

No CM got an opportunity like Revanth Reddy in history as he is looking after the Education Ministry. So he should take a political decision to implement a Common School System in Telangana. The Common School System will free parents from spending unnecessarily on their children's education. The BRS admin destroyed the education system and it would crash if the Congress continues in the same manner



- Katipally Venkatramana Reddy, BJP's Kamareddy MLA

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DON'T MISS...

7 students down with food poisoning

In Nalgonda district, seven students from the PA Pally Model School Hostel fell ill on Tuesday due to food poisoning. The students started vomiting and were immediately rushed to the Devarakonda hospital. From Monday night, several students in the hostel had been feeling unwell, but the hostel authorities kept it under wraps and did not disclose the situation. The medical team treated ...

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'They need empathy, not sympathy'

President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday emphasized the need for empathy, inclusivity and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities (Divyangjan), and asserted that their empowerment is a collective responsibility of society and the government. Speaking at the National Awards ceremony for individuals and organisations working for the welfare of Divyangjan, Murmu called for a shift in societal attitudes.

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'No blanket ban on Indian shrimp in US'

The US has not imposed a blanket ban on shrimp imports from India, including Kerala, and the restrictions are targeted only at wild-caught shrimp, the government said on Tuesday. In a written reply to Lok Sabha, Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, said, "USA has not implemented a blanket ban on Indian shrimp imports including Kerala. The restrictions are specifically targeted at wild-caught ..."

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Oz batters can take on Bumrah: Carey

Alex Carey on Tuesday maintained Australia are a "united group", confident that their "world-class" batters will come up with better plans to counter India's pace threat Jasprit Bumrah in the upcoming pink-ball Test here. With their backs against the wall, India came out all guns blazing in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series opener at Perth to win by a massive 295 runs with Bumrah (5/30 and 3/42) ripping apart Australia's batting in each innings. The heavy margin of defeat ...

-SPORTS



'Fourth City on global scale'

Will develop it as a global city, comparable to New York, Tokyo & Singapore

I will honour PM Modi if he okays Rs 1.5 lakh crore for Hyd: CM Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy declared that if Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister Kishan Reddy sanction Rs 1.5 lakh crore for Hyderabad's development, he would personally honour the PM at a public meeting at the Parade Ground attended by 10 lakh people. He criticised the BJP-led Central Government for neglecting the city's pressing needs and urged Union Minister Kishan Reddy to secure funds for trans-

formative projects. Speaking at the 'Hyderabad Rising' event, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy laid out an ambitious plan to develop Hyderabad's Fourth City into a global city, comparable to New York, Tokyo, Singapore and other metropolises. Addressing a gathering on the occasion of his government completing one year, he urged the public to focus on preparing for the future with a comprehensive development strategy. "We have 15,000 acres, another 15,000 acres of forest land is

also there. Another 15,000 acres are needed for Future City. Farmers should give lands for that," Revanth said. He highlighted Hyderabad's unique global position and credited the Congress's foresight in encouraging the development of the IT industry, Krishna and Godavari drinking water supply projects and the Hyderabad Metro. The Chief Minister announced plans to construct a Rs 35,000 crore, 360-km Regional Ring Road with radial roads to connect Hyderabad's

outskirts seamlessly. He also unveiled proposals for an international fruit market with cold storage facilities at Ibrahimpatnam and the development of a 'Future City' spanning 40,000 to 50,000 acres, designed to rival the world's best cities. He strongly criticised the BRS for neglecting Tank Bund and failing to deliver promised developments in the Old City. He accused the BRS government of overlooking essential infrastructure and said the Congress is committed to addressing these gaps.

'Credit goes to Cong govts'

Krishna, Godavari projects solved Hyd drinking water crisis: CM

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy credited the Congress for resolving Hyderabad's drinking water crisis through projects like the Krishna Drinking Water Supply Project and the Godavari Drinking Water Supply Project. Speaking at the virtual inauguration of the water supply projects of the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB), the Chief Minister emphasised the foresight of the Congress government in addressing the city's needs. The CM said that the three phases of the Krishna Project and

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'CM will launch Indiramma Housing Scheme tomorrow'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy will kick off the Indiramma Housing Scheme by launching an app on December 5, Revenue and Housing Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said. Addressing a meeting in the Julurupadu mandal of Bhadrachal Kothagudem district on Tuesday along with Wyrva MLA Ramdas Naik, he said the government will allocate 3,500 houses in all Assembly constituencies. He said that officials would tour villages from December 6



Revenue and Housing Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy driving a tractor in erstwhile Khammam district on Tuesday

to identify beneficiaries and that the government would give houses to everyone irrespective of political affiliations. He said the BRS Government had made the state debt-riddled and that the Congress government is paying Rs 6,500 crore as interest every month for the debts. He said the government will allot 4.5 lakh houses in the first phase of the scheme and that there is no need for people to pay money to brokers to get Indiramma houses. He said the BRS government 'forgot' the poor and took decisions 'favouring' the rich.

Centre clears formation of Telangana State Grameena Bank

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Centre has approved the amalgamation of the two Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) in Telangana into a single entity, the Telangana State Grameena Bank, which will cover the entire state. The decision, conveyed through an order dated November 13, 2024, by the Department of Financial Services (DFS), marks a significant step in streamlining rural banking services in the state. The Telangana State Grameena Bank will formally begin operations

on January 1, 2025. The Grameena Bank will be the largest banking network in Telangana, with around 950 branches and 17 regional offices. The long-pending proposal, initially raised after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh in 2014, has finally been implemented after agreements between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh governments on the division of assets and liabilities. A consensus on the matter was reached during a meeting convened by the Secretary of DFS on October 4, 2024, paving the way for the bank's formation.

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'No student must suffer due to financial problems'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Minister for Roads, Buildings and Cinematography, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, has reiterated his commitment to ensuring that no talented student in the state is forced to abandon education due to

financial problems. He expressed his deep concern for students struggling to carry on studies and emphasized that supporting deserving individuals is a service to society. Venkat was moved to act after coming to know

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TG govt to copy Maha strategy

NAVEENA GHANATE
 naveena.ghanate@gmail.com
 ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana appears to be taking cues from the success of the Maharashtra Government in the recent Assembly elections, with Congress legislators indicating that the state government plans to implement schemes modelled on Maharashtra's 'Ladki Bahin' and 'Ladle Kisan' initiatives. These schemes, which were instrumental in propelling the Mahayuti alliance to victory in Maharashtra, are now influencing the Telangana Government and its political roadmap. A Congress legislator said that the Telangana Government will launch

The legislator said on condition of anonymity, "We will implement the Mahalakshmi scheme just like the Ladki Bahin scheme in Maharashtra. See how the results have come. There is no urgency to roll out the scheme. Meanwhile, we are strengthening Self Help Groups. There is a massive positive wave among them"

the Mahalakshmi Scheme at an appropriate time, aimed at provid-

ing an allowance of Rs 2,500 per month to women. The legislator said on condition of anonymity, "We will implement the Mahalakshmi scheme just like the Ladki Bahin scheme in Maharashtra. See how the results have come. There is no urgency to roll out the scheme. Meanwhile, we are strengthening Self Help Groups. There is a massive positive wave among them." The legislator acknowledged the immediate electoral benefits the schemes could deliver. Chief Minister Eknath Shinde seemed to be hailing the government's 'Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana', commonly known as the 'Ladki Bahin'

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TG registers jump in revenue from property registrations

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana witnessed an increase in revenue from property registrations during November. The state earned an additional income of Rs 32.96 crore compared to the same period last year. The jump is attributed to an increase in the number of registration documents processed and the positive trend in residential property registrations.

In November 2024, a total of 1,19,317 documents were registered, generating a revenue of Rs 1,160.75 crore. This marks a 13.38% growth in document registrations and

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Now, responsibility is yours

PM dedicates to nation implementation of 3 new criminal laws

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday dedicated to the nation the successful implementation of the three new criminal laws here. These laws -- Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam -- came into effect on July 1, replacing the British-era Indian Penal Code, Code of

Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively. Chandigarh has become the country's first administrative unit where 100 per cent implementation of the three laws has been done. Speaking on the occasion, the prime minister said the new criminal laws represent a concrete step towards realising the ideals enshrined in the Constitution for the benefit of all citizens.

Creating flood-free urban areas a challenge: HYDRAA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As Hyderabad grapples with increasing flood risks, the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets Protection Agency (HYDRAA) has stepped up its efforts to implement innovative strategies. At the GeoSmart India 2024 conference held at HICC, HYDRAA Commissioner Ranganath outlined the city's flood mitigation initiatives. Emphasising the growing challenge of creating flood-free urban areas, he noted, "Even two centimeters of rain causes severe waterlogging, leading to traffic jams, fuel wastage, and rising pollution levels." Despite Hyderabad's annual rainfall of 89 centimeters being lower

than Telangana's 130 centimeters, sudden, heavy downpours exacerbate urban

HYDRAA is addressing these issues through lake restoration, clearing illegal encroachments, and preserving parks and government lands

flooding. Alarmingly, only 0.95 per cent of rainwater seeps into the ground due

to encroachments on lakes and drains, as well as rapid urban expansion. HYDRAA is addressing these issues through lake restoration, clearing illegal encroachments, and preserving parks and government lands. The historical Ameenpur Lake stands as a testament to HYDRAA success. After clearing encroachments, the lake has become a haven for migratory birds, including the 12-centimeter-long Red-breasted Flycatcher from Eastern Europe. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy celebrated this milestone by sharing a news article about the bird's arrival, calling it a sign of Hyderabad's ecological progress.

Account holders can have up to 4 nominees

LS passes Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Tuesday passed the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, which allows bank account holders to have up to four nominees in their accounts. Another proposed change relates to redefining 'substantial interest' for directorships, which could increase to Rs 2 crore instead of the current limit of Rs 5 lakh, which was fixed almost six decades ago. The Bill piloted by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was approved by a voice vote. Replying to the debate on the Bill, Sitharaman said depositors will have the option of successive or



simultaneous nomination facility, while locker holders will have only successive nomination. She also said that since 2014, the Government and

Continued on Page 2

Jagan's confidence in YSRCP's return to power is surprising

Relying on God for one's own individual benefits is one thing and praying to God while interceding on behalf of others is quite another thing. But Andhra Pradesh' former chief minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, by declaring his confidence in God that He would decimate the Telugu Desam Party (which is leading the NDA government in the state) has introduced a surprising element in politics quite religiously. Even if he has put his trust and the entire responsibility on God for his party's return to power, the larger question is whether voters will buy his line of thinking.



was disproportionate to the Rs. 2.70 lakh crore he had distributed to various segments of voters in the name of welfare schemes. His father and undivided AP's former chief minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy had experienced a similar situation in the past when he was in the Opposition. But that experience drove him to victory with redoubled efforts. As the head of the opposition Congress, YSR faced the 1999 elections and subsequently lost due to strong political equations knitted at the national level. Because of the alliance between then chief minister & Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief N Chandrababu Naidu and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), YSR had to face defeat as victory of the Indian army in the

Jagan seems to be just coming out of the rude shock that he received in the 2024 Assembly elections, which yielded for YSRCP a tally that was disproportionate to the Rs. 2.70 lakh crore he had distributed to various segments of voters in the name of welfare schemes

Kargil War against Pakistan had turned the tide in favour of the alliance. Then Congress headed by YSR had emerged as the biggest ever opposition party in the history of combined Andhra Pradesh by bagging 91 seats out of 294 in the Legislative Assembly. As the head of a strong opposition party, YSR could register an impressive win in the 2004 elections and eventually

became the chief minister of the state. These results made YSR's dreams of becoming chief minister come true, considering that he had been waiting patiently for his turn for 23 years. Today Jagan, unlike his father YSR, is in a peculiar situation of failing to get for YSRCP the status of even principal opposition party in the Assembly. That apart, he is



struggling to keep his flock together amid desertions by party's senior leaders. It is clear that these turncoat leaders do not see good prospects for themselves in YSRCP. Even those leaders who had been enjoying plum posts or serving as Rajya Sabha members

have left the party, cutting short their tenure. YSRCP leaders and RS members Mopidevi Venkataramana Rao, Beeda Mastan Rao and R. Krishnaiah have resigned from the party. Now Jagan is firm to hit the roads again from the first month of the New Year to lend a patient hearing to party workers, for whom he understandably had no time during his stint as chief minister. He is planning to reach out to the cadre. He will be covering all districts of Andhra Pradesh by camping two days in each district. He has decided to elicit the opinions of grassroots level workers by having meetings in all the Assembly segments, besides addressing mandal- and village-level committees. Ultimately Jagan would mould those committees to raise voice against the 'misdeeds' of the

National Democratic Alliance government and highlighting the alleged non-implementation of 'Super Six' poll promises made by the NDA alliance, comprising TDP, Jana Sena and BJP. Social media will also be a weapon in the hands of the cadre of YSRCP. This broad-based plan of YSRCP in the state's political arena suggests that it is preparing quite early the 2029 Assembly polls. This time Jagan has changed his tack. Instead of targeting 175 seats in the state Legislative Assembly for the next elections, he wants to confine TDP's tally in the House to a single digit! One can construe it as a wreaking vengeance against TDP as YSRCP got only 11 seats against its target of winning all seats in the House in the last Assembly elections. Jagan has expressed his confidence that God would

make YSRCP marginalize TDP like that. He seems to have firm belief in God, though people would expect him to make his party a viable force to fight in the elections. For people, the issues that count include complete ban on liquor consumption, assurance on comprehensive pension scheme for employees, revision of power tariff in favour of people and stopping of privatisation of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. But YSRCP was never sympathetic towards these issues when it was in power. This apparently proved costly for YSRCP. Instead, YSRCP has been blaming its poor show on EVMS. Regardless of the 'confessions' that Jagan is expected to make during his upcoming road shows, YSRCP would do well to adopt a constructive approach to return to power.

Telangana Cong govt's record unmatched: Mahesh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Extending greetings to the people of Telangana, TPCC President B. Mahesh Kumar Goud said the TG Congress Government has undertaken development and social welfare programmes no government in any other state in the country has done.



Erstwhile Mahabubnagar district leaders welcome TPCC Chief B Mahesh Kumar Goud on Tuesday night after his Srisaillam tour

In a statement issued on Tuesday from Srisaillam, Mahesh said that this day last year saw the end of dictatorial rule in the state. He thanked the people, who were fed up with Gadi's rule, farmhouse rule, corruption and family rule, and gave majority to the Congress to form a government. The TPCC president congratulated Congress MLAs for winning elections by winning the public's hearts. He said that Telangana is rising due to the development and social welfare programmes launched by Chief Minister

Revanth Reddy, Dy. CM Bhatti Vikramarka and Ministers. "We kept our word by giving free bus travel facility for women in TGSRTC buses, increased to Rs 10 lakh the coverage of the Aarogyasri scheme, gave 200 units of electricity free every month and supplied LPG for Rs 500 a cylinder. We allotted Rs 21,000 crore to waive farm loans up to Rs 2 lakh helping 23 lakh farmers. We also

gave a bonus of Rs 500 per quintal for fine variety paddy. We have filled around 54,500 government posts in a year. The government is establishing a Skill University and Sports University and steps have been taken to check the drug trade," he said. He said the Musi Project is a wonderful scheme and added that development projects are being launched.

CPI gives 60% marks for Congress's one-year rule

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress' friendly party, the CPI, gave 60 per cent marks to the Congress government's one-year rule.

Revealing the marks on Tuesday, the CPI's state Secretary and its lone MLA, Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao, said that the Congress had passed with 60 per cent marks. He said the CPI will give 90 per cent to the Congress admin's performance when compared to that of the BRS Government.

Speaking to the media at the Maqdhoom Bhavan on Tuesday, Sambasiva Rao said there the Congress government must fulfil the assurances it had given to the people. "There is no coordination within the government. Praja Palana has failed. Ministers are not answering the phone calls of the public or that of MLAs," Sambasiva Rao said.

BJP MLA appeals to CM to introduce common school system

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP MLA from Kamareddy constituency Katipally Venkataramana Reddy addressed a letter on Tuesday to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy appealing the latter to implement common school system in the State.

In his letter, Venkataramana Reddy said that the economic development and human development depends on the education system and hence there is a need to reform the education system comprehensively in the State.

He opined that the quality education only prepares the persons useful resource to the nation. However, the previous BRS government destroyed the education system in the last

10 years in the State. Venkataramana Reddy said that the education system in Telangana would fall to a low level if the Congress government continued the education system in the same manner. He suggested the Congress government to do justice to the coming generations. Venkataramana Reddy said that as per the UDISC report, the students pursuing education in private schools are more in Telangana when compared with other South India states - Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. It is not good for the State education system and for the comprehensive development of children, he lamented. The Kamareddy MLA said

that FRC system is in implementation in several states of north India, however it is not in implementation in Telangana.

Stating that no CM got an opportunity like Revanth Reddy in the history as he is looking after the Education Ministry, Venkataramana Reddy said that the CM should take a political decision with will to implement a common school system in Telangana. The common school system will free the parents from spending unwanted expenditure on children's education. He appealed to the CM to strive to step first from Telangana for the rejuvenation of the nation with the introduction of the common school system.

Kiran asks Centre to help in cleaning Musi River

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress's Bhongir MP, Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, appealed to the Centre to provide financial and technical assistance for cleaning the Musi River. The MP laid a paper titled 'Matter Under Rule 377' in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday on the Musi Rejuvenation Project as a matter of environmental, social and economic importance for Telangana and urged the Centre to help with financial and technical assistance. In his paper, Kiran said the Musi Rejuvenation Project has great environmental, social and economic importance. He said that the Musi River, which was once a vital water source for Hyderabad and its surrounding regions, is now polluted due to untreated sewage and industrial effluents and encroachments on its banks and river bed. Around 40,000 acres of farmland in Nalgonda district irrigated by the Musi River is directly affected by the polluted water, while an additional 60,000 acres using borewells and small tanks suffer due to the contaminated groundwater.

