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

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Gandhis celebrate Bathukamma for optics but stay silent as their Chief Minister Revanth Reddy erases it from the Telangana Thalli statue. Congress leaders like Indira Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi had once celebrated Bathukamma with Telangana women, while Priyanka Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi extended greetings during elections. After elections, they question: 'Why Bathukamma belongs to Telangana Thalli? Congress leaders are showing their true colours with such statements'



- Kavitha, BRS MLC

Bid to reduce minorities to 'second-grade' citizens: Akhilesh

CYCLING OUT HIS WAY TOWARDS A GREENER HYDERABAD

Balakrishna anger flows over Prashanth VARMA!

DON'T MISS...

Mohan Babu apologises

Film actor Mohan Babu issued a letter apologising for his actions in the recent assault on a vernacular journalist on Friday. He also filed a motion in the Telangana High Court seeking interim bail in the case. However, Justice K Lakshman declined immediate relief, stating that a counter from the State is required before any decision. In his letter, Mohan Babu expressed regret over the incident, calling ...

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Delhi schools receive bomb threats

Around 30 schools in Delhi received bomb threats over e-mail in the early hours of Friday, triggering a multi-agency search of their premises, officials said. Nothing suspicious was found in any of the schools after the searches, they added. The latest threats come close on the heels of at least 44 schools receiving similar e-mails on December 9. Police had declared those threats as hoaxes. The Special Cell of the Delhi Police has registered ...

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Plans afoot to bring EPFO at par with banking

Subscribers of the retirement fund body EPFO may soon be able to get services at par with banking system and use ATMs to withdraw their claim amount, a top official said on Friday. Union Labour Secretary Sumita Dawra told PTI that focus right now in EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) is to improve the IT infrastructure. "While improvements are being seen in last few months, in January 2025 we will see more improvement ...

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'Bumrah combination of legendary pacers'

Jasprit Bumrah embodies the qualities of pace legends such as Dennis Lillee, Andy Roberts and Richard Hadlee but at the same time is forging his own legacy, one that is set to inspire future generations of pacemen, feels former India coach Greg Chappell. He also said that Bumrah is the only player standing between Australia and the Border Gavaskar Trophy. "What sets Bumrah apart is his combination of skills: (Malcolm) Marshall's adaptability, Lillee's aggression, Richard ...

-SPORTS

Law applies to all, no exemption for film stars: CM Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy addressed the controversy surrounding actor Allu Arjun's arrest, emphasising that the law applies equally to everyone whether they are film stars or political figures.

Drawing parallels with past incidents involving Salman Khan and Sanjay Dutt, the CM said that the law functions as per the Constitution authored by Dr BR Ambedkar.

"The police arrested Allu Arjun in connection with a tragic incident in which a woman lost her life, and her son is still battling for survival. A criminal case was registered after the incident. The law cannot be changed for film or political personalities," he asserted in an interview with Aaj Tak.

"Did Allu Arjun fight on the India-Pakistan border? He invested money in films, earned profits and entertained audiences, but that doesn't exempt him from legal scrutiny," the CM said.

Detailing the sequence of events, Revanth said that the police visited Allu Arjun's residence 10 days after the case was registered. He explained that the chaos ensued when the actor stepped out of his car during a public function leading to an uncontrollable rush.

"Had he stayed in his car and left quietly after watching the movie, the situation could have been avoided. But the unnecessary fanfare caused a stampede, resulting in the unfortunate loss of life," the CM said. The Chief Minister clarified that



Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy speaks at India Today and Aaj Tak interview at New Delhi on Friday where he dismissed any personal grudge towards Allu Arjun but clarified law applies to all equally.

"Did Allu Arjun fight on the India-Pakistan border? He invested money in films, earned profits and entertained audiences, but that doesn't exempt him from legal scrutiny," the CM said

Allu Arjun has been named as Accused No. 11 (A11) in the case and asked, "Who is responsible for the woman's death? Shouldn't a case be filed even if lives are lost?"

Addressing his personal connection to the actor, Revanth acknowledged that he had known Allu Arjun since childhood and that their families are related.

"Allu Arjun's uncle, Chiranjeevi, is a Congress leader, and another relative, Chandrasekhar Reddy, is also part of the Congress. His wife is connected to my family as well," he said. However, he reiterated that these personal ties have no bearing on the case, as the Home Department, which he handles, is committed to impartiality.

Revanth also highlighted the condition of the deceased woman's son, who is in a coma and emphasised the need for accountability.



Film star Allu Arjun moved to Chikkadapally Police Station after the arrest on Friday. He was presented before the court after health tests in Gandhi Hospital.

Allu Arjun arrested, sent to jail

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telugu superstar Allu Arjun was arrested on Friday, sent to 14-day judicial custody by a local court here in connection with the death of a woman in a stampede during the premiere of his blockbuster "Pushpa 2: The Rule" and granted interim bail by the Telangana High Court -- all in less than five hours in a dramatic turn of events.

The actor, it seemed, may have to spend the night in jail

despite the HC relief, as the prison authorities had not received a copy of the bail till late on Friday, the jail sources said.

Even if it is received, the bail copy has to be scrutinized and the release may not be feasible on Friday, the sources said, indicating that he is likely to be walk out on Saturday morning.

The high-profile arrest also triggered a political slugfest with the BJP and BRS lashing out at

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- HC grants interim bail, but Pushpa star still held over in Chanchalguda Jail.
- Chances of release today,
- Strong reactions from industry, political circles

Police blame Allu Arjun's actions for woman's death

3



Chief Minister Revanth Reddy greeting Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Delhi on Friday

CM MEETS NIRMALA

TG seeks prompt release of Rs. 1,800 cr for backward districts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday and requested the immediate release of Rs 1,800 crore as special assistance for the backward districts of Telangana under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act.

During their meeting in Parliament, the CM stressed the Centre's commitment to provide Rs 450 crore annually to nine districts in Telangana, a promise that remained unfulfilled in the years 2019-20, 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24.

Revanth said that Telangana spent Rs 703.43 crore as operational expenses for undivided institutions like the High Court, Raj Bhavan and Lokayukta post-bifurcation.

He pointed out that Andhra Pradesh owes Rs 408.49 crore as its share of these expenses and urged Nirmala to direct Andhra Pradesh to clear the dues with interest. Despite agreement from Andhra Pradesh and reminders from the Centre Home Ministry, the payment remains pending, the CM said.

The CM also raised concern over the Centre's unilateral recovery orders for Rs 2,547.07 crore from Telangana for

Continued on Page 2

BRS rule destroyed TG, says TPCC chief

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

All sectors of Telangana's economy were destroyed during the 10 years of BRS rule, TPCC chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud said.

However, the Congress is now ruling as per the hopes and aspirations of the people, Mahesh said.

Attending a private interaction programme on Friday, Mahesh said that former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao is not attending the Assembly although he is enjoying all facilities as the opposition leader.

Mahesh said that the Leader of the Opposition (LOP) in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, is going to play the role of Virat Kohli in the next elections. He said the BJP-led Mahayuti came to power by influencing all systems in Maharashtra Assembly elections. Rahul Gandhi is a leader with commitment, he said.

He said the Congress Government has implemented all possible assurances during its one-year rule in Telangana and that the government will implement the remaining assurances in the coming days.

ED summons former BRS MLA, builders in land scam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned former BRS MLA Marri Janardhan Reddy and B. Subba Reddy of Vamsiram Builders, along with two other developers, in connection with an alleged land scam linked to IAS officer Amoy Kumar. The summons, issued on Thursday, asks the individuals to appear for questioning on December 16.

ED sources said the other developers named in the case are Talasu Surya Teja of Ammoda Developers and K. Sidda Reddy of KSR Mines. They have been identified as the alleged beneficiaries of fraudulent land transactions involving Bhoodan land in the Nagaram village of Maheshwaram mandal in Rangareddy district.

The investigation, conducted under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), focuses on



irregularities regarding 50 acres of Bhoodan land. These transactions are believed to be part of a larger scheme involving 100 acres, which the Telangana Bhoodan Yagna Board had earlier flagged as illegal. The Board issued eviction notices to the land allottees citing unauthorised transactions.

The case stems from an FIR filed in 2023 by the Maheshwaram police, based on a private complaint by Dastagir Shareef of Mehdiptnam. The complaint said that fraudulent sale deeds and land passbooks were issued for 42 acres and 33 guntas in Nagaram village in October 2021,

despite the land being classified as government property under Section 22-A prohibited category of the Indian Stamps Act.

The ED is investigating whether these transactions were carried out to alienate government land for private profit. IAS officer Amoy Kumar's role has also come under scrutiny, with his statements recorded many times during the probe.

As the investigation progresses, the ED is expected to uncover details about the alleged misuse of government land and possible money laundering linked to these transactions.

POST GUV'S NOD

BRS braces for KTR's arrest in formula E probe

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Bharat Rashtia Samithi (BRS) is gearing up for a potential political crisis after the Governor's approved for a probe into alleged irregularities in the Formula E race

held in Hyderabad. Sources said that as per procedures investigation could lead to the questioning and possible arrest of KT Rama Rao (KTR), a prominent leader and former minister. As reported by The Pioneer on 11 December, files related to the sanction have been moved

The controversy revolves around allegations of financial mismanagement and irregularities in the Rs 55 crore payment made for organizing the Formula E car race in February 2023. Congress leaders have accused

the BRS of using public funds irresponsibly, turning the global event into a political flashpoint.

The state government had sought the Governor's approval for the investigation on November 8. Sources suggest that KTR will be the first to face questioning, and depending on the details revealed, an arrest could follow. Sources hinted that the timing might coincide with the New Year, with weekend arrests reportedly being a favored strategy of the Congress government.

The BRS, however, has dismissed the probe as a politically motivated move by the Congress to undermine its leadership. Party leaders are reportedly preparing to counter the anticipated arrest, viewing it as an attempt to tarnish KTR's image ahead of key political milestones.



Widespread unrest if KTR is arrested, Delhi rule likely: Srinivas

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Minister V. Srinivas Goud warned the TG government that there would be widespread unrest and mayhem in the state if BRS Working President KT Rama Rao is arrested and that the imposition of President's Rule cannot be ruled out.

He said the BRS has 60 lakh activists in the state and they are ready for any sacrifice. "Is it possible to jail them all?" Srinivas said.

Speaking to the media on Friday at the Telangana Bhavan, Srinivas said the Revanth Government has been leaking info that KTR will be arrested soon.)Continued on Page 2

TG plans to generate 20 GW of green power by 2030

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Government has drawn up a plan to produce 20 GW of renewable energy by 2030 and 40 GW by 2035.

Telangana leads the nation in implementing the Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC), with 879 commercial buildings adhering to the code, resulting in energy savings of 392.21 million units.

The state also introduced the pioneering Telangana Cool Roof Policy (2023-28), designed to reduce heat and energy consumption during peak summer.

As per the Perform, Achieve, and Trade (PAT) programme, 43 companies have been identified as Designated Consumers, collectively saving 0.24 million tonnes of oil-equivalent energy in the first two PAT cycles.



Telangana leads the nation in implementing the Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC), with 879 commercial buildings adhering to the code, resulting in energy savings of 392.21 million units

In the demand-side management (DSM) domain, Hyderabad alone saved 40 MW by replacing over four lakh conventional streetlights with

LED lights. In 73 municipalities and gram panchayats, 17.23 lakh streetlights were converted to LED, and 32 lakh LED bulbs, 20W LED tube lights, and 28W BLDC fans were distributed at affordable prices, saving 439 million units annually.

TGRECO established 168 energy clubs in schools, replacing 57,483 conventional appliances with energy-efficient LED devices in government institutions to promote energy awareness. This saved 2.87 million units of energy annually and reduced carbon emissions by 2,814 tonnes.

Telangana's energy conservation initiatives have been nationally recognised, with the state winning the prestigious National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA) three times. The Telangana State Energy Conservation Awards (TSECA) are presented annually to individuals and organisations

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India must gear up to trump Donald's investor lure

While the world was bracing for a tariff war under a Trump Presidency, Trump's recent post foretells a global race to attract investments. A couple of days back, the former American President and President-elect posted on Truth Social, a Social Media platform, stating, "Any person or company investing ONE BILLION DOLLARS, OR MORE, in the United States of America, will receive fully expedited approvals and permits, including, but in no way limited to, all environmental approvals. GET READY TO ROCK!!!"

Trump's post highlights that even the largest consumer market in the world, which ranks sixth in the last available Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) rankings, must cut red tape and adopt aggressive, proactive measures to attract investors. Given that India's consumer market is just one-tenth the size of America's and

ranks 63rd in EoDB, one cannot overstate the urgent need for India to act swiftly to stay in the competition for investments, especially Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

India offers many inherent advantages to investors. Most important among them is its demographic dividend - a massive workforce with labour costs a fraction of those in America and many other Western countries. Its Union government has opened up forbidden sectors like defence and space for private investments while aggressively pursuing statutory reforms like repealing obsolete, redundant laws, de-criminalising minor economic offences and streamlining regulations to reduce compliance burdens. The recent Jan Vishwas Bill is a case in point. The central government has also been vigorously pushing to make India a manufacturing hub by providing financial incentives to companies that set up new

The Ministries of Industry, Information Technology, Labour, and bodies for Skill Development, Entrepreneurship, etc., should be fused into a single Employment Generation Ministry. This Ministry's only goal and benchmark should be the speed at which it attracts and transforms investment intents into additional formal and qualitative employment opportunities in the state

manufacturing plants in India through its Production Linked Incentive Scheme. The loss of trust in China post-COVID and the global business community's shift to a "China plus One" strategy to decrease its dependency on China and build redundancies into global supply chains is another factor favouring India. These efforts and advantages made the Indian economy the fastest-growing large economy globally.

India aims to become a developed country by 2047. To achieve the Viksit Bharat goal, it needs a sustained growth trajectory for its GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in the high single digits or even low double digits. Geopolitical uncertainties aside, President-elect Trump's intention to aggressively pursue investments makes it necessary for India to step up its investment attraction game to the next level.



KISHORE POREDDY

the investment can only materialise in one of the Indian states. Whether land, labour, construction, environmental clearances, or amenities like internal roads, transport, electricity, water, and sewerage connections; significant challenges for translating investments into production capabilities are in the states' purview. While the central government has been pushing economic reforms

since 1991, the states have been laggards on this score.

Unemployment is a major electoral issue today. Most states' financial situation does not afford them the luxury of addressing unemployment solely through government efforts. Hence, there is a lucrative incentive for those in power to pursue private investments. While significant infrastructure rollouts cost money, which the states may not have, they can focus on many low-hanging fruits that cost little.

Firstly, every state should launch a permanent commission similar to the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) proposed by the upcoming Trump administration. The department should comprehensively examine state-level laws, regulations, and processes relating to economic activity such as labour laws, and push for reforms - and/or repeals, changes, simplifications, and even overhauls - where neces-

sary. Additionally, it should simplify and speed up government interface through technology where feasible.

Secondly, states should try innovative approaches to solve the challenge of acquiring land for industry. The current strategy focuses solely on compensation - a lump sum for the owner's land, without providing an alternate sustainable income for those whose primary sustenance comes from land, like farmers. Land pooling like the one pursued by Andhra Pradesh for its capital city, wherein owners whose land is acquired get a parcel of developed land, coupled with schemes to provide loans to build economic assets that can translate into regular income, could be pursued among other innovative methods.

Finally, the state governments should turn their industrial policies on their heads. Instead of investors pursuing the state governments for land, facilities, clearances, and per-

mits, the state governments should take responsibility for translating investors' Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) into reality, with independent regulatory bodies to monitor irregularities. To do this, the Ministries of Industry, Information Technology, Labour, and bodies for Skill Development, Entrepreneurship, etc., should be fused into a single Employment Generation Ministry. This ministry's only goal and benchmark should be the speed at which it attracts and transforms investment intents into additional formal and qualitative employment opportunities in the state.

The timing is ripe, and given the competition for investments, it has become necessary to launch economic reforms at the state level. Telangana should lead the way.

(The author is BJP TS spokesperson.)

Millers warned against stealing, diverting paddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Although most rice millers are following rules some millers are still diverting and stealing paddy, Civil Supplies Commissioner DS Chauhan said.

The Commissioner said that if paddy is diverted to other places strong action would be taken including surveillance of the grain depots of rice millers. He said that criminal cases were registered against 11 people in four days and many were arrested.

The Commissioner said the Civil Supplies Department and Corporation had said that it has been allocating paddy to

millers in a completely transparent systematic and performance-based method, based on milling capacity. The allocation system has been streamlined, so that genuine millers are allocated paddy without any issues and defaulters are not given paddy.

In a statement issued on Friday, the Commissioner said that the Rice Millers Association was told that any pilferage or diversion of government paddy will be viewed seriously and the Association has also promised that, henceforth, there will not be any pilferage.

Requests were also made to speed up paddy milling and

delivery of Custom Milled Rice (CMR) so that both the Corporation and millers can avoid the interest burden.

He said that any paddy pilferage or diversion will be viewed very seriously by the Department and strong action will be taken against such rice millers. A drive has been started by the enforcement wing of the Corporation to check paddy stocks with rice millers and 11 criminal cases have been registered in the last four days and some arrests were also made.

The drive will be continued and pilferage will not be permitted at any cost, he said.

He said the department once



Civil Supplies Commissioner DS Chauhan

again appeals to rice millers not to engage in such acts and to deliver custom milled rice on time.

Cong never respected creative industry: Vaishnav

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress never had any respect for the creative industry, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said.

Posting on X regarding this, he said, "The Congress has no respect for the creative industry and the arrest of Allu Arjun proves it again. The mishap at Sandhya Theatre was a clear case of poor arrangements by the state and the local administration.

Now, to deflect blame, they are engaging in publicity stunts. The Telangana Government should assist those affected and punish those who made arrangements instead of hounding film personalities. It is sad to see this is becoming the norm under Congress rule."

Widespread ...

Continued on Page 1

There are reports that the Governor has given his nod to the ACB for arresting KTR in connection with Formula E Car racing, he said and asked the government to explain what KTR did to arrest him.

Is bringing Formula E Car racing, which is limited to some cities across the world, to Hyderabad a crime? he asked. Is enhancing Hyderabad's brand image a mistake of KTR?, he asked.

He said that many companies came to Hyderabad after Formula E racing. Instead of continuing the formula car racing, the Congress Government erred by scrapping the agreement, he said and added that it is the mistake of Revanth and not that of KTR. Revanth Reddy, who went to jail once, is thinking that everyone must go to jail, Srinivas said.



'Rs 1 lakh for Indiramma house beneficiaries'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Revenue and Housing Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy said the government will give Rs 1 lakh to those who are allotted Indiramma Houses as the first instalment. The Minister said the government is allotting 4.5 lakh houses in the first phase and that 80 lakh people had applied for Indiramma houses. He said the government is dis-

playing 580 model Indiramma houses across the state.

He said the government is going to complete the construction of a model house in Kusumanchi village by Sankranthi and that the Congress government had planned the scheme in such a way that beneficiaries can construct their own houses.

He said that those who did not apply in Praja Palana can

apply through special counters and that the deceased's legal heirs can also apply for Indiramma houses in case a person who applied for Indiramma house dies.

He said that the government took this decision to see that the poor did not face trouble and that officials who go to villages for surveys should go along with Indiramma Committees.

TG seeks prompt ...

Continued on Page 1

loans used in externally aided projects launched in United Andhra Pradesh. Revanth urged a review of the decision, asserting that Telangana should not be burdened with this liability.

The CM also requested the release of Rs 495.20 crore due to Telangana for Centrally sponsored schemes allocated exclusively to Andhra Pradesh in 2014-15. Revanth sought the Finance Minister's intervention to ensure that these funds are transferred to Telangana promptly.

