader trends of rising property values
- Hyderabad recorded a slight dip in unsold inventory levels on a quarterly basis
- The city market remains attractive for end-users and investors



by 11% year-on-year during Q3 2024, marking the 15th consecutive quarter of price increases since 2021. Delhi NCR led the price surge with a 32% annual growth, followed by Bengaluru at 24%. Nationwide, unsold inventory declined for the third straight quarter, driven by healthy absorption rates in cities like Pune, Chennai and Kolkata. While cities like Delhi NCR and Bengaluru saw dramatic growth due to marquee luxury projects, Hyderabad has sustained its growth through consistent demand in both mid-range and premium segments. Experts from CREDAI emphasised Hyderabad's balanced real estate market, driven by its strong infrastructure and investor-friendly policies.

Hyderabad's market, though reaching a plateau in some areas, remains attractive for end-users and investors due to its quality of life and planned urban development initiatives. As Hyderabad's real estate sector matures, the focus on sustainable growth and addressing unsold inventory challenges will be key to maintaining its appeal.

## Rainwater sumps at 141 waterlogging points: CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy inspected the ongoing construction of a rainwater sump near Lake View Guest House as part of the government's flood mitigation efforts. During the review, the CM provided several directives to officials, emphasising the need for comprehensive solutions to prevent urban flooding and reduce traffic disruptions caused by waterlogging. Highlighting the issue of waterlogging across Hyderabad, the Chief Minister instructed the construction of rainwater sumps at all 141 identified waterlogging points. This initiative aims to mitigate flooding risks and improve urban resilience against heavy rainfall.

CM Revanth suggested that diverting floodwater along roads could significantly alleviate traffic congestion during heavy rains. He stressed the importance of completing all ongoing works across the city before the onset of the next monsoon season. Additionally, the CM recommended redesigning the rainwater sumps to enhance their efficiency and utility. The review meeting was attended by Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar, Khairatabad MLA Danam Nagender, Municipal Administration Principal Secretary Dana Kishore, GHMC Commissioner Ilambarthi, and the CM's Special Secretary Ajit Reddy.



Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy inspecting the ongoing construction of a rainwater sump near Lake View Guest House on Hyderabad on Monday

## CM to launch key H-CITI projects today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy is set to inaugurate a series of developmental projects under the H-CITI initiative at a programme scheduled for 3:00 pm on December 3 at the HMDA grounds near Prasad IMAX. The projects include transformative works aimed at enhancing Hyderabad's urban infrastructure and sustainability.

Key among the initiatives are road infrastructure projects with a substantial allocation of Rs 3,500 crore. These projects are expected to improve connectivity and alleviate traffic congestion across the city. Additionally, 12 rainwater holding structures, sanctioned at a

cost of Rs 16.50 crore, will be unveiled to address urban flooding and enhance water management.

As part of efforts to beautify the city, the CM will also inaugurate 283 junction beautification works, undertaken at a cost of Rs 150 crore. These beautification projects aim to transform urban spaces into aesthetic and functional zones.

The H-CITI projects represent the government's commitment to urban modernisation, aligning with the vision of making Hyderabad a global city. Officials and civic leaders are optimistic about the transformative impact these initiatives will have on the city's infrastructure and overall livability.

## Young Bharati's services lauded

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In the vast expanse of Telugu literature, Young Bharati shines like a glowing lamp and a pole star, said Veeranari Chakali Ailamma University Vice-Chancellor Acharya Surya Dhanunjaya. She mentioned that Young Bharati is making significant efforts in promoting Telugu language and literature. She spoke as the chief guest at the second event of the Telugu Velugu Samakhya, which was held at the campus of IIMC College in the city, organised jointly by Young Bharati, Rasamai organisation and IIMC College.

During the event, Acharya Vangapalli Vishwanatham, the founder of Young Bharati, presided over the function. On



Veeranari Chakali Ailamma University Vice-Chancellor Acharya Surya Dhanunjaya speaking at Telugu Velugu Samakhya meeting

this occasion, Acharya Surya Dhanunjaya unveiled the brochure of the Telugu Velugu Samakhya programmes. As a student of Telugu literature, she shared her close experi-

ence with Young Bharati and praised the organisation for publishing outstanding books, with Mahanti being one of the most remarkable among them.

## FROM SLUM TO DIPLOMACY

# Jayalaxmi stresses need to appoint counsellors in educational institutions

DEEPIKA PASHAM  
deepikapasham2015@gmail.com  
■ HYDERABAD

Twenty-year-old Jayalaxmi Aripina, who took charge as Deputy High Commissioner for a day on November 25, hails from the slums of Singareni Colony in Champapet. She has called for significant reforms in the sanitation department of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), particularly addressing the issue of children working in dump yards. Jayalaxmi also emphasised the urgent need for appointing counsellors in educational institutions across Telangana.

Speaking to the media on Monday, Jayalaxmi revealed that she had been applying for the Deputy High Commissioner role for the last three years and was finally selected this year. During her one-day tenure, she expe-



Jayalaxmi, along with Gareth Wynn Owen, British Deputy High Commissioner to Telangana and Andhra Pradesh

rienced the responsibilities of a bureaucrat, which included interacting with officials and participating in various programmes. A graduate student at St Francis Degree College for Women in Begumpet, Jayalaxmi migrated from Rayalaseema, Andhra Pradesh, to Singareni Colony 17 years ago. Both her parents work as garbage pickers for the GHMC.

"There were days when I had to miss school to work as a garbage collector. I have become skilled at waste segregation, but this is not just my story - it is the reality for 6,500 families in my slum," Jayalaxmi said. Through her involvement in the Children's Parliament, she has engaged with the GHMC officials to raise awareness about preventing child labour in dump

yards and vows to continue fighting for this cause. She also highlighted the lack of counsellors in educational institutions and the need to ensure the safety of girls, especially in slum areas.

"Taking my story as an example, I want to highlight how hard it is for certain sections of society to fight for the Right to Education. My parents are garbage collectors, and I have had to fight for my education. My college provided me with concessions, but convincing my family and pursuing education is a struggle. Institutions must provide adequate facilities, including permanent counsellors, to support students," she explained.

Jayalaxmi urged the State government to launch awareness campaigns in slums to ensure the safety of girl children and address the increasing incidents of crime in these areas.

## CM's Cup 2024 to begin from Dec 7

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The CM's Cup 2024 sports festival is set to take place from December 7 to January 2, with competitions spanning from the gram panchayat level to the State level. The event will feature 36 sports disciplines, aiming to foster a vibrant sports culture and identify talent across Telangana. In alignment with Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's vision to establish Telangana as the top sports State, the Telangana State Sports Authority is making extensive arrangements for the event. Athletes are encouraged to register online at <http://cmcup2024.telangana.gov.in/>

by December 7-8 to participate in the competitions. The CM's Cup will feature competitions at four levels: Gram Panchayat Level - December 7-8, Mandal/Municipality Level: December 10-12, District Level: December 16-21, State Level: December 27 to January 2, 2025

Athletes will compete in sub-junior, junior and senior categories. Notably, para-athletes have also been included to ensure inclusivity and community participation. The State-level events will be held at seven locations across Telangana, including Hyderabad, Karimnagar, Hanamkonda, Warangal, Khammam, Medak and Mahabubnagar.

## Hyd aims for 100% sewage treatment coverage

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) has set an ambitious target to achieve 100% sewage treatment coverage in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) area by December 2025.

This major initiative is part of a Rs 3,866-crore project sanctioned by the Telangana government to enhance urban sanitation and prevent untreated sewage from polluting local water bodies.

As of now, six new Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) have been inaugurated with a combined capacity of 527 Million Liters per Day (MLD). These plants, equipped with advanced Sequential Batch Reactor (SBR) technology, are located at Nagole, Fathenagar, Miralam-I, Khajakunta, Miyapur-Patelcheruvu, and Safilguda. They cater to several high-density areas of



Hyderabad, significantly improving sanitation and urban hygiene.

With these STPs operational, the total capacity of sewage treatment in the city has reached 1,338 MLD. However, 10 additional STPs with a combined capacity of 453 MLD are currently under construction and scheduled for completion by December 2024. Once completed, Hyderabad will

have a total sewage treatment capacity of 1,791 MLD, ensuring comprehensive coverage for its growing urban population. The entire project aligns with the National Green Tribunal's (NGT) directive to bridge gaps in sewage management and prevent untreated wastewater from entering the Musi River. Officials have highlighted that these efforts will also help maintain hydrological balance by discharging treated wastewater into water bodies, boosting environmental sustainability.

In addition to these STPs, the HMWSSB is working on a massive sewer network improvement project. This initiative involves laying 2,656 kilometers of new sewer lines across the GHMC area at an estimated cost of Rs. 6,677 crore. The expanded network will integrate more neighborhoods into the city's sanitation system, meeting the needs of Hyderabad's rapidly expanding population.

## St Joseph's College starts Cyber Security Cell

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a significant step toward bolstering digital safety, St Joseph's Degree and PG College, King Koti, Hyderabad, inaugurated its Cyber Security Cell, 'Digital Care Hub', on Monday. The event, organised in collaboration with the Hyderabad City Police and Hyderabad City Security Council (HCSC), was held to mark World Computer Literacy Day. The initiative aims to create awareness about cyber threats, promote safety practices and equip students with the skills needed to address digital challenges effectively.

The event began with a welcome address by M Kiran Jyothi, Head of the Department of Computer Science, who outlined the vision behind the establishment of the 'Digital Care Hub.' She highlighted the increasing importance of cybersecurity in educational institutions and emphasised the hub's role in fostering a digitally safe campus environment. The launch comes at a time when cyber threats are on the rise, necessitating proactive measures to safeguard individuals and communities.

Fr. Anthony Sagayaraja, Principal of St. Joseph's College, delivered the

keynote address, underscoring the importance of equipping students and faculty with the tools to navigate the digital world safely.

A highlight of the event was the unveiling of the 'Digital Care Hub' logo by D Kavitha, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Cyber Crimes), Hyderabad. In her address, she shared real-life examples of cyber-crimes, including phishing, financial fraud, and online delivery scams, while providing practical tips on digital safety. She stressed the importance of strong passwords, caution in sharing personal information, and vigilance against fraudulent schemes.



## NIMS hosts Cancer NEXT meet with oncology experts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) hosted Cancer NEXT 2024, a conference that brought together India's foremost oncology experts, researchers and healthcare innovators, under the leadership of Prof Bheerappa Nagari, Director of NIMS.

The conference showcased the institution's commitment to advancing cancer research and treatment in India. The event featured groundbreaking research presentations from NIMS's departments, including significant contributions from Prof Vijay Kumar Kutala's biochemistry team and Prof Sadashivudu G's medical oncology unit.

"Our institution's collaborative approach was evident in the diverse range of topics covered, from molecular pathways to advanced diagnostics," said Prof Bheerappa Nagari.

The conference recognised excellence in research through generous cash awards with a total of Rs 5 lakh sponsored by Rajender Chandak, Rajesh Maggu and Virupaksha.

These awards celebrated outstanding contributions from both established researchers and emerging talents, particularly highlighting the work of students and early-career scientists presenting among the 50 research posters.



## C-Section deliveries rising at an alarming rate

PNS ■ BHUPALAPALLY

Despite repeated advisories from the state government to promote normal deliveries, private hospitals have continued to favor C-section deliveries, fully aware of the long-term health risks they pose to women. Recent data reveals that 78 per cent of deliveries in private hospitals over the past seven months have been C-sections, it is alleged.

In contrast, government hospitals report that 54.64 per cent of deliveries are normal, with 45.35 per cent performed via C-section. The higher authorities have repeatedly instructed both private and public medical officers to encourage women to opt for normal deliveries, but the response has been largely ineffective.

The private hospital managements have shown little regard for the government's



directives, which emphasise that C-sections should only be performed under medical-ly unavoidable circumstances. Instead, many private hospitals continue to priori-

tise C-sections, often driven by financial motives, without regard for the potential complications they may cause for mothers, it is alleged.

C-sections can lead to a range of serious health issues for women, including prolonged recovery times, surgical wound complications, excessive blood loss, and an increased risk of womb infections. These complications underscore the need for stricter enforcement of government regulations.

Dr Madhusudhan, the District Medical and Health Officer, emphasised that the government prioritises normal deliveries for the health of both mother and child. Private hospitals are required to provide justification for any C-sections they perform. The government has warned that hospitals that continue to flout these guidelines will face penalties, with efforts already underway to reduce the number of C-sections in the private sector.

## Drug Control Administration ramps up its enforcement activities

■ DCA cracks down 494 cases in one year

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Between January and November 2024, the Drugs Control Administration (DCA) of Telangana ramped up its enforcement activities, resulting in a significant crackdown on 494 cases in the pharmaceutical and cosmetics sectors. In its efforts to safeguard public health, the DCA conducted numerous raids and registered multiple cases of malpractice. Dr. V.B. Kamalasan Reddy, Director General of DCA, emphasised the administration's commitment to curbing illegal drug activities and protecting public health. Citizens are encouraged to report any suspicious drug-related activities to the DCA's toll-free number, 1064.

During this period, the DCA successfully carried out eight seizures related to spurious drugs and 75 seizures for Drug Price Control Order



Kamalasan Reddy

(DPCO) violations. Additionally, 176 seizures were linked to misleading advertisements under the DMROA and Schedule J regulations. The department also uncovered 61 instances of unlicensed medical shops and godowns engaging in the ille-

gal sale of steroids, cardiac stimulants, expired drugs, and unlicensed manufacturing activities.

A significant 124 cases involved unlicensed practitioners stocking and selling drugs without proper authorisation. Moreover, the DCA identified 41 cases where medicines were unlawfully manufactured and sold as food products or nutraceuticals. Other notable actions included five cases of unlicensed cosmetics manufacturing, three cases involving the manufacture and sale of banned drugs, and one case of misbranded cosmetics.

The DCA emphasised its continued commitment to monitoring and acting against illegal practices, urging citizens to report suspicious activities. These measures reflect the administration's dedication to ensuring the safety and well-being of the public.

## Sub-Inspector shoots himself dead in Mulgu dist

PNS ■ MULUGU

The 31-year-old Sub-Inspector of Police R Harish allegedly died by suicide at a private resort near Peruru in Mulugu district on Monday. He was Wazeedu Sub-Inspector of Police. He reportedly shot himself dead with his service revolver.