TGSPSC hired 12,324 people, TGPRB 16,067

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In its first year, the Telangana Government has delivered on its promise to create a surge in employment opportunities, by appointing 54,520 people in its departments and boards. This achievement underscores the state's commitment to tackling unemployment and strengthening public services.

The Telangana State Public Service Commission (TGSPSC) led the way with 12,324 appointments, preceded by the Telangana State Police Recruitment Board (TGPRB), which facilitated 16,067 recruitments. The Medical and Health Recruitment Board (MHSRB) contributed by recruiting 7,378 candidates, while the Telangana Residential Educational Institutions Recruitment Board (TREI-RB) filled 8,304 posts.

In school education, the DSC recruited 10,006 teachers to improve the quality of education in government schools.

BRS opposes move to acquire Trimulgherry Football Ground land

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS spokesperson Krishank Manne expressed concern over a recent gazette notification of the Congress Government about land acquisition which threatens the Trimulgherry Football Ground. Known as the ground of Olympians Peter

Thangaraj, D. Kannan, T. Balaraman, and former Indian football team captain Victor Amalraj, this field has been the cradle of Indian football. Citing history, Krishank said that on June 16, 1981, Indira Gandhi had declared the ground as a "playfield," explicitly forbidding construction.

He said that in 2018, when the Army restricted sports and civilian entry, locals, including himself had protested and successfully revoked the order. "The Chief Minister claims to be a sports person and has expressed his love for football many times. Is this how he wants to treat playgrounds," Krishank said.

Now, responsibility ...

Continued from page 1

He said these laws signify the end of colonial-era laws. The colonial-era laws were the medium of atrocities and exploitation committed by the British when they ruled over India, Modi added. "The 1857 revolution shook the roots of the British rule and in 1860, they brought the IPC and later, the Indian Evidence Act and the CrPC framework came into being.

The purpose of those laws was to punish Indians and keep them enslaved," the prime minister said. Speaking on the occasion, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the three new laws have been fully implemented in Chandigarh. "Within three years of the registration of an FIR, one will get justice," he said. "Our criminal justice system will be the most modern system in the world," Shah added.

TG govt to...

Continued from page 1

scheme for the victory. The Ladki Bahin scheme of Maharashtra provided Rs 1,500 per month to women, with a promise of more payouts after the elections, directly influencing voter turnout and allegiance among women. Telangana's Mahalakshmi Scheme is likely to adopt a similar approach, offering substantial financial support to women to address their socio-economic problems.

On the agriculture front too Telangana plans to adapt lessons from Maharashtra's Ladle Kisan scheme. "We have seen the results of Ladle Kisan in Maharashtra. Ahead of local body elections, Rythu Bharosa will be a game changer. It is a continuation of the Rythu Bandhu scheme. So it cannot be stopped by the Election Commission. Will the BRS write a letter to stop it? Will they go against farmers?" sources said.

The strategic implementation of both the Mahalakshmi and enhanced Rythu Bharosa reflects the Telangana Government's recognition of social welfare schemes as a decisive electoral tool.

With legislators drawing parallels to the Mahatyuti alliance's Maharashtra triumph, these schemes could be vital in shaping Telangana's political landscape, especially as local body polls are approaching.

'No student ...

Continued from page 1

through Chityala Mandal Congress President Gudipati Lakshmi Narasimha about three students who had secured MBBS seats but were unable to pursue education due to financial problems.

The students - Gunde Yugender from Elikatta, Antati Shashi Prakash from Veliminedu, and Rudrarapu Kaveri from Gundrampally - were invited to Hyderabad by the Minister and he personally extended a grant of Rs 65,000 to each of them.

He also assured the students that he would pay their fees for the next five years through the Prateek Foundation, along with other educational expenses. Encouraging them to excel in their studies, Venkat expressed the hope that they would become doctors dedicated to serving the underprivileged and earn a good name for themselves and their families.

Centre clears ...

Continued from page 1

Former MP B. Vinod Kumar said the process had faced delays for nearly a decade due to disagreements between the two states over the division of resources. He said the initial notification for the amalgamation was issued in October 2014, but progress was stalled until the recent breakthrough. Over the years, employees of both Grameena Banks had repeatedly approached Vinod Kumar to speed up the process.

Continued from page 1

the Godavari Project, launched during Congress rule, ensured an adequate supply of drinking water to the city. He attributed Hyderabad's stability in drinking water availability to these landmark projects and described them as a testament to Congress's governance.

The Chief Minister also outlined efforts to transform Hyderabad into a clean and pollution-free global city. He noted that the government is prioritizing the rejuvenation of the Musi River and establishing sewage treatment plants to improve wastewater management.

We want more quotas for BCs in local body polls: Kavitha

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLC Kavitha, who also serves as the President of Telangana Jagruthi, said that she is actively advocating increased reservations in local body elections.

During a meeting on Tuesday, led by BRS MLA Mutha Gopal, representatives of the Gangaputra community visited Kavitha to express their gratitude for Telangana Jagruthi's recent submission of

a report on caste-based enumeration to the BC Dedicated Commission.

Speaking on the occasion, Kavitha reaffirmed her commitment to securing a quota for BC women and extending support to BC movements across the country. She recalled Telangana Jagruthi's past struggles on various social issues and assured that the fight for 'justice' would continue without compromise.

Credit goes ...

Basic infrastructure like drinking water supply and sewage handling is being upgraded to match global standards, making Hyderabad a competitive world-class city, he added. Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, who also addressed the event, said that the Congress Government allocated Rs 10,000 crore in the budget for urban development.

Transport and BC Welfare Minister and Hyderabad in-charge Minister Ponnampallani

Prabhakar spoke on the government's commitment to the development of the city and said that projects costing around Rs 7,000 crore are underway. He said that 600 MGD (million gallons per day) of water is being supplied daily to Hyderabad from distant sources, ensuring the city's drinking water needs are met.

He also said that additional reservoirs are being constructed to extend water supply to people living in areas near the Outer Ring Road. Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) are being established to improve the city's wastewater treatment infrastructure, he added.

Fourth City ...

Continued from page 1

The Chief Minister strongly countered Union Minister Kishan Reddy and challenged him to bring Rs 25,000 crore for Musi rejuvenation and additional funds for Metro expansion, Godavari water supply and the Regional Ring Road.

He accused the BJP of 'prioritising' Gujarat over Telangana and questioned Kishan's contributions as a Union Minister.

He emphasized the Congress government's efforts to make Hyderabad a pollution-free, safe and economically thriving city and pledged to allot Rs 1.5 lakh crore for Hyderabad's development. The CM also invited constructive proposals from the opposition

and experts. The Chief Minister stressed the need for Central assistance for key infrastructure projects. He pointed out the lack of financial support for Hyderabad's Metro expansion, which requires Rs 35,000 crore, and demanded Rs 7,000 crore for bringing Godavari waters to the city.

He also emphasised the need for Rs 50,000 crore for the Regional Ring Road and radiation road network and asked Kishan Reddy to act swiftly. "Instead of blocking progress, bring funds for the Musi Project and provide affordable housing for the poor," Revanth said.

He accused the Central Government of 'ignoring' Hyderabad and 'prioritizing

Gujarat with projects like the GIFT City.

"What have you given to Telangana?" he asked, questioning Kishan's contributions as a Union Minister. "You can sleep in the Musi or drown in it, but nothing will change," the CM said.

Revanth contrasted Hyderabad's potential with other metro cities, outlining the city's resilience against challenges like floods, pollution and traffic issues that plague cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Bengaluru.

He also announced plans for cleaning the Musi River, construction of water harvesting wells in 141 locations and transformative urban development projects.

TG registers ...

Continued from page 1

a 2.92% increase in revenue compared to November 2023, when 1,05,235 documents yielded Rs 1127.79 crore.

Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) areas recorded significant growth, with 625 documents contributing to Rs 21.09 crore in additional revenue. In non-HMDA regions, 3,513 document registrations brought in Rs 202.78 crore, boosting the state's revenue.

The surge was particularly prominent in residential properties, including individual homes and housing complexes, compared to commercial properties. This indicates a growing demand for residential spaces, signalling a positive trajectory in Telangana's real estate sector.

City Pioneer

the pioneer

HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | DECEMBER 4, 2024

03

430 grievance applications received at Prajavani

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
In all, 430 grievance applications were received in Prajavani on Tuesday at the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Praja Bhavan. According to the officials, 126 applications were received for Minority welfare department, 114 for the Panchayati Raj & Rural Development department, 46 for Revenue department, 54 for Electricity department, and 70 for other departments. Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Commission Dr G Chinna Reddy, and Special Officer of Public Administration D. Divya, participated in the programme and received the applications.

CITY EVENTS

Workshop

On Overcome Anxiety & Tension

Venue

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

Geetha Madhuri Live

Venue

Akan,
December 6, 9 pm onwards

Arijit Singh Live in concert

HSBC presale is live for now. General sale on October 23, 1 pm. Get tickets only on insider.in and paytm.

Venue

Concert in Hyderabad on December 7.

Texture art workshop

This workshop is suitable for artists of all levels, from beginners looking to explore new artistic horizons to seasoned artists seeking to enhance their skills and repertoire.

Venue

Multiple venues in Hyderabad till December 8

Elena Gabriele - OK!?

Venue

KLN Prasad Auditorium,
December 13, 8 pm onwards

NYU CARNIVAL

With singer KARTHIK

Venue

Boulder Hills, Hyderabad
December 31

Weekend kids cooking camp

Master cooking and baking in 09 fun weekends

Venue

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

Man loses money to fraudster

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 51-year-old male private employee from Hyderabad had applied for a personal loan through Reliance Capital thinking that it is the original website and lost Rs 2.10 lakh to fraudsters.

The victim had received a WhatsApp call from a person claiming to be a Reliance Capital executive and asked the victim to send his Aadhaar card, PAN card and bank statement. The victim shared the details and the scammer informed the victim that he was eligible for the loan and sent him a letter.

The scammer then asked the victim to make a payment towards mandatory insurance fees. Subsequently, the scammer called several times, requesting payments for various charges, including GST, processing fees, TDS tax charges, loan completion charges, withdrawal activation charges and late payment fees.

In total the victim paid Rs 2, 10,559 and realising he was cheated, the victim filed a complaint seeking help.

TGbPASS to be replaced by BuildNow system: Min

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BuildNow system will replace Telangana Building Permission Approval and Self-Certification System (TGbPASS) for building permissions in Telangana. Information and Technology Minister Sridhar Babu has detailed that the BuildNow system is being updated and officers trained as it will be inaugurated by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy by February 2025.

"The necessity to launch and the behind story for the system is that old system TGbPASS is taking 30 days for scrutiny work which has in return causing hundreds of applications pending and the Congress government will adopt the Artificial Intelligence (AI) methods to decrease the time for scrutiny and assist the people within less time."

On Tuesday, media professionals were given a demo on how the system works and each person was asked to wear an AI equipped system to identify the work of an officer on field. Minister Sridhar Babu, experiencing the system, elaborated that it has features of a lightning-fast scrutiny engine that processes even complex multi-tower buildings in under 5 minutes.

Unified single-window interface that eliminates citizens' need to visit multiple departments and switch between portals. Immersive 3D visualisation technology allows citizens to experience their buildings before construction. AI-powered assistants provide instant, accurate guidance on building regulations.



Minister Sridhar Babu, experiencing the Artificial Intelligence system

- It offers a single unified portal for drawing scrutiny and application processes, ensuring all functions are accessible in one place for a seamless user experience.
- BuildNow uses Augmented Reality (AR) technology to provide interactive and immersive visualisations, allowing citizens to experience buildings in their real-world context before construction.
- The platform includes an AI chat support system that allows users to receive immediate information on building rules and regulations. This feature enhances accessibility and allows citizens to navigate the application process effectively.

Ensuring the data privacy and transparency, the Minister said that no individual can tamper the data as Blockchain technology is used for verifiable tracking of every application.

DTPC Director Devender Reddy told The Pioneer,

"Within a month the change will be brought and TGbPASS will be replaced completely. The BuildNow website will come up and the process will be seamless with officers finishing the applications within no time. As there is no single window currently we are facing difficulty in coordinating

with various departments to know what building has what permission so this system will do all the work as a multi-storied building with 3 towers and 40+ floors took less than 2 minutes for scrutiny. Existing System is taking 2-30 days and BuildNow will do it in 5 minutes."

ORR Phase-II drinking water project to be ready this month

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) is advancing the ORR Phase-II Drinking Water Supply Project, which aims to provide a sustainable drinking water supply to villages within the Outer Ring Road (ORR) but outside the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits. With a total project cost of Rs 1200 crore, the initiative is set to be completed by this month-end.

The project, which began in January 2022 with a 24-month agreement period, is being executed in two packages. Package I, entrusted to M/s NCC Ltd., covers areas including Saroornagar, Maheshwaram, Shamsabad, Hayathnagar, Ibrahimpatnam, Ghatkesar and Keesara mandals. Package II, undertaken by M/s MEIL, encompasses Rajendranagar, Shamirpet, Medchal, Qutbullapur, RC Puram, Patancheru and Bollaram mandals.

As part of the project, 71 reservoirs with a combined capacity of 138 million liters



are planned, of which 61 reservoirs are completed and 10 are in the final stages. Additionally, 2,764 kilometers of inlet and outlet distribution pipelines are proposed, with 2,728 kilometers already laid, ensuring swift progress toward achieving the project's goals.

Nineteen reservoirs have already been inaugurated, serving key constituencies including Rajendranagar, Patancheru, Medchal and Maheshwaram. A total of 554.77 kilometers of pipeline has been laid in these areas, with a cumulative expenditure

of Rs 188.11 crore. The largest expenditure was recorded in Medchal, with a total cost of Rs 66.08 crore, followed by Maheshwaram at Rs 62.02 crore.

The project is being executed to meet the rising demand for drinking water in these regions. Officials have emphasised the importance of maintaining quality standards and timely completion.

This initiative is expected to significantly enhance the quality of life for residents in the identified villages, ensuring equitable access to clean drinking water.

Synchrony, Hyd recognised as a Silver Employer

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Synchrony, Hyderabad, has been recognised as a Silver Employer at the India Workplace Equality Index (IWEI) Summit 2024. Synchrony as the consumer financial services company, the largest provider of private-label credit cards in the US, received this recognition for its

commitment to creating an inclusive workplace for LGBT+ employees and allies.

The IWEI Silver Award is given to employers who show significant achievements in promoting LGBT+ inclusion. Synchrony's progressed from a Bronze Employer in 2023 to a Silver Employer in 2024 showcasing equality and inclusivity.

Rachana Bahadur, SVP and Country Head - India, expressed pride in this recognition, emphasising that diversity and inclusion are key to innovation. Additionally, Chumki Sen Gupta, Assistant VP at Synchrony, was named a finalist for the Ally Trailblazer of the Year award for her role in supporting the LGBT+ community.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

TSIC conducts Assistive Technology Summit

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Innovation Cell (TGIC) conducted Assistive Technology Summit 5.0, appealing for disabled-friendly toilets and tech solutions for Persons with Disabilities (PwD). The summit, held to celebrate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2024, took place at T-Works on Tuesday.

Addressing the inaugural, Ajit Rangnekar, Chief Innovation Officer (CIO) of TGIC, highlighted the need for an inclusive environment and urged the audience to focus on tech solutions and collaboration. Rangnekar emphasised TGIC's mission to make Telangana a hub of innovation for everyone. He stated that Telangana's ecosystem is committed to starting initiatives in Hyderabad and expand to meet the needs of Persons with Disabilities (PwD) and create unity. He assured that the State would provide infrastructure to support innovative solutions.

T-Works CEO Joginder Tanikella shared his interest in assistive technology, inspired by a fall detection band. He explained that the TGIC sum-



Ajit Rangnekar, Chief Innovation Officer of TGIC and T-Works CEO Joginder Tanikella light the lamp at T-Works on Tuesday

mit aims to support assistive tech innovators. He announced new initiatives, including T-Works centres in all 33 districts to create local prototype hubs, eliminating the need to travel to Hyderabad. He also announced the launch of an Assistive Tech Accelerator offering support without equity demands.

Meanwhile, Consumer of Assistive tech and Professor Shilpi Bhattacharya from Jindal Law School stressed that PwDs rely more on assistive technology than people. She called for tech to address diverse needs, citing examples

like difficulties in wearing shoes or leaving home.

The summit showcased motion-sensor wheelchairs, bionic hands and an innovative cane developed by 12 to 13-year-old students from Keystone School.

The students explained that the cane is specially designed with a vibration sensor and an audio caution system, which works through headphones to help blind individuals navigate public roads safely. They announced that the cane is available at an affordable price of Rs 500. The day-long summit also saw workshops and panel discussions.

Governor hosts celebrations

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma participated in the International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2024 celebrations at Durbar Hall, Raj Bhavan on Tuesday.

Addressing the gathering, the Governor appreciated the confidence, courage and achievements of persons with disabilities, saying, "I salute your resilience and ability to overcome challenges, serving as role models in society. Your excellence speaks volumes and I deeply admire you." He highlighted the need to raise awareness across all sections of society to address issues related to intellectual disabilities, helping to reduce their preva-

lence.

Encouraging persons with disabilities, or Divyangjan, to view themselves as having divine potential, the Governor stated that disability is merely a state of mind. It does not stop you from pursuing your dreams. True success is in fulfilling your highest potential as a human being. The future is accessible to all who persevere.