MPs Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, Mallu Ravi, Balaram Nayak, Anil Kumar Yadav, Kadiyam Kavya, and former MP V. Hanumantha Rao accompanied the CM during his meeting.

Revanth also met Union Railway Minister Ashwini

Vaishnav, demanding the establishment of an integrated railway coach factory at Kazipet, as promised in the AP Reorganisation Act. The CM said that while a Periodical Overhauling Workshop was sanctioned in Kazipet, the coach factory remains pending. Revanth proposed a new railway line between Vikarabad and Krishna stations, which would reduce the distance by 70 km and connect backward areas in South Telangana. He highlighted the potential for industrial development, particularly cement clusters and other sectors.

The CM also sought approval for a rail route between Kalwakurthi and Macherla, which would connect remote areas and benefit the cement industry and the forest product trade. He explained that this route would

improve connectivity between Secunderabad, Guntur and Dhone while facilitating easier travel to the spiritual hub of Srisaillam.

Revanth requested the reconsideration of the proposed rail alignments between Dornakal-Miryalaguda and Dornakal-Gadwal. He pointed out that these routes pass through fertile lands, mainly owned by farmers from BC, SC, ST groups and minorities. He suggested alternative routes through backward areas like Vennaram and Maripeda to Mothe, which would reduce land acquisition costs and shorten the distance by 19 km.

MPs Mallu Ravi, Kadiyam Kavya, Kunduru Raghavver Reddy, Suresh Shetkar, Gaddam Vamsi Krishna and Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy accompanied the CM during the discussions.

Delhi HC seeks media houses' reply on Jagan Reddy's Rs 100 cr defamation suit

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has sought the response of various media houses on a Rs 100 crore defamation suit by former Andhra Pradesh chief minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy over alleged derogatory news reports linking him to the indictment proceedings against Adani Group in the US.

Justice Subramonium Prasad issued summons to the media houses and their

editors and search engine Google while asking them to file written statements in response to the suit.

"Let the plaint be registered as a suit. Issue summons," the court said in its December 9 order. The judge also issued notice on Reddy's application seeking an interim relief and made it clear that any application made after December 9 would be after being put to notice by court and have its own consequences.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar said the girl

Was Allu Arjun arrested due to his meeting with PK?

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Pushpa fame Allu Arjun's arrest has sparked many speculations. One of them is political analyst Prashant Kishore's meeting with Allu Arjun. Rumours spread that Allu Arjun may float a new political party and so he was arrested. However, political experts dismissed this argument saying that the case was registered much before PK met Allu Arjun.

One politician said the

arrest won't stop anyone if they want to float a new political party. He said that there is no meaning in it.

Another speculation among politicians is that the arrest was due to Allu Arjun's failure to name Chief Minister Revanth Reddy at a programme in which he had thanked Telugu CMs and that it is reflected among journos. Some journos said that Allu Arjun is behaving arrogantly and so he was arrested.

A resident of Mahidpur in a case involving alleged abduction and sexual assault of a minor. An FIR under various provisions relating to kidnapping and other offences was lodged by the father that his 16-year-old girl was missing.

It was alleged that a man abducted, lured and kidnapped his daughter.

'Child not chattel, accept marriage of your major daughter': SC junks parents' plea

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Saying "a child is not a chattel", the Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a plea of the parents of a woman for criminal action against her partner on the ground she was a minor when she married.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Sanjay Kumar said the girl

was not a minor at the time of marriage and the FIR was lodged against a person as her parents did not accept the marriage.

"You don't have the right to imprison ... You do not accept the relationship of your major child. You treat your child as a chattel. A child is not a chattel," the CJ said, "accept the marriage of your child".

The bench referred to the discrepancies in the date of birth certificate submitted by the parents of the woman and said it was not taking the matter further.

"We are not inclined to interfere with the high court order," it said.

On August 16, a bench of Madhya Pradesh High Court at Indore quashed an FIR against

a resident of Mahidpur in a case involving alleged abduction and sexual assault of a minor.

An FIR under various provisions relating to kidnapping and other offences was lodged by the father that his 16-year-old girl was missing.

It was alleged that a man abducted, lured and kidnapped his daughter.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Sukla Paksha

Tithi: Chaturdash: Dec 13 07:40 PM to Dec 14 04:58 PM

Purnima: Dec 14 04:58 PM to Dec 15 02:31 PM

Nakshatram: Rohini: Dec 14 05:47 AM to Dec 15 03:54 AM

Mrigashirsha: Dec 15 03:54 AM to Dec 16 02:20 AM

Rahukalam: 9:26 AM to 10:48 AM

Yamagandam: 1:33 PM to 2:55 PM

Varjyam: 09:08 AM to 10:38 AM

Gulika: 6:41 AM to 8:04 AM

Amritakalam: 12:57 AM to 02:26 AM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:48 AM to 12:32 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly Sunny

Temp: 28°

Humidity: 48%

Sunrise: 6:38 AM

Sunset: 5:44 PM

Updated: December 13, 2024 5:00 PM

TG plans to generate ...

Continued on Page 1

excelling in energy conservation. Speaking at the launch of the 2025 Energy Conservation Calendar prepared by TGREDCO, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti emphasised the state's unwavering commitment to renewable energy and energy efficiency.

The event, held at the Pragathi Bhavan on Friday, marked the commencement of the National Energy Conservation Week celebrations, scheduled from December 14 to 20.

Highlighting the government's initiatives, Bhatti said that Telangana is leveraging technology-driven measures to conserve energy in all sectors.

TGREDCO Vice Chairman and Managing Director Vavilala Anil briefed the Deputy Chief Minister about the agency's achievements, emphasising successful collaborations with the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) and notable milestones in the energy sector.

The Deputy Chief Minister emphasised the importance of raising public awareness during the Energy Conservation Week, with rallies, debates and media campaigns.

The event was attended by TGREDCO officials, including GM GSV Prasad, Deputy General Manager Venkatramana and Project Director Radhika, who contributed to the discussions on future energy strategies.

Continued on Page 1

the ruling Congress in Telangana, questioning the treatment meted out to the star and TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud hitting back, saying the law is equal for everyone and it will take its course.

Some drama ensued when police descended at the residence of the national award-winning actor as visuals showed him purportedly arguing with a cop and objecting to them for coming up to his bedroom.

"It is definitely not a good thing," he was heard saying. The national award-winning actor was taken to the Chikkadpally police station in a police vehicle, in a sudden development that shocked his fans and surprised others. He was produced before the Nampally court, which remanded him to a 14-day judicial custody. He was shifted to jail under heavy security.

A 35-year-old woman died and her eight-year-old son was hospitalised on December 4 during a stampede-like situation at the Sandhya Theatre in Hyderabad when thousands of fans jostled to have a glimpse of the actor at the premiere of the blockbuster movie.

Following the incident, the city police

Allu Arjun arrested...

registered a case against Allu Arjun, his security team, and the theatre management under different sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at the Chikkadpally police station based on the complaint lodged by the deceased woman's family. Allu Arjun on December 11 approached the Telangana High Court seeking to quash the FIR registered against him.

Shortly after Arjun was remanded to judicial custody by the local court on Friday, the high court granted him a four-week interim bail and posted the case to January 21, 2025, for further hearing.

Reacting to the arrest, BJP leader and Union Minister of State for Home, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, said the actor deserved better treatment, while BRS Working President K T Rama Rao slammed the government for treating the star like a "common criminal".

Responding to the criticism, Goud told PTI: "Whether it is a common man or a celebrity, the law applies to all. Law is equal for all. Arjun should not have

come without proper intimation to the police. It has claimed one precious life. The law will take its course".

Adding a twist to the case, the husband of the deceased said he doesn't find fault with Allu Arjun for the tragedy. He said he is ready to withdraw his case over the incident.

While hiring a Lunch Motion moved by the actor, high court judge Justice J Sridevi directed him to submit a surety of Rs 50,000 to jail authorities and that he should cooperate in the investigation.

Arjun's legal teams argued that the theatre management informed the police well in advance about the actors' programme and sought security and traffic management.

Senior Advocate S Niranjan Reddy appearing for the actor argued that just because there is a death by stampede, a popular person cannot be accused of a crime unless there is a deliberate and direct negligence or omission.

He also argued that culpable homicide not amounting to murder will

not be applicable against the actor in this case.

After the formal arrest, Allu Arjun was taken to the state-run Gandhi Hospital for medical tests. His father-in-law Chandrasekhar Reddy came to the police station while Arjun's father Aravind was present at the hospital when the actor was brought for medical tests. Allu Arjun last week announced Rs 25 lakh to the family of the deceased and also assured the grieving family that they are not alone in this painful situation and he will meet the family personally.

Earlier, the police arrested three persons -- one of the owners of the theatre, its senior manager and the lower balcony in charge in connection with the case registered over the death of the woman due to asphyxiation as crowds jostled at the theatre during the premiere show of Allu Arjun's movie.

According to the police, a huge crowd had gathered at the theatre to watch the movie and have a glimpse of the movie's lead actors coming to the theatre. However, there was no intimation from the side of the theatre management or actors' team that they would be visiting the theatre.

City Pioneer

the pioneer

HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | DECEMBER 14, 2024

03

**Mohan Babu
apologises;
HC denies
immediate relief**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Film actor Mohan Babu issued a letter apologising for his actions in the recent assault on a vernacular journalist on Friday.

He also filed a lunch motion in the Telangana High Court seeking interim bail in the case. However, Justice K Lakshman declined immediate relief, stating that a counter from the State is required before any decision.

In his letter, Mohan Babu expressed regret over the incident, calling it an unfortunate escalation of a family dispute. He acknowledged the injury caused to journalist Ranjith during the chaos and extended an apology to him, his family, and the TV9 community.

The actor revealed that he had been hospitalised for two days due to health issues, which delayed his response. He emphasised that the situation spiraled out of control after a group of individuals forcibly entered his residence, leading to the regrettable incident.

The assault case, filed earlier this week, continues to draw attention as Mohan Babu remains out of public view following his discharge from the hospital.



CITY EVENTS

Cultural programmes

Bharat's Art Academy
Venue
Ravindra Bharathi
December 14, from 9 am to 1 pm

Taj Mahal ka Tender

Hindi Drama

Venue

Lamakaan
December 14, at 8 pm

Throwball tourney

Under 17 girls throwball tournament

Venue

Villa Marie College for Women
December 14, at 10:00 am

All India Crafts Mela

Biggest handlooms and handicrafts mela in South India

Venue

Shilparamam
December 15 to 31, 10.30 am to 8 pm

Self-confidence and character building

Venue

Swamy Vivekananda Institute Of Human Excellence, Hydrabad
Till December 15, at 6:00 pm.

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.

Health advisory in view of low temperature alert

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast dry weather in Telangana over the next five days, with low temperatures in some districts, which may lead to an increase in respiratory infections like seasonal flu.

In regard to it, the Director Public Health and Family Welfare has issued a health advisory which said seasonal influenza is a contagious respiratory infection caused by influenza viruses. Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, and fatigue. It spreads easily through coughing and sneezing.

People at higher risk include pregnant women, children under 5, the elderly (65), and those with chronic medical conditions or immunosuppressive treatments. These individuals should consult a doctor. Warning signs include high fever, difficulty breathing, blue skin or lips, blood in sputum, or altered behavior.

TG to develop zoo, urban forest parks

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Environment, Forest, and Endowments, Konda Surekha, has directed officials to implement comprehensive action plans to upgrade zoo and urban forest parks across the State, making them visitor-friendly and environmentally sustainable. The Minister emphasised creating facilities that cater to public preferences without disturbing the ecological balance, ensuring revenue generation for the Forest department.

At the 13th governing body meeting of the Zoos and Parks Authority of Telangana (ZAPAT) held at the BR Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat, Surekha unveiled the Animal Adoption Scheme brochure, diary and a coffee table book. The meeting witnessed participation from senior officials, including Forest department Principal Secretary Ahmad Nadeem, PCCF RM Dobriyal, Chief Wildlife Warden Alu Singh Mehra, CCFs Priyanka Varghese and

Bhima Nayak and Zoo Parks Director Sunil S. Heramat.

Surekha stressed the need to adopt best global practices in zoo management and urged officials to study and implement effective strategies from across the world in Telangana's nine zoos and various urban forest parks. She particularly highlighted the Nehru Zoo Park, Kakatiya Zoo Park and other facilities, calling for additional visitor amenities such as online ticket booking and integrated fast-track parking systems.

The Minister also directed officials to address challenges such as staff shortages, with approval for filling vacant positions at Nehru Zoo Park. She emphasised the importance of providing insurance for zoo staff and ensuring the regular health monitoring of animals with the support of veterinary experts. Kakatiya Zoo Park in Warangal received special attention during the discussions. Surekha instructed officials to resolve issues related to the drainage system, which has been causing odour problems.

'WE WILL BREAK GROUND ON AI CITY'

Our ambition is to scale up 400+ GCCs in city: IT Min

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Highlighting the ambition to scale up to 400+ Global Capability Centers (GCCs), with over 250 already existing in the city, IT Minister D. Sridhar Babu stressed the importance of adopting AI noting that 70-80% of professionals focus on coding and risk falling behind without AI integration.

The Minister was the chief guest at the IAMPHENOM India conference on "Transforming the Future of Work with AI, Automation, and Talent Experience" at the Trident Hotel on Friday.

Addressing the conference in a fireside chat with Mahe Bayireddi, CEO and Co-founder of Phenom, the IT Minister emphasised that passion in your profession will take your journey to a quick spiritual level of business. He said it is time for transformation and inte-



IT Minister D Sridhar Babu being felicitated at the IAMPHENOM India conference in Trident on Friday

gration of AI, which has become essential in every sector. He announced that by the first quarter of 2025, Telangana will break ground on AI City and begin action.

He highlighted efforts to reskill

and upskill youth, aiming to make Telangana the skill capital of India. He also mentioned the establishment of Young India Skill University with advanced tech facilities and a shop-floor framework.

Discussing AI City, the Minister shared plans to host major R&D players, startups and product companies, along with an AI school and a computing facility. He stated that the city, spanning 200 acres, will be ready within 15-18 months after groundbreaking.

Talking about data infrastructure, Sridhar Babu said Telangana has 12+ data centres and there are plans to revise the energy policy by January 2025 with consideration of suggestions. He urged businesses to tap into Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities and expand across Hyderabad to ensure balanced development.

The Minister concluded by highlighting the government's goal of building a trillion-dollar economy in the next decade.

Meanwhile, Mahe Bayireddi highlighted Phenom's mission to help a billion people find the right jobs, transforming HR globally.

TRAGEDY AT PUSHPA-2 PREMIERE

Police blame Allu Arjun's actions for woman's death

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The tragic death of a woman during the Pushpa-2 premiere at Sandhya Theatre raises questions of whether the Police knew about the actor's visit, permissions among others.

Sandhya Theatre claimed to have sought police bandobast on December 2, addressing the need for security due to the anticipated heavy fan turnout and the visit of lead actors. However, DCP Akshansh Yadav clarified earlier in a press meet that there was no intimation about the actors' visit.

As Allu Arjun was denied permission on Friday, the Sandhya Theatre has released its letter which was submitted seeking permission.

The Hyderabad City Police stated that the theatre



management did not follow proper procedures. "Organisers are required to meet senior officers and brief them about the programme, but in this case, the letter was merely submitted without further details." Despite this, Police arranged security to control crowd outside the venue.

The situation escalated when Allu Arjun appeared in his vehicle's sunroof, waving to fans, drawing a surge of

the crowd towards the main gate. His private security further aggravated the situation by pushing people to clear his path. Police advised his team to leave, but the actor remained in the theatre for over two hours. The police blamed his actions for the unfortunate incident, which left one woman dead and her son put on a ventilator.

Addressing rumours of mistreatment during his arrest, Police denied any misconduct, stating that Allu Arjun was given time to change clothes and meet his family before being taken into custody.

Meanwhile, the deceased woman's husband, M Bhaskar, expressed his intent to withdraw the case, stating that he was unaware of the actor's arrest.

TG govt urges logistics industry to cut agri costs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Urging the logistics industry to focus on solutions that reduce the cost of agricultural products, thereby benefiting farmers and the broader economy, Dr G Malsur, Director of Industries, Commerce, and Export Promotion, Government of Telangana, participated in the Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI) 1st Roundtable under the Knowledge Series for Future Logistics Infrastructure" at Taj Krishna on Friday.

The discussions focused on innovation, sustainability, and practical solutions to address logistics challenges. Chairperson of FTCCI's Logistics Committee, Kamal Jain, noted that productive engagement will contribute to a comprehensive white

paper, reinforcing Telangana's industrial policy framework: "In Telangana - innovate, incubate and incorporate."

He also informed stakeholders about the continuation of such programmes and future engagements.

Meanwhile, Aparna, Director of Logistics, Depot of Industries and Commerce, Government of Telangana, provided updates on various government initiatives. Iqbal Patni, Co-Chairman of the committee, gave an

overview of available infrastructure. Ramprasad, advisor to the committee, summarised the session and proposed actionable plans.

FTCCI president Suresh Singhal, Senior VP Ravi, and VP KK Maheshwari expressed their commitment to supporting the industry in every possible way.



Healthcare facilities increased to 17,295 by Nov 24

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Director of Public Health and Family Welfare, Dr B Ravinder Nayak, conducted a virtual review meeting with DM&HOs and district healthcare officials to strengthen healthcare facility standards under the guidance of the Health Minister. Registered private healthcare facilities increased from

10,669 to 17,295 by November 2024. Government hospitals were directed to complete registration under the Clinical Establishment Act within a month. Pharmacy Supervisors were tasked with ensuring district-level drug availability. Coordination with DM&HOs is vital for prompt supply management through TSMIDC.

TGSPDCL focuses on removing poles obstructing city roads

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has initiated efforts to remove electric poles and transformers obstructing roads, disrupting traffic and causing accidents in Greater Hyderabad. A review meeting was held on Friday at the Southern Power Distribution Company of Telangana Limited (TGSPDCL) corporate office to address this issue. Senior officials from GHMC, Traffic Police department, Town Planning and TGSPDCL participated in the meeting.

The plan aims to clear obstacles on roads undergoing expansion, including key areas such as Sheikhpet, Vanasthalipuram, LB Nagar, Gachibowli, Uppal, Habsiguda and Masab Tank. Officers from various departments have been designated as Nodal Officers to streamline the process. These include Divisional Engineers from TGSPDCL, Station House Officers from the Traffic Police department, Executive Engineers from GHMC and ACPs from Town Planning.

The Nodal Officers have been tasked with forming



teams, conduct field inspections and identify road obstructions by the end of December 2024. They have been directed to finalise necessary estimates and permissions for the removal or relocation of poles and trans-

formers. The relocation process is set to be completed by February 2025. Additionally, CMD Musharraf Faruqui, instructed electricity officials to promptly remove unused and aban-

doned poles lying on the roads. The meeting was attended by GHMC Additional Commissioner Shiva Kumar, TGSPDCL CMD Musharraf Faruqui, Traffic Additional Commissioner P Vishwa Prasad, Joint Commissioner C Joel Davis, DCP Traffic-3 R Venkateswarlu, DCP Rachakonda V Srinivasulu, Director Operations Dr N Narasimhulu, Director Finance Sudha Madhuri, GHMC Chief Engineer Bhaskar Reddy, TGSPDCL Chief Engineers Pandya, Chakrapani and Kamesh.