The Sub-Inspector, according to police, checked into the resort on Sunday night.

The staff at the resort alerted the police when Harish did not respond to repeated knocks on the door of the room where the Sub-Inspector was staying. The police on arrival broke open the door to find Harish lying in a pool of blood.

Police suspect personal issues could be the reason behind the suicide. The exact cause is not yet known.

Harish, a native of Jayashankar Bhupalpally district, had been working at the Wazeedu police station in the Maoist-affected area of Mulugu district for the past few months.



R Harish

The incident created a flutter as it came a day after seven members of the outlawed Communist Party of India- Maoists were killed in an encounter with police in Mulugu district. Harish had been under significant stress since last month following the murder of two individuals by Maoists on suspicion of being police informers within Wazeedu police limits.

## SUSPECTED HONOUR KILLING

### Cop hacked to death by brother in RR district

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

A 28-year-old police constable, S Nagamani, was brutally hacked to death on Monday morning, allegedly by her brother. She had been attached to Hayathnagar police station.

Nagamani had married Srikant, a man from a different caste, on November 21, despite strong opposition from her family. Her brother, Kongara Parmesh, had reportedly threatened the couple with severe consequences. Police are considering the possibility of an honour killing.

The incident happened at Raipol village under Ibrahimpatnam in Ranga Reddy district on the outskirts of Hyderabad as Nagamani was on her way to work at the Hayathnagar police station. Despite police intervention and counselling, which had urged her family to accept the marriage, Parmesh allegedly continued to threaten the couple. Over the weekend, the couple visited Srikant's house in Ibrahimpatnam.

On Monday, while Srikant was at work, he called Nagamani to check on her. During the call, she told him



Nagamani

her brother was attacking her, but the call was suddenly disconnected. Police said that Parmesh, driving a car, chased Nagamani on her scooter, rammed into her, threw her off the vehicle, and then attacked her with an axe. Srikant rushed to the scene, but found his wife dead.

Parmesh reportedly surrendered to the police shortly after the murder. It could be the first honour killing in the district.

The police arrived at the scene and shifted the body to Osmania Hospital for post-mortem.

## Four dead as lorry ploughs through vegetable vendors

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

In a horrific road accident at Alur Gate under Chevella mandal in Rangareddy district on Monday, a lorry ploughed into vegetable vendors on both sides of the road. The devastating collision has claimed four lives. Unconfirmed reports put the death toll at six.

According to initial reports, seven people sustained critical injuries, and three more individuals are suspected to be trapped under the lorry. The accident unfolded in a chaotic manner with the lorry dragging four individuals along the road before coming to a halt. The driver remained trapped in the lorry cabin, and efforts are underway to extricate him.

Among the deceased, three victims have been identified as Ramulu and Prem from Alur and Sujatha from Khanapur. Several others sustained serious injuries and have been shifted to Chevella Government Hospital for treatment.

The cause of the accident is yet to be determined. Authorities are working at the scene to rescue those who are reported to have been trapped under the vehicle and to assess the full extent of the tragedy. The incident occurred at around 2.30 am when the driver of the lorry lost control while taking a turn near GVK Mall resulting in the death of vegetable vendors.

Two among the injured succumbed to their injuries while undergoing treatment at a hospital, police said.

The injured were undergoing treatment at different hospitals in the city.



## Officials told to address public grievances promptly

PNS ■ KUMRAM BHEEM ASIFABAD

District Collector Venkatesh Dothre has instructed that applications received at Prajavani program should be thoroughly examined and resolved promptly. On Monday, the Collector received applications from people at the Integrated District Collectorate building conference hall. Additional Collectors Deepak Tiwari and M David and Asifabad Revenue Divisional

Officer Lokeshwar Rao were also present.

Most of the petitions related to land dispute and land registration. Gore Lavanya from Ranavalli village in Chintal Manepalli Mandal, who is a 10th-grade student with hearing and speech disabilities, requesting the renewal of her disability certificate.

The Collector emphasised the need for officials to coordinate and resolve the applications received at Prajavani programme.

## Yadav Mahasbha general secretary receives Seva Award

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

In a prestigious international event in December in Delhi recently, Nadikuda Raghunath Yadav from Shadnagar has been selected by the president to receive the esteemed International Seva Ratna Award. Representing Telangana, he was chosen as the General Secretary of the All India Yadav Mahasabha, Rangareddy District, under a selection process that identifies one recipient from each state.

This recognition, awarded by the Bahujan Sahitya Akademi, was facilitated by Mahasabha national president Nalla Radha Krishna and Mahasabha Telangana unit State President MM Gautam, who acknowledged Raghunath Yadav's dedicated service to society.

Speaking on the occasion, Nalla Radhakrishna emphasised that the purpose of the International Seva Ratna Award is



General Secretary of the All India Yadav Mahasabha Nadikuda Raghunath Yadav being presented International Seva Ratna Award in Delhi

to encourage individuals who have consistently served the underprivileged, supported students in need, and set an example through their volunteer initiatives.

The event saw active participation from notable leaders and representatives of the All India Yadav Mahasabha, including Shabad Mallesh Yadav, Mende Krishna Yadav, district unit vice-president Batuku Devender Yadav, Padmaram Venkatesh Yadav, Shadnagar Municipality Town president Nakka Bal Raj Yadav, Farooq Nagar Mandal President Balamoni Mallesh Yadav, Kothur Mandal President Dannada Jangayya Yadav, Kondurg Mandal President Bhuiyani Ravinder Yadav, and Chaudhariyada Mandal President Ankam Shekhar Yadav.

Nadikuda Ramesh Yadav and Nadikuda Mahender Yadav also participated in honoring Nadikuda Raghunath Yadav for his remarkable contributions to society.

## 25 YEARS AFTER MAJOR KOYYUR ENCOUNTER

### Maoist movement sinks into oblivion

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Three decades ago, the Maoist influence in the Telugu states, especially in Telangana districts, was significant. The then Naxalites are now referred to as Maoists. In villages that were disrupted by feudal landowners' atrocities and police actions, dense forested agency areas became the battlegrounds for armed struggle, which began with the arrival of grain. As the movement gained momentum, many revolutionary fighters could not cope with the aftermath. During this time, the districts of erstwhile Oorgallu (now Rajanna Sircilla) and Karimnagar (now part of Jayashankar Bhupalpally) saw a major struggle against landowners, providing land to the poor. However, this Naxalite movement received a major blow on December 2.

The revolutionary spark ignited in Srikakulam, and through the



Nalla Adireddy

Erra Reddy Santoshreddy

Seelam Naresh

Jaithrayatra in Jagtial, it led to unrest in the erstwhile Karimnagar and Warangal districts. The 1999 encounter at Koyyur, which created a nationwide sensation, marks its 25th anniversary today. On December 2, 1999, in the encounter, People's War Central Committee members Nalla Adireddy

alias Shyam, Erra Reddy Santoshreddy alias Mahesh, and North Telangana Secretary Seelam Naresh alias Murali, along with a civilian Lakshmirajam, were killed. This incident created a stir in the state at the time.

At that time, Naxals had a strong presence in the Karimnagar and

Warangal districts. The death of top Naxal leaders during this period was considered a significant blow to the movement. In their memory, Maoists have been observing the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) week from December 2 to 8 each year. During this week, the police take preventive measures and deploy tight security in agency areas to avoid any untoward incidents.

The Koyyur encounter took place in the Malhar mandal of the erstwhile Karimnagar district (now Jayashankar Bhupalpally district) on December 2, 1999, where Nalla Adireddy, Seelam Naresh, and Erra Reddy Santoshreddy lost their lives. At that time, Home Minister Devender Goud and DGP HJ Dora visited the Koyyur police station by helicopter and then traveled by road to inspect the encounter site.

Nalla Adireddy, hailing from Kotagutta in Huzurabad Mandal, Seelam Naresh from Jagityala, and

Erra Reddy Santoshreddy from Kadivendi village in Warangal, were well-educated and had left their families to join the Naxalite movement, being drawn to their ideology. They became central committee members of the People's War (Maoist) Party. These leaders, who worked in the revolutionary movement for two decades, died in the encounter.

In their memory, a monument was erected in Begumpet, and the first anniversary of the People's War Party (Maoist) was marked by the establishment of the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA).

In recent times, several attacks have taken place between the Maoists and the police. However, after the significant loss of life among the Maoists, the movement is suffering a severe blow after a blow. There is a high possibility that the Maoist movement will gradually fade away in the Telugu states in the coming days.

As the festive season of Christmas and New Year approaches, egg prices in Telangana have surged, with each egg now costing Rs 7 in the retail market, compared to Rs 5.90 in the wholesale market a few days ago. In the open market, a dozen eggs are priced between Rs 80 and Rs 84, putting a strain on the budgets of middle-class families.

Earlier this year, in January, egg prices were set at Rs 7 each, before dropping to Rs 4 and Rs 4.50 per egg after a few months. However, over the past four months, prices have been steadily rising. In August, eggs were priced between Rs 6 and Rs 6.50 each. Although there was a slight dip in prices shortly thereafter, they have continued to climb. Presently, each

## EGG PRICES SOAR IN TELANGANA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

egg is sold at Rs 7 in the retail market. A tray of 30 eggs is now priced between Rs 190 and Rs 220 in some areas.

During the current Karthikam and Ayyappa seasons, the demand for meat has decreased, causing the price of chicken to fall to Rs 180 per kg, which is cheaper than a tray of eggs.

Experts predict that egg prices may rise even further in the coming days. They attribute the increase to higher demand during the winter months, particularly as eggs are widely used in the preparation of Christmas and New Year cakes. Additionally, rising costs of poultry feed and transportation are pushing prices up. Some trade circles have warned that it may not be surprising if the price of eggs reaches Rs 8 each in the near future.



ACROSS THE STATES



Modi to attend Assam investor summit

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the Assam Investor and Infrastructure Summit in Guwahati in February next year, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said here on Monday. The chief minister also extended an invitation to the prime minister to attend a mega performance of Jhumur dance of Assam's Adivasi community. "Today in New Delhi, I had the privilege to receive Adarniya Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji's guidance on various developmental issues. On behalf of the people of Assam, I also had the pleasure to invite him to bless the Assam Investor & Infrastructure Summit and Mega Jhumur Performance in February 2025 which he has kindly accepted to grace," Sarma said in a post on X. The summit in Guwahati will be held on February 24 and 25, 2025. The Jhumur performance will be also held during this time.



Man booked for posing as IAS officer

A man has been booked for allegedly posing as an IAS officer and threatening to kill an LLB student if she did not marry him, police here said on Monday. The case was filed against Deepak Kumar at the Chinhat police station on November 30 based on a complaint filed by the victim's mother. According to the complaint, Kumar first contacted her daughter in 2020 through WhatsApp. He had said that he hailed from Bihar's East Champaran district and sent his Aadhar details. Kumar claimed to have completed his B.Tech from Haryana. He also said he had been selected as an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer and was undergoing training in Delhi. However, the victim later discovered that Kumar actually worked in a private company in Delhi, specialising in computer-related work. He allegedly hacked mobile phones of girls and pressured them to marry him.



Cyber fraudsters swindle Rs 125.63 cr from people

Cyber fraudsters have swindled Rs 125.63 crore from people of Odisha during the last three years (2021 to 2023), Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi told the state Assembly on Monday. While replying to a question from BJD legislator Prasanta Behera in the House, Majhi said that a total of 6,368 cyber fraud cases were registered in the state and 1,388 persons have been arrested during the period. The police were able to return only Rs 2.77 crore to the victims, he said. The Odisha police have registered 2,037 cyber fraud cases involving cheating of Rs 40.39 crore in 2021, of which, Rs 27.56 lakh was refunded to the victims, he said. In 2022, the cyber fraudsters duped victims to the tune of Rs 37.28 crore, of which Rs 97.30 lakh was returned to the victims. The police have registered a total of 1,983 cyber crime cases in the year, Majhi stated. The chief minister, in his statement, said, cyber fraud to the tune of Rs 47.94 crore was reported in 2,348 cases during 2023. Out of the total amount, Rs 1.52 crore was returned to the victims.

'Sabarmati Report' reveals hidden truths: Hema Malini

BJP MP and renowned actress Hema Malini has said that the Hindi film 'The Sabarmati Report' exposes the truth behind the 2002 train burning incident at Godhra in Gujarat that was kept hidden for years.



While visiting her parliamentary constituency Mathura on Sunday during a break from the Winter Session of Parliament, Malini watched the matinee show of the film

at Roopam Cinema Hall. Talking to reporters later, she said "The Sabarmati Report" was "a very good film" and cleared several misconceptions about the event. Produced by Ekta Kapoor and directed by Dheeraj Sarna, 'The Sabarmati Report' was released on November 15 this year. The film is based on the 2002 Godhra train incident and features Vikrant Massey, Raashi Khanna and Ridhi Dogra in key roles.

Government, oppn break impasse in Parliament

Constitution debate to be held in LS, RS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government and opposition parties on Monday reached an agreement to break the impasse in Parliament with dates announced for discussions on the Constitution in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. The Lower House will take up the discussion on the Constitution to mark its 75th year of adoption on December 13 and 14, and the Upper House on December 16 and 17. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, who announced the dates, expressed confidence that both Houses will function smoothly from Tuesday. The breakthrough came at a meeting of Speaker Om Birla with floor leaders of different parties.

The opposition parties had demanded discussions in both Houses of Parliament to mark the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution by the Constituent Assembly. Several opposition leaders, who attended the meeting, also echoed similar sentiments. Asked about the opposition raising other issues such as Sambhal violence and Manipur, Rijiju said a decision will be taken in accordance with the rules. The Congress has been



THE CONGRESS HAS BEEN PERSISTENT IN RAISING THE ISSUE OF THE INDICTMENT OF US PROSECUTORS OF ADANI GROUP CHAIRPERSON GAUTAM ADANI AND OTHER COMPANY OFFICIALS ON BRIBERY AND FRAUD CHARGES

persistent in raising the issue of the indictment of US prosecutors of Adani Group chairperson Gautam Adani and other company officials on bribery and fraud charges. This coupled with vociferous opposition protests over matters such as

the Sambhal violence and Manipur unrest have resulted in constant adjournments of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha since the Winter Session began on November 25. However, some other opposition parties, especially the

TMC, have not attached the same priority to the Adani row and want Parliament to discuss a host of different issues, including unemployment, rise in prices and the Centre's alleged discrimination against opposition-ruled states in fund allocation. The TMC has skipped opposition meetings to formulate the INDIA bloc's joint strategy during the Session.