The Governor also appreciated children from schools for the hearing-impaired, visually impaired and others for cultural performances. He also distributed assistive devices such as wheelchairs, walkers and hearing aids. Later on, lunch was hosted for all the invitees.

HYDRAA gets Rs 50 cr for urban upkeep

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has sanctioned Rs 50 crore to the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Assets protection Agency (HYDRAA) for various urban development initiatives on Tuesday.

It was created for the conservation of government lakes and parks, restoration of ponds and rejuvenating them in and around Outer Ring Road (ORR). Principal Secretary (MA&UD) M Dana Kishore issued an order to this effect on Tuesday. The order stated that the funds can be spent on maintenance of the HYDRAA office, purchase of



new vehicles as well as paying bills related to demolitions so far. The State government, which has allocated Rs 200 crore for HYDRAA in the budget, has released Rs 50 crore.

In a separate programme,

the residents of Almasguda raised an alarm on park encroachment and got it saved by HYDRAA.

The park located in Sri Venkateshwara Colony, Almasguda, had fallen prey to encroachment. The trouble

began when a local individual removed children's play equipment and set up a container on the land, claiming it to be his own.

Alarmed by this act, the residents lodged a complaint with HYDRAA. Acting swiftly, HYDRAA officials inspected the layout of the area and confirmed that the land was designated as a park. Without delay, they removed the container and restored the park to the residents.

This timely action by HYDRAA brought relief to residents of Sri Venkateshwara Colony, who expressed their gratitude for safeguarding their community space.

SCR issues a travel advisory for safety of Sabarimala passengers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

South Central Railway (SCR) has issued a travel advisory for the safety of passengers on Sabarimala special trains operating from Secunderabad, Hyderabad and Kacheguda. These special trains, which are also running from Kakinada, Tirupati and Nanded, will stop at several stations along the route.

The Railways has requested the cooperation of passengers in ensuring a safe journey, particularly by refrain-



ing from lighting camphor or incense sticks and performing rituals like aarti inside the trains. Carrying inflam-

mable materials and starting fires on trains or railway premises is strictly prohibited due to the serious safety risks, including fire hazards.

Violating this rule is a punishable offense under The Railways Act-1989, with penalties including up to 3 years in prison or a fine, or both.

SCR is conducting intensive checks by Railways Protection Force (RPF) and Commercial department staff to prevent such practices and ensure safety for all passengers.



7 students of the PA Pally Model School take ill due to food poisoning

PNS ■ NALGONDA

In Nalgonda district, seven students from the PA Pally Model School Hostel fell ill on Tuesday due to food poisoning. The students started vomiting and were immediately rushed to the Devarakonda hospital.

From Monday night, several students in the hostel had been feeling unwell, but the hostel authorities kept it under wraps and did not disclose the situation. The medical team treated the affected students, and their condition is reported to be stable.

According to one of the students, the dinner served the previous night included sambhar, and after consuming it, several students became ill. Since Monday night, some of the girls at the school had been suffering from vomiting and diarrhoea.

Floating solar power units to adorn Lower Manair Reservoir

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

The state government is revisiting the idea of establishing a floating solar power station in the Lower-Manair Reservoir, a project originally proposed three years ago, but put on hold. Under the leadership of Revanth Reddy, the Congress government, plans are being considered to install floating solar power stations on all of the state's reservoirs.

The initiative offers several advantages. The venture does not require land acquisition or compensation to landowners and eliminates the need for conventional fuels. The concept of floating solar panels has gained renewed attention. The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) has already prepared a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the installation of the floating solar plant, covering an area of nine square kilometres within a total of 81 square kilometres of the reservoir. The solar panels will have a capacity of 300 KW, occupying just 10 per cent of the reservoir's surface area. Once completed, the project is set to become the largest floating solar power plant in India.

In August 2021, representatives from several consulting companies, including Tata Consulting Engineers Limited, TUV India



Floating solar panel (representation purpose only)

Private Ltd, TUV SUD South Asia Pvt Ltd, Zensal Engineering Ltd, and SGURR Energy Ltd, held discussions with SCCL officials about the proposal. In October of the same year, a private agency conducted a hydrographic survey of the Lower Manair Reservoir, analysing the bed soil and subsoil layers. Based on the survey findings, a decision was made on where and how many solar panels would be installed. The DPR is designed so that the panels will float on the water, even during times when the reservoir has low

water levels. Concerns regarding the potential impact on marine life and the livelihoods of local fishermen have been addressed through various studies. These studies suggest that the solar panels could promote the growth of moss, which in turn increases oxygen levels in the water, benefiting fish and other marine species. With the solar panels covering only 10% of the reservoir's surface, the remaining 90 per cent will still be available for fishing, meaning the fishermen's activities will not be disrupted.

The SCCL officials have estimated the cost of the project at around Rs 300 crore, which would eliminate the need to acquire 1,500 acres of land. Additionally, the solar panels will help reduce water evaporation during the summer. Once operational, the plant will involve minimal ongoing costs, primarily for maintenance. The increased use of solar power would reduce reliance on coal in thermal power plants and the demand for water in hydropower stations, making the floating solar station an eco-friendly and sustainable energy source.



Nirmal District Superintendent of Police Janaki Sharmila speaking to the media in Nirmal on Tuesday

SP vows to free Nirmal district from drugs

PNS ■ NIRMAL

Nirmal district Superintendent of Police Janaki Sharmila is preparing herself to take on drug smugglers in the district. She has intensified her efforts to free the district from drugs. Personally touring the entire district, she is visiting areas where marijuana is cultivated and taking strict action against illegal traffickers. She is raising awareness among the public, urging them to work together for the creation of a new society. She has been cautioning the youth against substance abuse as it would ruin their career and life.

Apart from it, the Superintendent of Police has been keeping a close watch on the drive launched by the police in the district to eradicate the drug menace. As part of her campaign to eradicate the menace, when she learned about marijuana cultivation on agricultural lands, Janaki Sharmila personally led a police force to seize the plant worth Rs 70 lakh.

The police arrested a "criminal" Baba Nayak, was arrested for cultivating the marijuana crop, she said. He was cultivating the marijuana as intercrop in the cotton field. When the offender tried to flee, SP Sharmila apprehended him and arrested him. Similarly, other individuals like Kasavath Sajan Lal, Goti Ravinder, Kach. Santoshi, Bhamaine Surender, and Peeriyah Pratap Singh were also found cultivating ganja as inter-crops in their respective farmlands, and SP Sharmila personally visited the sites to arrest them. The value of the seized ganja plants was estimated at around Rs 10 lakh.

She immediately held a meeting with the villagers and educated them about the illegal cultivation of ganja and the punishments associated with it. She urged the villagers to immediately report any suspicious activity involving marijuana or other narcotics in their surroundings to the phone numbers 8712659555 and 8712659599, assuring that their identities

would remain confidential. She called on the public to join hands with the police to eliminate the ganja menace from Nirmal district.

The district police are working to control the illegal contraband trade and punish the dealers and consumers with strict measures. SP Janaki Sharmila emphasised that anyone involved in the illegal narcotic trade, including those trying to exploit the youth for quick money, would not be tolerated. She warned that the Prevention of Dangerous Activities (PDA) Act will be invoked against those involved in illegal activities.

She highlighted the damage caused by marijuana addiction, which not only ruins the future of the youth but also creates problems for their families. Students, too, are falling prey to drug addiction, leading to a dark future for them and the shattered hopes of their parents. Janaki Sharmila called for everyone to come together to make Nirmal district ganja-free.

'Modi govt gifting nation's wealth to Adani, Ambani'

PNS ■ NALGONDA

In a speech at the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) District Maha Sabha held here on Tuesday, party State Secretary Tammineni Veerabhadram accused the Modi government of looting the nation's wealth and handing it over to business tycoons Adani and Ambani. He said that the Adani Group has been offering huge bribes to government leaders in various states. He cited a case filed in an American court. He described the Adani issue as a disgrace to the country and criticized Prime Minister Modi for remaining silent on

the guise of the 'Hydra' and 'Musi River projects. He emphasised that the Musi River needs cleaning, but poor people's homes should not be demolished in the process. He suggested that the government should first build homes for the poor before undertaking the Musi River cleanup. He also spoke about the issue of land acquisition in Lagacharla for the Pharma City project, accusing the government of illegally taking land from farmers and causing difficulties for women. He said Chief Minister Revanth Reddy was making misleading statements about the land acquisition and said that the land acquisition was not in line with the 2013 law. CPI-M Central Committee member Cherupalli Seetharamulu, State Secretariat members Joolakanti Rangareddy, Mallu Lakshmi, District Secretary Mudireddy Sudhakar Reddy, MLC Alugubelli Narsireddy and several others were present.



CPI-M Telangana State secretary Tammineni Veerabhadram and other party leaders at the party conference in Nalgonda on Tuesday

Singareni worker dies in freak accident

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

On Tuesday afternoon, Theetla Satyanarayana, a Singareni employee, tragically lost his life after falling into a sand bunker at the 7 Life Extension Project (LEP) in the Ramagundam-II area of Godavari-Khanna.

Satyanarayana, a head mine overman, was carrying out his duties when the accident occurred, and he died on the spot. The Singareni rescue team promptly responded to the incident and recovered his body from the bunker.

The body was shifted to the Godavari-Khanna area hospital.

Students take oath to refrain from using drugs

PNS ■ ADILABAD

Students take an oath in the presence of the Collector to raise awareness and refrain from using drugs. The district administration is determined to free the district from drugs.

District Collector Rajarshi Shah participated in the Arogya Utsav under Praja Pajana Vijayotsavulu programme organised at Yopaluguda Zilla Parishad High School.

As part of the innovative programme led by the District Collector, the programme is being conducted at Yopaluguda Zilla Parishad High School in Adilabad. On Tuesday, the program included Nutrition Day, where the Collector spoke to the students.

During the event, the students mentioned that they have been participating in Praja Palana Vijayotsavulu and observed Nutrition Day on Tuesday. They further stated that on Wednesday, they would focus on mental health stress,



Students take oath to campaign against drug menace, in Adilabad on Tuesday

on Thursday the topic would be drug abuse, on Friday seasonal disease prevention would be discussed and on Saturday the last day person and development would be observed. The Collector encouraged the students to actively participate in these programs.

The key purpose of conducting

awareness sessions for 10 minutes every day after the school prayer is to keep students' minds fresh in the morning as it helps them retain the information, the Collector explained.

The Collector further emphasised the importance of focusing on the work at hand and taking short breaks when necessary, especially if

one feels tired while working. The teacher effectively explained Nutrition Day, stressing the importance of consuming proteins, vitamins, carbohydrates, and fiber. The students were advised to avoid excessive water intake as it can negatively affect the digestive system.

A Food Committee has been formed to ensure the children's well-being. According to government instructions, one head and two school teachers, along with students, will monitor various activities.

The committee's duties include maintaining kitchen cleanliness, properly storing food items, ensuring hygiene, checking the cleanliness of kitchen utensils and student plates, and serving food to children only after the committee members have had their meals. All these activities are part of the Health School initiative.

Later, the Collector inspected the midday meal, store room, and other related areas.



Bijapur Highway in city turns a 'death trap'

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

The Bijapur Highway has turned into a death trap with 146 lives lost and over 400 people injured in the past three years. Despite these alarming statistics and widespread public outrage, the long-proposed road expansion project remains stalled, exposing the government's apathy. This highway, running from Appa Junction to Mannegeeda, is riddled with hazardous turns and plagued by heavy traffic, making it a hotspot for fatal accidents.

One recent tragedy occurred near Mirjaguda Gate, where a couple from Poddutur, Lakshma Reddy and Bhagyamma, were killed. Just days later, a lorry crashed into a group of roadside vegetable vendors at Aluru Stage near Chevella, resulting in four fatalities and leaving five others critically injured.

These are just the latest in a series of accidents that have transformed the highway into a corridor of death.

Spanning 46 kilometers, the highway has 100 turns, with 19 deemed particularly dangerous. Over the last three years, 370 accidents have occurred, claiming 146 lives and injuring 400. Despite

these grim numbers, the government has shown little urgency in addressing the problem. Politicians frequently tout road expansion as a key campaign promise but abandon the issue after elections.

The plan to expand the Hyderabad-Bijapur highway into a four-lane road was proposed six years ago, with an estimated cost of Rs 828.41 crore. The project requires 288.55 hectares of land, including 154.50 hectares from private owners.

The foundation stone for the expansion was laid by then Union Minister Nitin Gadhkari on April 20, 2022, but work has yet to commence. Bureaucratic delays, including lawsuits filed by environmental groups over the removal of banyan trees along the route, have stalled progress.

People's frustration is reaching a boiling point as the government continues to neglect the crisis. On Monday, a delegation led by BRA spokesperson P. Karthik Reddy filed a complaint with the Chevella RTO, urging immediate action on the road expansion. The group also lodged a police complaint at the Chevella Police Station, holding the government accountable for the highway's dangerous condition and frequent accidents.



Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar having launch with sanitation workers in Shadnagar on Tuesday

Shadnagar constituency witnesses rapid development: MLA

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar has declared that the development witnessed in the region over the past year surpasses what had been achieved in the previous decade. Marking the Praja Palana Vijayotsavulu, he spearheaded a series of welfare and developmental programmes aimed at uplifting municipal workers and promoting community well-being.

As part of the celebrations, MLA Shankar launched a medical health camp for sanitation workers, distributed free medical and health kits, and shared a meal with them in a gesture of gratitude for their contributions. Loans were also disbursed to women's self-help groups, along with the distribution of approved checks to further support their initiatives.

Speaking at the event, the MLA emphasised the transformative changes in Shadnagar over the past year, crediting Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's visionary leadership and the collective effort of public representatives and officials. He highlighted the rapid pace of development and urged citizens to acknowledge the progress made in a short span of time.

The celebrations were attended by a wide array of dignitaries, including Municipal Commissioner Venkanna, Municipal Chairman Narender, Councilors Srinivas, Krishnaveni, Swar Pasha, and others.

Prominent leaders such as Market Committee Vice Chairman Mohammed Babar Ali Khan, Town President Konkalla Chennaiyya, and former Municipal Chairman Agganur Vishwam were also present.

Officials told to provide basic facilities in newly merged areas of Khammam

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Minister for Agriculture Tummala Nageshwar Rao has directed the officials to take necessary actions to provide basic facilities in the newly merged colonies with the Khammam Municipal Corporation.

On Tuesday, the Minister laid the foundation stone for the construction of a cement concrete road in YSR Nagar Colony in the 8th division in Khammam city. The work is being carried out with an allocation of Rs 4.10 crore by the TUFIDC (Telangana Urban Finance and Infrastructure Development Corporation).

Responding to a request from the residents of YSR Colony, the Minister directed Khammam RTC officials to set up a request bus stop and bus shelter. He also suggested that special buses be arranged from SR Gardens to YSR Nagar, as students

and women were facing difficulties due to the lack of buses on that route. While addressing the gathering, the Minister said that the government had promised to provide basic facilities to the newly constructed houses for the poor and to the villages newly merged with the city. He mentioned that, after discussions with the Chief Minister, a special

fund of Rs 100 crore was allocated for this purpose. The Minister also directed the Municipal authorities to resolve the issue of electricity connections in YSR Colony and immediately allocate house numbers to properly constructed houses. He emphasised that any irregularities over the past five years should be investigated, and that the deserving should be provided with infrastructure facilities.

Later, the Minister unveiled the CM Cup sports competition brochure and logo.



Minister for Agriculture Tummala Nageshwar Rao unveiling the CM Cup brochure and logo in Khammam on Tuesday

Municipal Corporation Mayor Poonkollu Neeraja, Deputy Mayor Fatima Johara, Revenue Division Officer Narasimha Rao, 8th Division Corporators Lakavath Saidulu, Corporators Kamaratapu Murali, Kottapalli Neeraja, District Youth and Sports Welfare Officer Sunil Reddy, public representatives, officials, and others.

ACROSS THE STATES



4.4 per cent women in CAPF and Assam Rifles: Govt

There are nearly 4.4 per cent women in Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) and Assam Rifles in total posted strength of 9.48 lakh personnel, Lok Sabha was informed Tuesday. In response to a question, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said 4,138 women personnel are likely to be recruited in the CAPFs and Assam Rifles in 2025. "It is a constant endeavour of the ministry to increase the number of women in CAPF. It is noteworthy that number of women in CAPF has gone up from 15,499 in 2014 to 42,190 in 2024," the reply said. In terms of percentage, CISF has the highest representation of women at 7.02 per cent in total force strength of around 1.51 lakh followed by 4.43 per cent in SSB, 4.41 per cent in BSF, 4.05 per cent ITBP, 4.01 per cent in Assam Rifles and 3.38 per cent in CRPF, it said. The minister said 835 women personnel have been recruited in CAPF and Assam Rifles in 2024 while 5,469 are in the process of recruitment.



7 newly elected MLAs of Rajasthan take oath

Seven newly elected MLAs of Rajasthan were sworn in on Tuesday, with Assembly Speaker Vasudev Devani administering the oath of office in his chamber. Devani congratulated the MLAs and urged them to uphold the traditions, dignity and decorum of the House. The newly elected MLAs are DC Bairwa from Dausa, Revantram Danga from Khinvsar, Shanta Devi Meena from Salumbar and Rajendra Gurjar from Deol-Uniara, Rajendra Bhambu from Jhunjhunu, Sukhwant Singh from Ramgarh and Anil Katara from Chaurasi. Government Chief Whip Jogeshwar Garg and Chief Whip of the Opposition Rafiq Khan were also present on the occasion. Revantram Danga, MLA from Khinvsar arrived at the Assembly riding a tractor with supporters. Supporters of the MLAs, were also seen in large numbers outside the Assembly premises in traditional attire.