Minister Ponnam joins Christmas celebrations

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnam Prabhakar was the chief guest in the vibrant Christmas celebrations organised by the Christian Employees' Association at the Secretariat Church, located in the Dr BR Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister encouraged prayers to Lord Jesus for global peace and welfare. He emphasised the significance of following Jesus Christ's teachings, which promote forgiveness, sacrifice and love for the betterment of society. "Christmas is a globally celebrated festival that brings joy and unity," he remarked, urging everyone to embrace the festival's spirit by working selflessly and serving the under-



privileged. Ponnam Prabhakar highlighted the secular principles upheld by the Telangana government, which respects all religions and promotes harmony among communities. Extending warm Christmas greetings, he wished health, prosperity and happiness for farmers, employees and citi-

zens across the State. Brother Anil Kumar showed blessings on the Minister and led the congregation in special prayers. Delivering a keynote message, Brother Anil spoke of Jesus Christ's mission to forgive sinners and spread love, calling on everyone to embody these virtues in their lives.

The event featured the cutting of a Christmas cake by dignitaries, including AICC Minority leader Anil Thomas, Christian Minority Finance Corporation Chairman Deepak John, Minority Commission Vice-Chairman Shankar Luke and MD of the Christian Minority Finance Corporation Sabitha. Special songs were sung by the Employees' Choir Group added to the festive spirit, creating a joyous atmosphere.

The programme was presided over by Christian Employees' Union vice-president Chitti Babu.

Other notable attendees included Jacob Ross, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Suvarna Raju, Vikram, Sashi Bhushan, Viplav and Manoharamma, making the event a grand success.

RELIGIOUS FERVOR



Governor of Telangana Jishnu Dev Varma participates in the Pre-Christmas celebrations observed with great religious fervour at Raj Bhavan on Friday

Global meet on clean energy for MSMEs today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry, in support of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India, is organising an international conference on clean energy for MSMEs to promote emissions-free growth and efficient industrial system.

It will be a day-long conference and will be held on December 14 at HICC, Hyderabad.

The objective of the conference is to enable MSMEs to reduce conventional energy consumption, create awareness of various sources of clean energy and enable MSMEs to adopt the sources, improve efficiency and decarbonise operations, build capacity for sustainable, affordable, and reliable energy solutions, promote awareness of government incentives for renewable energy adoption and financing options and highlight the benefits of cluster-level adoption of clean energy solutions.

30 L addl acres under irrigation in five years: Uttam Kumar Reddy



BRS MLA Vemula Prashanth Reddy submitting a memorandum to Irrigation Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy at Balkonda in Nizamabad district on Friday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana's government is set to expand irrigation coverage to an additional 30 lakh acres over the next five years through the modernisation of historic projects like the Sriramsagar Project (SRSP) and Nizam Sagar, announced Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies N Uttam Kumar Reddy during his visit to these projects on Friday. At SRSP in Mendora mandal in Nizamabad district, the Minister reviewed the project's performance alongside MLAs P Sudarshan Reddy, Bhupathi Reddy, and Vemula Prashanth Reddy, as well as senior officials including Principal Secretary Rahul Bojja and District

Collector Rajeevgandhi Hanumanthu. Officials revealed that siltation had reduced SRSP's storage capacity from 112 tmc ft to 80 tmc ft. To address this, the Minister instructed the use of advanced global desilting technologies to restore its original capacity.

SRSP has been a lifeline for farmers, irrigating 12.5 lakh acres annually across ten districts during both kharif and rabi seasons.

However, the Minister emphasised the need to improve lift irrigation schemes and ensure equitable water delivery to tail-end areas. He warned officials of strict action, including suspensions, in cases of negligence.

Irrigation Minister reviews SRSP projects in Balkonda

Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy visited the Sriramsagar Project (SRSP) in Balkonda and was warmly welcomed by BRS MLA Vemula Prashanth Reddy. During the visit, Prashanth submitted several proposals, emphasising the need for the speedy completion of irrigation and tourism projects in the constituency and Nizamabad district. The MLA highlighted the progress of the Kaleshwaram Project Packages 20, 21, and 21A, which aims to irrigate two lakh acres at an estimated cost of Rs 5,800 crore. He explained that the project would benefit 80,000 acres in Balkonda, 1,14,000 acres in Nizamabad Rural and 6,000 acres in Armoor. With 60% of the work already completed at a cost of Rs 3,300 crore, Prashanth urged the minister to focus on completing the remaining work promptly to

ensure that farmers in these areas received irrigation water. Prashanth Reddy pointed out that Package 21A (Metpalli segment) is expected to irrigate 1,15,000 acres, including 80,000 acres in Balkonda, 29,000 acres in Nizamabad Rural, and 6,000 acres in Armoor. He said that 80 per cent of the head works, pump houses and main pipeline works are complete, with only 20 per cent of the distribution pipeline work pending. He requested the Minister to allocate funds to finish the project on a war footing, enabling the release of irrigation water to farmers at the earliest. Another key project discussed was the Chittapur-Fathepur-Surbiryal Lift Irrigation Scheme, which aims to irrigate 9,274 acres at a cost of Rs 150 crore. Of this, 3,474 acres in Balkonda, covering Chittapur, Balkonda, and Srirampur villages, will be

irrigated at a cost of Rs 60 crore, while 5,740 acres in Armoor covering Fathepur and Surbiryal villages will be irrigated at an expense of Rs 90 crore. The work on this project is progressing slowly and the MLA requested the minister to ensure its swift completion. Prashanth Reddy also raised the issue of leakage in the Choutpalli Hanumanth Reddy LIS due to the use of cement pipelines which prevents water from reaching tail-end tanks. He suggested replacing the cement pipelines with MS pipes to resolve the issue. The MLA proposed a mega tourism project near the SRSP site to honour the sacrifices of those displaced during its construction. He said that a tourism plan had already been submitted, identifying areas like Nagapur and Jalapur for development, including islands near the project site.

TGCHE constitutes committees to address challenges in higher edn

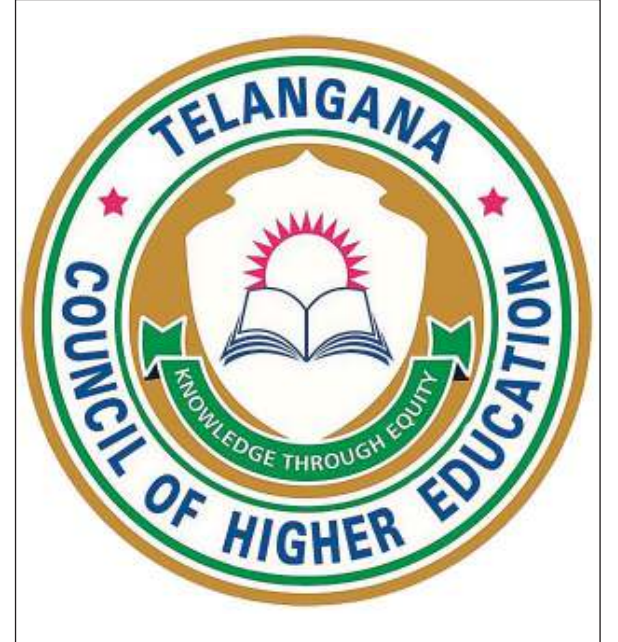
PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Council of Higher Education (TGCHE) has decided to constitute committees to address critical challenges in higher education.

The Telangana Council of Higher Education (TGCHE), under the leadership of Chairman, Prof V Balakista Reddy, held an introductory meeting with the Vice-Chancellors of Telangana State Universities on Friday. N Sridhar, Principal Secretary of Education, has delivered the inaugural address at the meeting.

The Principal Secretary of Higher Education Department, Telangana, advised the Vice-Chancellors to identify and present the core challenges faced by their universities, accompanied by a detailed note to be submitted to the Chief Minister.

After extensive discussions with the Vice-Chancellors, the Principal Secretary of Higher Education, suggested that the Chairman, Telangana Council of Higher Education (TGCHE) constitute committees to address critical issues in the higher education sector in the following areas: The committees will exam-



ine and streamline the recruitment procedures in universities, addressing challenges related to superannuation policies and the Career Advancement Scheme (CAS) promotions.

The committees will review the existing affiliation processes and develop strategies to improve institutional rankings. Additionally, the discussions addressed the

budgetary challenges faced by universities.

The Principal Secretary suggested the Vice-chancellors explore alternative funding opportunities, including leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives from industries and utilizing Members of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) funds.

SARASWATI PUSHKARALU

Officials told to make comprehensive arrangements

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Endowments, Forests, and Environment Konda Surekha directed officials to ensure comprehensive arrangements for the upcoming Saraswati Pushkaralu at Kaleshwaram in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district. She emphasised the need for smooth management to accommodate devotees from Telangana and neighboring states, ensuring no inconvenience during the sacred event. In a review meeting held at the Telangana Secretariat on Friday, the Minister instructed officials from multiple departments, including Endowments, Revenue, Panchayati Raj, Irrigation, Electricity, and Roads and Buildings, to prepare detailed estimates and action plans for the Pushkaralu, scheduled for May 2025. Surekha noted that the Pushkaralu will mark the transit of Jupiter (Guru) into Gemini (Mithuna) and highlighted the religious significance of the event.

Officials briefed the Minister on past Saraswati Pushkaralu, where approximately 30,000 devotees participated in the rituals, and estimated over 50,000

devotees this time. Surekha questioned specific arrangements for vulnerable groups, including children, women, and the elderly, and demanded meticulous planning to meet their needs.

Sanitation and Water Supply: Local authorities were tasked with deploying additional personnel for sanitation and ensuring safe drinking water near ghats, temples, and main junctions.

Temporary Infrastructure: Construction of temporary and permanent toilets at ghats, bathing taps for devotees, and separate changing rooms for women were mandated.

Transportation and Connectivity: Roads leading to Kaleshwaram are to be repaired, thorny bushes cleared, and special buses arranged from various districts by TSRTC.

Cultural Events: A 12-day schedule of spiritual and cultural programs was proposed to enhance the spiritual ambiance of the event.

Medical Services: Special medical centers and emergency rooms in Mahadevpur and Kataram were instructed to be operational, with additional facilities for immediate

healthcare.

Power Supply: Officials were directed to ensure uninterrupted electricity during the event.

The Minister emphasised coordination among departments and urged officials to draw from past experiences to streamline operations. She insisted that any challenges be reported directly to her for swift resolution.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary for Endowments Shailaja Ramaiyer, Commissioner Sridhar, Telangana Tourism Corporation MD Prakash Reddy, Bhupalpally District Collector Rahul Sharma, SP Kiran, Endowments Department RJC Ramakrishna Rao, Additional Commissioner Krishnaveni, Assistant Commissioner Sunitha, Conservation Architect Surya Narayana Murthy, and Kaleshwaram Temple EO Maruthi, among others.

Surekha concluded by reiterating the importance of dedication and collaboration to make the 12-day Pushkaralu a grand success, ensuring a seamless spiritual experience for devotees.

Kavitha to defy govt orders, instal Telangana Thalli statues

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha launched a scathing attack on Congress leaders and Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for allegedly insulting Telangana's cultural symbol, Bathukamma. Addressing the media on Friday, she questioned the inaction against Congress leaders who made derogatory remarks about the festival. She demanded accountability from the Chief Minister, accusing him of allowing ministers and Congress leaders to demean Telangana women and their pride.

She said that irrespective of the orders, through BRS and Telangana Jagruthi, Telangana Thalli of agitation will be installed in every village.

Kavitha criticised Congress leaders for exploiting Bathukamma during elections and neglecting it otherwise. She pointed out that leaders like Indira Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi had once celebrated Bathukamma with Telangana women, while Priyanka Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi extended greetings during elections. "After elections, they question why Bathukamma belongs to Telangana mothers. Congress leaders are show-

ing their true colors with such statements," she said, urging them to speak responsibly.

She highlighted how the BRS government, under KCR's leadership, elevated Bathukamma to the status of a state festival, making it a global phenomenon. Kavitha accused the Congress government of pushing it into obscurity. "We tried to make Bathukamma an international celebration, but Congress is attempting to erase its significance," she alleged.

Kavitha condemned the Congress government's decision to issue a GO restricting the representation of Telangana Thalli. "How can they change the image of Telangana Thalli? Statues across the country, including those of Mahatma Gandhi, Ambedkar, and Bharata Mata, are symbols of honor and respect, not enforced by GOs. But here, they are imposing restrictions and threatening cases," she remarked, calling it a grave injustice.

She criticised the secrecy surrounding the new Telangana Thalli statue and compared the government's actions to feudal and Nazi regimes. "Is this a democracy or a dictatorship?" she questioned. Kavitha vowed to continue unveiling Telangana Thalli statues

across villages under the aegis of Telangana Jagruthi and BRS.

Kavitha also lashed out at the Congress government for neglecting Telangana's folk culture in official events. "Why are Telangana songs missing from state celebrations? Despite having numerous folk artists, none were given a chance to perform. This cultural destruction is unacceptable," she said, adding that the state anthem and symbols, including Charminar and Kakatiya Toranam, were under threat under the Congress regime. Kavitha further criticised the appointment of Adityanath Das, a former Andhra Pradesh official involved in controversial irrigation projects, as an advisor to Telangana's irrigation department. "This raises serious questions about the government's priorities."

Gandhis celebrate Bathukamma for optics but stay silent as their Chief Minister Revanth Reddy erases it from the Telangana Thalli statue. Congress leaders like Indira Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi had once celebrated Bathukamma with Telangana women, while Priyanka Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi extended greetings during elections.

'Kavitha chanting Bathukamma to divert from liquor case'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress said that Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) MLC K Kavitha is chanting Bathukamma only to make the public forget her liquor case. Nobody is using Bathukamma for political survival like Kavitha as people have not been minding her after she came out from jail for allegedly engaging in the illegal liquor business, Women Development Corporation Chairperson Bandru Shobha Rani said.

She said that Kavitha has been speaking as if there will be no Telangana if there is no KCR family.

She said that KCR family's history is that they made Telangana Bahujans play Bathukamma in front of their 'Gadis'. However, the Telangana public is watching everything as Kavitha is trying to use Telangana Thalli for her political revival, Shobha said. Speaking to the media on Friday, Shobha said the BRS is the party which changed the shape of the Telangana Thalli statue. It is shameful on the part of Kavitha to speak as if she invented the Bathukamma festival. She said that it is shameful on the part of Kavitha, who had mortgaged the honour of Telangana women by engaging in the illegal liquor business in Delhi.

Shobha said the KCR family enjoyed luxuries in Telangana which was created by the sacrifices of countless youth.

Demand for nursing assistant role in patient care up across Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Nursing assistants, essential to patient care, are in high demand across Hyderabad, with a 54% hiring rate. TeamLease EdTech's latest insights reveal a 47% hiring surge in healthcare, driven by telehealth advancements and a focus on preventive care. Delhi and Chennai also show high demand for roles like research associates and brand management trainees.

The adoption of telemedicine, normalising virtual consultations and expanding diagnostic services are key factors in this hiring growth. An aging population and rising chronic illnesses further highlight the need for continuous healthcare and innovative treatments.

According to insights, Delhi at 65%, Bengaluru (56%) and

Ahmedabad (48%) lead in hiring research associates, who support medical research and clinical trials. Brand management trainees are in demand in Chennai (57%), Delhi (53%) and Coimbatore (45%), focusing on marketing initiatives. Hyderabad (54%), Chandigarh (49%) and Gurugram (43%) show strong demand for nursing assistants, while medical laboratory technicians are sought after in Mumbai (51%), Hyderabad (47%) and Indore (40%).

Employers seek technical expertise in lab techniques, diagnostics and clinical trials, along with skills in patient care, data analysis, communication and empathy. Certifications like Certified Clinical Research Associate (CCRA), Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and MRI certifications are crucial for roles in this growing sector.

TG targets 40% reduction in PM10 levels under NCAP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana aims to reduce PM10 levels by 30-40% in key pollution-affected cities, including Hyderabad, Nalgonda, and Sangareddy, under the National Clean Air Program (NCAP). Minister for Environment, Forest, and Endowments Konda Surekha, during a review meeting on Friday, stressed the importance of aggressive pollution control measures to ensure a healthier and sustainable environment in the state.

The review, held at the Forest and Environment Department's office in the Secretariat, highlighted Telangana's inclusion of three cities in the national list of 131 non-attainment cities, where PM10 levels have consistently exceeded permissible limits for five years. The Minister expressed concern over the rising air pollution levels, particularly in Hyderabad, attributing it to increasing vehicle numbers, industrial expansion, and population growth.

Officials from Telangana State Pollution Control Board (TSPCB) informed the minister that efforts are underway to achieve the national standard of 60 µg/m³ for PM10 levels. Steps include alternative fuels for industries, stricter vehicle emission checks, and public awareness campaigns.

Konda Surekha directed all departments to collaborate in implementing robust measures, such as the adoption of cleaner technologies, promotion of electric vehicles, and the modernization of traffic systems. cosmetic charges by 200%, benefiting nearly eight lakh students in SC, ST, BC and minority welfare hostels. Rs 667.25 crore has been allocated to upgrade infrastructure in schools and hostels. The state has also established the State Education Commission under Akunuri Murali's chairmanship to ensure continuous monitoring.

As part of the comprehensive plan, the government is focusing on enhancing the quality of food and education in welfare hostels. It has also initiated the construction of integrated hostels in all Assembly

constituencies, reinforcing its commitment to education and welfare. In line with these measures, the Chief Minister has asked officials to visit all welfare hostels and conduct a thorough review on Saturday. Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu will visit MJPCWR JC (Girls) in Madhira and Bonakal, Khammam district. Ministers Damodar Raja Narasimha, D. Sridhar Babu, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and Ponnamp Prabhakar, will inspect hostels in Bhupalpally, Khammam and Hyderabad

districts. Ministers Konda Surekha, Anasuya Seetakka, Tummala Nageswara Rao and Jupally Krishna Rao will inspect hostels in Sangareddy, Adilabad, Bhadradi Kothagudem and Nagarkurnool districts respectively.

These inspections are aimed at ensuring that students are provided with better facilities and educational opportunities and addressing gaps in the current system.

The inspections reflect the government's focus on improving welfare hostels and ensuring that they meet the highest standards. The findings of these visits will form the basis for reforms and steps to help the students of Telangana.

CM to inspect welfare hostels today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, along with ministers, senior IAS and IPS officers, and other officials, will inspect welfare hostels across Telangana on Saturday. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy will inspect hostels in Ranga Reddy, Vikarabad and Hyderabad districts.

The move aims to personally assess the living and learning conditions of students in these hostels, with leaders also joining students for meals to gain direct insight into their experiences.