A TMC source said his party cannot be there just to stamp its approval on the Congress' agenda.

INS Vikrant is fully operational, says Vice Admiral

PNS ■ KOCHI

The INS Vikrant, India's indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC), has achieved full operational status after completing its final operational clearance this year, Vice Admiral V Srinivas, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief (FOCINC), Southern Naval Command, said on Monday. Speaking to the media aboard the naval ship INS Shardul in Kochi, Srinivas said that INS Vikrant completed its final operations clearance this year. "With the completion of various trials



and the ship's fleet integration, INS Vikrant is now fully operational and is operating under the Western Fleet," he added. Srinivas emphasised that the ship, which is a sym-

bol of pride for the country and the Navy, is fully capable of undertaking all operations and commitments of the Indian Navy. Commissioned by Prime

Minister Narendra Modi in 2022, INS Vikrant is now under the Western Naval Command and is capable of handling naval assignments.

Designed by the Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau (WDB) and built by Cochin Shipyard Limited, Vikrant is the largest ship ever constructed in India's maritime history, the official release said. It boasts of state-of-the-art automation features and houses around 2,200 compartments, designed to accommodate a crew of about 1,600, including women officers and sailors, it added.

Delhi's air quality improves

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi has received a respite from toxic air in the first two days of December as the city's AQI remained in the "poor" category on Monday, recording a reading of 280. The 24-hour average Air Quality Index (AQI) of the city was recorded at 280 at 4 pm, registering a slight improvement from 285 on Sunday.

The air quality shifted from "poor" to "very poor" on October 30, after which it intermittently remained in the "very poor" and "severe" categories. On Sunday, for the first time in 32 days, the capital's AQI dipped below 300, aided by dry northwesterly winds and ample sunlight.

Of the 38 monitoring stations in the city, 12 recorded the air quality in the "very poor" category on Monday, while 25 recorded it in the "poor" category and one station reported "satisfactory" results, according to the Sameer app. The Central Pollution



Control Board (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 above 400 as "severe".

The primary pollutant on Monday was PM2.5, with levels recorded at 106 µg/m<sup>3</sup> at 3 pm. These fine particles pose significant health risks as these can penetrate deep into the lungs and enter the

bloodstream. Vehicular emissions, as reported by the Centre's Decision Support System (DSS) for Air Quality Management, are typically updated at 12 noon every day.

However, the data for Saturday, Sunday and Monday was unavailable on the website until 4 pm, with the most recent estimate reflecting Friday's contribution, which accounted for 21.4 per cent of Delhi's pollution.

SUPPLY OF RICE THROUGH PDS

Yet to get Rs 14,000 crore from Centre, says Bengal CM

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said the state has yet to receive Rs 14,000 crore from the Centre for rice supply through the Public Distribution System (PDS).

"For giving rice through PDS we get 60 per cent of the amount as subsidy from Centre which is yet to reach us", the CM said at the assembly. "Still the state continues to bear the expense through its coffers so that the poor are not deprived," she claimed.

Banerjee said the Khadya Sathi scheme of the state also covers people who are deserving but strictly don't belong to the criteria set up by the Centre. The Khadya Sathi Scheme is a food security programme in



West Bengal that aims to provide rice and wheat at a subsidised rate to the state's population. About the price of potato, she said, "We are second in potato production but some people are exporting the potato grown here outside creating a scarcity in the market which

will not be allowed." "In the past most of the potatoes used to be exported but during our tenure we have stopped that. Similarly, we have ensured 75 per cent of the onions grown here must be consumed within the state," she said.

'Pursue careers in science & technology'

ISRO chief Somanath urges youths

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chairman S Somanath on Monday exhorted youths to engage themselves with scientific and technological advancements being made by the country so that India can emerge as a global leader in the years ahead. He urged them to pursue careers in science and technology and contribute to the growth in these fields.

Somanath was speaking at a 'Student Science Interactive Program - Face to Face with New Frontiers in S&T', as part

of the four-day India International Science Festival (IISF) at IIT-Guwahati, which will conclude on Tuesday.

The ISRO chairman interacted with school students, inspiring them to explore careers in science and technology and pursue innovation in the field of space research, a release said.

"As students, you are the torchbearers of the future in science and technology. It is essential for you to grasp the remarkable innovations and advancements taking place in these fields today," he said. "By recognising their poten-

tial and the opportunities they present, you can draw inspiration to pursue similar paths and contribute to building a brighter tomorrow," Somanath added.

He maintained that engagement of the youth in the country's current scientific and technological endeavours is pivotal in realising the vision of making India a global leader.

The release said industry-academia collaboration, knowledge-sharing technical sessions and initiatives to inspire students and teachers in creative, knowledge-based learning have been organised as part of the



IISF.

The event also brought policymakers and scientific leaders together under one roof to discuss sustainable practices

across science, agriculture, manufacturing and healthcare, it added.

A key highlight of IISF 2024 was the lab-to-life initiative,

where Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) signed three technology transfer Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to promote sustainability and technological advancements.

Speaking about technology transfer, CSIR-NIIST, Thiruvananthapuram said, "Young innovators like you have already begun building rockets and satellites in colleges, efforts that are nearing commercial success. By understanding these advancements and the opportunities in the field of space, science and technology, you can be inspired to pursue similar paths and shape a brighter future."





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Musical chairs

While the BJP-led Mahayuti emerged victorious in Maharashtra, the post-election scenario has been anything but smooth

The Maharashtra Assembly elections have delivered a decisive yet politically tumultuous mandate. The BJP-led Mahayuti alliance scripted a powerful comeback in state Assembly elections by winning 230 seats in the 288-member House. Shinde's Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar's NCP also performed well. Sena won 57 while NCP won 41 seats. It was indeed a big disappointment for Congress-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA). The grand old party registered one of its worst performances in the state Assembly polls after it won only 16 seats. Sharad Pawar's NCP (SP) won just 10 seats, whereas Uddhav Thackeray's (UBT) won 20 seats. Despite this success, the post-election landscape has been anything but smooth, as a fierce tussle erupted between the two allies over the chief ministerial position. The post-election scenario has turned into a high-stakes political drama. Devendra Fadnavis, the BJP's chief minister candidate finally got the post as Eknath Shinde stepped



aside and his son is likely to be deputy chief minister; allegedly on the pressure of the BJP central command. His leadership has been credited with delivering key infrastructure projects and steering the state through various challenges such as agrarian distress and urban expansion.

As the BJP's top leader in Maharashtra, Fadnavis was widely expected to retain the chief ministerial post. The Shiv Sena made significant contribution to the alliance's victory and wanted to retain the CM post for Eknath Shinde. But after days of negotiations he finally agreed to give way to Fadnavis while maintaining that his tenure saw exponential development in the state and he made it number one. The party has pointed out that its cadre worked tirelessly to mobilise grassroots support, especially in rural and semi-urban areas where the BJP's influence has traditionally been weaker. It is also understandable that the BJP should lead the government, citing the party's larger mandate but it will still need NCP and Shiv Sena support to remain in power. The impasse between the BJP and Shiv Sena created an air of uncertainty in Maharashtra's politics. As of now, Devendra Fadnavis appears poised to be the chief minister, backed by the BJP's central leadership. Though, for now the BJP has prevailed and got the plumb post for its man, make no mistake. Shinde's Shiv Sena is not very happy about it and knows once they are marginalised in the game the chances of their party splitting and merging with the BJP are rather high. It has happened in the past and could well be repeated in Maharashtra as well. It would be interesting to watch how Maharashtra politics shapes up. The decisions taken now, the composition of the cabinet and indeed the say Shinde has in the administration would not only shape Maharashtra's governance for the next five years but also redefine the dynamics of India's financial hub.

As of now, Devendra Fadnavis appears poised to be the chief minister, backed by the BJP's central leadership. Though, for now the BJP has prevailed and got the plumb post for its man, make no mistake. Shinde's Shiv Sena is not very happy about it and knows once they are marginalised in the game the chances of their party splitting and merging with the BJP are rather high. It has happened in the past and could well be repeated in Maharashtra as well. It would be interesting to watch how Maharashtra politics shapes up. The decisions taken now, the composition of the cabinet and indeed the say Shinde has in the administration would not only shape Maharashtra's governance for the next five years but also redefine the dynamics of India's financial hub.

### PICTALK



Artistes perform during the 35th Konark Dance Festival 2024, in Puri

# COP29: Stalemate on climate finance



MANISH KUMAR SHRIVASTAVA

The 29th annual Climate Summit in Azerbaijan reached an impasse as developed and developing nations remained divided over climate finance commitments

The negotiation process at the 29th annual Climate Summit (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan came to a halt as both developed and developing countries did not agree with the proposed quantum of climate finance, and its mobilisation approach. The COP29 Presidency had two quantitative targets before the negotiating countries. A USD 1.3 trillion of total annual climate investments in developing countries by 2035 and USD 250 billion of annual climate finance from developed to developing countries by 2035. These targets are to be met through a variety of sources and actors. While it is learnt informally that developed countries, after initial rejection, are willing to commit to USD 300 billion per year by 2035, developing countries rejected the Presidency proposal.

For them, the commitment is too little and too late. Against the estimated cost of about USD 7 trillion required to implement current Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), developing countries demand more than USD 1 trillion per year of public finance from developed countries. By 2035 the ambition of NDCs is likely to be revised upward twice and total implementation costs would increase substantially. In this context, the Presidency's proposal shatters any hopes of raising ambition consistent with the goal agreed at the Paris Agreement. The current policy commitments are likely to lead to a temperature rise of a minimum of 2.7 degrees Celsius compared to the aspiration target of 1.5 degrees Celsius. In a surprising departure, the proposed target of mobilising USD 1.3 trillion is to be achieved by 'all actors' instead of 'all Parties' to the UNFCCC. Since a COP decision cannot be binding on 'all actors', the target holds little value beyond a half-hearted appeal. The G77 and China rejected the Presidency proposal followed by a strong letter from the civil society organisations supporting the rejection. The COP29 may still deliver a decision keeping the negotiation process alive as the negotiations are in extended hours searching



for a political compromise. Yet, the position taken by the developed countries during COP29 is a concern for developing countries in the next rounds of negotiations. Outsourcing Responsibility The reluctance of developed countries to commit to new, additional and predictable climate finance is not new. At COP29, this reluctance turned into an aggressive posture, shifting the responsibility to mobilise commensurate finance primarily onto emerging economies and other actors. Throughout COP29, developed countries left no stone unturned to shift responsibility onto emerging economies, including China, India, Brazil, and South Africa. They pressed for emerging economies to be considered ineligible for receiving climate finance, except in the form of debt. Additionally, they suggested including emerging economies' domestic investments and climate-friendly South-South cooperation in accounting for climate finance, urging them to voluntarily contribute. Outside the negotiation process, a group of developed countries, including the UK and Australia, signed a pledge to have "no new unabated" coal-based power plants. This may



BY TRYING TO SHIFT THE BURDEN ON EMERGING ECONOMIES AND KEEPING THE INTERESTS AND NEEDS OF THE VULNERABLE POPULATIONS ON MARGIN, DEVELOPED COUNTRIES HAVE AGGRESSIVELY PUSHED TO OPEN THE NEGOTIATIONS ON EQUITY PRINCIPLES AT COP29

be a response to the ongoing energy crisis in some developed countries, indirectly pledging to continue using coal with expensive carbon capture and storage technologies, expecting emerging economies to do the same. Adaptation Marginalised The Second Needs Determination Report (NDR) by the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance (SCF) estimates that more than USD 200 billion per year of adaptation finance is needed till 2030. So far, adaptation has received little finance from non-public sources. Even if the developed countries agree to USD 300 billion per year by 2035 as some reports suggest, it will categorically leave the adaptation needs on the margins of global climate governance. On a parallel negotiation track on the Adaptation Fund, the USA and EU sparred with the Arab Group on the need to scale up mobilisation beyond USD 300 million. While the financial commitments to developing countries are likely to remain meagrely, the Global Goal on Adaptation negotiations expect the developing countries to develop, implement, track, and report their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) commensurate with the projected tempera-

ture rise. Equity Under Siege The principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibility and respective capability (CBDR&RC) is the soul of global climate governance through the UNFCCC. The primary responsibility of creating enabling conditions for an equitable transition to a climate-resilient and low-carbon world, including through means of implementation, rests with the developed countries. By trying to shift the burden on emerging economies and keeping the interests and needs of the vulnerable populations on margin, developed countries have aggressively pushed to open the negotiations on equity principles at COP29. Irrespective of the number finally agreed at the COP29, the intent made abundantly clear by developed countries is alarming. It can potentially make any discussion on the quantum of finance irrelevant. It will certainly leave the vast vulnerable population unprotected-a marker of an unequal world.

(The writer is a Senior Fellow and Associate Director, Earth Science and Climate Change Division, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI); views are personal)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### TRUMP'S THREAT IS FOR REAL

Madam — This refers to the editorial, 'Trump's tariff threat'. Trump is an emotional activist. He decides his course based on his momentous decisions and emotions. Most of his decisions do not carry convincing logic or rationality. His earlier tenure had seen several such decisions, but none could help the people in terms of employment or faster economic recovery. Trump's challenges to finish the domination of China and the quixotic actions he took could not make anything tangible in the status. The Indian situation is vulnerable, with its export value being \$73 billion versus imports to the tune of \$119 billion. Any hostile imposition of tariffs will have serious adverse impacts on the balance of trade, which is already tilting against India's favour.