Kolkata to host Hamfest India convention

Hundreds of amateur ham radio operators from across the country will gather for the annual Hamfest India convention in Kolkata from December 14. The two-day convention will also see participation of delegates from Dubai, the US, Nepal, Oman and Germany, Sayani Dey, one of the organisers of the event, said in a statement. Bengal is the pioneer in the history of India's amateur radio and home to the country's first licensed HAM Amarendra Chandra Gooptu, who obtained his licence in 1921. "Hamfest India convener Milkantha Chatterjee said. He said it was a fitting tribute that the celebration of 103 years of ham radio practice was taking place in West Bengal, from where the journey began. Official representatives from the National Disaster Management Authority, National Disaster Response Force, India Meteorological Department, and the Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority are also participating in the convention. Dey said the Ministry of Communications issued a special call sign - AT24HF1 -- for the event, which would also witness participation of leading companies and R&D organisations.

Modi assures all possible help to Tamil Nadu

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Tuesday to enquire about the flood situation in parts of the state and assured him of all possible support from the Centre. Official sources said Modi called up Stalin regarding the flood situation. Villupuram district in north Tamil Nadu continued to reel under unprecedented flooding on Monday following extremely heavy rainfall, virtually blocking access to villages and residential colonies as bridges and roads were submerged and inundating huge acreage of standing crops. In Tiruvannamalai, tragedy unfolded as five bodies were recovered from a house crushed by a boulder that rolled down a hilltop following a mud slip on the night of December 1 during rains.

'India for fair framework on border issue with China'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India remains committed to engaging with China to arrive at a fair and mutually acceptable framework for boundary settlement, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Tuesday, noting that India-China relations cannot be normal in the absence of a clearly articulated approach. Making a statement in the Lok Sabha, the minister said India-China ties have been abnormal since 2020 when peace and tranquillity in border areas were disturbed due to Chinese actions.



Making a statement in the Lok Sabha, the minister said India-China ties have been abnormal since 2020 when peace and tranquillity in border areas were disturbed due to Chinese actions

"The amassing of troops by China in eastern Ladakh in April-May 2020 resulted in face-offs at a number of points. After the Galwan Valley clashes, we were addressing a situation that not only saw fatalities but events that needed heavy weaponry deployment," he said. The recent developments that reflect continuous diplomatic engagements have set India-China ties in the direction of "some improvement", he said. "We remain committed to engaging with China to arrive at a fair and mutually acceptable framework for boundary settlement... The government has maintained that India-China relations cannot be normal in the absence of peace and tranquillity in the border areas, the combination of a firm and principal stance on this situation and the border areas, as well as a clearly articulated approach to the totality of our ties," Jaishankar said. "We have been very clear that the restoration of peace and tranquillity will be the basis for the relationship to move forward," he added.

Jaishankar credited the Indian forces, saying that despite logistical challenges and the Covid pandemic, they countered the Chinese troops rapidly.



'They need empathy, not sympathy'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday emphasized the need for empathy, inclusivity and equal opportunities for persons with disabilities (Divyangjan), and asserted that their empowerment is a collective responsibility of society and the government. Speaking at the National Awards ceremony for individuals and organisations working for the welfare of Divyangjan, Murmu called for a shift in societal attitudes. "They need empathy, not sympathy. They deserve natural affection, not special attention. Above all, they should experience respect," President Murmu said, urging people to foster a society that treats Divyangjan with dignity and equality. The President highlighted that being differently

abled is not a limitation but a "special condition" that demands tailored support. "Special training, counselling and facilities must be provided for their needs. While the government is giving priority to their welfare, society must also step forward to prioritise their inclusion," she said. The President pointed to the remarkable achievements of Divyangjan in various fields, particularly sports. "In the 2012 Paralympics, India secured just one medal. However, in 2024, awareness and support for Divyangjan have resulted in our athletes winning 29 medals. This progress reflects our growing sensitivity and commitment to their empowerment," she said. President Murmu also stressed the importance of creating an inclusive environment.



INDIA bloc MPs demand JPC probe into Adani issue

Hold protest on Parl premises

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

MPs of several INDIA bloc parties protested on the Parliament premises on Tuesday over the Adani issue and reiterated their demand for a probe by a joint parliamentary committee into the matter.

MPs of the Congress, AAP, RJD, Shiv Sena (UBT), DMK and the Left parties, among others, raised slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and demanded accountability. Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, AAP's Sanjay Singh, RJD's Misa Bharti and Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Arvind Sawant also participated in the protest on the steps leading to the Parliament's Makar Dwar. In a post on

Facebook, Gandhi said, "Protesting at Makar Dwar, Parliament complex, today, asking the real question: Who benefits from Adani's billions, Modi ji? The Prime Minister's silence speaks volumes."

The Congress and some other opposition parties have been demanding a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) probe following the indictment of Adani Group chairperson Gautam Adani and other company officials by US prosecutors on bribery and fraud charges. However, some other opposition parties, especially the TMC, have not attached the same priority to the Adani row and from the start wanted Parliament to discuss a host of different issues, including

unemployment, price rise and the Centre's alleged discrimination against opposition-ruled states in fund allocation.

The TMC has skipped opposition meetings on formulating the INDIA bloc's joint strategy during the session. The Samajwadi Party has been attaching the highest priority to the Sambhal violence issue, which it raised in Parliament on Tuesday.

The Congress has said that Adani's indictment in a US court on bribery and fraud charges "vindicates" its demand for a JPC investigation into the various "scams" involving the billionaire industrialist's conglomerate. Gandhi has sought Adani's immediate arrest. The Adani Group has dismissed all allegations as "baseless".

Bengal govt calls for 50 pc devolution of taxes to states

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Sixteenth Finance Commission Chairman Arvind Panagariya on Tuesday said the West Bengal government has urged the panel to increase the devolution of taxes to states from the current 41 per cent to 50 per cent, while proposing significant changes to the criteria for weightage in horizontal allocation.

Panagariya, who was in the city, said, most of the 13 states the commission has visited so far have demanded raising the devolution of taxes to 50 per cent, while several others asked it to 45 per cent from the existing 41 per cent.

In vertical devolution, the West Bengal government, in its plea, demanded that the devolution be increased to 50 per cent, "the commission's chairman said. Vertical devolution is the distribution of tax proceeds between the Centre and states in the country.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee met the commission and made several suggestions. She also raised the issue of "deprivation of the Centre".

Cong blames 'PM's voodoo economic policies' over slowing GDP growth

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Stepping up its attack on the government over the GDP growth slowing to a near two-year low, the Congress Tuesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "voodoo economic policies" put India in the middle of a vicious economic cycle of low growth, no jobs, low income and high prices. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge alleged that every single aspect of the economy has been ruined by the Modi government.

"The growth rate is declining. There are no jobs for the youth. The condition of the manufacturing sector is worrying. Inflation has drained the pockets of the common people. The gap of economic inequality is widening," he said in a post on X.

"Now the rupee has reached 85, it is the second weakest currency in Asia. Only the billionaire friends of Modi are making money, small businessmen are in bad condition. In such a situation, Narendra Modi ji it is important to remind you of your own statement made before 2014," he said. Sharing an audio clip of Modi's remarks on falling



GDP when the Congress was in power, Kharge said, "You will not listen to the voice of the people, listen to your own voice!!" Addressing a press conference at Congress headquarters here, party spokesperson Supriya Shrinete said the GDP figure isn't just a number but a measure of all economic activity in a country, jobs created, investments made, consumption and even foreign trade including exports. "So, a slowdown in GDP can't be dismissed just because the numbers are uncomfortable for the BJP. India's Q2 GDP growth for the current financial year has plummeted to its lowest level in 21 months. This raises a lot of concern. Simply put, it means economic activity is sluggish, investments are not being made, consumption has been dampened, exports have crashed, jobs are not being created," she said.

Rahul to visit Sambhal today amid curbs

PNS ■ LUCKNOW/SAMBHAL

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi along with the five other Congress MPs from Uttar Pradesh will visit violence-hit Sambhal on Wednesday, party's state unit chief Ajay Rai said. Newly-elected Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is also likely to accompany the delegation, he said.

The party's general secretary and UP in-charge Avinash Pande will be there too, Rai said. Curbs under section 163 (power to issue order in urgent

cases of nuisance or apprehended danger) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) were set to expire on Sunday in Sambhal and have now been extended till December 31.

When asked about Rahul Gandhi's visit to Sambhal, Superintendent of Police of Sambhal Krishan Kumar told PTI, "Section 163 of the BNSS is already imposed in Sambhal. No outsider is allowed (to enter Sambhal). If they come, then they will be served a notice." Sambhal District Magistrate Rajendra Pensa on Tuesday wrote a letter

to the police commissioners of Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ghaziabad and the superintendents of police of Amroha and Bulandshahr districts, urging them to stop Rahul Gandhi at the borders of their districts.

On the Sambhal DM's missive, UP Congress chief Rai said that this is "murder of democracy through blatant misuse of police". Sambhal has been in the eye of the storm since November 19, when a Mughal-era mosque was surveyed on court orders following claims that a Harihar temple previously stood at the site.

Violence erupted during a second survey on November 24 as protesters gathered near Shahi Jama Masjid and clashed with security personnel. Four people died and several others were injured in the violence that ensued.

Meanwhile, UP Congress general secretary Sachin Chaudhary told PTI in Sambhal, "National secretary Pradeep Narwal, state vice-president Rizwan Qureshi and I met the family members of deceased Bilal and Noman, and helped them talk to Priyanka Gandhi ji. Priyanka ji enquired about their wellbeing."



'Death in severe COVID-19 could be due to cell damage'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Organ damage and death due to severe COVID-19 could be because of disruption to the mitochondria, or a cell's "energy-producing factory", which contributes to 'cytokine storm' or excessive inflammation commonly seen in these patients, a new study has found.

Researchers found that the damage or stress in mitochondria can trigger immune responses, specifically those that activate the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system, or 'RAAS', network of hormones, proteins and enzymes.

The network is known to be essential for regulating blood pressure, but when overactivated, can trigger a string of



"This could explain the long-lasting immune dysregulation seen in survivors of COVID-19 and may contribute to long COVID," Beheshti said

processes causing organ damage, the researchers, including those at the University of Pittsburgh, US, said.

They explained that overactivation of the RAAS network and stress in mitochondria

intensify an "out-of-control" immune response, known as a 'cytokine storm' a common feature of severe COVID-19 and also considered a main contributor to long Covid.

The findings, published in

the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, shed light on the biological processes driving organ damage and death in severe COVID-19 and helps explain why survivors can experience

long-term complications.

"Notably, we also found that activation of RAAS caused substantial damage to the lymph nodes (part of the immune system), which hasn't been shown in COVID-19 before," co-senior author Afshin Beheshti, a professor of surgery and computational and systems biology at the University of Pittsburgh, said.

"This could explain the long-lasting immune dysregulation seen in survivors of COVID-19 and may contribute to long COVID," Beheshti said.

For the study, the researchers analysed genomes in autopsy samples obtained from 40 patients who died due to the viral infection. The samples were taken from multiple

organs, including nasal cavity (nose), lungs, heart and liver.

The team observed an increased expression of about 50 genes involved in the functioning of one's immune system in the samples obtained from nasal swabs. Information in one's genes translate into observable behaviour and traits through the process of 'gene expression'. The authors wrote, "In total, these data suggest that overactivation of RAAS signalling and mitochondrially mediated inflammation activation holistically comprise the cytokine storm that causes lethal COVID-19." "Our study resolves some of the long-standing unanswered questions about how the SARS-CoV-2 virus impacts the body," Beheshti said.



FIRST COLUMN THE ETERNAL JOURNEY OF THE SOUL

Life and death are interwoven in an eternal cycle of renewal, granting the soul opportunities for growth



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Very few humans know when death will come, how it will occur and where it will lead because death is inevitable and it keeps no calendar. Life may not be fair to all, but death deals equally with all, whether rich or poor, mighty or meek, deity or demon, saint or a sinner. Death has many shades to it. Dying for a noble cause such as for patriotism, or a social cause brings glory to the dead. Such deaths win over a lot of sympathy and goodwill for the soul. Then some die a silent death without suffering much illness or pain. Such deaths happen to fortunate souls who perform good actions. There are also violent deaths such as accidents, murders, suicides, executions etc. Such deaths are preceded by suffering and bitterness and followed by more agony for the soul. So! Are there any happy deaths or can death be a rewarding experience? Well!! To understand this, we have to first understand life. For this, we need to ask a few questions to ourselves as to what is it that lives when a human being is alive. What is it that ceases to exist when death occurs? On one hand, we say that a person has died and on the other hand, we talk of the body as the mortal remains. So what is mortal? The person or the body? In essence, life is a phenomenon that unfolds when a soul enters a body and death is simply a state when a soul leaves one body and enters a new one. Hence the person who passes away is the soul



that was living in the body. So, what is a soul? A soul is a sentient energy that manifests itself in three levels, the mind, intellect and sanskaras. A common saying goes that when you die the world is dead for you. Hence, what ends with death is the soul's connection or attachment to the limited world that it is related to whilst in the body, such as relationships, possessions, roles, etc. However, an amazing trait of the soul is that it carries over the karmic debts and sanskaras into the next life. We all know that everyone has to die one day yet we never think about our death. This may be because as souls, we have been living in different bodies birth after birth for ages. Our attachment to the body is so strong that even in old age people buy bigger and better properties and continue to invest for the future so that they can live in comfort. Death is not the end of everything but it marks a major turning point in the journey of the soul in the human world. Death also means newness. It fills the soul with freshness and renewed zest for life and broadens the scope for the soul to enrich itself and evolve with new experiences with different souls in different roles, bodies and places. This renewal is what makes the concept of eternity meaningful. The cycle of life and world drama could not go on eternally if there were no death. For a spiritually enlightened soul, death means final liberation from earthly bondages; it's an ascension to a higher realm of existence where the soul can experience total freedom and bliss because an enlightened soul takes rebirth in a golden age where it will not suffer untimely or painful death. So, how does one get over the fear of death? For that, we need to understand that the root cause of our fear that leads us to sin & suffering is the consciousness and attachment of the body. Hence the awareness that we are eternal souls is the key to conquering the fear of death. Immortality is the awareness of our eternity and mastery over the body. It does not imply that we will go on existing in the same body forever, NO. A spiritually empowered soul becomes immortal by practising soul consciousness whilst living in the body. On the other hand, for sinful souls life itself is a living death for they die every day out of fear, remorse and suffering but those who die alive i.e. those who live in the world with no attachment to worldly matters are indeed liberated even in life. (Writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views are personal)

Delhi's pollution crisis: A call for sustainable solutions



RAJDEEP PATHAK

A comprehensive approach to urban mobility, affordability and infrastructure is the need of the hour to reclaim Delhi's air and ensure a healthier, sustainable future



As India aspires to emerge as the world's third-largest economy, it continues to grapple with the challenge of crafting a robust policy framework to combat the persistent environmental crises (read pollution) in its capital city, Delhi. Thankfully, the stubble-burning season officially concluded on November 30, 2024, and it is perceived as the end of the annual apocalypse of Delhi's air pollution. But, it needs to be seen that although the practice was outlawed in 2015, it continues unabated, contributing to approximately 35 per cent of Delhi's pollution. However, the core issue extends far beyond stubble burning, encompassing broader atmospheric and industrial factors. Decisive action in addressing these deeper challenges – and not prolonged silence – is the need of the hour. After weeks of smog and burning eyes and a high Air Quality Index (AQI), on December 2, 2024, Delhi's air quality showed marginal improvement for the second consecutive day, with the AQI that was recorded at 273 in the morning – though still within the 'poor' category. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the city's 24-hour average AQI on December 1 stood at 285, providing a modest reprieve after 32 consecutive days of 'very poor' and 'severe' air quality (AQI levels exceeding 400). However, despite these minor improvements, the Supreme Court on December 2, 2024, refused to ease emergency restrictions under Stage 4 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) for air pollution in Delhi. The Court emphasised that any relaxation of measures would depend on a consistent and substantial downward trend in AQI levels. The schools have nevertheless opened giving a fresh breath to the students from the online or hybrid mode. Although experts caution that pollution levels could potentially worsen, the past three days have seen clear skies and sustained, stronger winds from the northwest, which have facilitated the dispersion of pollutants. One of the most contributing factors of pol-