The inspections come in the context of the state government's recent decision to revolutionise welfare hostel services. Diet charges have been increased by 40%, and



(Girls) in Madhira and Bonakal, Khammam district. Ministers Damodar Raja Narasimha, D. Sridhar Babu, Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy and Ponnamp Prabhakar, will inspect hostels in Bhupalpally, Khammam and Hyderabad

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REGIONAL OFFICE: HYDERABAD
4th Floor, Spoorthi Bhavan, Opp: Metro Pillar No.1202, Hyderabad Collectorate Complex, Lakdikapal, Hyderabad, e-mail: ee-hyd-tspcb@telangana.gov.in

ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEARING NOTIFICATION
In Accordance with the Notification No.S.O.1533 Dt. 14th September, 2006 and its subsequent circulars dated: 13.10.2006 & 28.10.2006 of Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Govt of India, New Delhi, we hereby notify the Environmental Public Hearing for the proposed Quartz & Feldspar mine by M/s. Quartz & Feldspar mine of Smt. D. Ravali (1.0 Ha.), Sy.No.121166AA, Godal Village, Balmoor Mandal, Nagarkurnool District in the mine lease area of 1.0 Ha. The proposed activity attracts the Environmental Impact Assessment Notification No: S.O.No.1533, dated 14th September 2006 and the project proponent has obtained TOR from Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Govt. of India, hence proposed to have an Environmental Public Hearing. The details of the project activities given by the project authorities are as follows:

1) Name of the Company with Telephone number	M/s. 1.0 Ha. Quartz & Feldspar Mine of Smt. D. Ravali, Ph: 7961786104
2) Registered Office / Address of the proponent.	H.No.1-35, Godal Village, Balmoor Mandal, Nagarkurnool District
3) Location of the proposed project with Survey Nos.	Sy.No.121166AA, Patta land of Godal Village, Balmoor Mandal, Nagarkurnool District
4) Name of the authorized person to be contacted with address & Phone Numbers	Sri P. Jagdishwar Reddy, Representative of the mine. Ph: 7961786104.
5) Capital Cost of Project (Total)	Rs. 50 lakhs
6) Line of activity and Capacity	Mining of Quartz & Feldspar - 52,254 TPA in an area of 1.0 Ha. B1 Category (Mining of Minerals)
7) Date/Time/Venue of Public Hearing	17.01.2025 at 11:00 AM (Friday) near project site at Sy.No.121166AA, Patta land of Godal Village, Balmoor Mandal, Nagarkurnool District.
8) Name of environmental Consultant	M/s. EHS360 Labs Pvt., Ltd., Ashok Nagar, Chennai. Ph: 9663774884. E-mail: shs360labs@gmail.com.

9) Place of availability of Executive Summary (Telugu & English) & Draft EIA report of the proposed project.

- Office of the Collector & District Magistrate, Nagarkurnool District.
- Office of the Chief Executive officer, Zila Parishad, Nagarkurnool District.
- Office of the General Manager, District Industries Centre, Nagarkurnool District.
- Office of Tahsildar, Balmoor (M), Nagarkurnool District.
- Office of the Gram Panchayath, Godal Village, Balmoor Mandal, Nagarkurnool District.
- Regional Office, Integrated Regional Office, Ministry of Environment Forests & Climate Change, 3rd Floor, Aranya Bhavan, Opp to RBI, Sarifabad, Hyderabad, Telangana - 500004.
- Office of the Member Secretary, Telangana Pollution Control Board, Paryavaran Bhavan, A-3, Industrial Sanathnagar, Hyderabad-500018.
- Office of the Joint Chief Environmental Engineer, TGPCB, Zonal Office, 6-3-1219, Block-C Ward No.91, Uma Nagar, Near Country Club, Begumpet, Hyderabad-500016.
- Office of the Environmental Engineer, Regional Office, TGPCB, 4th Floor, Spoorthi Bhavan, Opp: Metro Pillar No.1202, Hyderabad Collectorate Complex, Lakdikapal, Hyderabad-500004.

Suggestions, views, comments and objections of the public, if any, are invited within 30 days from the date of publication of notification from all Persons including bonafide residents, environmental groups and others located at project site/s likely to be affected by the proposed expansion project. All the above persons can also submit written suggestions/objections, if any, to the undersigned officer of the T.G. Pollution Control Board or through e-mail: ee-hyd-tspcb@telangana.gov.in. The interested persons can take part in the proceedings of the Environmental Public Hearing on the date and venue specified above. The Executive Summary (Telugu & English) & Draft EIA report is also displayed in the TGPCB website tspcb.cgg.gov.in.

Place: Hyderabad
Date: 12.12.2024
Note: The notice of Public Hearing is issued as per the Appendix-IV of EIA Notification, 2006 and its cost is borne by the project proponent.

Sd/- Environmental Engineer,
T.G. Pollution Control Board,
Regional Office, Hyderabad.

DIPR R.O. No. 787-PP/CL-AGENCY/IA/DVT/12024-25

ACROSS THE STATES



Ex-cop Mondal, RG Kar ex-principal Ghosh get bail

The Sealdah court on Friday granted bail to former officer-in-charge of Tala police station Abhijit Mondal and R G Kar Medical College and Hospital ex-principal Sandip Ghosh in the rape and murder case of an on-duty doctor. While Mondal was accused of alleged delay in filing of FIR in the rape and murder of the on-duty doctor at R G Kar Hospital on August 9, Ghosh was accused of tampering of evidence in the case. The two were arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is investigating the rape-murder case on an order of the Calcutta High Court. The additional chief judicial magistrate (ACJM), Sealdah court, granted bail to the two accused persons as chargesheet against them was not filed within the mandatory 90-day period, a lawyer representing Ghosh said. Mondal's lawyer told reporters outside the court that he will walk out of the correctional home where he is incarcerated on judicial remand.



Teacher caught taking Rs 5,000 bribe from faculty

A government schoolteacher was caught while allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 5,000 from a guest teacher in Madhya Pradesh's Alirajpur district on Friday, said an official of the Lokayukta police. Manish Bhavsar (45), a secondary schoolteacher posted at the Jan Shiksha Kendra, was trapped when he was allegedly accepting the bribe amount from a primary school guest faculty, Kheema Aznar (43), at a government office. Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Anirudh Wadhia said. Bhavsar had inspected the primary school on November 26, he said, quoting Aznar's complaint. "During the inspection, the attendance of students in the school was found to be low following which Bhavsar had threatened Aznar and demanded an annual bribe of Rs 10,000. Bhavsar had said if the bribe was not paid, he would get Aznar sacked from job," the Lokayukta DSP said, citing the complaint.



Assam govt carries out eviction drive in Goalpara

More than 40 families were evicted in an anti-encroachment drive in Assam's Goalpara district on Friday, an official said. They were served eviction notices in advance, he said. The eviction drive was carried out with the help of excavators since morning in the Pancharatna area, under the Balijan revenue circle of the district. Security forces were also deployed for the operation, which faced resistance from the encroachers. Many of those evicted claimed they had been living there for at least three generations and attempted to prevent the administration from carrying out the operation. "I was born in this house, and now my grandchildren are here. We cannot be asked to leave just like that," a woman claimed. Another senior resident said that the administration failed to make any alternative arrangements for them. "Where will the people live now?" he asked. Some women tried to prevent the excavators, but police moved them away and cleared the way.

Uddhav takes jibe at BJP's 'Ek hai' slogan, says temples not safe in India, Bangladesh

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Friday sought to corner the BJP over Hindutva and said the party-led central government should inform Parliament what steps it is taking to protect Hindus in Bangladesh, where minorities have faced violent attacks. Addressing a news conference in Mumbai, Thackeray slammed the BJP, saying its Hindutva is only for votes. The former CM referred to a notice issued by the Railways to demolish a Hanuman temple outside Dadar station and said a "fatwa" (edict) has been



issued to bring down the 80-year-old shrine built by leaders. Taking a dig at the BJP over its "Ek hai toh safe hai" (united, we are safe) slogan, widely used during campaigning for the last month's assembly polls, he said even temples are not safe under the regime of the national party.

Bid to reduce minorities to 'second-grade' citizens: Akhilesh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav alleged Friday that efforts are underway to reduce the country's minorities, particularly Muslims, to "second-grade" citizens, and claimed their rights and properties are being systematically eroded.

Speaking in Lok Sabha during a debate on the 'Glorious Journey of 75 Years of the Constitution of India', Yadav charged the government with fostering inequality and failing to uphold the constitutional rights of marginalised communities. "This Constitution is our armour, our security. It provides us strength whenever needed. The Constitution is the true guardian of the rights of the oppressed, neglected, suppressed, and deprived. For people like us and the weak in the country, especially for PDA (Pichdde, Dalit and Alpsankhyak), saving the Constitution is a matter of life and death," he said.

The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister accused the government of neglecting minorities, and said their rights and properties are being systematically eroded. "More than 20 crore people, especially



Muslims, are being reduced to second-grade citizens. Atrocities against them are increasing daily. Their properties are being looted, homes demolished, and places of worship seized with administrative help," Yadav alleged. The SP chief reiterated his call for a caste survey, stating it is vital for bridging social gaps and achieving justice.

"Whenever we get the opportunity, we will conduct a caste census. It will not deepen caste divisions but reduce them, ensuring rights and

equality for those who have been deprived for long. Reservation was the most significant tool for social justice, but it has been diluted with outsourcing and contract-based jobs," Yadav added.

Yadav also criticised the government for its handling of border issues with neighbouring countries, claiming that India's territorial integrity is under threat. "Protecting the nation's borders is the primary duty of any government. Yet, we see intrusions... In Ladakh, our troops have withdrawn

from our (own) territory, and it won't be long before we are denied access to sacred sites like Kailash Mansarovar," Yadav claimed. On the issue of economic disparities in the country, Yadav highlighted the plight of the underprivileged.

"Out of 140 crore people, 82 crore depend on government rations for survival. While the country boasts of being among the fastest-growing economies, the reality is starkly different. Two-thirds of the nation's wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few families. If the

government has courage, it should reveal the per capita income of those living below the poverty line," he said.

He accused the government of manipulating elections through fear and administrative overreach. "During the Uttar Pradesh elections (recent bypolls to nine assembly seats), many were denied the right to vote. Women were threatened and police officials openly discouraged them with revolvers. Yet, those brave women defied intimidation and cast their votes. Is this the democracy we live in?" Yadav questioned.

He also warned against the erosion of democratic principles, drawing parallels with authoritarian regimes. "This system is rapidly veering towards dictatorship. Even Hitler amended the constitution after being elected to establish tyranny. Our government seems to be treading the same path," he said.

He also said that he will never accept the government's Agnipath scheme for recruitment in the armed forces.

TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee, meanwhile, said every provision of the Constitution must be broadly interpreted and extended to every poor person of India.



RS BYPOLLS

Ex-NCW chief and BJP nominee Rekha Sharma elected unopposed

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Former National Commission for Women chairperson and BJP leader Rekha Sharma was declared elected unopposed in the Rajya Sabha bypoll from Haryana after the deadline for withdrawal of nomination ended at 3 pm on Friday. Sharma had filed her nomination for the bypoll from Haryana here on Tuesday. She was the lone candidate in the fray. The BJP had on Monday announced Sharma's name for the Dec 20 Rajya Sabha bypolls. Accompanied by Haryana Minister Mahipal Dhandra and former Haryana Assembly Speaker Gian Chand Gupta, Sharma was given certificate by the Returning Officer after being declared elected unopposed.

Around 30 Delhi schools receive bomb threats, nothing suspicious found

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Around 30 schools in Delhi received bomb threats over e-mail in the early hours of Friday, triggering a multi-agency search of their premises, officials said.

Nothing suspicious was found in any of the schools after the searches, they added.

The latest threats come close on the heels of at least 44 schools receiving similar e-mails on December 9. Police had declared those threats as hoaxes. The Special Cell of the Delhi Police has registered a case of criminal intimidation and conspiracy but it is yet to get any lead on the culprits.

In May, more than 250 schools, hospitals and other installations had received similar e-mail threats, which are yet to be solved. Reacting to the development, former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal pointed out that it was the second such instance within a week and wondered how these bomb threats would affect the children. A Delhi Fire Services official said, "We received calls (regarding the threat e-mails) from the Bhatnagar International School in Paschim Vihar (4:21 am), Cambridge School in Srinivaspuri (6:23 am) and DPS Amar Colony in East of Kailash (6:35 am)."

"Calls were also received from the South Delhi Public School in Defence Colony (7:57 am), Delhi Police Public School in Safdarjung (8:02 am) and Venkateshwar Global School in Rohini (8:30 am)," he added. The fire department, police and bomb-detection teams, along with dog squads,



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rushed to the schools and conducted thorough checking, the official said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast) Ravi Singh told PTI Videos that they conducted checking followed by security protocol but nothing suspicious was found and it is suspected to be a hoax. "Investigations so far have established that the e-mail was sent from abroad but further probe is on. Around 30 schools,

including in our district, have received such e-mails," Singh said. The school authorities sent messages to guardians not to send their wards for classes and to take them back if they had already reached. A police source said the e-mails were received at 12:54 am, with the sender mentioning "parent-teachers meeting" and "sports day" activities in the schools. The sender also mentioned that the "schools will face bomb blasts" on Friday and Saturday, the source said. According to the source, the content of the e-mail reads: "This e-mail is to inform you that there are many explosives in your school premises and I am sure that you all do not check your students' bags frequently when they enter the school premises.

"A secret dark web group is involved in this activity and many red rooms also. The bombs are powerful enough to destroy the buildings and harm people. And from today till December 14, means tomorrow, on both days, there is an expected parent-teacher meeting to be happened.

'Premeditated': SC censures trial court Quashes proceedings against ex-Haryana IPS officer

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a relief to a former IPS officer, the Supreme Court on Friday quashed the proceedings against her under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act in Haryana, saying the special judge acted in a "premeditated manner".

A bench of Justices B R Gavai, P K Mishra and K V Viswanathan set aside an order, which was dictated and typed on May 30, 2008 by the special judge and was placed in a sealed cover, observing it reflected a "total non-application of mind".

The bench's verdict came on an appeal filed by the officer



who challenged a October 14, 2010, order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

The high court upheld the May 30, 2008 order of the special judge, Kurukshetra, who had placed the typed and dictated order relating to the proceedings initiated against the officer for the offence punish-

able under section 58 of the NDPS Act in a sealed cover to be delivered by the successor special judge.

Section 58 of the Act deals with punishment for vexatious entry, search, seizure or arrest. The apex court noted the special judge had heard the case at a "lightning speed" even after his transfer and dictated the judgement and left the act of pronouncement to his successor judge.

"When we opened the sealed cover on October 24, 2024 and perused the order dated May 30, 2008 passed by the special judge, it became clear to us that the special judge had acted in a predetermined manner," said the bench.

TN CM Stalin announces Rs 5 crore cash prize for Gukesh

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Friday announced a cash prize of Rs 5 crore for D Gukesh in recognition of his remarkable achievement of becoming the youngest World Chess Champion.

Chennai-based Grandmaster Gukesh on Thursday became the youngest world chess champion at 18 years after beating title-holder Ding Liren of China in the 14th and last game of the title showdown in Singapore.

'Cong govt in Himachal plagued by factionalism, financial mismanagement'

PNS ■ HAMIRPUR

Himachal Pradesh BJP leader Rajender Rana on Friday said the Congress government in the state is surrounded by factionalism, discontent and financial mismanagement, and it has pushed the state towards stagnation.

Speaking to the media here, the former BJP MLA said that the Himachal Congress is experiencing internal factionalism and is bound to collapse any moment. Rana was among the nine MLAs, including six Congress rebels and three independents, who voted in favour of the BJP nominee Harsh Mahajan in the Rajya Sabha

polls held in February this year. Later, he along with others joined the BJP and contested the by-elections from Sujapur assembly seat but was defeated. He also condemned the two-year celebration of the Congress government held in Bilaspur on Wednesday, calling it a waste of taxpayer's money. The factionalism within the state Congress came out in the open during the Bilaspur rally, where PCC Chief Pratibha Singh was insulted and not allowed to finish her speech on stage, Rana said.

"This incident indicates an attempt by Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu to show himself as supreme within the party" he said.

KERALA HC ON JUDGING WOMEN BASED ON CLOTHES

Shows 'misogynistic prejudice'

PNS ■ KOCHI

The Kerala High Court has held that judging women on the basis of their clothes or expecting them to be sad on getting divorce are indications of a "misogynistic prejudice" and "reinforce a very skewed gender stereotype". The observation by a bench of Justices Devan Ramachandran and M B Snehathala came while setting aside a Family Court order denying custody of the children to a mother for several reasons including that she wore revealing dresses, celebrated her divorce and had an account on a dating app.

Strongly disagreeing with the findings and reasoning of the Family Court, the High Court set it aside by saying that "courts cannot be suspected to be guilty of even borderline misogyny or sexism and our constitutional mandate is



that we decide matters as per its conscience and within its overriding umbra".

The High Court granted custody of the children to the mother by also taking into account the kids wish that they wanted to stay with her full-time and were open to

meeting their father on holidays. In its recent order setting aside the Family Court decision, the High Court observed that through such cases it has realised "how much rigid gender roles and patriarchy have trickled down into societies and guides our thoughts and

actions". "We unfortunately continue to follow and perpetuate such unconsciously, which surely warrants continuous education and close introspection," it said. The bench further said that in the "heteronormative context, being feminine is construed as synonymous to

being modest and even submissive or that is how this term is more than often interpreted".

It said that consciously or subconsciously, societies impose restrictions on women's autonomy and scrutinize their choices; and they are supposed to adhere to certain standards, including their choice of clothes and appearances.

"Such unwritten norms perpetuate casual sexism and strengthen the glass ceiling for women, with control being considered exclusive to men.

"Unfortunately, through time, unwritten dress codes impact women throughout their lives. The sexualization and policing of women's clothes, even from early school days, become active barriers to self-actualization and a full life," the bench said.

Referring to the Family Court's reasons for granting custody to the father, the High

The observation by a bench of Justices Devan Ramachandran and M B Snehathala came while setting aside a Family Court order denying custody of the children to a mother for several reasons including that she wore revealing dresses, celebrated her divorce and had an account on a dating app

Court said that the lower court found the mother to be a person of loose morals as the husband alleged that she wore revealing dresses and had posted her pictures on dating apps.

The High Court said that the Family Court arrived at the conclusion without any basis and without considering the woman's argument that it was her husband who created her account in the dating app and posted her pictures there.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

One Nation One Election

India's democratic system is on the verge of a transformative change with the 'One Nation, One Election' initiative

The concept of 'One Nation, One Election' has been a subject of significant debate in India's political discourse. On December 12, 2024, the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved draft legislation to implement simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha, state assemblies, and local bodies within 100 days. This proposal seeks to streamline India's electoral process, reduce the economic and administrative burden of frequent elections and enhance governance. The 'One Nation, One Election' initiative aims to align the election schedules of the Lok Sabha, state assemblies, municipal corporations and panchayats. The proposed legislation is likely to be introduced in Parliament during the ongoing Winter Session, reflecting the government's intention to initiate nationwide consultations on this transformative reform. The draft legislation incorporates 11 recommendations made by a high-level committee led by former President Ram Nath Kovind. These recommendations aim to address the frequent disruptions caused by the current staggered election schedule, which is a drain on economic, social, and political resources. One of the primary suggestions involves synchronising the election dates for the Lok Sabha and state assemblies in the first phase, followed by municipal and panchayat elections within 100 days. To ensure smooth execution, a dedicated implementation group will oversee the reforms. Constitutional amendments, such as the introduction of Articles 324A and 325, are proposed to facilitate simultaneous elections, create unified voter rolls. Elections demand significant financial resources and conducting them simultaneously could reduce costs related to security, logistics and administrative expenses. Frequent elections also result in prolonged enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct, halting developmental activities, which a unified schedule could minimise. However, implementing this ambitious reform involves substantial logistical and constitutional challenges. Synchronising elections requires amendments to several constitutional articles, including Articles 83, 85, 172, 174, and 356, which must be ratified by a majority of state legislatures. Building political consensus among parties with diverse regional interests is another critical requirement. Furthermore, the Election Commission will need to mobilise resources, including additional EVMs and VVPATs and ensure readiness of polling staff and infrastructure nationwide. Besides, simultaneous elections might overshadow local issues due to the dominance of national narratives, potentially affecting regional representation. Coordinating nationwide elections within a short timeframe also poses logistical challenges. Moreover, synchronising subsequent elections in cases of mid-term dissolutions could create governance gaps, leading to policy paralysis. While the proposal promises efficiency and cost-effectiveness, its implementation demands careful consideration of constitutional, logistical, and political complexities.