Moreover, India needs political will and moral courage to face such a situation of Trump imposing tariff hurdles. As of now the leadership does not have such a shield. During the pandemic period, the US had placed orders for hydroxychloroquine with Indian manufacturers. But the Prime Minister banned the export of this medicine as it was recommended as one of the drugs to treat Covid. Having learnt this, Trump reacted sharply and said if India does not honour orders placed for this drug, the country will have to face the wrath. Immediately, without wasting any time, our Prime Minister revoked the ban and attended to the order. As known to all, the Republican Party is a party of the affluent in the US, Trump, being a Republican leader, would not have any sentiments in safeguarding the interests of the rich in America. He will go all out to re-establish the supremacy of America in terms of international affairs or the power of the U.S. dollar. But he should realise that the world order is changing fast and undergoing sweeping changes in many respects.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

#### FADNAVIS WINS THE RACE

Madam — The selection of the Chief Minister of Maharashtra appears to be

#### Taj Mahal bears the brunt of pollution



The Taj Mahal, which is known for its stunning beauty, has suffered dramatically from the effects of air pollution over the years. Once a shimmering white monument, it now bears the marks of environmental degradation. This decline is primarily due to pollution from industrial activities and the increasing vehicle emissions in Agra, as well as the pollution of the Yamuna River, which runs behind this UNESCO World

Heritage site. Importantly, the toxic gas emanating from the Yamuna has been doing greater harm, and it is said to be the main culprit behind the discolouration of the Taj's glorious white marbles. For over two decades, various Indian research institutes have explored restoration methods to reverse the discolouration of the Taj and revive the monument to its past glory, but all their efforts proved unsuccessful. The 17th-century Mughal architecture, which is a symbol of India's rich history, needs swift and decisive action to get back its legendary lustre. Involving national and international experts can provide comprehensive solutions to safeguard this magnificent monument for future generations.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Urpakkam

tougher than winning elections for the Bharatiya Janata Party while going by the race between Devendra Fadnavis and Eknath Shinde to occupy the CM's chair. The hunger for power by the BJP keeps Eknath Shinde in the second line over Fadnavis.

The swearing-in ceremony of the new government is likely to take place on December 5, though there's not yet an official report from Raj Bhavan on this issue. Meantime, Eknath Shinde had headed for his hometown after his meeting with the Home Minister Amit Shah with the Mahayuti members. The disappointment of Shinde is wide open and he is in consultation with the NCP leadership and likely to put forth his demands for a cream of portfolios. The BJP is learnt to have offered a Union Cabinet to Shinde if he is unwilling to be a deputy CM also, the speculation is doing the rounds. Whatever may be the reasons, the delay in forming the government for their own benefits shouldn't cost the man-hours. The welfare of the people is more important than witnessing warfare between the elected alliance part-

ners, which doesn't augur well for the centre to justify their action.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

#### PROTECT SEWER WORKERS

Madam — In India, the poor sewer system has dried the citizens' lives with spreading disease, stinks and even taking lives in the cleaning process. Over the last 15 years, across India, 1,288 sewer deaths have been recorded by the National Commission for Safai Karmacharis. Only in the capital city, Delhi, 95 deaths recorded so far. The desperate issue is yet not to halt; on the contrary, it is increasing dreadfully. In the era of access to technology and digital India, the government's failing to launch any well-designed resource to facilitate the way of cleaning is concerning; maybe, due to particular caste, the government is still giving the cold shoulder. It's not tolerable, at any cost. The authorities must address it and ensure the safety of citizens and cleaners.

Jakir Hussain | Kanpur

## The power of touch: A sense that defines us

Touch is the first sense we develop and one that shapes our lives in profound ways. It connects us to each other, fostering love, compassion and resilience

We have read the story of five blind men and the elephant. Each man touched a part and described the animal differently. They would have correctly visualised the pachyderm if they also had sight. There is no denying that all five senses combined define how we live from birth to death. The absence of any will make us feel incomplete. Touch is probably foremost. Scientists say touch is the first of the senses we develop. It is not a single feeling. It consists of several distinct sensations communicated to the brain through neurons in the skin. Touch plays an important role in shaping us. It also conveys compassion from one human to another.



joy and pain alike will forever remain with me. I also recall the happy gurgling sounds of my younger cousins as I patted or tickled them.

The feeling I had as I held my fiancé's hand while putting the engagement ring on her finger was different. It gave me a sense of love and belonging to someone for the rest of my life. We got married and in time had children. Touch was important to nurture and cherish our love for each other and the children. As we held our children close, I could visualise the bliss that my parents might have felt when they held me or my younger siblings. Touch plays an equally important role in grief due to

loss. We are so conditioned to the societal norms of engaging the bereaved in an almost endless conversation, that we often forget their need to sit quietly with their thoughts to contemplate the life lived together and mourn the loss. A warm hug is all that the grieving person needs at that moment. I also visit the temple, not often, but occasionally. A sense of peace pervades me when the priest touches my forehead in blessing. We have heard about the power of healing only through the touch of a saint or even the statue of a revered person. It is the faith people have in the power of touch.

It is not unusual to see people across the globe reaching out to their leaders or stars to touch them and shake hands with them. Leaders and stars also feel connected when they are physically close to people. Leaders from different countries, separated by geographies and language, are also seen hugging each other, indicating friendship and camaraderie. We see sportspersons hugging each other after an achieve-

ment. It motivates them to perform better. COVID left us feeling bereft of several human emotions. Many lost their lives away from their loved ones. Both, the dead and those who survived missed the familiar touch. There were unanswered questions in everyone's mind. We were afraid of the unknown future. We did not know if touch, the most elementary of our senses that defines our personality, would be a thing of the past for future generations. We faced the unthinkable feeling of living and dying in the sterile 'Don't Touch Me' environment of social distancing. Touch keeps us alive. It imparts within us the ability to love and be loved. Emily Dickinson wrote in one of her poems, almost two centuries earlier. "He touched me, so I live to know... And now, I'm different than before."

(The writer is an author, speaker, coach, arbitrator and strategy consultant. He conducts workshops on creative writing for young adults and corporate executives.; views are personal)



SANJAY CHANDRA

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## FIRST COLUMN

## WORKPLACE GOSSIP: A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

It thrives in organisational environments as a form of informal communication



SAKSHI SETHI

Workplace gossip is an enduring phenomenon in organisational environments, involving informal communication with others, often without their knowledge. While it is frequently dismissed as harmless chatter, workplace gossip can have profound implications for individuals, teams and organisational culture. It is a double-edged sword. On one hand, it can serve as a bonding tool and provide informal channels of communication while on the other hand, it can breed mistrust, damage reputations and create a toxic work environment. Determining whether workplace gossip is harmless, or harmful depends on the nature, intent and consequences of the gossip.

The term stems from various psychological and organisational factors. Human curiosity and the desire for social connection often drive employees to share information, even if it is speculative. In many cases, gossip becomes a way to establish or strengthen bonds within a team. Another cause is ambiguity or lack of transparency in communication. Employees feel uncertain about organisational changes, leadership decisions, or colleagues' actions, and may resort to gossip to fill information gaps.

Moreover, competitive workplaces can foster gossip to gain leverage or influence perceptions. Though often vilified, gossip is not inherently negative. Looking at the positive perspective, it can foster social cohesion by creating shared narratives and providing an outlet for



employees to express concerns informally. It can also act as an informal feedback loop, alerting leadership to potential issues like toxic behaviours or dissatisfaction that may remain hidden. However, the negative consequences of workplace gossip often outweigh the positives. Gossip can damage reputations, lower morale and lead to feelings of mistrust and resentment.

Employees who are the targets of gossip may experience stress, anxiety and a decline in productivity. Additionally, pervasive gossip can erode an organisation's culture creating a hostile work environment where collaboration and trust are undermined. It is very often that stressful work environments, complaining about coworkers, personality clashes, or misunderstandings stem from unmet expectations and a lack of effective communication channels. It can exacerbate the urge to vent frustrations informally.

While airing grievances may feel like a release or an attempt to bond with others, it rarely resolves underlying issues. Instead, it creates a cycle of negativity. Organisations and leaders can adopt proactive strategies such as promoting open communication, fostering a positive work culture, leading by example and moreover empowering employees can be a few steps to mitigate the harmful effects of gossiping. Today the term gossiping isn't limited to celebrities and family reunions. When discussing the workplace, it has become a way not to take responsibility for any actions or reactions they create. By focusing on someone else, an individual can shift the focus from the circumstances. Complaining about colleagues behind their backs is a detrimental habit that harms relationships, morale, and workplace culture. By choosing direct, empathetic communication and focusing on solutions, employees can foster a more positive and productive environment. Eliminating backdoor complaints is not just about professionalism rather it is about creating a culture of mutual respect where everyone feels valued and heard.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

## Bullet train: A dream derailed by delays and cost overruns



SHIVAJI SARKAR

The Bullet Train, heralded as a landmark in India's infrastructure ambitions, is now bogged down by repeated delays, spiraling costs and environmental concerns



The ambitious Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train project, once a symbol of India's leap into advanced infrastructure, is now mired in delays, cost overruns, and environmental controversies. Japan, a key investor through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), has grown wary of the project's trajectory due to escalating costs and inadequate environmental safeguards. Approved in December 2015, the Rs1.08 lakh crore high-speed rail project initially aimed for a 2023 launch. However, land acquisition hurdles, especially in Maharashtra, and financial constraints have pushed deadlines repeatedly, with only a partial launch from Surat to Bilimora now targeted for 2026. The project's cost has surged by Rs15,000 crore, a steep climb for an economy grappling with a seven-quarter GDP slowdown to 5.4 per cent. Despite Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw's efforts, including a visit to Japan in September, progress remains sluggish.

Japan's reluctance to commit to revised timelines has prompted India to explore European alternatives for suppliers and technology. This shift, coupled with internal directives to float global tenders, underscores India's urgency to salvage the project. Environmental and Social Concerns The project's compliance with environmental and social norms remains under scrutiny. Environmentalists have criticised the absence of comprehensive environmental impact assessments and advisory committees mandated by JICA for "Category A" projects, which involve significant societal and ecological disruptions. Reports highlight violations, including inadequate public consultations and the bypassing of legal requirements for social and environmental evaluations. Gujarat's 2016 amendments to land acquisition laws and the Supreme Court's relaxation of environmental



JAPAN'S RELUCTANCE TO COMMIT TO REVISED TIMELINES HAS PROMPTED INDIA TO EXPLORE EUROPEAN ALTERNATIVES FOR SUPPLIERS AND TECHNOLOGY. THIS SHIFT, COUPLED WITH INTERNAL DIRECTIVES TO FLOAT GLOBAL TENDERS, UNDERSCORES INDIA'S URGENCY TO SALVAGE THE PROJECT

clearance norms have further exacerbated concerns. Activists argue these changes undermine safeguards meant to protect displaced communities and fragile ecosystems.

The central government is keen to showcase progress before the Gujarat Assembly elections in 2027. However, delays in resolving critical issues threaten this timeline. Critics speculate that the project if completed, might end up being a costlier version of the existing Vande Bharat trains rather than a transformative leap in Indian rail infrastructure. While the Bullet Train remains a flagship vision, its current state reflects broader challenges in balancing infrastructure growth with environmental and financial sustainability. Studies have found that expensive trains have poor ridership. Vande Bharat and similar trains often go half-empty. Comparable travel cost on the bullet is estimated to be high and not remunerative for bullet trains. The railways are considering having indigenous coaches of Vande Bharat type to replace the Japanese high-tech Shinkansen coaches. The bullet train is not the first example of a foreign-funded infrastructure project that has run afoul of international social and environmental standards.

In Gujarat itself, the Tata Power-owned Mundra Ultra Mega Power Project in Kutch has been in the midst of such a controversy since 2011. The US-based International Finance Corporation funded the project with an aid of US dollars 450 million, but villagers living around the power plant have now sued the IFC for alleged large-scale environmental damages caused by the project.

In 2015, a lower court in the United States held that international funding organisations are entitled to "absolute immunity" from lawsuits in that country. However, in May this year, the US Supreme Court agreed to take up an appeal case by the project-affected villagers. With an annual outgoing EMI of Rs 6,802 crore but a lower estimated revenue, the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project is set to become a big liability to the exchequer.

The JICA loan is given in Japanese Yen (JPY) and has to be paid back in JPY. "If the Yen appreciates the loan amount will increase significantly in rupees, if the rupee appreciates, the loan amount will decrease significantly. For example, if 12 years ago, Re 1 was 1.39 JPY and today it has depreciated to 1.86 JPY, now if it appreciates again and goes back to 1.4 JPY, then the loan amount simply goes up by Rs 52,571 crore. Even though it looks like a low-interest loan, currency fluctuation can change the whole game. The analysis also factors in the total number of passengers that will travel along the entire Mumbai to Ahmedabad route, as well as the Surat to Mumbai or Surat to Ahmedabad route, which could be double 17,900 passengers, considering passengers travel to and fro.

The proposed fare for one side travel was Rs 3,000, which is 1.5 times the rate of a first-class train ticket. In a best-case scenario where all passengers are travelling from Mumbai to Ahmedabad and back, the bullet train will generate an annual revenue of Rs 3,920 crore, but the yearly loan liability is Rs 6,802 crore, so there will be a shortfall of Rs 2,882 crore. Conservative esti-

mates peg revenue at Rs 2,499 crore per year, revenue shortfall of Rs 5,103 crore in the first year itself.

The estimated cost of operations was Rs 412 crore per year in 2014, but by 2028 it will become more than double, at over Rs 800 crore. It further goes on to say that Indian Railways with all 13000 passenger trains including First Class, 2AC, 3AC, Rajdhani, Shatabdi, and Vande Bharat could only earn Rs 63,300 crore in the last year. Delhi metro with a daily ridership of 46 lakh people clocked revenue of Rs 3,088 crore last year.

If we look at bookings of last summer, most cheaper trains are fully booked, and Vande Bharat and Tejas Express have lots of seats available. Already, 33 trains running on the route. Moreover, a ticket price of Rs 3,000 was determined when the cost of construction was Rs 1.1 lakh crore. There are problems. The new plan is to produce coaches and have signalling systems of Indian railways instead of Shinkansen. Still, there are three years.

There are international commitments to JICA and diplomatic issues with Japan. What is being discussed are partial truths.

The project could get a bit more delayed but the Indian Railways expects that most of the original plans would be on track with some modifications.

The project may be completed beyond 2027 and may be on time for the 2029 Lok Sabha elections. The operation cost is likely to go up and the railways have to reconfigure the fares to be charged to make it more affordable and sustainable.

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

## Breaking the stigma: Prioritising mental health for a happier, resilient future

Depression, anxiety and other mental health challenges must be taken seriously. They affect one in five people worldwide

Depression in mental health is a feeling of low, sad and unhappy. Which can lead to loss of appetite, loss of sleep, loss of interest, and negative thoughts. Mental health is about how we think, feel and cope with life's challenges. Just like we take care of our physical health, looking after our mental health is equally important. Parents play a key role in creating a happy, supportive, and understanding environment at home.