THE STATE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN DELHI REMAINS DEEPLY INADEQUATE. ACCORDING TO A REPORT DELHI CURRENTLY HAS APPROXIMATELY 45 BUSES PER 100,000 RESIDENTS, BASED ON DATA FROM THE 2011 CENSUS

lution, according to the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), is 'vehicular pollution' which remains the most significant contributor to Delhi's air pollution, accounting for 51.1 per cent of emissions from all local sources, despite technical interventions aimed at reducing emissions. CSE's analysis highlights a persistent 'mobility crisis' in the city, characterised by systemic shortcomings in the public transport infrastructure despite years of investment. This crisis has driven a sharp increase in the number of private vehicles, which now play a substantial role in fuelling winter air pollution. Notably, even during periods of reduced stubble burning, Delhi's air quality frequently remains in the 'poor' or 'very poor' categories. CSE's report draws attention to several critical issues undermining public transportation, including its lack of reliability. For instance, instances of buses breaking down during transit rose significantly, from 781 in 2018-19 to 1,259 in 2022-23. Furthermore, high waiting times at bus stops reveal a fundamental inefficiency in the system: less than 1 per cent of bus stops offer waiting times of less than 10 minutes, while approximately 50 per cent require passengers to wait over 15 minutes. The state of public transportation in Delhi remains deeply inadequate. According to a report Delhi currently has approximately 45 buses per 100,000 residents, based on data from the 2011 census. This figure is significantly below the benchmark set by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, which recommends a ratio of 60 buses per lakh of the population. In comparison, major global cities such as London, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Seoul exhibit considerably higher ratios, ranging from 69 to 90 buses per 100,000

residents, highlighting a significant disparity in Delhi's public transportation infrastructure. While the Delhi Metro has been championed as a cornerstone of urban mobility, its impact remains constrained. With an average daily ridership of only 2,700 passengers per train, the Metro's limited capacity – that poor labourers aren't able to afford – and reach is evident, failing to address the broader needs of the city's commuters. According to The Economic Times, an unskilled daily-wage labourer in Delhi spend approximately 8 per cent of their income on travel via non-air-conditioned buses, 14 per cent on air-conditioned buses, and an alarming 22 per cent on the Metro. These figures underscore the economic burden placed on vulnerable sections of the population. The challenge is addressing the issue of 'affordability'. Data from the 'Economic Survey of Delhi 2023-24' further paints a stark picture of the city's growing vehicle population. Delhi currently has 7.9 million registered vehicles, with an additional 650,000 vehicles added in 2023-24, a figure that surpasses the pre-pandemic (COVID) annual average of 610,000. Moreover, the city experiences a daily influx and outflow of 1.1 million vehicles. The annual growth rate of two-wheelers and cars stands at 15 per cent, contributing significantly to transport-related pollution. Notably, according to the CSE, the transport sector accounts for 81 per cent of nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions in the capital, further worsening its air quality challenges. There is a reports that the number of vehicles in the capital doesn't correspond to the size of its population, showing how a small proportion of the population has an outsized contribution to the air pollution crisis. According to data obtained in

the latest cycle of the National Family Health Survey, only a small proportion of families residing in Delhi own cars – 19 per cent in its rural areas and 28 per cent in its urban centers. Yet, Delhi streets are often congested by this small proportion of car-owners.' However, an equally concerning factor lies in the extensive proliferation of industries across Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR), which persist as major and consistent sources of pollutants. These industrial emissions subject the residents of Delhi to a form of 'slow violence (read poison)'. Therefore, enhancing public transportation systems is a pivotal strategy for addressing the challenges posed by urban mobility and environmental sustainability in Delhi. Key measures such as improving last-mile connectivity, reducing fares to ensure affordability for a broader demographic, and expanding the public transport fleet to accommodate the city's growing population are essential for reducing the dependence on private vehicles. By prioritising these initiatives, it is believed that a significant decrease in traffic congestion and vehicular emissions can be achieved, contributing to a cleaner and healthier urban environment. Moreover, such measures would improve the inclusivity and accessibility of the city, enabling individuals without personal vehicles to navigate Delhi more efficiently. In the long term, a robust and affordable public transport network would not only promote environmental sustainability but also enhance the overall quality of life for all residents by fostering greater equity and mobility within the city. (The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti; views are personal)

The impact of COVID-19 and lessons for preventing future pandemics

By strengthening healthcare systems and fostering global collaboration, we can minimise the risk of future pandemics write SUMER SINGH AHLUWALIA and SAISHA ANAND

COVID-19 has caused over 7,000,000 deaths worldwide, with countless others affected. These statistics barely begin to convey the immense impact of the pandemic, which brought loss to almost everyone. Wearing masks became the norm, schools transformed into virtual classrooms, and homes turned into makeshift workspaces. For a time, the world seemed to turn into a vast cemetery. Addressing and preventing future pandemics requires both personal behavioural changes and strict government regulations. These efforts can significantly reduce the risk of COVID-19 and similar health crises in the future. **Origins and Ethical Considerations**

The origin of COVID-19 remains controversial, though it is widely believed to have stemmed from an animal sold at the Huanan Seafood Market in China. The consumption of meat, normalised for centuries, has often been linked to the emergence of infectious diseases. Diseases arising from the butchering of animals highlight the need for dietary shifts. Vegetarianism, for instance, is a proactive step that could reduce the likelihood of zoonotic spillovers and the spread of diseases like COVID-19. This also raises an ethical question: is it justifiable to kill animals merely to satisfy human taste preferences? **The Role of Vaccination** Vaccination has long been a topic of debate, and the

COVID-19 vaccines faced significant backlash. Many were hesitant due to concerns about the intentions of pharmaceutical companies and the fact that the vaccines did not provide sterilising immunity. However, vaccinations remain essential to eradicating diseases. According to the National Center for Immunisation and Respiratory Diseases, individuals who received the COVID-19 vaccine were 54 per cent less likely to contract SARS-CoV-2. Achieving herd immunity is crucial, requiring the transmission rate (Rt) to fall below 1, meaning each infected individual transmits the virus to less than one other person. The concept of the "socialism of the microbe" emphasises our responsibility to protect

others by safeguarding ourselves from infectious diseases. For instance, self-isolation, mask-wearing, and vaccination not only protect individuals but also shield vulnerable populations who cannot be vaccinated. **Preventative Measures** Personal precautions, such as wearing masks, self-isolating, and following hygiene protocols, are critical in containing the spread of viruses like SARS-CoV-2. A study in Bangladesh revealed that mask usage significantly reduced COVID-19 infections. As an RNA virus, SARS-CoV-2 evolves quickly, facilitating asymptomatic transmission. Research by Wang and Tong, published in the 'National Library of Medicine', stresses the importance of strict quar-



antine measures for asymptomatic individuals to control the pandemic. **Government Interventions** Not everyone maintains the same hygiene standards, underscoring the need for government intervention. Investments in research and healthcare infrastructure are essential for pandemic preparedness. Projects like the

Global Virome Project and DEEP VZRN aim to identify high-risk regions, animals, and viruses, enabling better predictions and preventive measures. India's 2021 healthcare crisis serves as a stark example of unpreparedness. A lack of oxygen, hospital beds, and essential facilities led to thousands of deaths daily. Despite this, the country still faces a deficit in healthcare infrastructure, highlighting the urgent need for increased healthcare budgets. Economic barriers also prevent many from accessing necessary care. A study published in the 'National Library of Medicine' found that one in six adults avoids healthcare due to cost. Governments could address this by subsidising

basic health insurance, covering vaccines, health check-ups, and screenings. This would ensure equitable access to healthcare and encourage public participation in disease eradication efforts. **Education as a Tool for Change** Education plays a vital role in fostering behaviour change. Courses like "Global Change and Infectious Disease", offered at Wesleyan University, teach valuable skills for reducing infection risks. Such courses should be mandatory to instill a lifelong sense of personal and social responsibility. Teaching hygiene practices, such as proper handwashing, should start at a young age, while mass educational campaigns can raise awareness about infectious diseases across all age

groups. Social media can amplify these messages, encouraging responsible behaviors and helping curb the spread of future diseases. **Conclusion** Minimizing the spread of COVID-19 and preventing future pandemics requires a combination of personal behavioral changes and robust government interventions. These pandemics are a wake-up call, reminding us of the harmful impacts of human activities on the planet. By promoting practices like vegetarianism, personal hygiene, and social responsibility, we can mitigate the dangers of pandemics and build a hopeful future. (Ahluwalia & Saisha are studying economics at Wesleyan University; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



Gold declines Rs 200 to Rs 79,000 per 10 gm

Gold prices extended losses for the second straight day after declining Rs 200 to Rs 79,000 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity on Monday settled at Rs 79,200 per 10 grams. However, silver prices surged Rs 2,400 to Rs 92,400 per kg against the previous close of Rs 90,000 per kg. The bullish sentiment in the silver market is primarily driven by industrial demand, traders said. Prices of gold of 99.5 per cent purity slipped Rs 200 to Rs 78,600 per 10 grams. It closed at Rs 78,800 per 10 grams on Monday. Meanwhile, in futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for February delivery rose Rs 146 or 0.19 per cent to trade at Rs 76,833 per 10 grams. Silver contracts for March delivery advanced Rs 1,251 or 1.38 per cent to Rs 92,061 per kg. Globally, Comex gold futures climbed USD 7.40 per ounce or 0.28 per cent to USD 2,665.90 per ounce. Gold and silver prices witnessed higher swings in the previous session, pressured by a firm dollar after US President-elect Donald Trump threatened to impose steep tariffs on the BRICS group of countries to dissuade them from attempting to find alternatives to the dollar.



NMDC reports record 4.51 MnT output; 4 MnT sales

State-owned NMDC has reported a record 18 per cent rise in iron ore production at 4.51 million tonne (MnT) in November. The company had produced 3.83 MnT of iron ore in the same month last year, NMDC said in a statement. The company has also registered a 5.5 per cent rise in its sales to 4 MnT in the month under review, from 3.79 MnT in November 2023. "Achieving the best-ever production and sales figures for November is a momentous achievement for us. As we move forward, we remain focused on sustainable growth and delivering value to our stakeholders," said Amitava Mukherjee, Director (Finance), NMDC. Hyderabad-based NMDC, under the Ministry of Steel, is India's largest iron ore mining company. NMDC alone caters around 20 per cent to the country's demand for the key steel making raw material.



Fintech firm MODIFI targets to finance 5,000 SMEs

Amsterdam-headquartered fintech MODIFI on Tuesday said it aims to finance over 5,000 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) across India in the next two to three years. Having facilitated over USD 3 billion in global trade across over 1,800 trading partners in more than 55 countries since its inception, India remains pivotal to MODIFI's global expansion journey, a release said. The company, a global player in cross-border B2B trade finance and payments solutions, launched its India operations in 2019, making it the first international market outside Europe. In India, the release said, the company has provided trade financing to firms across key export sectors like renewables, automotive, chemicals, and textiles.

Govt not considering PSU bank merger: MoS Finance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is not considering merger of public sector banks, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said on Tuesday.

In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, he said several steps have been taken by the government to strengthen the financial condition of public sector banks (PSBs). Chaudhary said the reforms undertaken by the government in the banking sector have created systemic improvements and instituted checks and controls to minimise the risk of recurrence of excessive stress. To a question on whether the merger of public sector banks is being considered, Chaudhary replied: "No sir".

Chaudhary further said PSU banks have shown improvement in their capital adequacy ratio and gross non-performing assets position post-merger. "The merger has helped in improved synergies, economies

of scale, better technology integration and the same has resulted in uniform improvement across all key financial parameters," Chaudhary added.

In the biggest consolidation exercise in the banking space, the government in August 2019, had announced four major mergers of public sector banks, bringing down their total number to 12 from 27 in 2017, a move aimed at making state-owned lenders global-sized banks.

United Bank of India and Oriental Bank of Commerce were merged with Punjab National Bank; Syndicate Bank with Canara Bank; Allahabad Bank with Indian Bank; and Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank with Union Bank of India, effective April 1, 2020. In 2019, Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank were merged with the Bank of Baroda. Prior to this, the government had merged five associate banks of SBI and Bharatiya Mahila Bank with the State Bank of India.

'Banks should adopt a bottom-up approach for preparing credit plan'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Banks should adopt a "bottom-up" approach for preparing credit plans to fulfil fund requirements for different segments in districts, RBI Deputy Governor Swaminathan J has said.

Addressing a conference for lead district managers of Maharashtra last week, the Deputy Governor said the aspect of design and development starts with the credit plans, according to a RBI release.

The Lead Bank Scheme (LBS) was conceptualised in 1969 to coordinate the efforts of the credit institutions and the government.

"Credit planning should adopt a bottom-up approach to convey the needs of the centres and then designing a plan best suited to address those," he said.

It is also important to understand that, while the targets should strive to be aspirational in ideas, they



should be realistic enough to translate into execution and reflect the local credit needs, the senior Reserve Bank official said.

He further said that in this age of abundance of data and analytical models, a data-based empirical approach to designing of credit plan is essential. Such techniques provide the ease with which targeted strategies can be developed for intervention.

"Having said that, the primary step of data collection should be through field sur-

veys and not be substituted by just an academic understanding.

The field surveys also enable to identify those areas which are more in need of credit flow and have a better capability of servicing the loans.

This should be the premise on which you formulate bankable schemes," Swaminathan said.

The Deputy Governor also informed the gathering that statistics show that about half of the Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are yet to be linked to

formal credit, and a large proportion of small and marginal farmers still lack access to bank financing.

Another class of potential borrowers which has remained underserved are the MSMEs and within that, those led by women.

"Therefore, when we adopt an empirical approach coupled with your on-ground experience for designing of a credit plan, the credit requirements of such segments can be effectively addressed through suitable Potential Linked Credit Plans as well as in block and district-level credit strategies," Swaminathan said.

Over the decades, LBS has evolved in alignment with India's developmental priorities.

At its core, the LBS framework facilitates coordinated efforts among banks, financial institutions, and government machinery, resulting in improved banking access and enhanced credit flow to vital sectors.

Mahindra, IndiGo slug it out over '6e' trademark

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mahindra & Mahindra and InterGlobe Aviation, which owns IndiGo airlines, were on Tuesday locked in a tussle over infringement of the '6e' trademark, despite the automaker claiming it is in discussions to find an amicable solution.

The automaker, which introduced two electric brands -- BE 6e and XEV 9e -- earlier this month, said its trademark 'BE 6e' differs from IndiGo's '6e', eliminating any risk of confusion.

IndiGo, which uses 6E as the airline designator code, however refuted the claim by the Mumbai-based automaker. The 6E mark is an integral part of IndiGo's identity for the past 18 years and is a registered trademark that holds strong global recognition. The '6E' mark, whether standalone or in its variants and formative forms, is extensively used by IndiGo for its offerings.

'No blanket ban on Indian shrimp in US'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The US has not imposed a blanket ban on shrimp imports from India, including Kerala, and the restrictions are targeted only at wild-caught shrimp, the government said on Tuesday.

In a written reply to Lok Sabha, Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, said, "USA has not implemented a blanket ban on Indian shrimp imports including Kerala. The restrictions are specifically targeted at wild-caught shrimp, primarily due to concerns regarding sea turtle conservation."

While exports of wild-caught shrimp to the US are currently limited, shipment of wild-caught shrimp to other countries remain unaffected, he added.

The minister informed that the Department of Commerce, through Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), has been proactively taking up the matter with USA through the embassy of India in

Washington DC. The department through MPEDA in consultation with both the US Department of State and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has tested several versions of the Turtle Excluder Device (TED) fabricated by ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT).

Further, Department of Commerce through MPEDA has organised state level workshops on popularization of the TED and is conducting awareness programmes among boat owners and fishers across all the major harbours and landing centres of the country.

"Department of Commerce has taken up the matter through various bilateral mechanisms between India and the US at both official and ministerial level.

Some of such recent interventions have been through the India-US Trade Policy Forum (TPF) held in New Delhi in January 2024 and the Trade Policy Forum Inter-session held in September 2024," Singh said.

'Sustainability playing key role in global trade talks'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

New elements related to sustainability, inclusivity and security are now playing an important role in global trade discussions and they would dictate the future talks, a senior official said on Tuesday.

Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce L Satya Srinivas also emphasised on the importance of adopting a holistic perspective on the commercial significance of free trade agreements (FTAs) for the country.

"On the plate of trade, there are vast new dimensions getting added...How do we deal with those new dimensions...These new regulations and new focus areas of present will dictate our trajectory towards the future," he said at CII's Partnership Summit here.

Earlier in trade discussions, the main issues which used to figure included reduction or removal of customs duties and non-tariff barriers.

In addition to these, now



"new dimensions are coming into the trade play which is sustainability and security induced," he said, adding these issues like environment and labour are also bringing in regulatory as well as economic uncertainties.

Srinivas added that as the country is targeting to export USD 2 trillion worth of goods and services by 2030, FTAs are going to play an important role in that. "(In FTAs), we need to look at goods, investments and services all together," he said stating that besides these, the new elements have also

become important in terms of future.

India has so far implemented over a dozen trade agreements with countries including Singapore, Korea and Japan and is now negotiating trade pacts with the European Union, UK, Oman, and Peru. In the FTAs with UAE, Australia and EFTA (European Free Trade Association) bloc, new elements are there.

New rules such as EU's carbon tax and deforestation regulations are also impacting trade.

No shortage of DAP fertiliser in India: FAI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fertiliser industry body FAI has asserted that there is no shortage of Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) in the country despite fall in imports and production in the first seven months of this financial year.

Fertiliser Association of India (FAI) also demanded that the DAP should command the highest price among all non-urea fertilisers, because of its high nutritional value. It also stressed on the need to protect soil health.

"There is no shortage of DAP in the country," FAI Chairman N Suresh Krishnan told reporters here when asked about reports of non-availability of DAP in some parts of the country. He, however, said there could be a fall in the closing stock of DAP at the end of the current fiscal year.

According to FAI data, the production of DAP declined to 25.03 lakh tonnes during April-October this fiscal, from 27.01 lakh tonnes in the year-ago peri-



od. Import of DAP declined to 27.84 lakh tonnes from 39.68 lakh tonnes during the period under review.

Sales of DAP, too, fell to 56.92 lakh tonnes from 76.31 lakh tonnes. Krishnan, however, said the sales of DAP have improved in the last month.

He said the country requires around 10 million tonnes of DAP annually to meet domestic demand, of which around 60 per cent is imported. Imports from China has also declined so far this year. The FAI Chairman also highlighted that sales of NP/NPKs (other than DAP) fertilisers have increased, compensating for the drop in sales

of DAP.

Krishnan said the current MRP of the DAP is Rs 1,350 per bag and said the industry was not incurring losses at current subsidy offered by the Centre. Among all non-urea fertilisers, he said DAP should command the maximum price because of its high nutrient value.

When asked about the ideal retail price of DAP, Krishnan did not specify any particular amount.