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PICTALK



A vendor displays miniatures of Santa Claus ahead of Christmas celebrations, in Nadia

Unraveling the delicate threads of human interaction



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Communication is the lifeblood of human connection, yet it remains one of the most intricate and fragile aspects of our existence

Conversation is a delicate business. It is made even more fragile by being central to all human interaction. The more knowledgeable individuals feel that communication is only partially through words. It can also be through eyes, through touch, through gestures, and even through silence. The list can go on. This makes communication not only complicated but also a sensitive matter. Communication can be with oneself. It can be between two persons, or in groups. It can be a short distance or a long distance. The possibilities are immense. The pitch of the voice could matter. The eye's movement can be an intervening variable, and sometimes the more well-versed practice cross-communication. It means giving one message through one medium and another through another. In other words, it can be one message through words and another message through the eyes. If technology intervenes, it becomes even more complex. The technological interventions can be through a medium such as a handset, a telephone, or, in some parts, a piece of paper. In the past, pigeons have been known to serve a useful purpose. The permutations and combinations are immense, and each has a value, just as each medium has a context. Like in the case of many essentials in life, there is no primer available and there is no one author who has covered comprehensively all aspects of communication. Hence, much of this is on learning by practice. Much of this is also learning by grief because in the absence of a proper 'Guru' one can only learn by trial and error. Many relationships get under strain or break because one meaning is intended, but another meaning gets conveyed. This can sometimes be incomplete or even distorted. Put simply, coding and decoding a message is a complex process and has to do with many variables, most of which may not be under the control of the parties involved. Hence, it could become like fiddling with wires in the dark. The solutions are not difficult if they are systematically put into operation. In early childhood, when a person is being taught words, it would be helpful if the person is also helped to choose the better word to communicate his ideas. Proper pronunciation should also be taught. If the circumstances permit by linguicism or multi-linguicism can be practiced. This would help adjustment to different levels of people; people of different ages and from different contexts. The solutions are known just as much as the problems are known. But there is little systematic attempt to put it in a frame and help better communication. It is obvious that communication can be between two people of equal age, between somebody who is older and somebody younger, people of the same gender, people of the opposite gender, people with prior antecedents of relationships, and people with no prior antecedents of relationships.



THE USUAL RESPONSE WHEN THERE IS A LACK OF CLARITY ON WHERE TO BEGIN, ONE SHOULD BEGIN JUST SOMEWHERE AND HOPE THAT IT RUNS ON SATISFACTORILY. IF IT IS NOT ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY, IT CAN BE CORRECTED AS ONE GOES ALONG

The contexts are huge and almost impossible to exhaustively list. This is not to say that the problem is not solvable or cannot be handled. The usual response when there is a lack of clarity on where to begin, one should begin just somewhere and hope that it runs on satisfactorily. If it is not entirely satisfactory, it can be corrected as one goes along. Being inundated by problems and not beginning at all cannot be the answer. Sometimes a simple problem can be so elusive that it becomes difficult to structure it for a solution. Effective communication is one such problem. Any discussion touching on communication will be incomplete without the realisation, as already noted, that communication is not always with words. There is an oft-repeated quote to the effect of 'if you cannot understand my silence, you will not understand my words'. Interestingly, silence also communicates, and there are different types of silence. Often, body language takes over, but that is another matter. Unfortunately, communication through silence also needs deep insights and research. Communication can be between people where one of the limbs that is centrally used in communication, loses its function or becomes unusable. For example, if someone has a problem with listening through one ear, the best course of action would be to help the person concerned restore their hearing through the other ear. However, this may not always work. So options and support systems have to be generated. Like in many things, psychological factors become very heavily involved, and unfortunately, those who are not capable of deep thought fumble more. There is a case for serious research on all aspects of the communication enumerated above and more research on communication per se, in a scholastic mode, would help. Till then, one can only hope that the general conversation on communication will alleviate the confusion that sometimes arises on communication points. One also hopes that research will help good communication all around. (The writer is a well-known management consultant of international repute. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FAMILY FIRST POLITICS

Madam — Family first is not only for Biden. It is rather a human tendency to attend to the needs and aspirations of the family first before thinking and acting for the cause of the society. Biden's act of granting a pardon to his son is seen as a great sin because the US is projecting itself as the promoter and protector of democracy and democratic values all over. Though it is expected of any leader to rise above all petty thinking and prioritise the benefit of the general mass and the country, many a time we do observe some people at the helm of affairs succumbing to simple human instincts, keeping the disciplines and decorum related to the position held at bay. No doubt, such acts not only demolish the image of the person that has been built for decades but also bring shame to the nation and the society he is attached to. We have seen the way the entire country of Sri Lanka was brought under the grip of one family that led to unprecedented levels of corruption, amassing wealth by the family, unleashing some sort of dictatorship, and plunging the common people into sufferings of all sorts. But people are watching, which all the leaders should keep in mind. Biden lost in the US, and the family is out in Sri Lanka. India is not an exception. The leaders of the ruling dispensation, pointing at the Opposition for promoting the culture of family, assuming the leadership of the party, are simultaneously focusing on bringing their siblings to the limelight of political careers. In most of the states, the regional parties are almost converted into family organs, and they firmly believe in the dictum of 'the king and his family can do no wrong', meaning that their family is above all the laws of the land and none of them can be questioned or punished. In India it is almost an accepted norm to bear with all the mistakes or misdeeds of the members of the family in power.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

Gukesh youngest world chess champion



India's young Grandmaster D Gukesh defeated China's World Champion Ding Liren in the 14th and final round, claiming the title of the youngest world chess champion. At just 18 years old, Dommaraju Gukesh has demonstrated that conquering the world is possible at a young age. Thursday was a historic day for Indian chess, thanks to Gukesh's remarkable achievement. Gukesh broke the 14-year-old record held by Russia's Garry Kasparov, who became the youngest world champion at the age of 22 years, 6 months, and 27 days. Gukesh's victory marks a new chapter in the history of chess. After Viswanathan Anand, Gukesh is the second Indian chess player to earn the title of world champion. In a 14th-round match that lasted nearly four hours, Gukesh defeated Ding Liren in 58 moves, becoming the 18th world champion in chess history. In October 2022, Gukesh had already captured everyone's attention by defeating then-world champion Magnus Carlsen in a rapid chess tournament. In 2024, Gukesh first triumphed in the Candidates Tournament. Later, he played a pivotal role in helping the Indian men's team win the gold medal in the Chess Olympiad. Now, by claiming the world championship title, he has added another feather to India's cap.

Dattaprasad Shirodkar | Mumbai

HC JUDGE FACES FLAK

Madam— The Allahabad High Court judge made insensitive comments about the Muslim community and its practices and used offensive language against them, which was not warranted from someone who is looked up to by thousands of common men seeking justice at the high court. It cannot be construed as a slip of the tongue, as he spoke for more than 30 minutes, and it is not the first time he has garnered attention for his controversial words; earlier too, his oral remarks in the court made headlines, and he has also said that cows exhale oxygen. Such poor statements have the potential to undermine public trust in the judiciary and raise a question mark over judicial integrity. It is welcome that the apex court of the country has taken note of this and sought details of the speech. Some may argue about freedom of speech, but the fact that a judge's impartial conduct in office and public events should be above reproach. The Supreme Court's action in this matter should set the house in order for other judges in district and high courts.

Bal Govind | Noida

RS CHAIRMAN FACES NO CONFIDENCE

Madam — It is unfortunate that the ruling BJP and the opposition parties in our country do not look at each other as ideological opponents but as real-time enemies. The present move by sixty members of the opposition expressing 'no confidence' against the RS chairman may not reach the extent of voting, and even if it does, it will get defeated as the opposition does not have the sufficient strength for the motion's success. However, such a move by the opposition expressing lack of confidence in the chair is a black mark in the world's largest democracy. This has led to the situation that they do not engage themselves with each other and ensure a fair and useful debate in both the Houses of Parliament, trying to score one over the other.

Gopalaswamy J | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Why simplicity and equality must redefine weddings



RACHNA LAKHPATRI

There is a pressing need to rethink our approach to weddings; advocating for a shift towards simplicity, equality and genuine joy rather than crass display of wealth

Weddings have long been a grand celebration where two people unite, signifying not just the union of two souls, but also the joining of two families. These joyous occasions are infused with rituals, traditions, and celebrations designed to enhance the richness and pride of cultural heritage. Within the shimmering lights, the grand feast, and the spirited festivities, there exists a frequently ignored reality: the rising expenses these celebrations impose on families, especially those in the middle and lower-middle classes. Dowry, once regarded as a remnant of outdated and oppressive traditions, has taken on a contemporary guise. The concept of 'dowry' may no longer be prevalent in everyday language, yet its core remains hidden beneath the polished surface of what we now refer to as 'gifts.' What was once viewed with disdain has now been embraced, illuminated by a fresh perspective that aligns with contemporary feelings. What's the final takeaway? Families, particularly the bride's, face immense financial strain due to these 'gift' expectations, which frequently manifest as expensive items, vehicles, and cash contributions. In many cases, what are presented as gifts are actually disguised demands. Middle-class families, determined to avoid the label of being stingy, frequently push themselves to the limit to maintain their standing. The expectation to host lavish weddings adds an extra weight, as in many cultures, these ceremonies are seen as a reflection of the family's standing in the community. In severe situations, for struggling families, this can be devastating; for individuals find themselves compelled to deplete their life savings or other assets, while others are drawn into loan schemes. This debt, incurred at the expense of societal expectations, is repaid over years—and even decades—creating a relentless cycle of instability. The most concerning aspect of this situation is its ongoing nature and the way it sustains economic and gender disparities. When a groom traditionally requests gifts for the bride, it often creates an unfair financial burden on the bride's family, even if the demand is subtle. It merely reinforces the outdated notion that a family must 'pay' to marry off their daughter. This approach truly detracts from the principle of equality in relationships and adds unnecessary stress to what should be a welcoming event.



Now is the moment for society to reevaluate its values and confront these detrimental customs. Marriage ought to be a celebration of love and togetherness, rather than a cause for financial distress or societal expectations. A shift away from materialism is essential, emphasising the importance of mutual respect, understanding, and equality. Families and communities should collaborate to foster an atmosphere that values simplicity and authenticity over extravagance and false displays of wealth. Both governments and social organisations can play a vital role in addressing this issue by implementing laws against all forms of dowry and raising awareness about its psychological and financial consequences. A debt-free, joyful beginning to married life is the greatest blessing any couple could hope for. The true essence of celebration is not found in the extravagance of the occasion, but rather in the commitment to a shared future rooted in love and respect.

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



FIRST COLUMN

HARMONISING WITH CHANGE

While change is often seen as a source of progress, its relentless pace can leave many mentally drained



RRAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Whether we like it or not, we have to constantly adapt to the changing time, changing thoughts, and changing future. Today, change has become so rapid that some people, especially professionals, have to keep a constant watch on the emerging trends and must be perpetually prepared to gear up in order to keep pace with change. As a consequence of keeping themselves in high gear constantly over a long period of time, many feel that rapid changes shake up their nerves and are physically and mentally so exhausting and taxing that life has become more of a problem than a pleasure. However, we must not have the impression that every change is an anathema.

No! On the contrary to common belief, change is generally a welcome feature of life, and stagnancy is always considered boring. It is the rapidity and high frequency of change, or the enormity of change, that forces responsible people to miss the necessary physical and mental rest, keeping them always on the move and causing them worry. But the question that arises is, what has led to this condition of rapid and ever-growing change? Observation and analysis tell us that it is science and technology that are responsible for this predicament, as they compel individuals to lead an increasingly faster life in a highly competitive world. They force people to move like machines, which, too, are moving faster day by day and are changing enormously in design and functions. But if we go deeper into the problem, then we would find that science and technology are, in fact, at the service of mankind; therefore, it is man



who decides what kind of gadgets and goods he requires and at what pace—not vice versa. The evolution of science is based on man's needs, desires, mindset, motives, emotions, set of values, conscience, and external influences, including exposure to media and to society's approval, appreciation, or criticism of his acts. Hence, these factors are the major driving forces that lead to new inventions or new forms and designs. It is these factors that determine the purpose and use to which science and technology should be put. It is these which set new trends. It is these that lead to the rejection of the old and the change to the new.

Therefore, the rapidity of change depends, to a great degree, on the rapidity of rejection of the old system, old set of values, prevalent fashions and customs, and existing norms and beliefs. This, in turn, depends on how rapidly a person is dissatisfied or discontented with the present goods, facilities, services, practices, norms, status-symbols, and security needs. This dissatisfaction or discontentment may, in some cases, be justified and may, in most cases, be due to a lack of man's inner stability and inner happiness stemming from a wrong set of values and wrong attitudes. A thorough analysis of the present situation would lead us to the conclusion that the current situation, which is leading us either to tension or depression or short-lived pleasure, is due to our own consumerist attitude, which is geared mainly to cater to man's indulgence in sensual pleasure or comforts.

In order to bring a change to this callous attitude and wrong lifestyle, we need to reform our mind by adopting a spiritual attitude through a spiritual set of values, or what is called 'spiritualism,' which is a turnaround of thoughts and a way of living. Today, those people who are trying to cope with change without bringing change to their mindset, value system, and lifestyle through spirituality have really missed the message of the wise. Therefore, it's high time that we as a society realised that simplicity of lifestyle, by embracing spiritual values, alone would be the remedy to the present precarious situation that would empower us to manage rapid change with vigor and enthusiasm.

(The writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist; views are personal)

Bangladesh's secular fabric under siege



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

The suppression of dissent, coupled with the growing boldness of extremist ideologies, risks steering the nation towards a fundamentalist Islamist state



It is increasingly clear that fundamentalist Islamist organisations, which are pathologically hostile to India as well as to all secular and democratic persons and organisations in Bangladesh, are increasingly calling the shots in that country under the rule of its interim government. An indication of this is the relentless persecution of Shahriar Kabir, an internationally acclaimed author, journalist, champion of human rights, democracy and secularism, and a tireless campaigner to bring to justice the perpetrators of war crimes during Bangladesh's liberation war in 1971. He continues to languish in Kashimpur jail under terrible conditions. Despite being designated as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International, a magistrate's order giving him Division One status, which would give him a separate room and other facilities remains to be carried out. This is because the deputy commissioner of Ghazipur district, where Kashimpur prison, where he is lodged, is located, has not signed the order, which will be effective only after his signature is affixed to it. Nor, according to reports, does he seem inclined to sign it soon.

As a result, Kabir, who is 74-years-old has to live among common prisoners and sleep on the floor during a cold winter as his health continues to deteriorate. Earlier, during a remand hearing at Dhaka's Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on 20 October, Kabir had complained that he was not receiving adequate medical treatment in jail. On November 2, he was taken to Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Medical College Hospital for a check-up. According to its deputy-director, he suffered from various old age-related ailments but these were not critical.

Kabir has high blood pressure and diabetes and a large accumulation of stones in his kidney. Blood is coming out with his stool. Given the role of the deputy commissioner, who presumably has nothing personal against him, it is difficult not to feel that it is the interim government, led by Nobel laureate Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus, that wants to deny him Division One status. That it continues to do so despite considerable international demand for his release is clearly the result of pressure from



A SPIRITUAL LEADER, PHILOSOPHER, MYSTIC POET AND SOCIAL REFORMER, LALON ARTICULATED A WELTANSCHAUUNG WHICH ENCOMPASSED THE ESSENCE OF THE BHAKTI CULT AND SUFISM, REJECTED ALL DISTINCTIONS OF CASTE, CLASS AND CREED, OPPOSED THEOLOGICAL CONFLICTS AND RACISM

organisations like the Hefazat-e-Islam (Hefazat) and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (Jamaat).

Hefazat's hand in Kabir's persecution is clear from the fact that one of the several charges on which he has been jailed was filed with Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal on August 20, 2024, by Mufti Harun Izhar Chowdhury, Hefazat's joint secretary. It showed him, along with Sheikh Hasina, as one of the 23 accused, charged with crimes against humanity and mass killing in connection with the violent clashes between Hefazat's supporters and members of security forces and Awami League activists during its rally in Dhaka, on May 5, 2013, to press its 13-point charter of demands. The latter included demand for a stricter dress code as ordained by Islam, a ban on statues, candlelight vigils and public mixing of men and women, besides the scrapping of the Awami League government's women's development policy. Also, it demanded the designation of Ahmadiyas as "non-Muslims."

The charter underlined the fundamentalist ideology of Hefazat which was formed in 2010 to oppose the Awami League government's women's development policy promising women equal rights to property. Comprising mainly of Sunni clerics heading a network of 19,199 Quami madrasahs and its students in Bangladesh, it has considerable power to mobilise in the streets. Its intensely anti-India orientation was reflected in its violent protests against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Dhaka on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence on March 26, 2021. Thirteen 13 persons were killed and scores injured in clashes between its supporters and members of the security forces and Awami League's supporters. While the Hefazat is not calling all the shots in the interim government,

it certainly has a wide measure of influence and has its way wherever it wants, however small or big the event or the demand is. The "Mahati Sadhusanga and Lalon Mela" (great gathering of sadhus and Lalon fair) hosted by Muktidham Ashram and Lalon Academy in Madya Narsingpur, Kashipur Union Parishad in Narayanganj, was scheduled to begin on November 22, 2024. There was to be singing, dancing, festivities and food. Baul singers and devotee from all over Bangladesh were coming over for the occasion. The district administration, however, ordered its cancellation. A report in The Daily Star (November 23, 2024) quoted Fakir Shah Jalal, founder of the ashram and academy, said, "All arrangements had been made, but the administration did not permit the event, citing warning from some members of the "Muslim" community. Even when we requested to hold the event indoors, without loudspeakers, it was denied."

A spiritual leader, philosopher, mystic poet and social reformer, Lalon articulated a weltanschauung, which encompassed the essence of the Bhakti cult and Sufism, rejected all distinctions of caste, class and creed, opposed theological conflicts and racism. It is not surprising that such a person would be anathema to fundamentalist Islamists. The report in The Daily Star, cited above, had stated that Hefazat-e-Islam leader Maulana Abdul Auwal had warned the administration in a speech to stop the event or face intervention by protestors.

Other Islamist organisations are also flexing their muscles. Speaking at a grand convention of the District Quami Madrasa Council in Dhaka on November 25, Mamunul Haque, the secretary general of Bangladesh Khelafat Majlis, described the August 5 revolution as a significant step towards an Islamic revolution in

Bangladesh, adding that the country was destined to undergo an Islamist transformation.

Not surprisingly, Ahmadiyas and Sufis have come under attack. Several of the former's mosques were attacked on August 6. A violent mob destroyed Baba Pagla Ali's Sufi shrine at Sherpur district on August 29; another such mob vandalised and looted Ismail Pagla's shrine in Sirajganj district on September 3.

Meanwhile two Islamist terrorist outfits—Ansar al-Islam (erstwhile Ansarullah Bangla Team) and Hijbut Tahrir (Tahrir) are increasingly active. Despite the ban on Tahrir, its supporters organised, on August 9, a rally in Dhaka city and demanded the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate in Bangladesh. Also, the statues of two police officers who died fighting the terrorists at the Holey Artisan Bakery in July 2016, have been destroyed and a Hijbut Tahrir poster has been found at the site. Despite the arrest of its media coordinator in Dhaka in early October, its activities continue, albeit clandestinely, in many parts of Bangladesh.

This is because the interim government is pursuing a much softer line against both Ansar al-Islam and Tahrir than Sheikh Hasina's government. An example is the release of the 'chief' of Ansar al-Islam on bail on August 26. As a consequence, while the Hefazat and Jamaat are riding high and terrorist bodies are quietly active, champions of secularism like Shahriar Kabir are imprisoned and organisations opposing communalism are apprehensive and defensive. In a situation like this, one can hardly rule out Bangladesh slowly sliding towards becoming a fundamentalist Islamist country and even an exporter of terrorism.