Mental health issues such as anxiety, fear and depression are common, and they can arise due to bullying, family conflicts, changes in school or life, academic stress, or even harsh punishments. These challenges can make children feel isolated, angry, or lose



RESHMA A SANGODKAR

focus on their studies. It's crucial to understand that seeking help from counsellors, therapists, or trusted adults like parents or teachers is a sign of strength, not weakness. Today, one in five people faces mental health challenges. Professional support, such as therapy, can significantly improve emotional wellbeing. Activities like yoga, sports,

and meditation are also effective for calming the mind and reducing stress. Additionally, practising mindfulness—focusing on the present moment—can help children feel more peaceful and focused. Good habits, such as getting enough sleep, eating healthy food, and staying hydrated, support both mental and physical health. Engaging in enjoyable hobbies can boost happiness and reduce stress.

Schools and families need to work together to provide children with positive environments, where they feel safe and supported. In our society, mental health issues are often overlooked, and stigma prevents many from seeking help. Depression in mental health is a feeling of low, sad and

unhappy. Which can lead to loss of appetite, loss of sleep, loss of interest and negative thoughts. World Mental Health Day is celebrated on October 10 every year. Many people are affected by depression in the world. Very common in today's world. Campaigns like World Mental Health Day aim to break these barriers and encourage open conversations. And encourages those affected to seek help from a Psychiatrist.

Teachers should be trained to identify early signs of mental health problems in children and provide guidance. Parenting is also a key factor in shaping a child's mental health. Parents should avoid unhealthy comparisons and ensure their children feel emotionally secure. Building a



strong, friendly relationship with children helps them share their feelings without fear. Simple practices like mindful-

ness, meditation and breathing exercises can also help children and adults stay calm and focused. As Lord Buddha said,

"Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind on the present moment."

This profound phrase highlights the essence of mindfulness—focusing fully on the present and giving your complete attention to whatever you are doing. Mindfulness means being fully present in the moment, whether eating, studying, or walking. Meditation, on the other hand, is about dedicating time to relax the mind and focus on breathing. Both practices help reduce stress and improve sleep, allowing children to perform better in school and other activities. Engaging in activities like participating in marathons, running 5 kilometres, or setting personal fitness goals can help reduce depres-

sion and improve mental wellbeing. Yogic exercises like Surya namaskars help in boosting our prana level to stave off depression.

Welcoming an idol of Lord Buddha into your home or workplace, reading positive affirmations each morning, and offering gratitude to those around you and God are wonderful practices to keep the mind happy and at peace.

By creating supportive environments and normalising mental health discussions, we can ensure that children grow up to be emotionally strong, happy, and resilient individuals. The key is to break the stigma and make mental health a priority for everyone.

(The writer is an author and freelance writer; views are personal)



IN BRIEF



Operations resume at Swan Energy shipyard

Diversified group Swan Energy Ltd (SEL) on Monday said it has resumed operations at its shipyard. Formerly known as Reliance Naval and Engineering Ltd (RNEL), Swan's Pipavav Shipyard in Gujarat has also commenced refit of ships while it is also gearing up to commence its shipbuilding operations at the facility, Swan Energy said. Indian Coast Guard's fast patrol vessel Raj Ratan was the first vessel to undergo refit exercise, it said, adding that the refit work on the vessel, which began on September 4, has been completed on November 30, ahead of the schedule, it said. The refit project was executed in association with Sadhav Offshore Engineering, it added. The dry docking and refit of this ship marks a significant milestone in the revival of the shipyard, after SEL took over its management control earlier this year through NCLT, the company said.



Gold falls Rs 200 to Rs 79,200 per 10 gm

Gold prices fell Rs 200 to Rs 79,200 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday amid weak trends in the international markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity closed at Rs 79,400 per 10 grams on Friday. Silver also plummeted Rs 2,200 to Rs 90,000 per kg due to reduced offtake by industrial units and coin makers. It had closed at Rs 92,200 per kg in the previous trading session. Price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity slipped Rs 200 to Rs 78,800 per 10 grams. The precious metal ended at Rs 79,000 per 10 grams on Friday. Meanwhile, in futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for December delivery fell Rs 478, or 0.63 per cent, to trade at Rs 75,896 per 10 grams. Silver contracts for December delivery slumped Rs 574, or 0.65 per cent, to Rs 88,307 per kg. During the day, the white metal declined Rs 1,081, or 1.22 per cent, to hit an intra-day low of Rs 87,800 per kg on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX).



SBI plans to open 500 new branches

The State Bank of India (SBI) is planning to open 500 new branches across India during the current financial year, Parliament was informed on Monday. Of this, 135 new branches have already been opened till October 31, 2024, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha. Currently, the endeavour of the government is to ensure availability of a banking outlet (bank branch/business correspondent/ India Post Payments Bank) within 5 kilometres of all inhabited villages in the country, he said. Availability of banking outlets is monitored by a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based app, namely, Jan Dhan Darshak (JDD) app, he said. To another question regarding shortage of staff in SBI, Chaudhary said, public sector banks (PSBs) including SBI are board governed commercial entities. The requirement of manpower in each PSB is determined by the respective PSB keeping in view various factors which include, inter-alia, business requirement, spread of activities, superannuation and other unplanned exits, he said. Appointment of officers and staff is done accordingly by the bank and it varies from year to year based on their requirements, he said.

Goyal calls for sustainable consumption pattern

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Monday called for promoting sustainable consumption patterns to cut carbon footprint and resolve issues of environment.

He said that people of the world would have to focus on consuming products which are environmentally sustainable.

"We need to be conscious of the waste and carbon footprint due to our current lifestyle patterns. This is going to be a core of a better future for the world. Unless we address the consumption patterns, we are not going to resolve sustainability and environmental challenges," Goyal said. The minister was addressing CII's Partnership Summit here.

He added that environmental challenges are not a function of the carbon emitted through manufacturing, but "it is a greater function of the carbon caused by (our) consumption because manufacturing comes only because there is a consumption demand".

He suggested managing that demand in a better and more sustainable way.

Speaking at the event, M K Nir Barkat, Minister of



"We need to be conscious of the waste and carbon footprint due to our current lifestyle patterns. This is going to be a core of a better future for the world. Unless we address the consumption patterns, we are not going to resolve sustainability and environmental challenges," Goyal said. The minister was addressing CII's Partnership Summit here.

Economy and Industry, Israel, said the trade and economic relationship between the two countries is growing.

A corridor, spanning from India through the UAE, Israel, and extending to Europe, would help in further strengthening economic ties, he added. Goyal also said that the

Global South is not responsible for global environmental damage but it has been caused by the developed countries who enjoyed the benefit of low-cost energy.

Senior ministers from Italy, Israel, Bhutan, Bahrain, Algeria, Nepal, Senegal, South Africa, Myanmar, Qatar and

Cambodia were the partner countries at the summit.

Each of the partner countries have shared responsibilities towards environment and sustainability, but countries present at the summit are not responsible for the damage to the environment, Goyal said adding Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation will have an impact on the future of employment.

"Consumption waste is not going to make the world a better place to live in and the world will have to reflect on lifestyles and a circular economy," he added.

About 29,200 MW thermal capacity under construction in India: MoS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As much as 29,200 MW thermal capacity is being installed in the country, while 51,520 MW capacity is under various stages of planning and development, Parliament was informed on Monday.

The government's aim is to have an installed power generation capacity of around 777.14 GW by 2029-30. India's overall power generation capacity was at 454.452 GW as of October 2024.

The Ministry of Power, in consultation with states, has envisaged a plan to add thermal capacity of a minimum 80,000 MW by 2031-32, Union Minister Shripad Naik said in a written reply to Rajya Sabha.

"Against this target, 29,200 MW thermal capacity is already under construction, while 51,520 MW is at various stages of planning & development," the Minister of State (MoS) for Power said.

In addition, 13,997.5 MW of hydro electric projects and 6,050 MW pumped storage projects (PSPs) are under construction, while 24,225.5 MW



of hydro electric projects and 50,760 MW of PSP are under various stages of planning and are targeted to be completed by 2031-32, he said.

The minister further said there are also 7,300 MW of nuclear capacity under construction and 7,000 MW is under various stages of planning and approval.

In view of increasing power generation capacity, Naik said about 1,91,474 circuit kilometer (ckm) of transmission lines and 1,274 GVA of transformation capacity is planned to be added (at 220 kV and above voltage level) during the ten year period from 2022-23 to 2031-32. The country's peak demand met figures were at 219,222 GW up October 2024.

RBI lifts restrictions on Sachin Bansal's Navi Finserv

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank on Monday lifted the restrictions on sanction and disbursement of loans by Sachin Bansal's Navi Finserv with immediate effect.

On October 17 this year, the RBI had issued directions to Navi Finserv Limited, Bengaluru (and three other NBFCs) to cease and desist from sanction and disbursement of loans, effective from close of business of October 21, 2024.

The restrictions were based on material supervisory concerns observed in the pricing policy of these companies in terms of their Weighted Average Lending Rate (WALR) and the interest spread charged over their cost of funds, which are found to be excessive and not in adherence with the regulations.

Subsequently, RBI on Monday said it had several rounds of interaction with Navi Finserv for rectification of deficiencies.

'In discussions with potential local partner'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Skoda Auto Volkswagen India on Monday said it is in discussions with a potential partner regarding possible collaboration in India, refuting speculation that it has halted the process of finding a local collaborator after the investigation over alleged customs duty fraud.

The company, which is leading the German automotive group Volkswagen's India operations, asserted that finding a local partner in India and the show cause notice by authorities for alleged customs duty fraud to the tune of Rs 11,000 crore (about USD 1.4 billion) over import of cars as completely knocked down units, are completely separate and unrelated.

"To fully explore the country's growth potential, we are always considering new business opportunities and are evaluating various options to ensure the best possible solution to implement our strate-



gy in the highly dynamic Indian market. We are currently in discussions with a potential partner regarding possible collaboration," Skoda Auto Volkswagen India said in a statement.

The company was responding to a query on whether it has halted the process of finding a local partner in India after the alleged customs duty fraud investigation.

On the show cause notice, the company reiterated that

being a part of a global group, it "is a responsible organisation, fully complying with all global and local laws and regulations. We are analysing the notice and extending our full cooperation to the authorities".

Earlier this year, Skoda Auto Chairman of the Board of Management Klaus Zellmer stated that the company is looking to collaborate with an Indian partner in order to grow its presence in the country.

'Second half GDP number expected to be much better'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth on Monday said second quarter GDP growth at 5.4 per cent is lower than the potential but exuded confidence that the second half to be better.

Several high-frequency indicators in the month of October are pointing towards that, he told reporter here.

Seth also said that quarterly estimates have been revised upwards in the past when full GDP numbers are available.

"Numbers are lower than

what our potential is but not alarming...GDP growth will be much higher in the third and fourth quarter," he said.

The Economic Survey projected India's GDP to grow at 6.5-7 per cent in 2024-25, down from a high of 8.2 per cent in the preceding financial year.

India's economic growth slowed to near two-year low of 5.4 per cent in the July-September quarter of this fiscal due to poor performance of manufacturing and mining sectors as well as weak consumption.

Sebi orders attachment of bank, demat accounts of Reliance Big Entertainment

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Monday ordered the attachment of bank accounts as well as shares and mutual fund holdings of Reliance Big Entertainment to recover dues of Rs 26 crore.

Before this, the markets watchdog on November 14 sent a notice to Reliance Big Entertainment Pvt Ltd (now known as Rbep Entertainment Pvt Ltd) and asked the entity to pay dues within 15 days in

a case pertaining to illegal diversion of funds in the matter of Reliance Home Finance Ltd (RHFL).

The attachment notice came after Reliance Big Entertainment failed to pay the fine imposed on it by the markets watchdog.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has ordered the attachment of bank, demat accounts and mutual fund folios of the entity to recover the pending dues.

IMPLICATIONS OF TRUMP STATEMENTS

Commerce ministry reviewing India-US trade relations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The commerce ministry is reviewing various aspects of India-US trade relations focusing on implications of statements made by US President-elect Donald Trump during his election campaign and after the results, an official said.

The official added that there are no irritants in the relations between the two countries that can lead to discriminatory tariffs against India.

Trump, during his election campaign, has called India an "abuser" of import tariffs, a claim that echoed his October

2020 statement labelling India the "Tariff King".

Trump on Saturday also warned BRICS countries against any move to replace the US dollar and has sought a commitment from the nine-member group that includes India, Russia, China, and Brazil.

In the wake of such statements, brainstorming is fundamental to discuss the trade relations as the US is the largest trading partner of India.

Trade experts have time and again stated that Trump's claim that India is an "abuser" of import tariffs is unfair as many



nations including America protect their domestic industries by imposing high customs duties on certain products.

According to WTO's World

Tariff Profiles 2023, the US also imposes high duties on items like dairy products (188 per cent), fruits and vegetables (132 per cent), coffee, tea,

cocoa and spices (53 per cent), cereals and food preparations (193 per cent), oilseeds, fats and oils (164 per cent), beverages and tobacco (150 per cent), fish and fish products (35 per cent), minerals and metals (187 per cent), and chemicals (56 per cent).

An expert said that if the US would seek a cut in customs duties for some of their products, India should also demand a similar reduction to get greater market access for domestic items.

The US was the largest trading partner of India in 2023-24. India's exports stood at USD

77.51 billion, while imports aggregated at USD 42.2 billion in the last fiscal.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has recently stated that the US President is a "friend of India" and India-US friendship will only continue to blossom and grow further.

India's trade relations with the US will continue to grow irrespective of the change in regime in America and according to the commerce ministry data, India's exports to the US jumped to USD 39.2 billion in October against USD 21.46 billion in October 2015.

'Up to 75 pc of GST revenue comes from 18 pc slab'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

About 70-75 per cent of GST revenues collected in 2023-24 fiscal year came from the 18 per cent slab, while just 5-6 per cent came from the 12 per cent bracket, Parliament was informed on Monday.

Only 6-8 per cent of the FY24 goods and services tax (GST) revenues were from the 5 per cent slab, while the highest tax slab of 28 per cent contributed 13-15 per cent to the revenues in the last fiscal year.

Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary shared the details of the proportion of GST collected (excluding compensation cess and other payments)

under various tax slabs in 2023-24 in the Lok Sabha.