At present, the Muriate of Potash (MoP) is being sold at Rs 1,500-1,600 per bag, while the price of DAP is Rs 1,350 per bag. The government is providing a huge subsidy on DAP to ensure that farmers get this important nutrient at an affordable rate.

The FAI Chairman also talked about the huge volatility in the price of imported DAP during the last four years because of global conflicts. In view of the crisis in the Red Sea, the time duration for imports of fertilisers has also increased sharply.

Refund IPO funds of Rs 45 cr to investors:Sebi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Tuesday directed Trafiksol ITS Technologies to refund Rs 45 crore raised through its IPO, following material misstatements in the firm's prospectus and suspected collusion with a shell entity.

Trafiksol ITS is a Noida-based firm which provides intelligent transportation systems and automation solutions for traffic and toll management projects.

In October, BSE postponed the listing of Trafiksol ITS Technologies Ltd (TITL) on its SME platform after investor concerns. The Rs 45-crore IPO was oversubscribed by over 345 times, attracting bids worth more than Rs 10,000 crore.

Stock markets extend winning run to 3rd day

Sensex up 597 pts as RIL, HDFC Bank advance

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Extending the winning run to the third straight day, benchmark Sensex jumped 597 points on Tuesday on buying in blue-chip stocks like HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries and firm trends in global markets.

The 30-share index jumped 597.67 points or 0.74 per cent to settle at 80,845.75. During the day, it surged 701.02 points or 0.87 per cent to 80,949.10.

The broader NSE Nifty rose by 181.10 points or 0.75 per cent to 24,457.15.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Adani Ports surged nearly 6 per cent. NTPC, Axis

Bank, State Bank of India, Larsen & Toubro, UltraTech Cement, Tata Motors, HDFC Bank and Reliance Industries were the other big gainers.

Bharti Airtel, ITC, Sun Pharma, Asian Paints and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the laggards.

"Benchmark indices continued to demonstrate resilience amidst positive global sentiment. Investors are now focusing on potential growth drivers, assuming that weak economic data has already been reflected in the recent lacklustre corporate earnings," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Additional duty on steel imports to hit exports: Exporters

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

MSME exporters from the engineering sector on Tuesday said that any move to impose additional duties on steel imports would make domestic products uncompetitive and impact the country's outbound shipments from the sector.

Hand Tool Association Chairman S C Ralhan said that the MSME engineering exporters are already facing problems on the liquidity front and high prices of steel in the domestic market.

"Increasing prices of steel by domestic steel makers are hurt-

ing us and now we have seen in the media reports that the government is planning to impose a 25 per cent safeguard duty. This will severely impact MSME exporters," Ralhan said.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) Director General Ajay Sahai said that if the government imposes additional duty, they should ensure that the domestic steel companies do not increase the prices of the inputs.

"Increase in input prices will impact exports of value-added steel products," Sahai said.



The steel ministry has proposed for a 25 per cent safeguard duty on import of certain steel items into the country. The proposal came at a

meeting between Union Minister of Steel H D Kumaraswamy and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal here on

December 2.

Domestic steel players are raising concerns over rising cheap steel imports from select nations like China.

Think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) in its report has claimed that thousands of containers carrying imported steel remain stranded at JNPT and other ports due to complex clearance procedures imposed by the Ministry of Steel (MOS).

"The Customs clearance delays have disrupted production lines and tarnished India's global reputation, with even countries like Japan for-

mally requesting the government to release stranded shipments," GTRI said.

India's steel imports are neither excessive nor unwarranted, GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said, adding half of these imports are critical raw materials for domestic production, while 40 per cent consist of specialised items that India does not produce in sufficient quantities.

He said that steel imports are just 6 per cent of domestic production and an estimated over 70 per cent imports are done by large steel firms.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
CHIEF TRANSPORT OFFICE, KUKATPALLY ZONE

TENDER NOTICE
NIT No. 087/GHMC/KPZ/CTOI/2024-25, Date: 03.12.2024

Name of Work: 1) Providing of outsourcing services for engaging workers in transport section Kukatpally Zone from 01.12.2024 to 31.03.2025 (04 months).
2) Providing of outsourcing 38 nos drivers and 42 nos labours in Moosapet circle 23 & Kukatpally circle 24 in Kukatpally zone, GHMC. 3) Providing of outsourcing 19 nos drivers and 25nos labours in Qutubulapur circle 25, Gajularamsaram Circle 26 & Alwal Circle 27 in Kukatpally zone, GHMC. Estimate Amount/ECV: -
Start Date / Last Date & Time for Receipt of Bids: 05.12.2024 @ 12.00 PM & 08.12.2024 @ 12.00 PM, Name & Address Officer: Sri. D. Govardhan Goud, Chief Transport Officer. Further details can be seen at e-procurement @ <https://tender.telangana.gov.in/>
Sd/- Chief Transport Officer
Kukatpally Zone, GHMC
R.O. No: 746-PPCL/ADVT/11/2024-25, Dt: 03-12-2024

HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY URBAN FORESTRY
HGCL, Office Building, Nanakramguda, Hyderabad - 500 933

R.O. No.1893/UF/HMDA/2024 Tender Notification Dt: 28.11.2024

The HMDA is inviting tenders for Development and maintenance of greenery at Amberpet Flyover & other developmental works in HMDA jurisdiction from the registered contractors in any State or Central Government Departments/Organizations who have previous experience of executing similar nature of works on e-procurement platform. The last date for tender filing is 12.12.2024. For further details please visit e-procurement website <http://tender.telangana.gov.in/>.
Sd/- DIRECTOR
Urban Forestry HMDA
R.O. No: 1745-PPCL/ABFC/ADVT/1/2024-25, Date: 03.12.2024

Shreyas Talpade on portraying Vajpayee;

'a challenge' he couldn't refuse

AARTI SREENATH
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From delivering side-splitting comedy in *Golmaal* to embodying the intensity of a cricket coach in *Iqbal*, Shreyas Talpade's career has been anything but predictable. A master of both humour and drama, he's made a mark across genres, seamlessly transitioning from light-hearted roles to more nuanced performances. Now, as he takes on the formidable role of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in *Emergency*, directed by Kangana Ranaut, Shreyas is set to leave audiences stunned once again.

Shreyas Talpade, credits his theatrical roots as the cornerstone of his career. "Theatre groomed me as an actor and a person," he shares, reflecting on how it transformed an "under-confident guy" into a self-assured artist. From understanding discipline and teamwork to shaping his body language and perspectives, his foundation in theater set the stage for his cinematic journey.

Going further, he delved into his portrayal of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in the upcoming *Emergency*, directed by Kangana Ranaut. He describes the challenge of embodying such an iconic personality, balancing his own research with the director's vision. "It was about following her conviction and ensuring I did justice to the character," he explains, eager for audiences to witness the result of their collaborative effort.

Despite setbacks and criticisms surrounding *Emergency*, he remains focused on the bigger picture. "What matters is teamwork and delivering our best," he remarks, highlighting the resilience of the cast and crew amid delays. "Setbacks are tough, but they're not impossible to handle," he reflects, speaking about the challenges faced by *Emergency*. Despite delays, the team has remained united. "We'll face it together and emerge stronger. At least, that's what we're hoping for."

The film, which delves into a controversial period of Indian history, encountered issues flagged by the censor board. These concerns were addressed by the production team. "Kangana is the right person to elaborate, but as far as I know, all issues have been resolved and certification was granted again," shares the *Om Shanti Om* star.

"It's demotivating to see a film repeatedly postponed. But, as I mentioned earlier, it was beyond our control. Had it been up to us, we'd probably be celebrating the success by now. Instead, we're still talking about the release. It's tough, especially when you've invested time and effort into promotions, only for everything to be halted just days before release. The financial losses are significant, too. But now that we have a new release date, we're all gearing up to give it our best shot," enthuses the *Welcome to Sajjanpur* actor.

When asked about the message the film conveys, he added, "Everyone will take their own message from it. We're presenting a fac-



Shreyas Talpade, the actor known for his impressive range and nuanced performances, joins us for an exclusive conversation about his latest projects, his approach to acting and the future of Indian cinema

tual story about that period and how each viewer interprets it is up to them. Our job was to tell it as truthfully as possible."

Striking the perfect balance between humour and authenticity is no easy feat, but for Shreyas Talpade, it's all about embracing the art of comedy with seriousness and sincerity. "Anyone can do tragedy, but comedy is serious business," he reflects, citing a timeless piece of wisdom. The secret, he believes, lies in approaching humor with honesty and innocence. When done with heart, comedy feels natural. However, when forced, it can easily fall flat. "You've got to immerse yourself in the situation, let the moment flow, and trust the timing," he says. Drawing on his extensive theater experience, he has fine-tuned his comedic timing, learning to read the room and deliver with finesse. He even points to

legends like Akshay Kumar, who, with his sharp instinct and flawless timing, has mastered the craft of making us laugh effortlessly.

His comedic genius lies in his ability to deliver lines with utmost seriousness, creating humour without even trying. As the *Golmaal* fame shares, "When you do comedy, you do it seriously." His craft involves remaining true to his character, never letting the comedy overshadow the integrity of the role. "You have to stay in character, stay true to the situation and perform with seriousness and honesty," he explains. Drawing inspiration from seasoned actors, he continually hones his skills, learning from those who've mastered the art of comedy. He reflects on working alongside actors like Akshay Kumar, who, despite their humorous roles, approach every line with sincerity. "It's about doing it with innocence, not

forcing it," he adds, emphasising the importance of being authentic.

Theatre, for him, has been a critical teacher, helping him fine-tune his comedic timing. "The moment you start taking your audience for granted, that's when it all falls apart," he says. "Comedy works when you approach it with honesty." And it's this honesty that resonates with audiences, whether on stage or on screen. He takes immense pride in knowing that his work has brought smiles to people's faces. "It's a great feeling when people relate to a character you played, when they recognise you, even in a random place like an aircraft," he says, clearly enjoying the connection with his fans.

When asked about quirky habits, Talpade chuckles, admitting that he doesn't know of any, though his co-stars might have a different story. He mentions a simple pre-show pooja as part of his routine, but beyond that, he's focused on bringing his best to the screen, time and time again.

On the future of Indian cinema, he has big dreams. "The goal is to make your country proud," he says, reflecting on the legacy of greats like Amitabh Bachchan, whose discipline and work ethic continue to inspire him. "I want to be remembered for contributing something to the industry, whether it's one piece of work or many." He admires how Bachchan's influence has shaped his generation and admits that elements of the legend's style are present in his own work, especially in roles like the one in *Pushpa*. "There's something of Mr. Bachchan in that role," he shares, with a touch of reverence.

Looking ahead, he remains eager to explore new horizons, both in acting and in different genres. "I like to keep experimenting, whether it's theater, television, or films," he says. His latest project lineup, which spans various sequels and franchises, offers an exciting mix. "It's interesting how some of my upcoming films follow a sequence, from *Mujasa* to *Housefull 5*," he laughs, appreciating the patterns that emerge as he journeys through his career.

For aspiring actors, his advice is simple yet powerful: "Just keep working. You never know which opportunity will strike gold." Reflecting on his own breakthrough in *Iqbal*, where he started with a small role that eventually led to the lead part, he emphasises the importance of seizing every opportunity. "You never know which film will give you the recognition you deserve," he says, recalling his rise from *Iqbal* to *Golmaal* and *Pushpa*. His journey reminds us all that success is often found in unexpected places. "You just have to keep going, keep experimenting, and stay true to your craft," he concludes with a smile.

Habits leading to kidney & bladder stones

Kidney and bladder stones are crystalline deposits that form in the urinary tract, causing significant discomfort and health complications. These stones often result from a combination of genetic predisposition, dietary factors, and lifestyle habits.

PHYSIOLOGY OF STONE FORMATION

Kidney and bladder stones develop when urine becomes supersaturated with minerals like calcium, oxalate, or uric acid. This creates an environment where crystals can precipitate and grow. Protective factors, such as citrate, which inhibit crystal aggregation, may be deficient in individuals.

EVERYDAY HABITS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO STONE FORMATION:

1. Insufficient hydration

Dehydration is one of the most significant risk factors for stone formation. Inadequate water intake concentrates urine, increasing the likelihood of mineral crystallisation. A habit of drinking less than the recommended 2-3 liters of water daily can lead to this condition. Tea, coffee, and sugary sodas, often consumed in place of water, exacerbate the issue due to their diuretic and oxalate-rich properties.

2. Excessive salt intake

High dietary sodium levels promote calcium excretion into the urine, a primary component of calcium-based stones. Common culprits include processed foods, salty snacks, and canned goods. A diet persistently high in sodium overwhelms the kidney's ability to reabsorb calcium, leaving it to combine with oxalate or phosphate to form stones.

3. High oxalate foods

Spinach, nuts, and chocolate are rich in oxalates, compounds that bind with calcium to form stones. While these foods are nutritious, excessive consumption, especially without adequate calcium intake, raises stone risk. Calcium binds with oxalate in the gut to reduce absorption, underscoring the importance of a balanced diet.

4. Low calcium diets

Paradoxically, avoiding calcium to prevent stones can increase risk. Dietary calcium deficiency leads to greater oxalate absorption, contributing to stone formation. The key is consuming calcium in moderation from dairy or fortified foods.

5. Sedentary lifestyle

Physical inactivity contributes to calcium loss from bones, increasing urinary calcium levels. Prolonged immobility or a desk-bound lifestyle creates an ideal environment for stone formation.

6. Excessive animal protein

Diets high in animal protein, such as red meat, eggs, and fish, can acidify urine, reducing citrate levels. Citrate binds with calcium, preventing stone formation. High protein intake also increases uric acid excretion, a common component of stones.

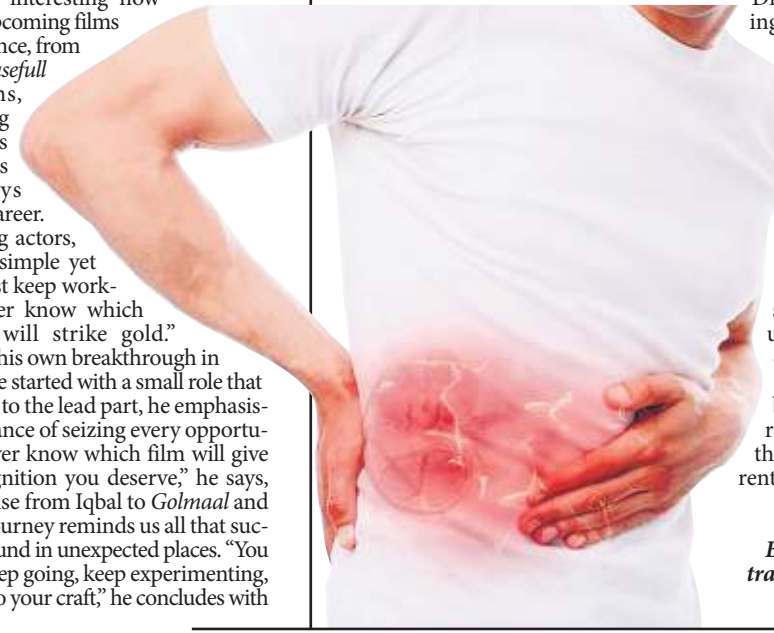
7. Irregular urination

Holding urine for extended periods can concentrate minerals in the bladder, facilitating stone formation. Regular urination flushes out potential stone-forming substances, reducing risk.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Prevention is better than cure. Drinking adequate water, maintaining a balanced diet with moderate calcium and low sodium, and adopting an active lifestyle can significantly reduce stone risk. Regular health check-ups and dietary adjustments tailored to individual metabolic profiles are essential for those with a history of stones. Kidney and bladder stones are often preventable. Identifying and modifying hidden habits, such as dehydration, high sodium intake, or a sedentary lifestyle, can go a long way in promoting urinary health. By making small but significant changes to daily routines, individuals can reduce the risk of this painful and recurrent condition.

(The author, Dr. Kinjal Banerjee, is a consultant - renal transplant, urology, at Sarvodaya Hospital.)



PRESERVING ASSAMESE HERITAGE AND HOW

TEJAL SINHA
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In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer*, Tara Bhuyan, the creative force behind the eponymous luxury fashion, opens up about her vision, design philosophy and the role she sees herself playing in bridging traditional Indian craftsmanship with emerging technologies and global sustainability movements



manship with emerging technologies and global sustainability movements.

At the heart of the couture lies a deep commitment to celebrating Assamese culture and craftsmanship. "I once remarked, 'I've dreams on their looms!' and it had to have been born one... to the softness and richness of the eri silks that my mother wore every day... in the unique style of the 'mekhela sador', the traditional dress of Assam!" says Tara Bhuyan, reflecting on her connection

to Assamese heritage. This connection is evident in their designs, which seamlessly blend traditional Assamese motifs with modern elegance. "My design ideas start from the base; I intend to work on the bigger picture by visualising the ramp. Through my designs, I want to show the world how, with the usage of elegant weaves, one can make an Indo-fusion outfit," Bhuyan explains, highlighting her approach to storytelling through fashion.

Storytelling is indeed a crucial aspect of its design philosophy. Each piece is not just a garment but a testament to the team's collective experience and dedication to preserving Assamese heritage. They curate an exquisite blend of Indian, Asian and Western designs.

Its participation in events such as New York Fashion Week

2023, runway shows in South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand and exhibitions in Dubai, India, Canada and the USA has showcased their commitment to excellence and cultural representation. "Our garments are not only fashion statements but also tell stories that weave together cultural heritage and contemporary innovation."