(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)

The rise of preventative fillers: A new era in beauty standards

India's Millennials and Gen Z are embracing early cosmetic treatments like fillers as part of their self-care routines

In recent years, a noticeable trend has emerged among India's Millennials and Gen Z, the increasing popularity of early cosmetic treatments like fillers. This shift highlights evolving beauty standards influenced heavily by social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, where idealised images of flawless skin abound.

These platforms perpetuate an image-driven culture, encouraging young people to consider cosmetic enhancements as a means to maintain a youthful appearance and meet contemporary beauty ideals. Recent data from Deloitte underscores this trend, revealing that 65 per cent of Millennials and 58 per cent of Gen Z in India



HEMA PANT

have a positive outlook on using technology and aesthetic treatments to improve their lives. This optimism is coupled with a heightened focus on self-care and personal enhancement, which has led to the rising popularity of preventative fillers. Often referred to as 'Baby Botox,' these treatments involve minimal amounts of Botox or dermal fillers used before

the onset of wrinkles, appealing to those who wish to stave off the visible signs of ageing before they even begin. A significant demographic shift is evident in data from NASSCOM, which indicates that Millennials and Gen Z comprise 52 per cent of India's population. This figure highlights the growing influence of these younger generations who are increasingly well-versed in cosmetic procedures and less stigmatised by them. The normalisation of such treatments owes much to open discussions on social media, where people share their experiences and results, contributing to a growing acceptance. The American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

reports that 64 per cent of practitioners have noted a rise in patients under 30 seeking cosmetic procedures, reflecting this broader cultural acceptance. The allure of preventative fillers lies not only in the desire to maintain a youthful appearance but also in the empowerment that comes from taking control of one's aesthetic journey. Young individuals today are more informed and proactive about their beauty routines, often seeking expert advice to make informed decisions. This proactive approach to beauty and self-care represents a significant cultural shift toward embracing enhancements as a normal part of life in a digital era. However, while the



appeal of preventative fillers is undeniable, young people must approach these treatments with caution. Overuse can result in "filler fatigue," a condition where excessive treatments lead to skin stretching and the need for more frequent interventions.

A balanced approach that integrates overall skin health with aesthetic goals is essential to ensure that beauty enhancements do not compromise one's natural appearance. Education plays a vital role in this process. Young individ-

uals are encouraged to seek guidance from reputable professionals who prioritise safety and use high-quality products. By doing so, they can make informed choices that align with their personal beauty goals without succumbing to the pressures of fleeting trends. This emphasis on education and safety empowers them to navigate their beauty journeys with confidence, fostering a sense of self-assuredness in their natural selves.

The rise of early cosmetic treatments among India's youth illustrates a significant cultural shift towards embracing self-care and beauty enhancements in a digital era. As these generations navigate their identities in a visually oriented world,

they increasingly turn to options like fillers to maintain their youthful allure. By prioritising education and safety, young individuals are empowered to make informed decisions about their beauty routines, fostering confidence in their natural selves.

As this trend continues to evolve, it will be intriguing to observe how it shapes the ongoing conversation around beauty in modern society. The future of beauty is likely to be shaped by these young, informed consumers who value both innovation and authenticity, setting new standards for generations to come.

(The writer is Medical Director, Sculpt Clinics; views are personal)

IN BRIEF



NHAI to introduce advanced RPVs to boost safety

State-owned NHAI is planning to introduce advanced 'rajmarg saathi' route patrolling vehicles (RPVs) to enhance highway safety, an official statement said on Friday. RPVs conduct inspection of stretches on the national highways to monitor and respond to emergency situations. According to the statement, additional advanced feature new RPV shall be equipped with 'AI video analytics' to capture and identify cracks and potholes as well as other elements, including vehicles, pedestrians, road signs, and other infrastructure assets.

Plans afoot to bring EPFO service at par with banking, says top official

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Subscribers of the retirement fund body EPFO may soon be able to get services at par with banking system and use ATMs to withdraw their claim amount, a top official said on Friday. Union Labour Secretary Sumita Dawra told PTI that focus right now in EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) is to improve the IT infrastructure.



While improvements are being seen in last few months, in January 2025 we will see more improvement coming in as a result of hardware upgradation," she said. The secretary said that the efforts are being made to bring systemic reforms that make processes easier and efficient. "As part of this modernisation drive, we also aim to compare EPFO systems with the banking systems in

India that are in place and are working well. For ease of living, bringing more transparency and ease of claims is also part of the plan," she said.

Under the new system, claimants, beneficiaries or insured individuals will be able to access their claim amounts through ATMs.

A maximum of Rs 7 lakh is provided under the Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance (EDLI) scheme run by the EPFO to the heirs of deceased subscribers. In the new system, the heir of the deceased EPFO subscriber may also be able to use ATMs to withdraw the money after claim settlement.

The new systems is expected to be rolled out after completion of a hardware upgrade by the EPFO.

The body is also likely to issue dedicated cards for use by EPFO subscribers to withdraw claim amounts through ATMs.

SpiceJet says cleared Rs 160 cr worth pending employee PF

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

SpiceJet on Friday said it has cleared all employee provident fund dues worth Rs 160.07 crore that were pending for over two years.

The low-cost carrier, which has been facing multiple headwinds, recently raised Rs 3,000 crore, following which it has been clearing statutory, GST (Goods and Services Tax) and other dues.

Employee provident fund dues amounting to Rs 160.07 crore, spanning over two years, have been cleared, the airline said in a release.

According to the release, since October, SpiceJet has been utilising its internal cash flows to meet its statutory obligations, including provident fund and TDS (Tax Deduction at Source) payments, the release said.

The airline has also resolved various disputes with aircraft lessors and other creditors.

'Ayushman Bharat helps millions get health cover'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A government study carried out in some states observed that the Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme since its implementation has been instrumental in increasing access to health care and in reducing out-of-pocket expenditures among beneficiaries, the Lok Sabha was told on Friday.

A baseline study was commissioned by the government in 2019-2020 to understand the impact of Ayushman Bharat — Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) across the states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Kerala, Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

The study covered a sample of 72,636 individuals, Minister of State for Health Pratap Rao Jadhav said in a written reply.

It revealed that beneficiaries were satisfied with the quality of medical services received under AB-PMJAY, Rao said.

The study also recommended strategies to increase aware-



ness of the scheme, addressing barriers in accessing health-care, replicating experiences from other settings like dedicated staff to guide beneficiaries, and establishing communication channels to allow people to voice their concerns.

The beneficiary base of the scheme has been continuously progressing from 10.74 crore Socio-economic caste census/Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana families to 12 crore poor and vulnerable families in January 2022, the study said.

This base has been further expanded with the inclusion of 37 lakh Accredited Social Health Activist/Anganwadi Workers/Anganwadi Helpers and their families in February 2024.

Additionally, approximately 6 crore senior citizens aged 70 and above (corresponding to approximately 4.5 crore families) were brought under the ambit of the scheme in October 2024, Rao said.

Beneficiary Identification System (BIS 2.0) allows self-assisted verification and eliminates unnecessary intermediaries.



'Nestlé's added sugar per serving meets regulations'

Switzerland scraps MFN status to India, dividend income to face higher tax

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Switzerland has withdrawn the MFN status granted to India following an adverse court ruling against Nestlé, a move that will result in adverse tax implications for Indian entities operating in the European nation.

With this, from January 1, 2025, Indian companies will be subject to a higher withholding tax on income generated in Switzerland.

In a statement, Switzerland announced suspension of the application of the most favoured nation (MFN) clause of the protocol to the agreement between the Swiss Confederation and the Republic of India for the avoidance of double taxation with respect to taxes on income.

Switzerland cited a ruling by Indian Supreme Court in a case relating to Vevey-headquartered Nestlé for its decision to withdraw the MFN. This means that Switzerland will tax dividends that Indian entities will earn in that country at 10 per cent from January 1, 2025.

Welspun Corp starts Little Rock facility expansion at USD 100-mn investment



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Welspun Corp on Monday said the company has kicked off a USD 100-million expansion plan to double the capacity of its Little Rock facility in the US to 3.5 lakh tonnes.

The unit's present manufacturing capacity is 1.75 lakh tonnes and the expansion project is expected to be executed by March 2026, the company said.

Its step-down subsidiary Welspun Tubular LLC on Friday conducted the groundbreaking ceremony for the expansion of its high-frequency induction welding (HFIW) pipe manufacturing facility in Little Rock, Arkansas, US, Welspun Corp said.

The expansion represents a USD 100-million investment to expand and upgrade the

company's line pipe portfolio in the US and expected to add an additional 175 jobs at the Little Rock plant.

Welspun World Chairman B K Goenka said, "We are glad to be in Little Rock to announce the expansion of our plant here which we set up back in 2007, and have successfully maintained a relationship with Arkansas region and its people."

"The Port of Little Rock is quickly becoming the centre of economic development for our region, and today's groundbreaking is only going to continue that," Arkansas Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders said.

Part of Welspun World, Welspun Corp Ltd is one of top-three manufacturers of large diameter line pipes globally.

Rupee recovers 10 paise to end at 84.78 against US dollar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee rebounded from its all-time low level and settled with a gain of 10 paise at 84.78 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, buoyed by a strong recovery in domestic equity markets and easing inflation data.

However, a strengthening American currency overseas and foreign fund outflows restricted the positive bias in the local unit, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.87 and touched the intraday high of 84.77 against the greenback. The unit finally ended the session at 84.78 (provisional) against the dollar, logging a gain of 10 paise from its previous closing level.

On Thursday, the rupee fell 5 paise to settle at the lowest-ever level of 84.88 against the US dollar. The previous record low closing level was recorded on December 9, when the unit settled 20 paise lower at 84.86 against the dollar.

The latest official data released on Thursday showed India's retail inflation eased in November to 5.48 per cent and came within the Reserve Bank's comfort zone mainly due to lower food prices, creating headroom for a rate cut



crude oil prices. FII outflows may also pressure the rupee. However, positive domestic equities and better-than-expected macroeconomic data may support the rupee at lower levels. USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of Rs 84.65 to Rs 85.05," Choudhary said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading higher by 0.06 per cent at 106.70.

Analysts said that the dollar has been strengthening after the US inflation numbers came on expected lines, raising hopes for an interest rate cut by the Federal Reserve in the upcoming policy review next week.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, climbed 0.54 per cent to USD 73.81 per barrel in futures trade.

On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share benchmark index Sensex closed sharply higher by 843.16 points or 1.04 per cent at 82,133.12 points. The Nifty jumped 219.60 points, or 0.89 per cent, to 24,768.30 points.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Thursday, as they offloaded shares worth Rs 3,560.01 crore, according to exchange data.



Indus Towers to acquire 26% stake in JSW Green Energy Eight

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended sharply higher on Friday amid heavy buying in telecommunication stocks and encouraging domestic inflation data.

After falling 1,207.14 points in morning trade, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex recovered all the lost ground later and jumped 843.16 points or 1.04 per cent to settle at 82,133.12. During the day, it surged 923.96 points or 1.13 per cent to 82,213.92.

The NSE Nifty climbed 219.60 points or 0.89 per cent to settle at 24,768.30 after falling 367.9 points in intraday trade.

Among the 30-share Sensex blue-chip pack, Bharti Airtel,



ITC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Hindustan Unilever, Titan, UltraTech Cement, HCL Technologies, and Power Grid, were the biggest gainers.

Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank, JSW Steel and Bajaj Finserv were the laggards.

Retail inflation declined in November to 5.48 per cent and came within the Reserve

Bank's comfort zone mainly due to easing food prices, creating headroom for a rate cut at the central bank's rate-setting panel meeting under new Governor Sanjay Malhotra in February.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based headline inflation was at 6.21 per cent in October and 5.55 per cent in November 2023.

India's industrial production (IIP) growth slowed to 3.5 per cent year-on-year in October 2024, mainly due to poor performance of mining, power and manufacturing, as per official data released on Thursday.

"The domestic market smartly recovered from the day's low and moved out of the consolidation path led by index heavyweights. A gradual easing in food inflation and a price hike by FMCG companies, along with a recent correction in valuation, supported the sector to outperform. Currently, the market is anticipating a revival in consumer spending, driven by the festive season and year-end holidays, adding to the sentiments.

Delhi-Dehradun expressway to be ready in 3 months

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Friday said that the Delhi-Dehradun expressway, which is expected to reduce travel time between the two cities to two hours, will be completed within the next three months.

Currently, the travel time between the two cities is five to six hours.

Addressing 'Times Network India Economic Conclave 2024', Gadkari further said that construction of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway is expected to be completed within two months. The travel time between the two metropolitan cities is expected to reduce to 12 hours with the completion of the expressway from the present 24 hours. The road transport and highways minister said Delhi-Dehradun highway project has two packages.

"A Rs 10,000 crore project has been approved for Delhi's Kalindi Kunj, extending to

Faridabad. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate the project within the next 15-20 days," Gadkari said.

Gadkari also said that the Modi government is working to reduce air pollution, lower the import of fossil fuel and enhance farm income. "The transport ministry is responsible for 40 per cent of the air pollution... While a huge part of pollution is due to stubble burning in neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana, road construction and fossil fuels also add to the annual problem," he said.

The minister also pointed out that the problem of stubble burning will be solved in two years as the government is working on 400 projects that will convert 200 lakh tonnes of rice straw every year to alternate fuels. Gadkari said that his ministry is working on 36 green express highways, which will help reduce the logistics costs in the country.

Sebi must ensure people don't approach 3rd umpire SAT: ED

ONUS ON 'FIELD UMPIRE'



over a majority of the orders by Sebi, resulting in stays or

reversals at the SAT. Sundareshan said stability is

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Sebi should write regulations in such a way that people do not disagree and end up challenging decisions in the Securities Appellate Tribunal, a senior official said on Friday.

Speaking at the World Hindu Economic Forum, V Sundareshan, an Executive Director associated with the market watchdog for over three decades, said facilitating capital formation and ensuring investor trust is the Sebi's primary responsibility.

"As a field umpire, we need to ensure that people do not disagree with the field umpire and go to the third umpire that I call as SAT," he noted.

The 'game' will be played properly only if the umpire is 'impartial' and this will lead to trust among the investors, he said, while speaking in a different context of growth in the mutual fund industry.

The remarks came at a time when concerns are being expressed in several quarters

very important, and the pursuit of market development should not be done like the roads of Mumbai, where a newly laid road is dug up within six months for some pipe laying.

One needs to balance several factors like inflation, taxation, and duties, among others, to ensure that the market development goal is achieved.

Sebi has adopted a consultative way in the ease of doing business agenda, he said, adding that 250 of 400 propos-

als have already been implemented and the rest are on the way.

The number of public issuances by companies has grown 7x to 209 per year in the last three years, he said, adding that India is now the biggest by number of such issuances globally and fifth biggest from a capital-raised perspective.

There is a need to convert the savers in the economy into investors, Sundareshan said, pitching for strategies like sachetisation of invest-

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER OFFICE, PR REGION MEDAK E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

NT No: HO/Tender/245-268/2024-25 Dt: 13.12.2024

Out of the total (24) works, Construction of BT Roads under CFR grant, PMGSY-II & MRRU FOR and Health Sub centers in NH-4 & XV grant in undersigned With total estimate cost of Rs.31.56 crores. Tender schedules can be had from e-procurement market from 16.12.2024 till 17.01.2025 for each tender with minimum (7) working days to participate from date of upload. Other details can be had from a procurement market place @ <https://tender.telangana.gov.in>; email ID: se.pr.mdk@gmail.com, Office Land Line number: 06452-295457.

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Saturday
December 14, 2024

CYCLING OUT HIS WAY TOWARDS A GREENER HYDERABAD

AFTER YEARS OF LIVING AND WORKING IN LONDON AND DUBAI, RAVI SAMBARI, A SEASONED CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONAL AND CO-FOUNDER OF THE HYDERABAD CYCLING REVOLUTION, RETURNED TO HYDERABAD, DRAWN BY ITS PERFECT BALANCE OF TRADITION, COMMUNITY AND MODERN GROWTH. IN AN EXCLUSIVE CHAT WITH THE PIONEER, HE OPENS UP ABOUT HIS DEEP-ROOTED CONNECTION TO THE CITY OF HYDERABAD, HIS PASSION FOR MAKING HYDERABAD A GREENER CITY AND MORE

TEJAL SINHA
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Hyderabad holds a special place in the hearts of its people and visitors alike. Known for its rich history, vibrant culture and stunning architecture, the city captures the imagination of everyone who steps foot in it. From the iconic Charminar to the majestic Golconda Fort, Hyderabad's landmarks are a testament to its glorious past. The warmth and hospitality of the locals further enhance the city's charm, making it a beloved destination. People also rave about the city's food, especially its famous biryani, which has gained global recognition. And one such is Ravi Sambari, a seasoned construction professional, who is not anything else but in love with the city for more than one reason.

For our special segment of the Hyderabad Bond, he shares his journey and deep connection to Hyderabad. After living and working in London and Dubai, the Warangal-born returned to Hyderabad, seeking a city that could balance community, family and professional growth.

"Hyderabad felt like home—a place with strong roots, vibrant culture and immense potential for growth," he reflects.

He appreciates the city's community-driven environment, which fosters connections and collaboration.



For Ravi, community living in Hyderabad goes beyond proximity; it creates bonds that offer mutual support. "In communities, people share resources, knowledge and empathy. For instance, a cycling companion who happens to be a doctor may step in during an emergency without hesitation. That sense of unity isn't easily found elsewhere," he explains.

Professionally, Hyderabad has impressed Ravi with its cosmopolitan atmosphere and opportunities for growth. "The city is a mix of tradition and modernity. Its rich cultural heritage, combined with global exposure, makes it a dynamic place to work and innovate," he says. The city's infrastructure developments and strategic urban planning have also contributed to its appeal for professionals and families alike.

However, he notes the challenges of promoting cycling in a car-dominated culture. "Changing

mindsets is our biggest hurdle. People need to see cycling as practical, not just recreational," he says. Despite this, he lauds the state government's efforts to improve public transport and infrastructure, though he believes more needs to be done to integrate cycling lanes and support systems into urban planning.

For Ravi, Hyderabad is not just a city; it's a symbol of progress, community and possibility. His love for the city is deeply rooted in its ability to offer professional opportunities, cultural richness and a platform to make meaningful contributions. Through his work and advocacy, Ravi is helping shape a greener, more connected and future-ready Hyderabad.



Bandish Bandits Season 2

Symphony of emotions, but struggles to keep beat

PNS| HYDERABAD

PLOT

Bandish Bandits Season 2 picks up from the melodious journey of Radhe (Ritwik Bhowmik) and Tamanna (Shreya Chaudhry), navigating the complexities of love, tradition and ambition in the world of classical music. Radhe, torn between his musical heritage and modern aspirations, faces mounting pressures, while Tamanna confronts the challenges of balancing her dreams and her family's expectations. This season continues to focus on the intense emotional and musical battle between classical and contemporary genres.

HIGHLIGHTS

The latest series boasts an engaging storyline crafted by Atmika Didwania, Karan Singh Tyagi, Digant Patil and Anand Tiwari, which introduces new challenges and characters, adding to the entertainment value. The screenplay expertly blends music and drama, although the pacing may feel slow for some viewers. The dialogues are sharp and simple, with standout one-liners delivered by Kunaal Roy Kapur. Anand Tiwari's direction shines, maintaining the show's unique aspect and focusing on the central theme of music. The series features several memorable scenes, including dramatic confrontations, surprising revelations and heartfelt moments, making it a compelling watch. Anand Tiwari's masterful direction brings this unique show to life, seamlessly weaving music, drama and confrontation throughout the narrative. The series expertly explores the complexities of character relationships, with dynamics shifting in intriguing ways. Memorable moments abound, including a poignant confession, dramatic entrances, and intense face-offs.