The GST Council has constituted a six-member Group of Ministers (GoM), under Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary, to suggest rationalisation of GST rates as well as merger of slabs to increase GST revenues.

Currently, GST is a four-tier tax structure with slabs at 5, 12, 18, and 28 per cent. Under GST, essential items are either exempted or taxed at the lowest slab, while luxury and demerit items attract the highest slab.

Luxury and sin goods attract cess on top of the highest 28 per cent slab.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION  
 EE-Div-16/EE/Divn.16/ISB2/GHMC  
 NIT No: 36/Cr-16/Engg-Div-16/ISB2/GHMC/2024 Dt: 30-11-2024  
 Name of the work: Chain link mesh in Amberpet Circle-16, Secunderabad Zone, GHMC  
 TOTAL Tender Amount: Rs. 4.50 Lakhs SI. No. 1 Start Date: 02-12-2024 From 3:00 PM  
 Last Date & Time for receipt of Bid: 03/12/2024 at 3:00 PM. Sri K. RAMESH BABU,  
 Executive Engineer, Division-16, Circle-16 Amberpet, Sec2nd Zone, GHMC Cell  
 639920591/ 6796374855. Address of the Concerned Executive Engineer, Div-16, SE-  
 GHMC, Abids, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. Further details can be seen at:  
 Procurement www.tender.telanganagov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer  
 Div-16, SBZ, GHMC  
 PPR S.O. No: 107/PPC/ADT/1/0014/25 Dt. 01-12-2024



## Kicking down barriers and turning into gold



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In a country where sports are often synonymous with cricket and football, Rupa Bayor's extraordinary journey is redefining the landscape of Indian athletics. This 23-year-old Taekwondo sensation has single-handedly put India on the global martial arts map, becoming the nation's first athlete to shatter the glass ceiling of the top 10 World Poomsae rankings. Currently ranked No. 9 by World Taekwondo, her remarkable ascent is a testament to her unwavering passion, unwavering dedication and unrelenting pursuit of excellence. With every kick, punch and victory, she is boldly scripting a new chapter in Indian sports history, inspiring generations to come.

Bayor's introduction to martial arts began with karate, which she practiced with her uncle, a karate master. "I began karate with my uncle, who was a master in the sport. He saw my potential and recommended that I take up Taekwondo, as it is an Olympic sport," recalls Rupa. She started Taekwondo in 2015 but only began competing at a professional level in 2021.

Her journey was not without its challenges, as she had to balance her sports career with family responsibilities. "There were times I had to put my game aside and go help my mom. I used to somehow manage, taking leaves from my training to help with our family's *Khetti-baadi*. We had to work and also look into my professional life and manage my time," shares the Taekwondo champion. Despite these challenges, she proudly adds, "We didn't have an option but to face these challenges. Because of this, there were times I wasn't able to concentrate properly."

Her family has been supportive of her Taekwondo career, but financial constraints made it difficult for her to pursue her dreams. That's when the Welspun programme stepped in, providing her with the necessary financial support.

Expressing her gratitude, she says, "If this programme wouldn't have been there, I wouldn't have been able to play Taekwondo. This programme has been helping women so well... I'm thankful to Welspun Sports for helping me throughout. Giving the opportunity to my talent at the right time, I'm grateful to them." Welspun Super Sports Women is a programme focused on empowering female athletes from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The initiative helps them pursue their sporting dreams and aims to foster change-makers within their communities.

Since associating with Welspun in 2021, she has made significant progress in her Taekwondo career. She credits the programme for her success, stating, "It's that support that has helped me throughout... Training and all of it is all secondary. If you don't have financial support, then things don't get easy. I got immense support."

Her approach to Taekwondo is straightforward – hard work and practice are key to success. She believes, "I don't believe in any sort of strategies. I believe that the amount of strength and practice it all leads to the end result in the championship. Mentally, it's just not before the championship but the years of training. It is the strength that leads you to where you shall be." Going ahead, she also emphasises the importance of focusing on one's strengths and weaknesses, saying, "Every player has their own strength and weaknesses in their skills and I make sure that I do not let my opponent know my weaknesses."

Her achievements in Taekwondo have earned her recognition, including being the first Indian Taekwondo athlete to achieve a significant milestone. She humbly acknowledges the appreciation, saying, "I feel so grateful when such appreciations come in and I feel to do more big and better." Her

goal is to reach the top three in the world rankings and she credits her coach for her progress. "My journey is still going. I wish I could do what I've wished for. I credit all of it to my coach for reaching where I am today."

As she prepares for the upcoming World Championship, she is focused on her training. When asked about her advice to aspiring athletes, she shares, "Be it in sports or other fields, whatever you like, be it small or big, if you keep your thinking professional, then don't make any excuse. Problems will come but don't take that as an excuse... *Joh bhi karro acha karro* (Whatever you do, do it well)."

Rupa Bayor's remarkable journey is a shining testament to her unwavering dedication, unrelenting passion and unshakeable perseverance. As India's top-ranked Taekwondo athlete, she has not only made a name for herself in the sport but has also paved the way for future generations of Indian athletes.

With her sights set on the top three world rankings, Rupa continues to inspire and motivate others with her remarkable story. As she prepares to take on the world's best at the upcoming World Championship, one thing is certain – Rupa Bayor is a force to be reckoned with, and her legacy will continue to inspire and empower aspiring athletes for years to come.



In a sport dominated by giants, Rupa Bayor's name echoes as a light of hope and inspiration. India's first-ever Taekwondo athlete to break into the top 10 World Poomsae rankings, her remarkable journey is a testament to her unwavering dedication, unrelenting passion and unshakeable perseverance. In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, Rupa Bayor opens up about her fascinating story, from the early days of struggle to her current status as a world-ranked champion



## Nurturing life skills through early music education

Picture this: a room full of toddlers, eyes wide with wonder, tiny hands clapping along to a catchy tune. It's not just adorable – it's brain-building magic in action! Music education in early childhood isn't just about creating the next Mozart (though that would be cool). It's about giving kids a turbo boost in their overall development.

The plasticity of our brain is how magic happens. Humans literally have the ability to rewire their brains, which helps them learn difficult things, adapt to new environments and navigate tricky situations. This is exactly what happens when kids engage in music – and the numbers back up this brain-boosting party. Just 1-2 years of music training can boost auditory and language development by 20%! It's almost like their brains are throwing an epic concert, where different areas light up and start grooving together. The frontal lobe, hippocampus and auditory cortex are all invited to this neural shindig, leading to a remarkable 25% improvement in working memory and attention skills. The best part? This mental mosh pit helps build stronger connections in young brains, with even six months of early musical exposure correlating to 25% better auditory memory retention into adulthood.

Research shows that exposure to music allows young minds to soak up a range of notes, tones, and words they'll use later. Additionally, it strengthens the corpus callosum—the brain's information pathway—which can lead to better problem-solving skills and emotional resilience. And all this simply comes from bopping along to some tunes.

Despite all the benefits, some questions still pop up in every parent's mind: Does my kid really need to know how to play the sitar? Do I have to put them through rigorous piano classes? Well, no child must be a maestro at either playing an instrument or even training to be a singer. The benefits of simply being exposed to some kind of music education are more than enough to make a compelling argument for parents contemplating exposing their child to some kind of music education.

Music education is like a Swiss Army knife for child development, packing a punch in multiple areas. It fine-tunes language skills, helping kids process sounds and rhythms that boost vocabulary and even aid foreign language learning. On the emotional front, it's a mood-changing superpower, teaching kids to express feelings in healthy ways. Physically, it's a full-body workout, developing both fine and gross motor skills. Socially, it's a crash course in teamwork and cooperation. And cognitively? It's a mental gym, improving memory, concentration, and even math

skills. Who knew that singing all those nursery rhymes would be so beneficial?

Remember the 90s craze about playing Mozart to make babies smarter? Well, it turns out there might be something to it—but not in the way we thought. While blasting classical tunes won't automatically turn your child into a genius, there is evidence that engaging with music does have positive effects on brain development.

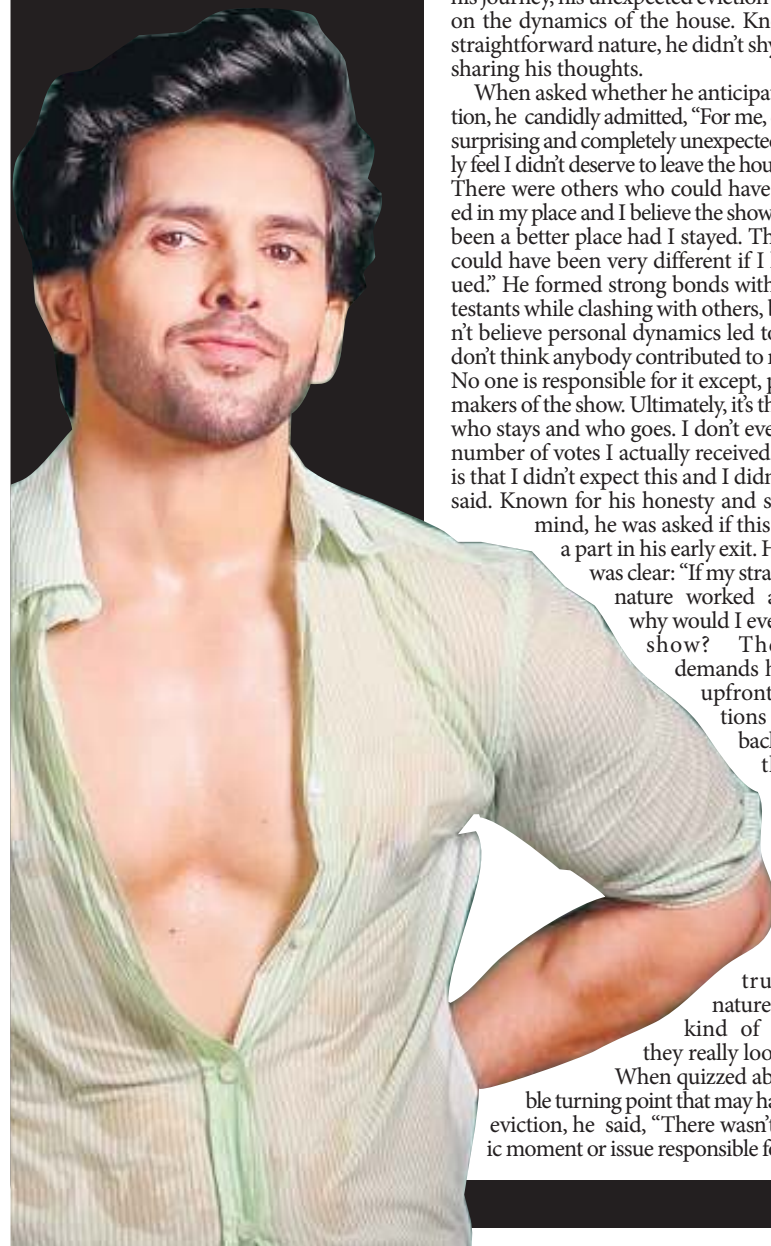
So, when should you start introducing your little one to music? Well, learning music has its own benefits for kids of different age groups. Even babies and toddlers can benefit from musical experiences. For the littles ones, ages 0-2, simple songs, lullabies and rhythmic games are perfect. It's all about bonding and introducing basic musical concepts. As they grow, kids aged 2-6 enter prime time for exploring different instruments, singing songs and incorporating music into daily routines. It's less about perfection and more about exploration and fun. For the older crowd, ages 7-11, if your child shows interest, this can be a great time to start more formal music lessons. But remember, keeping it enjoyable is key!

Incorporating music into early childhood education isn't just a nice-to-have—it's a must-have. Schools that prioritise music education give their students a significant advantage in multiple areas of development. According to it's not about creating a generation of rock stars (though that would be awesome), but about nurturing creative, confident and well-rounded individuals. Music education teaches discipline, boosts confidence and provides opportunities for teamwork and self-expression. At its core, early childhood music education is about much more than learning to carry a tune; it's about equipping kids with tools for success in all areas of life. From enhancing brain power to fostering emotional intelligence, the benefits of early music education are truly music to any parent's or educator's ears. All this is living proof that music education needs to become a part of children's education. Not only will it improve their cognitive functions but will also help them excel in different beats of life, helping them become emotionally resilient and well-rounded individuals. Whether it is through formal lessons or learning music as a hobby, it is the best gift parents can give their children. After all, life is better with a soundtrack, especially when you're equipped to create one yourself.

(The author, Ashish Joshi, is the founder and CEO of Artium Academy.)

## 'My individuality is non-negotiable; I take pride staying true to myself'

Shehzada Dhami's *Bigg Boss* journey came to an abrupt end, a few weeks back. Now, in an exclusive and explosive conversation, he lifts the lid on his eviction, the house dynamics and more



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With his unapologetic attitude, fearless honesty and a heart that beats to its own drum, Shehzada Dhami captured the hearts of millions during his stint on *Bigg Boss*. As a true original, he dared to be himself, even in the face of adversity, inspiring a generation with his courage and conviction. In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, Shehzada Dhami, who was evicted from India's most controversial reality show, opened up about his journey, his unexpected eviction and his take on the dynamics of the house. Known for his straightforward nature, he didn't shy away from sharing his thoughts.

When asked whether he anticipated his eviction, he candidly admitted, "For me, eviction was surprising and completely unexpected. I genuinely feel I didn't deserve to leave the house this soon. There were others who could have been evicted in my place and I believe the show would have been a better place had I stayed. The dynamics could have been very different if I had continued." He formed strong bonds with some contestants while clashing with others, but he doesn't believe personal dynamics led to his exit. "I don't think anybody contributed to my eviction. No one is responsible for it except, perhaps, the makers of the show. Ultimately, it's their decision who stays and who goes. I don't even know the number of votes I actually received. All I know is that I didn't expect this and I didn't like it," he said. Known for his honesty and speaking his mind, he was asked if this trait played a part in his early exit. His response was clear: "If my straightforward nature worked against me, why would I even be on the show? The format demands honesty and upfront conversations instead of backstabbing. If the makers or the audience don't appreciate someone who speaks their heart and stays true to their nature, then what kind of person are they really looking for?"

When quizzed about a possible turning point that may have led to his eviction, he said, "There wasn't any specific moment or issue responsible for this. I was playing my game, expressing myself honestly and addressing issues head-on." Reflecting on his time in the house, he stood firm in his choices. "I have no regrets. I've always stood for what's right and called out what's wrong. That's who I am and I won't change myself—not for a show or for anything else. My individuality is non-negotiable and I take pride in staying true to myself," he stated emphatically.