Sustainability is another core value that drives the design process, dedicated to upcycling and zero waste, using handwoven silk from the villages of Assam and repurposing materials to create new, functional items. "We operate with zero electricity consumption, utilise natural dyes, and ensure that our garments embody eco-friendliness. It's not just about sustainable creations but also fostering a sustainable team and community," emphasises Bhuyan. Going ahead, their commitment to sustainability extends beyond their design process. "Holistic sustainability is a mindful approach towards both the environment and the well-being of the individuals involved in the process. Striking a balance between eco-conscious practices and social responsibility is paramount in shaping a responsible fashion industry."

"Harnessing Handloom: A Shift Towards Zero Electricity consumption is a pivotal move that involves limiting the use of electricity in production processes. By embracing handloom techniques, the sector can not only reduce its reliance on electricity but also uplift communities by providing employment opportunities."

In addition to their commitment to sustainability, it is also dedicated to preserving Assamese heritage and promoting cultural exchange. "The theme, *Couture Chronicles* resonates deeply with our philosophy, which celebrates storytelling through fashion. Just as each piece in a couture collection narrates a journey, our designs intertwine heritage, craftsmanship, and contemporary aesthetics. Our vision is to become a global beacon of luxury fashion that seamlessly blends Assamese heritage with modern elegance, creating timeless and bespoke pieces that inspire and captivate while championing sustainability and craftsmanship. We strive to lead in the fashion industry by delivering exceptional quality, fostering environmental responsibility, and sharing the beauty of our heritage with the world."



Ashray Akuti celebrated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPWD) with an engaging awareness programme on Tuesday, at Sri Satya Sai Nigamagamam, Srinagar Colony. The Chief Guest, Special Chief Secretary of the Industries & Commerce (I&C) and Information Technology (IT) Jayesh Ranjan, announced the launch of the Digital Employment of Telangana (DET), a platform designed to connect job seekers with potential employers, addressing ongoing employment challenges.



MAA Research Foundation commemorated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) with a thought-provoking Awareness Walk and an Inter-College Science and Technology Exhibition, centered around the theme "Amplifying the leadership of persons with disabilities for an inclusive and sustainable future." The event kicked off with an Awareness Walk from KBR Park to MAA Hospitals, Jubilee Hills Check Post, flagged off by Sunitha G. Kumar, Managing Director of the MAA Group.

In a spectacular celebration of India's rich and diverse musical landscape, Hungama Artist Aloud, in collaboration with R City and A&M Studio, presented The Indian Music Awards 2024 (IMA 2024) Grand Finale. The landmark event brought together exceptional artists from across the country under one roof, honouring the best of talents in film, independent, regional and traditional music.



Nurse Maria Victoria Juan from Philippines, has been announced as the winner of Aster Guardians Global Nursing Award 2024 and awarded with Rs. 2 Crore at a prestigious award ceremony

New seasons, movies and more

Disney+ Hotstar is here to make your December spectacular with an incredible lineup of content to end the year on a high note! Dive into the intriguing world of *Invisible* with its gripping first season and let your imagination run wild with Marvel Studios' *What If...?'s* Season 3, where alternate realities redefine the universe. Plus, don't miss the enchanting new release Dream Productions, promising to deliver an experience filled with wonder and magic

DISNEY & PIXAR TITLES

Wonderboys (Season 1) (December 6) (Italian)

In Naples, while New Year's Eve is approaching, Aniello, Teresa, Gennaro, Raffaele and Sasà, the *Wonderboys*, are about to be evicted from their homes by the Old Hag, who has decided to sell the apartments in exchange for a Maradona figurine. However, the figurine is stolen by the new Munaciello, Tonino Wonderboy, a true legend for the *Wonderboys*, who named their group after him. When Aniello ventures into underground Naples in search of the figurine, his inseparable group of friends follows him, embarking on a true treasure hunt filled with legends, mysteries, and breathtaking discoveries. Meanwhile, the Old Hag and her henchmen are on their heels, willing to do whatever it takes to find the lost figurine first.

Dream Productions (Season 1) (December 11) (English)

Taking place in between the events of *Inside Out* and *Inside Out 2* is "Dream Productions," an all-new series about the studio inside Riley's mind where dreams really do come true—every night, on time and on budget. Riley is growing up and when her memories need some extra processing, Joy and the rest of the Core Emotions send them to Dream Productions. Acclaimed director Paula Persimmon (voice of Paula Pell) faces a nightmare of her own: trying to create the next hit dream after being paired up with Xeni (voice of Richard Ayoade), a smug daydream director looking to step up into the big leagues of night dreams. Pixar Animation Studios' hilarious, mockumentary-style series is written and directed by Mike Jones and produced by Jaclyn Simon.

Invisible (Season 1) (December 13) (Spanish)

Based on the novel by Eloy Moreno, twelve-year-old Capi has suffered a terrible accident that has left him with severe post-traumatic stress disorder. Neither the school, nor his friends, nor his family can explain what has happened. However, the psychologist who treats him is determined to delve into his story and discover the reasons that led him to this situation. Little by little, Capi begins to trust him and tells him that he has the power of invisibility and that the terrible nightmares that haunt him every night are linked to the monsters and the dragon that haunt him.

MARVEL TITLES

What If...? (Season 3) (December 22) (English) (New eps debut daily for 8 days)

Marvel's animated series *What If...?* returns in Season 3 for its culminating adventure through the multiverse. Watch as classic characters make unexpected choices that will mutate their worlds into spectacular alternate versions of the MCU. The Watcher (voice of Jeffrey Wright) will guide viewers as the series traverses new genres, bigger spectacles and incredible new characters.

STAR WARS TITLES

Star Wars: Skeleton Crew (Season 1) (December 3) (English, Hindi) (2 Ep Premiere)

Skeleton Crew tells the story of four kids searching for their home planet after getting lost in the *Star Wars* galaxy and the strange aliens and dangerous places they encounter on their adventure.

<JUNG KOOK: I AM STILL> THE

OTHER TITLES

ORIGINAL (December 3) (Korean)

Filmed over an eight-month period, the upcoming docuseries follows Jung Kook as he transitions from a member of 21st-century pop icons BTS into a successful solo artist in his own right. Featuring collaborations with some of the world's biggest producers, <JUNG KOOK: I AM STILL> THE ORIGINAL captures Jung Kook's unique artistry as he travels to New York, London and Seoul recording, performing and filming music videos and performance films as part of a whirlwind promotional tour for his debut solo album GOLDEN.

Light Shop (Season 1) (December 4) (Korean)

An adaptation of Kangtull's hit webtoon of the same name, *Light Shop* follows six strangers, each grappling with a traumatic event from their past. As they go about their daily lives, they slowly come to realize that something is very wrong—they just can't figure out what. Desperate for answers and searching for a way back to normalcy, the strangers are drawn to a mysterious light shop at the end of a foreboding alleyway, which holds the key to their past, present and future. Full of mystery and intrigue, *Light Shop* promises to take viewers on an emotional adventure through its unique and heart-wrenching premise.



Apollo Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, hosted the Convocation Ceremony for the students of Undergraduate Batch 2018, at the RNR Auditorium, Jubilee Hills. Chief Guest Dr. D Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman & Founder of Asian Institute of Gastroenterology (AIG), Hyderabad, Padma Shri & Padma Bhushan Awardee; conferred the Degrees at a glittering ceremony attended by the parents and families of the students. Guest of Honour Dr Sangita Reddy, Joint Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals Group; graced the occasion. Dean Dr. K. Manohar addressed the students and parents, Aparna Reddy, COO, AIMSR welcomed the gathering.



All India Payam e Insaaniyat Foundation has organised Mega Voluntary Blood Donation Camp for Thalassemia patients in Malakpet. Anil Kumar Yadav, MP & Malakpet MLA Ahmed bin Abdullah Balala had visited the blood donation camp and many others.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



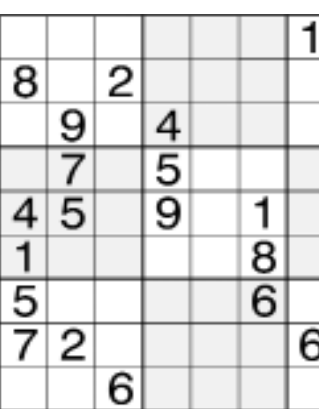
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

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

- Small towns
- Overdue
- Changed direction
- In the lead
- A smelly vegetable
- Unlocks
- A measure of length
- Remained in the same place
- Nought
- Illnesses
- Something worn around the neck
- Likely to kill or harm you
- Cross and upset
- Paper is made from these
- Counts up
- Black stuff on roads

DOWN

- Mountains that erupt
- A measure for liquid
- A type of door in a fence
- Very unusual

SOLUTION

S	V	A	B	P				
A	T	R	H	E				
A	B	S	B	I				
D	I	S	A	P	A	R	I	
L	S	V	M	E				
I	N	N	E	R	J	A	P	I
N	E	A	O	D	I			
E	V	E	R	Y	H	E	R	E
S	O	S	N	R				



Naga Chaitanya's wedding attire pays tribute to grandfather ANR

Naga Chaitanya has always carried forward the legacy of his illustrious family with grace and his upcoming wedding with Sobhita Dhulipala is no exception. The actor has decided to pay tribute to his grandfather, the legendary Akkineni Nageswara Rao, by donning traditional attire called 'pancha' reminiscent of his grandfather's timeless style.

The decision has struck an emotional chord with fans, who have taken to social media to praise Naga Chaitanya for his simplicity and reverence for his roots. Fans are applauding the actor for choosing tradition over extravagance in an age of opulent celebrity weddings. Netizens are also showering love on the couple's cultural authenticity, particularly their 'mangal snaanam' ritual, which has become a viral sensation for its heartfelt simplicity. With an 8-hour-long wedding ceremony rooted in age-old customs, the couple's union is proving to be an inspiring celebration of tradition and family values.



Working on periodic series is unique experience: Costume designer Gayathri Devi

The recent web series *Vikkatakavi* on Zee5 is receiving praise and positive reviews. Set between the 1940s and 1970s, it is a detective web series with a Telangana backdrop. To reflect the era authentically, every actor needed costumes that matched the time, making the role of the costume designer crucial. Josyula Gayathri Devi, who worked on the series, played a significant role in ensuring the outfits were perfect. The series stars Naresh Agastya and Megha Akash in lead roles and is directed by Pradeep Maddali.



"Working for OTT platforms and web series provides great opportunities for young talent and technicians. However, as a professional, I make it a point to stay updated by watching projects in Hindi, French, and Korean, even amidst my busy schedule," says costume designer Josyula Gayathri Devi.

Born in Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh and raised in Chennai, Gayathri pursued a degree in Computer Science Engineering and later worked as a developer in private organisations. "Due to personal reasons, I resigned from my job and decided to take a break. During that time, I developed an interest in fashion designing," she shares. She joined a one-year diploma course in fashion designing at Hamstech and later participated in a fashion show, which became a valuable learning experience. "Within a

year, I was invited to be a mentor for the course, and I took up the role," she adds. Her experience as a fashion show mentor helped her understand the entire process, and she subsequently launched her own boutique. While her boutique operated successfully until 2019, the pandemic forced its closure. It was then that Gayathri transitioned into films, starting with the web series *Kudi Yedamaithe* on OTT. "After that, I worked on a movie titled *Parahushar*, but it didn't release due to certain reasons," she explains. She later collaborated with director Karuna Kumar on *Kalapuram* and with Pradeep Maddali on the web series *Sarvam Shaktimayam*. "After *Sarvam Shaktimayam*, I worked on another periodic series titled *Harikatha*. My experience with *Harikatha* directly helped me while working on *Vikkatakavi*. Working on periodic series with unique concepts isn't a regular occurrence, so when such opportunities arise, one must seize them. Balancing these projects and understanding the nuances of each era has been a rewarding challenge," she shares. Regarding her upcoming projects, Gayathri reveals that she is currently working on a web series titled *Marmayogi*, directed by Satish Vegesna. "The shooting has recently started. Additionally, I'm also working on a movie titled *Manasachora*," she concludes.

Ticket price hike for *Pushpa 2: The Rule* sparks debate in T'wood

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Allu Arjun's *Pushpa 2: The Rule* is set to release worldwide this Thursday, but not without controversy. The film's producers successfully sought approval from the Telangana and Andhra Pradesh governments to raise ticket prices. This led to the premiere show tickets on Wednesday night being priced at 1,000 for single screens and 1,200 for multiplexes—the highest in Telugu cinema history.

While Allu Arjun often credits his fans, calling them his 'Allu Arjun Army,' the decision to impose such high prices has disappointed many. Fans feel burdened, despite the makers claiming the hike is for their benefit.

"Every fan wants to watch their favourite star's movie on the first day, first show. But these increased prices put unnecessary pressure on them," said Tummalapalli Ramasatyanarayana, a producer and exhibitor. "The rising budgets of films cannot justify shifting the burden onto the audience." Ticket price hikes for major releases are not new. Films like *Salaar*, *Kalki*, *Devara* and *Guntur Kaaram* also saw similar price hikes. However, none reached the extent of *Pushpa 2*.

A few years ago, a delegation from the Telugu film industry, led by stars like Chiranjeevi, Prabhas and Mahesh Babu, approached Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to request a general increase in ticket prices for big-budget films. The move drew criticism from filmmaker Thammareddy Bharadwaj, who argued, "If you're making pan-India movies, why impose higher prices only in the Telugu states? This burdens local audiences unfairly." Benefit shows, once a philanthropic tradition, have changed significantly. "Previously, proceeds from these shows supported star associations or relief funds," Ramasatyanarayana explained. "Now, they serve as a tool for producers to pocket more money."

He added, "Stars exploit their fans' emotions. Fans often go to extreme lengths—selling valuables or taking loans—to buy these tickets. This is unethical. If a star truly values their fans, they should hold benefit shows for free."

Producer and distributor Natti Kumar echoed these sentiments, calling the practice "emotional blackmail." He said, "Not every fan is wealthy. Many earn between 7,000 and 70,000 a month. Expecting them to pay exorbitant prices is unreasonable. If Allu Arjun truly cared for his fans, he would not have allowed this hike."

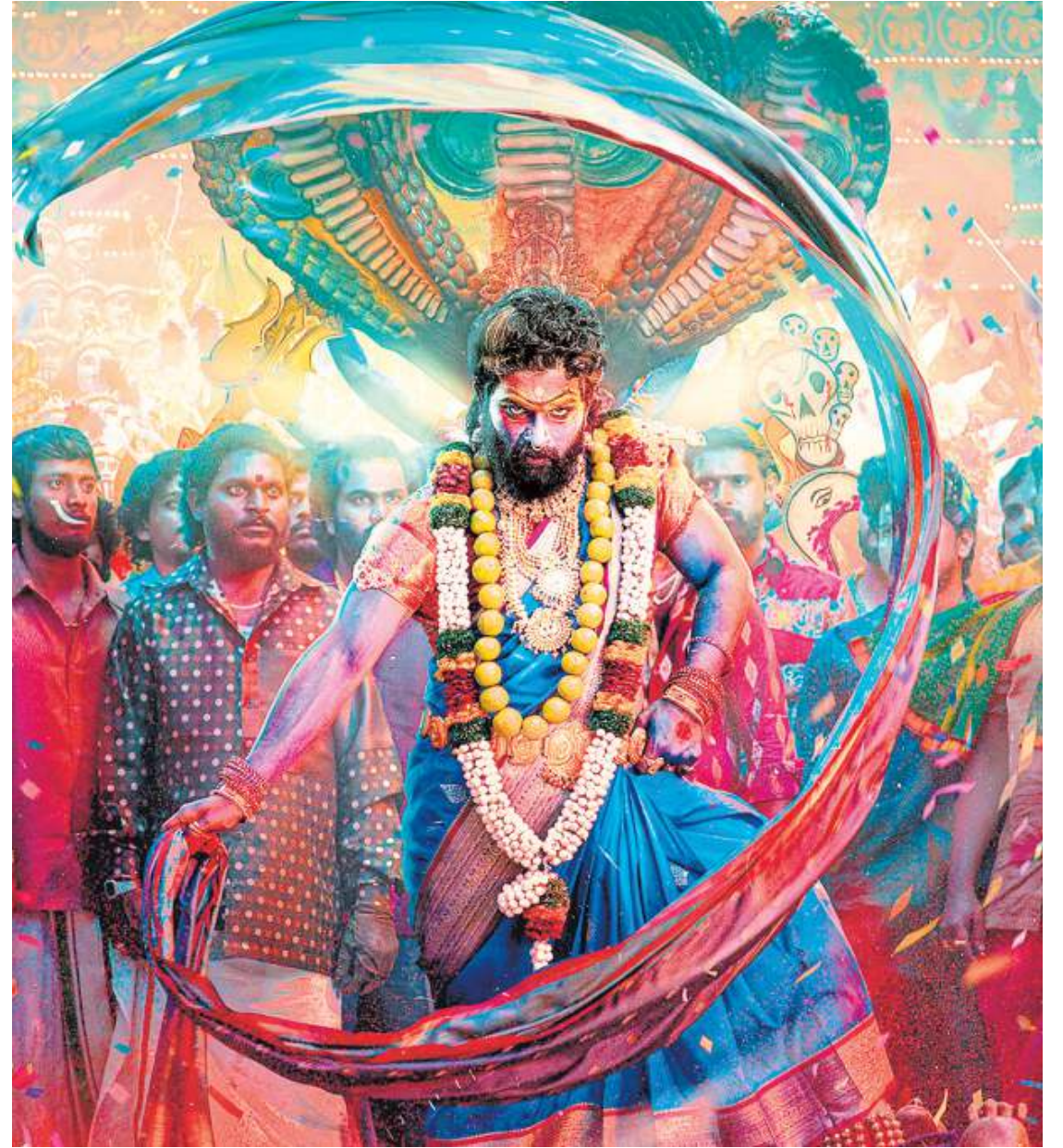
Natti Kumar also warned of the financial risks such practices pose. "When a film's ticket price is so high, and the movie turns out to be average, fans feel cheated. This creates negative word-of-mouth, which can harm the film's performance. With standard pricing, audiences might be more forgiving."