DRAWBACKS:

While the emotional depth and music remain compelling, the season suffers from slow pacing. Certain plot points feel drawn out,



leaving the narrative dragging in places. The integration of new characters is uneven, sometimes disrupting the flow of the story. Additionally, the length of the episodes feels excessive, with some moments failing to make an impact due to the drawn-out execution. While it introduces intriguing new characters and layers, it sometimes lingers too long on melodrama, sacrificing pace for emotion. The series thrives on the fusion of classical Indian

music with a contemporary narrative, but the execution falters in certain emotional beats. The lack of urgency in the plot progression occasionally weakens the show's overall momentum.

PERFORMANCES

Ritwik Bhowmik delivers a captivating performance, leveraging his endearing on-screen presence and impressive acting skills. Shreya Chaudhry dazzles with her stunning screen presence,

VERDICT

Bandish Bandits Season 2 offers engaging music, strong performances and emotional depth but suffers from pacing issues and at times, a convoluted narrative. It will appeal to fans of the first

season and those who appreciate classical music, though a more succinct approach could have made it even more impactful. Still, a worthy watch for its performances and musical moments.

REVIEW

Directed by: Anand Tiwari

Produced by: Amritpal Singh Bindra

Cast: Ritwik Bhowmik, Shreya Chaudhry, Sheeba Chaddha, Atul Kulkarni, Rajesh Tailang, Kunaal Roy Kapur, Divya Dutta, Rohan Gurbaxani, Yashaswini Dayama, Aaliyah Qureshi and Saurabh Nayyar

Streaming on: Prime Video

Rating: 3/5

showcasing significant growth in her performance since Season 1. Rajesh Tailang as Rajendra and Sheeba Chaddha as Mohini consistently demonstrate their reliability as talented actors. Divya Dutta as Nandini steals the spotlight with her outstanding performance and well-crafted character. Kunaal Roy Kapur as Arghya leaves a lasting impression with his comedic timing, while Rohan Gurbaxani as Ayaan, Samadh Khan as Vishal, Yashaswini Dayama as Saumya, Saurabh Nayyar and Aaliyah Qureshi deliver notable performances in their respective roles.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

The show's musical offerings are undoubtedly its crowning jewel, with standout tracks like *Araj*, *Garaj Garaj Rock*, *Saavan Mohe Tarasaaye*, *Nirmohiya*, *Sakhi Mori* and *Ghar Aa Maahi* (I'm Waiting for You) leaving a lasting impression. Soumil Shringarpure's background score perfectly complements the show's musical theme. The technical aspects are also noteworthy, with Anubhav Bansal's exceptional cinematography, particularly in the music performance scenes, and Hazel Paul's appealing yet realistic costume design. Manini Mishra's production design adds a touch of elegance, while Tanupriya Sharma's editing, although somewhat dragging, rounds out the overall visual experience.

Charting career path after earning your US CMA in 2025

The current job market is tough and cracking a reputed job role can be a complex process. Jobs that came with a tag of security a decade back aren't immune to this development, including varied roles in accounts and finance. In such a scenario, there are some certifications that you can pursue that will help you to "stand out" amongst the pool of candidates, applicable to freshers and experienced professionals equally.

One such certification in accounting and finance is CMA (Certified Management Accountant), a US certification by the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) that can open a plethora of opportunities in the job market in India and abroad. Unlike traditional accounting roles that emphasise recording and compliance, CMAs are trained to interpret financial data, forecast trends and drive business decisions. This unique blend of skills aligns perfectly with the needs of multinational corporations, which focus on growth strategies, sustainability and global operations. One can earn the certification through the two-part exam. Part I includes financial planning, performance and analytics. Part II includes strategic financial management and covers cost management, financial budgeting, risk management and investment analysis.

VERSATILITY ACROSS INDUSTRIES

US CMAs are celebrated for their versatility. From manufacturing giants to tech startups, they find relevance across industries thanks to their proficiency in cost management, budgeting and performance evaluation. As companies seek to optimise resources and improve profitability, the demand for professionals who can offer actionable insights continues to grow. For instance, in the manufacturing sector, CMAs play a pivotal role in managing cost structures and improving operational efficiency. Meanwhile, in the technology industry, they drive financial strategies to support innovation and scalability. This adaptability ensures CMAs remain indispensable, regardless of economic fluctuations.



STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING

Modern businesses need more than just number crunchers. They need strategic advisors. US CMAs excel in bridging the gap between financial data and corporate strategy. With their expertise in areas like risk management, performance metrics and capital investment decisions, they empower organisations to make informed choices that foster long-term growth. The increasing adoption of data analytics and artificial intelligence in finance further amplifies the importance of CMAs. Their training equips them to interpret complex datasets and leverage technology to refine business strategies, making them invaluable assets in the era of digital transformation.

CAREER GROWTH BACKED BY INCREASED EARNING POTENTIAL

The prestige of the US CMA certification is reflected in the robust career growth and compensation packages it unlocks. According to the IMA's Global Salary Survey, CMAs earn significantly more than their non-certified peers. CMAs tend to earn 20% to 40% higher than non-CMAs. This earning potential, combined with opportunities for leadership roles, makes the certification highly attractive to ambitious professionals. Moreover, CMAs often find themselves on the fast track to senior management positions. Their ability to contribute to high-stakes decision-making ensures they are viewed as

integral to the leadership pipeline, further cementing their demand across organisations.

As businesses continue to expand their global footprints and adapt to technological advancements, the role of US CMAs will only grow in prominence. Their skill set aligns seamlessly with the priorities of modern enterprises, such as sustainability, agility and innovation. Whether it's driving mergers and acquisitions or navigating complex regulatory environments, CMAs will remain pivotal to shaping the future of corporate finance. One important thing to note here is that earning this certification requires a lot of commitment, especially if you are working. However, by successfully completing the US CMA exam and earning the certification, professionals unlock substantial returns on their investment. This achievement translates into a wealth of career opportunities. For employers, hiring a CMA is an investment in excellence, ensuring their financial strategies are grounded in expertise and foresight. In a world where businesses strive to do more with less, the US CMA stands as a symbol of value creation, adaptability and strategic brilliance. This is why they are and will continue to be, in demand across the corporate sector.

(The author, Pratham Barot, is the CEO and CoFounder, of Zell Education.)



Tollywood sensation Mangli unveiled Xiaomi's latest 5G powerhouse, the Redmi Note 14 Series, at Cellbay's Gachibowli showroom, marking a new era in smartphone technology.

what's brewing?

Amp up your hairstyle this concert season

Concerts are the perfect time to show off your bold, playful and effortlessly cool hairstyles. From Dua Lipa's electrifying vibes to Diljit Dosanjh's desi grooves or Bryan Adams' classic hits, your hair can help you channel the mood. Here's your ultimate step-by-step guide to creating fun and stylish hairstyles that are perfect for your next event or concert.

Bubble braids

- Start with clean, towel-dried hair. Apply a leave-in conditioner or a styling mousse for added volume and texture.
- Gently comb through your hair with a wide-tooth comb to remove any knots and ensure smooth styling.
- Attach the Coanda smoothing dryer, setting it to high speed and heat. Pre-dry your hair until it's about 80% dry.
- Part your hair in the middle or to the side, depending on your preference. Then, gather hair into a low ponytail and secure with an elastic band.
- Create sections along your ponytail using small elastics, spaced evenly apart. Gently tug each section of hair between the elastics to create the "bubble" effect.
- Repeat until you've styled the entire ponytail with cute, voluminous bubbles.
- Lightly mist with hairspray to set the look and ensure it stays in place throughout the concert. Tie ribbons on the bubbles to complete your look.

Twisted ponytail

- A twist on the classic ponytail, this sleek, sophisticated style adds texture and depth. The twisted ponytail is the perfect look, blending sophistication with a touch of edge, much like the vibrant energy of the concerts.
- Start with clean, damp hair. Apply a heat protectant or styling cream to ensure your hair stays nourished and smooth while styling.
 - Set straightener on a high airflow setting and start from the roots, gliding the tool down to the tips for a polished, straight finish.
 - Once your hair is fully dry and sleek, part it in the middle or side, depending on your preference.
 - Divide your hair into two equal sections.
 - Take a small piece of hair from the first section, twist it tightly, and secure it with a bobby pin at the back of your head. Repeat this on the other side.
 - Once both sides are twisted, gather all your hair into a low or mid ponytail at the back of your head. Make sure to keep the twists secure and neat.
 - Use a strong elastic band to tie the ponytail in place, ensuring the twists don't unravel.

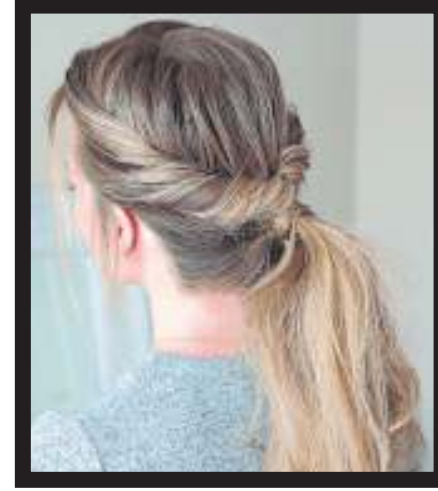


- Gently tug at the twists to add more volume and texture.
- Finish with a light hairspray to hold the look in place throughout the concert, ensuring it stays sleek and elegant all night.

Messy bun

The messy bun is the ultimate go-to hairstyle for concerts that strike a balance between laid-back vibes and effortless style. Perfect for artists like AP Dhillon or Prateek Kuhad, whose music invites you to relax and soak in the moment, this hairstyle complements the mood with its carefree charm. It's practical yet stylish, keeping your hair off your face so you can enjoy the concert to the fullest.

- Start with damp hair. Use a paddle brush to smooth down any frizz and gently stretch out your natural curls, setting your desired pattern as you go.
- Using an elastic band, gather all your hair into a high ponytail at the crown of your head. Secure it tightly, making sure the ponytail sits the top of your head for maximum height and volume. Smooth down the sides, carefully tucking the hair behind your ears for a sleek finish.
- Twist the ponytail and wind it into a loose, messy bun. Don't worry about perfection here—the charm of the style is in its relaxed, undone nature. Secure the bun with a few hair pins, keeping it secure yet still playful and voluminous.
- Use the flyaway attachment to smooth down and perfect the look, giving it a sleek and controlled appearance without sacrificing the messy vibe.



Chic and sleek

When it comes to concert hairstyles, nothing beats the timeless appeal of a sleek and polished look. Whether you're swaying to soulful melodies or dancing to high-energy beats, the chic and sleek style is a versatile choice.

- After washing your hair, apply a styling cream and begin to blow dry your hair smooth with a hair dryer. Doing this step first will maximize the smoothness and help prolong the style.
- Once dry, brush the hair through to remove any tangles.
- Next, section the hair into manageable pieces, tying or clipping away the top sections first.
- Take each section—sections should be a similar size to the plates to allow the strands to spread evenly across them—and place the straightener close to the roots and glide through to the ends at a medium speed.
- Reduce the heat setting for hairline sections. To get closer to the roots, take sections at an angle.
- Apply a holding styling product to fix the style in place and increase style longevity.
- For a concert-ready look, add some flair with hair accessories. Jewel-encrusted clips or sparkling pins can instantly elevate your style, giving you a chic, statement-making finish.



ITC Nimyle, takes a conscious step towards a more responsible tomorrow with the launch of its Clean Equal Mission. The initiative is designed to foster equality in cleaning by raising awareness and inspiring action among the next gen. The Clean Equal Mission includes a first-of-kind educative module for children, to instil cleaning as a shared responsibility.



Media Day Marketing has launched four exciting expos, showcasing the latest innovations in various industries. The 4th Edition of the Dairy & Food Expo was inaugurated by industry leaders and association heads, while Ponnam Prabhakar, Minister of Transport, Government of Telangana, inaugurated the 6th Edition of India Green Energy Expo and the 4th Edition of the Green Vehicle Expo.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



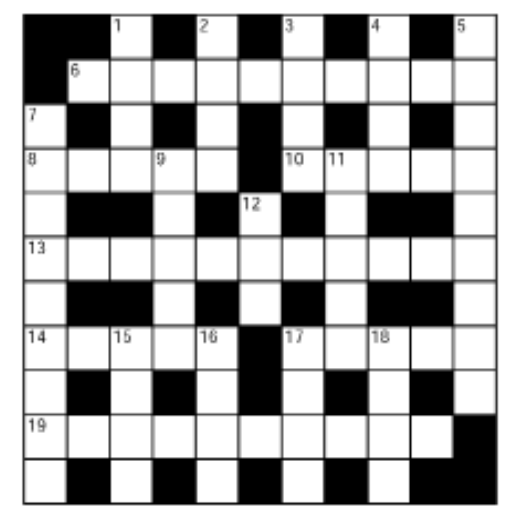
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

GINGER MEGGS



- ACROSS
- 6 A tower that warns ships of danger
 - 8 Carrying a weapon
 - 10 A black and white animal that lives in China
 - 13 A green jumping insect
 - 14 A long gun held against the shoulder
 - 17 Start
 - 19 Below
- DOWN
- 1 Use this in a camera
 - 2 A garden building for tools
 - 3 Large boat
 - 4 Destroy with fire
 - 5 Mending
 - 7 Likely to kill or harm you
 - 9 A support for an artist's painting
 - 11 A type of fruit
 - 12 Bashful
 - 15 Lose colour
 - 16 Rest your glasses on these
 - 17 Meat from a cow
 - 18 A kind of door in a fence
- SOLUTION
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Allu Arjun's arrest leaves tollywood stunned

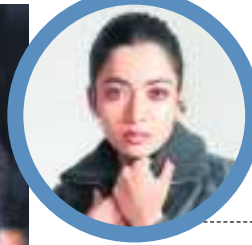
Mega Star Chiranjeevi and his family had reportedly distanced themselves from Allu Arjun due to personal differences. However, at this crucial juncture, Chiranjeevi put aside all conflicts and rushed to Allu Arjun's residence to show his support.

The Tollywood industry is in shock following the news of Allu Arjun's arrest over the Sandhya Theatre stampede incident. The stampede led to the death of a woman, Revathi, and left a boy hospitalized. The police had filed a case against the actor days earlier, and he returned to Hyderabad on Friday morning after attending the *Pushpa 2* success meet in Delhi on Thursday evening.

Over the past few months, a division has emerged in the Mega family, with Allu Arjun on one side and Megastar Chiranjeevi's family on the other. This rift reportedly began after Allu Arjun supported his friend, YSRCP leader Shilpa Ravichandra Reddy, in Nandyal. The feud has also affected fans, with many Pawan Kalyan supporters boycotting *Pushpa 2*, which has performed well in the Hindi-speaking belt but struggled in Telugu states.

Despite their differences, Chiranjeevi and his wife rushed to Allu Arjun's house to console his mother after the arrest news broke, accompanied by Nagababu. Prominent figures, including producer Dil Raju, director Trivikram Srinivas and producer Naga Vamsi, were seen at the Chikkadpally Police Station and Nampally Court to support Allu Arjun. Fans also gathered at the police station, Gandhi Hospital and the court.

Allu Arjun reportedly expressed frustration with the manner of his arrest, as he was not given time to change his clothes. The actor was drinking coffee when the police arrived and left with them after reassuring his distressed wife, Sneha. Before departing, he kissed her on the cheek, displaying calmness despite the situation. Many politicians and Tollywood celebrities have taken to social media to support him.



I can't believe what I am seeing right now...The incident that happened was unfortunate and deeply saddening incident. However, it's disheartening to see everything being blamed on a single individual. This situation is both unbelievable and heartbreaking.

— Rashmika Mandanna

It's heartbreaking to witness such tragedies. I believe we must reflect on how to prevent them in future. This isn't about finding fault but about learning, growing and taking collective responsibility to ensure a safer and better tomorrow.

— Nithin



I wish the kind of enthusiasm government authorities and media show in anything related to people from cinema was also there for the regular citizens. We would have lived in a better society. That was an unfortunate incident and it was heart breaking. We should all learn from the disaster and be lot more careful here after and introduce measures to make sure this doesn't happen again. We are all at fault here. One person is not responsible for this.

— Nani

Fear: Frighteningly good film deserves watch

REVIEW



Cast: Vedhika, Aravind Krishna, Pavitra Lokesh, Jaya Prakash, Aneesh Kuruvilla, Sayaji Shinde and others

Cinematographer: I Andrew

Music director: Anup Rubens **Producer:** AR Abhi

Director, writer and editor: Haritha Gogineni

Rating: 2.5/5

SURESH KAVIRAYANI
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After the big film *Pushpa 2*, smaller films are now hitting the screens and *Fear* is one of them, which is releasing today. Haritha Gogineni, a woman director, is making her debut with this horror genre film. Vedhika plays the lead actress, while Anup Rubens is the music director.

Story

Sindhu and Indu (played by Vedhika) are twins. Sindhu, the younger sister, deeply admires Indu but suffers from constant fear, believing someone is after her. Indu, irritated by Sindhu's fears, often grows angry with her. Sindhu falls in love with Sampath (played by Aravind Krishna), her childhood classmate and becomes possessive, even resenting his interactions with Indu. Her fears escalate, and she tells her parents someone wants to kill her. They admit her to a mental asylum, where she resists treatment. The doctor (played by Anish Kuruvilla) tries one last approach to help her. Meanwhile, Sampath goes missing, and Sindhu worries about his fate. What happens to Sampath, Sindhu, and Indu forms the crux of the story.

Analysis

Haritha Gogineni debuts as a director and has bravely chosen the horror genre, which demands a nuanced approach. The film is heavily reliant on its screenplay, with Haritha weaving together past and present scenes in a nonlinear narrative. From the outset,

she maintains control over her storytelling, delivering an engaging narrative with a surprising twist at the climax. Unlike many debut directors who opt for entertainment or family dramas, Haritha ventured into the challenging horror genre and managed to handle it effectively. Despite minor flaws, her effort is commendable. The film also carries a strong message: fear is harmful and parents should be attentive to their children's concerns, addressing them promptly instead of dismissing them as trivial.

Performances

Vedhika shines in her performance, embodying her role perfectly. Pavitra Lokesh and Jaya Prakash, as her parents, deliver strong performances, while Sayaji Shinde, Satya and Anish Kuruvilla provide solid support. Aravind Krishna, in a cameo role, is effective. Child actors also contribute significantly.

Technical aspects

For horror films, music is crucial, and Anup Rubens delivers a strong background score. The cinematography enhances the film's mood and despite being a small-budget project, the technical aspects are impressive.

Conclusion

Fear is a film narrated through a nonlinear screenplay. While it has some flaws, it offers an engaging experience and is worth a watch. Tollywood needs more women directors like Haritha Gogineni, making it essential to support such ventures.



Ram Charan pokes fun at SDT's love life, urges him to marry

Ram Charan attended as the chief guest for Sai Durga Teja's 18th film title launch. Directed by Rohith KP in his debut, the film is produced by Niranjana Reddy and Chaitanya Reddy. At the event, Ram Charan praised his cousin Sai Durga Teja's dedication to his craft and referred to his recovery from a life-threatening accident as his "second birth," crediting fans for their blessings.