Now that he's out of the house, who does he think has the strongest chance of winning? He refused to single anyone out: "I don't think there's a clear strongest contestant. The dynamics change every day, as do the relationships and the atmosphere. It's hard to say who will ultimately come out on top." While his journey on the show was cut short, his candid and unapologetic attitude is sure to leave a lasting impression on fans. For now, he's focused on what lies ahead and remains proud of the honesty and integrity he displayed during his time in the house.

Known for his unfiltered honesty and straightforward approach, sharing insights into his strategy during his time on the reality show, how he managed the pressures of the house and the lessons he's taking forward.

When asked about the pressure he faced, he revealed, "The only real pressure I experienced was the lack of sleep and food. It made me feel irritated at times, but that's where self-control came in. I think I managed to handle myself well under these circumstances. Whenever there was an issue in the house, I always expressed my point of view clearly. There was never a moment where I said something just out of stress or pressure. I'm proud that I didn't let those challenges get the better of me."

On how life has changed after the show, he shared a valuable takeaway: "I've learned to be more vocal. Staying silent might be a good idea sometimes, but not always. Silence can hold you back and I've realised the importance of speaking up when needed. That's something I'll carry forward in my life."

The conversation turned to the topic of alliances in the house, or as Shehzada described them, "gangs." He firmly stated, "I don't want to comment much on the gangs in the house. I've never been a part of any gang and I don't like the idea of fighting in groups. I've always fought my battles single-handedly and that's been my strategy from day one. I believe in standing on my own." As for his plans post-eviction, he has left fans intrigued: "You'll find out soon. Keep an eye out for my articles—they'll reveal what's coming next!" With his characteristic blend of confidence and mystery, Shehzada has set the stage for an exciting journey ahead. Whether it's his newfound vocal clarity or his independent spirit, he's ready to make his mark beyond the confines of the house.



# what's brewing?

**Party**

Photos by - SV Chary

● Rraxshmi Thakur

● Shrda Mahajan

● Anchal Bansal

● Sumaya Reddy

● Anika Khara

● Simi

● Deborah Fell

Shrda Mahajan, the luxury label rooted in theology and spirituality, hosted its annual trunk show, offering a special preview of the flagship collection, Tasyai, which draws inspiration from Goddess Sita in her powerful warrior form. The showcase also marked the launch of the label's accessory line, The Archaic Satchel.

Lala Land 5.0, a unique theme-based flea market, was a resounding success at Hitex Grounds, Hyderabad, attracting a diverse crowd. The event offered a Christmas carnival experience with a tribute to Coldplay, live performances by renowned bands Capriccio and Aatish and a showcase of over 200 brands offering a wide range of products.

● Santhoshe

● Nayana

● Anusree

● Siri

● Rashmika

● Ashrutha

Rajeev Reddy, Chairman of Country Club India, unveiled the 'Chalo Sri Lanka with Bade Dilwale' card, a unique initiative that promises an unforgettable experience. The launch event was attended by actress Dakshina Nagarkar. On this occasion, Reddy also announced Asia's biggest New Year bash 2025, which will take place in Hyderabad and simultaneously across all Country Club India's clubs and resorts in India.

P. Satyanarayana & Sons Jewellers has expanded its presence in the city with the launch of its 8th showroom, located at Fairmount Square, Kompally, beside Raichandani Mall. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Femina Miss India Andhra Pradesh 2024, Bhavya Reddy, along with the Managing Director, Shivek.

## FUN

**ARCHIE**

I'M REALLY PLEASED WITH MY LATEST WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAM!

MAKING SOME STEADY PROGRESS, ARE YOU? OH, YES!

I'M ALMOST AT THE POINT WHERE I'M WILLING TO STEP ON THE SCALE!

**CALVIN AND HOBBS**

AHHH, WHAT A DAY!

UP AT DAWN! FRESH AIR! TRANQUILITY! NO DEMANDS, NO PHONES, NO PRESSURE!

THE WHOLE DAY IS ONE'S OWN! ISN'T THIS GREAT? ISN'T THIS THE LIFE?

SPACEMAN SPIFF, A PRISONER ON THE ZOG SLAVE GALLEY, PLANS HIS BARRING OVERBOARD ESCAPE!

**GARFIELD**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU, HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU...

HAPPY BIRTH-DAY, YOU'RE FOR-TV...HAPPY BIRTHDAY TOOOOO YOOUUU!

AND MA-NY MOOOOORE!

**NANCY**

YOU TWO MAKING PROGRESS ON THE MATH PROBLEM?

WE'RE MAKING PROGRESS ON A MATH PROBLEM

NUMBER OF SECONDS LEFT IN SCHOOL  
24 = 5  
60 = 60

**GINGER MEGGS**

ALRIGHT, GINGER. YOUR FATHER AND I WILL BE OUT FOR DINNER. WE'LL BE BACK LATER TONIGHT.

I'M LEAVING YOU IN THE CAPABLE HANDS OF YOUR POP.

HERE, GINGER. CAN YOU OPEN THIS? MY HANDS ARE NO GOOD.

**REALITY CHECK**

JELL-O IS OUR MAIN DESSERT FEATURE TONIGHT - WE ALSO HAVE A CHOCOLATE CAKE AND APPLE PIE

YOU HAD ME AT 'JELL-O'!

**SPEED BUMP**

BOB?

FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

**CROSSWORD**

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8	9		10	11
		12		
13				
14	15	16	17	18
19				

**SUDOKU**

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

**Yesterday's solution**

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

**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**

- Transport for someone who cannot walk
- With nothing in it
- The outside ends of something
- Vanished
- Opposite of outer
- The country with Tokyo
- In all places
- Annoy or bother someone for fun
- A play
- Secret agent
- Require
- Sunbeams
- A boy's name
- Meat from a pig

**DOWN**

- A large boat
- Extremely
- A throbbing pain
- The sound of an explosion
- The leader of the USA
- Large-lettered words above items in a newspaper

**SOLUTION**

S	H	I	Z	E	K	N	I	T
A	A	P	P	I	E	A	S	T
E	A	S	T	O	B	I	R	E
W	E	A	L	T	H	N	I	
S	R	E	L	I	S	O		
T	W	O	U	N	D	E	D	
A	M	E	D	O	R			
P	L	O	E	D				
S	A	T	S					
A	N	C	H	O	R			



## SRINU VAITLA COMPLETES 25 YEARS AS DIRECTOR



Popular Telugu film director Srinu Vaitla has completed 25 years in the industry. He made his debut with *Nee Kosam*, starring Ravi Teja and Maheswari as the lead pair. The film was released on December 3, 1999. "I was disappointed when my first film was halted. At that time, Ravi Teja, who is a close friend of mine, had immense confidence in my talent," recalls Srinu Vaitla about his debut project. Determined to make his mark, he wrote a story that suited a budget-friendly film, with Ravi Teja playing the lead. "New producers took up the project, but the film faced several hurdles. Thanks to Ravi Teja's support, I was able to complete it," he said. Media baron and producer Ramoji Rao saw the film, liked it and purchased it outright. "He actually stepped in like a real producer, settled some dues related to the film and ensured its release," said Srinu. Actor Nagarjuna also watched the film and later offered him a directorial project. *Nee Kosam* went on to win seven Nandi Awards, including Best Debut Director, Best Actress and Best Screenplay Writer. At the time, Ravi Teja had been playing small roles and was introduced as a lead actor in Krishna Vamsi's *Sindhooram*. "He is a talented actor and that's why I chose him as the lead for my debut film," said Srinu. The duo

worked hard on *Nee Kosam* and it performed reasonably well at the box office. Ramoji Rao's contribution to its release led to Srinu's second project, *Anandam*, which he directed under Rao's banner. "Ramoji Rao appreciated my debut work and offered me another opportunity," said the director.

Reflecting on his journey, Srinu expressed happiness at completing 25 years as a filmmaker. "From my childhood, I wanted to be a director. After graduating, I moved to Chennai to pursue my dream," he recalled. "My passion for cinema and direction has driven me all these years. I never imagined I would complete 25 years in this industry. My career is filled with magical and memorable moments," he added.

When asked to name his top films, Srinu listed *Anandam*, *Venky*, *Ready*, *Dookudu* and *Dhee*. Addressing the speculation about directing a Tamil remake of *Dookudu* with Ajith, he clarified, "I was working on *Badshah* back then, which turned out to be a huge blockbuster. As a result, I couldn't take up the remake. However, I don't regret it."

Srinu also emphasised staying updated with the latest technology and trends in cinema. "Technology evolves rapidly, and I make an effort to keep up with it. Filmmaking is much easier now compared to earlier times," he remarked. Talking about his upcoming project, he shared, "I have completed 70% of the story and will announce the project details soon."

With a career spanning two and a half decades, Srinu Vaitla continues to evolve, cementing his legacy as one of Telugu cinema's leading directors.



### Ariaana, Viviana Manchu shine in *Kannappa's* new poster

Vishnu Manchu has been consistently sharing updates from his prestigious film *Kannappa*, slated for release on April 25, 2025. Directed by Mukesh Kumar Singh, the film boasts an ensemble cast of seasoned actors. As part of the promotional strategy, the makers have been unveiling first-look posters and updates every Monday.

Now, on this Monday, coinciding with their birthday, the first look of Ariaana and Viviana Manchu was revealed. The twin girls are seen in tribal attire, enacting Lord Shiva's iconic pose. They will appear in a song that delves into the story and significance of Sri Kalahasti and its legend.

Expressing his pride and joy, Vishnu Manchu shared, "I can't wait for everyone to witness the magic my little mommies create on screen," he added. Vishnu Manchu's father and versatile actor Mohan Babu is also playing a significant role in it. Alongside him, Sarath Kumar, Arpit Kumar, Prabhas, Akshay Kumar, Mohanlal and Kajal Agarwal will be seen playing important roles.

### Chandrika Ravi embodies the sizzling spirit of Silk Smitha

Silk Smitha, a legendary actress known for her iconic special songs across South Indian cinema, remains an enduring figure in Indian film history. Having starred in numerous Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam films, her untimely death in 1996 under mysterious circumstances left an indelible mark on the industry.

On Monday, on the occasion of Silk Smitha's birthday, STRI Cinemas has announced an official biopic titled *Silk Smitha - Queen of the South*. The film will star Chandrika Ravi in the titular role and will be directed by Jayaram Sankaran. Produced by SB Vijay Amirtharaj, the project aims to celebrate Silk Smitha's life and legacy.

To mark this special announcement, the makers unveiled an exclusive video offering audiences a glimpse into the essence of Silk Smitha. Production is set to begin in early 2025 and the film promises to delve deep into the captivating life of the beloved actress.

Fans and cinephiles are eagerly awaiting this tribute to an icon who left an unforgettable legacy in Indian cinema.



### Nagababu's tweet targets Allu Arjun?

Allu Arjun's much-anticipated film *Pushpa 2* is set to hit the screens on December 5, with many premiere shows scheduled for December 4 at increased ticket prices. However, a notable absence has caught fans' attention — members of the Mega family have not posted anything on social media about the film.

Adding fuel to speculation, Nagababu, Chiranjeevi's brother, shared a quote by Swami Vivekananda that seemed to take a dig at Allu Arjun. The quote read: "If you realise you have taken the wrong path, correct your course immediately. The longer you wait, the harder it becomes to return to where you truly belong" (sic).

The context behind this strained dynamic dates back to the Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections when Allu Arjun visited his friend and YSRCP candidate Shilpa Ravi Chandra Reddy's house in Nandyal. Reportedly, this visit

occurred despite Chiranjeevi advising him against it. At the same time, Ram Charan was in Pithapuram to support his uncle Pawan Kalyan's Assembly constituency campaign. Since then, reports suggest a growing distance between Allu Arjun and the rest of Chiranjeevi's family.

This rift became a hot topic not only within the film industry but also among fans.

Adding to the tension, Allu Arjun defended his visit to Nandyal during a public event, emphasising that he would always stand by his friends, even as chief guest at another movie's event. His steadfast stance reportedly further irked Chiranjeevi and his family. As the release of *Pushpa 2* approaches, fans are left wondering if this family discord will overshadow the celebrations.

### SANCHARI SANCHARI SONG FROM SARANGAPANI IS OUT

Director Mohan Krishna Indraganti is coming up with *Sarangapani Jathakam*, starring Priyadarshi and Roopa Koduvayur. The film is an entertainer and the teaser released a few days back hints at loads of comedy. Sivalenka Krishna Prasad is producing the film, which hits the screens on December 20.

Before the film's release, the second song, *Sanchari Sanchari*, has been released. Sanjith Hegde has sung the song, written by Ramajogayya Sastry, with music composed by Vivek Sagar.

Talking about the song, director Indraganti said, "Whether you write an entertainment or a full-length comedy story, emotion is essential for any story. My film *Sarangapani Jathakam* is a complete comedy, but it also has many emotional scenes."

He added that the main theme of his movie is love. "It's the story of a man torn between the woman he loves dearly and his beliefs," said Indraganti. The song *Sanchari* comes at a point where he loses the woman he loves dearly due to his beliefs.

"It will appear in the second half and change the course of the story," he added. There are only four songs in this film and its *Sanchari* that directs the narrative of the story.



### YADHA YADHA SAVVADI FROM KANYAKUMARI IS A MELODIOUS DELIGHT

The lyrical song *Yadha Yadha Savvadi* from the upcoming movie *Kanyakumari*, starring Geeth Saini and Sree charan Rachakonda, has been released. Directed and produced by Srujan Attada under the banner of Radical Pictures, *Kanyakumari* is set against a

village backdrop and is gearing up for a grand theatrical release.

The film has completed all preparations, and this song release marks an exciting milestone for the project. The lyrics for *Yada Yada Savvadi* were penned by Srujan Attada, with Anurag Kulkarni and Jayasri Pallem lending their beautiful voices to the track. The music, com-

posed by Ravi Nidamarthi, beautifully complements the song's vibe.

The teaser for *Kanyakumari*, which was released by actor Vijay Deverakonda, has already garnered a positive response. Additionally, the song *Kathilanti Pillave* has also been well-received. The team will soon announce the official release date for the film.