Some producers argue that stars pressure them into hiking ticket prices to set record-breaking opening-day collections. "These inflated numbers help boost the star's market value, allowing them to negotiate higher pay for their next projects," said an unnamed producer. "But if the film flops, the losses fall squarely on the producers, distributors, and exhibitors."

Ramasatyanarayana concluded, "High ticket prices can sometimes backfire. A more balanced approach is needed to respect fans' financial limitations while ensuring the industry thrives."

As the release of *Pushpa 2* draws closer, the controversy over its ticket pricing continues to divide opinions. Whether this strategy will succeed or backfire remains to be seen!

Allu Arjun's much-awaited film *Pushpa 2: The Rule* has sparked a debate due to its ticket pricing, set at nearly Rs 1,000 for single screens and Rs 1,200 for multiplexes. Fans and critics alike question the fairness of this steep hike



RISHAB SHETTY TO STAR AS CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ

The powerhouse of Indian cinema, National Award-winning actor, Rishab Shetty and maverick director Sandeep Singh, today announced their collaboration for one of the biggest stories in Indian history, *The Pride Of Bharat: Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj*. Rishab Shetty, who is known for redefining cinema with *Kantara*, has an impressive slate, becoming the only actor to be a part of the most



anticipated mega films lined up in consecutive years—*Kantara 2* (2025), *Jai Hanuman* (2026) and *The Pride Of Bharat: Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj* (2027). With this stellar lineup, Rishab Shetty cements his place as a leading force in Indian cinema, bringing larger-than-life stories to the silver screen. Sandeep Singh, the creative genius behind iconic films like *Mary Kom*, *Sarbjit*, *Veer Savarkar*, *Ramleela*, *Sarbjit*, *Bajirao Mastani*, & the short film *Safed* will helm this historic epic, while Rishab Shetty will breathe life into the role of the legendary warrior king who defied and inspired generations. This magnum opus promises action on a scale never witnessed before, featuring groundbreaking visuals, stunning VFX and an unforgettable musical score. Backed by a team of top-notch technicians from across the globe, it will bring to life the story of India's greatest warrior kings, a leader who reshaped history and

brought the Mughal invaders to their knees. Rishab Shetty added, "Sandeep's vision for *The Pride Of Bharat: Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj* was so grand, that as soon as I heard the film, I said yes without blinking any eyelid. Playing *The Pride Of Bharat: Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj* is an honour beyond words. He is a national hero whose impact transcends history, and I feel immense pride in bringing his story to the screen." Sandeep Singh added, "Rishab Shetty was my first and only choice for the role—he truly embodies the strength, spirit and valour of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. This film has been my dream for many years now, and it is my privilege and honour to be bringing this story to the silver screen. The film has been envisioned with a scale, grandeur and never seen before action choreography that will help take Indian cinema truly global." Witness history being unfolded in cinemas globally with the arrival of the multi-lingual magnum opus, *The Pride Of Bharat: Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj* slated to release on 21st January 2027 globally.

'You are an inspiration to all Telugu girls,' Allu Arjun to *Kissik* sensation Sreeleela!



With her magnificent aura and electrifying dance moves, Sreeleela has always captivated the hearts of audiences. The actress, who made waves with the popular song *Kurchi Madathapetti* from *Guntur Kaaram* starring Mahesh Babu, has returned with yet another epic dance number in the biggest film of the year, *Pushpa 2: The Rule*. While the young sensation received tremendous love for her performance from all across, During a recent pre-release event, Allu Arjun praised Sreeleela, calling her a talented actress with a promising future in the industry.

The icon star Allu Arjun praised Sreeleela saying, "What a cute girl, She is so cute! She has a bright future and I wish you all the best, Sreeleela. For this generation, you are an inspiration to all Telugu girls." "In this generation, you are the first star Telugu girl to bring us pride. I wholeheartedly wish that you take us all to even greater heights. Amma, you should make us all proud!" the icon star further added.

Sreeleela, known for her graceful moves and vibrant presence, has garnered significant praise for her performance. The song's choreography, high-energy visuals and the dynamic performances from both actors have made *Kissik* a trending hit.

Carey backs Australia's 'world-class' batters to counter Bumrah threat

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Alex Carey on Tuesday maintained Australia are a "united group", confident that their "world-class" batters will come up with better plans to counter India's pace threat Jasprit Bumrah in the upcoming pink-ball Test here.

With their backs against the wall, India came out all guns blazing in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series opener at Perth to win by a massive 295 runs with Bumrah (5/30 and 3/42) ripping apart Australia's batting in each innings.

The heavy margin of defeat left Australia looking for answers as their batters flopped collectively, leaving their famed bowling attack with a lot to do.

"He's obviously a fantastic bowler; (he) has been for a number of years. Our batters are world class as well and always find ways to come up with

solutions," Carey told the media. "We've had a look at him now. Hopefully we can combat that first, second spell. Get him bowling a little bit deeper in the innings with an older ball."

"We saw Travis (Head) sort of counterpunch a bit (in the second innings). I trust our batters, we'll find a way not only (against) Bumrah. They played a couple of other debutantes who bowled well as well," Carey said.

After Australia were set an improbable 534 to win, Josh Hazlewood had invited the media to ask their batters how they planned to go about in the second innings, sparking rumours of a rift between the batting and bowling groups.

Carey, however, declined there was any tensions in the dressing room.

"If you ask the batters, we all want to perform better and (as) cricketers, you go out there to score a hundred and if you don't



do that, I think you're at times disappointed," Carey said.

"But we're a very united group. We all do get the opportunity to bat and we're all keen to continue to put those big runs on the board and I trust the guys to do that," he added.

Carey said Australia's resounding loss at Perth sparked a "big reaction externally" but maintained that the team will stick to its processes.

"It's quite a big reaction externally for one Test loss. Internally, we don't feel that. We didn't play the way we would have liked to have played."

"We know (that) over four or five Test matches, (if) we keep rocking up and playing our style of cricket we will have the success. We've had that success to, I guess, call upon the method does work."

"We're calm internally, we're excited to get back out and play a better style of cricket and we've

got that opportunity come Friday."

Carey did not want to draw much attention to the last contest here in which India were shot out for their lowest-ever Test total of 36.

"There are obviously amazing days in cricketing history but we don't expect to go out there and do that again. We have a process and a plan that we try to execute and whatever happens, happens. I was not here for that Test match."

Australia have never lost a pink ball Test in Adelaide, in fact they have only lost once in day and night fixture.

"We are excited. We take a lot of confidence for our record in pink-ball cricket — it doesn't mean we will have the success but (with) our methods, our style of play and the experience we have in this group we'll bounce back from Perth," he added.

The two teams will take on each other in the second Test, starting here from Friday.



Gilchrist advises Australian batters to stay longer at crease

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

The legendary Adam Gilchrist has advised the beleaguered Australian batters to stay longer at the crease to nullify the threat posed by the Jasprit Bumrah-led Indian bowling attack in the pink-ball second Test here.

The swashbuckling former keeper-batter also backed the out-of-sorts Marnus Labuschagne to regain form.

After Bumrah scythed through the Australian batting line-up, taking eight wickets including a five-for in the first innings at Perth, Gilchrist advised the hosts to "weather the storm".

Steve Smith and Labuschagne, the team's two batting mainstays, flopped in the series opener and that did not help Australia's cause.

"Marnus had the onus to do that (stay at crease) and tried at good effect to nullify 50-odd deliveries. So, if you face an average of 50 deliveries every Test innings, you're probably going to be on the right side of the ledger more than you're on the wrong side of it," Gilchrist was quoted as saying by Nine's World of Sports.

"He just couldn't find a way to score and maybe that's what (the Australians) as a collective will look to try and do."

"It will bring with it risk, for sure, but it is a risk for reward."

Queenslander Labuschagne has been struggling for runs in recent months and now finds himself under immense pressure to retain his place in the side.

Gilchrist attributed Labuschagne's poor run of form to conditions and the quality of bowlers in the opposition camp, and didn't see it as a technical issue.

"I'm sure the people around him are already doing this but he needs to be reminded that he is a class act," Gilchrist said of Labuschagne.

"He's got a game that has been able to tolerate and withstand everything that the cricketing world has presented, and he's dominated for a number of years."

The former star added, "Most players that have played long enough will have been in this situation at some point in time and it's about not letting any self-doubt creep in and understanding you don't lose that skill — you don't lose that edge — (and) certainly not in a short space of time."

Gilchrist urged Labuschagne to "trust your training, get out there, see the ball and play it."

The second Test, a day/night affair, will begin on Friday at Adelaide Oval.

India lead the five-match series following their 295-run victory in the opener at Perth last week.

New Zealand penalised WTC points, drop to fifth in table

PTI ■ DUBAI

New Zealand's aspirations of qualifying for the World Test Championship Final suffered a setback after they were docked three penalty points due to slow over-rate against England leading to a drop in the ranking table, the ICC stated on Tuesday.

The deduction is a welcome news for India, who enjoy pole position with 61.11 percentage points.

New Zealand now have a points percentage of 47.92 percent and can only move as high as 55.36 percent with victories from their remaining two fixtures against England, South Africa (59.26), Australia (57.26) and Sri Lanka (50) are placed second, third and fourth respectively.

"The race to feature at next year's ICC World Test Championship Final at Lord's has taken a twist with



New Zealand and England sanctioned for maintaining a slow over-rate during the opening Test of their series in Christchurch," the ICC said in a statement.

"Both teams were fined 15 percent of their match fees and penalised three crucial World Test Championship competition points, adding more intrigue to the thrilling final stages of the ongoing cycle," it further stated.

While England are already out of contention of reaching next year's final despite the impressive eight-wicket triumph at Hagley Oval, the loss in competition points is a major blow to New Zealand who drop from equal fourth to outright fifth on the standings as a result.

It means the inaugural World Test Championship winners face a tough ask to qualify for next year's one-

off Test in June 2025, with two wins against England and several other results also needing to go their way if they are to reach the Lord's decider.

New Zealand and England were both found to have three overs short of the target after time allowances were taken into consideration, with sides penalised one point for each over they were found to be short.

Both captains - Tom Latham of New Zealand and Ben Stokes of England - pleaded guilty to the offence and accepted the proposed sanction, so there was no need for a formal hearing.

On-field umpires Ahsan Raza and Rod Tucker, third umpire Adrian Holdstock and fourth official Kim Cotton levelled the charges, with David Boon of the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees imposing the sanctions.

Todd Greenberg appointed new Cricket Australia CEO

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former National Rugby League boss Todd Greenberg will succeed Nick Hockley as the chief executive officer of Cricket Australia next year, the governing body announced on Tuesday.

Green, who is the current chief executive officer of the Australian Cricketers' Association, will assume the role from March.

Hockley, who was appointed in 2020 initially on an interim basis, had announced in August that he would step down from the post at the end of the current domestic season.

Greenberg has previously worked with Cricket New South Wales. A top-order batter, he played 10 seasons for Randwick CC in Sydney.

Apart from serving as the CEO of NRL, Greenberg also worked with NRL club Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs before joining the ACA in January 2021.

"This is an extremely exciting time for cricket with the rapid growth of the



game across the globe creating fantastic opportunities, while also presenting some challenges to ensure Australian cricket retains its position at the very peak of the game," Greenberg was quoted as saying by cricket.Com.Au.

"Thanks to the work of the current administration the game has strong fundamentals in place. I want to ensure we build on this momentum so Australian cricket continues to thrive -

from local parks to the nation's biggest stadiums," he added.

As CEO of the ACA, Greenberg worked closely with Hockley and the two reached an amicable agreement on the current Memorandum of Understanding for cricket, which outlines the distribution of wealth within the game and resulted in a significant increase in women's remuneration.

"We are entering a period of great opportunity and the recruitment panel and CA Board was enormously impressed by Todd's passion for cricket and his vision to build on the achievements of the past few years and continue the game's growth," CA chairman Mike Baird said.

"I would like to thank Nick Hockley who will leave the game in a position of great strength at the end of the season with important foundations including our broadcast rights deal, MOU and seven-year content strategy in place," he added.



World Chess Championship: Gukesh squanders advantage to settle for draw in Game 7

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

The youngest-ever challenger to the world crown, D Gukesh let go of a very promising position and had to settle for a fourth consecutive draw against defending champion Ding Liren of China in a marathon seventh game of the World Chess Championship here on Tuesday.

The stalemate, which came after five hours and 22 minutes of nerve-wracking play, left both players on an identical tally of 3.5 points each, still shy of four more points in order to win the championship.

The two players signed peace after 72 moves.

It turned out to be a tough day in office again for Liren, who was staring at a losing position for a long time, till Gukesh blundered. The Indian, playing white, got a huge advantage but miscalculated to let the Chinese off the hook in what was the longest game of the match thus far.

It was a miraculous save by Liren after getting into what the chess pundits termed as a lost rook and minor piece endgame.

Earlier in the day, Gukesh yet again tightened the noose in the opening. He has clearly been the better player when it's come to springing opening surprises.

Moving his knight forward on the first move, the Indian faced the Neo Grunfeld defense from Liren, and as early as on the seventh turn, Gukesh came up with a surprise idea.

Liren, who seemed to have

solved his opening problems in the last couple of games, was at the receiving end on Tuesday, and even though he chose normal continuation, white's position remained preferable.

Gukesh exerted pressure through the centre and got a dangerous-looking passed pawn in the early stages of the middle game, with the advantage of the bishop pair only adding to Liren's woes.

The middle game saw inaccuracies from both sides, and it seemed that Liren was close to obtaining equality. However, the process had yet again eaten up most of Liren's available time as the players are required to make the first 40 moves in two hours without any increment.

Gukesh went for the trade of queens after fracturing black's pawn structure on the king side as the Indian got an indisputable advantage.

As has happened so many times in the past, the 40th move proved to be jinxed yet again as Liren lost a pawn. The Chinese either underestimated Gukesh's chances or it was an oversight. Despite the advantage, Gukesh still had to go through the technicalities, which has not been his forte here.

Gukesh's 45th move was not the best and Liren slowly clawed back into the game with some really resourceful play.

The tenacity of the Chinese came to the fore in the second time control also after he was left with just four minutes with a 30-second increment after each move is made.

Former England captain Alastair Cook Praises India for being 'Brave' in Perth Test

PTI ■ LONDON

Opting to go in without a proven performer like R Ashwin and batting first in an opening Test of a high-pressure series in Australia are reflections of an Indian team that is brave and supremely confident in its ability to win from any situation, feels England's all-time great Alastair Cook.

Cook, a former captain and the first England batter to make 10,000 runs in Test cricket, praised India for their remarkable comeback after getting bowled out for just 150 in the first Test at Perth.

"I thought India was so brave. I thought that first, you know, they win the toss and bat on that wicket, you look there, even though there's only 150 they got, the thought process to say, 'we're going to take Australia on there. We know it's going to be hard, but we think it's going to be hard for both

sides only, and then it'll be a one-innings game," Cook said on TNT Sports.

He added, "I think most captains would have bowled first, certainly would have done and probably got the end of a bad result, like normally in Australia. But India took it on brilliantly. It was just an all-round fantastic performance."

"You think... Bowled out for 150, you think we're struggling here, but to bounce back when you've got Boomer (Jasprit Bumrah) up with the new ball on those kinds of wickets, he's always going to be outstanding and backed up by team."

Captaining the team in the absence of Rohit Sharma, pace spearhead Bumrah came up with a magnificent performance to grab eight wickets, including a first-innings five-for, to lead India to a memorable win.

Speaking about India's move to exclude the senior off-spinner Ashwin from the



playing XI, Cook said, "... Just think of how brave they were? They didn't bother playing Ashwin who has got 500 Test wickets. They've kind of played a couple of

like, not makes you spinners, but you know, I thought Ashwin would have been outstanding, but you know, great thinking by them. "And isn't it nice to see

Australia get thrashed?" Cook lauded the "classy" Yashasvi Jaiswal for the manner in which he dominated the formidable Australian pace attack and

said he wouldn't have told the menacing Mitchell Starc he is bowling too slow even if he was.

After failing to open his account in the first innings

of the series opener, Jaiswal adapted to the conditions beautifully and played a brilliant 161-run knock in the second essay, his maiden century on Australian soil.

During the second day of the match, Jaiswal told Starc, "It's coming too slow", with his confidence attracting the attention of many in the cricket world, including the former England captain, who had been a prolific scorer in Tests for a prolonged period.

"We've seen his celebration enough here, but it's more enjoyable against Australia than England, certainly," Cook said, referring to Jaiswal's phenomenal run in the Test series against England, when he amassed over 700 runs.

He added, "And sledging Mitchell Starc, saying at a certain stage, I think he wasn't on 100, he wasn't on anything on a major score, but he's telling him you're bowling slow."

"And I've faced Mitchell Starc and he certainly doesn't bowl slow. And if he was bowling slow, I'd keep my mouth shut and not wind him up, but have the confidence to do that as a 22-year-old."

"I think he scored the most runs as any Indian player up to after 15 Test matches at the top of the order, which I'll keep saying it, no one else believes me, it's the hardest place to bat. What a classy player he is."

India thrashed Australia by 295 runs in the five-match series opener and Cook said he was pleasantly surprised by the result.

"I was surprised. I was surprised that India have gone there and hammered Australia in what normally is a very hard place to go and play cricket, Perth. I know it's not the WACA. I know it's the new stadium, but still, historically, Australia don't lose many games there," Cook said.