The actor release the film's title, *Sambarala Yetigattu*, at an event in Hyderabad, which saw a large

turnout of Mega fans. Speaking highly of Sai Durga Teja, Ram Charan described him as "not only a good actor but also a good human being, a good son, brother and nephew." He also commended director Rohith KP for his exceptional work, saying, "After watching the promotional video, Rohith doesn't seem like a debut director; he comes across as experienced."

In a lighter moment, Ram Charan humorously urged Sai Durga Teja to show affection toward women. "Teju loves only his male

fans, but I want him to express his love to women too. His mother asks him every day to get married, but he shows no interest," Charan joked, eliciting laughter and applause from the audience and Sai Teja's mother.

The event was attended by several prominent figures, including Allu Aravind and directors and producers who have previously collaborated with Sai Durga Teja. Ram Charan concluded by asking fans to ensure the success of *Sambarala Yetigattu*.

BEHIND THE LENS:

Rana Daggubati's candid conversations with S S Rajamouli & Ram Gopal Varma

Balakrishna anger flows over Prashanth Varma!

A few days ago, Balakrishna's son Mokshagna's debut film, to be directed by Prashanth Varma, was scheduled for a grand launch. However, it was cancelled at the last minute, with Balakrishna later stating that Mokshagna's health was the reason. He did not clarify whether the movie was shelved

or if it would be relaunched. Sources reveal that on the night before the launch, Prashanth Varma informed Balakrishna that he could not direct the film but would provide the story instead.

This last-minute revelation reportedly angered Balakrishna, who was upset given the anticipation surrounding

Mokshagna's debut. Determined to take control, Balakrishna announced *Aditya 999 Max*, a sequel to his successful film *Aditya 369*, which he plans to direct himself, making it Mokshagna's debut.

As a result, the Mokshagna-Prashanth Varma project is reportedly shelved, according to insiders.

Rana Daggubati has effortlessly captivated the attention of the audience with *The Rana Daggubati Show* by engaging with some of the biggest names in Indian cinema, and he's certainly scaling it up with every episode. The show has quickly amassed a fan following driven by exciting conversations, playful camaraderie, and a rare chemistry with his guests, unseen in talk shows before it.

In the latest episode, viewers are treated to an in-depth exploration of the creative processes of two legendary filmmakers, S.S. Rajamouli and Ram Gopal Varma, offering an exclusive glimpse into their minds and world. Working in Rajamouli's *Baahubali*, the duo is seen reminiscing about their experiences through the journey of the two-part pan-India magnum opus. Reflecting on its impact, Rana said, "It took a decade of my life—an entire era. We only understood its true value after we finished. We were doing our best work, inspired by the best things we'd ever seen. It hasn't been the same since."

The episode also features legendary director Ram Gopal Varma, with whom he last worked on the critically acclaimed thriller *Department*. Both these directors, with vastly different approaches, ideologies, and filmographies, opened up about their creative callings, making the episode a highly interesting watch.



Creative approach for building stories and characters

Rajamouli spoke about how his ideas are formed, explaining, "The books you read, the films you watch, the discussions that you are involved in around you—all of it builds up in the form of lava and bursts as an idea at the right moment." Ram Gopal Varma, on the other hand, drew inspiration from real-life experiences and encounters, revealing how a gangster's intense emotional outburst following the death of his brother left a lasting impact on him. "It struck me how, for gangsters, power defines everything—even grief comes out as anger. Taking a real-life trait and making it into a story is an exercise that I truly love."

True inspiration behind company

Varma left viewers stunned when he revealed that his iconic film *Company* was not inspired by infamous underworld dons but rather his own rift with filmmaker Krishna Vamsi. He stated, "Whether it is the underworld or a film company, the ego wars remain the same."

Personalities that inspired S.S. Rajamouli: Senior NTR, Kurien Verghese & Lal Bahadur Shastri

With great reverence, Rajamouli spoke about his admiration for revered figures like Sr. NTR, emphasizing, "I hold a high regard for Sr. NTR, not just as an actor but as a director; he is really pathbreaking. His impact as an actor is so profound that, at times, his work as a director feels almost overshadowed." But Rajamouli's inspirations extend beyond the world of cinema. He

also expressed immense respect for personalities like Kurien Verghese and Lal Bahadur Shastri, whose work and contributions leave him feeling insignificant by comparison.

Family and professionalism

When it comes to working with family, Rajamouli explained that, despite close bonds, professional relationships take precedence. "We completely forget that we are related to each other while working."

Created and hosted by Rana Daggubati, *The Rana Daggubati Show* is an eight-episode unscripted Telugu Original produced by Spirit Media. With a stellar lineup of guests, including Dulquer Salmaan, Naga Chaitanya Akkineni, Sreeleela, Nani, Rajamouli and Ram Gopal Varma, new episodes drop every Saturday.



Bumrah is a combination of legendary pacers, says Chappell

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Jasprit Bumrah embodies the qualities of pace legends such as Dennis Lillee, Andy Roberts and Richard Hadlee but at the same time is forging his own legacy, one that is set to inspire future generations of pacemen, feels former India coach Greg Chappell. He also said that Bumrah is the only player standing between Australia and the Border Gavaskar Trophy. "What sets Bumrah apart is his combination of skills: (Malcolm) Marshall's adaptability, Lillee's aggression, Richard Hadlee's control, Roberts' strategy, Wasim (Akram) and Waqar's (Younis) reverse swing, (Glenn) McGrath's precision, (Dale) Steyn's explosiveness, and (Kagiso) Rabada's modern versatility." "As Nasser Hussain aptly observed, 'He's the complete bowler. As he has had back

surgery already, it is not certain he will have a long career, but if he does, his name will be mentioned in the same breath as the champions above," Chappell wrote in the 'Sydney Morning Herald'. An all-format bowler, Bumrah has reinforced his status as the best bowler in the world several times including when he led India to a 295-run win in the Perth Test recently. "While the legends of yesteryear established the foundations, Bumrah is carving his own legacy – one that promises to inspire future generations of pacemen." The former Australia captain said Bumrah's lethal yorkers and unsettling bounce evoked memories of Lillee's raw aggression on the field. "Lillee was a warrior, combining raw aggression with psychological prowess. I opposed him many times in domestic cricket and watched him from close quarters



against the best batsmen of his era. "His ability to make it hard for

batsmen to score runs with his probing line and length, allied to his guile and

determination, made him the champion that he was. Bumrah, though less overtly

combative, channels Lillee's ability to unsettle batsmen. His deadly yorkers and disconcerting bounce – especially with his unorthodox release point and trajectory – echo Lillee's capacity to dictate terms. "Bumrah's quiet intensity and precision make him a nightmare, much like Lillee's unrelenting aggression." Another great of the game was Roberts, who combined pace with strategic brilliance. Chappell felt Bumrah's 2018 performance at the MCG where he used variations to get the better of the batters was reminiscent of the way Roberts operated. "Bumrah shares Roberts' cerebral approach. Both bowlers use subtle variations to outfox batsmen, relying on strategy rather than brute force. Bumrah's spell in the 2018 Boxing Day Test against Australia – culminating in 6-33 – was a modern echo of Roberts' game-changing

bursts." "Roberts had a loping and relaxed run-up and a very strong shoulder action like Bumrah, and skidded onto you quite quickly, so it was important to be focused on the ball leaving the hand. "The danger of a bowler who zeroes in on the stumps, as Roberts did and Bumrah does, is that if you relax for a moment and try to hit across their deliveries, you become even more vulnerable to LBWs and bowled. I would use the same approach against Bumrah," Chappell added. The 31-year-old has consistently churned out stellar performances and is the go to bowler when the Indian team is in need of wickets. "With 151 wickets at an average of 21.03 in just 30 Tests, his ability to excel in diverse conditions recalls Marshall's dominance. Bumrah's reverse swing on abrasive surfaces and his

ability to seam and swing the ball under cloudy skies have been pivotal, evoking the same uncertainty that batsmen faced against Marshall. "As Ian Botham famously remarked of Marshall, 'He gave you no respite.' Today, batsmen echo similar sentiments about Bumrah," Chappell wrote. Drawing comparison to Hadlee, Chappell said "Bumrah's meticulousness draws comparisons to Hadlee. His mastery of English conditions, where he averages 22.02, and his ability to exploit even the slightest movement resemble Hadlee's clinical dismantling of batting orders. "Like Hadlee, Bumrah's focus on perfecting every delivery has made him indispensable in critical moments. He is also carrying the Indian pace attack at present as Hadlee did for New Zealand in his era," he added.



Dismissals during first innings did affect his flow, admits Gill

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Shubman Gill admitted that the fall of wickets at the other end affected his game in the Adelaide Test but expressed confidence that the Indian batting group would deliver a stronger first-innings effort in what is now effectively a three-match series. Gill didn't play the first Test due to a finger injury but looked good in his brief innings of 31 and 28 during the pink ball Test at Adelaide which India lost by 10 wickets. "As a batting group, we are looking to post a big total first up. That's been the key discussion and every batter has his own game plan," Gill said in the pre-match press conference after the team scored 150 and 180 in the first innings at Perth and Adelaide respectively. Gill believes that he wouldn't curb his natural game although he did get edgy seeing wickets tumble at the other end. "I still have the freedom as a batter. One of the challenges is whether you can play the game you want to play, irrespective of what's happening at the other end and irrespective of scorecard. "I faltered in the first innings because of what happened at the other end and I take that upon myself." There was a four-over period

in which Gill faced just one ball and that affected his concentration. "And there was a period when I didn't face much – may be one ball in four overs and then when I faced a delivery I missed a completely fuller ball. These are challenges you face. You might not face a ball for four overs or you might end up facing 18 balls on the trot," Gill explained. India have had at least six scores of 150 or less in recent times and Gill admitted that the piece of stat isn't lost upon the batting group. He said it is now a three-match series for his side. "Adelaide Test, we didn't do well but the series is still 1-1. We will treat it as a three-match Test series and if we win this one, we will have advantage going into Melbourne and Sydney." Gill was nostalgic as he walked into the Gabba for the first time since the 2021 Test where he was the top-scorer in the run-chase with a fine 91 that catapulted him into stardom. "Walking into the stadium after 2021 with the team, definitely it felt very nostalgic." Skipper Rohit Sharma didn't attend the optional training session and when asked about his absence, Gill replied: "This was an optional session and he has already practised a lot."

Ignore the criticism, it comes with the territory: Anand to Gukesh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Legendary chess player Viswanathan Anand on Friday asked D. Gukesh to ignore those questioning the standard of the World Championship title showdown with China's Ding Liren, saying criticism always comes with success. Indian Grandmaster Gukesh made history on Thursday, becoming the youngest-ever to win the world title defeating Liren in the 14th and final game of the championship in Singapore. Former world champion Vladimir Kramnik was not impressed with the quality of chess on display during the match, calling it the "end of chess as we know it." Kramnik expressed his frustration over the game's quality, calling a critical blunder by Ding Liren "childish". In his reaction, Kramnik wrote on 'X', "No comment. Sad. End of chess as we know it." In another tweet, he said,



"Never yet has a WC title been decided by such a childish one-move blunder." Five-time world champion, Norway's Magnus Carlsen too has been critical of the quality on display in earlier rounds, saying, "This does not look like a game between two World Championship contenders. It just looks like maybe the second round or third round of an open tournament." However, Anand, the five-time world champion and Gukesh's mentor, said he saw "history being made by

Gukesh". "I feel very happy. I was literally watching history being made yesterday," Anand told PTI Videos. "It (criticism) comes with every match. To be honest, I think it just comes with the territory. You ignore it and that's all. You know Gukesh's achievement, the whole qualification, everything and his concomitant rise. I mean if you look at the Olympiad, he showed that he's actually become a much stronger player. "He won the Candidates this

year, so many good results in Toronto and he's here. So this stuff (criticism) just comes with it. You cannot expect to become world champion and not face some random criticism," added Anand. The championship match seemed destined for a draw. However, Liren faltered under pressure and committed a blunder. "Most of us had written the game off (as a draw) by this point. If Ding had brought his bishop back, Gukesh would have had a long task to make any progress. But then, suddenly, the game turned, and he won. It was fantastic," he added. Anand praised the psychological depth of the young champion's approach. "Gukesh was not playing aggressive or anything. He had an extra pawn and was circling around, trying to find a way through," Anand said. The tactic of wearing down the opponent, even when it looked as good as a stalemate, proved crucial.



Hazlewood replaces Boland in Australia XI for third Test against India

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Australian captain Pat Cummins on Friday announced that pacer Josh Hazlewood will replace Scott Boland in his playing XI for the third Test against India after having recovered from a side strain. The injury had forced Hazlewood to sit out of the Pink Ball Test in Adelaide last week. Cummins exuded confidence that Hazlewood would pull through the match without any "hiccups". "He had a really good bowl yesterday, he had another bowl in Adelaide a couple of days previously. Him and the medical team are really confident," he said on the eve of the game at the Gabba. Cummins said he had to take the ball away from Hazlewood at Perth to prevent his injury getting worse. "We've seen it a few times where Josh has pushed through to get through a Test match and a little bit of soreness turns into a month or two of injury. "So, we made the call then that it probably wasn't worth the risk of keeping him bowling. I think he bowled an extra two overs leading into tea break and he said it felt ok, but I just kind of thought from there, 'that's enough,'" said Cummins. The Australian captain was sympathetic for Boland after the veteran pacer made a stirring return to Test cricket at Adelaide after last year's Ashes. Boland had a match-haul of five wickets that included the prized scalp of star India batter Virat Kohli in the second innings. "It's tough. He was fantastic in Adelaide. Unfortunately, he's spent quite a bit of time on the bench over the last 18 months and whenever he plays he's fantastic. "It's a shame for Scotty, but still a fair bit to play out this series. I'd be surprised if he didn't play again in this series," said the New South Wales player. Green is fading at Gabba The green tinge on the Brisbane deck was significantly reduced on the match eve. Once a fortress of the Aussies, India had breached the 'Gabba' barrier during the 2020-21 series to end the hosts' winning run dating back to 1988. After that the West Indies too beat Australia here, riding on the back of pacer Shamar Joseph's heroics. "I looked at it yesterday – it looked like a good wicket, like it has been the last few years," said Cummins. "A bit of sun baking it the last couple of days (means) I don't think it's as green and leafy as it was against South Africa," he said. Cummins was referring to the Test against South Africa here in 2022 which ended inside two days.

Treesa-Gayatri bow out of BWF World Tour Finals

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Indian women's doubles pair Iof Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand missed out on a semifinal spot at the BWF World Tour Finals after losing to Japan's Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida in straight games in their third and final group A match here on Friday. Treesa and Gayatri, who won their maiden BWF Super 300 title at Syed Modi International in Lucknow recently, lost 17-21 13-21 to their world number 4 opponents in 49 minutes. It was the fourth defeat for the Indian pair against the Paris Olympics bronze medallists Japanese rivals in five meetings. World number 13 Treesa and Gayatri, the only Indians to have qualified for the



prestigious season-ending tournament, needed a win to secure a spot in the knockout stage of the tournament. On Wednesday, the Indians had narrowly lost to world No.1 pair Liu Sheng Shu and Tan Ning of China in their

opening group match before stunning the Malaysian duo of Pearly Tan and Thinaah Muralitharan in their second match to keep their hopes alive. But the Japanese pair proved too hot to handle for the

Indian duo, who stayed level with Matsuyama and Shida till 5-5. Thereafter, the Japanese pair zoomed ahead and a six-point burst took them to 18-10. Treesa and Gayatri narrowed down the deficit to 17-19 but Matsuyama and Shida prevailed. After the change of sides, Treesa and Gayatri had a slender 4-2 lead but Matsuyama and Shida turned the tables quickly and entered the break with a four-point advantage. The Japanese pair kept a firm grip on the rallies and slowly and steadily kept moving ahead to eventually shut the door on the Indians. Matsuyama and Shida joined the Chinese pair of Sheng Shu and Ning in the semifinal stage of the tournament.

Hojlund scores twice for Manchester United to beat Viktoria Plzen 2-1 in Europa League

AP ■ LONDON

Rasmus Hojlund scored twice after coming off the bench and Manchester United rallied to beat Viktoria Plzen 2-1 in the Europa League. The Denmark striker netted in the 88th minute after collecting Bruno Fernandes' pass off a free kick to seal the victory and put United into the top eight of the standings. Hojlund replaced Marcus Rashford in the 56th and scored an equalizer six minutes later after Amad Diallo's shot was deflected by goalkeeper Martin Jedlicka into his path for an easy finish. The 21-year-old Hojlund also scored twice in the previous round, when United beat Norwegian team Bodo/Glimt 3-2, and has five goals in his six appearances in the second-tier competition. "It feels good to have scored

two goals but I am more happy with the win," Hojlund said. "My instructions? Go out there and score two goals! Just to use my qualities, run the channels and be assertive in front of goal." United had come off two straight losses in the English Premier League, 2-0 away to Arsenal, and 3-2 at Old Trafford to Nottingham Forest that left the club 13th and eight points adrift of the top four as progress looked slow under new coach Ruben Amorim. Matej Vydra, who previously played for Burnley and Watford, opened the scoring three minutes into the second half. United has 12 points from six games after three wins and three draws in Europa League play – good enough for seventh place. The top eight qualify directly to the Round of 16. The

teams placed No. 9 to No. 24 go into a two-legged playoff. Tottenham continued to show inconsistent form in a 1-1 draw at Rangers, leaving the north London team in ninth place. The Scottish side is eighth. Substitute Dejan Kulusevski was fed by fellow substitute Dominic Solanke to score 15 minutes before time and salvage a point at Ibrox Stadium. Spurs were held 2-2 at home by Roma in the previous round and lost 3-2 to Galatasaray before. The draw came after losing 4-3 to Chelsea in the Premier League on Sunday. Hamza Igamane netted for Rangers at the start of the second half off a cross from James Tavernier in what was a return to Glasgow for Spurs coach Ange Postecoglou, who led Celtic for two seasons. Fisayo Dele-Bashiru and



veteran Pedro Rodriguez scored one each for Lazio in the second half to defeat Ajax 3-1 in Amsterdam and move

to the top of the standings with 16 points from six games. Bilbao is level on points but in second on goal

difference. Anderlecht beat Slavia 2-1 in Prague to move into third place. Lyon jumped to fourth

by beating Eintracht Frankfurt 3-2. The German team is fifth. Among other results, substitute Sergio Peña equalized in stoppage time for Malmö to hold unbeaten Galatasaray 2-2. The Turkish club is sixth in the standings. PAOK routed Ferencvaros 5-0. Roma showed signs of improvement by beating Braga 3-0 for a second straight victory that came after the struggling club earned its first win under new coach Claudio Ranieri, 4-1 over visiting Lecce in Serie A. Braga goalkeeper Matheus received a red card in the 68th with the score 2-0. Conference LeagueA youthful Chelsea lineup made the most of a long trip to Kazakhstan by beating Astana 3-1 to stay perfect in the UEFA Conference League. Marc Guiu struck twice within five minutes

early in the first half. The 18-year-old forward opened the scoring on a solo effort in the 14th and added his second after meeting a cross from Pedro Neto from the right in freezing conditions in the city of Almaty. Guiu, who joined Chelsea from Barcelona this summer, has scored three in the competition. Renato Veiga, who is 21, headed home the third before Marin Tomasov scored for the hosts late in the first half. Neto was the only player to remain from the squad that beat Tottenham 4-3 on Sunday to move to second in the Premier League. Chelsea has 15 points atop the standings of third-tier competition with one more game to play in the league phase. Fiorentina crushed LASK 7-0 and Legia Warsaw lost 2-1 at home to Lugano.