### Filmfare honour for SDT's *Satya*

Actor Sai Durgha Tej and Swathi Reddy starred in a short film titled *Satya*. The film received appreciation from all corners and the makers submitted it to the Filmfare Short Film Awards. Now, the film has won the award in the People's Choice category at the Filmfare Short Film Awards 2024. The team shared the joyous moment of winning this award on social media. Sai Durgha Tej thanked the Filmfare jury and the audience who voted for the film. The team took a picture together with the black lady. The entire team expressed their gratitude for this special accolade.

Swathi Reddy portrayed the leading actress in the short film. Harshith and Hanshita are the producers. Naveen Vijay Krishna, a childhood friend of Sai Durgha Tej, directed the film. The film's story is based on the sacrifices and challenges faced by soldiers.





# Bumrah will go down as one of the greatest pacers: Head

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Australia batter Travis Head feels Jasprit Bumrah will go down as "one of the greatest fast bowlers to play the game" and said he'll proudly tell his grandchildren about the formidable challenge of facing the Indian pace maestro. Bumrah reinforced his status as the best bowler in the world with a stunning performance in the opening Test in Perth which India won by 295 runs. "Jasprit will go down as probably one of the greatest fast bowlers to play the game. I think we're finding that at the moment -- how challenging he can be, and it's nice to play against that," Head told reporters on Monday. "It's gonna be nice to go back and look at your career and go tell the grandkids that you faced him. So not a bad series of playing with him. Hopefully I'll face a few more times, but he has been challenging," he added. Bumrah, who was captaining the visiting side, led from the front with a match-haul of 8/72,

including several pivotal wickets, showcasing his exceptional form. His stellar performance was a testament to his remarkable consistency this year. Earlier this year, he was named Player-of-the-Series in the T20 World Cup, where he played a key role in India's title-winning campaign. Head was the sole Australian batter to get a fifty in Perth as the top order comprising the likes of Steve Smith, Usman Khawaja and Marnus Labuschagne struggled but the explosive middle-order batter is certain his teammates won't be approaching him for tips. "They are not coming to me for batting tips, that's for sure. Everyone goes about it in different ways. We'll have a chat over the next three or four days. "(Bumrah) is so unique, and that's with any of the bowlers, really. Every (batter) picks up different cues and goes about it in a different way." The Australian squad reconvened on Monday after a short break. The two sides will now play a pink ball Test in Adelaide from Friday



at the same venue where India were all out for 36 in their previous visit in 2020. Recalling that match, Head said, "I

remember that it was a quick test, so it was good. We got to enjoy all of the bits of Adelaide afterwards. "It'll be nice to do that again.

Don't know if we can revisit. It wouldn't take very long to watch it. I don't think that will happen this week."

While India played a day-night pink-ball game against the Prime Ministers XI over the weekend, Australia last played a pink ball Test in January. "It's been a long time since we played one (pink ball), India got another look at it last night. Everyone's well experienced enough, especially that team as well, that in your international level. "I think you can accustomed to things pretty quickly. I don't think it'll take them long to be prepared for it, and same as us." No divide in the team Head asserted that there is no "divide" between Australia's batting batting and the bowling unit. A possible rift within the team was suggested following a comment from Josh Hazlewood during the first Test. "We hold high expectations for both sides (batting and bowling) and it's a very individualised sport," Head said. "So batters, we want to hold our own - we know how good our bowlers have been for us in the past and they've got us out of

trouble a lot. As a batting group, we know that if we get enough runs on the board, we put ourselves in a great position. "As a batter myself, I try to take a whole lot of pride in what I do, and knowing that if I can set it up for the big boys, that they can knock it down for us, so definitely no divide," Head said. Australia have dealt with adversity well Head backed the Australians to bounce back from their horror show in Perth. "This team has dealt with adversity well. The small amount that we have had in the last three or four years, we have played well. "We've had some challenging times and a couple of challenging Tests last year. We didn't have a very good week. That's fine. But we have got four more opportunities to do it, we will crack on as we do, as we have done for the last few years. "Over the last couple of years, there's a lot of teams that lost the first Test or gone down in the series and brought it back and played really well."



## We have found the right mix: Hardik Pandya

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya has expressed his delight at the way things panned out for them in the IPL mega auction in Jeddah and said the franchise has "found the right mix" of players. The star all-rounder said they had a clear plan of having a blend of youth and experienced players. "I was in touch with the table as well, exactly who we are going for, and I think we came out pretty well from the auction and how the team is looking," he said in an MI video posted on social media. "We have found the right mix, which is experienced players, like Boult (Trent Boult) is back, Deepak Chahar, who has been around, and at the same time, young guns like Will Jacks, Robin Minz and Ricketon, who are fresh. "So, I think we have done pretty well. We have covered all the bases." Explaining the auction dynamics, Pandya admitted that while the entire process is thrilling, it is important to keep the emotions in check, especially while going for a particular player the team desperately needs. "The auction dynamics are always tricky. When you are watching it live, it is very exciting, and the emotions are

always up and down because you want this player," he explained. "But sometimes, you just lose. (So), it's very important to not be very so emotional, and in the end, we have to create a whole team." "Mumbai Indians has the facility to make them flourish" MI bought quite a few uncapped young players -- Naman Dhir, Robin Minz, Vignesh Puthur, Arjun Tendulkar, Bevan John Jacobs, Venkata Satyanarayana Penmetsa, Raj Angad Bawa, Shrijith Krishnan and Ashwani Kumar. Referring to these youngsters, Pandya urged them to work hard and said that MI possesses the best facilities to help them develop into top cricketers. "My message to all the young guns who are joining Mumbai Indians this year is that if you are here, you have that spark, you have that talent, which the scouts have seen," he stated. "They found me, they found Jasprit, they found Krunal, they found Tilak. They all eventually played for the country. "All you have to do is show up, train, work hard, and the best part is that Mumbai Indians has the facility to make them flourish."

## Australia quashes rumours of divide in their camp ahead of pink ball Test

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Australian big-hitter Travis Head on Monday asserted there is no "divide" between his team's struggling batters and its potent bowling attack as they geared up to bounce back in the pink-ball Test against India, starting here on December 6. Australia suffered an embarrassing 295-run loss as their batters struggled to cope with the bouncy Perth pitch, managing just 104 & 238 in their two innings. On day three of the Test, pacer Josh Hazlewood, who picked four wickets in first essay, made a comment that seemed to suggest frustration with the team's batters. Triggering speculation of tensions in the dressing room. Head said there was no reason to doubt the dressing room dynamics. "It can be put to bed. We hold high expectations for both sides (batting and bowling) and it's a very individualised sport," Head said. "So batters, we want to hold our own - we know how good our bowlers have been for us in the



past and they've got us out of trouble a lot. As a batting group, we know that if we get enough runs on the board, we put ourselves in a great position. "As a batter myself, I try to take a whole lot of pride in what I do, and knowing that if I can set it up for the big boys, that they can knock it down for us, so definitely no divide," he explained. Hazlewood was questioned about Australia's approach to day four, given they were 12/3 in pursuit of 534. "You probably have to ask one of the batters that question

probably, I am sort of relaxing and trying to get a bit of treatment, and I am looking mostly to next Test, Hazlewood had said. The Australian top-order comprising the likes of Usman Khawaja, Steve Smith and Marnus Labuschagne crumbled at Perth. Labuschagne, in particular, has been woefully out of form and several former players have called for his exclusion from the side but Head backed him to get some big runs. "Knowing Marnus, he would have worked on a few things over the last few days and it

would have been hard to probably keep him out of the nets," he said. "No doubt over the next few days we'll see him working hard again. He's a guy that has played well over a long period of time. He would like some more runs -- so would everyone." Trailing the five match series 0-1, Australia have their backs against the wall as the race for the World Test Championship final has also intensified. However, Head backed his team to bounce back from the horror show in Perth. "This team has dealt with adversity well. The small amount that we have had in the last three or four years, we have played well," he said. "We didn't have a very good week. That's fine. But we have got four more opportunities to do it, we will crack on as we do, as we have done for the last few years. "Over the last couple of years, there's a lot of teams that lost the first Test or gone down in the series and brought it back and played really well," he added.

## Rohit will either open or bat at No. 3, reckons Harbhajan

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Captain Rohit Sharma will either open or bat at number three in the Adelaide Test against Australia, reckoned former India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh on Monday while ruling out the possibility of a senior star coming in at number five or six. KL Rahul and Yashasvi Jaiswal added a record 201 runs for the opening stand during the second innings of the Perth Test, which the visitors won by 295 runs with plenty of time left in the match. "I don't see Rohit coming in at number five or six. Either Rohit will open with Yashasvi Jaiswal, with KL Rahul coming in at number three, or he will bat no later than number three," Harbhajan told PTI on the sidelines of the inauguration of the World Tennis League here. "Number six for Rohit wouldn't be in best interest of the team. Your top four in batting order should be the four pillars and someone like Rohit at the top would only



add greater fillip." The second Test, a day/night affair to be played with the pink ball, will begin at Adelaide Oval on Friday. Harbhajan described the move to play Washington Sundar over R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja in the series opener as a massive step. "Washington had showed during the New Zealand series that he is ready to take over the mantle from Ashwin in coming days," the "Turbanator" said. When asked if Ashwin's age is a factor, he said :I don't think 38 is old. He is not a 58-year-old. But yes, after so many years, the shoulders do experience fatigue and wear and tear, so the zip can just be a bit less."

## India beat Japan by 211 runs in Under-19 Asia Cup

PTI ■ SHARJAH

Mohamed Amaan led from the front with an unbeaten century, while KP Karthikeya and opener Ayush Mhatre made fifties to hand India a comfortable 211-run victory over minnows Japan in the Under-19 Asia Cup here on Monday. Amaan slammed an unbeaten 122 off just 118 balls, a knock studded with only seven boundaries, after India were invited to bat. Besides Amaan, Karthikeya made 57 off 49 balls with the help of five fours and one six, while Mhatre's fiery 29-ball 54-run knock featured six boundaries and four hits over the fence. C Andre Siddarth (38), Hardik Raj (25 not out), and Vaibhav Suryavanshi (23) also played useful knocks to help India post a mammoth 339 for 6 in their 50 overs. Hugo Kelly (2/42) and Kiefer Yamamoto-Lake (2/84) took two wickets each for Japan. It was an easy outing for the Indians, as they restricted Japan to 128 for 8, securing their first win in Group A. However, the Indians will be a little disappointed, as they failed to bowl out Japan.



After picking up two wickets earlier in the day, Kelly returned as Japan's top-scorer with a gritty 50 off 111 balls. Charles Hinze remained unbeaten on 35. For India, Karthikeya (2/21), Hardik Raj (2/9), and Chetan Sharma (2/14) shared six wickets between them. India had lost to arch-rivals Pakistan by 43 runs in their tournament opener. India will play United Arab Emirates in their final group game on Wednesday. The top two teams from each group will qualify for the semifinals, scheduled for December 6, with the final slated for December 8.

## Hosts India open against Hong Kong in 20th Asian Women's Handball Championship

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hosts India will look to make a strong start when they face Hong Kong in their opening match of the 20th Asian Women's Handball Championship, which kicks off here on Tuesday. India is hosting the tournament for the first time, and the 25-member squad, captained by Diksha Kumari, faces a tough challenge against some of Asia's top teams. India is placed in Group B alongside powerhouses Japan, Iran, and Hong Kong. In addition to their opener against Hong Kong, India will take on Iran on December 4 and Japan on December 6 at the Indira Gandhi Arena here. The top two teams from each group will advance to the semi-finals, with the top four securing spots in the 2025



World Women's Handball Championship. As part of their preparation, the team underwent a rigorous training camp at the NCO SAI Centre in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, under head coach Sachin Chaudhary. "Our focus in the training camp was on addressing the gaps from our previous outings and building a cohesive, unified team. We worked hard to strengthen our

collective game," said Sachin, who also led India in the 2022 AWHC, in a release. The team features standout players like Menika, who was named in the Team of the Tournament at the 7th Asian Women's Club League Championship, Bhavana Sharma and Priyanka Thakur from India's historic 2022 Asian Women's Junior Championship gold-winning team.

## Women's Asian Champions Trophy win was important for India for LA 28 buildup, says Rani Rampal

PTI ■ ROHTAK

Former captain Rani Rampal believes the Asian Champions Trophy title was an important feat for the Indian women's hockey team as it kick started its preparation for the Los Angeles Olympics on a rousing note. The Indian women's hockey team produced a dominant show to win its third Asian Champions Trophy title after struggling to win matches the entire year, which culminated in its failure to qualify for the Paris Games. "The Asian Champions trophy win was very important for our women's hockey team in terms of build up. It started the buildup for 2028 LA Olympics. It's a good start. Under coach Harendra Singh

the team will do well," Rani told PTI. The-29-year-old signed off her career as one of India's most decorated hockey players after leading the women's team to its best-ever finish at the Olympics -- a fourth show at the Tokyo Games in 2021. She was roped in as the national coach for sub-junior women's team before she officially announced her retirement last month. "My experience was great, learnt a lot while working with the sub juniors. They were young girls who were coming from similar background as me, it was easy to understand their issues and to guide them," Rani said. "I told them 'if I can do it (be successful) then all of you can also do it.' They need



guidance and I tried to give that to them by sharing my experience with them," she

said of her experience as a mentor for the Soorma Hockey Club in the upcoming Hockey India

League, which will also have a women's tournament for the first time.

As a coach and mentor she hopes to help youngsters manage the burden of expectations. "I am going to be a mentor for Soorma club so I will try my best to fulfil that role to the best of my abilities. There is a lot of pressure on young athletes to perform mentally and emotionally. So I will like to help them. "Pressure is normal but I will try and tell them how to perform even under pressure. So I will try my best to share my experience and knowledge that I have gathered over the years with them," she said. Asked if she aspires to coach the Indian women's team in

the future, she said "One task at one time, I want to focus on the role I have for the next two months." Hockey was among sports like badminton, wrestling and cricket that were axed from the official programme for the Commonwealth Games 2026 in Glasgow, Scotland, a decision that has left Rani disappointed. "It is quite said hockey has been removed from the CWG because when hockey wins a medal it's not one but 18 medals. Imagine 18 players come from different places, villages. Even if they come from 8 different states they inspire so many children from those states. "This tournament is good and the CGF (Commonwealth Games Federation) should think about the decision," she said.

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